

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – King's Choristers

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King's Choristers return

A new term begins at King's College, Cambridge. The choristers are back to regular singing in Chapel. Further information on this term's concerts and services available to view/download as a booklet here:

<https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/chapel/attending-chapel-services>

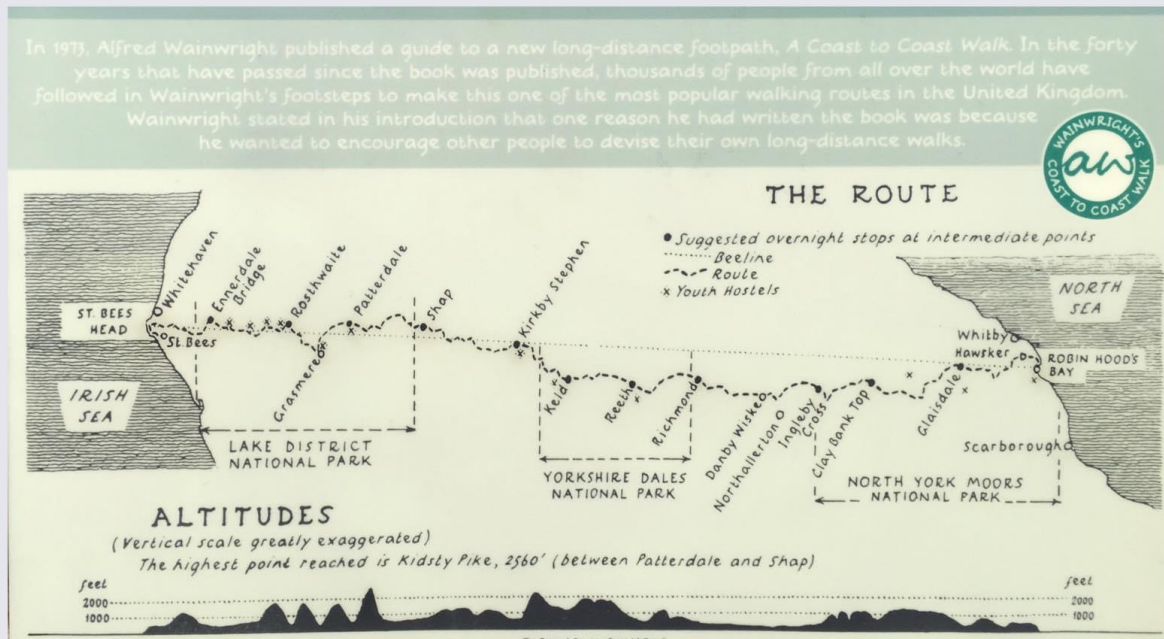
People and places

Walking Wainwright's Coast to Coast for church building fund

Rev Rosie and Ronnie Diffin plan to walk the Alfred Wainwright's Coast to Coast: 200 Miles across Rural England 8th-20th August 2023.

All sponsorship raised will go to Kilcronaghan Church Building Fund.

Wainwright's Coast to Coast is a long-distance, unofficial trail in Britain that goes from the Irish Sea to the North Sea via three national parks. The scenery varies dramatically from day to day, covering about 52,000 feet of elevation change through the walk.



Location: St. Bees to Robin Hood's Bay (54.4302882, -0.5322307), England.

Terrain: Moderate/hard. Some fairly steep climbs, many exposed sections, and the joys of British weather to contend with.



Streetreach 2023 applications are live online

Young people in Connor Diocese can now sign up for Streetreach 2023 with applications live online.

Streetreach is the local, missional experience for young people in the diocese, and is a fantastic opportunity to serve and get to know others!

Streetreach 2023 will run from Tuesday July 4 until Friday July 7, in partnership with the Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane & Kildollagh, the Grouped Parishes of Ballintoy & Dunseverick with Rathlin Island and St Patrick's Coleraine & St Andrew's Ballysally.

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Residential Applications are open for young people who have completed Fourth Year / Year 11. The cost for a full residential stay is £60. Anyone who can only attend part time, should contact Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie for costing. Participants will stay at the White Park Bay Youth Hostel.

Non-Residential Applications are open for young people who have completed First Year / Year 8. For attending each day the cost is £10.

All over 18s are invited to apply to serve as a Team Leader or as a participant, subject to Access NI checks.

