

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Pyre Pallets by Gaz Drone

Late on the night of July 11 our friend at Gaz Drone commented on the Craigyhill Bonfire - I'm home and tired after a long but thoroughly enjoyable evening! Such a buzz about the place tonight, with everyone with smiles on their faces!

As a photographer you always want to rush home to check the SD card and see what you captured, so this is a quick edit before I head to bed and take a proper look tomorrow.

Hats off to the Craigyhill bonfire and cultural page for putting on such an amazing event again. It never disappoints!

News

D Day landing briefs at the RACHD Museum

Course participants enjoyed the opportunity to deliver their briefs surrounded by their Royal Army Chaplains Department's Chaplaincy Memorabilia.

The Museum provided the perfect venue to consider the D Day landings and the lessons we can learn today. The museum is a real blessing to the staff and students of the Defence Academy. In course of the morning, the Curator,



Mr David Blake, was presented with a birthday cake by chaplain, Rev Jim Caldwell (Church of Ireland) to mark his recent birthday. "We were all grateful to David for hosting the syndicate at the Museum."

Presbyterian comment on the national commemoration at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham

Speaking about the event at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, former Moderator Rev Dr Bruce said that it has always been 'a great sense of privilege personally, and for the Presbyterian community as a whole, to take part in this national commemoration.'



Carrickfergus marina and castle

The equivalent of the UK's Remembrance Sunday in November, since 1986 on the closest Sunday to 11 July, the Republic of Ireland remembers all Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars, or on military service with the United Nations, and other international organisations in the service of peace.

The 11 July date is significant, for on that day in 1921 a truce was signed that ended the Irish War of Independence.

With the main commemoration taking place in Dublin, other local commemorations took place in Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Sligo and Waterford.

Following the laying of a wreath at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins in memory of those who died, a minute's silence was observed. Having served two terms as president, this was the last time Mr Higgins laid a wreath, as he will leave office later this year.

During the Commemoration, Dr Bruce prayed during a Christian act of worship before a joint blessing was given at its conclusion.

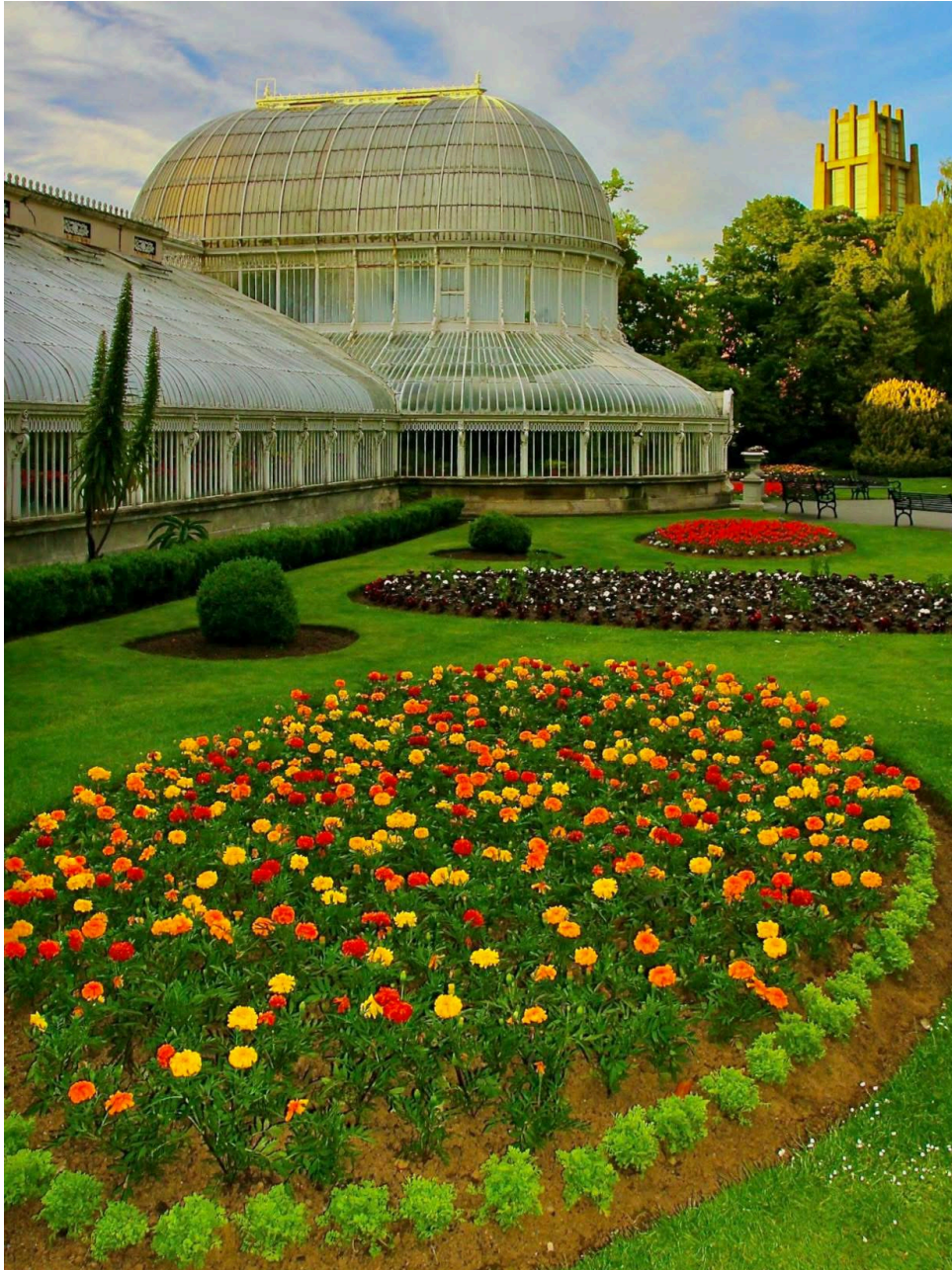
Speaking afterwards, Dr Bruce said, "As a young Dublin minister in the 1990s I took part in a number of Commemorations, and as Moderator in 2020 and 2021, only both ceremonies were scaled back due to the ongoing impact of the Covid Pandemic.

