

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Peter at Westminster

Statue at Westminster Abbey reflecting Petertide -

'Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus

Christ.' 1 Peter 2:

4-5

News

Mural of mother of author C.S. Lewis unveiled in East Belfast

Belfast Live reports - A striking new mural honouring Flora Lewis - mother of author

[Church News Ireland](#)



C.S. Lewis - has been unveiled in East Belfast.

Created by local street artist Emic, the piece now adorns the gable wall of The Secret Day Spa on Belmont Road, blending artistic flair with deep cultural roots.

The mural features a graceful figure draped in a lavender shawl and crowned with wildflowers, symbolising Flora Lewis's influence on her son's imagination — an imagination that would later bring Narnia to life.



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Cork Diocesan Youth Council surprise party for Chairperson

Cork Diocesan Youth Council met for a "round up of the year" meeting and also to get plans in place for the coming year.

But what their Chairperson, Judy Peters, didn't realise, was that the Youth Council were also herded together (a few couldn't be there) to celebrate her rather significant birthday (a little belated).

“Judy has been the incredible force behind the youth council for more than 20yrs, and we all really appreciate the work and time (and patience) she has put into it all over the years. Happy Birthday Judy...(don't kill me!!)”

Bishop: Church must prepare to go to war

The Church of England is preparing for the possibility of the UK going to war, according to the Bishop to the Armed Forces.

The Rt Rev Hugh Nelson, who also serves as the Bishop of St Germans, said it was also looking back to its leadership during the Second World War for inspiration regarding “what it might mean for us to be a Church in a time of conflict”.

The bishop made the comments ahead of the General Synod which will convene in York next month.

Members of the Synod want to change legislation to loosen the “burden” of red tape which would enable Army chaplains to be deployed more quickly in the event of war. Papers submitted to the Synod warn that while a conflict directly involving the UK is not an immediate risk, “given the very serious impact such a conflict would have on every person in the country, we must be prepared”. It adds: “The pandemic showed us the risks of being unprepared for a national crisis, and we must learn the lessons.”

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN
CONCERTS AT
ST. COLUMB'S
CATHEDRAL**

 Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle Chathair
Dhoire & Cheantar
an tSrátha Bala
Derry City & Strabane
District Council



NICKY MORTON & LOUIS FIELDS

THURSDAY 3RD JULY 1.10PM - 1.50PM

From epic Western landscapes to high-octane espionage, this concert features thrilling arrangements of iconic film and theatre music on the organ like you've never heard them before.

The Government's national security review warned earlier this week that the UK must "actively prepare" for the potential of a "wartime scenario" in its homeland amid ongoing war in the Middle East.

There are currently almost 200 Church of England chaplains serving as both regulars and reservists across the Armed Forces.

Makin was wrong Welby criticises abuse review

Justin Welby has criticised the report into historical sexual abuse in the Church of England which forced him to resign, claiming it got things wrong.

The former archbishop of Canterbury said the Makin review, had incorrectly stated that serial abuser John Smyth could have been brought to justice before he died in 2018 had Welby reported matters to the police sooner.

Speaking during an event at the Cambridge Union, the 69-year-old said a paper trail subsequently showed reporting was "fully" given to the police, who had asked the Church "not to carry out its own investigations because it would interfere with theirs". Courtesy Gabriella Swerling in the Daily Telegraph

Education



Retirement of head of Campbell College - Speech Day 2025

Thank you to the Campbell Community for coming together to celebrate our College, our staff, and most importantly, our pupils. Congratulations to all our Prize Winners on their outstanding achievements.

This year's event was especially poignant as we marked the retirement of Headmaster Mr Robert Robinson, MBE, after 13 years of exceptional leadership. His final address was a heartfelt reflection on service, growth, and the enduring values of Campbell College.

We were honoured to welcome Old Campbellian Mr Gareth Reid (7664) as our Chief Guest. An internationally acclaimed portrait artist, Mr Reid shared his inspiring



journey from the Campbell art room to global recognition, encouraging pupils to embrace challenge, stay curious, and be ready when opportunity comes.

Read the full story, browse the photo gallery or watch the recording here

<http://bit.ly/4ljZPNH>

Lisneal pupils in Derry steal show with a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream

It marked the end of a two-year Creative Schools Programme, which gives students with an interest in scriptwriting and performance the chance to work alongside industry professionals.

