

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Famine remembrance

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Famine remembrance

Kindred Spirits is a large stainless steel outdoor sculpture in Bailick Park in Midleton, County Cork.

The shape of the feathers is intended to represent a bowl of food. This beautiful sculpture was built by the Irish people to honour the American Choctaw Indian tribe. They were grateful because in 1847 the Choctaw people sent money to Ireland when they learned that Irish people were starving due to the potato famine.

The Choctaw themselves were living in hardship and poverty, having recently endured the Trail of Tears.

History Reclaimed, a group of so-called 'anti-woke scholars', has criticised an episode on BBC's Digging for Britain that




Brothers in Arms
The Priest & the taxi-driver

Gardiner Street Parish
Church of St Francis Xavier

Join Fr Brendan McManus SJ & Jimmy Fullam sharing the story of their Camino experience:

- walking through a heatwave,
- coping with injury,
- reflecting on life and faith.

John Sullivan Room,
Gardiner Street Church, Dublin 1
Saturday 4th February 2023
11am-12.30pm
Cost: €10



focused on famine relief works. See 'In the media' in this issue of CNI. Ronan McGreevy writes in The Irish Times

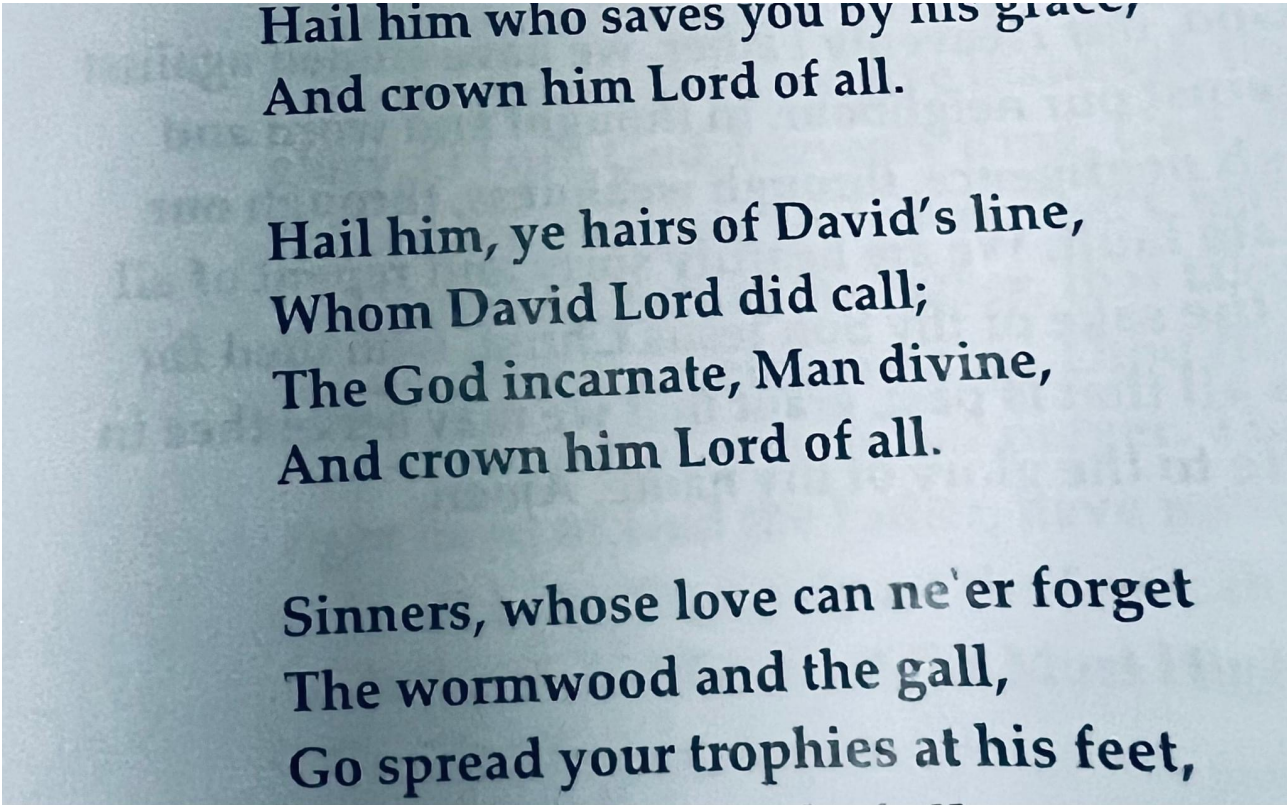
News reports

Malahide Choir retirees with 40 years' service each

For over 30 years, the choir has led worship at services in Malahide under the direction of choirmaster Rodney Baldwin.

In times past, they undertook an annual choir tour and sang the services in several English and Irish cathedrals.

After almost 40 years' service each, four choir members



Hail him who saves you by his grace,
And crown him Lord of all.

Hail him, ye heirs of David's line,
Whom David Lord did call;
The God incarnate, Man divine,
And crown him Lord of all.

Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at his feet,

Church typos

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have decided to hang up their gowns namely Olive Haynes, Andrea Thompson, Isobel Morris and Sylvia Leeson. Words alone could not adequately thank these ladies for the very significant and faithful contribution they have made to the worship life of St Andrew's Church.

“There will be an opportunity in the new year to pay tribute to them properly but meanwhile it is appropriate that we record our very sincere thanks”, said a parish spokesperson..

Psalms and Hymns at Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland

“Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs” a talk by the Rev S.W. Moore.