Sign up - link at

<https://connor.anglican.org/2023/01/23/applications-for-connor-streetreach-now-open/>



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For further information, please contact Christina on christinabaillie@connordiocese.org



Jewish and Christian students at Lambeth Palace

Archbishop Welby commented - “It was good to speak with Jewish and Christian students at Lambeth Palace Library facilitated by Council of Christians and Jews - CCJ

“It was inspiring to hear of their resilient and confident faith despite obvious challenges, and the initiatives for shared learning across all communities.”

Church News Ireland

News reports



Fix social care crisis, say archbishops

Report commissioned by church leaders calls for tax rises to fund tackling issues within embattled sector

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York yesterday called for tax rises to help fix the “unethical” social care crisis in a landmark report.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, and the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev Stephen Cottrell,

commissioned their own staff to look into the sector last year.

In a report published yesterday they have issued a series of proposals, including for taxes to fix the social care crisis in order to avoid the “drag on the economy”. They also warned that a failure to tackle issues within the embattled sector would amount to “collective sin”.

The Church of England leaders also recommended that social care be “a universal entitlement”, for means-testing to be scrapped and the introduction of a “social care covenant”, akin to an NHS Constitution or Wigan Deal, because government alone lacks the “wider vision” to fix the crisis.

After criticising the Government’s record on social care last year, the archbishops commissioned their own bishops, clergy and staff to look at the sector in which “the national debate is often narrowly focused, short-term in outlook, and lacking in wider vision”.

The report, entitled, Care and Support Reimagined: a National Care Covenant for England, warns that a failure to tackle the issues facing the sector, including rising costs, longer waiting times, racial and disability inequalities and staff recruitment would amount to “inaction as a collective sin”. The Archbishop of Canterbury said: “This report gives me hope that we can rise to the challenge of fixing our broken social care system.”

The Archbishop of York added that it “outlines a new vision for our society where we learn to be inter-dependent with one another, where I thrive because you do”.

On Monday protesters gathered outside Lambeth Palace to demand an end to discrimination against LGBT people in the Church of England, ahead of a reception for 100 MPs and peers attending an annual parliamentary reception.

It comes after the church rejected calls to allow clergy to conduct same-sex marriage, proposing instead that couples married in a civil ceremony could have their union blessed.

The social care report comes just days after census data revealed five million people – including children as young as five – provide unpaid care to people with long-term health conditions or problems related to old age.

A further 1.5 million people provide more than 50 hours a week of unpaid care as the embattled sector struggles with increasing needs and demands.

Staff recruitment and retention in the sector has also been exacerbated by the pandemic.

There are 165,000 vacancies across the social care sector in England, and average pay for careers is just £9.50 an hour.

In April 2021 the archbishops tasked their Commission on Reimagining Care to develop “a radical and inspiring” vision for how to tackle problems within the sector, drawing on Christian theology.

Llandaff looks north to find its next bishop

The Electoral College of the Church in Wales has chosen the Rt Revd Mary Stallard, Assistant Bishop in the diocese of Bangor, to be the next Bishop of Llandaff.

Bishop Stallard's appointment was announced on Thursday afternoon. She succeeds the Rt Revd June Osborne, who retired at the end of last year. Bishop Stallard was one of the first women to be ordained in the Church in Wales, in 1997.

The diocese of Llandaff is the largest by population in the Church in Wales, home to about half the population of the country. It was seeking "a bishop with the parish priest's heart".

