

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Last school assembly**

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### **News -**

MP's tribute to Church's annual remembrance of UDR

Portadown MU Branches explore Hillsborough

NI at Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast in Westminster

Stoneyford and Gartree Christian Aid Week

Remembrance of WW2 plane crash on Binevenagh

25 people killed in church in Damascus on Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi in North Belfast and Armagh

Bishop of London urges peers to oppose assisted dying bill

### **Education -**

Methody school leavers raise 21K for Motor Neurone

Eco Club brings St Dominic's School garden to life

RBAI cast looks at careers in drama

### **Cathedral Calls -**

Queen Elizabeth II shared in Westminster Abbey

International Portrait Day

Christian Aid permanent exhibition at Christ Church Dublin

### **Clergy and ministry -**

From Roslea to Westminster diocese

### **Events -**

GRAMMY Award Los Angeles Children's Chorus in Belfast

Lunch time concerts in St Columb's Cathedral

### **Resources -**

'We Believe': new reflections 1700 years of the Nicene Creed

### **Poem for today -**

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer by John Keats

### **Speaking to the soul -**

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

## Image of the day

### Last school assembly

**Congratulations to the 6th class at St Fin Barre's National School who graduated yesterday Wed 25. A big day for the children, their parents, and the school. What a memory to have.**

StFinBarresCathedral is surely one of the very finest school assembly buildings worldwide.

## News

### MP's tribute to Church's annual remembrance of UDR

**“I had the honour of attending the Service of Thanksgiving for the UDR, and all those who served and gave their lives to defend NI from the scourge of terrorism over the 23 years of the life of the regiment”, writes Sammy Wilson MP.**

Mr Wilson commented - Since I became MP for East Antrim, it has been my honour to attend this service held in St Saviours Church in Connor each year.

The most poignant part of the service is when they read out the names of those who were murdered because they dared to serve in the UDR.

June 26, 2025

Last night I met the widow of one such soldier who was murdered at his own home, leaving his wife and three children. UDR soldiers were targets for terrorists 24 hours a day, not just when they were on patrol.

Over the lifetime of the regiment 40,000 men and women served in the UDR; 198 were murdered during their service but even after they had retired they were still targets. A further 62 were murdered even though they were no longer members.

Hundreds were left maimed as a result of injuries sustained because of terrorist murder attempts.

It is important we remember the sacrifices made, and it was great to see so many veterans at the service proudly wearing their medals and remembering their fallen comrades.

As The Troubles fade from memory, it is sad to see that there is a generation growing up who don't even know what the letters UDR stand for let alone the important work they did in securing peace in NI.

I thank Rev Ian Magowan and the local UDR ex members for their commitment to keeping alive this the memory of those who served our country so well in dark times.

We must never forget.

## **Portadown MU Branches explore Hillsborough**





**On Saturday 21st June two Portadown Branches, Seagoe MU (Down & Dromore Diocese) and St Marks MU (Armagh Diocese), joined together for a tour of Hillsborough Parish Church, Hillsborough Castle and Lisburn Museum.**

The two diocese may be divided by the River Bann but are united in faith and fellowship through Mothers' Union. Many thanks to Elaine (St Marks) for organising a wonderful day.

## **NI at the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast in Westminster**

**Gavin Robinson MP, writes - "This morning I joined MPs, Lords, church leaders and organisations from across the UK for the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast in Westminster."**



***Sammy Wilson MP with the new Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev Trevor Gribben***

Gareth continues, Held in Westminster Hall, this year's theme was "God in the public square?", a timely question, especially in light of the recent debates on abortion to full term and the Assisted Dying Bill, which reached its third reading last week.

The morning's prayers included one read by **Nigel Dodds**.

The keynote address was delivered by **Professor John Lennox** an Armagh man and world-renowned mathematician and author, who spoke powerfully about the need for moral clarity and grace in public life. We were also





***Rev Chris Skillen, Robin Swann, MP, and Ven. Dr Stephen McBride from All Saints Parish Antrim***

led in worship by **Keith and Kristyn Getty**, whose music continues to inspire churches across the world.

At a time when decisions touch on the most personal and profound parts of life, it was a moment to step back, reflect, and ask what role faith can play in shaping leadership with empathy and strength.

**Sammy Wilson MP** said, “I joined with the new Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, **Rev Trevor Gribben**,

June 26, 2025

at the Annual Prayer Breakfast in Westminster, this morning. It was an all NI affair with music from Kristyn and Keith Getty, and the speaker, Professor John Lennox.”

