

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Lambeth Conference underway

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Lambeth Conference underway

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People and places

Moira Methodist Church's 200th birthday celebrations

The 200th birthday celebrations for Moira Methodist Church got underway on Sunday last.

The origins of Methodism in Moira can be traced back to the middle of the 18th century and a visit to the village by Church of England clergyman and founder of the Methodist movement, Rev John Wesley.

By the beginning of the 19th century, a Methodist society had been formed, worshipping regularly in Moira Mews.

A purpose-built Church was constructed on the current Main Street site in 1822, with a successor building opening in 2018.

Glenavy and Moira Methodist Circuit Superintendent, Rev Philip Gallagher, said: "As we celebrate 200 years of the Methodist Church in Moira, it's only natural to look back, and thank God for His faithfulness and providence to

generations of Methodists in the village. However, with modern worship facilities, a growing congregation, and a clear sense of purpose, we're also focused upon working with other churches in Moira to realise God's vision for our village today."

The church is hosting a movie night, a children's holiday club in partnership with The Faith Mission, and a family fun day. There will also be a free summer concert and a special thanksgiving service led by the President of The Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev David Nixon, with performances from the Moira Together Choir too.

All events are free and anyone can attend, regardless of whether or not they are members of a church.

Celebrations began today and conclude on Sunday. To find out what's happening visit www.mmc200.uk

Moravian link of founder of Wrightbus

Sir William Wright was buried before his funeral service as a Moravian minister declares him a 'genuine Christian' who shunned 'fancy ways'

The minister of the church where industrialist Sir William Wright has been buried this week has spoken of him as "a very genuine Christian man".

Rev Sarah Groves of Gracehill Moravian Church outside Ballymena oversaw a short committal service at her churchyard at noon for Sir William's family.

Unusually, it came before his funeral service held two hours later.

Verses from the Psalms (no. 119) were read at the graveside (“Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord...”).

He was not a member of the church (he was affiliated to Highkirk Presbyterian in Ballymena), but his wife Ruby was connected with it, and the two of them were married there.

“William has always been very kind and generous in a gentle way to the Moravian Church; many individual acts of kindness to people in the village,” said Rev Groves.

“If ever I saw him he’d say ‘oh how is the church?’ He’d always come to the village fair. He’d be sat there just having a cup of tea and cake with everybody else.

“He was what you saw. He would be the same in his home or if he met you at the cashpoint – wherever. He was a very good ‘person’ person. He remembered people’s names and there was no fancy way about him. The titles were an honour but he didn’t live on them.

“He was a faithful Christian.

“I always think of him as a man who lived out the ethos of the ‘wisdom’ literature of the Bible – the Book of Proverbs; working steadily, delighting in the wife of your youth, of seeking the Lord’s ordinances.

“Nobody’s perfect, but he was a very genuine Christian man.”

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The Moravian Church is very small in Northern Ireland, with just five congregations.

It owes its genesis to the Czech reformation in 1457, several decades before Luther, and is considered close to both the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church.

The Gracehill church dates back to 1765 and Sir William's family have asked well-wishers to donate to its upkeep.



Dublin debut at St Patrick's Cathedral for comedy quartet The MozART Group



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MozART group

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Art meets comedy in this incredible show which is guaranteed to bring joy and laughter to the whole family! All four gentlemen of the MozART group are well educated instrumentalists who graduated from prestigious Academies of Music in Warsaw and Łódź, but they decided to play classical music in a humorous way.

The MozART group created a worldwide unique musical cabaret playing to packed-out arenas globally, where the music, not the words, are the source of joy and laughter. Studies show that Tuesdays are the gloomiest day of the week, so cheer yourself up and book your spot today!

Tickets are available now!

<https://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/event/the-mozart-group/>

Lambeth Focus



The Irish front row at Lambeth - Derry, Clogher and Connor

The Lambeth Conference begins....

Bishop of Connor on Day 1

Today I joined with many others from across the Anglican Communion for the Welcome & Introductions day of the 2022 Lambeth Conference. There's much work ahead, but today it was just good to begin to meet with people.