Funded by the National Lottery through the Arts Council, the cross-government programme is delivered in partnership with the Education Authority.

Taking to the stage in full costume, the young cast brought Shakespeare's much-loved comedy to life. The performance took place in Lisneal's school amphitheatre — the first time the outdoor space has been used for a production.

More than 25 Key Stage Three students took part, working with professional director Laura Douglas and producer Jonathan Burgess of Blue Eagle Productions.

Marie O'Donoghue, Creative Schools Programme manager, said: “The young cast captivated us all with their energy and teamwork, proving just how powerful it is when young people are given the freedom and support to shine.” Teacher Michelle Lake said that being part of the Creative Schools Programme has been “incredible”.

Life and legacy of Queen's Chancellor Emeritus in powerful new documentary

The life and legacy of Queen's Chancellor Emeritus, Senator George Mitchell, were brought to the screen in a powerful new documentary which premiered in Belfast last week.

Developed in partnership with FinePoint Films, the documentary was directed by Trevor Birney and produced by Stephen Douds and Andrew Tully, with Queen's Vice-President, Dr Ryan Feeney as Executive Producer.

RTÉ broadcaster and Queen's Honorary Graduate, Dr Miriam O'Callaghan, also joined Senator Mitchell and Trevor Birney for a conversation about the making of the film and the profound impact the Senator has had on Northern Ireland.

St Malachi's exciting educational visit to Carrickfergus Castle

Year 8 students recently enjoyed an exciting educational visit to Carrickfergus Castle, built in 1177 by the Norman knight John de Courcy. As part of their history course, pupils toured the castle's keep, battlements, and impressive banquet hall.

A highlight of the day was the weapons demonstration, where students tried on chainmail and handled replica swords, shields, spears, and even a crossbow. They also discovered the importance of the castle's fresh water well during times of siege.

Throughout the visit, students were praised for their excellent behaviour and were outstanding ambassadors for the College. The experience brought their history lessons to life and enriched their appreciation of the Norman legacy in Ireland.

Cathedral Calls

Columbanus Day celebrations in Carlow

Promising to be a highlight of the upcoming XXVI Columbanus Day celebrations is the Concert in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow on Saturday 12th July at 8pm.

Combining many musical talents and choirs and a packed programme makes this an event you won't want to miss.

The full programme of events can be viewed and booked at <https://www.kandle.ie/countdown-to-xxvi-columbanus-day-2025/>

Join us as we celebrate this 6th century monk who hailed from Myshall Parish in the shadow of Mount Leinster.

Celebrating St. Eugene's Choir Scholar scheme

Celebrations took place last week for the members of St. Eugene's Cathedral Choir Scholar scheme in Derry.

Text from photo captions - Mrs Phyllis McAlister presents the Ciaran McAlister Memorial Award for Commitment to this year's recipient, Keyla Duffy.

Keyla, with her grandparents.

This year's choral scholars, with Mrs Phyllis McAlister (two missing from picture)

Keyla Duffy and Ellen Harkin will be attending an international choral workshop in Warsaw for a week in July.

Thank God for these young people who share their talent and commit to the choir during the year. God bless you all

Cinematic organ adventure at St. Columb's

Join Nicky Morton and Louis Fields at St. Columb's Cathedral on Thursday 3rd July from 1.10pm to 1.50pm for a cinematic organ adventure like no other!

To kick our July organ series off, our Organists of St. Columb's Cathedral bring you a unique mix of drama, flair, and probably a lot of comedy – all packed into your lunch break. From sweeping Western soundscapes to spy-thriller drama, this special performance reimagines iconic film and theatre music on the glorious Wells-Kennedy organ, come along and hear the organ as you've never heard it before!

Free entry | All welcome

Clergy and ministry

Good things come in threes at Derry ordination

There's an old adage which holds that good things come in threes and that was certainly the case in Kilrea, on Sunday evening,



On an historic evening for the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe – three women were ordained by Rt Rev'd Andrew Forster as priests of the Church of Ireland.

