

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mothers Union new course on domestic abuse

Image of the day

Mothers Union new course on domestic abuse

Ms Jacqui Armstrong presents Bishop Andrew with a copy of the manual for the new course which will address gender-based violence and domestic abuse.

People and places

Mothers Union enables Derry and Raphoe parishes to counteract domestic abuse and gender-based violence

Three parishes from the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe will be among the first in Ireland to take part in a new course which Mothers' Union has helped develop to counteract domestic abuse and gender-based violence.

The five-part programme was developed in conjunction with Bishops' Appeal and Tearfund. The Diocesan President of MU, Jacqui Armstrong – who was heavily involved in its preparation – says the new course will be rolled out in September, with volunteers from five parishes (including three from this diocese) taking part in the pilot.

Ms Armstrong says participants will attend five sessions which will offer a global view of gender-based violence, an analysis of the problem in Ireland (north and south), a look



Rev Graham Hare said he had underestimated the scale and prevalence of domestic abuse.

at the support available in local communities for tackling the problem, the role of advocacy in addressing domestic abuse and provide advice on tackling cultural attitudes.

The Rector of Drumragh with Mountfield, Rev Graham Hare, who was involved in the first pilot for the course, last January, said the experience had shown him how he had underestimated the scale and prevalence of domestic violence. He urged fellow clergy to “open their eyes and open their hearts” to the issue. “What is the church,” he asked, “if it’s not a refuge?”

Bishop Andrew Forster has commended the new course to parishes throughout Derry and Raphoe, urging rectors to



"It sounds like a difficult subject - and it is a difficult subject," Ms Armstrong told clergy.

begin delivering it. "Let's really go for this," he said, "so that we in this diocese take the lead in tackling, educating, supporting and advocating on this issue."

Ms Armstrong presented Bishop Andrew with a copy of the manual for the new course, "hot off the press". She told clergy: "It sounds like a difficult subject – and it is a difficult subject." MU hopes to deliver two more courses in the autumn, in addition to September's pilot. Ms Armstrong suggested that parishes which sign up should be represented by their rector and at least two or three lay people.



Hub's farewell to the Fordes

Yesterday marked Rev Barry Forde's last service as the Chaplain at the Church of the Resurrection, at Queens University, as he moves on to serve under the Bishop in the diocese of Connor in Belfast.

A tribute from the Hub community said, "We want to publicly honour the Forde family for their outpouring of love, service, commitment and faith as they have led and guided us over



the past 12 years. We have been blessed beyond measure.”

Healing Service at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

Organised by the Church’s Ministry of Healing on Friday 1st July at 1.00pm. led by Ven Stephen McBride



The organisers say - Come for yourself if you are in difficulty, for another, to support those present in prayer, and for those who have asked for prayer.

Parking is available on the East side car park.
Everyone is welcome, those of faith and those with none.

Notes on notes

A new series of lunchtime concerts begins in St Mary's cathedral, Limerick, on Tuesday at 1.15pm when organist Peter Barley will play music by Buxtehude, Mendelssohn and Franck.

On Wednesday the second open rehearsal for the new Community Choir will be held in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, from 7 to 8.30pm. No experience is necessary and all are welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

On Friday, at 1.10pm Summer Music in Sandford continues on Sandford parish church, Ranelagh, where organist Siobhán Kilkelly will play works by Saint-Saëns, Boëly and Franck.

Presbyterians hear how £1.1m spent in Ukraine

Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's General Assembly have heard how the £1.1m they raised for Ukraine has been used on the ground to help struggling refugees.

Launched by outgoing Moderator, Dr David Bruce, it came in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent refugee crisis.

Prof Zoltan Literaty, who was born and raised in Transcarpathia in the south-west of Ukraine, now serves as a minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church and is one of the Presbyterian church's partners.

Now based in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, he said the population of his home region of Transcarpathia was about a million people, but is now coping with over 500,000 refugees.

