



**Image of the day -
the former Elmwood Presbyterian Church**

St Columba to be celebrated across Ireland

Organisations across the North West are gearing up for the Feast Day of St Colmcille on 9th June – a date that is all the more special given this historic year as the 1500th anniversary of the Saint’s birth, Derry Now reports.

While the ongoing COVID restrictions may be limiting physical events that can take place, there is plenty happening online as well as church services and exhibitions open to the public.

Celebrations kick off with the 2021 American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) on June 2-5, broadcast live from Ulster University’s Magee campus, where academics and historians from across the globe will bring Colmcille’s rich academic legacy to life.

Some of the live streamed sessions will be available to the public at www.acis2021.com including a keynote address by Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland on Thursday, June 3, at 5pm as well as addresses by the Irish and UK ambassadors to the US on Saturday 5 June.

As part of the conference, a special programme ‘Slí Colmcille’ presented by Lónra Leitir Ceanainn in conjunction with Letterkenny Regional Cultural Centre will premiere live on Friday 4 June at 8pm on www.facebook.com/LIONRALC with music and poetry,

June 3, 2021

history and storytelling from a host of wonderful guests across Ireland and Scotland.

On Sunday, June 6, the Saint's birth place in Gartan, Donegal will be celebrated in two special services.

Mass will be broadcast live on RTE One at 11am to celebrate both Corpus Christi and the 1500th anniversary, with celebrant Fr Michael McKeever joined by parishioners from St Colmcille's Church, Glendowan.

A Church of Ireland Service of Holy Communion in St Columba's Church, Gartan in Church Hill at 12.30pm will celebrate the international heritage of Columba and can be viewed live at [www.facebook.com/ StColumbaGartan](https://www.facebook.com/StColumbaGartan) or later at [www.youtube.com/channel/ UCCunnllJgF9K_Rcz0-Vm2-Q/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCunnllJgF9K_Rcz0-Vm2-Q/)

Raphoe Diocese Colmcille 1500 will present 'Colmcille: A Lasting Legacy', a virtual series on the life and legacy of Colmcille/Columba, to be streamed in three parts via YouTube on 6, 7 and 8 June at 8pm.

The series will include contributions from Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ and Rev. David Houlton, Rector of Gartan, as well as historians, academics and other Columban experts.

Original poetry and music compositions will also feature as well as excerpts from the work of local schoolchildren and an extract from 'The Enemy Within' in Gaeilge.

Margaret McAteer's new musical setting of 'Alone with None but Thee' will also premiere with Colmcille Gospel Choir and churchnewsireland@gmail.org

June 3, 2021

featuring guest singers such as Moya Brennan along with other choirs, performers and Glencolmcille Primary School.

On Wednesday, June 9, RTE News Channel will be live at 10.30am at St. Colmcille's Church, Glendowan to mark the Feast Day.

Many other Colmcille locations and places dedicated to the Saint will also mark the day.

For example, St Columba's Church of Ireland in Glencolmcille will be open to visitors throughout the day and in Fanad, mass will be streamed from St Colmcille's Well at 10am at www.facebook.com/stmarysfanavolty.

Whilst in Derry, the place of Colmcille's first and most beloved monastery, Bishop Donal McKeown will celebrate Mass in St Columba's Church Long Tower at 10am and will bless water from St Columba's Well which will be available in the Church after the service.

You can watch the special mass at <http://longtowerchurch.org/webcam>.

Aras Cholmcille - St. Columba Heritage Centre, next to Long Tower, will be re-opening in time for the Feast Day and you can visit from 11am to 3pm or online at www.stcolumbaheritage.com. Wooden sculptures will also be on display at the Well.

The Churches Trust will launch a short film online at 10am at www.youtube.com/channel/UCg6a7ovcN-RDhw-JPVZJ5Kg to showcase its Columba Schools Project and churchnewsireland@gmail.org

June 3, 2021

the completion of a story book by pupils in three primary schools - Fountain, Nazareth House and Longtower.

Whilst later at St Augustine's Church, a Columba Pageant entitled "Columba: a Triptych" will take place at 7.30pm. In three parts, it will tell the stories of his mother's dream, the battle his kinsmen began on his behalf and his eventual remorse. For further details and tickets email weechurch@btinternet.com or visit www.facebook.com/weechurch.

Two new Colmcille exhibitions will also be open on the Feast Day. 'Colmcille - Man and Myths' is at the Tower Museum until September before moving to Donegal County Museum.

