

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Enniskillen to remember VJ Day 80

The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Regimental Association and the Inniskillings Museum will be marking the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day on 15 August with a Service of Reflection and Remembrance at St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen at 11am.

This special service of remembrance will mark the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, commemorating the end of the Second World War in the Far East.

Enniskillen is unique in the United Kingdom, being the “home” to two Regiments in the British Army: the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (antecedent regiment of the Royal Irish Regiment) and the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards (antecedent regiment of the Royal Dragoon Guards).

The 1st Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers was the only Irish infantry battalion represented in the Burma Campaign. Their service in the Far East was marked by extraordinary hardship, suffering, and resilience. In the period 1942-1943, 425 Inniskilling soldiers lost their lives due to enemy action and disease. Of those, only 38 have known and marked graves. Many more were wounded, taken as prisoners of war, or listed as missing in action.

Maeve Cadden, Curator of the Inniskillings Museum, commented:

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“This anniversary is a solemn reminder of the price of peace. Many of these men were young, far from home, and fighting in conditions few of us today can truly imagine. In respect of this historic occasion, we will come together to remember their names, their stories, and their legacy”.



All are welcome to attend this reflective service to remember those who gave their all for our freedom.

News

Ballymena woman's 70,000 stitches lifts Belfast school and Christian Aid project in Cambodia

Did you hear the ‘yarn’ about the Ballymena woman whose knitting challenge raised more than £1,500 for Christian Aid’s work?

Mary Campbell, a parishioner of Ballymena Parish (Kilconriola and Ballyclug) decided that instead of running 70 km this Christian Aid Week, she would ‘run up’ 70,000 stitches, by knitting five little baby jumpers.

But she didn’t stop at five. Altogether, she knitted 45 of the little garments which were brought out to Cambodia by the

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staff and Sixth Form pupils of Breda Academy in Belfast where they were donated to low-income families.

While most people of Mary's age are enjoying their retirement, this youthful 79-year-old is still working part-time, travelling three days a week from her home in Ballymena to Breda Academy where



she helps newcomer children to improve their English. 🙌

Mary even shared a 'purl' of wisdom: "I believe that 70k in May is the new version of house-to-house. Just as house-to-house collections enable people from the wider community - outside the churches - to contribute funds for Christian Aid's work, 70k in May does the same. I want to thank my family and friends and the staff of Breda Academy for sponsoring me so generously."

We are 'sew' grateful to Mary for raising this money for our work and to everyone who dug deep to donate.

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We also want to thank the good people of Ballymena Parish who held a church collection and two lunches which raised more than £1,500 for this year's Christian Aid Week appeal. Mary's knitting challenge and the parish fundraising brought the church's total this year to more than £3,000 and 'needles' to say, we are absolutely delighted.

It's no wonder we @loveballymena.



C of I Foxford's 5th Annual Parish Outing

Took place on Saturday 19th July. 'To Parke's Castle, Co Leitrim, Lissadell House and Drumcliffe Church. It was good to meet Pamela Cassidy in Lissadell and Rev Luke Pratt who led us in a short service at Drumcliffe church.

Bible Society report stating UK Church is having period of rapid growth scrutinised by Humanists UK

A recent report by the Bible Society stating that the UK Church is experiencing a period of “rapid growth” has come under scrutiny by Humanists UK.

The Quiet Revival report, released in April, was based on a YouGov survey that suggested monthly church attendance had risen by 50 per cent in six years—from 8 per cent of the population in 2018 to 12 per cent in 2024. The Bible Society described the findings as evidence of a revival, particularly among the Gen Z population.

However, Humanists UK has pointed out that the findings appear to contradict other reputable data sources, including the British Social Attitudes Survey and church attendance figures from major denominations.

A separate YouGov poll—commissioned by the British Election Study (BES) around the same time—found that just 6.6 per cent of the population were attending church monthly, down from 8 per cent in 2015. That poll used a larger sample size and was based on a long-standing panel.

When asked to explain the conflicting data, YouGov acknowledged that the likely cause was “survey design and weighting”—highlighting how different sampling techniques and demographic adjustments can produce different

outcomes. While the Bible Society's survey was weighted for age and ethnicity (factors often linked to churchgoing), the BES was weighted based on political engagement, which can also impact religious behaviour.

Professor David Voas, a leading expert on religion and society, wrote in *The Conversation UK*: "Quota samples do not give each person a known chance of selection, and findings cannot be reliably generalised. The notion that these surveys offer a 1 per cent margin of error at a 99 per cent confidence level is misleading."

Voas also raised concerns that younger adults—those most often portrayed as a 'spiritual generation'—are harder to reach in online polling, and thus results concerning them may be less reliable.

