

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Irish church leaders at opening of
Ulster Tower at Theipval**

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Image of the day

Irish church leaders at opening of Ulster Battlefield Memorial Tower at Theipval

The Ulster Battlefield Memorial Tower was opened by Field Marshall Sir Henry H Wilson on November 19, 1921

People and places

Community mentoring boost

The ROC Mentors Tour met this week with folks from The Methodist Church in Ireland, St Michaels Church, the Vine Centre, ROC Cafe Rathfern, and Belfast Health Trust.

Toby from COACH Community Mentoring joined with the group and shared the vision for ROC Mentoring.

If you missed the info events this week and want to find out more about mentoring, contact Keeva at northernireland@roc.uk.com

Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) launched in Northern Ireland in May 2012. Since then, ROC have been empowering people of goodwill to work together for safer, kinder communities in towns and cities across Northern Ireland.



ROC Café Rathfern: a Friday night youth drop-in for 12-16 year olds in Rathfern Social Activity Centre in Newtownabbey. There is plenty of activity at the ROC Café with sports activities, arts and crafts, music lessons, a tuck shop and trips out. Check out the ROC Café Rathfern Facebook page for updates.

ROC Care Rathcoole: a befriending scheme providing a befriender volunteer to visit or phone an isolated older person living in the Rathcoole area of Newtownabbey. Social isolation is a rising isolation in our communities affecting people of all ages and backgrounds. Older people are most profoundly affected with '1 in 3 older people saying TV is their main form of company' (AGE UK). Loneliness is found to be as bad for health as smoking 15 cigarettes a

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day. The conversation and company of a befriender improves health and wellbeing for our clients.

The project is run in partnership with Newtownabbey Methodist Mission and is part funded by Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Retirement of Principal of Methodist College



On Saturday 25 June, the Board of Governors of Methodist College bade farewell to retiring Principal Scott Naismith, after 15 years of outstanding leadership.

Mr Naismith's official College portrait was unveiled by photographer Jennifer Willis, a former pupil of MCB.

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North Belfast clergy night out



The Church of Ireland clergy from the parishes in north Belfast and Newtownabbey met last Tuesday evening for their Annual Dinner.

Seated from left to right:

Rev'd Andrew Irwin (St Paul & St Barnabas), Rev'd Canon Nigel Baylor (Jordanstown), Rev'd Elaine O'Brien (Whitehouse), Rev'd Arlene Moore (Rathcoole), Rev'd Brian Lacey (St Peter & St James), Rev'd Peter Jones (Mossley), Rev'd Carol Harvey (Carnmoney), Rev'd Andy Heber (Carnmoney), Rev'd Louise Bowes (Mossley), Rev'd Anne Locke (Whitehouse), Rev'd Ruth Patterson (Monkstown), and Rev'd Jacob Mercer (Mallusk).

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Meeting with Minister for education



Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist representatives, with the Controlled Schools' Support Council, met with Education Minister Michelle McIlveen this week to discuss a range of issues across the controlled education sector in Northern Ireland.

The Department commented after the meeting that Education Minister Michelle McIlveen had a positive engagement today with the Controlled Schools' Support Council and the Transferor Representatives' Council

To find out more about the churches' role on behalf of schools in Northern Ireland, visit www.trc-churcheducation.org

Retirement from St Lukes Charity & Home



Cork

The Bishop of Cork, Rt Reverend Dr Paul Colton and Mrs Joan Jeffery entertained Joan Jeffery to lunch on the occasion of her retirement as Assistant Director of Finance and Administration St Lukes Charity & Home Cork.

Bishop Colton said, “As President of the Charity for the last nearly 24 years, I worked very closely with Joan in relation to the work of the Charity, fund-raising, and, most important of all, in making connections with residents and their families. On behalf of us all I thank Joan and wish her every blessing in retirement.”

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New portrait for the Order of St. John

The new portrait
of the Grand Prior
HRH Prince
Richard Duke of
Gloucester by
Henrietta Abel
Smith is now on
display in the
Chapter Hall at St
John's Gate in
Clerkenwell
London

Henrietta studied
at Charles H Cecil
Studios in
Florence, Italy
from 2009 to 2012.

She is the prestigious "The Society of Women Artists",
Winner of the 'Young Artist' Award 2020.

<https://www.henriettaabelsmith.com/portfolio>



CNI

News reports

Safeguarding: Oxford vice principal wins £40,000 for unfair dismissal

The vice principal of an Oxford University theological college has won more than £40,000 after being wrongly sacked over the handling of a child sex abuse allegation against a priest.

