

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Clogher MU Jubilee lunch

People and places

General Assembly Under 30 Delegate Fringe Event

The Under 30 Delegate Fringe Event will be held on Thursday 23 June at 6pm in the Conference area, Assembly Buildings

The organisers say - Come along to enjoy a free light tea and listen in on what a panel of Under 30's are making of this year's General Assembly. They will also discuss some of the challenges and opportunities they see facing PCI as we emerge from the pandemic.

Whilst the panel will be made up of those under 30, the event is open to all ages to hear the views of young people in the denomination. Booking is essential.

Register at [www.presbyterianireland.org/under30] or by contacting the Congregational Life and Witness office

Act For Nature at Hugh's Meadow

You are most welcome to join A Rocha's Act for Nature Day at Hugh's Meadow nature reserve, Parkgate, Co Antrim, to encounter nature up close and learn about how you can help nature on your doorstep – on Saturday, 23 July 2022, at 10am.

About this event



Learn how to care for nature at one of A Rocha UK's Partners in Action, Hugh's Meadow nature reserve. Come along to receive training on specific areas of conservation and enjoy nature up close! During the event there will be opportunities to meet A Rocha UK staff and volunteers, and to ask questions.

Morning session from 10am:

Join us in the morning for a tour around the site, training on meadow management and moth recording, and a talk on the work of A Rocha UK.

Afternoon session from 1pm:

Connect with nature and learn something new in the afternoon. We'll be exploring nature at the reserve more closely; doing a flower count, looking for butterflies and other insects, bark rubbing, and learning about how we can speak up for nature through campaigning.

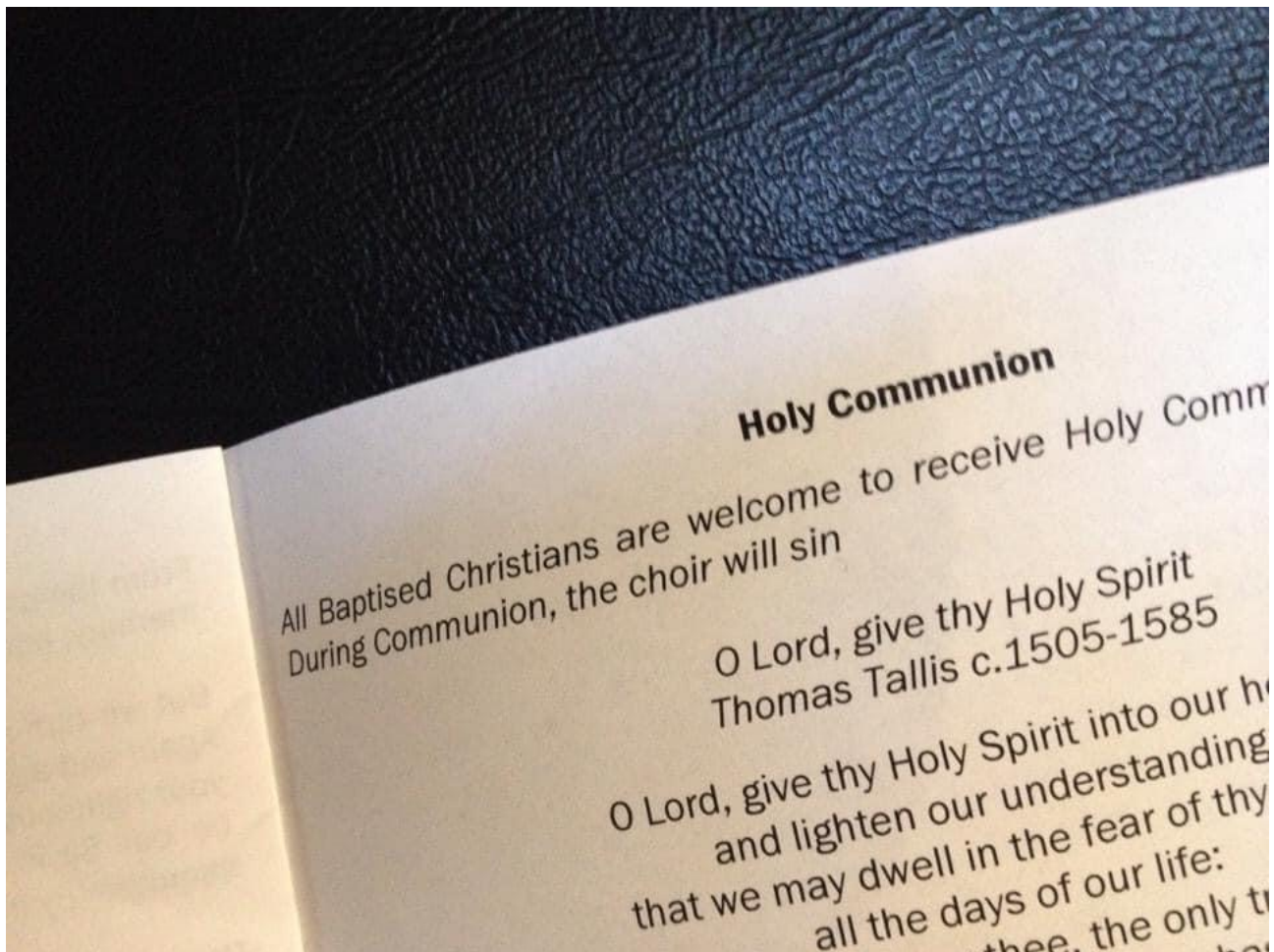
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When booking, please indicate if you would like to attend in the morning, afternoon or both. A reminder email will be sent to all registered attendees beforehand with further details.