Venue - Cregagh Presbyterian Church. Thursday, 2nd February 2023 - 8.00pm

“In 1840, the unaccompanied 150 Psalms of the Scottish Metrical Psalter were the lawful form of praise but throughout 19th century and into the 20th century, a range of musical features have been accommodated, e.g., using instruments rather than voices and lyrics composed rather than scripturally 'inspired'. Each new innovation brought it disunity, dissension, and diversity. We explore these themes together”.

102-104 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT6 9ER.
Web site - [<https://cregaghpresbyterian.org/>]



A scouting stalwart has Gone Home

Stanley Philpott passed away peacefully last week aged 93.

Stanley was a former President of West Belfast District Scout Council and was a serving Hon. Vice President. To mark his long and dedicated service, The Chief Scout awarded Stanley the Silver Acorn, which he wore proudly, when he and Mrs Philpott

travelled to Windsor Castle in 2010.

Stanley was the last of the 48th 'Old Boys'. He had a connection to the Group, going back to it's Romford Street days. It was fitting that given his long established connection to the Group that Stanley should succeed the late Edith Carlisle as Group Scout Leader, a position he held until his retirement in 2010.

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Stanley and his late wife, Betty were always of great support and encouragement to younger leaders in the Group. A prominent local businessman and a stalwart member of St. Michael's Parish Church, Stanley moved to east Antrim some years ago, to be closer to his family.

Betty Philpott served as President of the Mothers' Union in Connor Diocese.

Based on a tribute by William Humphrey MBE, the District President.

There will be a short celebration of his life at Roselawn crematorium on Wednesday 18th January at 10am. If desired please make a donation to your local food bank in lieu of flowers

More honours in Derry Diocese

A fourth member of Derry Diocese was among those to receive an M.B.E. in the recent New Years Honours, while a Glendermott woman got the British Empire Medal for her work with young children.

Mrs Heather Pratt who is a Parochial Nominator in the Parish of Tamlaghtfinlagan (Ballykelly), is chair of the board of governors of Rossmar Special School, in Limavady. Mrs Pratt was recognised with an MBE for "services to education". The Rector of Tamlaghtfinlagan, Rev Canon Harold Given, was among the many people in the parish to extend congratulations to Heather in person and online.

