

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Elmwood by night**

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## Image of the day

### Elmwood by night

The former Elmwood Presbyterian Church and the newly rebuilt and refurbished Student Centre at the Queens University, Belfast. Photo courtesy of QUB.

## People and places

### 12th century Lismore Crozier on display at enthronement

Bishop Wilkinson of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory knocks on the west door of St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, at the start of his service of enthronement.



The Bishop expressed thanks to the National Museum of Ireland for allowing the replica of the 12th century Lismore Crozier to be on display at the service.







## PSNI's Big Coffee Breaks supports Hospice

A massive thank you to Police Service of Northern Ireland who recently hosted Big Coffee Breaks in various stations across Northern Ireland in support of Hospice and raised an amazing £3,760.27!

## Newman Church seeks wedding photos for St Valentine's Day

**Newman University Church has put out a call to men and women whose weddings were celebrated there to send in photos from the ceremony.**

The historic church started the project to collect wedding photos from those who married there to be displayed for St Valentine's Day, February 14.



January 17, 2023

“It is heart-warming to see generations of couples come together on such an important and sacred day” said a spokeswoman.



## Presiding Bishop visits Diocese of Los Angeles

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry has begun his 2023 travel.

This weekend he visited the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. clergy of the diocese gathered for a meeting with Bishop Michael who. Also preached at a service of ordination.



## News reports

### Clergy well-being worsening since 2019, study reveals

**The Church of England has released a new report on the well-being of its clergy.**

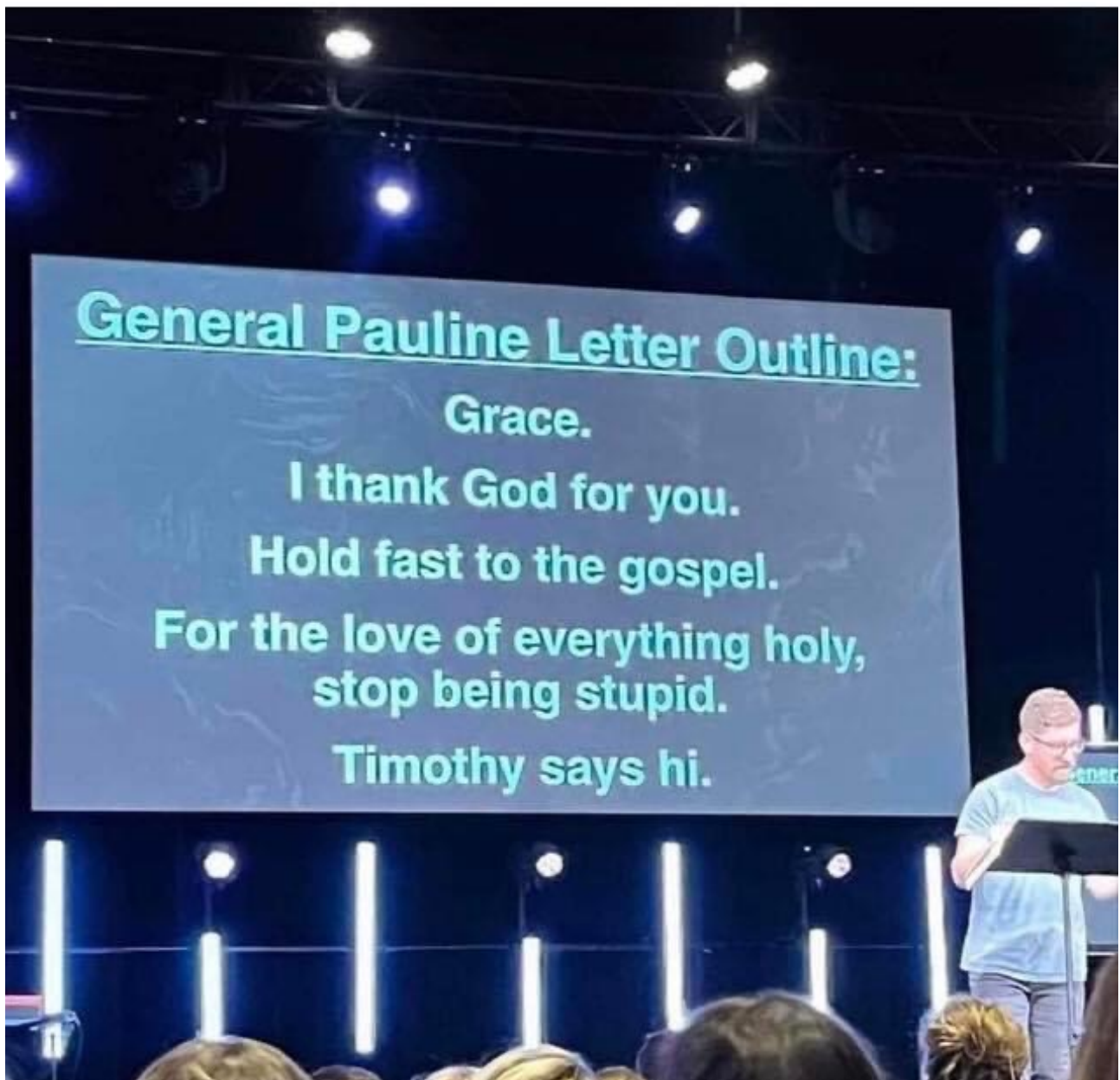
The report found the well-being of the clergy has declined since 2019, with lockdowns aggravating pre-existing pressures and taking a toll on the physical and emotional well-being of church leaders.



