



CNI



As of September 2016, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, will be offering 24 choristerships for girls from the age of 8 attending the Cathedral Choir School. Along with the boy choristers they will receive a formal education from the Choir School they will also receive vocal and aural training as part of the Cathedral Choir as well as instrumental tuition from the team of visiting tutors.

C of I clergy send message of support to Presiding Bishop and The Episcopal Church

Fifty-five Church of Ireland clergy have sent a message to the Most Rev. Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, recording their appreciation of his reaction to the

recent decision of the Primates' Meeting in respect of TEC and pledging to pray daily for TEC , its bishops, clergy and people, until the decision of the Primates' Meeting is rescinded.

The text of the message follows -

Most Reverend Sir,

We the undersigned serving and retired clergy of the Church of Ireland greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

1. We dissociate from the decision of the Primates' Meeting in respect of TEC.
2. We thank you for your exemplary witness in word and behaviour in the face of the announcement of that decision.
3. We are grateful for the witness of TEC in its worship and commitment to equality amongst all the People of God.
4. We commit ourselves to pray daily for TEC , its bishops, clergy and people, until the decision of the Primates' Meeting is rescinded.

Prominent gay rights activist backs Christian bakers in cake row

The prominent gay rights campaigner, Peter Tatchell, has said that he has changed his mind about a landmark legal ruling, involving a bakery run by Christians in Northern Ireland, which is due to be challenged this week.

Husband and wife Daniel and Amy McArthur, who run Ashers Bakery in Northern Ireland, were told last year by Belfast High Court that they had unlawfully discriminated against a customer when they refused to bake him a cake with a pro gay-marriage slogan on it and were ordered to pay £500 in damages. Ashers Bakery's appeal against the decision is due to begin on Wednesday.

Despite supporting the verdict which was issued last November, Peter Tatchell has written an article for the Guardian in which he says the law suit against the couple was "a step too far".

Tatchell writes: "It pains me to say this, as a long-time supporter of the struggle for LGBT equality in Northern Ireland, where same-sex marriage and gay blood donors remain banned. The equality laws are intended to protect people



Daniel and Amy McArthur of Ashers Baking Company, arrive at Belfast County Court

against discrimination. A business providing a public service has a legal duty to do so without discrimination based on race, gender, faith and sexuality.

“However, the court erred by ruling that Lee was discriminated against because of his sexual orientation and political opinions. His cake request was refused not because he was gay, but because of the message he asked for. There is no evidence that his sexuality was the reason Ashers declined his order.”

Mr Tatchell also expressed concerns about the wider implications of the ruling for freedom of conscience. He said: "This finding of political discrimination against Lee sets a worrying precedent. Northern Ireland's laws against discrimination on the grounds of political opinion were framed in the context of decades of conflict. They were designed to heal the sectarian divide by preventing the denial of jobs, housing and services to people because of their politics. There was never an intention that this law should compel people to promote political ideas with which they disagreed.

"The judge concluded that service providers are required to facilitate any 'lawful' message, even if they have a conscientious objection. This raises the question: should Muslim printers be obliged to publish cartoons of Mohammed? Or Jewish ones publish the words of a Holocaust denier? Or gay bakers accept orders for cakes with homophobic slurs? If the Ashers verdict stands it could, for example, encourage far-right extremists to demand that bakeries and other service providers facilitate the promotion of anti-migrant and anti-Muslim opinions. It would leave businesses unable to refuse to decorate cakes or print posters with bigoted messages."

He concluded: “In my view, it is an infringement of freedom to require businesses to aid the promotion of ideas to which they conscientiously object. Discrimination against people should be unlawful, but not against ideas.”

In an interview with the Belfast Telegraph, Daniel McArthur said they were launching their appeal in order to protect the rights of Christians in the workplace.

“The big factor for us in going to appeal is that it is not just for ourselves but also for other Christians working in business or, like us, owning a business. Hopefully if we can win the appeal it will give them additional rights and say that you can be a Christian and hold Christian beliefs outside the home or the church without feeling threatened,” said.

St Patrick focus for Reader ‘mini-retreat’ conference

The Lay Training Department of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute has issued details of its first Reader ‘mini-retreat’ conference for 2016.



