

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – President elect of Methodist Church

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President elect of Methodist Church

At its 2022 annual Conference, the Rev. David L Turtle was designated as President of the Methodist Church in Ireland for 2023-24.

He will be installed as President during the opening service of the 254th Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland taking place this year at Assembly Buildings in Belfast from Thursday 8th – Saturday 10th June.

The Rev. Turtle who is a graduate in Agriculture from Queen's University, grew up near Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone where after graduating farmed for twelve years with his father. Feeling a call to ministry he first served as a lay pastor on the Aughnacloy and Monaghan Circuit of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

He was accepted for ministerial training at Edgehill College where he graduated with a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Queen's University. The President-designate was ordained at the Methodist Conference in Dublin in 2009.

Over the years the Rev. Turtle has been stationed in Ballynahinch Methodist Church, Trinity Methodist Church in Lisburn and most recently in Seymour Street Methodist in Lisburn where he is also the Superintendent of the Lagan Valley and South Down Circuit.



When asked about his passion in ministry he said:

"My passion is teaching the Scriptures and encouraging followers of Jesus to deepen their relationship with God to integrate their faith in every aspect of

their lives."

The President's theme for his year in Office will be "Take my yoke upon you."

Speaking ahead of his installation, the Rev. Turtle said:

I hope that I'll be able to draw alongside people and actually just be there to encourage our Connexion, to encourage individuals to keep walking in the way of Jesus, and to

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encourage the church to step forward into whatever God has for us next.”

Reflecting on the Church today, the Rev. Turtle said:

“The Church isn’t in the same privileged position of influence in which it once was, but that doesn’t mean it’s the end of the Church. We have real opportunities to engage with people in their daily lives and find new ways to do that well.”

He went on to say:

“(As Methodists) We’re really keen that we don’t remain static and that we don’t continue doing the things we’re doing year after year ... we’re looking at ourselves and considering how we might best move into a phase of growth.”

As well as serving as a minister in local churches, the Rev. Turtle has served as Convenor of the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland as well as serving on the Executive of the European Methodist Council and latterly as a council member of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe.

In his inaugural address on the evening of Thursday 8th June, the Rev David Turtle will reflect on the words of Jesus found in the book of Matthew 11:28:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!”

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He will say: “These words of Jesus which Matthew records for us, the best term I can come up with is to say that they have haunted me for over 15 years. They continually chase me down.”

“More than any other, these are the words of Scripture that I come back to again and again. This passage is the place that my heart and soul is drawn to. Because, at least for me, though I believe actually for each and every human soul, those words both answer and call out a longing that resides within me. At the very depths of our beings there is a desire for this kind of rest, for this kind of life in Jesus.”

Married to Pamela, they have four children.

The supreme court of the Church is the conference, which is the final authority in the Church in all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline and order.

The first conference in Ireland was called by John Wesley in 1752 and was held in Limerick. With a few exceptions, the Irish Conference had been chaired by the successor of John Wesley, the President of the Methodist Church in England, until recently.

In the last number of years the Church has elected a President annually, who chairs the Conference and other committees throughout the year, as well as visiting Methodist congregations all over the island and representing the Church in the public sphere.

Photo credit: Kelvin Boyes (PressEye)

People and places

Templepatrick Parish Ministry trip to India



The young people who will join the Rev Jeremy Mould on the Ministry Trip to India this July are, from left: Nicole, Rory, Josh, Matthew and Phil.

A small team from Templepatrick Parish will this summer travel to the Indian Christian Mission Centre in Salem to run holiday clubs for the children.

The team, led by the rector of Templepatrick and Donegore, the Rev Jeremy Mould, leaves for India on Monday July 11,

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arriving at the Promised Land Orphanage after a six-hour drive the following day.

During a busy two weeks, team members will run Bible clubs in a number of different places, and on the Sunday they will take children's services at Omega Church in Salem and St Patrick's Church.

Among other things, they will attend a traditional assembly at St Basil's School in Salem and meet leprosy sufferers at the House of Peace.

The Templepatrick team, made up of Jeremy, Rory and Josh, Jeremy's son Matthew and his friend Phil, and Nicole from Mossley Parish, is going with an Exodus Team of nine young people.

Jeremy is currently fundraising to buy all the craft and sports equipment needed during this ministry trip, and the team will be leaving behind all that they take. Jeremy would also like to leave the Indian Christian Mission Centre some funds so the centre can continue to buy sports equipment during the year for the 300 children in the orphanage.