January 17, 2023

The report is part of the Living Ministry research, a more comprehensive study first launched in 2017 which aims to gather evidence about what factors “enable ministers to flourish in ministry”.

It analyses four cohorts of clergy: those ordained in 2006, 2011, 2015 and 2016. So far, the ministry has released three waves of quantitative and qualitative research as well as stand-alone studies in specific areas.



The latest report said the pandemic had “shed light on existing issues” rather than “creating new ones”.

“In previous waves of research, clergy also spoke of tiredness and isolation, along with concerns about declining congregations, diocesan instability and the future of the Church of England. All these were intensified in the latest wave,” the report reads.

Although clergy experiences of the pandemic were varied, many found the third winter lockdown “the hardest” due to “cumulative exhaustion and responsibility for decisions regarding public safety”.

Consequently, they found the period of reopening “the most challenging” because of “cumulative tiredness, difficulties managing hybrid services and negotiating decisions over safety, withdrawal of congregational participation, and increased uncertainties within the church and wider society”.

“I think I'm probably getting more mentally tired now than I was during lockdown,” one cleric told the study. “Although we were very busy, you weren't trying to juggle two lots of things. And that's what's happening, it's just there's a lot more. Rather than paring down, things have layered up, and expectation.”

Dr Liz Graveling, author of the report, said:, “I am deeply grateful to all the people who continue to share the joys and trials of ordained ministry to help the church learn how best to care for its clergy.



“Supportive frameworks of autonomy and accountability are crucial, and the stories contained within this report illuminate how these two things can be held together in the context of covenantal relationships.”

## **Pope announces Ecumenical Prayer Vigil for Synod**

**Pope Francis announces an Ecumenical Prayer Vigil, to be held in September prior to the Synod of Bishops, so as to entrust the bishops' work to the Lord.**

Addressing the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis looked ahead to the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which takes place each year from 18 to 25 January.

This year's theme, he noted, is taken from the prophet Isaiah: "Do good, seek justice" (1:17). In light of this, Pope Francis asked that we each give thanks to the Lord "who faithfully and patiently guides His people towards full communion, and let us ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and sustain us with His gifts".

Christian unity and synodal conversion are linked

Pope Francis went on to note that the path to Christian unity and the Church's synodal conversion are linked. For this reason, he announced an Ecumenical Prayer Vigil, set to take place in St Peter's Square on Saturday 30 September.

At the Vigil, he explained, "we will entrust to God the work of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops". The Pope added that for the young people who will come to the Vigil there will be a special programme throughout that weekend, organised by the Taizé Community.

"As of now", the Pope concluded, "I invite brothers and sisters of all Christian denominations to participate in this gathering of the People of God".

## In the media

### Ancient 'Geneva Bible' sells for £20,000 in East Belfast

**The Bible is the most cherished book for many millions of Christians worldwide and it was not surprising that there was considerable interest in a 400-year version put on sale at an East Belfast auction house this week.**

*Billy Kennedy writes in The News Letter*

The cherished copy of the Geneva Bible, printed in 1615, was taken to America in 1620 by aristocratic English migrant Elizabeth Poole and, at the Bloomfield auction, it went for an impressive £20,000.