Humanists UK has called on the Bible Society to retract its conclusions, stating that presenting the data without acknowledging contrary evidence has had a serious impact on public perception and debate.

However, the Bible Society has not backed down. It said in a statement to Premier Christian News: "Along with YouGov, we stand by the results of The Quiet Revival survey and are confident that our work reflects the reality on the ground."

The organisation said it's familiar with critiques of the report and created a FAQ section on its website to address concerns.

It states that although no survey, apart from an exhaustive census, can provide perfect accuracy, due to exhaustive

checks, the data in the report is trustworthy and shows "genuine change".

"...our findings were so surprising that as well as additional checks employed by YouGov, we also asked them about other possible methodological causes, such as possible disproportionate dropout from non-churchgoers and response bias (for instance, where churchgoers might be more likely to fill in the survey). None of these were found by YouGov to be significant, and they could see no methodological explanation for why we have ended up with such a different result. This strongly suggests we are observing a genuine change, not a methodological error," the website reads.

In May, Alpha, the internationally recognised Christian course designed for exploring faith, reported its most successful year since its inception in 1977.

In 2024, more than two million people participated in Alpha courses around the world.

Education

Sophia is Methody's latest rowing champion

Congratulations to Sophia, for her outstanding achievements in rowing, especially her recent triumph at the 2025 Irish Rowing Championships where she won 3 gold medals!



Since starting her rowing journey just four years ago, Sophia has quickly risen through the ranks, representing Ireland internationally at the Under-19 level. Inspired by fellow alumna Rebecca Shorten, who captured a silver medal at the Paris Olympics.

Her dedication is commendable, balancing two training sessions a day alongside her studies. Sophia is a rising star in Irish rowing, and we can't wait to see what she accomplishes next!

For more details on Sophia's incredible journey, check out the full article here:

<https://ow.ly/Nvjz50WstSO>

Outdoor learning at Killard House School

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Thanks to our Community Fund, Killard House School in Donaghadee has opened a fantastic new outdoor classroom and sensory area.

Designed to boost well-being and inspire creativity, this transformative initiative will benefit over 220 pupils aged 4–19 receiving specialist education.

“At Belfast City Airport, we are proud to support projects that make a real difference in our local community.”

Funding for holidays and respite breaks for disabled children

The Adamson Trust gives financial help with the cost of holidays or respite breaks for disabled children aged between 3 and 17 with physical, mental or emotional impairments.

Alongside individual families, applications on behalf of groups of children, organisations, schools and other registered charities are welcome. Grants usually cover a relatively small part of the holiday cost.

Next deadline 30 September 2025.



Apply here: www.theadamsontrust.co.uk

Has watching The Open inspired you to follow a career in golf?

Helen Tung travelled from Australia to study our Masters in Golf Management located at Ulster University, Coleraine, just a few miles from Royal Portrush Golf Club where the world's oldest major golf championship comes to its exciting climax today.

Helen sought to join the programme as it blends advanced business management principles with specialised knowledge of golf operations, hospitality, event planning, and tourism.

The Masters in Golf Management is open to those who want to explore the global golf industry through a strategic, practical, and forward-thinking programme covering club and resort management, contemporary issues like sustainability and technology integration, and the strategic planning of golf tourism and events.

Find out more at
ulster.ac.uk/golf.

Cathedral Calls

Lego Hide and Seek at Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

This summer the



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**historic gem
that is Saint
Mary's
Cathedral in
Limerick is
hiding
something
special...**

It has been
turned into an
exciting Lego
Minifig
scavenger
hunt!

The challenge:
A group of
mischievous
Lego Minifigs
have found
their way into

the cathedral, and they're hiding in the most unexpected
spots! It's your mission to find them all while exploring this
stunning, centuries-old landmark and place of worship.

Why you should join:

It's the perfect mix of history and fun!

A family-friendly activity to enjoy with loved ones

Discover hidden corners of the cathedral you might have
missed

Prizes for those who find the most minifigs! 🎁



So, are you ready to play?
Bring your best detective skills, explore
the cathedral, and see if you can
uncover all the Lego surprises waiting
for you!

When: All summer long
Where: Saint Mary's Cathedral,
Limerick



Come for the history, stay for the hunt!

Northern Ireland International Organ Competition

12 competitors from 3 continents have been shortlisted as senior finalists in this year's Northern Ireland International Organ Competition.

The 13th edition will take place in Armagh between Monday 11 and Wednesday 13 August 2025.

