

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Methodist Conference

People and places



New Methodist church leader pays tribute to his congregation

The newly-installed Methodist President has paid tribute to those who supported him and his wife through her terminal illness several years ago, Alf McCreary writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

In his inaugural address in Belfast, Rev David Nixon thanked his congregation in Dun Laoghaire and the senior Methodists who supported him and his wife Rhoda before she passed away with cancer in 2020.

Rev Nixon had been elected in 2018 to lead the Methodist Church in Ireland for a year but due to his wife's illness he withdrew.

At the annual conference of 2021 he was again elected president for the coming year.

He told the congregation during last night's opening meeting of the annual conference at the Presbyterian Assembly Building: "I am grateful to the Reverend Sam McGuffin, who became president in 2019, and especially to the Dun Laoghaire congregation for allowing me to take time to be with Rhoda as she travelled her difficult journey.

"I have more experience now of brokenness, of many tears, of a God who did not answer our prayers for Rhoda's healing, but also a loving God who constantly showed us that He was with us and ahead of us to the very end.

"We experienced what it means to be part of a loving church family who supported us and cared for us when we really needed it.

"We experienced the value of older Christians who wrapped their arms of love around us and became parents to us."
Rev Nixon was born into a farming family in Blacklion, Co Cavan, in 1966. He worked as a joiner before training for the ministry. He served in the Dungannon Circuit with his wife before they spent 12 years as mission partners in Zambia. They returned with their two sons in July 2018, just a few weeks before Rhoda was diagnosed with cancer. Mr Nixon is currently the Circuit Superintendent in South East Leinster and is based in Dun Laoghaire.

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The Church also installed Tom Wilson, formerly principal of Abbot's Cross Primary School in Newtownabbey, as its new Lay Leader for the next two years.



Service to mark centenary of disbandment of Irish Regiments

This coming Sunday 12th June marks the centenary of the disbandment of the 6 Southern Irish Regiments of the British Army from the Republic of Ireland.

In a letter to the Dublin Fusiliers, King George thanked each man who had served in the regiment for their “good service to this Country and the Empire”.

The Queen's and Regimental Colours were handed to the king for safekeeping at Windsor and are there to this day. Addressing the gathering at Windsor, the king stated that the regiments were parting with their colours, "for reasons beyond your control and resistance".

The reasons beyond the regiment's control lay in Article 8 of the treaty between Britain and Ireland signed in London on December 6th, 1921, which stated that the Irish Free State could only establish and maintain a "military defence force" in proportion to its population vis-à-vis Great Britain. This statement marked the beginning of the end of the Irish infantry regiments of the British army recruited in southern Ireland.

HM King George V received the Colours of The Royal Irish Regiment, The Connaught Rangers, The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment, The Royal Munster Fusiliers and The Royal Dublin Fusiliers for safekeeping at Windsor Castle where they remain to this day.

To mark the centenary this Sunday the Combined Irish Regiments Association will hold a parade at the Cenotaph in London at 10:00hrs, and in Dublin the regimental associations will hold a service in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Birds with Wishes: Creativity camp for children 8–10 years of age

**Participants invited to register for camp in July
Birds with Wishes: Creativity camp for children 8–10 years of age.**



Last year, the 'Homing Pigeons: Birds with Wishes' project captured our imaginations! Good wishes arrived to Christ Church Cathedral on the wings of fanciful works of art, created by school children in Aleppo, Syria.

The 'Birds with Wishes' project continues and this year we are inviting children in Dublin to be part of the fun! Young artists will explore the beauty and architecture of the cathedral, engage with nature in nearby urban green spaces, and take part in creative activities involving visual arts, storytelling, creative writing and music. By the end of the week they will have created a new flock of 'Birds with Wishes' which will become part of the ongoing project.

Date and time: Mon, 4 Jul 2022, 10:00 – Fri, 8 Jul 2022, 15:30 IST

Location: Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

Drop-off each day: 9.45–10.00

Collection each day: 15.30–15.45

Registration and tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/birds-with-wishes-creativity-camp-tickets-344672072447>

Participation fee: €100 (€80 for second participant from the same household) Includes lunch each day and all art supplies.