Retired Free Presbyterian minister the Rev David McIlveen was among an evangelical church group from various Protestant denominations who made the purchase and,



while the Bible sold for double its valuation, Mr McIlveen said he did not think about it in monetary terms.

“I see it as a vision in terms of reaching out to school children and also to libraries as well. This historic Bible will be used to reach out and reignite interest in holy scriptures” said Mr McIlveen.

“Something like this – I would pray – could reactivate that interest in the scriptures. I see it not only an artefact, but as a message that is so relevant for this modern generation” he added.

The Geneva Bible, first published in 1560, inspired by the evangelical mission of the period by Protestant Reformers John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer and John Knox, and was the first mechanically printed, mass-produced Bible available to the public.

The East Belfast auctioned version sold as part of a private collection from a Northern Ireland gentleman’s residence and it is understood there was interest by up to 10 prospective buyers, including several from the United States.

The original owner Elizabeth Poole travelled with her brother on the ‘Mayflower’ ship to the Plymouth colony in America.

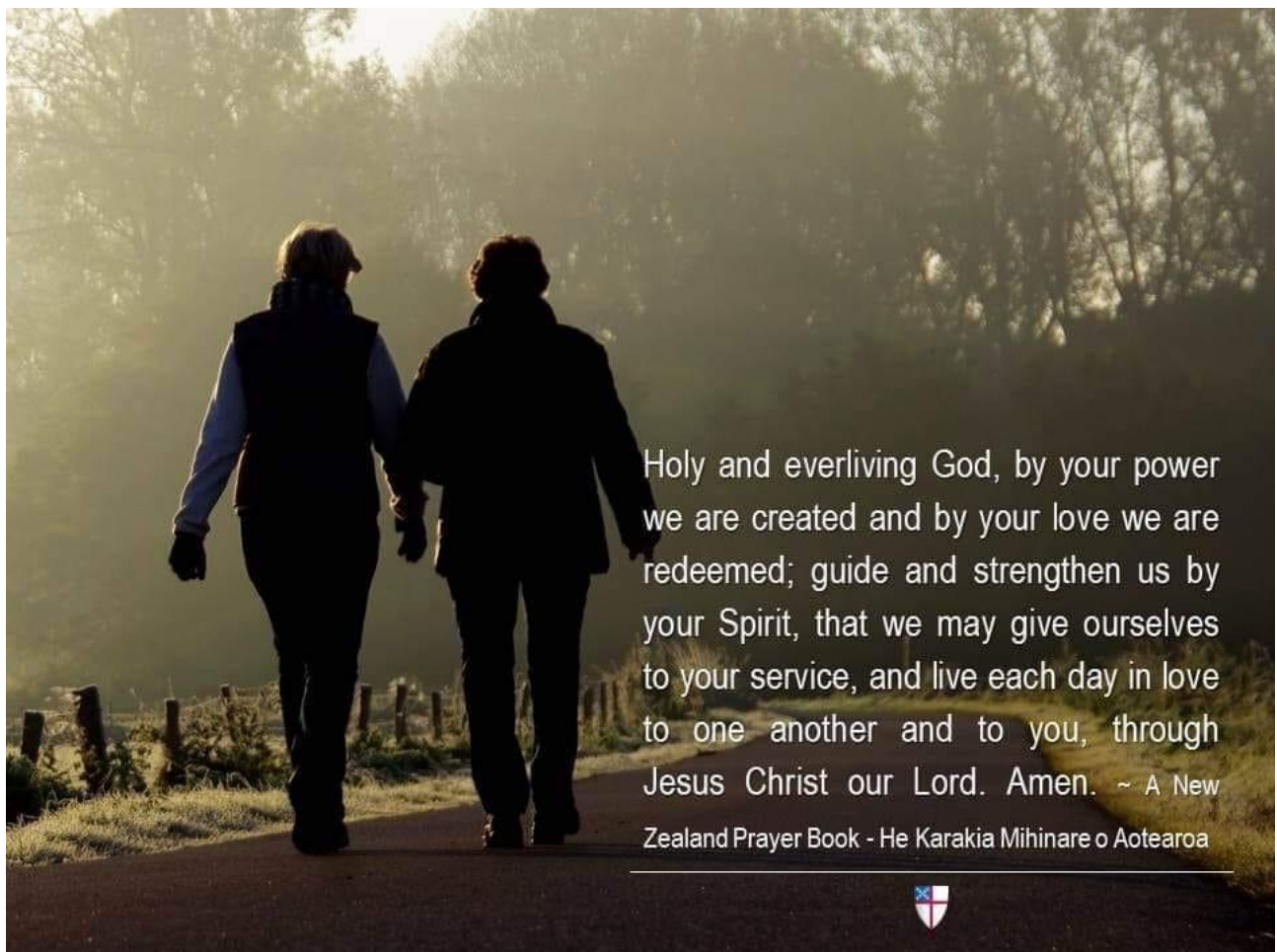
Originally from Devon, she went on to help with other Plymouth migrants in founding the town of Taunton in Massachusetts and she is believed to be the first woman to help establish a settlement in the 17th century American colonies.