In the vestry of a sweltering St Patrick's Church, Rev'd Linda Hughes, Rev'd Eleanor Craig and Rev'd Gillian Millar fanned themselves with their orders of service before making and signing their declarations of assent in front of the Bishop and the Diocesan Registrar, Rev'd Jonathan Brown.

It was, Bishop Andrew said, a joyful occasion, and he encouraged the three women – who had followed the Ordained Local Ministry path to this evening's service – to relax and savour the occasion as they prepared to process

into the church to be priested. The church doors were left wide open to allow air to circulate among a huge congregation, comprising clergy and parishioners from many parts of the diocese.



The service was organised by the Rector of the K.I.T. Group (The Parishes of Kilrea, Tamlaght O'Crilly Upper & Lower), Rev Gary Millar, whose wife, Gillian, was one of the women being ordained. The service was led by Bishop Andrew, who was assisted by the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller and Rev'd Canon Carmen Hayes (who was Bishop's Chaplain for the evening).

In his sermon, Bishop Andrew referred to the historic nature of the service. "This is actually the third ordination in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe this month," he said. "I hope a historian of this beautiful church in Kilrea will be able to tell me if there has been an ordination here before. But what a wonderful setting, tonight, in this beautiful church, as we gather with the sun still shining to give God thanks for how

his love has shone so brightly in the lives of Gillian, and Eleanor and Linda, and how his love shines so brightly from them. That's what we're here tonight to be thankful for, and we're here tonight to thank God for the gift of ordination."

"You know, in the challenges of ordained ministry – in the cost that is ordained ministry, as well as the privilege – all of us gathered here tonight who have the joy of being ordained know that at times we get it right and at times we get it wrong. We've known failure as well as success. We've known joy as well as pain. And that will be true for Eleanor, for Gillian and for Linda."

Bishop Andrew said Peter's denials of Jesus were among the most celebrated failures in Scripture. "The truth is that each one of us is a bit like Peter: we deny Jesus at times by our words and by our actions. And yet Jesus doesn't give up on us."

The music for the service was provided by the K.I.T. Group's choir, accompanied by Barkley Thompson on the organ and Melissa McCombe on the piano. The lectors were Joshua Monteith, Clara Monaghan and Valerie Ferguson.

After the service, the congregation enjoyed refreshments in 1st Kilrea Presbyterian Church Hall.

Grace is at work in the lives of our children



St Paul and St Barnabas parish in Belfast celebrated Children's Day 2025 on Sunday giving thanks to God for the life and faith of our children.

It was a joyful and heartfelt service, filled with music, memory verses, prayers, and reflections from their Sunday School. 'We're deeply grateful for the dedication of our leaders, the enthusiasm of the children, and the support of our wider church family.

'As we heard from Jonah 2, "Salvation belongs to the Lord" — a reminder that even in our moments of weakness or running, God's mercy finds us and brings us home. That

same grace is at work in the lives of our children, shaping them into disciples of Jesus.

‘Thank you to everyone who helped make today special. To find out more about our children’s ministry or to get involved, visit:

www.spbbelfast.church

Basking in Ballylesson

Drumbo Parish Church at Ballylesson also highlighted children’s ministry -

Don’t forget to pick up your Activity pack on the way into church this morning...strictly for youth and children ;-)



Pope Leo XIV warns new archbishops against pastoral plans that repeat without renewing

Pope Leo XIV warned new archbishops on Sunday against following “the same old pastoral plans without experiencing interior renewal and a willingness to respond to new challenges.”

Speaking on the Solemnity of Peter and Paul — saints recognized by the Catholic Church as pillars of the faith and venerated as patrons of the city of Rome — the pope also called for maintaining ecclesial unity while respecting diversity.

“Our patron saints followed different paths, had different ideas and at times argued with one another with evangelical frankness. Yet this did not prevent them from ... a living communion in the Spirit, a fruitful harmony in diversity,” the pope said.

During Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica, where he bestowed the pallium on 54 new metropolitan archbishops, including eight from the U.S., Leo urged them to “find new paths and new approaches to preaching the Gospel” rooted in the “problems and difficulties” arising from their communities of faith.

“The two apostles... inspire us by the example of their openness to change, to new events, encounters, and concrete situations in the life of their communities, and by their readiness to consider new approaches to

evangelization in response to the problems and difficulties raised by our brothers and sisters in the faith.”

