



**Image of the day -
Lichfield online with Cork**

Reports

Christian coalition calls for Climate Sunday services ahead of COP26

Christian groups marked 100 days until the UK hosts the COP26 climate-change summit by calling for the Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, to show more leadership on the issue.

With record-breaking heatwaves in North America, extreme flooding in Europe, China, and London, and a hunger crisis in parts of Africa, the ongoing climate crisis has highlighted the need for action at the UN summit taking place in Glasgow this November.

On Friday, while 200 participants gathered in Swanwick, Derbyshire, for the National Justice and Peace Network conference focussing on the theme 'action for life on earth - in London campaigners went to Parliament Square, outside the Palace of Westminster, to ask what had happened to UK leadership, with just months until world leaders visit UK shores.

The CEO of Christian Aid, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, said that COP26 was the biggest diplomatic event taking place on British soil since the Second World War: "The responsibility on the shoulders of Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak could not be higher, and yet they appear to be missing in action.

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"COP26 needs to deliver the long-promised climate finance for the world's poorest people, a proper process for addressing the permanent loss and damage caused by the climate emergency, and much more urgent emissions reductions to put us on track to limit global heating to 1.5C. There's still time, but it's running out, and we need to see the occupants of Downing Street putting their shoulder to the wheel to make COP26 the success it needs to be."

To mark the 100-day countdown to the talks, a coalition of Christian groups have called for churches to hold a 'Climate Sunday' service in the run-up to the summit, commit to practical action themselves, and sign a petition calling for more urgent action from the Government. More than 1500 churches from the denominational spectrum in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland have already signed up.

A key milestone of the campaign before COP26 will be a national Climate Sunday event in Glasgow Cathedral on 5 September. This will celebrate the commitments made by churches to that point, and present the Government with a list of those commitments and the signatories of all churches who have signed the declaration "The Time is Now".

The CEO of A Rocha UK, Andy Atkins, who chairs the Climate Sunday Coalition, said: "The climate crisis is accelerating alarmingly; but we have the unique opportunity in rich countries to accelerate the solutions by directing Covid recovery funds towards building a new, green economy. At present, the Government is in danger of 'building back worse'; so there has never been a more crucial time for UK churches to come together to pray, act

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locally, and speak up nationally on the climate crisis and on the need to 'build back greener'."

Hannah Eves, a member of the Young Christian Climate Network from Northern Ireland, which is also a supporter of the coalition, said: "It's five to midnight on the ticking clock to avoid catastrophic climate change. We're thrilled to see churches now acting on the concerns of my generation. But the grand statements we hear from the Government are so often undermined by contradictory actions.

"Boris Johnson says 'We're committed to Net Zero,' then launches a massive new road-building programme, for example. The whole world is watching. Our government needs to put its own house in order fast, to have a fighting chance of delivering a successful COP for the world and my generation."

For more details about the Climate Sunday initiative, including a series of free resources for churches, visit:
[www.climatesunday.org]

PCI welcomes demise of Republic's 'seriously flawed' assisted dying Bill

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has welcomed the decision by the Irish Parliament's Committee on Justice not to progress the Dying with Dignity Bill 2020, which the Committee described as having 'serious flaws'.

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In a statement on behalf of the all-Ireland denomination, former Moderator Very Reverend Dr Trevor Morrow, convener of the PCI panel that advises the Church on social, political and economic matters in the Republic of Ireland, said, “At the time of the Bill’s introduction last year, we said that this particular debate addressed matters of the deepest sensitivity in an area where a person’s essential dignity should always be affirmed.

“This issue raises the most fundamental questions about the value that is placed on human life in Ireland. We therefore welcome the decision by the Oireachtas Committee on Justice not to progress the Bill, essentially because of the serious flaws they found contained within the proposed legislation.

“PCI’s was one of 1,400 submissions received by the Committee in which we expressed our view that the proposed legislation was indeed poorly drafted and deeply flawed. We are pleased that not only did many others share the same opinion, including the Office of Parliamentary Legal Advisors, but that the Committee also came to this conclusion.”

Dr Morrow, who is minister emeritus of Lucan Presbyterian Church in County Dublin, continued, “As a denomination, we firmly believe that life is a gift from God, and the components that contribute to a peaceful and dignified death are not only physical, but also social, emotional, financial and spiritual. The true measure of any society can be estimated in how it treats its most vulnerable, and ensuring that those made vulnerable through illness and distress are well supported is a priority for us all. In that

respect our legislators would be better to focus on how the care needs of those approaching the end of life can be improved in a consistent manner across Ireland that affirms every person's inherent dignity.