Jeremy has set up a JustGiving page for anyone wishing to make a donation to provide equipment for the ICMC Orphanage in Salem, India

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/jeremy-mould?utm_medium=email&utm_source=ExactTarget&utm_campaign=20230525]

Bishop Fintan Monahan urges safety for road users this June long weekend

On Sunday Bishop Monahan will lead a Blessing of the Roads ceremony at the Cathedral in Ennis

To date a total of 108 people have died on roads across the island of Ireland in 2023

As we look forward to enjoying this June long weekend in the Republic, Bishop Fintan Monahan asks of all road users – and especially young people – to take extra care over these three days.

Bishop Monahan said, “The good weather over this June long weekend will encourage hundreds of thousands of people to travel to the coast, go hiking, attend sports matches, and to the Bloom Festival in Phoenix Park, Dublin. This will mean a sharp increase in people travelling on our roads. In this context I am asking all road users, especially young people, to take extra care. Everyone shares a responsibility to protect human life.

“Sadly this year, up to this morning, there have been 77 road fatalities in the Republic, an increase of 13 over 2022 (64 deaths), and of 15 in 2021 (62 deaths). Over the same period this year the number of road fatalities in the North of Ireland has been 31. This loss of life is a tragedy for our society and is particularly devastating for the families and loved ones of the deceased. After 11.30am Mass, this Sunday in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Ennis Co Clare, I will lead a Blessing of the Roads ceremony to



pray for the protection of road users. I also invite parishes across the diocese to pray for those who have lost their lives in tragic circumstances so far this year, and also to pray for the safety of road users.” Bishop Fintan Monahan is Bishop of Killaloe.

[A contemporary prayer](#)

Holy Mother, hear our prayer,
Keep us in your loving care,
Whatever the perils of the way,
Let us not add to them this day.
So to our caution and attention,
We add a prayer for your protection,
To beg God’s blessing on this car,
To travel safely near and far.
Amen



Sun warning for St Columba

Glorious weather is on the cards - as usual - for the annual Service of Thanksgiving for the life and Ministry of St Columba, which will take place in Gartan Abbey, near Church Hill, this Sunday 4th June, beginning at 3 o'clock.

The Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster will be preaching; the Britannia Band will be playing; there'll be activities onsite for youngsters; and local parishioners will be providing refreshments afterwards.

The Rector of Conwal Union with Gartan, Rev David Houlton (who obviously has first class local knowledge) brought his sunglasses last year. You'd be well advised to do the same this weekend....and important PS...

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Don't forget the sun cream. Judging by the forecast you'll need Factor 50 million.



Scouts lend a hand

Scouts in Belfast working in an area food bank...doing a good turn

News reports

Moderator will take part in the Aberdeen Kiltwalk this weekend

Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will be donning tartan and walking boots this weekend to take part in the popular Aberdeen Kiltwalk and to raise money for Christian Aid.

The Moderator is walking the 3.7 mile 'Wee Wander', one of two walking events taking place as part of the Aberdeen Kiltwalk on Sunday June 4th. Mrs Foster-Fulton took a year's sabbatical from her work as head of Christian Aid Scotland to take on the role of the Kirk's ambassador at home and abroad.

She said: "I'm thrilled to be taking part in the Aberdeen Kiltwalk and step by step raising money for Christian Aid, walking alongside our sisters and brothers living in extreme poverty.

"It's been a busy time since I became Moderator but I'm delighted to be spending this weekend in Aberdeen and connecting with communities in the north-east.

"I'm very much looking forward to being supported by a few friendly faces from local churches who are going to join me on the journey."

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The current head of Christian Aid Scotland Val Brown said: "We're delighted that Sally has been able to find time in her very busy diary to take part in the Aberdeen Kiltwalk for Christian Aid.

"Events like this are a wonderful way to fundraise and have a great day out.

"Every penny that Sally raises will go towards our work fighting poverty and injustice – whether that be in South Sudan, Bangladesh or Malawi.

"Good luck to everyone taking part on Sunday."

The Kiltwalk is one of Scotland's biggest mass participation charity events with thousands taking part in the Aberdeen Kiltwalk, walking for their favourite charity or cause.

You can sponsor the Moderator and support Christian Aid by donating through her Justgiving page.

Diocese of Toronto plans year of spiritual renewal

The Diocese of Toronto is planning to hold a year of spiritual renewal in 2024 to help Anglicans re-energize their faith.

"I am really excited by it," says Bishop Andrew Asbil. "We've been hearing over and over again in Cast the Net's consultations with clergy and laity a deep need to steep

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ourselves in prayer and discipleship and a renewed sense of our life in Christ. My hope is that the year will lead us to a deep and profound joy in the gospel of Jesus Christ and a sense of communities large and small feeling a part of a rekindling of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Toronto.”

Cast the Net, the Diocese’s vision and strategy process, has consulted with about 1,000 clergy and laity since last fall. Its steering committee hopes to bring recommendations to Synod in November that will help set a course for the Diocese for the next several years.