During the event there will be opportunities to meet A Rocha UK staff and volunteers, and to ask questions. A Rocha is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches to care for the environment.

All info is available here – please register at this link for this event.

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/act-for-nature-at-hughs-meadow-tickets-320540614607>]



We wonder did they....



Leadership Camp for young people

Engage Connor Youth and the Down and Dromore Youth Council have come together to run a leadership camp for young people aged 17-21 from June 24-26.

This takes place at the Kilbroney Centre, Rostrevor, and the cost is £30 per person.

This will be an opportunity for the young people to spend the weekend together exploring leadership, developing skills in leadership and considering biblical models of leadership.

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The weekend will include teaching, discussion, worship, team and leadership challenges and a Saturday afternoon activity.

For further information and to sign up, click here - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/leadership-weekend-registration-2022-tickets-333496395697>



Jubilee Tea Party for Clogher MU Indoor Members

A wonderful afternoon at the Bishop's Indoor Members Jubilee Tea Party held at St John's Parish Hall Fivemiletown.



Lovely company and fellowship, delicious tea and fantastic entertainment from Fivemiletown Primary School and Miss Jane McKinley, (Specialist soloist). Thank you to all who worked very hard to make this such an enjoyable and successful event. It was very much appreciated by all who attended.

New man on York Street

The Rev Andrew Irwin was introduced as Curate of the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas, Belfast, on Wednesday June 8 by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison.

At the same service, Bishop George also Licensed the Rev Brian Lacey as Priest-in-Charge of the parish.



Preacher at the service was the Ven Roderic West, rector of the Parish of Seapatrick, Banbridge, Diocese of Down and Dromore, where Andrew was curate prior to his appointment to St Paul and St Barnabas. A sizeable number of Andrew's friends from Seapatrick Parish travelled to St Paul's in York Street for the service.

Present at the Service of Introduction and Licensing were: Kate Crothers, Parish Reader; the Ven Barry Forde, Archdeacon of Belfast; the Rev Brian Lacey, Rural Dean, who was Licensed as Priest-in Charge of the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas; the Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor; the Rev Andrew Irwin, who was introduced as Curate of the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas; the Rev Canon William Taggart, Registrar; and the Ven Roderic West, Seapatrick Parish, who preached.



Andrew, 32, is a native of Portadown, Co Armagh, and grew up in the Parish of Knocknamuckley. He studied Computer Science at Queen's University Belfast, graduating in 2012. He worked in software development and digital communications before starting to train for the ministry in 2015 at the Church of Ireland Theological College in Dublin.

Andrew was deacon intern in Waringstown and Donacloney, Diocese of Down and Dromore, before moving to nearby Banbridge as curate in Seapatrick Parish.

Andrew said: "I am looking forward to moving to St Paul and St Barnabas and seeing what God can do. It is a great place with great potential."



