



The Rev Bill Mullally, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, is pictured in the memorial room of the Ulster Memorial Tower, Thiepval, France, commemorating the centenary of the Battle of the Somme with Lt Col DB Kenny OBE, Commanding Officer 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish, and Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for the Arts and the Gaeltacht.

Irish Church leaders call for joint commemoration of the 1916 Rising and the Somme

‘Members of our traditions tend to simply choose one single narrative about this centenary year’

Archbishop Richard Clarke and Archbishop Eamon Martin , Anglican and Roman Catholic Primates in Armagh, write in The Irish Times -

At the beginning of this year we considered how we might make a joint contribution to the centenary commemorations which would build our friendship and symbolise our commitment to reconciliation.

We therefore chose to be together in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, on the anniversary of the [1916 Rising](#) and to stand side by side at the [Ulster Tower](#) in [France](#) last Friday, July 1st. We find no contradiction there.

We also decided to lead a pilgrimage with young people of different traditions and outlooks from across the island of [Ireland](#) to explore our shared story and the ways in which our different

traditions have chosen to approach these significant anniversaries.

From [Glasnevin](#) to Thiepval, from Guillemont to Passchendaele, we visited significant places that are linked to both the Easter Rising and the first World War. We were particularly interested in seeing the site of the Battle of the [Somme](#) and memorials in France and [Belgium](#) linked to the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division.

In a poignant moment at the Menin Gate in Ypres, we had the honour of laying a peace wreath of white flowers during the Last Post Ceremony.

We realise that members of our traditions tend to simply choose one single narrative about this centenary year and thereby lose the richness and completeness of understanding other perspectives.

Perhaps this generation will be the one to open up the broader story that has not been suitably articulated and recognised until now.

Centenary pilgrimage

We hope that our centenary pilgrimage has given leadership to our congregations by engaging together with aspects of our history which

perhaps we have not always been comfortable in exploring jointly in the past.

There is a much greater understanding now, than there was even 50 years ago, of the complexity of our shared story which isn't capable of neat compartmentalisation.

We spoke together about [Tom Kettle](#), the Irish nationalist, sympathetic to what was happening in Ireland yet believing it was his duty to go and fight in [Europe](#). With thousands of others, he died at the Somme in September 1916.

From the stretcher-bearers of the 36th Ulster Division who carried the body of Irish nationalist [Willie Redmond](#) from the battlefield to the young priest, Fr Donal O'Sullivan, who was fatally wounded at the Somme while giving the Last Rites to a wounded soldier on the battlefield – we miss a lot by not acknowledging the entanglement of the narrative.

Reading the names on the first World War gravestones and on the memorial walls, it is clear that many thousands of Protestants and Catholics died side by side during that horrific war. It is fitting, then that we should remember them together.

Many Ulster Protestants and Irish Catholics went to war showing great courage and conviction.

We heard stories of their heroism and personal sacrifice. We also noticed the reactions of our young pilgrims as they realised many of the young men who died at the Somme and elsewhere were about the same age as they were – or even younger. This sobering thought changed our whole perspective and highlighted for all of us the futility and waste of life and opportunity that is war.

Memorable moments

Among the most memorable moments from our pilgrimage were the times of shared prayer and our recital with young people of the Peace Pledge at the Island of Ireland Peace [Park](#), Messines:

“From the crest of this ridge, which was the scene of terrific carnage in the first World War . . . We repudiate and denounce violence, aggression, intimidation, threats and unfriendly behaviour. As Protestants and Catholics, we apologise for the terrible deeds we have done to each other and ask forgiveness.

“From this sacred shrine of remembrance, where soldiers of all nationalities, creeds and political allegiances were united in death, we appeal to all people in Ireland to help build a peaceful and tolerant society. Let us remember the solidarity

and trust that developed between Protestant and Catholic soldiers when they served together in these trenches.

“We affirm that a fitting tribute to the principles for which men and women from the island of Ireland died in both World Wars would be permanent peace.”

The Dublin Council of Churches is hosting a lecture on *Making God-Sense of 1912-1922 a Century Later – Faith in a Different World* by Rev Dr Johnston McMaster at the Lutherhaus, [Adelaide Road](#), on Tuesday, July 12th, at 8pm

Irish Methodists and the First World War

“It is not known how many Irish Methodists served in the war. Figures supplied to John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, show that from the beginning of the war to 15 January 1918, 64,607 Catholics and 52,365 Protestants joined up in Ireland, but the latter figure was not broken down by denomination.