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Mrs Roberta Cooke, the Manager of Caw Community Playgroup, in Londonderry, was awarded the B.E.M. for "services to Early Years Learning". Roberta is a member of Glendermott's Select Vestry and a Safeguarding Panel member.

Three other parishioners from the Diocese were also recognised in the Honours list: Professor Anne Heaslett (a parish reader in St. Canice's Church, Balteagh); Mr Godfrey Young (a member of St Columba's Church's Select Vestry in Omagh); and Mr William Oliver (an active member of the Castlerock and Dunboe church family and one of the Diocese's five Honorary Secretaries).

SAMS Ireland annual evening conference



You are warmly invited to SAMS Ireland annual evening conference Friday Night Live, which will take place in

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Annaghmore Parish Centre 7.30pm on Friday 3rd February.

The event theme this year is 'Enlarge - Expand- Extend'. SAMS look forward to hearing stories of how the Gospel is impacting people's lives through the work and outreach of the church in South America.

Please join SAMS for an evening of worship, Bible teaching and stories of mission!

Please note the NEW venue this year : Annaghmore Parish Church Halls (Junction 13 M1, Postcode: Craigavon BT62 1NT)

For further information : office@samsireland.com or Tel: 028 38310144

Ukraine: Pentecostal preacher and son tortured and killed after being taken by Russian soldiers

The bodies of a Ukrainian Pentecostal church deacon and his 19-year-old son have been discovered in a forest after they were allegedly abducted by Russian soldiers.

According to a report by Release International, the father and son had been tortured and killed four days after they disappeared.



The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group and the Global Investigative Journalism Network claim the pair were abducted by Russian soldiers at 7 p.m. on 22 November, while they were working in their garage close to Kherson.

The reasons for their abduction are not known, but four days later, the family were told that their bodies had been discovered in a nearby forest. Anatoliy Prokopchuk (52) and his son Oleksandr had been tortured and shot.

Release International's partner in Ukraine 'Pavel' says Anatoliy was a deacon and preacher at a Pentecostal church in the city of Nova Kakhova, which is close to Kherson.

According to Pavel, when the Russian troops arrested them, the soldiers claimed: ‘Your church has no right to exist, as it has connections with America and other western countries.’

For four days, the family were denied news of what had happened to them. Then on 26 November, the dead bodies of the men were found outside the town.

Says Release International partner Pavel: ‘Their bodies had signs of prolonged and excruciating torture. They were so mutilated that it was difficult to identify them.’ He describes Deacon Anatoliy Prokopchuk as having ‘helped many people in practical ways, enthusiastically and sacrificially, regardless of whether they were members of his church. As the Bible says, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.”’ For Pavel, the accusation that the Pentecostal church had no right to exist and was acting as an agent of the West has an all too familiar ring from the days of the Soviet Union. Anatoliy Prokopchuk leaves a widow, Irena, and five other children, four sons and a daughter.



Exeter Cathedral begins first major new building project in 135 years

Exeter Cathedral has embarked on its most significant building project since 1887, in the first phase of an ambitious new development project.

Work began on 18 November in the cathedral's Cloister Garden, where a specialist building team will be recreating a new Cloister Gallery.

The new construction replaces original medieval cloisters, which were demolished in 1657, and recreates a covered walkway to connect the cathedral with its 13th century Chapter House and Pearson Building. It will be the first major construction to be added to the cathedral since the Pearson building was completed in the late 19th century. The most recent additions prior to the Pearson building are the cathedral's Speke and Oldham chapels, built 500 years ago.

Other development works taking place in the Cloister Garden include the preparation of a Treasures Exhibition space which will safely showcase ancient collections from the cathedral's library and archive. New toilet facilities with improved accessibility will also be installed as part of the project.

The first phase of the project is expected to take two years to complete, but for The Revd Canon Chris Palmer, Exeter Cathedral's Canon Treasurer, who is overseeing the project,

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the benefits far outweigh the inevitable disruption:

“We are delighted to have reached the point of starting this exciting project. We know we are going to have to live with inconvenience for a while, but we are really looking forward to the day when our new facilities greatly improve the experience of all our visitors and worshippers.”