Great to meet and spend time with the small group of bishops from across the communion that I had been introduced to by Zoom in preparation for the conference, but really lovely to meet folk that I have had some connection with before the conference.

Bishop David Court from Grimsby, who I first met back in Oak Hill College; Bishop Elias Chakupewa from Tabora, Tanzania who stayed with us in Carrickfergus rectory; Rev Dr Robert Heaney, who was our Crosslinks Mission Partner in Tanzania, but now is a professor in Virginia USA and is part of the Conference Team here; Bishop David Ireri from Embu, Kenya who I met at an Anglican Leadership conference in the US in 2018 and Bishop Levi Mapandulu from Connor's link diocese of Yei, South Sudan.

Oh, and there are a few Irish bishops here too!

Speakers at Bishops' Retreat

Bishops will hear addresses from:

The Revd Prebendary Dr Isabelle Hamley, Secretary for Theology and Ecumenical Relations and Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops;

The Revd Dr Paul Swarup, Presbyterian Green Park Free Church, New Delhi, India

Dr Esther Mombo, Professor of African Church History, Gender and Theology at St Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.

The Spouses' Retreat

Explores what it means to be 'Called by Name' and 'Known and Loved'. Mrs Caroline Welby and Canon Paula Gooder, from St Paul's Cathedral, England will feature among other session leaders and contributors.

Text of Lambeth Calls to be discussed by Bishops

The Calls which will be discussed by bishops from around the world at the Lambeth Conference 2022 have been published.

The document Lambeth Calls includes revisions to a number of draft Lambeth Calls which were released last week as part of Lambeth Calls: Guidance and Study Documents.

It includes revisions to the Call on Human Dignity, agreed by the drafting group following consideration of widespread responses from bishops and others.

There are also revisions to the draft Calls on Discipleship, Mission and Evangelism and Inter Faith Relations.

Bishop Tim Thornton, Chair of the Lambeth Conference's Lambeth Calls Subgroup, said:

“We have listened carefully and prayerfully to what bishops and many others have said in response to the draft Calls, especially that on Human Dignity. Archbishop Justin has



The Archbishop of Canterbury

invited the bishops of the Anglican Communion to come together as a family to listen, pray and discern – sometimes across deeply-held differences.

“It is our prayer that these Calls can offer a basis for those conversations – and that all of our discussions will be marked by the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

“Please continue to pray for us that we may continue to listen, walk and witness together.”

Please click here to view the Lambeth Calls document - [\[https://www.lambethconference.org/programme/lambeth-calls/\]](https://www.lambethconference.org/programme/lambeth-calls/)

Comment

LGBT Church of Ireland members welcome same-sex marriage statement

A group representing LGBT members of the Church of Ireland has welcomed a change from the Anglican Communion to a major statement on same-sex marriage, Robbie Meredith of BBC News NI reports.

Ahead of the global Lambeth Conference, the communion had defined marriage as "between a man and a woman".

But that statement has now been altered to say that some Anglican churches have welcomed "same-sex union/marriage".

Changing Attitude Ireland (CAI) said the Church of Ireland's silence on the controversy was disturbing.

When contacted by BBC News NI, the Church of Ireland said its bishops would "participate in the debates and discussions that take place at the conference".

"All of our bishops have been invited to attend the conference, and would plan to attend unless this is not possible due to personal circumstances," they said.
'Not permissible'

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The Lambeth Conference takes place every 10 years and is a major gathering of more than 600 Anglican bishops from across the world.

Hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, it began in Kent on 26 July and lasts for 12 days.

At the conference a series of statements - or "calls" - are put to bishops and discussed.

But a draft statement on human dignity published ahead of the conference said that "it is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same gender marriage is not permissible".
church

It added that "legitimising or blessing of same-sex unions" cannot be advised, and "it is the mind of the communion to uphold 'faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union'".

But that led to protests from a number of Anglican congregations from around the world, including the Anglican Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

On Tuesday the Lambeth statement was changed by the Anglican Communion at the last minute.

"Many provinces continue to affirm that same gender marriage is not permissible," the revised statement said.

"Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the "legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions" cannot be advised.

"Other provinces have blessed and welcomed same sex union/marriage after careful theological reflection and a process of reception."

'Hurt and division'

Changing Attitude Ireland, a long-standing advocacy group for LGBT members of the Church of Ireland, told BBC News NI the change was welcome but there were still questions about "who originally drafted such a call and on what basis".

But CAI also said that it "deplored" that an Anglican resolution passed in 1998 that "the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions cannot be advised" had been "brought up for discussion once again" in 2022.

They said that had caused "hurt and division".

"The Church of Ireland House of Bishops' silence on this extremely unsettling matter, in contrast to many other Anglican Churches throughout the world, is particularly disturbing," the CAI statement continued.

"It could be asked whether they are hoping that by avoiding the topic of LGBT+ inclusion, the issue will magically disappear.

"We call on the Church of Ireland, and its House of Bishops, to now engage with us on the issue of welcome and equal inclusion for its LGBT+ members."

What do other churches think of same-sex marriage?

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The Church of Ireland and the Church of England do not currently permit same-sex marriage, but both accept LGBT people as full members.

The Scottish Episcopal Church - which is an Anglican church - voted to allow same-sex marriage in 2017.

The Church in Wales approved a service of blessing for same-sex couples in 2021.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a policy that anyone in a same-sex relationship cannot be a full member of the Church.

In 2018, it also voted to loosen its ties with the Church of Scotland due to its more liberal attitude to same-sex relationships.

Meanwhile, the Methodist Church in Ireland also only permits marriages between a man and a woman, in contrast to the Methodist Church in Britain.

Report courtesy of BBC News NI 28/07/2022. Robbie Meredith is BBC News NI Education Correspondent

Bishops who deny the Gospel 'should be removed from their positions'

Christian Concern leader Andrea Williams has expressed her disappointment over changes to a Lambeth Call on marriage and sexuality, Christian Today reports.

The Call on Human Dignity will be discussed and voted on by 650 Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference next week.

It has been revised to remove a reaffirmation of the 1998 Resolution 1.10, which upholds marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and rejects homosexual practice.

The change was made after pressure from liberal bishops, including those in the US Episcopal Church and Church in Wales.

Ms Williams, who is also a lay member of the Church of England General Synod, said that the views of traditionalist Anglicans were being silenced.

She said that "apostate" bishops should be removed from their positions.

"Faithful Anglicans around the world stand on the biblical principle of marriage between a man and a woman as taught in Scripture, reflected in the doctrine of the church throughout history and re-stated in Lambeth 1:10," she said.

"Their voice is being silenced by a vocal and powerful minority of apostate Western and American Bishops.

"These bishops that deny the gospel should be removed from their positions rather than be allowed to use their influence to bully faithful Anglicans out of the space that is rightfully theirs.

"It is a great disservice to the gospel, its power and witness when Lambeth Palace allows this to happen."

Report courtesy of Christian Today

Why is the Church obsessed with gay sex?

The Archbishop is being turned into an Anglican Pope - Giles Fraser

Every ten years, bishops from all over the global Anglican Communion meet up in Canterbury to argue about gay sex. They are supposed to be talking about other things as well — after all, there are 90 million Anglicans worldwide and there is much to discuss: poverty, global warming, famine, war, even secularisation.

The theme for this year's conference is "God's Church for God's World: walking, listening and witnessing together". But the only witnessing they are doing is to the brokenness and divisiveness of the Communion. Out in the parishes, the best we can hope for is that our parishioners won't notice. We are all praying for a busy news week.

The Anglican Communion is the product of empire. As the map of the world came to be covered in red, missionaries from the Church of England piggybacked upon the whole imperial project to convert indigenous peoples to the joys of the Book of Common Prayer. And they were remarkably



successful at it: Cranmer proved surprisingly popular in Kigali. Not only that, but the worldwide Anglican Church — especially in Africa — continues to grow at an incredible rate. As churchgoing collapses in the UK, and in the West more generally, in other places it is rapidly expanding. In 1970, there were 7.7 million Anglicans in Africa. By 2015, that figure had risen to 57 million and continues to grow. In numerical terms, Anglicanism is thriving — it is currently the third largest group of Christians in the world. Never before have there been so many people in the pews. Mostly, they are in their thirties, female, black, and conservative.