"On each occasion, however, and no less today, it is always with a great sense of privilege personally, and for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as a whole, to take part in this national commemoration.

"We all need to recognise the importance of remembering and the Presbyterian community sees this as an important annual expression of our belonging."

The former Moderator continued, "My father, as part of the Royal Army Medical Corps, was training during the Second World War and was posted to Berlin a few weeks after Germany's surrender.

"On this 80th anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe, we remember and pay tribute to those, like my father, who was one of some 120,000 Irishmen from across this island,



Belfast Botanic Gardens

who volunteered to serve with the British Army, with around 70,000 coming from what is now the Republic of Ireland.”

The event, which also saw the participation of the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, was attended by other senior political and civic representatives, including members of the Government, members of the Oireachtas, the Council of State, the Diplomatic Corps, and the Judiciary.

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Representatives of the next-of-kin of those who died in past wars or on UN service, other international organisations in the service of peace, ex-servicemen's organisations, as well as relatives of the 1916 Leaders, were also invited.

With members of the Irish Defence Forces on parade, the Southern District Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin and a representative of the Georgian Orthodox Church, also took part during the service.

Irish churches urge ceasing of sale of Israel Bonds in Europe

Rev. Steven Foster, Southern Chairperson, Council on Social Responsibility...

...alongside other Social Justice representatives of various churches have delivered a letter to the governor of the Central Bank of Ireland Governor Gabriel Makhlouf, urging the institution to immediately cease the regulation of the sale of Israel Bonds in Europe.

irishmethodist.org/news/csr-deliver-letter-to-governor-of-central-bank-of-ireland

Bishop Nulty: Europe risks fracturing as solidarity fades

“Columbanus came from Carlow. It was here in this place he was

nurtured and reared. Every Columbanus Day, since its first iteration, twenty-seven years ago, has spoken to a part of the life of this European Saint, we all have good reason to claim as our own – Annegray, Fontaine, Luxeuil, Saint Gallen, Bregenz, Milan, Bobbio.

“To our shame in Ireland Columbanus is much more honoured in the countries of his adoption than in the country of his origin. We need to do the maths, a favourite subject of Pope Leo, Columbanus was 47 years on this island, only 25 years on the European Continent”.