“The February 1915 issue of the Methodist Church Record (a monthly edited in Dublin by James M Alley) carried a Methodist Church in Ireland ‘Roll of Honour’ giving a total of 1,579

Irish Methodists serving in the armed forces. Of these 1,251 (79%) came from Ulster. The number of Methodists that were killed has never been calculated. The best we have are general statements noting the significant numbers involved, with some reference to individual churches and the names of fallen and enlisted recorded on congregational war memorials. We do know that the sons of 24 Irish Methodist ministers were killed in the war. Three lost two sons, one of whom, George Wedgwood, lost them on the same terrible day – 1 July 1916.”

The paragraphs quoted above are taken from a paper *Irish Methodists and the First World War* delivered by the late Professor Keith Jeffery at the 2014 Annual Lecture of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland in Edgehill Theological College, Belfast. The paper was then published in the *Bulletin of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland (Volume 20, 2015)*.

The July/August 2016 issue of the *Methodist Newsletter* brings an abstract of Professor Jeffery’s paper, prepared Dr Peter Mercer. In the original paper, Professor Jeffrey combined a general study of the impact of the war on Irish Methodism with a smaller study of how the war affected two Irish Methodist families (to which he

was directly related). The abstract concentrates on the first of these studies.

We are grateful to the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland for kind permission to reproduce this material.

Belfast priest proud of family role in Battle of the Somme

A prominent Belfast priest has said that he is proud of one of his relations who fought at the Battle of the Somme.

North Belfast-based priest Fr Gary Donegan CP, who is Rector of the Holy Cross Church on Belfast's Crumlin Road since 2008, revealed that his great grand-uncle Bob West fought with an Irish Regiment at the Battle of the Somme and was later decorated for his courage.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph newspaper, Fr Donegan who has been the subject of a number of threats from dissident Republicans said, "When you look back and see the slaughter of so many young men in such battles as the Somme I think the least that people can do is remember them."



Fr Gary Donegan CP

The Passionist priest, who is a native of Co Fermanagh, said that he attended a dinner recently in Belfast City Hall to remember all those killed in the Battle of the Somme and a few weeks previously he also attended a dinner in Belfast to mark the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising.

Fr Donegan said that he felt it was important, “for people like me to be seen at all of these things. I am typical of all people across Northern Ireland whose family backgrounds are complex.”

He added, “I have a Protestant aunt and uncle and cousins and there are many people on the island like me who have a mixture of everything.”

Fr Donegan said that he welcomed the greater appreciation among Catholics and Protestants nowadays about the role played by both communities in events like the Somme.

“Many of those who joined the army may have done so because of poverty at home, or for adventure or just to see the world. What happened to them is almost beyond comment. As has been so often said war is old men sending young men out to die.”

Fr Donegan revealed that recently he attended a lecture by Ulster GAA at Queen’s University which outlined how former players were involved in various wars. “It was a real eye-opener for many of the people who were present in the room,” he said.

He added, “I am very proud of my great grand Uncle and what he did. As a priest and a pastor, I don’t agree with war, but he went and did what he did, and I am the last person to deny what he did. His courage was immense.”

Teams of priests to now serve Limerick parishes

Due to the decline in priest numbers and the drop in vocations in the diocese of Limerick, the



Bishop Brendan Leahy

“evolving clerical landscape” will have to incorporate “teams of priests” who will minister across a number of parishes.

Announcing the 2016 clerical changes for Limerick on Tuesday, Bishop Brendan Leahy said that while the move towards ‘teams of priests’ is inevitable, there will be no change for parish structures or identity.

Teams of priests will work across different parishes and while there won’t necessarily be a priest living in every parish, there will be a parish priest for every parish.

“We have been saying for a number of years that we have to adapt for the fall-off in vocations and so far the changes we have implemented have managed this new landscape very well,” the bishop stated.

Having a parish priest for every parish, “enables us to retain the identity of a parish. The parish still has the service of a priest, its parish council, finance committee, etc.” But that parish priest could also be parish priest for a neighbouring parish, Dr Leahy explained.

The new landscape, he said, will be accompanied by greater lay involvement and that this was very much prescribed at the Diocesan Synod in April.

“One of the key reasons for holding our Synod was to look at how we can deliver the pastoral care going forward that the people of our diocese need and want as well as dealing with the reality of having less priests,” he said.

“The 400 Synod delegates very much instructed us that the way forward in terms of leadership in the diocese would be a combination of priests and laity.”