This is a joint exhibition between the two Councils which will take people on journey of discovery around the world of Colmcille in Donegal and Derry.

Whilst in Donegal Central Library in Letterkenny, a limited edition of the 'Faksimile Verlag Luzern' Book of Kells presented in an decorative case will be on display alongside a limited edition poem by Seamus Heaney 'Colum Cille the Scrib'.

Deirdre Harte, Colmcille 1500 Project Manager with Donegal County Council, said: "We're delighted with the number and range of events that are taking place around the Feast Day across the North West.

"Whilst physical events and access to exhibitions will be limited in numbers in line with current COVID restrictions

June 3, 2021

there is plenty to view online. You can find further information on Colmcille 1500 on our website at www.colmcille1500.com or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ Colmcille1500NW](http://www.facebook.com/Colmcille1500NW)."

Pope updates Church law on child abuse

Pope Francis updated the Catholic Church's criminal code on June 1 by adding details on punishing sexual abuse of minors by priests, measures long sought by activists against paedophilia.

The purpose of the revision, the most comprehensive since 1983, is "restoration of justice, the reform of the offender, and the repair of scandal" wrote the Pope.

The new code falls short of explicitly spelling out sexual offences against minors yet refers to offences against the sixth commandment, which prohibits adultery.

Under the new heading of "Offences against human life, dignity and liberty", the code specifies that a priest is to be stripped of his office and punished "with other just penalties" if he commits offences against the sixth commandment with a minor.

Similarly, a priest who grooms or induces a minor "to expose himself or herself pornographically or to take part in pornographic exhibitions" will be punished.

June 3, 2021

Revision of the penal sanctions within the Code of Canon Law followed a process that lasted years involving input from canonist and criminal law experts. It came after repeated complaints by victims of sexual abuse and others that the code's previous wording was outdated and unclear.

Since becoming Pope in 2013, the Argentine pontiff has worked to tackle sexual abuse scandals involving priests around the globe, although many activists against paedophilia insist much more needs to be done.

He convened a summit on clerical sex abuse in 2019 while lifting secrecy rules that hindered investigations of abusing priests.

People and places

Revd Tony Murphy's 100km walk in aid of the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Maize Project in Burundi exceeds €10,000

The Revd Tony Murphy's fundraising walk through Cork, Cloyne and Ross has concluded with more than €10,000 raised to help maize farmers in Burundi through the work of Christian Aid.

Tony writes: "By last week we had passed the €8,000 mark. The gratifying news is that we have now passed our optimistic target of €10,000 which is both gratifying and humbling."



At Kinneigh Union of Parishes.

And in conclusion, he expresses his thanks: “Can I therefore sign off by thanking all those who helped in this campaign: Bishop Paul who launched our walk and has supported us throughout, each and every rector in every parish for their individual support and that of their parishioners; and finally Andrew Coleman who not only supported me throughout, but more importantly had the imagination to conceive the project in the first instance.”

Polish WW2 airman remembered

On 29 May 2021 Antrim and Newtownabbey Mayor Jim Montgomery has led tributes at a special service to unveil a memorial to one of the many Polish airmen who lost their lives here during the Second World War.

The memorial, for Flight Sergeant Wladyslaw Kolek, located at Boghill Road, Mallusk, is part of a council project in partnership with For Your Freedom and Ours, who are behind the Polish Wings Heritage Trail in Northern Ireland,
churchnewsireland@gmail.org



which assists in locating civilian graves, crash sites, memorials and exhibitions.

County Down, Belfast, Newtownabbey and the North Coast were temporary homes to over 100 members of the Polish Air Force who were stationed with the RAF here between 1940 and 1945.

Kolek, of No 315 Polish Squadron, lost his life during a training sortie over Co Antrim on 11 September 1943, aged 26.

Just two days after arriving in Northern Ireland, he crashed his Spitfire into a farmhouse on Flush Road near RAF Nutts Corner.

June 3, 2021

Guests attending this memorial service conducted by the Reverend Campbell Dixon included Poland's Consul General, Pawel Majewski.

Visit of RSCM Director to Armagh Cathedral

The Cathedral was delighted to have a visit, on Friday 28th May, from the Director of the Royal School of Church Music, Hugh Morris, and states it will look forward to renewed links and opportunities of involvement with RSCM in the years ahead.

