

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – The man from Chicago

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Image of
the day

The man
from
Chicago

You may take
the man out of
Chicago but for
sure this
present Pope
knows you
can't take
away support
for the White



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Sox. And as the photos here show his fellow fans have taken due note of his affirmation.

The White Sox official web site is - <https://www.mlb.com/whitesox>

News



Diocese of Armagh Annual Hospice Sunday Appeal

The Annual Hospice Sunday Appeal in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Armagh has been taking place since

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it began in 2014. the diocese has raised a total of £21,377.95 in their 2024/2025 collections.

Thank you for your continued support.

Pictured: Archbishop of Armagh John McDowell, Hospice Fundraising Officer Aisling Hickey, Rev Canon Matthew Hagan MBE and Diocesan and Secretary Mrs Jane Leighton



Assembly agrees to establish new Church

For the first time in 15 years a new church, 'Central Belfast' will become a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) after the General Assembly approved the move.

On the second day of debate and discussion at their meeting in Belfast, the all-Ireland denomination agreed to establish the new congregation after eight years of prayerful and dedicated work on the ground by those involved.

The decision was taken when the General Assembly agreed to Carnmoney Presbyterian Church's 'prayer', contained in its Memorial (or petition) to the Assembly, to authorise the Presbytery of South Belfast, to 'establish 'Central Belfast' as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church', joining the 500-plus other congregations in the denomination.

While not a member of the General Assembly, David Dickinson, (Photo) who leads Central, and is training for PCI's ordained ministry, was in the Assembly Hall to listen to the debate. Speaking afterwards, he said, "As I look at all God has done these past eight years, and as we open the doors

Rick Hill, Council for Mission in Ireland Secretary, highlighted the growth and development of projects and congregations in Balbriggan, Belfast, Wexford, Carrigart, and Kilkenny.

every Sunday to see hundreds of people gather...I'm hopeful and expectant for all God is yet to do."

Established in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter in October 2016, Central began life with much prayer and nine people. Mr Dickinson said that after eight years, a number of moves and a pandemic - today "is an exciting day and important moment in Central's journey."

Talking about that journey, Mr Dickinson said that Central had come as a result of five initial years of incredibly fruitful Alpha courses in the city, “seeking to see a community of believers established in the city centre, living, worshipping, and giving themselves to rhythms of worship, community and witness.”

The church plant began in October 2016 on Wednesday nights with nine people meeting in various spaces in The MAC theatre. The community grew to around 25, and in February 2018 services moved to a Sunday afternoon to facilitate better kids’ ministry and make better rhythms of families. Two months later, they moved to the ground of Assembly Buildings, where numbers grew to around 40.

Mr Dickinson explained, that, throughout this period, the Presbytery of South Belfast, one of PCI’s 19 regional bodies, began conversations with the Central team about “the possibility of taking on May Street, which was to close at the end of 2018 after 190 years of faithful worship. Funding raising began in anticipation of the expected renovation.”

He continued, “We held a joint service with the outgoing May Street congregation in January 2019 to give thanks for the previous 19 decades, and to give thanks for what was to come. In Easter that year, with around 70 attending, we moved our services to Sunday mornings, in the new venue with a number of firsts – first wedding and first Carol services with the expansion of multiple homegroups and a growing kids ministry. When we reopened in 2022, following Covid, having gone online, we’d grown to around 120.

Today, Central now exists as a worshipping community of between 350-375 people, which is an amazing work of God.”

The Church Planters

Talking about today’s decision of the General Assembly, Mr Dickinson said, “This is an exciting day and important moment in Central’s journey, as I believe it begins the process of putting down roots inside the life of PCI, and roots down in Belfast, so that a church might live here long beyond us as a transforming presence in the heart of the city for generations to come.

“We’re grateful for how PCI has stepped toward us in relationship, and warmly received us as a community, and are excited about how that relationship will develop in the years ahead. It’s also our prayer that our journey is a challenge and encouragement to many more people and congregations inside our denomination to follow God’s voice into planting churches throughout Ireland. As I look at all He has done these past eight years, and as we open the doors every Sunday to see hundreds of people gather, I’m hopeful and expectant for all God is yet to do,” he said.

Proposing the Memorial, the minister of Carnmoney Presbyterian, Rev Stuart Hawthorne, said, “Central’s story is a testament to God’s steady provision as the team has followed the Holy Spirit’s guidance, step-by-step.”

Becoming minister of Carnmoney after the church plant began, he continued, “Today, around 300–350 people gather in the old May Street building each Sunday...for some time, it has been felt that it is time for this church

‘plant’ to become established as a ‘church’—hence this Memorial. While city-centre ministry is not more important than suburban, or rural ministry, cities remain strategically vital in the Mission of God...The journey of Central has always been about faith—moving from one stage of God’s unfolding plan, to the next. We have now arrived at a significant new milestone...”

Mr Hawthorne’s immediate predecessor, Rev John Dickinson, under whose ministry the church plant began, also spoke in the debate, saying, “This is a special moment for all of us who worship in Central every Sunday, and already call it our church.” Having mentioned by name many who had made this day possible, in an emotional conclusion, he said, “In the formative years of my life, my dad was my pastor and now in my white-haired days, my pastor will be my son.”