“Three years ago members of our General Assembly, attending from across Ireland, discussed this matter and voted to oppose any legislation which allowed for assisted suicide, or euthanasia in these islands. We note the Committee on Justice has recommended that the topic of assisted dying, through suicide or euthanasia, would potentially benefit from detailed consideration by a Special Oireachtas Committee, as this will afford the topic ‘the level of consideration it merits’. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland therefore looks forward to further engaging with elected representatives on this matter, once this Special Committee has been established.”

Dr Morrow concluded by saying, “As our Moderator, Dr Bruce, said about this issue last year, we look forward to contributing to the national debate from the perspective of a pastor's care, and affirming that assisted suicide is not an expression of compassion for those already suffering.”

Guidance on face coverings at church services in C of I

The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev John McDowell, has issued the following guidance in relation to the wearing of face coverings at church services, following changes in Covid-19 restrictions by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Much has been reported in the Press in the last 24 hours about the decision by the Northern Ireland Executive to remove the mandatory requirement for face coverings to be worn during religious services in places of worship.

Please be aware that although the former regulations are now being moved to guidance only, face coverings will still be legally required when entering and exiting the building. It is also strongly advised that they are worn whilst singing or moving around inside the church premises. This new guidance only applies to acts of worship.

The clear guidance from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor remains that face coverings should continue to be worn, therefore parishioners are strongly encouraged to continue wearing face coverings, for the time being, when attending church services as the benefits, particularly in the regard to the welfare of others, outweigh the risks.

Congregational singing also considerably increases the risk of the spread of the virus so wearing a face-covering is a necessary mitigation against that risk.

By wearing a face covering, we are showing our support and consideration for other members of the congregation, particularly the more vulnerable and those with underlying health concerns. Individually and collectively, we are also then continuing to play our part in preventing transmission of the virus.

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Guidance remains that social distancing of two metres is recommended within church services. The closer we are in proximity to others, then the higher the risk. The risk of transmission is therefore higher at one metre compared to two metres. The highest risk environments for the spread of the virus are indoor, crowded, poorly ventilated spaces where people are in close proximity to others for a period of time.

Please continue to ensure that all necessary mitigations and safety measures are in place and that risk assessments are regularly updated.

People and places

Cork and Lichfield meet online

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton and members of the Diocese recently met online with the Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Michael Ipgrave OBE and members of the Diocese of Lichfield to discuss their ongoing relationship.

The link between Lichfield, in the Church of England, and Cork, Cloyne and Ross goes back to 2018 and since then several possibilities of connecting parishes, cathedrals and schools have been discussed. Upon the outbreak of Covid-19 many of these plans had to be put on hold, but equally, new opportunities have arisen.

The pandemic and consequent lockdowns have accented the importance of communication and relationships and at



Visitors from Lichfield and clergy from Cork, Cloyne and Ross in 2018

the online meeting the parishes of Perton in south Staffordshire, and Carrigaline presented their approach to forming a lasting relationship during these times. The two parishes connected and stayed in communication via virtual pulpit swaps, quiz nights in aid of the Mother's Union and Christian Aid, and the exchange of Christmas Cards among other things.

The sharing of prayers across both dioceses is an essential part of this link and several other ideas about youth work, the eco agenda, charitable giving, and civic connections were exchanged during the meeting.

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Both dioceses are eager to further strengthen their existing link and after praying together, the meeting ended with a final blessing by Bishop Michael.

Scotland: Short film highlights ancient pilgrim route

A new, short video has been produced on behalf of Faith in Cowal that showcases the rich religious heritage and newly established pilgrim routes across Argyll's spectacular Cowal peninsula.

Promoting 'The Cowal Pilgrimage', the video is narrated by Jim Ritchie and includes a captivating backing track written by Skye Beautyman, Gordon Whyte and Ciaran Whyte (performed by the eXp Youth Work School of Music).

Faith in Cowal project lead, Dan Romani, explained: "After launching a network of pilgrim trails in Cowal just a few weeks ago, we've produced a video that we hope will entice people to come and try them out. It reveals fascinating landmarks in all their glory such as Kilmorich church in Colintrave, the carved stones in Kilmodan and Lochgoilhead and Kilmun Church on the banks of Holy Loch, highlighting the natural beauty of the peninsula all the while.