**Robin Swann, MP**, -“It’s been great to be able to welcome **Dr Stephen McBride** from All Saints Parish Antrim and **Rev Chris Skillen** from Sixmile Methodist Churches to the 2025 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast this morning”.



## Stoneyford and Gartree Christian Aid Week

Well done to the parishioners of St John’s Stoneyford and Gartree churches near Lisburn who held a lunch on



## **Sunday to raise funds for Christian Aid's work to help people living in poverty and crisis.**

Earlier, CAI Church Fundraising Project Officer Suzanne Simpson (first left) spoke at both churches, sharing the story of our work in Guatemala which is the focus of this year's Christian Aid Week appeal.

Big shout-out to the Christian Aid representative Norma Parker (first right), and to all the parishioners who gave their time freely to prepare and serve the lunch. We're also grateful to everyone who came along and donated so generously.

Special thanks go to the minister, Rev John Farr who has supported our work for many years. With a name like that, perhaps it's no surprise that he wants to show God's love to people who live 'Farr' away.

## **Remembrance of WW2 plane crash on Binevenagh Mountain**

**Nine RAF airmen who lost their lives in a plane crash on Binevenagh Mountain 81 years ago were remembered at a service in Aghanloo Parish Church this week where a plinth was unveiled in their honour.**

Their Consolidated Liberator Aircraft from RAF Ballykelly had been on anti-submarine duty when it crashed into the cliff face during bad weather on 24th June 1944.



A granite stone bearing the names of the fallen crew members was unveiled by a member of Limavady Royal Air Force Association. The plinth was dedicated by the Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, during a service led by the Rector of the Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and Tamlaghtard Group of Parishes, Rev Rhys Jones.

Among those in attendance was John Fraser Gordon Leonard – a nephew of one of the lost crewmen – who had travelled from Edinburgh for today's unveiling.







## ***His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant Lady Karen Girvan MBE***

Bishop Andrew said it was a privilege to be part of the service. "I had two great-uncles who both served in the RAF in the Second World War," he said, "and when [Rev](#) Rhys told me about the whole endeavour of having this memorial placed here in memory of the men who died on that Liberator, I didn't want to be anywhere else today but here – acknowledging their service and thinking back to members of my own family who served in the RAF." Local political representatives, including Alan Robinson MLA, joined members of the Royal Air Force Association from both Limavady and Coleraine, and representatives of Limavady Branch of The Royal British Legion for the Service of Dedication and Commemoration. His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant Lady Karen Girvan MBE laid one of several wreaths which were left by the plinth.



June 26, 2025

## 25 people killed in church in Damascus on Corpus Christi

**On Sunday, June 22, the solemnity of Corpus Christi, at least 25 people were killed after two armed men stormed the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Elias in Douailah, on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria.**

On June 24, a funeral prayer was held for the repose of these victims at the Church of the Holy Cross in Qassaa.  
Video credit: [Al-Rifai/EWTN News](#)



**Corpus Christi  
in North  
Belfast and  
Armagh**





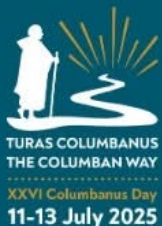
## Bishop of London urges peers to oppose assisted dying bill

The Bishop of London has spoken of her concerns for the most vulnerable, as the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons by a narrow margin on Friday.

In a statement on the Church of England's website, **Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullaly** who is a former Chief Nursing Officer and now the Church of England's lead bishop for health and social care, said there was "mounting evidence" that the bill



### Symposium - "If You Want to Know the Creator, Understand Creation"



.....  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 5 p.m.  
*Carlow College, St Patrick's*



COLÁISTE CHEATHARLACH  
NAOMH PADRAIG  
CARLOW COLLEGE  
ST. PATRICK'S



“is unworkable and unsafe and poses a risk to the most vulnerable people in our society.”

Bishop Sarah went on to urge peers to oppose the assisted dying bill when it goes to the House of Lords for scrutiny:

“If enacted, this legislation would come into force amid serious shortfalls in adult social care, a post code lottery in palliative care and well documented pressures on the NHS, multiplying the potential risks to the most vulnerable. It does not prevent terminally ill people who perceive themselves to be a burden to their families and friends from choosing ‘assisted dying. And it would mean that we became a society where the state fully funds a service for terminally ill people to end their own lives but shockingly only funds around one third of palliative care.

