

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Ballycastle beats

One of the many activities for young people organised by the congregations of Ballycastle Parish



News

Open access at Christ Church, Strabane

Christ Church says - Our doors will be open every day of the week from Monday (today) onwards.

Everyone is

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welcome to come in, sit a while, walk around, pray, and be still.

There are lots of beautiful windows to admire that depict the stories of the Bible. If you are passing by please stop in.

Ballylesson's Bear

We got a new book in the Rectory last week...if you don't have it yet, take 20 minutes and watch this interview with Bear Grylls and Chris Evans...

Bear Grylls challenges our 'sanitised' view of Jesus.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGgu8nsrS9M>



Generous appreciation of Derry church's charity shop and café

ReLoved Charity Shop & Cafe at All Saints, Clooney, were delighted to receive a meaningful donation, kindly handed over by Melrose Day Centre.

Melrose clients shared how much they appreciate the sense of connection, support and kindness that the charity shop & café offers. Their gesture reflects the deep value they place on the outreach and warmth offered by the ReLoved team.



“On behalf of everyone at ReLoved, thank you to the clients of Melrose Day Centre for this generous donation. Your appreciation motivates us to continue our work with dedication and compassion, knowing that what we do makes a difference in the lives of so many.”

Selfie Board Celebration of Dungannon parish volunteers

The Parish of Dungannon now has its very own Selfie Board. They debuted it at last weekend's "Thanksgiving Volunteers" Mass - and what a hit it was.

On the parish Facebook site folk were urged to swipe through the photos to see the smiles, laughter, and joyful moments their amazing volunteers captured.

The parish posted “We’re loving how it brought everyone together and added a bit of extra fun to the day.

“Were you snapped in a selfie? Be sure to tag yourself and your friends - and feel free to share your favourite photos on

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your own socials to spread the joy even further! We'd love to increase our following on Facebook and Instagram, so this would really help us.

“Keep your eyes peeled for it at our upcoming parish events... and don't forget to put on your best smile!”

10th anniversary of Laudato Si in Down and Connor

Anna Byrne DC, one of the Catholic representatives on the ECI - Eco Church Ireland - committee, attended the celebration of Laudato Si Week in Belfast.

Anna writes - The Diocese of Down and Connor celebrated the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si', the week May 19th–25th.

This included a weekend programme in Clonard Monastery, a Sunday afternoon conference 'Raising Hope: Living



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Laudato Si' with input from various speakers, a tree planting in the grounds of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Carryduff, and a World Cafe Coffee morning in St Bride's Parish Hall in Belfast.

You can read Anna's report in full and view all her photos on the ECI web site.

Rathmichael Team commissioned for second Kenya visit

A team from Rathmichael Parish in Dublin will travel to Kenya in August to build on their partnership with a diocese there.

Archbishop Michael Jackson commissioned the team for their work during a visit to the parish last month. Volunteers will be travelling to the Diocese of Maseno North to refurbish Kwiliba School.

This 2025 visit to Kenya follows on from Rathmichael's visit in August 2023, when the team refurbished Wandecche School. This was the first part of a five-year partnership between Rathmichael and the Diocese of Maseno North, which came about from a meeting between Bishop Charles Kascan Asilutwa of Maseno North, and Archbishop Michael Jackson, at the 2022 Lambeth Conference. The Archbishop put Bishop Charles in touch with Geoffrey Perrin of Rathmichael, who volunteered to coordinate a mission link. Plans quickly developed for this five-year programme of support for Maseno North Diocese and its schools.



Wandecche School was refurbished and enhanced in 2023 and, following the Rathmichael team's report to their church, a breakfast programme followed. Since early 2024, Rathmichael Church has been providing the funds for a daily breakfast programme, initially for the early learner classes – but due to the generous support that came in, the programme was extended to the whole school. The result of this has been a major and consistent increase in school attendance as the children have the added incentive of being fed in school – for many, this may be the only substantial meal they get regularly. Rathmichael's vision has been to enhance the educational experience of the children in Wandecche, as education is the key to a brighter future for these children and their families. Ongoing support since 2023 has also included the development of new toilet blocks for the school.

Rathmichael Church is delighted to now be in the position to grow their mission in the area. The visit in August this year will focus on Kwiliba School which is about three times the size of Wandeché. Although this is an increased challenge, a larger group will be travelling this summer. It includes people with various experiences in trade and building, along with some of the young people of the parish community. As well as completely refurbishing the school, the team will also build a new toilet block for Kwiliba School.