The 12 competitors, drawn from a substantial longlist, are:

Pascal Bachmann (UK)
Miquel Carr (Spain)
Daniel Carroll (USA)
Jukka Geisler (Germany)

Jakob Gierok (Germany)

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Maximilian Haller (Germany)
Oskars Kalnins (Latvia)
Julien Landers (Luxembourg)

Jannik Raeker (Germany)
Áron Sipos (Canada)
Timothy Stewart (UK)
Wenhao Zhao (China)

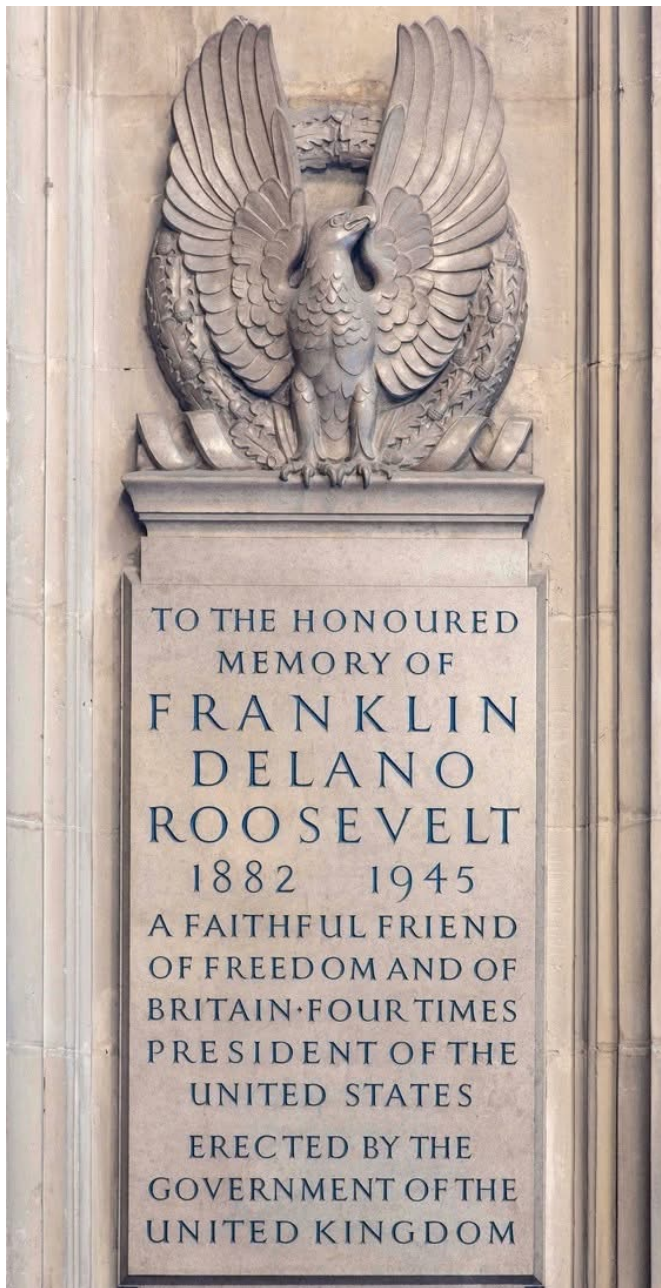
Each will perform on the organ of St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, in front of a jury chaired by Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin – Titular organist of the Great Organ of Saint Sulpice in Paris. They will compete for awards including a £4,000 first prize funded by the John Pilling Trust; a Bach Prize; international recitals at venues such as Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York, and Westminster Abbey; and the coveted Dame Gillian Weir Medal.

Last year the Senior competition was won by the outstanding young German organist, Jan Liebermann.

The Junior and Intermediate competitions will run on Tuesday 12 August, along with a masterclass given by Sophie-Véronique. She will also run a workshop for players of all standards on Wednesday 13 August. Full information is at

<https://www.niioc.com/2025competition>.

US President Roosevelt memorial at Westminster Abbey



This memorial to former US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was dedicated in the Abbey in 1948, making him the first overseas head of state to be commemorated here.

The inscription was written jointly by Prime Minister Clement Attlee and his predecessor, wartime PM Winston Churchill, who both paid tribute to Roosevelt at the memorial's unveiling ceremony. Roosevelt's widow, Eleanor, was also in attendance. Among the music was The Star Spangled Banner, which was played on the organ.

Clergy and ministry

Ordination of deacons by Archbishop Dermot Farrell



On Saturday, July 19, Archbishop Dermot Farrell ordained Arcadiusz Lenkiewicz and John Gormley to the diaconate in St Mary's Church, Lucan.

