

Church News Ireland



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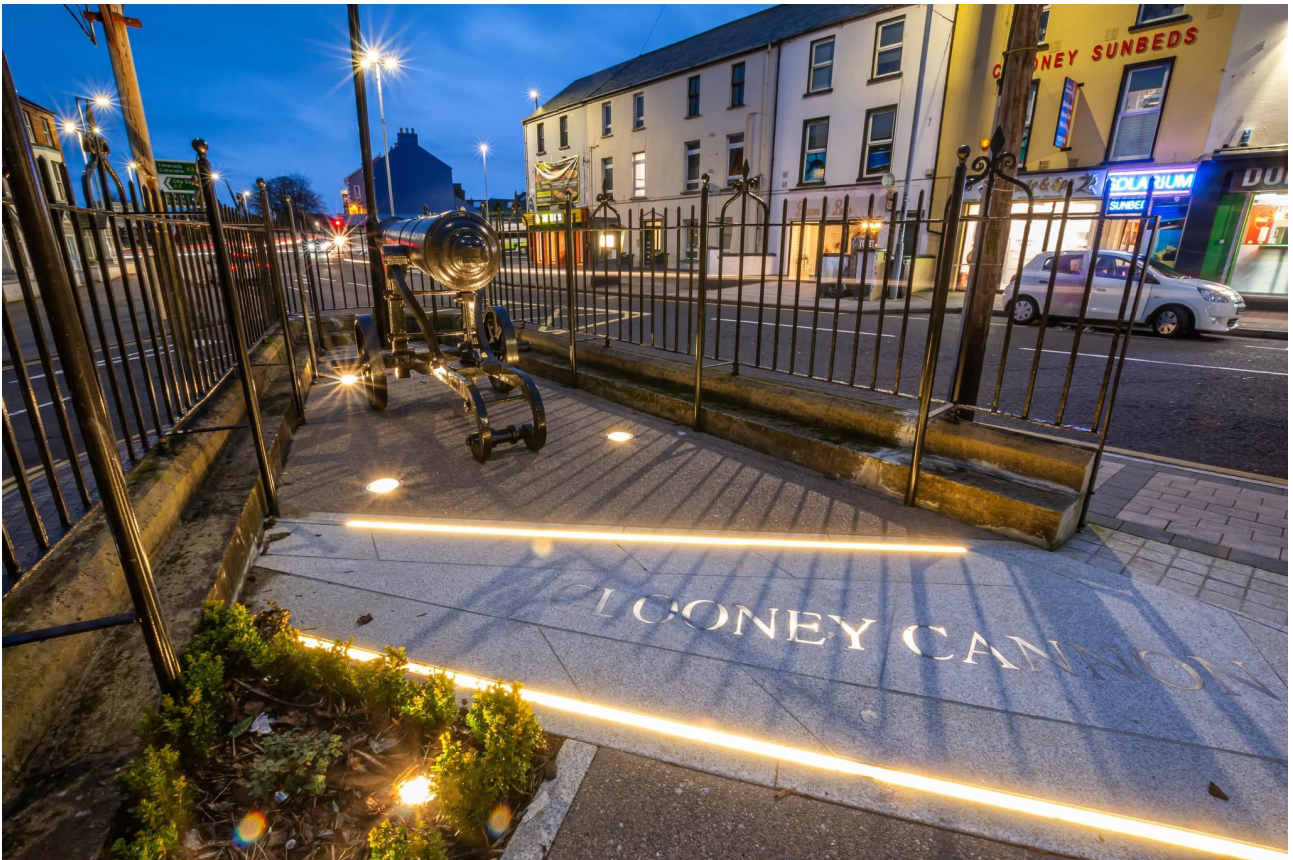
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Image of the day



Winning Derry restoration

The Mark Patterson Show on BBC Radio Foyle commented - Just in. Watersiders, you know the wee park and restored Crimean War cannon there on Clooney Terrace?

Well, it has just won the highly prestigious "Royal Town Planning Institute Northern Ireland Awards for Planning Excellence 2025".

We've reported this one from the start; how the Council and the community partnered up - it was a really messy space beforehand. I see it most days, and the community have



respected the restoration. It's spotless, and looks so well in the sun especially.

Well done all, especially the Council, Bonds Street Community Association and Clooney All Saints Church of Ireland

A "restoration of the historic Crimean War-era cannon, new seating, planting, lighting, and the installation of interpretive signage. The scheme also created a physical link between the cannon site and the adjacent Clooney All Saints Church garden ... " £215k well spent...