Speaking at the recent commissioning service, Archbishop Jackson told the congregation that “mission and commissioning can happen at any time of the year. The period between Ascension and Pentecost is a particularly significant time. The first disciples found themselves with individual responsibility for their faith after Jesus finally left them; Pentecost gave them scope to create a new community of faith resulting in international mission”.

He added: “This mission from Rathmichael is unique. It flows directly from Lambeth Conference 2022; it is a return visit; it is not solely giving to those who need help but it is an opportunity for the team and new people from the parish to receive mission in Kenya and to return transformed and to invest that in Rathmichael Parish.

“Those who go will learn what it is to be a guest and to accept the best from people who give to visitors more and better than they give themselves. In this way the sharing of mission is the personal and the communal transformation.”

The Rector of Rathmichael, the Revd Sean Hanily, who will be travelling with the group in August, said “our ongoing link

with the Diocese of Maseno North in Kenya has not only benefitted the people who we are supporting in Kenya, but has made a difference to the life of our church here in Rathmichael.

People who have invested in the future of this area of Kenya have a real and vested interest beyond our own parish boundary, in the Global Anglican Communion, following Jesus's command to love our neighbour".

He continued: "Thanks to the tireless efforts and vision of Geoffrey Perrin, this mission from our humble church in South Dublin is making a huge difference to the lives of a large community in rural Kenya. The regular updates and photos we receive from Kenya are a great encouragement to all of us in Rathmichael, as we see the difference that our contribution is making there. We are excited to extend this help to a new school this summer and have a terrific team travelling to Kenya in August who will represent Rathmichael, and indeed the Church of Ireland, very well."

Fundraising has been ongoing by Geoffrey Perrin – both inside and outside the parish. If you would be interested in supporting the ongoing work of Rathmichael in Kenya, then all donations are appreciated.

Donations may be made to:

Rathmichael Parish Church a/c no.

40168005 IBAN IE31 AIBK 9333 9240 1680 05 (If using this method please specify 'Kenya Project') N.B. CHY No. 20003623;

By cheque/cash to Geoffrey Perrin, Ballyman Rd, Enniskerry, Co.Wicklow, A98TV79;

OR through GoFundMe <https://gofund.me/6cdd104a>



Conference Update: **Revising The Methodist Worship Book**

Methodist Church votes to revise worship

The Methodist Conference in GB, meeting in Telford, has voted to revise the Church's authorised liturgies.

This decision sets in motion a major

project to equip the Church with new and revised liturgical resources, available in a wide variety of formats, including digital and printed versions.

The first stage of the process is to consider the style and language to be used in the resources, in order to enable the Church's worship to be as inclusive as possible, in line with the Conference's commitments in its strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity.

The report outlined a rolling programme of renewing existing authorised liturgy while consideration is given to what needs to be resourced with authorised liturgy and what can be

appropriately resourced in other ways. There will also be consideration of what it might mean for a liturgical resource no longer to be authorized.

The Conference voted to adopt the principle that authorised liturgy is defined as that which has been authorised by the Conference, rather than that which is contained in a particular book. This will mean resources can be produced in formats, digital and print, according to needs which may vary through the life of the resource. The work will also consider what happens to official texts when they have been superseded.

Discussions have already been held with the Methodist Survivors' Advisory Group and Solidarity Circles for Disability and for Women who have indicated that the needs and patterns of the Methodist Church are changing and are likely to change yet further over time.

All resources are expected to be made available online in formats appropriate to their use, for example PowerPoint presentations, Word documents and ready-to-print PDFs. Rather than produce a single book containing everything, it is intended that booklet versions be produced that contain liturgies regularly used in local churches or where it may be convenient for ministers and others engaged in pastoral ministry to be able to carry copies.

It was agreed that details should be brought to the Conference in 2026 seeking to set out principles along with an outline of the plan of work and revision.

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Education

Foyle flies the US flag

Today, on 4th July, we marked Independence Day by raising the Star Spangled Banner at our Foyle College campus on the Limavady Road, formerly the US Navy Communications Base from 1943 to 1977.



We were honoured that morning to be joined by Frank Ekstrom, who was stationed at the US Navy Communications Base. He was accompanied by his son-in-law, David Duffy, and Elaine and Sandra Malcor. Sandra's late husband also served in the US Navy. Sandra also worked at the base. Also present were Mrs McLaughlin, Principal, Mrs Dougherty, Head of History, and Mr William Lynn, representative of the Former Pupils' Association.

St Mary's Limavady at Queen's University

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Former Principal Mr Sean Bradley delivered the 2025 graduate address to Education Graduates at Queen's University Belfast in his role as Queen's alumnus and Honorary Graduate.