News reports

Churches and Christian groups are playing a major role in Scotland's drug addiction battle

A new report has revealed the crucial role being played by Christians and churches in tackling drug addiction across Scotland.

Stories of Hope: addiction recovery, produced jointly by the Evangelical Alliance and Serve Scotland, reveals that Scottish churches and Christian groups have helped over 2,300 people recover from drug addiction in the last decade.

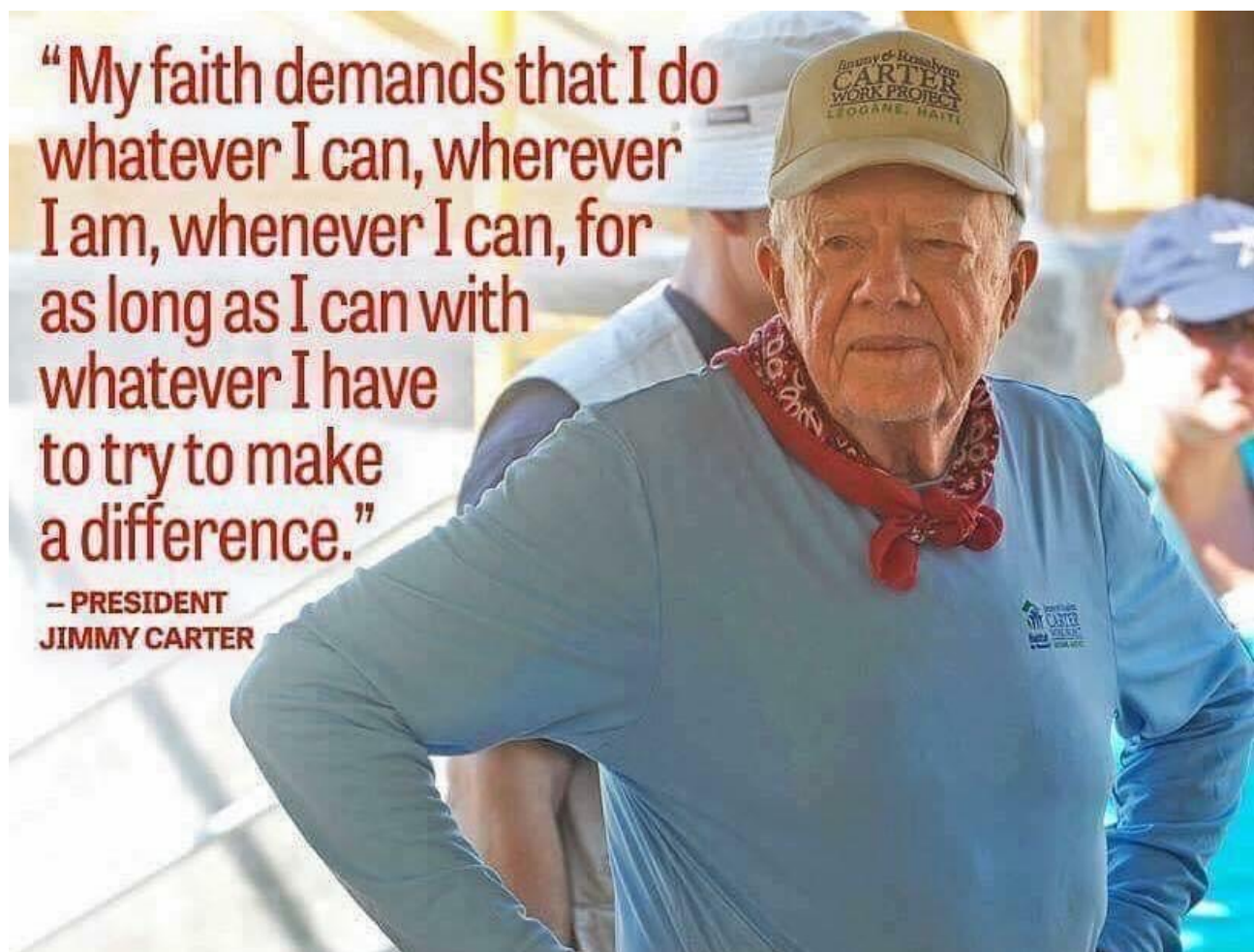
"Scotland has been marked by the devastating impact of drug and alcohol addiction in many ways," the report reads.