News

Specific concerns in recent troubles identified in statement from Archbishop John McDowell

‘The scenes of violence which have taken place over this week in some of our towns are a source of great shame for Northern Ireland.



“Hiding behind the figment of “legitimate concerns” but in fact motivated by crude racism,

groups of young men (and the shadowy and unaccountable people who control them) planned and carried out attacks on civil society and on democracy. The damage they have caused is not just material; it cannot be simply swept away.

‘As disciples of Jesus Christ, called to respect the dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God, we should put ourselves in the shoes of someone trapped inside a house or a hostel while an angry mob gathers outside. It must be utterly terrifying. Imagine the lasting impact of such terror on a child.

‘The people who are the target of such squalid protests have come to this country to make a new life and to make a living. Just as we would rightly refuse to be judged by the criminal actions of any individual who happens to be from

the same nationality or ethnicity as us, so we should question those who do so of others.

‘As with many people I, too, have legitimate concerns. I am concerned that when family members can no longer care for themselves and are at their most vulnerable, there won’t be skilled assistants and carers to help look after them. Or that when I go to hospital, there won’t be nurses and doctors from around the globe to provide expert treatment and care. Or that so many of the industries crucial to a flourishing Northern Ireland – from agriculture to the arts, from restaurants to R&D – will wither without workers being respected and valued, regardless of their background.

‘I have also a legitimate concern that the scapegoating of people whose skin is a different colour, who speak different languages or who practice a different faith, will allow policymakers to continue to ignore the actual, deep-seated problems which make Northern Ireland a place of low productivity and social and political unease.

‘Above all, I have a concern that speaking about other people and cultures in sub-human and certainly sub-Christian terms, and acting towards them as though they are in some way inferior to me, will deaden my soul to the love of the God of all nations, whose Son allowed Himself to be bowed to the ground to bring an end once and for all to every ethnic division.’

St. Nicholas' Schola Cantorum continuing commitment

The choristers in Galway finished another incredible term by singing their final service of the 2024-2025 year.

During this special service, probationers were inducted as full members of the Schola, and awards for Musicianship, Liturgy, and Vocal training were presented.

Each of these students demonstrated dedication and commitment this year, and we couldn't be more proud of them.

None of this would be possible without the continued leadership of our Musical Director, Mark Duley, who, along with Dottie Knauer, provides not only quality musical leadership each week but a supportive and caring atmosphere for each student who enters our church. "We are incredibly appreciative of the two of them and their continued commitment to the St. Nicholas' Schola Cantorum".

Five Irish Methodist ministers to visit Church in South Africa

What does it mean to be "Methodist" in a broken, unfair world? That's not a hypothetical question: around the globe, Methodist churches are actively searching for practical answers.

This Sunday, five ministers from The Methodist Church in Ireland are travelling to South Africa – a country where the effects of inequality, division and climate change are starkly apparent.



Together with colleagues from The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, they will consider what a Methodist response to those issues should look like – both in Southern Africa, and here in Ireland.

Please pray for Leah, Alan, Philip, Michael and Fiona as they travel to South Africa, and for their hosts: Church Land Programme. Pray that God would richly bless them as they spend time with our world church family.

We pray that God would use this experience to light a spark for world mission in the hearts of each team member, inspire new ideas for their home churches and help them to develop deeper relationships with each other and the Methodist Church in South Africa.



The real side of Ballymena

With so much attention focused on Ballymena this week, we want to remind you of the goodness and generosity of people in the County Antrim town.

Ballymena Ukulele Group held a busking session recently, giving their time freely to raise funds for Christian Aid's work to help people living in desperate poverty and crisis around the world.

These 'plucky' and talented musicians entertained shoppers at the town's Tower Centre mall, who responded with donations totalling almost £350.

It won't make it onto the news but Ballymena's small act of solidarity is a symbol of hope. Hope that we can work together to build a better, fairer world. Love Ballymena.

Charity Fundraising Forum in Dublin

Benefact Group hosted a Charity Fundraising Forum in Dublin - “It was the first time we have taken this event to Ireland, and won't be the last! “

With over 25 fundraisers in the room, the event was packed with valuable insights and discussions.

The keynote speaker, Andy King, Director of Fireside Fundraising, delivered a session on the role of storytelling in fundraising, covering:

- ✓ How budget holders make decisions
- ✓ How to influence them
- ✓ How to clearly define your charity's purpose and impact

We were also joined by some of our own team from Benefact Group and Ecclesiastical Insurance Office (Ireland), including Ian Tate, Scott Hayes, John Devitt, Graham Hohn CIP Dip CII and Chris Pitt

A huge thank you to all the incredible fundraisers who attended! Please do let Scott Hayes of Benefact know how you found the event.