He added that the need for greater lay involvement was very much declared by

delegates and welcomed by the diocese and the fall-off in vocations means that this will not only be desirable but inevitable.

The new reality in Limerick follows the Bishop of Kerry's announcement that five parishes in the diocese of Kerry are now without a resident priest while just one priest in the diocese is under forty.

Chilcot report - Christian Aid on Iraq today

In light of today's Chilcot report Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Frances Guy said:

“While we consider the impact of the Chilcot report let us remember those in Iraq who suffer from the results of political decisions made elsewhere in the world. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have died, more than 10 million are in need of some humanitarian assistance, most especially the more than 3 million who have fled their homes to go to other places inside Iraq in search of relative safety.

“Apologies will not put their lives together, however support for an inclusive political process and help to those who have fled the

fighting will help bring back some hope for a better future.”

Christian Aid has been responding to the needs of displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees with food, clothing, hygiene kits and health services. The agency has reached more than 225,000 vulnerable men women and children in Iraq, over the last two years. It has scaled up its response to meet the mounting needs of those most recently affected by the conflict in Fallujah.

Readers can find out more about Christian Aid’s work in Iraq [here](#) or to donate to the Iraq Crisis appeal by visiting [this page](#).

Cathedral and choral - Drumhead Service at Derry Cathedral for Somme Centenary

A bass drum which was used for the Eucharist at the Battle of the Somme a century ago was used again at a poignant Service in St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry to mark the battle's 100th anniversary.

Several hundred people attended the Drumhead Service of Holy Communion, including the Lord-Lieutenant for the City of Londonderry, Dr Angela



Garvey, and the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District, Alderman Hilary McClintock.

The Presiding Minister, the Very Rev. William Morton, Dean of Derry, was assisted by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt. Rev. Ken Good, Canon John Merrick and Canon Sam McVeigh.

Dean Morton said it was a solemn Service, which remembered and acknowledged the immeasurable sacrifice made by all those who were killed at the Somme. He said there was also hope for the future as we, in our generation, resolved to do all in our power to strive for a peaceful world.

"The various components to this Service add a distinct poignancy to remembering," the Dean

said, "none more so than through the contribution of the Hamilton Flute Band". It was immensely fitting, he suggested - given the history of the band in relation to the 10th Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers - that its bass drum and side drums, which were used regularly as Holy Communion tables on the battlefield, should be used for again for a Drumhead Service.

A number of dignitaries were in the Cathedral for the Service, among them the Foyle MP Mark Durkan, Lord Hay of Ballyore, DUP MLA Gary Middleton, and District Councillors Alderman Mary Hamilton, Ald. Drew Thompson and Cllr. Martin Reilly.

The Cathedral Choir and organist Dr Ian Mills provided music for the Service, during which Bryan Morgan played 'The Last Post'. The Hamilton Flute Band performed the newly-commissioned '1.7.16', which was composed by Mel Orriss in tribute to those who died at the Somme.

Cathedral and choral - Former Belfast chorister to be rector of Nenagh



Rev'd Roderick Smyth, who likes to be known as Rod, was born and brought up in Belfast, where he was educated at Grosvenor High School. He later studied music at Queen's University, Belfast before undertaking teacher training at Stranmillis University College, Belfast. For 33 years Rod worked in education, and before ordination was Head of Senior School at Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College. He also for many years has been an examiner with the Council for the Curriculum and Examination Assessment, the statutory body responsible for administering

GCSE, AS and A level examinations in Northern Ireland.

Rod is a former chorister of St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, and was also a Bass Lay Clerk there while studying Music at Queen's University, Belfast. He served as parish organist in several parishes in the north, including Groomsport Parish Church and St Gall's parish church in Bangor where he went to help out for six months and ended up staying for over twenty years!

He is married to Rosemary, also a teacher and musician and they have a son, Jonathan and daughter, Rachel who both live and work in London. During his theological training Rod undertook parish placements in Knockagoney and St George's, both Belfast, and in St Mark's, Dundela.

Rod was ordained priest in 2014 by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, with whom he had attended school. The preacher at the service was the Rev Cally Hammond, Dean Director of Studies in Theology at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Rod and Rosemary have always been passionate about church music since their university days. They met when Rod was

conducting the University Chamber choir, and they have continued to sing in various church choirs over the years, including the Balligan Consort and the Osborne Singers. It was with the Balligan Consort that they enjoyed two Cathedral tours, singing the daily services in Norwich and Lichfield Cathedrals for a week each. Rod and Rosemary both studied early music at Queen's and Rosemary is a very fine Recorder player, having played in several groups including the Belfast Baroque Consort.