Bursaries available for children living in direct provision or other situations of financial need, contact abigail@christchurch.ie directly to request a bursary place.

Along with Her Majesty, Cloughfern celebrates its own 70 years

Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations were all the more special in Cloughfern Parish as it was also marking its 70th anniversary over the weekend of June 4-5!

Back in 1951, intending parishioners of the newly-formed Parish of Cloughfern met in a converted barn in Fernagh Estate. Services and Sunday School were held in this venue for approximately a year and a half, until the new Church of the Ascension, Cloughfern, was built in the form of a dual purpose hall.

The church was formally dedicated by the Bishop, the Rt Rev Charles Irwin, on Ascension Day, May 24 1952.



Cutting the anniversary cake are children of founder members of the Church of the Ascension, Cloughfern Parish: Tom Fulton, Maebeth (Waite) Wilson, Christine Hunter, and Eleanor (Fulton) Robinson.

In 1953, it was decided to start work on a parochial hall, which was built mainly by volunteer labour. The work was completed in around 18 months. After a complete redecoration, and the installation of a stained-glass East window, the church was formally consecrated on May 21 1955.

Since then, Cloughfern Parish has had five incumbents, eight curates, and a number of trainees/students on placement.

The celebrations began on Saturday June 4, with a Platinum Jubilee lunch in the church hall, attended by some 75 parishioners, family and friends. After a selection of drinks on arrival, the anniversary cake was formally cut by Tom Fulton, Maebeth Wilson, Christine Hunter and Eleanor Robinson, all children of founder members of the church.

This was followed by a buffet lunch and a special display of biscuits decorated for the church's jubilee by the children in the Sunday School. Souvenir Platinum Jubilee pens and commemorative Queen's Jubilee keyrings were given out to everyone – the children had also helped to put together the keyrings.

A slideshow of photos old and new, reflecting 70 years of church activities, ran throughout the afternoon, and the event ended with a Royalty Jubilee quiz – no prizes, but some folk were very competitive!

On Sunday June 5 there was a special service in celebration of the Jubilee, when parishioners remembered and gave thanks for the service and dedication not only of the Queen, but also of those in the parish who have given of their time and energies over the last 70 years.

Special flower arrangements for the service, and also for the lunch, were made by Edith Clifford, assisted by husband John.

This Connor Diocese Photo Gallery gives a flavour of Cloughfern's 70th anniversary celebrations -
<https://connor.anglican.org/2022/06/08/along-with-her-majesty-cloughfern-celebrates-its-own-70-years/>



New Rector in Maghera

The faces of the parishioners of Maghera and Killelagh were wreathed in smiles on Thursday evening as they welcomed the institution of their new Rector, Rev Jonathan Brown in St Lurach's Church in Maghera.

The new incumbent's former parishioners, who had travelled all the way from Hillsborough for the occasion, looked less pleased, although they wished him well in his new ministry, conceding - generously and graciously - that in Rev Brown his new parishioners were getting "a good man".

The Service of Institution marked the end of an eight month vacancy following the resignation of the previous incumbent, Rev Terence Kerr.



Rev Canon Dr Bryan Follis

Bishop Andrew Forster welcomed the congregation to a “special occasion for all of us – for the parishioners, for the diocese and most especially for Jonathan and Julie”. He said he and the congregation were looking forward to getting to know the new Rector better. “One of the things that everybody wants to find out from Jonathan Brown,” Bishop Andrew said, “is how come he looks so young?”

It was a good sign for the parishioners of Maghera and Killelagh, the Bishop suggested, that two of their former rectors had returned to St Lurach’s for the service. The Bishop said Rev Canon Ian McDonald and Archdeacon Robert Miller were delighted to come back.

The sermon was preached by the Rev Canon Dr Bryan Follis, the Rector of Hillsborough Parish where Rev Brown had served as a curate. Dr Follis had chosen the first reading from Scripture, from Nehemiah 1:1-11. The congregation may have wondered, he said, how the passage – which was set in Babylon in 450 BC – could be relevant to a church and rector in Northern Ireland in 2022? The Bible was the word of God, he said; it had direct relevance for all God's people, at all times and in all places. "It's the word of God," Dr Follis said, "and as such it's supreme within our church in all matters of faith and conduct."