Education

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Strabane Academy history in action

Year 9 students had an unforgettable trip to Derry~ Londonderry, diving deep into the city's rich history and vibrant culture.



From exploring fascinating exhibits in the Guildhall museum to walking the iconic city walls, we brought our history lessons to life in the best way possible.

A special highlight was our visit to the Mayor's Office — an inspiring opportunity for students to learn about local leadership.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this trip so memorable. The past has never felt more alive.



Peace Plus in Enniskillen schools

Jones Memorial Primary School and Holy Trinity Primary School, in Enniskillen, proudly showcased the culmination of their ASPIRE PEACEPLUS Shared Education project on Thursday, 29th May 2025, with a vibrant exhibition of creativity and collaboration, which included a video of an original song written and performed by the pupils.

ASPIRE is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It aims to provide direct and sustained contact between children and young people from all backgrounds.

To read the full story: <https://ow.ly/Zjp750W4Rfk>

To watch video: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1090524307?h=69706c922d>

Cathedral Calls

Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral

The Revd Dr Stanley Gamble has been appointed as a canon of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Dr Gamble has been rector of Killinchy and Kilmood for 13 years and is married to Sarah. They have two children.

Bishop David McClay of Down and Dromore said: 'I was delighted to learn that Revd Dr Stanley Gamble will be joining the Chapter of Saint Patrick's, our national Cathedral.



He will bring much to his role as Prebendary of Maynooth, particularly with his ability to spearhead new community outreach initiatives and his creativity around helping a church to grow and thrive. Stanley has also recently supported me as bishop with some new church planting initiatives.

"I extend to him my prayerful good wishes for his new role in the life of St Patrick's."

Speaking of his appointment, Stanley said: "I am humbled and honoured to join the Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. I am very grateful to the Dean and Chapter for electing me to the Prebendary of Maynooth.

"My first memory of St Patrick's was when the late Revd Canon Dr Ken Cochrane was installed there in 1990. Little did I know as a boy that 35 years later I would be called to follow suit. I am very much looking forward to making a positive contribution to the life of the Cathedral.

“Please pray for me as I seek to assist the Dean and Chapter in the ministry of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments.”

Cumbria man pedals to all 42 Anglican cathedrals with cello in tow

A cellist and poet from Cumbria has cycled to all 42 Anglican cathedrals in England with his cello strapped to his bike as part of a personal pilgrimage combining faith, music and endurance.

Beginning in Newcastle on 19th May and ending with a concert in Carlisle on 4th July, Kenneth Wilson performed his Meditation on the Seven Last Words of Jesus at each cathedral.

The meditative work weaves together original poetry and the slow movements of J.S. Bach’s solo cello suites.

He explained to The News and Star: “The idea is that the journey is personal pilgrimage. I wanted to perform my meditation on the seven last words of Jesus... most cathedrals thought it was a wonderful idea.”

No stranger to long rides, Wilson previously cycled from Hadrian’s Wall to Rome with his cello.

This latest journey averaged 40–50 miles a day and includes performances designed to invite stillness and spiritual reflection.

Christ Church Cathedral Friends June excursion

The June excursion is to the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, Dun Laoghaire, at 11am, on Thursday 19th June.

This is located in the former Mariners' Church, five minutes along the seafront from the DART Station and opposite DLR Lexicon Library. There is a wide range of artifacts and documentation connected with the seas around Ireland.

Current special highlights include the working 1902 optic light from Baily Lighthouse, Captain Halpin and the story of the RMS Leinster wreck, Ireland's worst maritime disaster, in 1918. There is reduced admission charge of €5 and guests can accompany Friends. Contact [\[cccdublinfriends@gmail.com\]](mailto:cccdublinfriends@gmail.com) (<mailto:cccdublinfriends@gmail.com>) to book.

Workshop with Bishop Bonnie Perry

You are invited to. join Bishop Bonnie A. Perry, the first openly lesbian bishop in Michigan, for a moving and hopeful conversation on the Episcopal Church's decades-long journey toward LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion.

Through personal stories, historical insight, and hard-earned wisdom, Bishop Perry will explore how a traditional Christian denomination became a global leader in affirming LGBTQ+ people at every level of church life.

She'll reflect on the people, prayers, conflicts, and commitments that transformed the Episcopal Church—from protest to policy, from division to deep welcome. Participants will be invited into open conversation about what inclusion can and should look like in their own churches and communities.