In his free time Rod likes to indulge in hill walking, sampling fine wines, supporting his favourite football team, his beloved Manchester United and collecting the odd piece of Georgian glassware! Rosemary and Rod are looking forward to a new and exciting chapter in their lives in coming to Nenagh.

News briefs

Canon Aubrey Northridge's 100th birthday -

Family and friends of the former Rector of Derg and Termonamongan, Canon Aubrey Northridge, joined him recently for a party to celebrate his 100th birthday. Canon Northridge's family baked him an elaborate birthday cake for the occasion. It was decorated with Derry and Raphoe diocesan shields and Church of Ireland crosses,

and the cake stand was decorated with one hundred LED lights.

Canon Northridge, who lives in Ballinamallard in County Fermanagh, was born in Dublin on 22nd June 1916. He was educated at St Stephen's Green School and Trinity College Dublin, and married his wife, Moyra, in June 1943. Mrs Northridge died in July 1996.

Canon Northridge (who was the son of a clergyman) retired from ministry in 1981, after serving for 30 years as Rector of Derg (with Termonamongan from 1971). He had begun his life in ordained ministry as a Curate in Christ Church, Londonderry, in 1941 and later served as Curate and then Rector in Convoy.

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A commemoration ceremony of the **100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme** will take place in the National War Memorial Garden, Islandbridge, on Saturday July 9 at 11.30 am. Archbishop Michael Jackson will attend at the invitation of An Taoiseach.

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The Annual **National Day of Commemoration Ceremony** will take place at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on Sunday July 10 at 10.30 am. The

Archbishop of Dublin will be among the Church Leaders who will participate.

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The Rev Lynne Gibson, Curate Assistant of the Parish of Saint Mark, Dundela, in the Diocese of Down, has been appointed as Incumbent of the **Parish of Ballymacash**, Lisburn. The Service of Institution will take place on Wednesday September 7 at 8.00 pm.

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Connor Streetreach 2016 is underway in north Belfast, with young people from across the diocese engaged in a variety of activities taking mission into the community.

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St Peter's, Belmont, Londonderry 50th anniversary - There was a celebration of Holy Communion in St Peter's, Belmont, Londonderry on the evening of St Peter's Day as part of a series of events to mark the 50th anniversary of its consecration.

The order of service included a hymn from the Service on Saturday, 8th October, 1966, when the Church was consecrated by Bishop Charles Tyndall.

The Presiding Minister, the Venerable Robert Miller, Archdeacon of Derry, was assisted by the

Reverend Katie McAteer and the Reverend Robert Wray. The Preacher was the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Right Reverend Ken Good.

In his sermon, Bishop Good said it was appropriate on St Peter's Day to give thanks for 50 years of ministry, of mission and of witness at St Peter's. He said St Peter's Day was historically a time of ordination in the Church of Ireland and it was appropriate to remember clergy who had served in the Church over the last 50 years.

After the service, the congregation enjoyed refreshments in the parish's Acorn Centre.

The iconic white church, at the city end of Londonderry's Foyle Bridge, was originally built as a daughter church of Christ Church, Londonderry to accommodate an increasing number of Church of Ireland members in the Belmont area. St Peter's was soon made a separate parish.

St Peter's is now part of the grouped parishes of Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and St Peter's and is experiencing new growth as families and individuals choose to join its congregation.

News briefs international

The June 28 terror attack at Istanbul International Airport has been met with a wave of prayer from Anglican and other Christian leaders. “Our hearts cry out in prayer for the victims and families of the terrible attack in Istanbul,” Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said on Twitter. “In prayer and faith we also commit to resisting the evil of violence and religious extremism.”

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Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem Suheil Dawani has spoken of his “delight” at news that a mine clearance charity has secured permission to demine the area around the West Bank of the River Jordan on the approach to the traditional site of Jesus’ baptism.

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A challenge to a Lutheran bishop by young Anglicans in Southern Africa has led to the formation of an ecumenical partnership to fight climate change. The Young Green Anglicans group made the challenge at a Lutheran youth conference last month; and now, the new Green Lutherans group has been launched at an ecumenical service in Swaziland.

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Anglicans from around the world are gathering in Fiji this week for an international consultation on climate justice. The event, organized by the

Anglican mission agency United Society, is designed to help Anglican leaders “grapple more vigorously” with the challenges of climate change.

