

Church News Ireland



Image of the day -

Visit to East Belfast Mission by Irish and Caribbean Methodist Presidents

July 7, 2022

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Visit to East Belfast Mission by Irish and Caribbean Methodist Presidents

This week the East Belfast Mission welcomed two Methodist Presidents- President of The Methodist Church in Ireland David Nixon and President of the Methodist Church in the Americas and the Caribbean, Everard Galbraith along with his wife Sherraine - good chats - thanks to the project managers who told the story of EBMs work.

July 7, 2022

People and places



Well done to those from St Mark's Parish, Ballymacash, Lisburn, who took part in their sponsored walk for Christian Aid, on a beautiful evening in Wallace Park.

Fr McVerry hits back at housing minister's church comments

Responding to Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien's comments about "underutilised" Church-owned land when it comes to housing, Fr Peter McVerry said that the State has more than enough land to build a lot of houses and "it seems to me there's no urgency about doing that".

July 7, 2022

Speaking to The Irish Catholic, Fr McVerry said that experts he speaks to say that the State is in possession of enough land to build a significant number of houses without the Church's input.

New speaker for Down & Dromore Bible Week

Revd John Coles will be the speaker at Down & Dromore diocese annual Bible Week at the end of August. John is joining the event at short notice following the withdrawal of Archbishop Ben Kwashi due to ill-health.

The theme this year is 'Forward Together' and you are welcome to join in the events in Willowfield Church from Tuesday 30 August – Friday 2 September beginning each evening at 7.45 pm.

Bible Week will also be an occasion to celebrate leadership in the diocese with short acts of commissioning on Tuesday (Parish Readers) and Wednesday (Diocesan Readers). On Thursday Bishop David McClay is inviting the clergy of the diocese to reaffirm their ordination vows.

On Friday it is hoped that choirs and worship teams will make a special effort to come along for 'Let's Sing', an evening of worship and teaching from John. John is Chair of Trustees for New Wine which he led from 2001–2014. John oversaw the development of New Wine



Revd John Coles

from a summer conference to a network of leaders and churches, and then to a movement with a vision not only for renewal but church planting and social transformation. He continues to be involved in teaching and training church leaders. John and his wife Anne help lead a missional congregation who meet in a home in North London, with a vision to start other similar congregations.

Bible Week will begin each evening at 7.45 pm in Willowfield Church, 149 My Lady's Road, Belfast, BT6 8FE.

Free article from Presbyterian Herald

“A mind that works differently” - Erin Burnett articulates what it is like to have autism and describes the challenges it brings to her faith:

[https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland/docs/presbyterian_herald_july_2022/s/16138174]



Queen's Chaplaincy's Golden Jubilee Gala Ball



July 7, 2022



What a fitting end to an incredible year! Queens University Catholic Chaplaincy gathered in the iconic setting of Belfast's City Hall on 10th June for a Gala Ball to celebrate Chaplaincy's Golden Jubilee.

More than 250 students, staff, alumni and friends were welcomed by our newly-elected Lord Mayor, before enjoying a fine dinner, good wine and great entertainment. Thanks was expressed to all those individuals, businesses and organisations who supported the event, and to the guests who helped mark this significant milestone in the record of service to the University and City with such style and good humour. Here's to another 50 golden years!

Thanks to the Ulster Tatler for the photographs.

July 7, 2022

A story of ‘miracles, grace and generosity’ - Book on Lisburn parish and Uganda killing fields school

Never Lose Hope – the story of St Apollo School, Kasizi, is a book ‘littered with miracles, grace and generosity,’ guests in the hall of Christ Church, Lisburn, heard at its launch on Tuesday July 5.

Sub-headed Journey of Partnerships, the book is written by the rector of Christ Church, the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada, and tells the story of the partnership between Christ Church and St Apollo School, located in what was once the ‘killing fields’ of Uganda.

In the book’s preface, Paul writes that it is a story across many miles with many lives changed and transformed. “At the heart of this story is the children at St Apollo School, Kasizi, their education and learning and growing in a place of hope because of the God we worship and learn.”

He describes it as ‘an amazing journey long before the first brick was laid on the new school buildings in 2012.’

The story is based partly on Paul’s own reflections, as well as thoughts of members of the teams who travelled to Kasizi in 2012, 2015 and 2017, those whose trip was thwarted by the pandemic in 2020, and published documents, including the parish magazine.

It was launched in the presence of a large gathering of parishioners by local MLA Robbie Butler, who said he had



Robbie Butler MLA at the launch of the book by Archdeacon Paul Dundas

found it full of miracles, grace and generosity. “It is really astonishing what God can and does do when we are faithful to his calling and obedient to act. That’s clearly what has happened here with the partnership between Christ Church, Lisburn, Fields of Life and St Apollo School, Kasizi,” Mr Butler said.

He added that the book’s title *Never Lose Hope* was a powerful phrase, and one that would resonate both in Lisburn and in this part of Uganda.

“There is much to be proud of in this book and in the delivery of the help to the families with the school at Kasizi. For me it is the seeds of God’s love that you have planted in

July 7, 2022

the hearts and lives of those children and adults that will help transform those families, the villages and in Gods time a nation,” Mr Butler said.