Pictured here with past pupil and former Head Boy (1997-1998) Dr Ryan Feeney who is the Vice President for Governance and External Affairs at QUB.



Graduate Spotlight: Lucy Brogan ✨

Her former school was delighted to shine the spotlight on the inspiring journey of Lucy Brogan, a proud 2020 leaver of St Dominic's!

Lucy began her academic journey at St Colman's Primary School in Lambeg, and went on to study English Literature, History, and Politics at A Level here at St Dominic's — subjects that clearly sparked a lifelong passion.

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In 2023, Lucy graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a First Class Honours degree in English and History, and has since completed her PGCE in English — an incredible achievement!

Lucy will now be stepping into the classroom in September as an English teacher, continuing her commitment to working with young people. Alongside her teaching, she's also actively involved in outdoor education through Scouts, making a real difference both inside and outside the classroom.



Huge congratulations from all of us at St Dominic's, Lucy — we're so proud of you!

Belfast Royal Academy 240th Anniversary Celebration Events

A reminder of events taking place in September to mark the 240th anniversary of Belfast Royal Academy in 2025 - on 16th September, the Hon Mr Justice David Scofield will deliver a law lecture in the Assembly Hall.

To reserve a place, please email alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net

Cathedral Calls



Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa Girls Choir sing in Belfast Cathedral

Belfast Cathedral yesterday welcomed the Girls Choir of Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa, who sang at both of services.

At the 11 am Choral Eucharist they sang
Langlais: Missa in simplicitate, and
Durand: O salutaris.

Choral Evensong included

Hewitt: Responses

Malcolm Archer: Four cathedrals services, and

Kitson: Holy Father, cheer our way.



Sacred Heart Statue visits Newry Cathedral

A statue of the Sacred Heart that has been in various dioceses in Ireland arrived at Newry Cathedral on the evening, Friday 4th July, and will remain in the Cathedral until Friday 11th July.

Archbishop Eamon Martin celebrated Mass at 7.30pm in the Cathedral to welcome the statue to Dromore Diocese. Be sure to call in to see the statue in the days ahead.

Clergy and ministry



Rector for St Elizabeth's, Dundonald



The Revd Ross Mungavin was instituted rector of the Parish of Dundonald in Down and Dromore diocese.

Bishop David McClay instituted Ross at a packed and joyful service in St Elizabeth's on the evening of Friday 4 July. Revd Richard Balmer, Ireland Team Leader for Crosslinks, gave the address.

New Lay Funeral Ministers for the Diocese of Down and Connor

On Wednesday 2nd July Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ Commissioned 21 new Lay Funeral Ministers for the Diocese of Down and Connor.

The Funeral Ministers represented 14 parishes from across the diocese. It was a joyful prayerful evening and we were



joined by friends, family and Parish Priests of the new Funeral Ministers. We wish the new Funeral Ministers every blessing as they begin their new ministry.

Some words of thanks to Bishop Alan for being with us and for his wise and prayerful words of encouragement. To the

Lay Funeral
Ministry Trainers,
Mrs Anne
McDermott and Fr
Paul Byrne,
Deacon James
McAllister, Mrs
Carole Martin and
Mr Peter McAlister
for their guidance,
wisdom,



prayerfulness and fun during the training a deep sense of gratitude. Thank you to Daniel McDonald for the beautiful music during the service. The final words of thanks to the Pathways to The Future Team for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Events

Sing with Sing Happy Choir NI this summer

No commitment needed, simply drop in when you can and Pay As You Go.

🎵 17th and 31st July at St John's Church, Malone Road, BT9 6SX 10.30am-12.30pm

🎵 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th August at Malone Presbyterian, Lisburn Road, BT9 6GT 10.30am-12.30pm

Everyone welcome from beginners to experienced singers. Learn how to get the best out of your voice, have fun and make new friends!

Carrickfergus Before the Castle

**Exhibition launch: Thursday 24 July 2025 7pm;
Carrickfergus Museum Exhibition Gallery**



The archaeology of Early Medieval settlement (c 400.1100AD) with Cattle Battle gaming event.

Join us for the launch of a new exhibition exploring the early medieval period. What did life look like here before the castle?

Discover more with Archaeologist Scott Ingram who will be exploring the nature of early medieval settlement and society in Ireland from a mainly archaeological perspective, with reference to excavations and historical records.

This is Ireland's first historically documented period, and it saw the arrival of Christianity and literacy, great artistic achievements such as the Book of Kells, the development of monastic centres, the arrival of the Vikings, and the beginnings of urban settlement.

You'll also have a chance to get hands-on with early medieval life with our new board game, Cattle Battle!

Game play will commence at 8pm.