Further phases of the project would see approximately half of the Grade I listed heritage site conserved and refurbished.

Works include conservation of the cathedral’s 50 medieval misericords (or ‘mercy seats’), a more sustainable heating zoning system, new visitor interpretation to explain the history of the cathedral, a new Cathedral Shop, and lifts to make the new facilities and visitor experience accessible for everyone.



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The work is being funded by Exeter Cathedral's 2020s Development Appeal which aims to raise £10 million. The funds will support essential improvements and a calendar of community activities and events designed make the ancient Devon landmark more inclusive, accessible and sustainable for the future.

As Jill Taylor, Director of Development at Exeter Cathedral, explains, the



The oldest existing cat flap. Exeter Cathedral has a 14th century door that is mentioned as an entrance for cats. From 1305 cathedral accounts show an allowance for quarterly payments of 13 pence “to the custors and the cats”. They kept the rats and mice down

appeal has already attracted significant support:

“Over half of our £10 million target has already been secured, thanks to an incredible £4.3 million grant awarded earlier this year by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a further £1.9 million from some extremely generous grant-giving trusts, foundations, corporate and private donors.

“We have been overwhelmed by the level of support and affection for this unique Devon landmark. But of course, we still have another £3.8 million to go if we are to reach our goal of ensuring a truly sustainable future for Exeter Cathedral, for generations to come.”

One of the ways in which Exeter Cathedral is hoping to raise the remaining funds is through a new Adopt a Stone scheme. Private and corporate supporters are being invited to ‘adopt a stone’ in the new Cloister Gallery building, with donation options ranging from a single stone block, to an entire doorway.

For The Very Revd Jonathan Greener, Dean of Exeter, one of the most important aspects of the development project is for Exeter Cathedral to be used by a wider range of communities across Devon.

He explains: “We want to preserve this precious piece of Devon heritage for future generations, just as previous generations did for us. But we also need to ensure that it continues to inspire and meet the needs of all the people of Devon for the 21st century.

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“By supporting our Development Appeal, donors will be helping us to reach and serve a wider audience. They will be funding essential conservation and improvements to our building. But they will also be enabling us to improve the way we tell our story, and supporting an exciting new programme of events and activities designed to inspire and connect all Devonians with their local heritage.”

Further information about the 2020s Development Appeal and the Adopt a Stone scheme can be found on the Exeter Cathedral website

In the media

BBC documentary's Irish Famine 'extermination' claim 'astonishingly irresponsible', historians argue

History Reclaimed, a group of so-called 'anti-woke scholars', has criticised an episode of Digging for Britain that focused on famine relief works, Ronan McGreevy writes in The Irish Times

Ronan McGreevy Irish Times Jan 4 2023

'A group of British historians have described a BBC documentary on the Irish famine as being “astonishingly irresponsible”. Digging for Britain, a BBC series focusing on archaeology, broadcast an episode in January 2022 presented by Alice Roberts that focused on relief works carried out during the Irish famine. It included a claim by an

academic from Nottingham University that Britain had rejected giving the Irish “handouts” and that the Great Famine amounted to the “extermination of a people”.

The episode has been criticised by History Reclaimed, which describes itself as a “group of anti-woke scholars” featuring some of Britain’s best known historians including Niall Ferguson, Andrew Roberts, Robert Tombs and Elizabeth Weiss. Two Irish historians, Ruth Dudley Edwards and Liam Kennedy, are also part of the group.

Their mission statement maintains there is “no evidence” to suggest that “facing up to a past presented as overwhelmingly and permanently shameful and guilt-laden is the way to a better and fairer future”.

It has published a 24-page report in which it sets out examples of where the BBC has shown “consistent bias when exploring British history, whether through inclusion of inaccurate or tendentious material or by omission of important relevant facts”.