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"Today, the nation is at the forefront of addiction-related issues and deaths in Europe, with repercussions in health, economic, educational, and social challenges for families and communities in urban and rural environments.

"The widening mental health crisis, socio-economic challenges and limited clinical support exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic has led to the highest increase of addiction issues in over ten years.

"But we are a nation with hope. For decades, church communities and Christian-based organisations have invested tremendously in the building of in-person and online spaces for drug addiction recovery."



The study was conducted off the back of figures released by the Scottish government last year showing that the number of drug-related deaths in Scotland reached 1,339 in 2020.

Scottish government figures also reveal that over a quarter of residential beds for addiction patients are provided by Christian groups - 121 out of the 418 available.

The report draws on the responses of 17 churches and Christian groups involved in addiction recovery services across Scotland, as well as members of the EA network.

The residential rehabilitation programmes run by these groups were shown to have a high success rate, with all respondents reporting more than a 50% success rate of recovery and the average being 66%.

Liam, one of the individuals quoted in the report, said, "My whole life I struggled with fear and anxiety as a result of traumatic experiences from my childhood.

"After 20 years of using drugs and alcohol to ease the pain, I was reduced to a level of brokenness I never quite thought possible.

"If it were not for the Haven [one of the Christian groups in the report], I would probably be dead, and my family devastated.

"I can never repay the staff for the impact they've had on me, and my family's lives.

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"Jesus still saves people, he still heals people, and he still changes people's lives. I am living proof of it."

The Scottish government has promised to increase funding for services addressing addiction. The report urges the Scottish government to see "the value and necessity of directing this funding toward many of the pre-existing faith-based programmes across Scotland".

Fred Drummond, director of the Evangelical Alliance Scotland, said: "This report shows that Christians, fuelled by the love of God, are engaging with people going through the darkest of times and walking with them into a place of hope."

In the media

NI caught in Johnson's anarchically unpredictable lies, which are shredding Britain's global reputation

Extract of an analysis by Sam McBride in the Belfast Telegraph, June 9, 2022

Political lies are as old as the practice of politics. Otto von Bismarck, the man who unified Germany, once observed that "people never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war, or before an election".

But what Boris Johnson has done is to make dishonesty central to his politics in a way which is highly unusual; lies fill the vacuum which ideology would normally occupy.

Routinely misleading on matters big and small has helped him win power and a vast Commons majority, but the limitations of this amoral approach are becoming unavoidable.

Mr Johnson's biggest lie was about the NI Protocol, and it is this miscalculation which now hangs like a millstone around the weakening neck of a man who can feel the water rising. The Prime Minister's claims about the protocol were central to his landslide election victory in 2019 — not because most British voters cared passionately about Northern Ireland, but because the narrative constructed by Mr Johnson presented him as the strong man who finally cut through years of wrangling to “get Brexit done”.

In fact, the protocol had not resolved any of the problems which he himself had identified with Theresa May's Brexit deal.

Despite his frivolity, Mr Johnson is not a stupid man.

He knew that his deal ensured an Irish Sea border from the outset; in that regard, it was arguably even worse than Mrs May's deal when judged against his own criteria for denouncing her backstop.

His own government's analysis was undeniably clear.

The Treasury's assessment was that the protocol would be “highly disruptive to the NI economy”, would push up prices, and would mean “NI symbolically separated from the Union”.

Another Whitehall assessment said that implementing the Irish Sea border entailed “security, social and economic impacts”.

And the 69-page impact assessment which accompanied the Withdrawal Agreement Bill clearly said firms would face “ongoing costs of completing administration for movement of goods between GB and NI”.

It noted that for agri-food products and other goods there would be new costs which would not go away and set out some of the new array of EU documentation required for British firms selling to Northern Ireland: “Goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be required to complete both import declarations and Entry Summary (ENS) Declarations because the UK will be applying the EU's Universal Customs Code in Northern Ireland. This will result in additional administrative costs to businesses.”

It stated explicitly that Northern Ireland “will be required to align with certain EU VAT and excise rules”, said that goods arriving in NI from GB would undergo regulatory checks to ensure they complied with EU standards, referred to new “border inspection posts” and said that there would be fees charged for the inspection of all the new documentation, noting that the EU minimum fee for this was €55 (something not yet enforced).