The preacher said he wanted to focus on the insight the reading afforded into the person and character of Nehemiah, and apply that to Rev Brown and to his new parish. Nehemiah was a godly man, who made a significant impact for the Kingdom of God. "It wasn't just projects; people mattered to Nehemiah." Nehemiah was pastoral, prayerful and prophetic. He had a concern and a passion for those in need; he shared their pain and felt their pain. "Any rector in any parish who will make any meaningful contribution to that parish, must be pastoral. And to the people of this parish, I want to reassure you that Jonathan Brown is extremely pastoral. One of the things about Jonathan which stand out from his time as a colleague in Hillsborough is his deep concern and care for individual parishioners. He is very pastoral, and I believe that as your rector Jonathan will prove an effective and faithful rector."

The preacher urged Rev Brown to be "proactive" like Nehemiah. "Be 'out and about', get to know individuals, build relationships, be known as their pastor as well as their



Diocesan Registrar, Rev Canon David Crooks

rector, not just formally but relationally and pastorally as someone whom they can trust, someone who cares – for that is who you are – and know your people individually. May God use you as an instrument of grace and mercy in this place.”

Dr Brown appealed to the people of Maghera and Killelagh to support their new Rector. “Jonathan is not – despite being very able, despite being a hard worker – is not a one-man band, to do all the work or ministry of this parish.” To put it bluntly and practically, the preacher said, that meant that every parishioner who was a believer and who trusted in Christ, had a ministry, a role and a responsibility. It might be with Sunday school; it might be assisting at a service, or catering at a parish function. “Whatever our talents,

whatever our gifts, whatever our personality – and we're all different – but each believer is called to serve the Lord.

“As Jonathan serves here in this parish, there needs to be a partnership with the people. Jonathan is called by God to be pastoral, to be prayerful and to be prophetic. But you, the believers, are called to a partnership. Honour that calling. Jonathan, I know, will honour God's calling upon him, and I invite the parish to honour God's calling upon you in partnership.”

Thursday's Service of Institution was organised by the Rural Dean, Rev Canon Colin Welsh. Bishop Andrew was assisted by the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven Robert Miller (who presented the incumbent-elect for institution); Diocesan Registrar, Rev Canon David Crooks; and by the Bishop's Curate, Rev Carmen Hayes.

‘Exploring racism and equality at the core of Church's mission’

Dublin & Glendalough's Council for Mission hosted a thought provoking evening exploring faith and racial justice as part of the ‘Conversations about Mission’ series. You can watch the conversation at the link at the end of the article.

“There is an institution and this institution is called whiteness. Whiteness protects.” These are the words of Dr Ebun Joseph who was speaking at the ‘Faith and Racial Justice’ Conversation about Mission organised by Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission. She said that

exploring racism and equality is at the core of the church's mission and urged people to "dig deep in to that conversation to see what the Lord needs us to do".

Dr Eburn Joseph was the latest speaker in the Conversations about Mission online series. She is director of the Institute of Antiracism and Black Studies, a race relations consultant, lecturer Black Studies and chairperson of the African Scholars Association Ireland (AFSAI). She was a Teaching Fellow at Trinity College Dublin where she taught the undergraduate module on race, ethnicity and identity on the Master's programme and developed and taught the module on intersectionality of race and gender. She developed the first module in Black Studies and critical race theory in education at University College Dublin. The session was recorded and there is a link at the end of this article.

She outlined the types of biases people have – affinity bias, attribution bias and conformity bias and pointed to research on how biases on a range of issues, from height to skin colour to gender, affected people's access to employment.

"Skin colour matters in Ireland and influences people's employment outcome. The scale of their skin colour matters. Immigrants with lighter skin tone are more likely to get a job," she explained. "I do what I do because beautiful babies, their experiences in life are going to be different because of the texture of their lips, hair and the colour of their skins. All influence how they will get on in the labour market, how they will get on in life, where they can and cannot go."