It may be no surprise, therefore, that the Archbishop of Canterbury has proposed that the worldwide Anglican Communion ought to have a greater say in choosing his successor. It used to be that the global communion supplied just one of the 17-member group that passed a name to the Queen. Last month, it was agreed that it should be five —

with local representation from Canterbury being halved. The Church of England was formed on the basis that “the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England”. Yet in the years to come, the Bishops of Nigeria will play a decisive role in choosing the most senior member of the British establishment outside the royal family, and ex officio member of the House of Lords. Which is why it is likely that the next Archbishop will be even more conservative on matters of sexuality than his — and yes, it will inevitably be a him — predecessor. The fabric of the Communion will continue to tear, with the shrinking liberal West at continual ideological war with the burgeoning Global South, the hot button issue remaining that of homosexuality.

The organisers of this year’s Lambeth Conference were especially keen that the world’s bishops would not get derailed by more endless arguments over gay sex. But however hard they tried, the question could not be managed away. Somehow, a text that claimed “it is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same-gender marriage is not permissible” found its way into the official papers. Given that a number of the bishops are themselves in same-sex marriages (their spouses were not invited), this was slightly tricky. Late on Monday night, just hours before all the purple shirts were due to gather, Justin Welby intervened to allow liberal bishops to express their disagreement with this statement. But the damage was already done. The Conference was preceded with lots of talk of reconciliation. Planners had been “cooing in our ears about fellowship”, said the Bishop of Los Angeles. But all that feels a very long way away now. The Anglican Communion has long been a recipe for perpetual rancour.



And the only way to take all the acrimony from the debate is to stop Canterbury being the focus of the global Church.

How a small and rather uneventful town in Kent became the centre of a worldwide religious community is a story that develops from the earliest conversion of England, through its popularity as a pilgrimage site because of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, to the rapid expansion of the British Empire. These days there is no reason for Canterbury, or its Bishop, to be so important. But bishops don't vote to make themselves less important. And the inclusion of worldwide representation for choosing the next Archbishop, while ushered in under the banner of greater inclusion, is actually a way of making the Archbishop into a kind of Anglican Pope. Motions at the Lambeth Conference that speak of the "mind of the Communion" only reinforce the deeply un-Anglican but increasingly common idea that the Church is

some top-down structure where people are told what to believe by a gathering of (mostly) men in pointy hats. Parishes are bleeding their power to dioceses; local national churches are being told what to think by meetings in Canterbury. Power is centripetal.

Unfortunately, Christianity has this thing about centralisation. Perhaps it's the whole "one God" thing that creates a desire for "may they all be one as your heavenly father is one". This thirst for oneness is an excellent thing when understood spiritually as the universal coming together of human beings, our fundamental solidarity under God; but organisationally it is a recipe for domination and bitterness. The idea that the latter can force the former is a terrible idea. The more power that gets located at the centre, the more there is to fight over.



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The Church bangs on about decolonisation when it comes to things like statues. But when it comes to power, the central Church keeps on accruing more to itself. It would not be constantly derailed by pointless arguments over gay sex if there wasn't any theological or administrative power to claim. I would be perfectly happy for the world's bishops to have a jolly to Kent every ten years: they could meet for lunch, go to the pub, worship in the Cathedral. They could meet other bishops, share a bit of gentle ecclesiastical gossip, sometimes have difficult chats about their differences. But they absolutely shouldn't sit in meetings and pass motions. And there mustn't be some chief wizard whose favour they are all seeking to curry.

The Anglican Community needs to become a much looser federation of churches where theological difference is not able to derail a sense of common endeavour. Only a powerless centre can become a focus of unity.

Courtesy of UnHerd 28/07/2022. Giles Fraser is a journalist, broadcaster and Rector at the south London church of St Mary's, Newington.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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