Facilitated by Rev'd Canon Comerford, Lecturer in Anglicanism, Liturgy and Church History (CITI), Diocesan and Parish Readers are warmly invited to hear Patrick lead our thinking and learning on "The Life of Saint Patrick and his message for us today". Topics to be covered during the mini-retreat will include "Who is Saint Patrick?" "Saint Patrick's writings and message" and "Celtic Spirituality, is there something there...?"

Running from 6.00 pm on 11 March to 3.30 pm on 12 March, this 'mini-retreat' will

provide an informed and challenging look at the life of our Patron Saint and the importance of his message for the Church (and society today). The retreat will also include times of worship, prayer and fellowship for those engaged in Reader ministry from across the Church of Ireland.

To book a place on the Saint Patrick 'mini-retreat' (residential or non-residential places available) please email davidbrown@theologicalinstitute.ie

C of I bishop and Baptist pastor to lead Lent workshops

Contemporary Christianity, an evangelical group, is organising three workshops in Lent which they state will be an opportunity to develop a Personal Rule of Life.

The workshops will be jointly led by Bishop Harold Miller (Bishop of Down and Dromore) and David Dunlop (Pastor of Windsor Baptist Church) on Thursdays 11th February, 7:30 - 9:30pm; 25th February, 7:30 - 9:30pm and 10th March, 7:30 - 9:30pm

The venue is Contemporary Christianity Offices, 21 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HD ([click for map](#))

Each session will have input from both Harold and David and will include space for participants to spend time developing their Personal Rule of Life. By the end of the three evenings each participant will have developed a Personal Rule of Life.

Places are limited, so please register:

- via CC's website - [click here](#)
- by emailing info@contemporarychristianity.net
- Please mark your email RHYTHMS and RULES WORKSHOPS.

Places are limited so reserve your place soonest.

There is no charge for these workshops. Gifts or donations can be made to Contemporary Christianity.

Presbyterian Moderator is on his third and final Presbytery tour

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, began his third and final Presbytery tour on

Sunday when he preached in congregations in Iveagh Presbytery.

The Presbytery stretches from Newmills, near Portadown in County Armagh, to Newcastle on the County Down coast and is one of the Church's 19 Presbyteries, which are local bodies made up of a minister and an elder from each congregation. Iveagh comprises 27 churches in and around the towns and villages of Banbridge, Castlewellan, Rathfriland, Donacloney, Gilford, Loughbrickland, Tandragee and Lawrencetown, four of which are the oldest congregations in the denomination.

Visiting Presbyteries gives the Moderator the opportunity to preach in the local churches, encourage the congregations, as well as seeing for himself what they are doing in the communities in which God has placed them – including a cross-community coffee morning in Castlewellan.

Speaking at the start of the tour, which saw him preach on Sunday in Tandragee and Tullylish, Dr. McNie said, "This is the third and final tour of my year as Moderator, and as with the previous tours, we hope that our visit will encourage those we meet. As we come together with our fellow church members and those working in the



community, we never fail to be inspired and encouraged.

“Personally, I always enjoy visiting and preaching in congregations within our denomination, as well as meeting those individuals who work hard in their local communities,” he said.

Accompanied by his wife Anne, while Dr. McNie’s visit is chiefly pastoral, he will also attend some community projects and visit a number of schools, including Banbridge Academy, and Rathriland High. During these visits he will attend

assemblies, meet staff and participate in a RE class.

During the week he will also attend a Mid Week Meeting in Garvagh Presbyterian Church, meet members of Ballydown congregation and attend a Presbytery Meeting at Scarva Street Presbyterian Church in Banbridge. He will also visit Banbridge Police Station, allowing Dr. McNie the time to offer encouragement and support to the police officers. He will also be briefed on some of the policing issues the local community in the area faces.

With a keen interest in sports activities, Dr. McNie will visit Tollymore Outdoor Centre in Newcastle, before going on to lunch at the Glenada Conference centre with local ministers and their spouses. The afternoon finishes with a visit to Newcastle Lifeboat Station. The tour itself will end on Sunday when Dr. McNie will preach at a joint service in the morning, with members of Leitrim Presbyterian Church joining the congregation in Castlewellan. In the evening Dr. McNie will speak in Donacloney Presbyterian Church.

