

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Remembering at St Giles

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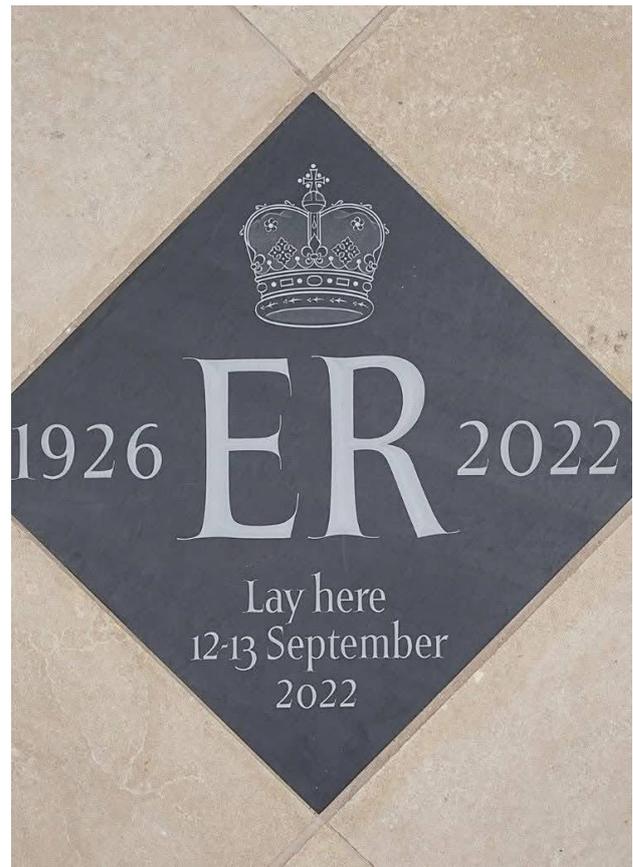
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Image of the day

Remembering at St Giles

King Charles and Queen Camilla unveil a memorial stone this week in St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh where Queen Elizabeth II lay at rest before being carried to London. Charles and Camilla attended the dedication of the memorial stone at the cathedral.



News

Supporting good causes 1 - 5

1. Children's Hospice Week

During Children's Hospice Week, something truly special happened across Northern Ireland.



From the unveiling of Oliver Jeffers' crayon mural to school bake sales, butterfly releases, shop coffee mornings and landmark light-ups; communities came together to celebrate the only Children's Hospice in Northern Ireland.

Thank you to every supporter, staff member, volunteer and fundraiser who made it a week to remember.

Take a moment to watch our short wrap-up video, capturing the colour, care and community spirit that make our Hospice so unique.

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Your support fills every day with colour and comfort and you can help us continue that work.

<https://brnw.ch/21wTJSn>

2. Cancer Fund for Children

Members of the Henry Brothers Ltd team joined NI Chamber President Cat McCusker and fellow business leaders for a fundraising hike up Slieve Donard - Northern Ireland's highest peak



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The climb was part of the ‘26 Mountains to Mayo’ campaign, a nine-day challenge to summit the highest point in every county across Ireland, all in support of the Cancer Fund for Children.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and contributed towards raising funds for this vital cause!

3. Coleraine Grammar Rugby Association

A proud day for Coleraine Grammar Rugby Association.



As we wrap up a remarkable academic year, we had the privilege of presenting a cheque for £50,000 to Dr Carruthers – our contribution to the school’s rugby programme for 2024/25.

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This milestone reflects the incredible support from sponsors, parents, alumni, and – most importantly – our players, all of whom are building the future of rugby at CGS.

From the appointment of a new Director of Rugby to overseas tours and exciting projects in the pipeline, it's been a year of real momentum – and we're just getting started.



We were also delighted to welcome back Darryl Callaghan, our last Schools' Cup-winning captain, and share stories and ambitions for the years ahead. Alumni support like Darryl's plays a vital role in what we're trying to achieve.

A heartfelt thank you to Dr Carruthers and the Board of Governors for their continued trust and backing – and to everyone who has helped us reach this point. Here's to a competitive and inspiring 2025/26 season.

4. Gort Cancer Support Group

Galway charity receives €5,000 as part of 'Movement for Good' awards



Galway Advertiser reports - One outstanding Galway charity has been awarded €5,000 in the latest special health and wellbeing draw through the **Benefact Group's 'Movement for Good' awards**, supported in Ireland by **Ecclesiastical Insurance**.

Gort Cancer Support Centre, based in Gort, County Galway, was selected from thousands of public nominations to receive funding aimed at supporting organisations with a core mission in health and wellbeing.