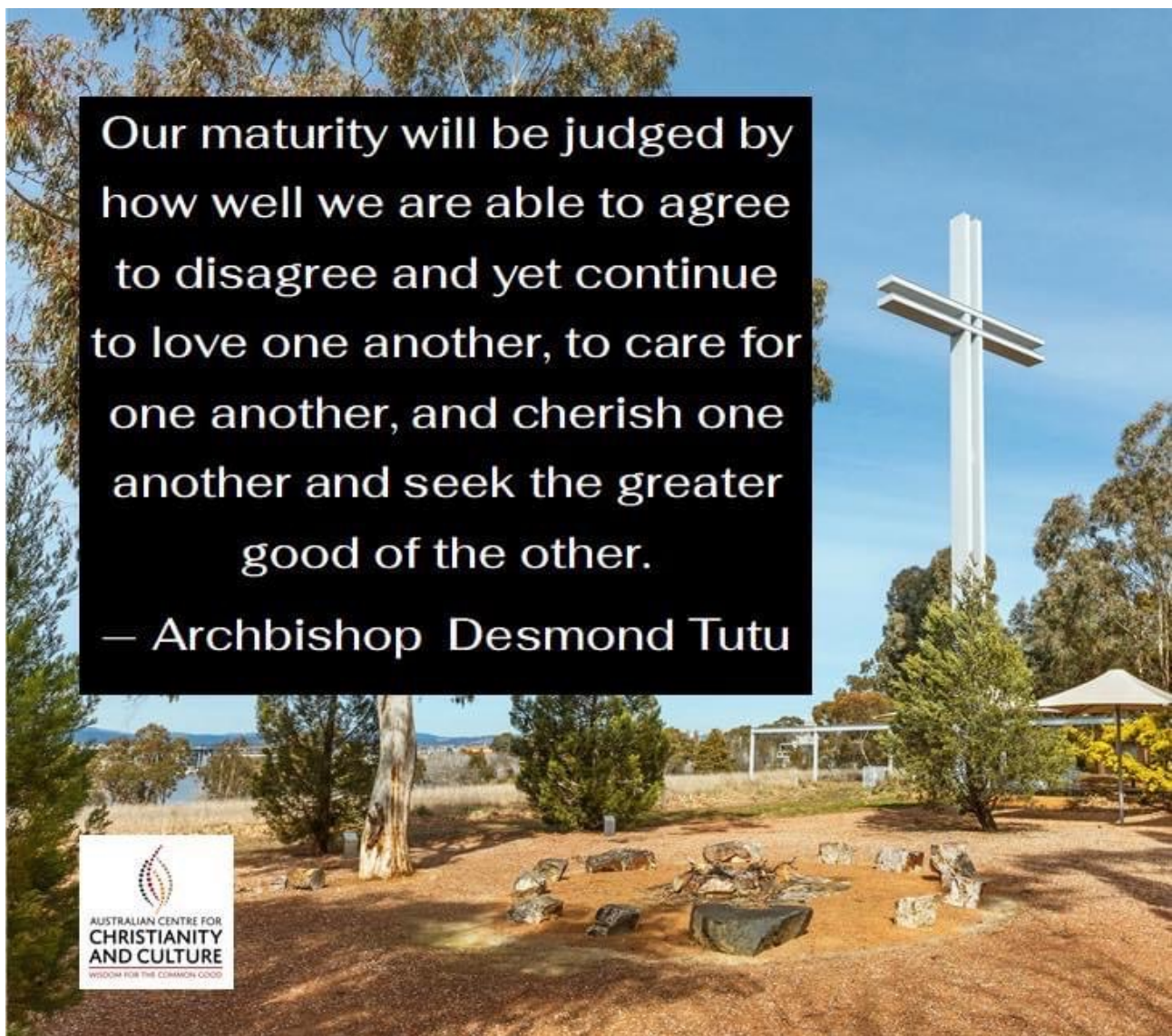
Bishop Stallard obtained the two-thirds majority vote needed on the second day of a two-day meeting of the Electoral College in Llandaff Cathedral, carried out behind ceremonially closed doors.

The college comprised the bishops; six clergy and six lay people elected from Llandaff; and three clergy and lay people elected from each of the other dioceses. The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd Andrew John, described them to Church Times last week as "transparently elected, properly scrutinised, informed people who represent a wide constituency".

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Archbishop John said of the appointment on Thursday:
“Bishop Mary has served the diocese of Bangor with enormous energy, faithfulness, and joy. It is a huge privilege for us now to be able to pass her to the diocese of Llandaff, where we know she will bring all of the gifts she has shown us. We are so delighted for her.”

Bishop Stallard spoke of the privilege of receiving “this new call. . . I will do my very best to live up to faithfully.”



'The Church is not in decline,' says missiologist

Widespread belief in the resurrection of Jesus is an opportunity for the Church, a missiologist has said.

Findings from the Talking Jesus Report published last year revealed that 45 per cent of the UK population believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and according to the people behind the report, that statistic should be encouraging news for churches as it can serve as a stepping stone for evangelism and conversations about faith within the wider community.