"It's aimed at anyone visiting this stunning part of the world, be they cyclists, ramblers or campervan enthusiasts and was created by Glasgow based company Code Word Zebra with production by Subtle Sensor and features a number of Dunoon residents helping out as 'extras'.



"There's such a strong footprint of early Christianity in Cowal and we're delighted that this short film brings it to life in such a vivid way" added Dan. "We hope the video, and the 200 mile network of trails themselves, will appeal to visitors to the area".

The video, along with information about the pilgrim sites and detailed walking guides for The Cowal Pilgrimage, can all be found on the Faith in Cowal website: <https://faithincowal.org>

Find the video on YouTube here:
<https://youtu.be/leAV08xMLO4>



Deadline approaches: Movement for Good awards accepting entries

Ecclesiastical's Movement for Good awards is giving away a further €500,000 – with one charity set to receive a life changing €110,000. The deadline for charities to submit their applications is Friday 6 August 2021

For the third year running, Ecclesiastical is giving away over €1million to charities through its Movement for Good awards.

Through the second phase of giving, 30 charities will be chosen by a panel of judges to receive €10,000 to be put towards the advancement of heritage and arts, education, rural and community, climate, human rights and equality. What's more, two charities will benefit from an additional €50,000 each and another will receive an additional life changing €100,000 award.

Charities across the island of Ireland are invited to submit their applications before Friday 6 August 2021.

Applications will be assessed against four key areas: impact and effectiveness, sustainability, innovation, and care and compassion.

Designed to give eligible charities the financial assistance they need to make a real difference, the funding can be used within three years



and for a blend of project and core funding costs.

David Lane, Managing Director of Ecclesiastical in Ireland, said: “At Ecclesiastical we believe business should be a force for good. Charitable causes need sustained support and a sense of financial stability.

“Through the second phase of our Movement for Good awards we are actively championing innovation, giving charities the backing they need to propel their plans forward and turn creative ideas into practical solutions that benefit society. We hope to see a number of strong applications from Ireland between now and 6 August, so we can continue to help charities at a time when they need it most.”

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For further information on the Movement for Good awards phase visit:

[www.ecclesiastical.ie/movement-for-good/phase-two/]

Books, broadcasts, resources, and Webinars

Joseph and the Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat Summer Music Course, last 20 spaces available!

Belfast Cathedral Summer Music School presents...Joseph and the Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat Summer Music Course! 🌞🏰

Taking place from the 16th-20th August, 9am-4pm, this course is for children ages 7-14.

Belfast Cathedral is offering children the opportunity to work with a team of specialist music tutors on this 5-day course, which will culminate in a concert performance of Joseph and the Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat and other works for family and friends.

The course is open to all children regardless of their musical ability and we welcome complete beginners alongside those who are more advanced. We will be working with some of the city's finest professional musicians to create a vibrant and exciting programme.

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Follow the link to discover more about the Summer Music Course and to download the application form.

If you have any questions contact bcsms@belfastcathedral.org.

Make sure to get in touch with the Music School Team at BCSMS@belfastcathedral.org to book your space.

<https://www.belfastcathedral.org/news/belfast-cathedral-summer-music-school?>

Scotland's Catholic Museum launches interactive virtual site

Blairs Museum, Scotland's National Catholic Museum has launched a brand-new website featuring an interactive virtual museum and shop, thanks to funding from the Scottish Government's 'Museum Recovery and Resilience Fund' established to protect Scotland's culture and heritage sectors from the impacts of Covid-19.

The new website unites all the collections of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Collections Trust Museum, and the historic Library and Archive (both of which are on loan to the University of Aberdeen). The website also provides a link to the Scottish Catholic Archives at Columba House in Edinburgh.



This project was funded through a significant Recovery and Resilience Grant from Museums Galleries Scotland. In July 2020, the Scottish Government allocated £4 million to the Museum Recovery and Resilience Fund from the £97 million package of funding to protect Scotland's culture and heritage sectors from the impacts of Covid-19.

The Museum Recovery and Resilience Fund aims to secure the future of Scottish independent museums put at risk by the pandemic and to protect the vital role that they play in their communities.