An unsuccessful offer from the library in Taunton, Massachusetts was made at this week's auction..

The copy was printed by Robert Baker, printer to Queen Elizabeth I and Kings James I and VI.

It was presented to Elizabeth's father, Sir William Poole, by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, in recognition of the Poole family's services to the church and the poor of Devon.

When Elizabeth Poole died, the Bible was returned to her family in Devon and it remained in the possession of the Poole-Carew family until the mid-20th century when it was sold to a collector from Northern Ireland in the 1990s.





Mr McIlveen, a close associate of late Free Presbyterian moderator the Rev Dr Ian Paisley, said he was sure Dr Paisley would have recognised the significance of the Bible's sale.

"If he had been alive today he would have been among the first to make an offer for this Bible."

He confirmed a number of people from various Protestant denominations in Northern Ireland had generously come together to pay for the Bible.

## **'You walked with our foreparents': Mass marks Presentation Sisters departure from Drogheda**

**Service acts as farewell to order 210 years after it first arrived in Co Louth town**

*Patsy McGarry is Religious Affairs Correspondent of The Irish Times*

The departure of the Presentation Sisters from Drogheda Co Louth after 210 years was marked on Sunday by a special Mass celebrated by Catholic Primate Archbishop Eamon Martin at St Peter's parish Church in the town.

It was farewell to the four remaining Presentation nuns, Sr Agnes Byrne, Sr Carmel Curran, Sr Colette McCloskey, and Sr Rose Wright, of the departing community at Greenhills in the town.

“The sisters came to these parts 210 years ago. Their early presence in Fair Street, Duke Street and eventually at Greenhills has left a real mark. It is sad that the last community of sisters is now moving on, but the Presentation sisters will forever be remembered as amazing pointers to active faith, hope and love at work among us,” said Archbishop Martin.

“For some time now the sisters have known that they would be finishing up their mission here, but they have worked to ensure that the example of their presence will remain. It now falls to the lay women and men, girls and boys of Drogheda to keep alive the ethos of compassionate service which Nano Nagle and the Presentation sisters championed,” he said.

He added that “the Presentation sisters are a missionary congregation and their priorities have now shifted to other parts of the world where their charism is needed most.”

In a tribute to the Sisters, past pupil Vera Moonan recalled how “for over 200 years you have served us with distinction, always generously, never sparing yourselves. You walked with our foreparents during the time of the Famine, you were with us at the turbulent time of Partition and the Civil War. You were ever by our side, prayerfully and in action, both Mary and Martha to us.”

Hundreds of Presentation Sisters had “passed through Drogheda since 1813, both in Fair St and Greenhills. There are just four left and now sadly, Sisters Agnes, Carmel, Colette and Rose, you must leave us. The four of you have



brought so much to the women and girls of Drogheda,” she said.

They had taught in St Philomena’s, Presentation Primary, and Our Lady’s College, Greenhills, “formed us in the Faith and have been chaplains in our schools. You have excelled in hospitality,” she said. The sisters had worked “with the Samaritans, Drogheda Youth Development, Boomerang, Drogheda Women’s and Children’s Refuge, Drogheda community development, homeschool liaison, healing and peace.”

They had worked with the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the adult faith development and spirituality commissions, and on the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace.