Dr Rachel Jordon-Wolf, Executive Director of HOPE Together, told church leaders gathered for The Briefing in London on Thursday that the resurrection is "key" and "a lot of people have some level of belief in it and we have to help them with that".

The insightful Talking Jesus research project was initiated in 2015 and is the joint initiative of HOPE Together, Christian Vision, Alpha, Kingsgate, Luis Palau and the Evangelical Alliance. The aim of the project is to analyse the nation's views on Jesus, Christians and evangelism, and the findings for the report are drawn from surveys spanning four thousand adults across the UK.

The 2022 report found that 6 per cent of Christians are "active" and "part of a worshipping community", a figure that has been stable since 2015 and, according to Dr Jordan-

Wolf, is proof that "the Church is not in decline" and that "there is not a missing generation in the Church".

Results from the Talking Jesus Report have made an impact in churches and their strategies for evangelism and missions.

There is now a Talking Jesus Course to equip people with greater confidence to share Jesus and an 'evangelism healthcheck' for churches to self-audit their members and communities so that they can plan ways to grow stronger in their personal and corporate evangelism and witness.

Rachael Heffer, head of mission at the Evangelical Alliance, encouraged churches to "befriend non-Christians in new spaces and places" and "be brave and intentional to share nuggets of faith in their everyday lives and places they inhabit".

And churchgoers are being prompted not just to talk about church or God, but to use the name of Jesus in their conversations.

"When we share Jesus together, we are modelling what it is for the Church to be one body," said Andy Frost, Director of Share Jesus International. He continued: "When people see the Church working as it should do it's attractive."

According to Heffer, non-Christians have been seeking hope in the midst of Covid, political instability, and the cost of living crisis. And church leaders, she said, are being "further awakened" to the fact that people are asking "big questions

of life and purpose" and are "made more aware of their own mortality".

According to Dr Jordan-Wolf, 10 per cent of practising Christians in the UK are to be found in London. She called on churches in the capital to make the most of that.

"Ten per cent of any population is enough to change the culture," she said.

"We need to remember we are a culture-shaping movement. We have more openness than anywhere else in the country.

"We have got to get our act together to do this together. If we do this together we can make an enormous difference."

YouVersion Bible app hires former Facebook exec to fuel growth

On Sunday 15 January, more than 12 million people turned on their smartphones to open up the Good Book. It was the highest ever daily engagement in the nearly 15-year history of the YouVersion Bible app.

If Bobby Gruenewald, the Oklahoma-based pastor who has overseen the free Bible app since the beginning, has his way, that number will soon become routine.

"That's been an aggressive goal, but that's the trajectory that we're mapping towards," said Gruenewald, innovations pastor at Life.Church, one of the nation's largest congregations.

Gruenewald first thought of the idea of an online Bible while in a security line at Chicago's airport in 2006. YouVersion began as a website, then transitioned to smartphones when the app store for the iPhone launched in July 2008.

The app hit 500 million downloads in 2021. In a video conference call on Thursday, Gruenewald said he hopes to pass 1 billion downloads in the next five years. To help continue the app's growth, Gruenewald said YouVersion recently added some new leadership staff, including Nona Jones, who until recently was an executive at Meta, where she had been head of global faith partnerships at Facebook.

Jones, whose husband is a pastor, has served as a teaching partner for YouVersion and has authored several books on faith.

Some of the most recent growth for YouVersion, which Gruenewald said offers translations in 1,900 languages, has been in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. In December, Life.Church launched a new, low-data version of the app in several African countries. The new version is easier to use offline and takes up less space, making it better for low-capacity devices. YouVersion has also seen growth in Europe, which had not been a growth area in the past.

Hiring Jones and two other leaders from Fortune 500 companies is part of the larger plan to grow YouVersion. Currently, 165 people work on the app, said Gruenewald, and there are plans to double the team in the next few years. About 1,000 volunteers also help with the app, which

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offers 27,500 Bible reading plans in more than 80 languages, along with videos, a popular verse of the day and other functions.

Sundays remain the highest-use day of the week, often around the hours when church services are normally held. Usage remains high at the beginning of the week, then tends to drop off by Friday and Saturday. Historically, there's usually been a spike in the month of January, often fueled by New Year's resolutions.