This latest draw is one of several special awards from the 'Movement for Good' initiative, recognising charities that promote physical and mental health, provide care services,

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and support vulnerable individuals. Ten charities across Ireland and the UK have each received €5,000 in this round of funding, helping them to continue and expand their critical work.

Providing these charities with this donation means that they can continue to operate and improve the lives of hundreds of locals in communities across Ireland. The 'Movement for Good' awards are an annual programme of giving, funded by Ecclesiastical Insurance and its parent company, Benefact Group. More than €1 million will be given away in 2025 to charities across Ireland and the UK through a mix of €1,000 and €5,000 special draws and larger grants by application. The €1,000 grants are open to all Irish-registered charities, and nominations can be made by anyone at any time throughout the year at www.movementforgood.com

Mary Nolan, director at Gort Cancer Support Group, said: “We are deeply grateful to the Benefact Group and all those who supported us through the 'Movement for Good' awards. This generous €5,000 grant will enable us to provide vital counselling and play therapy for children aged four to 12 who are facing the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis. These services are a lifeline for young children navigating incredibly difficult circumstances, and this funding ensures we can continue to offer them the compassionate support they deserve.”

For more information on how to support the 'Movement for Good' awards or to nominate a cause, visit www.movementforgood.com

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5. Royal superfan minister showcasing collection to raise cash for charity trip

A Co Armagh minister who is a Royal superfan is showcasing his remarkable 40-year collection of memorabilia - Lauren Scates reports in the Belfast Telegraph.

Rev Canon Derek Kerr, rector of St Vindic's Parish Church in Tynan, has items dating back to Queen Victoria's time.



The extensive display is currently on show inside the church, running until July 6.

Rev Kerr has spent years meticulously assembling an assortment of more than 500 items which showcase the lives and reigns of the Royal family.

His collection includes commemorative china, framed letters from Buckingham Palace, photographs and rare artefacts dating back to Victoria, who reigned between 1837 and 1901.

Some of the oldest pieces include jugs and crockery celebrating Queen Victoria's reign.

Rev Kerr can't lay his hands on the first item he acquired, but remembers it was something from the late Queen Elizabeth.

“It was a jug that I saw and purchased. I couldn't pick it out now but at the time it struck my interest,” he recalled.

Rev Kerr's passion for royalty was ignited in childhood, inspired by tales of King Arthur and the grandeur of castles and old houses. “As a little boy, I was always fascinated by movies with knights and jesters and make believe stuff — I always enjoyed that,” he said.

“More recently, I started watching period dramas like *Downton Abbey*.

“Over time, I observed life and found that I was interested in monarchy.”

This fascination evolved into a lifelong commitment to collecting Royal memorabilia and sharing his knowledge through engaging talks and exhibitions.

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As a Church of Ireland minister he is a firm believer in his power and that of the monarch to make a real difference in the community.

“My friends, colleagues and people often tease me and say it's all illusions of grandeur but I believe as a head of state, a monarchy, when it's done well and acted out properly by the person who holds it, it's a great example and encourager of someone who brings people together,” he added.

Rev Kerr hopes the local community will enjoy the exhibition, and will gain a new insight into the Royal family.

“I hope people will go away feeling proud of the monarchy we have,” he added. “It is really good fun to watch people go around it.

“It hasn't been too busy — we have had a slow, easy trickle of people which has been nice. The tables are laid across the pews so it's easy for people to see.

“Many people have left donations and have said they have enjoyed it.” The exhibition at St Vindic's Parish Church opened on June 20 and runs to this weekend, with visiting hours from 7.30pm-10pm on weekdays, 10am-10pm on Saturday and 2.30pm to 10pm on Sunday.

While admission is free, donations are welcome and will help fund an Africa charity trip scheduled for September.

Rev Kerr says he will keep the exhibition open after July 6 and urged anyone interested to contact him if they would like to see it.

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He said people have been very respectful of his artefacts. “I have encouraged them to enjoy and pick up the pieces if they'd like,” he explained.

“Some people are reluctant to touch them for fear of damaging the items, but to me, I want them to be able to learn something and enjoy the product — it's there to be enjoyed.”

The Africa mission trip that the exhibition is helping to fund will see the Archbishop of Armagh, John McDowell, Rev Kerr and several others journey to the country of Burundi.

The group will tour various parts of the country and visit the Mother's Union, which takes a holistic approach to focus on faith, family and community.

“We are going to see how we can be of help to them and encourage us to help them in their local parish and vice versa,” he explained.

“There will be a fundraiser for the trip, but I hoped that this event would give us a kickstart on the fundraiser as people have been unexpectedly donating to me on arrival.”

The trip will take place from September 18 for 10 days.

Education

Nearly €2m for teaching Irish in universities in Europe and the UK

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A funding pot of nearly €2m has been allocated to support the teaching of Irish at universities in Europe and the UK.