“Lots of people from eastern and southern Ukraine found their safe place in Transcarpathia, as there is no war there at the moment,” he said.



“It is a safe place and hundreds of thousands of people have arrived in the region. You can imagine one day you see familiar faces in the village and the next day half of the village has escaped and different people have come, so it is a challenge.”

In the early stages of the conflict Prof Literaty took members of his church in Budapest to the Hungarian border with Ukraine to help.

“It was a totally new experience for me, working for 24 hours with no or little sleep.

“Every four hours a train from Ukraine brought thousands of people. Can you imagine that after days or weeks of journey, arriving in a country where they couldn’t speak the language?”

“We tried to help these deeply traumatised people,” he said. The Assembly also heard from Dr Károly Czibere, President of the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, about the support that they had been able to provide through the Moderator’s appeal.



“Since the outset of the war, our vans have been crossing the border daily, and more than 550 tons of in-kind donations have been collected, more than 300 tons of which has already been delivered directly to help with those fleeing the violence,” he said.

The aid included nonperishable food and hygiene products and medical supplies.

The assembly was updated that its 2021 World Development Appeal raised £446,879 to help with several world crises, including climate change, Covid, Ukraine, and the World Food Programme, which faces a shortfall of \$10bn to feed everyone globally who goes to bed hungry.

The Assembly also heard from Myanmar churches who are “continuing to reach out with God’s love, despite being caught up in fierce fighting” following a military coup, and

June 27, 2022

from the Gujarat Diocese of Church of North India, with Percy Patrick talking of the challenges facing “a very small Christian minority” among those who are not Hindu.

Archdeacon David Pierpoint appointed Canon Treasurer of St Patrick’s

The Archdeacon of Dublin, the Venerable David Pierpoint, has been appointed Canon Treasurer on the Chapter of the National Cathedral and Collegiate Church of Saint Patrick, Dublin, in which he served as a boy chorister, a Sunday tenor singer and later as a verger.

The Treasurer–designate, who succeeds Canon Horace McKinley, former Rector of Whitechurch, is a past pupil of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral Choir School, and Saint Patrick’s Cathedral Grammar School. Having served in banking for some years, he was later selected for training for the sacred ministry. He was ordained in 1986 and served, in succession, in a number of parishes in a non–stipendiary way before his appointment in 1992 as curate to the St Patrick’s Cathedral Group of parishes then to the Christ Church Cathedral Group in 1995 as vicar.

By virtue of his office, Archdeacon Pierpoint represents the Church of Ireland locally and nationally on many boards and committees, including those involving health care, and politics. He currently serves on the boards of the Rotunda Hospital, and Tallaght Hospital, and was Chaplain at St James’s Hospital from 1992 to 2018. With this experience in the health service, he produced an important policy



document for the HSE for the accreditation of hospital chaplains.

Archdeacon Pierpoint is also chaplain to An Garda Síochána, a position he has held for 22 years. He is the first Church of Ireland clergyman to hold this position and has represented the force on at least two occasions overseas as well as at local and national policing events.

The Treasurer–designate, who is highly regarded in both political and legal circles due to his many dealings in these areas, graduated Master of Arts from Dublin City University in 2007 having studied Management in All Hallows College which incorporated finance, human resources and leadership. His pastoral expertise, communication skills, and administrative ability are well documented.

June 27, 2022

He is married to Denise, and they have four daughters, Nicola (and Daniel), Karen, Amanda (and Brian) and Rachel and four grandchildren.