Bound for Ibiza Chaplaincy

Early in May, the rector of Mount Merrion, Revd Adrian Green, announced his appointment as chaplain to the English-speaking church on Ibiza and Formentera in the Diocese of Europe. The diocesan press office asked Adrian to tell something about the new (and unexpected) adventure ahead.

How did you come to be appointed? - In mid-December last year someone sent me the advert, almost as a joke, but the Holy Spirit chipped away at me. I sent off for the application pack and to be honest, it had my name written all over it. It seemed like what we'd done in Mount Merrion but with sunshine! I was interviewed on 1 February and offered the job the same day, but Brexit and COVID meant I couldn't make the announcement until 2 May.

It's something that I didn't see coming and it was hard to make the announcement because the people of Mount Merrion are like family to us, but we believe it's God's will. I



always said that I wanted to leave Mount Merrion in a stronger place, than when I arrived and I believe that together under God's grace we have achieved that; but I also believe that there are even greater things to come for God's church in Mount Merrion.

Tell us about the chaplaincy - The chaplaincy has a long tradition of being known as The English–Speaking Church on Ibiza and Formentera. It's a diverse evangelical Christian community with members from many different cultures and nations. There's a monthly bi–lingual (English/Spanish) family service which is growing. My role as chaplain is supported by the Intercontinental Church Society (ICS). As we're in the Diocese of Europe I'll be introduced as chaplain by the Archdeacon of Gibraltar, hopefully on 9 September.

And the islands? - Ibiza and Formentera are the smaller of the Balearics. The population is around 135,000 (legal!) residents, living in three main centres – Ibiza Town (the capital), Santa Eulalia and Sant Antoni (near where the chaplaincy house is situated). Between May and October, the island has around 1,500,000 visitors who come mainly to enjoy the beaches and the nightlife.

June 3, 2021

What excites you about the task ahead? - What really excites me is the church's vision. They want to see the people on the island reached for Jesus, especially groups they believe aren't being reached at the moment. They also want to plant a church on the neighbouring island, Formentera, which is a short boat ride away. The opportunities are very diverse, and I hope we'll have the chance to collaborate with 24/7 Prayer Ibiza.

Tell us what this means for your family

We have five children and three grandchildren but only our youngest son Ben is coming with us. Our youngest daughter, Mia, will continue to live in Belfast and finish her A-Levels and her two older brothers, Joe and Sam are also staying. It is going to be such a wrench leaving family, church and diocese but we felt it was right and it has been confirmed by some prophetic words.

How's your Spanish? - I'm on Day 108 of Duo Lingo! In the late 80s I spent 6 months teaching English on a Spanish sailing ship so I'm brushing up on what I learned then. I'm sure it'll come back.

How can we pray? - Please pray for Linda and me and all the family as we come to terms with the changes ahead. Please also pray for our new church as they don't really know what they've let themselves in for!

Farewell but not goodbye

Travel restrictions permitting, Adrian and Linda plan to leave for Ibiza at the end of June but with family living locally they'll be back from time to time (and there's always the

June 3, 2021

wooden cut-out of Adrian outside the church if you miss seeing him around!)

Armagh Library's new team member

This week the Armagh Library welcomed Max Bryant to its team in person. Max started as Curatorial Research Fellow in February, working on the Rokeby print collection remotely before moving to Armagh in May.

'Gifted communicator' retiring in Donemana

The Rev Dr Robin Stockitt has led his final Service of Sunday Worship in Donemana prior to his retirement as Rector of Donagheady (St James). He was joined for the occasion by another retiree, the Rt Rev Ken Good, who preached the Sermon.

"I want to thank Robin and [his wife] Joan for so many things," Bishop Good said in his address, "but particularly for the generous way in which they have given of themselves to us as a parish, to us as a diocese, to us as a community and to us as a Church of Ireland." Bishop Good, who instituted Dr Stockitt into the parish seven years ago, talked about Robin and Joan's legacy in Donemana. They had made their mark, the Bishop said, and their mark had been a very positive one. "My sense was that this parish was ready and willing to move forward, as evidenced by Jigsaw and the Monday Club and other things I saw at the time. I thought that there was a willingness there for creative and fresh approaches to ministry. Now, it is always a risk when a bishop institutes a new rector into a parish. But what about when you institute an English vicar who has never worked in

June 3, 2021



Bishop Ken Good and Rev Dr Robin Stockitt in the Eames (Donemana) Parish Church.