To read Bishop Nulty's homily click

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2025/07/13/bishop-nulty-europe-risks-fracturing-as-solidarity-fades/>





The next Ireland Professor of Poetry

Congratulations to Vona Groarke who was announced as the next Ireland Professor of Poetry by the Ireland Chair of Poetry Trust this week.

July 15, 2025

Vona will be the tenth Ireland Professor of Poetry from September 2025 to November 2028, taking over from Professor Paul Muldoon.

The Ireland Chair of Poetry Trust was established in 1998 after Seamus Heaney won the Nobel Prize for Literature. It was decided to mark this award by selecting a renowned poet to hold the Ireland Chair of Poetry every three years.

The Chair is supported by Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, as well as by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Over the three years the Chair spends a year associated with each partner university. During that time they are in residence for eight weeks with each university, holding workshops and readings with students, doing outreach work and also delivering a formal lecture.

Next call up for international duty -

Aoife Craig in cycling

Aoife will be representing Ireland in cycling.



July 15, 2025

She will take part in the Road race and time trails in the European Youth Olympic Festival in Skopje, North Macedonia from the 20-26 of July! A fantastic opportunity to showcase her outstanding level of skill. Wishing you very bit of success from all at St Dominic's

Cathedral Calls

An invitation to Saint Mary's Cathedral

Saint Mary's Cathedral is the oldest place of worship still in use in Limerick, standing for over 850 years at the heart of the city's spiritual life.

We invite you to be part of that living tradition by joining us for daily services,



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held Monday to Saturday at 10:30am & Sunday at 11:15am.

Each service is a quiet time of prayer, reflection, and worship in a sacred and historic space.

On Thursdays, we celebrate Holy Communion, gathering around the Lord's table in faith and fellowship.

Whether you've been before or are stepping inside for the first time, all are warmly welcome.

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



STEWART SMITH

THURSDAY 17TH JULY 1.10PM - 1.50PM

Organist at All Saint's Clooney Church, Stewart Smith continues our July Lunchtime Concert Series this Thursday.



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



July 15, 2025

 Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

 Daily Services | Monday–Saturday at 10:30am

 Holy Communion | Every Thursday at 10:30am

 Sunday Service | Every Sunday at 11:15am

Experience peace. Encounter history. Feel at home.

St. Columb's Cathedral Lunchtime Organ Concert on Thursday

Join Stewart Smith at St. Columb's Cathedral on Thursday 17th July from 1.10pm to 1.50pm for our 3rd Lunchtime Organ Concert this July.

Stewart is a renowned organist, conductor, and educator, and through Wells-Kennedy, he ensures our Cathedral organ remains in perfect tune and top condition. We're delighted to welcome him to perform a programme featuring works by Bach, Buxtehude and Stanford.

Free entry. All welcome.

Clergy and ministry

Call for Charles Wood Festival Volunteers

The Charles Wood Festival is just around the corner, and we're looking for some brilliant volunteers to help make it all happen!

Whether it's welcoming audiences at the door, handing out programmes, chaperoning choirs, or helping us set up gazebos on the Saturday morning, we'd love to have you on board.

The festival relies on the kindness and energy of volunteers to run smoothly – it's a team effort and a great way to get involved in one of Northern Ireland's leading music festivals.

We're also on the lookout for a social media manager and a photographer/videographer to help us capture the magic of the week. If you're looking to build your portfolio, gain experience, or simply enjoy being part of a creative, lively environment, we'd love to hear from you!

For more information, email us at charleswoodfestival@gmail.com – or better still, come along to our Volunteer Information Meeting on Monday 21st July at 8pm in the Synod Hall, St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Armagh.

Come and be part of something special – all roles are voluntary but hugely appreciated!

Events

Come and Sing: The Seasons in St Mark's, Armagh

Join us for a joyful evening of choral singing led by the inspirational Dónal Doherty, Artistic Director of the City

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of Derry International Choir Festival and conductor of the acclaimed choir Codetta.

To celebrate the 300th anniversary of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, we'll be singing from The Four Seasons: A Choral Celebration by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange – a vibrant and imaginative reworking of Vivaldi's iconic masterpiece for voices.

Whether you're an experienced singer or just love to sing, this promises to be a fantastic evening – come and sing with us!