Education

Wallace Midsummer Concert

Come along and celebrate the end of the Wallace High School year at a Midsummer Concert in the Assembly Hall on 25th June at 7:30pm.

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The concert is presented by the Junior School and Year 11, and will feature soloists, choirs, instrumental groups, and a few other special items.

Tickets are free and can be booked via the following link:
<https://zurl.co/q1gfp>

Refreshments will be available to purchase on the night. We look forward to seeing you there!

A Special Celebration at St Dominic's

We were delighted to celebrate a beautiful Mass with our Year 8 students and their families, marking the completion of their first year at St Dominic's Grammar School.

Congratulations to all our Year 8 pupils – we are incredibly proud of everything you have achieved this year. Your enthusiasm, growth, and spirit have enriched the wider St Dominic's community, and we can't wait to see all you will become over the next six years!

A special thanks to Fr Darren for leading the celebration, to Mrs Willoughby and the RE Department for their organisation, and to Mr McNeill and the Music Department for providing such moving accompaniment to the liturgy.

Ballymena visit to Ypres Salient and the Menin Gate ceremony in Ypres

It was another busy day for all those on the Academy's Year 10 History trip.

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Pupils visited the Ypres Salient and finished at the Menin Gate ceremony in Ypres.

Cathedral Calls

St Patrick's Choristers had massive experiences

“Very sad day at the pointy end of the building with this lot heading on to pastures new”. Writes a correspondent at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Comment continues - “Most of them started either just before or mid-covid, made it through all of that, represented the Cathedral in the US (twice) and Spain too and sang our first broadcast with the BBC in nearly 20 years. A few budding organists in there too....”

Derry Choristers promotion

Huge congratulations to Tomàs and Jobe who were promoted to Full Choristers last Sunday morning by the Dean, after serving a period of six months as Probationers.

Well done, Boys. And thank you for all that you do for the St Columb's Cathedral Choir.

St Columb's Cathedral Choristers

Saint Patrick's Cathedral's Conservation Plan launched

Saint Patrick's Cathedral, the National Cathedral of the Church of Ireland and one of the country's most cherished landmarks, has officially launched its Conservation Plan, a comprehensive roadmap to safeguard the historic building's physical fabric, cultural significance, and spiritual legacy for generations to come.

The plan was unveiled on Wednesday (11 June) at a special event held in the Cathedral Deanery on Kevin Street, Dublin 8, attended by Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, Christopher O'Sullivan. The 112-page document outlines a meticulous strategy for the sustainable care and future development of the cathedral, recognising its vital role as a place of worship, cultural beacon, and living heritage site.

At the launch, The Very Revd Dr William Morton, Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, underscored the cathedral's enduring importance to both the spiritual and civic life of Ireland.

"Saint Patrick's Cathedral matters — to our history, to our present identity, and to future generations," he remarked. "We are guardians for only a brief time, during which we are entrusted with a sacred legacy. Our duty is not only to preserve what has been handed on to us, but to pass it on, enriched, to those who come after us, endowed and alive with meaning and purpose, history and hope."

Developed by James Howley, Grade 1 conservation architect of Howley Hayes Cooney, in collaboration with Cathedral Archaeologist Linzi Simpson, and with contributions from heritage expert Mary Hanna (author of the original 2006 plan), the new conservation plan takes stock of the substantial progress made over the last 18 years including essential repairs, fire safety upgrades, and increased visitor engagement.

The plan was made possible through funding from the Community Monument Fund, administered by Dublin City Council and supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The conservation plan takes a forward-looking, integrated approach to care and stewardship, balancing the preservation of ancient stonework, stained glass, and archaeological remains with the cathedral's role as a vibrant centre for worship, music, education, and tourism, welcoming more than 600,000 visitors annually.

It also emphasises environmental responsibility, using sustainable materials and practices in all conservation efforts.

Key features of the Conservation Plan 2024 include:

- Comprehensive assessment of the cathedral's historic fabric and cultural significance
- Updated archaeological inventory including 30 new entries

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- Sustainable conservation strategies aligned with international best practice
- Guidance for managing change and growing visitor engagement
- Acknowledgement of community, state, and stakeholder collaboration

As the most visited church in Ireland and a cornerstone of Irish heritage, Saint Patrick's Cathedral continues to represent the intersection of faith, history, and civic identity. The Conservation Plan reaffirms its commitment to that role.

Clergy and ministry

Presbyterian Women - Prayer Request

Presbyterian Women. Write - Please join with us this week as we pray for Diane Cusick, global mission worker in Zambia.

Having returned to N.



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Ireland in early May for a break and some further medical investigation, it has been diagnosed, very sadly, that Diane is suffering from an aggressive cancer.

As Diane, her family and friends process this devastating news and face up to the challenges ahead, she asks that we pray for God's Spirit to work in and through her.

Clergy appreciations



The Church Wardens in St Polycarp's, Finaghy presented a flower arrangement to the Rector at this Sunday's morning service as she celebrated the 25th anniversary of her ordination.