Introducing his book, Paul said he had been inspired to tell the story of St Apollo when, during the Covid-19 lockdown, he read From Killing Fields to Fields of Life, by Fields of Life founder Trevor Stevenson. This, he said was about ‘amazing hope’ and ‘amazing people.’

“God is good is something that has resonated in our hearts,” he told guests at the launch.

“When the first team went to Kasizi, all they saw was a building site, but now it is a community because of the God we know.

“It is the amazing children, with their smiling faces; it is the staff who sustain the school; it is all who have journeyed from here to here and those here who have been so supportive.”

It takes time, Archdeacon Dundas said, to build relationships. “St Apollo is located in Idi Amin’s ‘killing fields.’ Families had to flee. What a transformation, hope now prevails. It is a different world completely and an amazing place to visit.”

The Archdeacon thanked the members of the various teams, his family, the designer of the publication, and the Rev John Pickering for checking its contents.



Members of Christ Church, Lisburn, teams who have travelled to St Apollo School over the years, and some of those whose plans to visit Uganda in 2020 were thwarted by the pandemic, along with the Ven Paul Dundas (front, second from left), rector and author of ‘Never Lose Hope.’

In a foreword in *Never Lose Hope*, John pays tribute to the vision of Fields of Life. “It is being part of the rejuvenation of Africa from poverty and corruption to increased prosperity through education, with the building of schools,” he wrote

Referring to the new school building, a cook house, teachers’ residence, nursery, an extension to the church and skills training in husbandry, his foreword continues: “The great achievement is heightened when it is realised that this vision of Fields of Life will be ongoing for generations of children to come in the future. The interest of the parish will be continued and deepened.”

July 7, 2022

Following the speeches, there was a steady stream of people wishing to buy a copy of *Never Lose Hope*, with Archdeacon Dundas signing each copy. Copies are available from the parish office, priced £4, with all proceeds going to St Apollo School.



CLARE CHORALE
24th September 2022
Waterfront Hall, ICC
Belfast

Live

Buy your tickets now!



Want to enjoy a musical night in Belfast? Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to watch the popular group Clare Chorale perform live! Buy your tickets today:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/308946235507>

Family Outreach Worker (part-time) wanted

St. John's Parish Church (Lurgan) is looking for "an enthusiastic and passionate person to join our team to work with our families and the children within our church and local community.

"This ministry will seek to operate a flexible approach that builds positive relationships to help families and children grow as disciples of Christ whilst also seeking creative opportunities to share Jesus with children and families in the local area who do not know him.

Closing date for applications: Friday 22 July at 12 noon.

If you'd like more info or to apply, please click on link at -
[[<https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2022/07/family-outreach-worker-part-time>]

News reports

Andrew Nethsingha appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey

Andrew Nethsingha, currently Director of Music at St John's College, University of Cambridge, has been



appointed the new Organist and Master of Choristers at Westminster Abbey.

He will succeed James O'Donnell, who has been appointed as Professor in the Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. He will leave the Abbey this Christmas, and Andrew Nethsingha will replace him in the New Year.

As the Abbey's Director of Music, the Organist and Master of the Choristers is the head of the Abbey music department and oversees all musical aspects of the Abbey's work, including directing the celebrated Choir of Westminster Abbey.

Since its foundation in the fourteenth century, the Choir has sung daily services in the Abbey and today has a worldwide reputation for its work, which includes concerts, broadcasts, and a critically acclaimed series of recordings for Hyperion Records.

July 7, 2022

The Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, said:

‘I am delighted that we can look forward to welcoming Andrew Nethsingha into our life, our work, and our worship. He is an exceptional musician who needs no introduction to those who visit ‘places where they sing’. He is known to audiences at the Three Choirs Festival and to the many who



have experienced St John’s Advent Carols, a series of marvellous recordings and otherwise shared in years of music made for the glory of God. He is also known for his kindness, intelligence and readiness to explore the potential for music to enhance divine worship.

‘Under James O’Donnell the Abbey has enjoyed a golden age of music making. We are so grateful. His legacy is in safe hands.’

Andrew Nethsingha said:

July 7, 2022

'I am excited to have been appointed to direct the music at Westminster Abbey. It will be a great privilege to contribute to the worship in a building of such beauty and historical significance. Following the work of his eminent predecessors, James O' Donnell has created a choir of enormous distinction, comprising choristers from the unique Abbey Choir School and some of the world's finest adult choral singers. I have been struck by the warmth and friendliness of the Abbey community, of which my family and I look forward to becoming a part. At the same time I will greatly miss St John's, another of the world's finest choral foundations. I have been immensely happy there and I will be forever grateful to my wonderful colleagues at both College and College School, and to all the supremely talented people with whom I have been privileged to make music over the past



St Columb's Cathedral
Londonderry

Lunchtime
Organ
Recitals

July 2022
Thursdays 1.10pm - 1.50pm


7th Dr Derek Collins
Organist St Columb's Cathedral

14th Nicky Morton
Assistant Organist St Columb's Cathedral

21st Jack Wilson
Graduate Organ Scholar Ely Cathedral

28th Tristan Russcher
Associate Organist St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

ADMISSION FREE

 Derry City & Strabane District Council
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Derry City & Strabane District Council

July 7, 2022

fifteen years.'