Includes a wine reception and chance to win a hamper from Carrickfergus Greengrocers

Please RSVP to T: 028 9335 8241; or E mail:
carrickfergusmuseums@midandeantrim.gov.uk

Delivered as part of the museum programme for the Carrickfergus Before the Castle exhibition.

In the media

The PCI now faces many awkward questions after shaping a church fit for the 17th century - not the 21st. Belfast Telegraph

Narrow theology and rigid governance have created a culture of exclusion, Alf McCreary writes.

This week, Lord John Alderdice, a former Stormont Speaker and highly-regarded member of the House of Lords, expressed his frustration that the Charity Commission has been so slow in dealing with a dossier of alleged wrongdoings by some people within the Presbyterian Church.

John Alderdice is the son of a Presbyterian minister, who resigned from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) in 2018 as a matter of principle.

He has a detailed knowledge of the inner workings and governance of the church, and when he forcefully states his frustration in public, it is time to take notice.

Alderdice has been assisted by Roy Simpson, a former PCI cleric, who has submitted to the commission a lengthy dossier of claims about suffering among a number of individuals who have been disciplined for the alleged breaking of the church's rules and teaching.

He, too, is frustrated by the lack of action by the Charity Commission.

He said: “At the very least, the commission should investigate, and those who are named as abusers be given the opportunity to deny or explain.

“The same names came up repeatedly, and there were similar elements to claims — false accusations of sexual impropriety, for example.”

In a lengthy reply, the Charity Commission claimed its investigation “is taking longer than usual to complete”, but fair-minded observers might conclude that three years is long enough. If not now, when will the Charity Commission make public its findings?

In the meantime, it is important that Alderdice, Simpson and others who have worked hard on the dossier will keep up the pressure on the commission.

In the long silence of the past three years, the alleged victims continue to suffer.

A great deal of this has been known by observers and insiders in the PCI who talk depressingly among themselves about the situation, but so far there has been too little publicity.

However, this newspaper and others have stepped up strongly to the mark.

The spotlight is now firmly on some of the inner workings of the Presbyterian Church, and it won't go away.

Much of this may come as a surprise to many Presbyterians in the pews who pay little attention to what goes on in the higher echelons of the church.

In fact, few enough Presbyterians know or care about the annual election of a Moderator, which sometimes makes the intense Sistine Chapel deliberations for the election of a new Pope seem simple by comparison.

Those pew Presbyterians who do take an interest in such things are divided between a determined coterie of evangelicals, and a dwindling number of liberals who are increasingly unwilling or afraid to speak out in public.

The PCI tries to foster an image of togetherness, but those who differ from the party line say their experiences are very different.

The prevailing mantra is to obey “the settled position” on such controversial matters as same-sex marriage and LGBT issues, but anyone who tries to reach out a caring hand to the “others” is obliged to toe the party line.

Dissent is too often frowned upon, and this is tragic in a church which itself was formed and, until now, thrived on dissent.

In the past few decades, the Presbyterian Church has been taken over by determined conservatives who are on a path of pushing it up narrow cul-de-sac, along which it does not appear to have an open-arms welcome for human beings with all their flaws and shortcomings. The PCI will deny this of course, but many people feel this way.

The church has been travelling long on a path of isolationism, from the time decades ago when it left the World Council of Churches because of that institution's alleged connection with an element of terrorism in the developing world.

Several years ago, it severed the connection with its mother church, the Scottish Presbyterians, because of the Scots' much more liberal attitude to same-sex marriage and allied issues.

I was reporting for this newspaper on that general assembly when the female Scottish Moderator left the hall in tears

after her eloquent plea for continued relationships with the PCI had been voted down.

I remember the Scottish general secretary, who made a much more Christian statement than the entire Assembly itself that day when he said: "I am sorry for your decision.

We will pray for you, and if you change your minds, our door is always open."

Unlike the other main Reformed Churches in Ireland, the PCI has never had a female leader, though it was the first in Ireland to ordain a woman, the Reverend Ruth Patterson.

Later on, she bravely put her name forward twice unsuccessfully for election as Moderator. On the second occasion, she did not receive a single vote from any of the church's 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland which was, and remains, a thundering disgrace.

Not surprisingly, there was no female candidate for the Moderatorship this year. What woman in her right mind would put up with such humiliation in public?

Despite this, there are good people in the church doing great things for their congregations and for society in general.

Sadly, however, there are still too many awkward questions facing the PCI which has been steadily shaping a church for the 17th century, but not necessarily fit for the 21st century where all sorts of needy human beings are still looking for

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love and compassion, and not just theology and strict judgment.

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

Please recommend to your friends