Ireland's Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary confirmed he has approved up to €681,146 per academic year for the period 2025-26 to 2027-28, which amounts to €1.979m in total.

The funds will support the teaching of Irish in universities in continental Europe and the United Kingdom under the An Ciste Tríú Leibhéal Thar Lear, 2025-2028 initiative.

Queen's University Work Experience fantastic for BRA pupils



Two of BRA's Lower Sixth pupils had a fantastic work experience hosted by the School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) at Queen's University Belfast.

The XP Work Experience Programme allowed pupils to explore the exciting world of computing and



engineering through a wide range of workshops and challenges.

Academy pupils, Wiktoria Januszewska and Jude Craig, were part of Team 7 (Commotion in the Ocean) that won the Biggest Real World Impact Award in the UN Sustainable Development Goals Hackathon. Their solution's potential for real-world impact really impressed our judges and demonstrated exceptional understanding of practical applications.

BRA is grateful to Queen's University for providing this opportunity for pupils as this will greatly assist them with career planning. #ATID



Belfast High School pupil agrees terms with Academy of Light at Sunderland AFC

We are delighted to report that Year 12 pupil Matthew Burns has agreed terms to join the Academy of Light's professional development Scholar Programme for 2025-26.



Matthew joins premier league club Sunderland from Coleraine FC, where he has progressed

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through the ranks since he was aged 13. Congratulations Matthew - we wish you every success for the future!

Events



Book your place on eventbrite, or
contact millie@downanddromore.org for
more information

ANTHEM

WORSHIP WORKSHOP

for young people

HOLYWOOD PARISH CHURCH
8TH + 9TH JULY | 10AM - 4PM
£60 FOR BOTH DAYS
FOR AGES 11 TO 18
ALL MUSICAL ABILITIES WELCOME
LUNCH PROVIDED



Anthem worship summer scheme at Hollywood

Do you know a young person with a heart for worship and a passion for music?

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We're so excited to invite you to ANTHEM: A two day worship summer scheme for young people, designed to equip, encourage, and empower the next generation of worship leaders! Whether you're a seasoned singer, just starting on keys, or still working out how your gift fits into worship, this day is for YOU.



Date: Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th July



Location: Holywood Parish Church



Time: 10am–4pm



Book now on Eventbrite! (£60 pp for the two days)

Expect worship, practical workshops, inspirational teaching, and the chance to connect with others who love Jesus and love music. Get in touch for more information.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/anthem-worship-workshop-for-young-people-tickets-1397195392029?aff=oddtcreator>

Perspective

Church Leaders express encouragement and thanks to PSNI

The Church Leaders Group (Ireland), has written to the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Jon Boutcher, and the Chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Mukesh Sharma, offering their encouragement and support, while expressing their thanks 'to the members of the PSNI for their courage in the face of adversity' over recent weeks. They also thanked

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officers for the protection and care they afforded to everyone who had been ‘attacked and abused... faced intimidation and the threat of violence...’

The Group, which is made up of the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops of Armagh, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Presidents of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and the Irish Council of Churches, said that, “We all have a responsibility to show love to our neighbours, to welcome the stranger, and to show kindness and compassion to the most vulnerable in society.”

In their letter, the Church Leaders said, “The last number of weeks have seen shocking examples of violence and intimidation on our streets and racially motivated attacks in various places across Northern Ireland, initiated by individuals who decided to take the law into their own hands.

“The rule of law underpins the very foundations of normal society, and no one is above the law. It is a very fragile entity and without its security, lawlessness can degenerate into anarchy. As Church Leaders, we therefore want to thank the members of PSNI for their courage in the face of adversity, and for the protection and care they afford to all who have been attacked and abused, who have faced intimidation and the threat of violence, particularly in recent days...No one should feel unsafe in their own homes or on the streets of his country.”

The Church Leaders continued, “We all have a responsibility to show love to our neighbours, to welcome the stranger,

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and to show kindness and compassion to the most vulnerable in society. Many acts of kindness have been witnessed during these last few weeks...[and](#) we would appeal to all people to work together in mutual respect for the safety and well-being of the whole community.”

In conclusion they assured the Chief Constable and the Policing Board Chair of their prayers and the prayers of those they represented. The Church Leaders also encouraged everyone to engage positively with PSNI, allowing its officers to do their duty and “for all to work together in mutual respect for the safety and wellbeing of the whole community.”

The letter was signed by Right Reverend Dr Trevor Gribben, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Sarah Groves, President of the Irish Council of Churches, Most Reverend John McDowell, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, Most Reverend Eamon Martin, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, and Reverend Alan Wardlow, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

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

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