With 27 churches in the Iveagh Presbytery, covering a wide rural area that takes in parts of County Down and County Armagh, Presbytery

Clerk, Rev. Dr. Ivan Patterson, who is Minister Emeritus of the Newcastle congregation, said that this presents its own challenges, with many ministers serving in two congregations, like Castlewellan and Leitrim. “We trust the visit will demonstrate the caring face of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and be an encouragement to our members in local congregations.”

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Catholic primate calls on state to support traditional marriage

Irish Times

Legislation and constitutional guarantee needed, says Archbishop Eamon Martin...

Meanwhile, **Church of Ireland** Primate Archbishop Richard Clarke has said the recent meeting of Anglican communion primates in Canterbury was “at ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/catholic-primate-calls-on-state-to-support-traditional-marriage-1.2517377>

Wanted: Principal for Northern Ireland school that does not exist

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/wanted-principal-for-northern-ireland-school-that-does-not-exist-34412115.html>

NI students 'among poorest skilled' in developed world countries

BBC News

University students from Northern Ireland have some of the poorest reading, writing and maths skills among countries in the developed world, a report suggests.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35455972>

Gay rights group organises protest at meeting to support Ashers

Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/gay-rights-group-organises-protest-at-meeting-to-support-ashers-1-7190293>

Christian Today

Report that the Archbishop of Canterbury is heading the biggest evangelism project in the UK this millennium.

Every cathedral, church and clergyman and woman is being urged to share their faith and win new converts to Christianity. Archbishops Justin and Sentamu are calling cathedrals and other churches to use the week running up to Pentecost Sunday on May 15 to pray for new followers to Christ.

Yorkshire Press

The Archbishop of York will continue his six-month pilgrimage of prayer, witness and blessing with a visit to the Yorkshire Wolds this week. Archbishop Sentamu will

meet people in and round Driffield from Tuesday until Sunday.

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14243125.Archbishop_s_pilgrimage_reaches_the_Yorkshire_Wolds/?ref=rss

Guard

More than half of British adults have visited a church in the past year and six in 10 say the government should provide grants to help maintain the buildings, according to an opinion poll. The survey, commissioned by the National Churches Trust, found that 84% of those questioned think churches, chapels and meeting houses are important to the country's history and heritage. A similar number said churches play an important role in society by providing a space for community activities, such as playgroups and cultural events. The government has made more than £130m available for repairs to historic churches in the past two years, the trust said.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/31/church-christian-british-adults-visit-more-than-half-government-pay-upkeep>

ITV

The Acting Dean of Durham Cathedral says it will continue to admit visitors free of charge, despite concerns that some cathedrals could be running low on cash. He says a number have no choice but to charge because of the urgency of the situation. Unlike many cathedrals, entry to Durham's has always been free of charge, although it does ask for a voluntary donation.

<http://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2016-01-31/durham-cathedral-will-continue-to-admit-for-free-despite-uk-cathedral-cash-concerns/>

Metro

Further reports on a YouGov poll, commissioned by General Synod member Jayne Ozanne, on attitudes to same-sex marriage saying more Anglicans are now in favour than oppose it. A Church of England spokesperson said: "The poll suggests an inconclusive breadth of view with less than half of Anglicans in England expressing support, a third opposed and a fifth uncertain. The process of shared conversations is continuing within the church, with general synod expected to be part of the conversation process in the summer. The Church of England is part of global Anglican communion which is mutually accountable for its teaching on marriage and other matters."

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/01/31/more-anglicans-back-gay-marriage-than-oppose-it-5653981/>

Times

Report that the archbishop of Boston has welcomed the release of *Spotlight*, which shows how reporters at *The Boston Globe* exposed widespread abuse by paedophile priests in the Boston archdiocese in 2002, leading to a wider investigation across America. Cardinal Seán O'Malley, who was instrumental in overseeing the introduction of strict child protection measures in the Dublin diocese, said that the events which the film depicted were vital in bringing an end to secrecy in the wider church.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/irishnews/article4679323.ece>

BBC

Hundreds of people have attended an annual memorial service for more than 6,000 Hull trawlermen lost at sea.

The 27th annual service was held on the Saint Andrews Quay retail park, by the Humber. The Bishop of Hull, Alison White, blessed several wreaths in memory of the lost men.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-35455061>

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