After the homily, deacons descended to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, located beneath the Altar of the Chair, to retrieve the palliums the pope had blessed.

In the media

Watchdog slammed for three-year wait for probe into complaints about church - Belfast Telegraph

Lord Alderdice frustrated over lack of action on dossier of allegations, Angela Davison reports -

A former Assembly Speaker says he is deeply frustrated that a dossier alleging inappropriate behaviour within the Presbyterian Church is still on the desk of an independent regulator — three years after it was submitted.

Lord John Alderdice, who resigned from the church in 2018, said he was disappointed at the lack of movement on the matter by the Charity Commission.

The document was commissioned by Lord Alderdice, who enrolled former Presbyterian minister Roy Simpson in collating information, outlining the experiences of people who allege wrongdoing by some within the church.

The dossier, also examined by eminent Lord Carlile, was sent to the Charity Commission expressing concerns on the legitimacy of the church's charity status due to its alleged ill-treatment of some of those working for the church.

Rev Simpson, who spent around 18 months gathering information from people who said they have suffered at the hands of the church, is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. He said the stories from people he interviewed for the report are “hard to believe”.

“People told me that they experienced severe mental health problems and breakdowns due to the treatment they had experienced from some ... and some said their lives had been destroyed,” he said.

“As a registered charity, receiving taxpayers' money, PCI has the responsibility to treat people properly. Not only has the governing Presbyterian Church body charitable status, Union Theological College has too, as well as each congregation within the church.”

Rev Simpson believes such problems didn't always exist within the denomination.

“After the riotous 2018 General Assembly meeting when the Presbyterian Church in Ireland cut ties with Presbyterian Scotland over gay rights issues and same-sex marriage, Lord Alderdice contacted me, concerned about the goings-on within the church.”

This, he said, included concerns about alleged anti-gay sentiments, misogyny and people who felt harassed.

“I first set about gathering evidence — identifying people affected, contacting them and trying to build up their trust,” he added.

“To back up claims, we then looked for corroborating evidence from witnesses, emails, Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests. We got a lot of documents that way but it was a slow process and then I had to write it up.”

He said the dossier contained the stories of 12 people — “not an exhaustive list but a flavour of experiences.”

He added: “I believe it's not a great time to be a female minister within the Presbyterian Church right now, which is sad as the Presbyterian Church was the first church to ordain female ministers.

“It is hard to believe that all of the abuse victims were lying. At the very least the Charity Commission should investigate and those who are named as abusers be given the opportunity to deny or explain. The same names came up repeatedly and there were similar elements to claims — false accusation of sexual impropriety, for example.”

Lord Alderdice, meanwhile, says he is frustrated at the slow progress on the matter.

“I am extremely disappointed that almost three years since I submitted a detailed dossier to the Charities Commission for NI (on July 25, 2022) they have still not provided a considered response to my request that they conduct an inquiry into multiple well-documented complaints of abusive behaviour by PCI authorities,” he said.

The Charity Commission, which has not yet decided if an inquiry should be opened, said the investigation has been delayed due to the complex nature of the allegations.

It said it “has an open concern regarding the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and has received a dossier in connection with this”.

The Commission added: “The time it takes to investigate a concern about a charity can vary a lot depending on the situation.

“While the Commission aims to handle all concerns as quickly as it can, how long it takes depends on several things - like how complicated the case is, whether there's any risk to the charity's funds or the people it helps, how busy the Commission is at the time, and whether other organisations are involved.

“The Presbyterian Church in Ireland case involves a lot of detailed and sometimes quite complex information, which means the Commission needs to take extra care in reviewing it. It has also required input from legal experts.

“Because of this, the investigation is taking longer than usual to complete.

“The Commission will keep reviewing the information we've received and aims to move things forward toward a suitable outcome over the next few months. That said, we're not able to give a definite timeline just yet.

“For confidentiality reasons, and to ensure there is no prejudice caused to any current or future enquiries work, the Commission cannot provide any further details on the case at this time.”

The Presbyterian Church said: “While we have not been informed by the Charity Commission of its concerns, in line with their approach, as a rule, we would not comment on such matters.”

Lord Carlile said he would not be commenting on the dossier's content.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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