The Rev Dr James Lawson was dismissed for gross misconduct for failing to follow the correct procedures after he was approached by a survivor of historic mistreatment. That person had told Dr Lawson – who at the time was acting principal of the Society of St Stephen’s House – the case was “very much closed” and suggested the abuse had been physical rather than sexual. As a result, counselling was organised for them, an employment tribunal heard, but Dr Lawson never escalated the matter.

The panel heard Dr Lawson, while in charge of safeguarding, had never dealt with a matter as serious as this and did not make a record of it or report it to the relevant bodies. Later on, the survivor told the Rev Lucy Gardner, one of Dr Lawson’s colleagues, that they had in fact also been sexually abused and that the alleged perpetrator had been in touch and offered them money.

The tribunal panel heard that when the Rev Canon Dr Robin Ward, who had since returned from a sabbatical and resumed his role as principal at St Stephen’s, learned of this he “panicked”.

He proceeded to sack Dr Lawson for gross misconduct on the basis that he had not recorded and reported the matter appropriately.

Dr Lawson has now been awarded £40,292 in compensation after the tribunal found it was “wholly unreasonable” that he was sacked and concluded that he had been shown “absolutely no courtesy” during the dismissal process.

The college is an Anglican theological foundation and one of just six permanent private halls of Oxford University.

WCC: Regarding false media reporting on Israel and Dr Pillay

Since the election in mid-June of Rev Dr Prof Jerry Pillay as new World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary, concerns have been raised, predominantly in Jewish media, about his position on Israel and the Jewish communities and their faith.

The WCC general secretary-elect underscores that under his leadership the WCC will continue to desire and uphold cordial relationships with the Jewish communities.

"I support the Jewish people preserving their identity and practicing their religious beliefs and values. I believe that all religions must be respected and people of all faiths - and no faith - must work together to create a world of justice and peace in which we express love, unity and reconciliation,"

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Pillay says. "This stance has been and continues to be that of the World Council of Churches, and it would never elect a leader who practiced or preached antisemitism in any way, shape or form. The WCC continues to promote and nurture justice and peace, and has consistently raised concerns about issues of justice in Israel and Palestine."

Consequently, the WCC will continue to stand firmly behind United Nations (UN) resolutions on the occupied territories and speak out against all forms of injustice, regardless of where or who they come from.

"Our perspectives are always from the perspective of a Christian witness - a point of view in which human rights, justice and peace are cornerstones. We are a faith-based - not a political - organization and part of a worldwide fellowship confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour," Pillay adds.

Pillay added that he stands behind the WCC policies on the Holy Land, most recently expressed in a public statement by the WCC central committee on 18 June that WCC reiterates a "constant call for an end to the occupation, and for equal human rights for all" in the Holy Land.

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In the media

Ireland knows its Nato neutrality is shameful by Ruth Dudley Edwards

The country thought it could have its cake and eat it, by relying on the hated British for its defence

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is posing Ireland – which is not a Nato member – with difficult choices. In its happy position of having next door a neighbour that used to be an enemy but had become its best friend in the EU, it has been cosily accustomed to having its cake and eating it.

Governments spoke piously from the high moral ground of the sacred tradition of neutrality and contributed some modest peace-keeping forces to UN operations. But the reality was that they had always spent a pittance on defence because they knew that the UK would come between them and any international danger, however much they badmouthed the British for their wickedness over Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Take what happened in March last year when Russian long-range aircraft, for the third time in a week, headed south down the Atlantic in air space controlled by Irish authorities but which the country did not have the resources to police. Three RAF fighters scared them off. This was not an unusual event – just a routine Russian reconnaissance. And post 9/11, Ireland had a confidential agreement that the UK Government would deploy aircraft if there was an immediate threat to life.

Ireland was in a happy place, revelling in smiles and back-patting from the EU Commission for its readiness to sacrifice its sovereignty in the name of internationalism and to be used as a weapon in the Brexit negotiations. And it was part of a little club of countries whose neutrality was well respected.

But Putin has changed everything utterly. Finland and Sweden are speeding ahead into Nato, an organisation hitherto widely ridiculed as a pointless relic of the Cold War, which is now seen as a saviour. In a referendum, 66 per cent of Danish citizens have just voted to abolish their EU defence opt out.

Disturbing questions are being asked by European countries, and even by the US, about Ireland's commitment to collective defence. And disobliging people are harking back yet again to Ireland's failure to fight the Nazis (although in fairness its government was neutral, but in practice pro-Allies).