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The next World Mission Conference of the WCC will take place in Arusha, Tanzania, in March 2018, it was announced last week. The decision was one of a number taken by the ecumenical body’s Central Committee on a myriad of themes during its recent meeting in Trondheim, Norway.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Ten ways Stormont can immediately start preparing for Brexit

Sam McBride in the News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/sam-mcbride-ten-ways-stormont-can-immediately-start-preparing-for-brexit-1-7463727>

Taoiseach: 'Abortion bill is bad for women and medically inadequate'

The Journal

Cabinet agrees not to take a position on bill tabled by TD Mick Wallace

<http://www.thejournal.ie/abortion-bill-to-be-discussed-at-cabinet-2861790-Jul2016/>

What is Mick Wallace's abortion bill and why is it causing so much controversy?

The Journal

<http://www.thejournal.ie/abortion-bill-explainer-2861806-Jul2016/>

A new bill will ban discrimination in some schools, waiting lists and admissions fees

The Journal

The laws have been given a guarded welcome.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/school-admissions-law-2864038-Jul2016/>

750,000 people are living in poverty in Ireland - on under €218 a week

The Journal

New figures released by Social Justice Ireland yesterday show 100,000 more people are in poverty than at the start of the recession.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/poverty-ireland-2-2862501-Jul2016/>

Gardaí: No surge in Islamophobia in Cork

Evening Echo Cork

... Cork Methodist Church, Canon Daniel Nuzum represented the **Church of Ireland**, Valerie Fletcher represented the Cork Presbyterian Church, and Fr ...

<http://www.eveningecho.ie/cork-news/gardai-no-surge-islamophobia/2462133/>

[Religious congregations may gift properties to State](#)

Irish Times

Speaking to The **Irish** Times after the meeting, Mr Coveney said discussions with some 40 national representatives of 16 **religious** congregations in ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/religious-congregations-may-gift-properties-to-state-1.2710357>

Education Authority denies misleading Stormont committee for second time

BBC News

The Education Authority denies misleading a Stormont committee for the second time in three months

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36708839>

Ind/Politics Home/Mail/Christian Today/Times

Reports a speech made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords in which he highlighted the “poison and hatred” brought about by the EU referendum (see above). Archbishop Justin urged political leaders on both sides of the Brexit debate to take on the “xenophobia and racism” that has been prevalent seen since the decision to leave the EU.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-archbishop-of-canterbury-speech-post-eu-referendum-racist-attacks-racism-xenophobia-polish-a7121466.html>

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/europe/eu-policy-agenda/brexit/news/76966/archbishop-canterbury-eu-referendum-has-created>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3675652/Archbishop-Canterbury-slams-spreading-poison-hatred-Brexit-aftermath.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/universities-move-to-protect-academics-from-racist-abuse-x6vwgwj2w>

Christian Today

Previews the debates agenda at this weekend's General Synod. Secretary General, William Nye, described *Renewal and Reform* as the "main theme" of the meeting. Synod will debate what the vision for this initiative is. Mr Nye said the Archbishops' Council was "inviting the synod to endorse a vision" that was both "hopeful" but also "realistic".

Exp/Mail

Reports that with the help of crowdfunding, archaeologists have been digging on Lindisfarne, off the Northumberland coast, trying to find evidence of the earliest monastery on the island where the Lindisfarne Gospels were written. Founded by King Oswald in 635 AD, it was attacked and destroyed by the Vikings a century later. Although the monastery was replaced, the site of the original has long eluded experts but the excavators have discovered a very rare Anglo-Saxon grave marker dating from the mid-7th to 8th century AD.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/686577/Living-prayer-location-early-Lindisfarne-monastery-unearthed>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3675027/Stunning-grave-marker-reveal-lost-monastery-1-200-year-old-stone-lie-close-site-treasured-Lindisfarne-Gospels-written.html>

Guard

Reports that for centuries, cathedral and college choirs across Britain have been exclusively populated by school-age boys – but with the admission of girls, that outdated practice is finally breaking down. Edward Wickham, director of music and a fellow of St Catharine’s College, Cambridge writes that in the world of choral music – specifically, music written for what is called the English cathedral tradition – “we still working out how gender-fluid we are or want to be.”
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/jul/05/girls-choirs-male-dominated-english-tradition-boys-changing>

Comment

Christian Today: Shared conversations: Can the Church of England prevent a split over gay marriage?

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