Regarding the appointment of Archdeacon Pierpoint to the Chapter of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, the Dean & Ordinary, the Very Reverend Dr William Morton, said: " David brings vast experience, and numerous talents and gifts, to his new role in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, which for him holds many and dear memories, not only from his days in the Choir, but



SONGS OF HOPE

SONGS OF HOPE

Fundraiser in aid of Ukraine

TUESDAY 28TH JUNE
Clontarf, 8PM
TICKETS €15/€20

· CAPPELLA · DISCOVERY GOSPEL CHOIR · REJOICE GOSPEL CHOIR · FINGAL GOSPEL CHOIR ·

June 27, 2022

since, through a host of friends, clergy and lay as well as having served on the Cathedral board since 2005. I welcome him warmly to the Chapter and look forward to working closely with him in the years ahead.”

Archdeacon Pierpoint commented: “I am honoured, privileged and above all, humbled to have been appointed by the Dean to succeed Canon McKinley as Canon Treasurer in The National Cathedral. My association with St Patrick’s extends back as far as 1964 when I sang in the boys’ choir and later became Winstanley Scholar. Having served on the Board of the Cathedral for many years, I am conscious of the role of a dignitary and what this important part plays in the life and witness of the Cathedral. I will endeavour to fulfil my duties to the best of my ability and am so grateful to Dean Morton for putting his trust in me”.

News reports

US Presiding Bishop deeply grieved by Supreme Court Dobbs decision

Half of America faces abortion being banned in their states as President Joe Biden blamed his predecessor Donald Trump for having enforced an “extreme ideology” on the country.

The US Supreme Court overturned the landmark 50-year-old Roe v Wade ruling, which had enshrined the right to abortion nationwide.

June 27, 2022

It means individual states will now decide for themselves, with 13 already having so-called “trigger” laws banning abortion within 30 days of Roe v Wade being struck down.

About half of America’s 50 states are expected to ban or severely restrict abortion in due course, with an estimated 36 million women affected.

Mr Trump, in one term, nominated three Supreme Court justices – Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett – all of whom voted to overturn Roe v Wade in a 5-4 decision by the nine-member court.

Three Supreme Court justices appointed by Democrat presidents – Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan – all dissented.

Mr Biden said: “It was three justices, named by one president – Donald Trump – at the core of today’s decision to upend the scales of justice and eliminate a fundamental right for women in this country.

“It is the realisation of an extreme ideology and a tragic error by the Supreme Court, in my view. The health and life of women in this nation are now at risk. It is a sad day for the court and a sad day for the country.”

He said it made the US an “outlier” among the developed nations of the world. “The court is literally taking the country back 150 years.”

**Statement on Supreme Court Dobbs decision by
Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry**

Today the Supreme Court released its decision in the case of Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. The court has overturned the constitutional right to abortion that was recognized in the seminal 1973 case Roe v. Wade.

While I, like many, anticipated this decision, I am deeply grieved by it. I have been ordained more than 40 years, and I have served as a pastor in poor communities; I have witnessed firsthand the negative impact this decision will have.

We as a church have tried carefully to be responsive both to the moral value of women having the right to determine their healthcare choices as well as the moral value of all life. Today’s decision institutionalizes inequality because women with access to resources will be able to exercise their moral judgment in ways that women without the same resources will not.

This is a pivotal day for our nation, and I acknowledge the pain, fear, and hurt that so many feel right now. As a church, we stand with those who will feel the effects of this decision —and in the weeks, months, and years to come.

The Episcopal Church maintains that access to equitable health care, including reproductive health care and reproductive procedures, is “an integral part of a woman’s struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being” (2018-D032). The church holds that “reproductive health procedures should be treated as all other medical procedures, and not singled out or omitted by or because of gender.” (2018-D032). The Episcopal Church sustains its

June 27, 2022

“unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions [about the termination of pregnancy] and to act upon them.” (2018-D032). As stated in the 1994 Act of Convention, the church also opposes any “executive or judicial action to abridge the right of a woman to reach an informed decision...or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision.” (1994-A054).

The court’s decision eliminates federal protections for abortion and leaves the regulation of abortion to the states. The impact will be particularly acute for those who are impoverished or lack consistent access to health care services. As Episcopalians, we pray for those who may be harmed by this decision, especially for women and other people who need these reproductive services. We pray for the poor and vulnerable who may not have other options for access. We urge you to make your voice heard in the way you feel called but always to do so peacefully and with respect and love of neighbor.