Gruenewald said he feels like YouVersion—which is a ministry of the church and supported by donors and church funds—is just getting started and plans to invest heavily so it can continue to grow.

"There's a lot of people that we want to be able to reach with the Bible," he said.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Download a free sample PDF of *Is Easter Unbelievable?* by Rebecca McLaughlin

This evangelistic book is great to give away at Easter outreach services, so you can purchase 100 copies for only £1 each. Learn more and download your free PDF: www.thegoodbook.co.uk/is-easter-free-pdf



Mothers Union 2023 Annual Gathering tickets

Tickets for the 2023 Annual Gathering are now on sale! You can find all the information here:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023>

Word for Today

Many people use Word for Today, the daily reflection from UCB offering practical Bible insights to help in everyday life.

UCB have an additional free resource available online called "Facing your giants" and this consists of a series of 6 eBooks that can be downloaded to your phone or computer. Each one takes a different "giant" - fear, grief & loss, work & unemployment, money, business, addiction.
<https://www.ucb.co.uk/facingyourgiants>

Each one offers practical pointers and insights from the Bible around each topic. The Bible is not just an ancient book but one that is always up to date and relevant to our lives.

Perspective

The Republic of Ireland's key role in the Troubles must be highlighted if we are to understand legacy -

A letter from Tom Elliott MLA

There is a great deal of frustration with regard to legacy and how we can best move forward.

What we must not do is resurrect the Stormont House Agreement (SHA). The Ulster Unionist Party was the only one of the five major parties to reject the legacy proposals contained within the SHA because we could see from the outset that they contained major flaws.

Firstly the Stormont House Agreement proposed a parallel police force in the form of the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU) that would inevitably focus on the army and police due to the availability of accurate historical records, which obviously do not exist for terror gangs. Secondly it proposed a charge of ‘non-criminal police misconduct’ clearly indicating the target group.

It was also proposed that the HIU would only look at some – not all – deaths. It is little short of a scandal that throughout this process the injured have been all but ignored, and attempted murder treated as being of little consequence. This in effect has allowed the terrorists a get out of jail free card even though they would have been responsible for the injury of over 35,000 UK citizens. Those who oppose the government’s current proposals because of the Amnesty, should also oppose the Stormont House Agreement because of the Amnesty contained within it.

What we need is an approach to legacy which is grounded in human rights. This will place the focus and the blame where they truly belong. I accept that on occasions the State and those who acted for it – the police and the army – may have overstepped the mark and should be held accountable. We must never forget that terrorists – loyalist and republican – were responsible for 90 per cent of Troubles related deaths.

Every single action by the terror gangs was illegal and a breach of an individual’s human rights. Every killing, every bomb attack, every so-called punishment shooting or beating was carried out without any lawful authority or justification. Literally thousands of human rights abuses

which too many people seem to want to be conveniently forgotten about in a bid to rewrite history and place the blame on the State, the Police and the Army.

Furthermore, if there is ever to be a serious examination of the Troubles and the legacy they have left, then there needs to be an honest assessment and acknowledgement of the role played by the Republic of Ireland.

Its territory was used by the IRA to import arms, store weapons, mount hundreds of cross border attacks, coordinate ethnic cleansing of minority Protestant communities in the border area, and act as a safe haven for IRA terrorists on the run who were able to live freely in the Republic and the overwhelming difficulties the UK repeatedly faced in trying to extradite terrorist suspects from the Republic.

Successive Dublin Governments have shown little appetite to seriously address these issues. The reality is that the Republic played a central role in the Troubles and this needs to be both highlighted and acknowledged if we are to have a full understanding of what really happened during those dark times.

Tom Elliott is an Ulster Unionist MLA

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Poem for today

January by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

For January I give you vests of skins,
And mighty fires in hall, and torches lit;
Chambers and happy beds with all things fit;
Smooth silken sheets, rough furry counterpanes;
And sweetmeats baked; and one that deftly spins
Warm arras; and Douay cloth, and store of it;
And on this merry manner still to twit
The wind, when most his mastery the wind wins.
Or issuing forth at seasons in the day,
Ye'll fling soft handfuls of the fair white snow
Among the damsels standing round, in play:
And when you all are tired and all aglow,
Indoors again the court shall hold its sway,
And the free Fellowship continue so.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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