A graduate and organ scholar of St John's College, Andrew Nethsingha was appointed its Director of Music fifteen years ago in 2007 following a highly successful period as Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral. He has previously held appointments at cathedrals at Wells and Truro. He has also been artistic director of the Three Choirs Festival.

In the media

Exclusively Christian RE not lawful, says High Court

The exclusively Christian-focused religious education taught at primary schools in Northern Ireland is unlawful, a High Court judge has ruled, the New Letter reports.

Mr Justice Colton held that an obligation to base the core curriculum on the Holy Scriptures breaches human rights.

The verdict came in a legal challenge mounted by a father and daughter to the current syllabus in controlled primary schools.

The three main Protestant Churches in Northern Ireland — the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches — said in a joint statement issued that they will “reflect” on the court’s decision in the “coming weeks”.

July 7, 2022

The education department at Stormont has also said it will “want to consider the ruling in detail”.

Mr Justice Colton, meanwhile, said: “The unlawfulness... identified requires a reconsideration of the core curriculum and the impugned legislation in relation to the teaching of Religious Education (RE) and the provision of Collective Worship (CW).”

Judicial review proceedings were brought against the Department of Education on behalf of a seven-year-old girl who attends a school in Belfast. Her lawyers argued that the complete focus on Christianity, to the exclusion of all other faiths, violates education entitlements protected by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Described as a non-religious family, the child’s parents expressed concerns that she may adopt a specific worldview.

Despite not objecting to most of the focus being on Christianity, they alleged that no meaningful alternative teaching is available in Northern Ireland’s state-funded primary schools.

In a challenge which centred on provisions in the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, it was contended that the current arrangements lack pluralism and involve proselytising the Christian faith.

Counsel for the Department insisted the system is flexible and lawful, with potential scope for supplementing the statutory syllabus.

But Mr Justice Colton said: “It is no answer that the core curriculum is a minimum requirement if it has the effect of failing to provide religious education in an objective, critical and pluralist manner.”

He cited a statement that the Department has no knowledge of whether individual schools provide additional opportunities for pupils to learn about other religions or none.

“This is a damning admission and, in the court’s view, emphasises the need for a reappraisal of the core curriculum in so far as it relates to RE and the provision by schools of CW,” the judge found.

With the girl’s father expressing fears that she could be isolated or bullied if they had taken the step of having her excluded from religious education or collective worship activities, Mr Justice Colton held that those concerns were valid.

“Whilst an unfettered right to exclusion is available it is not a sufficient answer to the lack of pluralism identified by the court,” he said.

“There is a danger that parents will be deterred from seeking exclusion for a child. Importantly, it also runs the risk of stigmatisation of their children.”

He confirmed: “The court therefore concludes that the impugned legislation is in breach of both applicants’ rights under Article 2 of the First Protocol ECHR read with Article 9 ECHR.”

A solicitor representing the family predicted the judgment will have wider significance for religious education within Northern Ireland's schools.

Darragh Mackin of Phoenix Law said: "The Court has ruled that the core curriculum needs to be changed so it teaches Children about Christianity, as opposed to being Christians – that is not the job of a school.

"This now needs to be adjusted so that children learn about Christianity, but are not indoctrinated or proselytised into being Christian."

He added: "Religious education needs to be made fair and objective, which as an outworking, would be reflective of the wider society we now live in."

But Peter Lynas, UK Director of the Evangelical Alliance and a former lawyer, said that while the ruling was significant "the full implications aren't yet clear".

He added: "Christianity has shaped our culture when it comes to dignity, equality and rights and has been part of the school curriculum for over 100 years. Today's ruling may change that, but the judge has not ordered a remedy at this stage.

"The law does protect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. That has been used to protect humanist parents in this case, but equally protects Christians and others. The court notes a curriculum review is already under way and no doubt there will be more discussion on this topic. We always encourage parents and carers that they are they should be taking a lead on faith

July 7, 2022

formation not leaving it to schools. There are also lots of opportunities to engage with, and support schools such as serving as a parent governor.”

Statement from the Transferor Representatives’ Council

Statement from the Transferor Representatives’ Council regarding the High Court decision on the challenge to teaching arrangements for religious education and collective worship in controlled primary schools by Mr Justice Colton today (5 July).

A spokesperson for the Transferor Representatives’ Council said, “The teaching of RE & collective worship in controlled primary schools is an important matter. Mr Justice Colton indicated today that he would allow the parties time to reflect on his judgement and indeed, ‘...invited further submissions from counsel prior to making a final order.’

“While the transferring churches are not direct parties to this case, nonetheless, as this is an important and significant issue we will also be reflecting on today’s decision over the coming weeks, and any subsequent final order that Mr Justice Colton may make. We will also need to take the time to discuss the matter as churches together.”

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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