At the heart of it all is a simple, radical truth:
“Where there is love, there is holiness; and where there is holiness, there is God.”

This workshop is for clergy, lay leaders, seekers, and anyone passionate about justice in the Church. Come as you are. Everyone is welcome—regardless of belief, background, or identity. Please register in advance via - <https://christchurchcathedral.ticketsolve.com/>

Clergy and ministry

Derry and Raphoe's “newest priests”

A piece of local history was made in St Eunan's Cathedral Raphoe, this evening, as the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe's “newest priests” were ordained to the priesthood in the Ordained Local Ministry (O.L.M.) by Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

It was “a privilege and joy” the Bishop said, to be with Rev Brian Robinson and Rev Sean McClafferty, on St Barnabas' Day, for “this very significant and special occasion”.



It was standing room only in the cathedral as family members, friends and parishioners from the various parishes in which the two men served previously as deacons came along to share that joy that Bishop Andrew spoke about and to lend the two new priests their support. The service was especially important for their home parishes, the Bishop said, “where your faith has been nurtured and where that vocation was born and grew to bring you to this point of ordination.”

Among those looking on with interest in the church were Rev Eleanor Craig, Rev Linda Hughes and Rev Gillian Millar who will be ordained to the priesthood – also in the Ordained Local Ministry – in St Patrick's Church in Kilrea on Sunday 29th June, and Glendermott and New Buildings Church of Ireland's new curate, James Shiels, who will be

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ordained to the diaconate in Glendermott Parish Church next Sunday 15th June.

Wednesday evening's service was led by Bishop Andrew, who was assisted by the Dean of Raphoe, Very Rev Liz Fitzgerald, the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven. David Huss and the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller.



In his sermon, the Bishop said it was a significant and special occasion for the whole church of Jesus Christ. He said Ordained Local Ministry was a new form of ministry that had been absolutely blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Turning to the two ordinands, Bishop Andrew said: "Today is both a milestone in your personal discipleship and it's also a signpost for the ministry that lies ahead of you. Today as we ordain you in the name of Jesus, be assured of our prayers and support for the ministry that stretches ahead of you."

This evening's was the first of three ordination services in the diocese in just over a fortnight, and the Bishop said he wondered what the advice he could give was for people being



ordained. "It's pretty basic advice," he said, "it's pretty obvious advice, and it's the advice I'm sure that your ordained colleagues in the front rows here would say to you this evening, and it's this: to pray, to keep praying, and whenever you feel you're exhausted in prayer, pray again."



"Keep praying. Pray for yourself, pray for your family, pray for the people you serve. Pray for others. Keep praying. Because it's in our own prayers that we find our spiritual life enlivened and strengthened, and it's within our own prayers that we come to discover the heart of God for those whom we serve in ministry."

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Music for this evening's service was provided by the Cathedral Choir, accompanied by organist Renee Goudie and afterwards refreshments were served in the Cathedral Hall, a short walk away from St Eunan's.

Methodist Church Lay Witness Weekends

Three Lay Witness Weekends are planned, God willing for 2026!

Togherdoo Methodist 6 - 8 February
Co leaders Shirley Alexander & Bruce Mullen

Whitehead & Island Magee Methodist
27 February - 1st March
Co leaders Tom & Louise Wilson

High Street Methodist, Lurgan
13 - 15 November Leaders TBC

Please pray for these weekends and as team members are confirmed. If your Church Council is interested in hosting a weekend, please get in touch. God is good.

Poem for today

June Thunder
by Louis Macneice

The Junes were free and full, driving through tiny
Roads, the mudguards brushing the cowparsley,
Through fields of mustard and under boldly embattled

Mays and chestnuts

Or between beeches verdurous and voluptuous
Or where broom and gorse beflagged the chalkland--
All the flare and gusto of the unenduring
Joys of a season

Now returned but I note as more appropriate
To the maturer mood impending thunder
With an indigo sky and the garden hushed except for
The treetops moving.

Then the curtains in my room blow suddenly inward,
The shrubbery rustles, birds fly heavily homeward,
The white flowers fade to nothing on the trees and rain
comes
Down like a dropscene.

Now there comes catharsis, the cleansing downpour
Breaking the blossoms of our overdated fancies
Our old sentimentality and whimsicality
Loves of the morning.

Blackness at half-past eight, the night's precursor,
Clouds like falling masonry and lightning's lavish
Annunciation, the sword of the mad archangel
Flashed from the scabbard.

If only you would come and dare the crystal
Rampart of the rain and the bottomless moat of thunder,
If only now you would come I should be happy
Now if now only.

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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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