The report includes a section on a BBC programme on the Great Famine featuring a Nottingham University academic, Dr Onyeka Nubia, who contended that Daniel O’Connell was trying to prevent the “extermination of a people”.

Dr Nubia went on to suggest that the British prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, and his government rejected “all requests for handouts. Simple charity was out of the question”. The relief works programmes were regarded as an acceptable compromise, it stated.

History Reclaimed claims it is “pure fiction” to suggest that the British government was not prepared to provide handouts to Irish people when they were starving. It has also taken issue with Dr Nubia’s belief that it was “worse” to provide handouts than to let the population die of starvation.

A report by the group states that Peel suspended the Corn Laws, designed to keep out cheap grains, in early 1846 to allow for the importation of American maize to feed the Irish population. He was forced to resign from office in the middle of 1846 because of political opposition to these reforms.

The impression given by the programme was that the British government response was one of “heartless and deliberate inaction”. Instead, the report by History Unclaimed suggests, the British government spent one sixth of all its taxation revenues on famine relief and by July 1847 was keeping three million people alive.

The report states: “Dr Nubia appears to be unaware that no serious scholar regards the Irish famine as an ‘extermination of a people’ – effectively an accusation of genocide, if taken at face value – or accuses successive British governments of refusing aid, even if aid proved insufficient in the face of a previously unknown potato disease that caused several years of disastrous harvests in several countries.”

It said the only people who claim the Irish famine was a deliberate extermination by the British government were “extreme Irish nationalists and their sympathisers”. It said this view had been “combated by Irish scholars unwilling to allow their history to be weaponised by extremists” for years.

“For such an accusation to be espoused uncritically by the BBC is astonishingly irresponsible,” the report said.’

Ronan McGreevy - Irish Times January 4 2023

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Bishop Burrows commends imaginative use of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources

Bishop Michael Burrows said , “As Chair of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, I once again commend appropriate and imaginative use of the resources for the coming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in every locality. Post–Christmas fatigue and dark winter evenings should never diminish our commitment to the quest for that Unity for which Christ himself prayed.

“Sometimes we feel that ecumenical progress has reached a certain plateau, that earlier passion and energy for the cause has been lost. But in these times no theme has a greater potential to reignite our common energy and shared pursuit of human dignity under God than the promotion of racial justice as a source of hope for our disfigured world. I pray that the rich resources rooted in the instructive

American experience may prove an inspiration to all who use them.

“As we join with other Christians around the world for the Week of Prayer, we pray that our hearts will be open to see and hear the many ways in which racism continues to destroy lives, and to discern the steps we can take as individuals and communities to heal the hurts and build a better future for everyone.

“Participants can show their support for Christian Unity by posting messages and details of events to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Twitter wall – by simply adding the #wpcuwall hashtag to their Twitter post (please note there is a delay before tweets appear). Updates about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity can also be found on Twitter by following the #wpcu2023 hashtag.

“The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from January 18 to 25 – the octave of St Peter and St Paul – and for 2023, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is making the resources available both as downloads and printed versions that can be ordered, including in English, Welsh, Irish and Scots Gaelic.”

For this January’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, CTBI is guided by the churches of Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, as we seek to explore how the work of Christian Unity can contribute to the promotion of racial justice across all levels of society. Through this resource, the CTBI writers’ group has also focussed attention on the 30th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which will be marked in 2023. The work of restoring hope through justice undertaken

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in Stephen's memory continues to inspire and change lives for the better.

All of the resources are available to download at this link along with details for ordering printed copies from Church House Publishing, London.

[\[https://ctbi.org.uk/category/mission-and-unity/christian-unity/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity/\]](https://ctbi.org.uk/category/mission-and-unity/christian-unity/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity/)

[\[https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2023/\]](https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2023/)

Poem for today

The Journey of the Magi by T S Eliot

“A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.”
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:

A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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