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On paper it may appear that the labour market is a level playing field and that everyone is equal, she said.

Dr Eburn Joseph

But she said racism, discrimination, lack of residency permits, people not being 'white enough to be Irish' all worked against people. "Wherever you are, the same group of people are at the bottom of the ladder. Are

they lazy or stupid or is there a system of operation that makes it inevitable that they will not succeed?" she asks. "The field is not level. Some people start higher up so they achieve their goals faster than those who start at the bottom."

White privilege is what protects white people from not starting at the bottom of the ladder, she stated adding that she was not saying that white people do not work but that they don't have to start at the bottom all the time.



She asked what happened to white privilege in the church: “In church do we become holy and we don’t do our white privilege thing?” She said there is a place for people of colour in the church, as seen in the Bible. “This is not just diversity. It is a core practice of your faith. You should dig deep into that conversation saying ‘oh Lord what do we need to be doing.’”

She suggested that race is about all people. “When we talk about difference, white people think about black people, travellers, etc. But we all are different. Whiteness is difference. Whiteness is put in the centre but we are all part of that difference. When we talk about race, it is all of us. It is not just black people, not just white people,” she said.

In response to a question about bias, Dr Joseph said you cannot tell people they have a bias, you have to show them. “All of us have bias. I show people a three legged chair and ask people if they would sit on it. They say no and I say they are biased towards four legged chairs,” she commented.

Another participant pointed out that everyone has bias based on history and experience and a good point to start was to reflect on ourselves. Ebun agreed and said that people should not be afraid to own their bias. “I have a lot of biases but I am aware of them. You need bias to live because if you have to check every chair before you sit down it would be endless. But there is a thin line where bias goes from survival to damaging others. You have to know where to draw that line. If your line is too close to your personal preference then your bias is going to be too high,” she explained.

Issues that came up during breakout discussions included:

- The need to address our biases intentionally.
- The challenge in getting all churches on board.
- The lack of diversity in leadership roles.
- The need to encourage churches to engage with the issues.
- The need to create welcoming spaces.
- The importance of modelling from the top, there needs to be leadership.
- The need to remove whiteness from the centre of the conversation.

Bringing the conversation to a close, the chairperson of the Council for Mission, the Revd Rob Clements said that he hoped the conversation that had been started would ripple out throughout the church as its members discern and learn where God is calling them to be. He thanked Ebun for her thought provoking contribution. The evening ended with a prayer from the Take the Knee liturgy.

You can watch a recording of the session here:

<https://youtu.be/a3TG5aB5Glg>

News reports

Welby asks African Archbishops to reconsider Lambeth Conference boycott

The Archbishop of Canterbury has asked the Primates of Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda to reconsider their anticipated boycott of the Lambeth Conference.

Bishops from around the Anglican Communion will gather in Canterbury, Kent, from 26 July to 8 August but the three African Primates - who belong to the orthodox GAFCON movement - intend to stay away.

In a statement in March, Nigerian Primate Henry Ndukuba, Rwandan Primate Laurent Mbanda, and Ugandan Primate Stephen Kaziimba said they would not be attending "because the Anglican Communion has failed to address with remorse and repentance the issues that necessitated their absence at the 2008 Lambeth Conference".

They said that a meeting of the Primates in London earlier this year suggested "that the subject of human sexuality is not on the agenda at the next Lambeth Conference, as if the problems generated by the admission of homosexuality as a normal way of life as opposed to Resolution 1.10 of the Lambeth Conference of 1998 could be swept under the carpet".

"Instead, Lambeth 2022 is to focus on peripheral matters about the environment and difficulties experienced by disadvantaged communities," they said.

"Their focus on the environment should be rooted in biblical theology within an authentic salvation message and must not abandon that for any social cause."

Writing to the three Church leaders, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, said that the invitation to attend "remains open".

In their joint letter, they said they were "distressed" to read that the Primates "consider matters of the environment, poverty and economic disadvantage to be 'peripheral'".

"These are matters of life and death for large parts of the Communion. They are the result of human sin of despoiling and ruining God's creation and it is anticipated that the world will see devastating wars and the displacement of up to one billion people as a direct result of climate change," the letter said.