It has been fortunate for democracy that Ireland's two traditional political enemies are governing in coalition, allowing the Fianna Fáil Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, and his deputy, Fine Gael's Leo Varadkar, to agree swiftly a responsible line. In the month before the invasion of Ukraine, Martin began clarifying that the country's position was militarily but not politically neutral.

After it, Varadkar went further in the Irish parliament. The country was militarily unaligned but "not neutral at all ... support for Ukraine is unwavering and unconditional". Irish

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public opinion, which is volatile and often Left-wing, became deeply sympathetic to an invaded country with which it identified. The doors were opened to unlimited Ukrainian refugees and Ireland now has more than it can accommodate.

Saying little on the war, however, is Sinn Féin – a party that eulogises the terrorists of the IRA but speaks of neutrality as a sacrament – which has been so embarrassed by its past pro-Russian sentiments that it wiped them all off the party's website.

Its president, Mary Lou McDonald, is playing it safe: Sinn Féin's foreign policy priorities, apart from Irish unity, are "firmly asserting Ireland's position as non-aligned" and actively exercising maximum international pressure against Israel's "apartheid regime". Its vicious propaganda has turned Ireland into the most anti-Israel country in the EU.

But McDonald is no fool, and she knows that in the middle of a European war, with Ireland outside Nato, and Britain and America the leading defenders of Ukraine, this is no time to be controversial.

So Irish neutrality – complacent at the best of times – has now become untenable, and perhaps its politicians will finally resolve to do something about it.

In May, Simon Coveney, the minister for foreign affairs and for defence, told a Harvard gathering that the Russian invasion would be bringing about a shift in attitude in Ireland. "Neutrality means Ireland decides when we get involved and when we don't. Ireland is not neutral." It was

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sending non-lethal supplies, such as medical equipment and humanitarian aid, to Ukraine, he explained, and he believed they would in the future be more open to collective approaches to security. Praising the Biden administration for getting the balance right “supporting Ukraine while at the same time not letting the war spread beyond the borders”, it was no longer “sustainable” to be “an outlier” spending only 0.3 per cent of its GDP on defence.

Referring to Brexit as “a pebble in the shoe”, he said that in the context of Ukraine, “we have to get our act together as a continent”. Resolving the problem of the Protocol could yet be an unintended consequence of Putin’s disastrous war.

Published in The Daily Telegraph, June 30, 2022

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

The Pope Video - July 2022: For the Elderly

Pope Francis has released his prayer intention for the month of July, and urges everyone to pray for the elderly, so that they may be "teachers of tenderness".

As the Church gears up to celebrate the Second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on 24 July, the Holy Father

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is calling on Catholics to pray throughout the month for the elderly.

The text of the video follows:

We cannot speak about family without talking about the importance of the elderly among us.

There have never been so many of us in the history of humanity, but we don't quite know how to live this new stage of life: there are many plans for assistance for the old age, but few projects for existence.

We elderly people often have a special sensitivity for care, for reflection, and affection. We are, or we can become, teachers of tenderness. And indeed we can!

In this world accustomed to war, we need a true revolution of tenderness.

We have a great responsibility towards new generations about this.

Let us remember: grandparents and the elderly are the bread that nourishes our lives, the hidden wisdom of a people. That is why we must celebrate them, and I have established a day dedicated to them.

Let us pray for the elderly, that they may become teachers of tenderness so that their experience and wisdom may help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility.

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Watch the video here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=grvXTu-_A8o

Poem for today

From the Somme by Leslie Coulson

(Leslie Coulson was killed in action 1916)

In other days I sang of simple things,
Of summer dawn, and summer noon and night,
The dewy grass, the dew wet fairy rings,
The larks long golden flight.

Deep in the forest I made melody
While squirrels cracked their hazel nuts on high,
Or I would cross the wet sand to the sea
And sing to sea and sky.

When came the silvered silence of the night
I stole to casements over scented lawns,
And softly sang of love and love's delight
To mute white marble fauns.

Oft in the tavern parlour I would sing
Of morning sun upon the mountain vine,
And, calling for a chorus, sweep the string
In praise of good red wine.

I played with all the toys the gods provide,
I sang my songs and made glad holiday

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Now I have cast my broken toys aside
And flung my lute away.

A singer once, I now am fain to weep,
Within my soul I feel strange music swell,
Vast chants of tragedy too deep - too deep
For my poor lips to tell.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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