No prime minister could remain unaware of these basic facts about his most controversial policy, and no prime minister having familiarised himself with those facts could honestly claim there would be no Irish Sea border. More...

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Peace Building resources from Clonard

Launched on Wednesday night in Clonard Monastery, Belfast some new Peace Building resources. The resources are built upon the ministry of Fr Alec Reid CSsR and Fr Gerry Reynolds CSsR and the legacy they have left behind.

The Order states the “resources that are a result of the desire to build on the example of Fr Gerry and of Fr Alec, who played such a pivotal role in facilitating secret peace talks in the run up to the Good Friday Agreement.

“Nearly a quarter century after the Agreement, we are well aware that their work of peace is unfinished and requires new activists to help us build a better society.

The resources are not based on the the result of focus group conversations with young people, youth ministers, and people who have been involved with the Unity Pilgrims. Financial support for the focus groups and the production of the resources and videos was provided by a Queen’s University impact grant, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK).

“Our hope is that these resources help us achieve the aims of the project, which are to:

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1. Raise awareness of Fr Gerry and Fr Alec's lives and ministries, inspiring others to sustain or create faith-based initiatives focused on peacebuilding and/or ecumenism.

2. Introduce Fr Gerry and Fr Alec's lives and the Unity Pilgrims model to younger generations as a means of equipping them for peacebuilding and ecumenical activism.

3. Support the creation of new groups of Unity Pilgrims (or other initiatives) in both Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations.

"It is our hope that these resources: the video and guides for young people, and for parishes and congregations (both Catholic and Protestant), will help people think creatively about how inter-church activism can contribute to the transformation of our society today." @ @ @

General Assembly 2022 - Two weeks to go

As annual events retake their place in the calendar, this month sees the General Assembly meet in Belfast from Wednesday 22 to Saturday 25 June but with a number of significant changes to encourage greater participation.

For the full story visit:
bit.ly/3mgGYWz

Here are some worship events you may wish to attend:
Wednesday @ 7pm Opening Night
Thursday @ 12.15pm Lunchtime Worship

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Thursday @ 7.45pm Celebration evening hosted by the new Moderator Rev John Kirkpatrick introducing his theme 'Grace Works' - the guest speaker will be Peter Lynas, Evangelical Alliance NI

Friday @ 11.45am Communion Service

All public sessions will be live-streamed from the PCI website

The 2022 General Assembly begins on 22nd June and runs to Saturday 25th June. You can view the reports and GA timetable online here... <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/General-Assembly/2022-General-Assembly/General-Assembly-2022.aspx>

Poem for today

Dublin by Louis MacNeice

Grey brick upon brick,
Declamatory bronze
On sombre pedestals –
O'Connell, Grattan, Moore –
And the brewery tugs and the swans
On the balustraded stream
And the bare bones of a fanlight
Over a hungry door
And the air soft on the cheek
And porter running from the taps
With a head of yellow cream
And Nelson on his pillar
Watching his world collapse.
This never was my town,

I was not born or bred
Nor schooled here and she will not
Have me alive or dead
But yet she holds my mind
With her seedy elegance,
With her gentle veils of rain
And all her ghosts that walk
And all that hide behind
Her Georgian facades –
The catcalls and the pain,
The glamour of her squalor,
The bravado of her talk.

The lights jig in the river
With a concertina movement
And the sun comes up in the morning
Like barley-sugar on the water
And the mist on the Wicklow hills
Is close, as close
As the peasantry were to the landlord,
As the Irish to the Anglo-Irish,
As the killer is close one moment
To the man he kills,
Or as the moment itself
Is close to the next moment.

She is not an Irish town
And she is not English,
Historic with guns and vermin
And the cold renown
Of a fragment of Church latin,
Of an oratorical phrase.
But oh the days are soft,

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Soft enough to forget
The lesson better learnt,
The bullet on the wet
Streets, the crooked deal,
The steel behind the laugh,
The Four Courts burnt.

Fort of the Dane,
Garrison of the Saxon,
Augustan capital
Of a Gaelic nation,
Appropriating all
The alien brought,
You give me time for thought
And by a juggler's trick
You poise the toppling hour –
O greyness run to flower,
Grey stone, grey water,
And brick upon grey brick.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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