"Not to care for God's creation and for the poor and destitute is in direct contravention of the teaching of scripture and the words of Jesus Christ."

The letter said that in not attending Lambeth, the Primates "will have neither voice nor the opportunity to listen".

"The invitation for bishops of the Anglican Communion provinces of Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda remains open," wrote Welby and Idowu-Fearon.

"God calls us to unity and not to conflict (John 17:21) so that the world may know he came from the Father. That is the very purpose of the church globally.

"Boycotts do not proclaim Christ. Those who stay away cannot be heard, they will lose influence and the chance of shaping the future. All of us will be the poorer spiritually as a result of your absence."

Pope forced to withdraw from Sudan visit

Vatican News states - "At the request of his doctors, and in order not to jeopardize the results of the therapy that he is undergoing for his knee, Pope Francis has been forced to postpone, with regret, his Apostolic Journey to the Democratic Republic of Congo and to South Sudan."

The Moderator of the Church of Scotland who was going with the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury tweeted "I

AMACH LE DIA - HOLIDAY GATHERING

An opportunity to meet informally in the summer

Tipperary & Limerick - 8th – 12th July

We've created an informal setting where there will be opportunity to participate in some events, share meals together and holiday at your own pace. Accommodation available at Methodist Manse, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary. Come along and enjoy.

Friday 8th – evening meal
Saturday 9th – Limerick Pride service & Limerick Pride parade
Sunday 10th – lead worship at Roscrea Methodist, Lunch & Walk
11th, 12th – Daytime trips in mid west & evening meals & meeting

Minimal costs involved & informal atmosphere. Simple accommodation available in manse or other local accommodation can be recommended too.

For further details, questions or ideas please contact
Steven – 087 163 1208 / stevenfoster13@gmail.com



am very sorry to hear that @Pontifex has been forced to postpone our historic Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan for health reasons and I hope that he makes a speedy recovery and he is assured that our prayers are with him”.

In the media

The BBC has confirmed it has decided to axe live coverage of the Twelfth of July parade in Belfast

Belfast Telegraph

The Grand Secretary of the Orange Order and the leader of the DUP were informed of the move on Thursday.

Last night a BBC NI spokesperson said no final decision had been taken about programming.

However a letter was sent to Rev Mervyn Gibson and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson this morning revealing plans to substitute live coverage with an extended night time highlight show.

BBC NI interim director Adam Smyth said the one hour show – covering eight events – is part of efforts “to better and more fully reflect” the Twelfth.

“We know that our decision not to resume live television coverage of the Belfast demonstration may be disappointing for some people and have made this decision after careful consideration and based on all usual editorial considerations,” the letter states.

“We will also want to explore how we can make audiences aware of other BBC programmes about the Orange tradition, coinciding with this year’s 12 July programming and will confirm these and other broadcast details shortly.”

Mr Smyth insisted the public funded broadcaster recognises the importance of the Twelfth and Orange Order events.

“This is something we will properly reflect within our output, seeking to describe and explain the significance of what is happening and make it more generally accessible including to those with other backgrounds and beliefs,” he added.

The letter also praised the Orange Order for helping production staff over the years and expressed a desire to continue good relations.

“We hope that this is something that the Institution will feel able to facilitate helping BBC staff in their efforts to capture the colour, diversity and importance of these events.”

Poem for today

**Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal, Dublin
'Erected to the memory of Mrs. Dermot O'Brien'
by Patrick Kavanagh**

O commemorate me where there is water,
Canal water, preferably, so stilly
Greeny at the heart of summer. Brother
Commemorate me thus beautifully hi
Where by a lock niagarously roars

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The falls for those who sit in the tremendous silence
Of mid-July. No one will speak in prose
Who finds his way to these Parnassian islands.
A swan goes by head low with many apologies,
Fantastic light looks through the eyes of bridges -
And look! a barge comes bringing from Athy
And other far-flung towns mythologies.
O commemorate me with no hero-courageous
Tomb - just a canal-bank seat for the passer-by.

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