Venue: St Mark's Parish Church, Armagh

Time: 7:30pm

Tickets: £10 – available at the door or online at www.charleswoodsummerschool.org/events

Glenarm Castle's incredible history

Join George, the McDonnell family's trusted butler, as he takes you on a magical journey through Glenarm Castle's incredible history.

Hear fascinating stories and explore rare artifacts that bring the Castle to life.

PLUS, your Castle Tour ticket includes FREE access to the stunning Walled Garden, enchanting Woodland Walk and Heritage Centre!

Next tour dates



Book now: <https://glenarmcastle.com/castletours/>

Edinburgh Festival of Sacred Arts

Explore the rich collection of church vestments, hangings and linens at the 'Jacobite' church of Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church.

This two-day exhibition offers the opportunity to see the many ways in which these gorgeous creations bring a distinctive artistic dimension to Christian faith in the practice of worship. Expert guides will be on hand to explain the symbolism embodied in fabric, and the religious ceremonies in which these magnificent items are regularly used. 12 - 13 August 10am - 4pm. FREE entry.

<https://www.edinburghsacredartsfestival.org/festival-2025-programme-226081.html>

‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good’
(1 Thessalonians 5:21)

In the media

Safeguarding issues dominate

Former Welsh bishop faces fresh abuse probe - BBC

Former Welsh bishop faces fresh abuse probe

July 15, 2025

A former bishop in the Church in Wales is facing fresh allegations of historic sexual abuse, as a BBC investigation uncovers new claims against Anthony Pierce and another former clergyman.

Pierce, once Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, is currently serving four years in prison for indecent assaults on a child during his time as a parish priest in the 1980s.

His lawyer says he “deeply regrets” the crimes, while the Church in Wales has admitted it feels “the most profound shame at the dreadful offences”.

Several men have now reportedly told the BBC that Pierce behaved inappropriately towards them, too.

A woman also claims she was assaulted by David Gedge, the late choirmaster at Brecon Cathedral, and says no action was taken when she reported it, while Pierce was bishop at the time.

Police are now investigating these new allegations, and the Church in Wales has confirmed it is reviewing how such cases were handled.

A former priest has called on the Welsh Assembly to launch an independent inquiry into the church’s safeguarding failures.

Safeguarding at Blackburn Cathedral ‘inadequate’ INEQE audit reports - Church Times

Safeguarding arrangements at Blackburn Cathedral are “inadequate” and require immediate action, an independent audit has concluded.

The audit was carried out by the INEQE Safeguarding Group as part of a rolling programme across the Church which is due to be completed by 2028.

It began in October 2024, two months after the BBC reported that a member of the cathedral Chapter, Canon Andrew Hindley, had been forced to retire by the then Bishop of Blackburn in 2021, and that a six-figure sum had been paid to him in a legal settlement (News, 16 August 2024). Canon Hindley has insisted that he has never posed a danger to young people or been a safeguarding risk.

The audit report was published last week. It concludes that, while there are some positive aspects to the cathedral’s safeguarding, including good practices in chorister safeguarding, these are “significantly undermined by critical vulnerabilities that demand urgent and comprehensive attention”.

Among its recommendations is that the Dean — whose designation as safeguarding lead is, it says, “neither appropriate nor sustainable” — should step back from involvement in day-to-day safeguarding activity “to ensure the appropriate separation of leadership and governance from operational safeguarding activities”.

“There is a view that safeguarding is not being driven or influenced by a safeguarding professional but by the opinion of senior leadership,” the audit states.

“Whilst senior leaders are rightly accountable, they are not equipped with the skillset to deliver operational safeguarding. Interviews and a review of other material revealed that neither the part-time Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor nor the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer appears able to effectively challenge the Dean on safeguarding matters. . .

“It has resulted in an absence of effective safeguarding leadership, questionable decision-making, inadequate safeguarding capacity and expertise, poor communication, inconsistencies in practice, and a failure to embed robust governance, oversight, and accountability.”

Recording-keeping is “poor”, it says, and HR processes are “in need of urgent improvement”. Overall, safeguarding arrangements are “currently inadequate and require immediate action”.

Some participants in the audit mentioned “internal conflict during discussions”. There were suggestions that the behaviour of certain individuals at the cathedral illustrated “a culture that appears collaborative on the surface but has underlying tensions”.