“All Leinster women, you have come from this county of Louth, from Wexford, Offaly, and Wicklow,” she said. “The good deeds you have done do not now go with you, but rather continue to yield a wonderful harvest to the glory of God, not least through Presentation Primary and Our Lady’s College which continue to grow and to thrive,” she said.

### **BBC News: Milton Keynes vicar's world fell apart when her son took his own life**

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-63495987>]

### **BBC News: Cloughoge: Priest 'shocked to the core' after Sacred Heart church vandalised**

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-64277509>]

# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

## Legacy of St Brigid - Immersive hands-on ancient Irish Cultural Heritage experience

**In Downpatrick - Relax and enjoy watching a saint Brigid Cross making demonstration. Have a go at making your very own Saint Brigid's Cross View a display of the different styles of crosses made in Ireland and learn about other traditions associated with the saint.**

Join the experience in the historic town of Downpatrick, in the Saint Patrick Centre. The grave of saints Brigid, Patrick and Colmcille( Columba) is nearby on Cathedral Hill.

Hear the enthralling story of Saint Brigid's life and legacy as told by Brigid Watson and visit the saint's grave in the grounds of Down Cathedral.

Learn about her links with Saint Patrick and enjoy a short film about Patrick. Light refreshments are served on arrival.

Brigid Watson is a local expert tour guide and environmentalist with a passion for Christian heritage and the fascinating life stories of people. In the ancient town of Downpatrick, home to the burial place of Saint Brigid at Down Cathedral, Brigid shares the story of the fascinating

life of this Irish woman who is revered across Ireland and beyond. On arrival in the Saint Patrick Centre you will be offered light refreshments. You will have an opportunity to explore an excellent display about Saint Brigid, the Goddess Brigid and the ancient traditions associated with Saint Brigid.

Brigid shares many stories about Saint Brigid, born in the 5th century, signifying her kindness and empathy for the marginalised. One of the ancient traditions still widely practised in Ireland today is the making of the Saint Brigid's Cross. Brigid gives a demonstration of how to make a Saint Brigid's Cross and explains the beliefs that people hold about the cross. Everyone is then invited to make their own cross using the materials provided. Other customs associated with Saint Brigid are shared.

Book Now

[\[https://sustainablejourneysireland.com/product/legacy-of-saint-brigid/\]](https://sustainablejourneysireland.com/product/legacy-of-saint-brigid/)

## MU Metamorphosis course

**It's not too late to sign up for the MU Metamorphosis course! "This 8-session course will help equip you with new ideas, tools, and inspiration as we work positively to bring hope in these challenging times."**

Metamorphosis has been described as "Exciting and Inspirational", "Challenging", "Confidence Boosting", "Hopeful", "Unexpected as to where God will take us", "A Treasure Trove" and "Expanding thoughts and actions".



**Mothers' UNION**



# **Metamorphosis**

Metamorphosis is for anyone who wants  
to work for change in their MU, church  
and community!

**Spaces available**

Metamorphosis equips people with the inspiration, confidence and skills to work for transformation in their local churches and communities across the UK and Ireland. It originates from over 15 years of experience across our Mothers' Union movement in bringing churches and communities together to work for transformation, and it has been contextualised for use in the UK and Ireland.

It starts with getting together a group of people who want to work for change and inviting them to be part of our Metamorphosis online learning course, or as a small group, to work through our six-session Bitesize resource. You can find the booklet [here](#) to purchase.

Prayer and Bible Study that stimulate all our senses are at the heart of Metamorphosis, and our materials include interactive learning games and exercises, discussion questions, easy to use tools to help us to understand and engage with others, and case studies. Participating in Metamorphosis is guaranteed to change you and those around you.

The Metamorphosis course runs over 8 sessions - Click [here](#) for the flyer. Metamorphosis Bitesize includes all you need to run a group in your branch or small group. However, if you would like to meet with others who are planning using bitesize, to share learning and to work through the materials with others, join our sessions on zoom on the second Tuesday of every month at 2 p.m. Please contact [development@mothersunion.org](mailto:development@mothersunion.org) for further details or to sign up for the course that starts on 27th January 2023.

For more details and to sign up, click here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/metamorphosis>

## Poem for today

### Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind by William Shakespeare

Blow, blow, thou winter wind.  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

January 17, 2023

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.  
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
That dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remember'd not.  
Heigh-ho! Sing  
*As You Like It (Act II, Scene 7)*

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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