“Every person is of immeasurable and irreducible value, and should be able to access the care and support that they need – a principle that I know is shared by those all faiths and none.

“We must oppose a law that puts the vulnerable at risk and instead work to improve funding and access to desperately needed palliative care services.”

The bill, which would allow terminally ill adults with six months or less to live to get medical assistance to end their own lives, passed by just 23 votes. 314 MPs voted for the bill with 291 against.

Many MPs who had previously voted for the bill in November changed their mind, meaning the bill’s margin of

support halved. Over the last few months, organisations including The Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal College of Physicians, Association for Palliative Medicine and Disability Rights UK raised the alarm over what they said was a lack of safeguards and scrutiny around the bill which was proposed by the MP Kim Leadbeater.

The bill will now pass through the House of Lords, before being passed back to MPs who will look at any changes suggested by peers. The bill would then become law unless it's blocked by peers or runs out of Parliamentary time.

## Education

### Methody school leavers raise 21K for Motor Neurone Disease Association'

On Friday, we celebrated our Upper Sixth pupils during their leavers service which marked the end of their school







## chapter.

We also had the honour of presenting the donation of £21,063.02 to their chosen charity 'Motor Neurone Disease Association'.

We are so proud of all their hard work and wish them all the best in the future.

## Eco Club brings St Dominic's School garden to life

**Our Eco Club has been busy transforming the school garden — preparing planters, planting trees, and weeding — as part of an exciting project funded by Belfast City Council.**



June 26, 2025

The garden will focus on growing vegetables, herbs, flowers, and creating a space to support local wildlife.

As an Eco-School, we're proud to promote active citizenship and biodiversity. This project gives pupils a hands-on opportunity to care for the environment and make a lasting difference in our community.

A special thanks to Mr. Millar, our caretaker, whose long-held vision and creativity are helping bring the garden to life. He has reused old materials — pallets for planters, goalposts and bus stop perspex for a greenhouse — and donated plants from his own garden.

The space is already taking shape and promises to be a thriving, sustainable hub for learning and nature.

## **RBAl cast looks at careers in drama**





**The cast of our junior school play "A midsummer night's dream" had a special guest come along to our exclusive matinee performance on Friday 20th June.**

Actor Adam Gillian, who is currently playing "Jack Ernest Worthing" in Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" in The Lyric Theatre, took time to come and meet our pupils as well as watch the play.

Adam gave insightful feedback to the cast and band about their performance as well as a Q&A session about careers in the industry. Everything from higher education to agents in Northern Ireland was covered.

Mr Down (Head of Drama at Hunterhouse) and Mrs McClean (Head of Drama at RBAI) had the opportunity to



June 26, 2025

watch Adam live on stage at The Lyric and remarked what a visually stunning and hilarious production it was!

On behalf of the Drama team and cast of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" we wish Adam all the very best as the play continues to sell out in The Lyric.

## Cathedral Calls



## Queen Elizabeth II shared in Westminster Abbey International Portrait Day

**On International PortraitDay, we wanted to share this painting of Queen Elizabeth II standing in Westminster Abbey, by Australian artist Ralph Heimans.**

The portrait was commissioned to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and shows her wearing her State

June 26, 2025

dress and robe and standing on the Cosmati Pavement - the place where she was crowned in 1953.

You can see the portrait on permanent display in our museum, the Abbey Galleries.

## Christian Aid permanent exhibition at Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

**Christian Aid states - We are grateful to the Very Rev Dermot Dunne, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, for allowing us to have a permanent exhibition in this magnificent space.**



The exhibition will not normally be staffed, except on special occasions such as Christian Aid Week but visitors can pick up information and make a cash donation to support our work.

Besides being solemn places of worship, cathedrals are also tourist attractions which welcome thousands of visitors each year, so we are grateful to Dean Dunne for allowing us this opportunity to reach his visitors with our story – the story of how donations made by ordinary people here in Ireland can transform lives in some of the world's poorest