The new deacons' family and friends were joined for the celebration by parishioners from St Mary's Parish, Lucan, and their partnership parishes, as well as from St Philip the Apostle, Mountview, and their partnership parishes. Permanent deacons and priests from all corners of the Archdiocese were also in attendance at the ordination.

Deacons Arcadiusz and John have been supported throughout their formation by their wives Yolanta and Edel, their family and friends, their parish priests Fr George (St Philip's) and Fr Philip (St Mary's), and their parishes.

For Deacon Arcadiusz (Mountview) and Deacon John (St Mary's), this has been the culmination of over five years of discernment and formation. The formation team would like to extend their gratitude to everyone who has been involved in their discernment of, and formation for, a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate.

Finally, the formation team would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy, Fr Philip Curran, the St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council, and everyone from St Mary's Parish who were involved in the organisation of the celebration, in the welcome, in the ordination liturgy, and the refreshments after the celebration.

Please keep Deacon Arcadiusz, Deacon John, all permanent deacons, all priests, our auxiliary bishops, our Archbishop, and all in religious life in your daily prayers. Deacon Thomas Groves. Director of Diaconal Formation

Events

Holiday Bible Club – The Wonder Zone at Newbuilding Parish

Join us at Newbuilding Parish this summer as we dive into God's Wonderful World with Wonder Zone, a fantastic resource from Scripture Union!

Children will explore the wonders of science and faith through games, crafts, Bible stories, experiments, and loads of fun.

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18th-22nd August



2-4pm



Newbuilding Church of Ireland Centre



Completely FREE!



Open to all primary school-aged children

Everyone's welcome – no limit on places!



Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/NewbuildingsClub>

Feel free to tag friends and share – we'd love to see you there!

Portaferry Gala Festival is under way

Enjoy a week full of fun activities for all the family in this stunning seaside setting.

Full programme:

<https://www.portaferrygala.com/2025-gala-programme>

In the media

Ireland records its highest number of abortions since practice was legalised in 2018 - Irish Post

Figures released by the Department of Health (last) week reveal that 10,852 terminations were carried out across the country in 2024..

This is a marked increase on the 8,156 abortions reported in 2022.

The majority of the terminations were early medical abortions, involving the use of tablets prescribed by a doctor within the first couple of months of pregnancy.

A small percentage were carried out due to fatal foetal abnormalities, risk to the life of the mother or emergency medical interventions.

The report further revealed that of the women who had terminations 4,125 were based in Dublin, followed by 957 in Cork, 507 in Galway, and 441 in Limerick.

A total of 450 women did not disclose their county, and eight women travelled from Northern Ireland for an abortion.

The Department of Health's annual report also noted that the highest number of terminations occurred in January, followed closely by May.

Dr. Shirley McQuade, medical director of the Well Woman Centre, expressed surprise at the scale of the increase, suggesting that factors beyond population growth may be at play.

She pointed to the availability of free contraception for women aged 17 to 35 and said that while contraceptive failure is possible, it's generally rare.

The use of online consultations, introduced during the pandemic, has also made access to abortion services easier.

One of the two required doctor appointments can now take place over the phone or by video.

Meanwhile, the number of Irish women travelling to Britain for abortions has dropped dramatically from 2,879 in 2018 to just 201 in 2022.

Heritage

Only Irishwoman to win at Wimbledon

This year's Wimbledon tennis tournament provided ample skill, luck and entertainment. Once again there was no mention of Tipperary-born Lena Rice, the only Irishwoman ever to have won the Wimbledon trophy.

Lena Rice was born in the Tipperary village of New Inn in 1866, one of 8 siblings. She won the coveted Wimbledon trophy in 1890, her winning point secured using a move called the 'overhead smash' which she is credited with inventing. It was a sweltering hot July day and she was wearing a long skirt with numerous petticoats, a long-

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sleeved blouse tightly cinched at the waist, a corset, a bustle, a straw hat and leather shoes!

The tournament that year was a great one for Ireland. The men's singles title went to Lena's mixed doubles partner, Willoughby Hamilton, the first Irish man to win a singles title at Wimbledon. The doubles was also won by two Irish men that year, Joshua Pim and Frank Stoker.

1890 was Lena's last Wimbledon competition, in fact she never played in public again, retiring from professional tennis to care for her sick mother (Lena's father had died when she was two years old). In 1907, on her 41st birthday, Lena died at home in Tipperary of tuberculosis. She is buried with her parents in an old windswept cemetery in New Inn called Downey's Field.

New Inn village is very proud of Lena's legacy. They have beautiful all-weather tennis courts and, every year, they invite all local clubs to play for the honour of winning the Lena Rice Trophy.

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

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www.churchnewsireland.org

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

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