Parishioners were also delighted to welcome the Revd. Clifford Skillen as Preacher as he celebrated the 36th anniversary of his own ordination. Well done good and faithful servants.

The Reverend Philip Heak (left) said on Sunday, “I had a lovely surprise at St. Mary’s this morning!

“A full church, lots of kind comments, thoughtful gifts and afterwards the congregation presented me with a beautiful card

and a wonderful cake to mark my 30th ordination anniversary. Feeling truly humbled and very grateful”

Ordinations in Down and Dromore

Bishop David McClay of Down and Dromore ordained six presbyters at a service in Down Cathedral on Sunday 15 June.

The preacher was Revd Paul Harcourt, Vicar of All Saints' Woodford Wells in Essex, who also led the ordination retreat.

It was a joyful occasion with a capacity congregation. Thank you to Daniel and Sarah McDonald from Willowfield Church

The ordinands were: Revd Colin Morris for the curacy of Kilmegan & Maghera; Revd Reuben Johnston for the curacy of Willowfield; Revd Peter Booth for the curacy of LAMP; Revd Dr Ryan Hawk for the curacy of Cregagh; Revd Dave Thomas for the curacy of Bloomfield and Revd Jonathan Watson for the curacy of Ballyholme. Down Cathedral St Donard's Community Church, Dundrum Willowfield Church LAMP St Finnian's Parish Church St Donards Church Ballyholme Parish Church

"It is quite something," Bishop Andrew Forster of Derry and Raphoe said on Sunday evening, "to come into a

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building as Mr James Shiels and to leave it as the Reverend James Shiels."

The Bishop was preaching to the congregation in Glendermott Parish Church in general, and addressing James in particular, at his Ordination Service as Deacon. "It is quite something," the Bishop said, "to take that step and feel that difference that the laying on of hands brings this evening."



The newly ordained minister now begins service as a Curate in Glendermott and New Buildings Church of Ireland under the guidance of the Rector, **Rev Canon Robert Boyd**. Canon Boyd was, himself, singled out for praise by the Bishop at the outset of the service having been honoured with an MBE less than 48 hours earlier in the **King's Birthday Honours list**.



There was rapturous applause as Bishop Andrew remarked that in over 20 years of friendship he had rarely seen Canon Boyd blush. "Robert, we're just delighted – really thrilled – and all your friends, all the family here in Glendermott and in the Diocese are so pleased at this recognition of the man you are and the service you give. You are somebody who always goes beyond and above, and always goes the extra mile and we are thrilled that the King has bestowed on you this wonderful honour. And in congratulating Robert I also want to pay tribute to [his wife](#) May because if ever it's true that behind every man there's a great woman, it's true in this instance. Bless you, May."

Bishop Andrew said the evening's Ordination Service was a significant occasion not just for James, his wife Julie, their son Clark and their family circle but for the parish, the diocese and the whole Church of Jesus Christ. He

welcomed the many people who had helped James both discern and live out his vocation in Christ. "It is lovely, also, to have **Rev Dr Paddy McGlinchey** with us this evening from the **Church of Ireland Theological Institute**. The Theological Institute do a wonderful job in the formation of clergy and Paddy you're very welcome; it's good to have you with us and please always be assured of our support and prayers for the work of the Institute."

The new deacon's wife, Julie; son, Clark; and parents Mary and William, were in church to support this important step in his ministry. Sitting in the same pew as the new deacon was another ordinand, Matthew Campbell, while watching with interest in the centre of the church was **Rev Canon Walter Quill** who was appointed curate in Glendermott 65 years ago this month.

Members of parishes which have featured in the new Curate's journey of ministry – from the Parish of Agherton (Portstewart), and the Parishes of Donaghmore St Michael (Castle Caulfield) – travelled to support him on the evening.

Events

Lunchtime recitals at St Ann's Church Dublin

“We’re delighted to invite you to join us for our lunchtime recitals at St Ann’s Church over the coming weeks. From soaring Icelandic choral works to a lyrical dialogue between violin and organ and a French

musical reverie for clarinet and piano—there’s something for every musical soul.”

Please see below for details and click the links to learn more:

Wednesday, June 19 The Reykjavík Cathedral Choir

Conductor: Lenka Máteová A breathtaking programme featuring Icelandic composers alongside works by Bruckner, Grieg, Stanford, and Gjeilo. Full programme and details <https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/the-reykjavik-cathedral-choir-domkorinn-i-reykjavik>

Wednesday, June 26 Bogdan Şofei (violin) & Thomas Charles Marshall (organ)

An evocative programme of Romantic and sacred music for violin and organ, including rarely heard gems by Enrico Bossi, Otto Olsson, and Joseph Muset. Full programme and details <https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/bogdan-sofei-and-thomas-charles-marshall-3>

Wednesday, July 3 Rêverie Française Margot Maurel (clarinet) and Aurélie (piano) perform a beautifully curated French programme featuring Poulenc’s and Saint-Saëns’ beloved clarinet sonatas, alongside Liszt and Grovlez.

Full programme and details <https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/reverie-francaise>

We’d be delighted to welcome you at these concerts. Tickets are ten euros.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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early morning

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