June 26, 2025

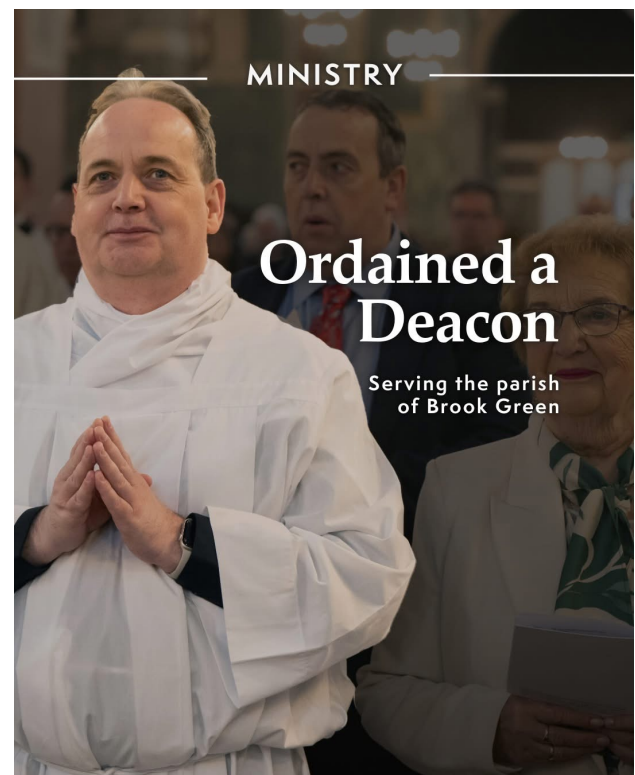
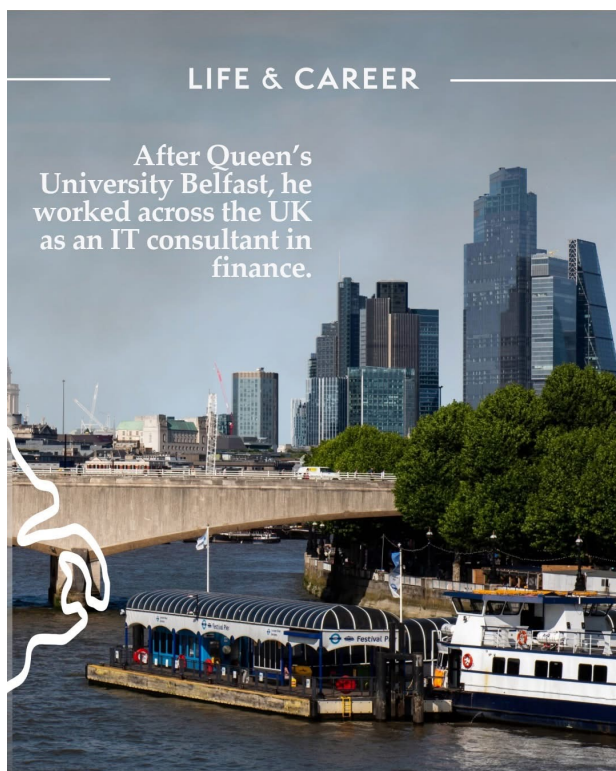
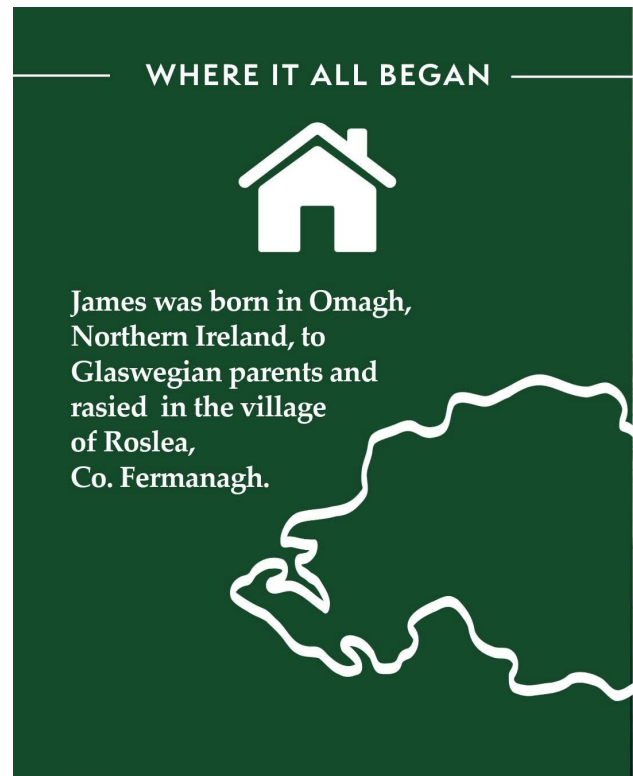
communities. Pictured at the exhibition are Dean Dermot Dunne and Dee Huddleston, Christian Aid Ireland's Church and Community Officer.