The audit itself “encountered evidence of these tensions”. It observes that “the anxiety following the recent exposé of the Hindley case persists and has impacted many staff, volunteers and leaders,” and it warns of “a significant risk of

division that could prevent or further undermine the urgently required improvements in safeguarding at the Cathedral”.

The audit also concurs with the assessment, made by some participants, that tensions between the cathedral and the diocese are “creating additional barriers to effective communication”.

A “refreshed” Memorandum of Understanding between the cathedral and the diocesan board of finance is “crucial”, it concludes. It also recommends that consideration be given to establishing a dedicated safeguarding directorate responsible for the delivery of safeguarding across both the diocese and the cathedral.

Its audit of the diocese is largely positive, identifying a “strong commitment to safeguarding” and a “genuine willingness to listen and learn”. It praises the diocesan Bishop, the Rt Revd Philip North, having found evidence of his “appropriate and unambiguous challenge at all levels. This included making difficult decisions that put safeguarding before reputation, personal or professional relationships . . . exemplified in his approach to concerns raised with him regarding perceived leadership challenges at the Cathedral and their potential impact on safeguarding.”

Last week, Bishop North said in a statement: “It is clear from the audit published today there is a need for the Cathedral to act swiftly to make improvements and the Diocese continues to be happy to offer support to the Cathedral to implement in full the recommendations contained in the report.”

A cathedral spokesperson welcomed the audit and said that the Chapter had taken “swift and decisive action to implement the most urgent recommendations”. It would implement all the recommendations in full, the statement said. “We apologise unreservedly to anyone who feels let down by our previous safeguarding arrangements.”

Leicester stalker had reference from Bishop Dyer - Sunday Times

The Bishop of Aberdeen & Orkney, the Rt Revd Anne Dyer, provided a reference for Venessa Pinto, a former member of the Church of England’s General Synod who who was prosecuted for stalking in her subsequent employment in the diocese of Leicester (News, 4 July), it was reported last week.

An article in The Sunday Times said that Ms Pinto was installed as a “pioneer evangelist”, funded by the Church Army, and personally licensed by Bishop Dyer.

The former Rector of St Devenick’s, Aberdeen, where Ms Pinto worked, the Revd Gerry Bowyer, told The Sunday Times that it “quickly became clear that Venessa was not suited to this kind of role”, and was “prone to outbursts of anger”.

Mr Bowyer made an official complaint about Ms Pinto, who in turn accused him of racism and bullying, the newspaper reported. The complaints led to two investigations, which did not uphold Ms Pinto’s allegations, and concluded that she

had anger-management problems, but also that Mr Bowyer could have done more to support her.

Mr Bowyer said that he left his post in the Scottish Episcopal Church as a result of the stress that the episode caused. “I was exhausted, my wellbeing was suffering and I just didn’t have the emotional capacity to carry on,” he said.

Of Bishop Dyer’s involvement, he said that there was “absolutely no way” that she “did not know what was going on”.

The Sunday Times quoted a “Church of England insider” as saying that Bishop Dyer “effectively vouched” for Ms Pinto when she applied for the job in Leicester.

A statement from the diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney confirmed that Ms Pinto had served as a Pioneer Evangelist from November 2018 until March 2020. “Venessa was employed in Aberdeen by The Church Army, however, at no point was she directly employed or managed by the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney,” the statement said.

“Any grievances made against Venessa during her time in Aberdeen were handled by The Church Army. Neither the Diocese nor Bishop Anne had awareness of the details of these proceedings, so could not have provided this information to the Diocese of Leicester.”

In May 2024, Ms Pinto pleaded guilty to stalking Jay Hulme, a churchwarden at St Nicholas’s, Leicester. She resigned from the General Synod along with her elected position on the Crown Nominations Commission.

Bishop Dyer has herself been accused of bullying, but disciplinary proceedings against her were terminated last year by the SEC's Procurator, Paul Reid KC. In his ruling, however, Mr Reid wrote: "I remain of the view that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction in respect of each allegation." He opted not to proceed with the case, citing the harm that it might cause to the alleged victims (News, 11 October 2024).

Bishop Dyer subsequently returned to work in the diocese, after being suspended for almost two years.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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