Museum curator and project lead Amy Miller said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented many visitors from coming in person to view our collections at Blairs. This new website and suite of online resources allows anyone with an internet connection to see our museum and treasures safely. We have 3D scanned a selection of our artefacts and users can interact with the object by zooming and rotating it to see all the details."

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She added: "We have also created a YouTube Channel to host our new series of web videos about our collections and the amazing stories they tell. We are still adding new videos so it is well worth checking the channel regularly."

The new website also features learning resources for school pupils to use in conjunction with the virtual museum so learning can take place with or without a physical visit. Schools will also have the option to 'Contact a Curator', where museums staff can lead learning sessions through videoconferencing software.

Lucy Casot, CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland said: "We are pleased to support Blairs Museum through the Recovery and Resilience Fund. The museum has faced loss of income and a multitude of challenges caused by the pandemic. They have responded to these difficulties with forward thinking plans to expand their online activities and support visitors and school children to explore this important cultural collection from afar."

LINK - The new website can be found at:
[www.schct.org.uk]

Pointers for prayer

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee,
that the course of this world
may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance,
that thy Church may joyfully serve thee

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in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord of the Church, we pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who acknowledge your presence and power in their lives. We pray for those who are laughed at or victimised because of their faith in you. We pray that you will give us strength to be true to our faith when it is questioned or belittled.

We pray for our church and our community and for a renewal of our vision and dedication to the work you have called us to do.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord of all nations, we pray for the needs of this world.

We pray for those nations where communities are broken by prejudice and hatred, where the fear of violence is never far away. We pray that where human endeavours to find peace and reconciliation seem so inadequate your power to draw people together will bring renewed hope for the future.

We pray for those who have knowledge and power in the fields of medicine and science. Let them not be corrupted by greed and ambition but grant them wisdom, integrity, humility and compassion to use the knowledge they have gained only for the good of all people.

Throughout the world-wide community of nations may there be a sense of responsibility for each other and a desire for equality and justice for all your children.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

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God of compassion, we pray for all those who are suffering with anxiety, stress, grief or pain and illness.

Long ago a woman believed she would be healed if she could just touch the clothes of Jesus. May we today believe that if we pray to you for those we know and love, your healing power will also flow into their lives bringing wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

In a moment of quiet our hearts reach out to you in prayer for the needs of those we love.

Grant us strength in our weakness, comfort in our sorry, peace of mind in our anxiety and stress and the renewed hope for life which only your presence and power can bring.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord of time and of eternity, we pray for those who have died and are now with you in your kingdom

We thank you for the communion we share with all those who have gone before us and pray that our lives may reflect on earth the light that surrounds them in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, be present among us this morning and may the transforming power of your Spirit work in us and through us today and throughout the coming week.

Merciful Father accept these prayers, For the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

Philippians 2:5-7 NLT

These amazing words form the beginning of what many people consider to be a First Century hymn. They beautifully express the fundamental truth that God's desire is to turn our thinking upside down! Our natural inclination is to seek power, prestige and recognition but Jesus came to this earth and did precisely the opposite. And that, says Paul, is the attitude that the Philippians needed to have towards one another in the church. He wants to see them ditch all traces of arrogance and to consider others better than themselves. It's all very challenging.

The humility of Jesus is truly astonishing. He, above everyone else, was entitled to have power and influence and to enjoy a life of ease and comfort but he gladly accepted the opposite. He was willing to endure the ultimate powerlessness of being hung upon a cross and to experience the agony of rejection by his own people and even by his Father. The outcome of his humility was that God exalted Jesus to the highest place of all and gave him the name above every name. Truly Jesus turns all our thinking about life on its head. And that is now the approach to life that Paul encourages his friends in Philippi

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to adopt. The only way to be blessed by God is to learn what it means to be truly humble.

So how are we going to grow in humility, since everything depends upon it? Probably the most important fact is that we cannot become more humble by our own efforts. There is nothing more sickening than someone who, like Dickens' character Uriah Heap, manufactures an artificial pretence of being "ever so 'umble". Humility results from us getting closer to God and allowing his Holy Spirit to do deep work on our character. The grace of humility will grow unselfconsciously and gradually as we come to love God. As we get to know God better we will find, miraculously, that we are starting to have the very same attitude as Jesus.

QUESTION

Whose example of humility do you find most inspiring?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you that by your Spirit you are helping me day by day to have the same attitudes as Jesus. Amen