## Clergy and ministry

### From Roslea to Westminster diocese

**On Saturday, two men will be ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Nichols.**

Learn about Deacon James



Boyle, and his path to his vocation from Roslea to Westminster diocese

<https://rcdow.org.uk/news/meet-westminsters-next-priests/>

## Events

### **GRAMMY Award-winning Los Angeles Children's Chorus is coming to Belfast**

**“Our singers sound incredible, and we hope you will join us for this free concert as our touring ensembles bring the joy of song to St. Mark's Church Dundela on July 1.”**

July 1 - 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. St. Mark's Church (Dundela), 219 Hollywood Rd., Belfast, BT4 1DH United Kingdom.

Venue Phone:

(028) 9013 7436. Tickets: FREE

## Resources

### **'We Believe': new reflections mark 1700 years of the Nicene Creed**

**The Church of England has published a new booklet of biblical reflections and prayers to mark the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.**

The Nicene Creed, which is one of the foundational statements of Christian belief, was agreed at the Council in AD 325. It was attended by bishops from around the world and convened by the Emperor Constantine.

The Council sought to resolve disputes about the identity of Jesus Christ and affirmed that he is “of one being with the Father”. The Creed was expanded in its present form at the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381. It sets out the Church’s faith in the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and has been recited in Christian worship down the centuries as a shared declaration of belief, unity and hope. It is now shared across all the main Christian traditions.



The poster features a photograph of the organ console and stop tabs of St. Columb's Cathedral. A circular logo in the top left corner contains a coat of arms and the text 'SIG: DPC & CAP: DERRIS 1700:'. The main title 'St. Columb's Cathedral Organ Concert Series' is prominently displayed in white serif font, with 'July 2025' below it. The right side of the poster is dedicated to the concert schedule, including the title 'LUNCHTIME CONCERTS AT ST. COLUMB'S CATHEDRAL', the frequency 'EVERY THURSDAY IN JULY', the time '1.10PM - 1.50PM', and 'FREE ADMISSION'. A list of organists and their churches is provided for specific dates in July. Logos for the Derry City & Strabane District Council and the local Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) are also present.

**St. Columb's Cathedral Organ Concert Series**  
July 2025

**LUNCHTIME CONCERTS  
AT ST. COLUMB'S  
CATHEDRAL**

**EVERY THURSDAY IN JULY  
1.10PM - 1.50PM**

**FREE  
ADMISSION**

**Thursday 3rd July - Nicky Morton and Louis Fields**  
Organist and Assistant Organist: St. Columb's Cathedral

**Thursday 10th July - Dr. Derek Collins**  
Former Organist: St. Columb's Cathedral (2018-2024)

**Thursday 17th July - Stewart Smith**  
Organist: All Saint's Clooney

**Thursday 24th July - Ben McGonigle**  
Organist: Christ Church

**Thursday 31st July - David McGuckin**  
Organist: First Derry Presbyterian Church

Derry City & Strabane District Council  
Comhairle Chathair  
Dhoire & Cheantar  
an tSratha Báin  
Derry Citty & Strabane  
Destrack Council



The new booklet is a 24 day devotional and is called 'We Believe'. Published by Church House Publishing, it explores the theological depth and contemporary relevance of the Nicene Creed – one of the most enduring and universal expressions of Christian faith. It invites readers to engage prayerfully with each phrase of the Creed. Through daily Scripture passages, commentary, prayers and prompts for reflection, the booklet encourages individuals and communities to explore what it means to say “we believe” in the context of today’s world.

Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield and Chair of the Liturgical Commission, said:

“The Nicene Creed has been a cornerstone of Christian belief for 1700 years – a statement of faith that connects us not only to one another, but also to generations before us as well as to Christians across the world today. We Believe is a timely and beautifully written resource that will help churches explore this historic creed afresh, inviting reflection, deepening discipleship, and opening space for theological discovery. I warmly commend it to parishes, groups and individuals across the Church.”

Printed copies are available as single booklets or in packs of ten for use in parishes. The reflections are also available via the Church of England’s Everyday Faith app.

## Poem for today

### On First Looking into Chapman's Homer by John Keats

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;  
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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June 26, 2025

# Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from  
early morning**

**Please recommend to your friends**