Summary of Episcopal Church General Convention statements: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/summary-of-general-convention-resolutions-on-abortion-and-womens-reproductive-health/>

Scrap fees for church weddings to boost marriage, C of E clergy urge

Wedding fees should be scrapped to persuade couples to marry, vicars have told the Church of England.

June 27, 2022

In papers published in the run-up to next month's meeting of the General Synod, the Church's legislative body, clergy are urging officials "to show the Church's commitment to marriage and pastoral care" by amending legislation "so [the] fees relating to marriages are set at nil or at a minimal amount".

Currently, there is a legal fee for marrying in a church.

According to the latest figures, it costs couples £560 if they marry away from where they live and £512 if they marry in their home parish. The rate is set by the Church of England nationally and is the same for every church.

It includes the cost of the vicar, the church, the service, lighting and all administration. After the wedding, when it has been registered at the relevant register office, a further £11 will be charged for the marriage certificate, which is no longer issued by churches.

However, the Blackburn Diocesan Synod has called on officials to abolish the fee.

Signing off the proposal, the Rev Dr Tom Woolford said: "There is a correlation between the rising level of Church of England wedding fees and the sharp decline in recent years in numbers of church weddings, a trend which appears to be especially acute in poorer areas.

"The current fees structure is economically unjust, putting church weddings beyond the reach of the poorest in our society.

“Marriage according to scripture and our own liturgy is meant to be a gift of God’s grace, but our fees give a contrary impression. If we believe in marriage as we ought, we should ensure that finance is no bar to anyone who wishes to marry in Church. Expensive fees limit the missional potential of marriage ministry.”

According to the latest figures, there were 63,371 Church of England weddings in 1999, compared with 31,430 in 2019 – a fall of 50 per cent.

Dr Woolford added that another reason for the decline of church weddings was specialist venues offering the “added convenience of an ‘all-in-one’ ceremony and reception package deal on the same premises”.

The Office for National Statistics published data last month that showed weddings in places of worship have hit a record low.

In the media

Presbyterians keep finances in good shape

Irish Presbyterian congregations have been praised for their generosity and steadfastness during the challenging lockdown periods of the covid pandemic in 2002-21, Billy Kennedy writes in the News Letter

June 27, 2022

Reports at the church's General Assembly in Belfast this week confirmed that monies paid by the 500-plus congregations to the key administrative Presbyterian 'United Appeal' stood up well in comparison with previous years, with £3,015,185 received, just under the £3,300,000 expected.

Despite the shortfall, church treasurers acknowledge that the amount received was still a "highly significant" response by congregations in the midst of another challenging year, as in 2020, largely dominated by the impact of the covid pandemic.

The Irish Presbyterian Church's 'United Appeal' is used to annually fund 'Mission in Ireland,' global mission, congregational life and witness, training in church ministry at Union theological college in Belfast, and general social witness.

'Mission in Ireland' last year received £724,500, global mission £1,061,500, congregational life and witness £402,000, ministry training £412,500 and social witness £224,500, totalling almost three million pounds.

The church's 2022 'United Appeal' is estimated to be on the £3,6million figure, with outlay in the stipulated segments expected to cost £3,525,000. Looking ahead, the 2023 figure will be in the same range of revenue and expenditure.

Presbyterian congregations, who administer their own finances at a local level including ministerial stipends and church maintenance as well as outreach, are levied centrally

June 27, 2022

by Church House in Belfast through the 'Union Appeal' system, on the basis of membership, with set amounts confirmed a year in advance.

* The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has 27 full-time global mission workers, operating in 12 regions - Brazil, Central and Southern Africa, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Kenya, Spain, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, Russia, and Zambia.

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.

June 27, 2022

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