One of the major themes emerging from the discussions is a desire for spiritual renewal – for people to re-connect with their faith, to deepen their own discipleship and to be more articulate about their life in Christ. The theme is so strong and widespread that the steering committee decided to act on it now rather than waiting for the final report that goes to Synod.

The steering committee proposed the year of spiritual renewal to Synod Council on May 25. The proposal calls for the year to unfold in four phases:

From Epiphany to Lent, clergy will be oriented to the project with easy-to-use educational and promotional materials. Every parish will be asked to participate in a three-session program of bible study and reflection on mission, co-led by teams of clergy and laity, online or in person. There will be additional resources for young adults, youth and children, to engage them in what it means to be committed to a life in Christ. Materials will be available in a variety of languages, reflecting the cultural diversity of the Diocese.

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During the Easter season, Bishop Asbil and others will travel throughout the diocese, conducting and preaching at special services with a focus on strengthening the people of the Diocese in their work and of being the Church. Services will include inspiring music, testimonies, scripture and sermons, as well as time for anointing and prayer for those who seek it. The services will be held in easily accessible venues and will also be available virtually for those who cannot attend in person.

During Pentecost, the bishops and others will preside and preach at liturgies in large locations. Baptism, confirmation and reaffirmation will be offered. These will be lively, diverse celebrations of Christian commitment and service.

In autumn, Sunday worship celebrations will include times for lay people to share testimony about how they experience God as active in their lives, or share “Spirit sightings,” where they see the Holy Spirit of God at work in the world. Every parish and congregation will be invited to engage in an examination of mission opportunities within their region. Many of these will be held in regional groupings. Reports from these efforts will be brought back to Synod.

Bishop Asbil believes Anglicans are ready for spiritual renewal. “People are really engaged in and grateful for the Cast the Net conversations. They’re also speaking of a hunger and being able to say, how do I share my faith? How do I equip myself? They’re saying, I know I need to be a part of it to spread the gospel and grow the Church, as we’re called to.”

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He says the time is right for spiritual renewal. “I think every parish understands that where we were before the pandemic is not where we are now. On the one hand, we feel the vulnerability of that but on the other hand we feel the possibility of it, too. And there is a real sense of kindling of new ideas and a new sense of God’s spirit working with us.”

The Very Rev. Peter Elliott, one of the Cast the Net’s coordinators, echoes his words. “I think the pandemic – that period of being disbursed and losing the pattern of regular church attendance – has had an impact on people, and it’s a new day, things have changed and we need a renewal of the Spirit to face the challenges that this new day is bringing,” he says. “In some ways, the year of spiritual renewal is casting the net on the other side.”

He says Bishop Asbil has the gifts to lead the year. “In my view, Bishop Andrew is one of the most gifted communicators of the Christian way in the church in Canada and in the whole Communion. So let’s put his gifts to the fore. Rather than sitting in meetings and puzzling over problems, what if the bishop’s time could be used to do one of the things he does the best, and communicate out the faith and the importance of that in daily life and work?”

More information about the year of spiritual renewal will be posted as it becomes available.

Report by Stuart Mann



Anglican Communion Secretary's tribute to Dr Agnes Abuom, Kenyan ecumenist and peacemaker

Anglican Communion Secretary General pays tribute after death of Dr Agnes Abuom, Kenyan ecumenist and peacemaker

Dr Agnes Abuom, a lay woman from the Anglican Church of Kenya who became the first African and first female to be elected Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, the global ecumenical body, has died after a short illness.

She was 73. Dr Abuom was a passionate ecumenist and peacemaker, and her ministry took her all over the world.

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggo, was amongst many Church leaders paying tribute.

“Anglicans mourn the death of Dr Agnes Abuom and give thanks to God for her outstanding and exemplary leadership within the Anglican Church of Kenya, the Anglican Communion, and in the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches,” he said.

“I first met Dr Abuom in the late 1990s when she attended St Luke’s Parish in Kenyatta, Nairobi where I was an attached clergy from 1996 to 2007.

“I next met her when she was Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and played a significant role in nurturing the peace process and reconciliation in South Sudan.

“Dr Abuom’s contribution to ecumenism and peace building were recognised globally and also within the Anglican Communion. In 2017 she was awarded the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“She had a passion for faith, for social justice and for Christian unity, and brought this, with her many gifts, to her long service on the committees and meetings of the WCC, where she served as President and Moderator.

“I thank God for her life and witness. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.”



In the media

Rector and Select Vestry

The Vicar of Dibley is a British sitcom which originally ran on BBC One from 10 November 1994 to 1 January 2007. It is set in a fictional small Oxfordshire village called Dibley,

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which is assigned a female vicar following the 1993 changes in the Church of England that permitted the ordination of women. Dawn French plays the lead role, a vicar named Geraldine Granger.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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