Northern Ireland? Is that a risk? That is a risk. But he had, in his favour, wisely married someone from here who could at least soften the edges a bit.”

The Bishop praised the Rector’s skill as a “very gifted communicator” who was able to make complex things understandable. Robin was flexible and adaptable, and ready and willing to take on a challenge. “What I think people appreciate as your legacy, and there are many things, is your genuineness and authenticity,” Bishop Good said, “that there are no airs and graces – even though he might be a posh Englishman – there are no airs and graces about Robin, or Joan, they are real and without pretence; they are down to earth and easy to be with, and that’s an

June 3, 2021

important part of a legacy, so that people feel that you understood them, you related to them, you were interested in them, you were part of their life and of their crises and emergencies and joys and sorrows.”

In his final words to his congregation, Rev. Dr Stockitt reminded parishioners of the Diocesan vision statement – ‘Transforming Community; Radiating Christ’, which were displayed in St James’ Church. “I was intrigued by those two words, ‘transforming’ and ‘radiating’.

They spoke of a message and a way of living that transformed whole communities and enthused them with the qualities of heaven. And for that motto to become more than just words hanging on the wall, there had to be change, and risk-taking, and growth and experimentation, and excitement, and kindness and joy. So, I tried in my own way, these seven years, to fulfil that vision.”

Robin recalled some of the things he and the congregation had done together: installing a screen in the church; experimenting with liturgy; launching a St Patrick’s Day ceilidh; taking a group to Barcelona; organising a cycle ride round the province’s cathedrals; Mothers’ Union activities; renovating the nearby parish hall; building a toilet block in the church; and improving the path in the graveyard. He said he had been heartened, too, to see the growth of shared education in the local primary school and the recent founding of the Donemana Men’s Shed.

Ridley, starring Adrian Dunbar

June 3, 2021

ITV commissions contemporary detective drama, Ridley, starring Adrian Dunbar. Details - <https://bit.ly/2TrCKjM>

Elmwood Hall, University Road, Belfast.

See front page photograph -Elmwood Hall was originally built as the Elmwood Presbyterian Church. It was designed by amateur architect John Corry, but not erected until 1862. It has been described as one of Ulster's best High Victorian church designs. The building is a mixture of styles, principally Italianate with a spire on top of a campanile. It was Queens University Belfast who converted the church into a concert hall and renamed it Elmwood Hall. The building was deconsecrated and for a time became the home for the Ulster Orchestra. Written information from Wikipedia. Photograph by Rosemary Gordon

Media review

Brexit Minister Lord Frost reiterates belief that NI Protocol is 'unsustainable' in its existing form

BBC News

The UK's Brexit Minister has reiterated his belief that the NI Protocol is unsustainable in its current form. Lord Frost was speaking after meeting business leaders in NI. UK and EU officials are engaged in intensive technical talks aimed at simplifying the operation of the protocol.

A "stock-taking" meeting involving Lord Frost and European Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic could take place next week. However it is understood that the technical

June 3, 2021

talks have made limited progress. They are covering around 30 issues ranging from VAT on used cars, to pet travel and the movement of food products from GB to NI.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-57324713?at_custom2=twitter&at_medium=custom7&at_custom1=link&at_campaign=64&at_custom3=BBC+News+NI&at_custom4=6345F3A4-C368-11EB-BE04-80D3923C408C]

Why Could Boris Johnson Marry in a Catholic Church?

The New York Times

The British prime minister was married twice before, but the church didn't recognise those unions because they were not Catholic.

[<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/world/europe/boris-johnson-married-catholic-church.html>]

Canon law means you can check out but you can never leave Catholic Church

The Irish Times

One of Ireland's leading canon lawyers has explained how a valid marriage in the Catholic Church's tradition must meet three requirements. Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President at Ireland's national seminary, St Patrick's College Maynooth, said the couple party to such a marriage "must have capacity (ie the requisite freedom and knowledge to give such matrimonial consent), be free from any impediment in canon law and marry according to canonical form."

[<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/canon-law-means-you-can-check-out-but-you-can-never-leave-catholic-church-1.4580343>]

June 3, 2021

Most Presbyterian clerics who protested against LGBT policy retired - no sign of further ...

Belfast Newsletter

In 2018, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) voted to deny full membership to ... He told the News Letter: "I'm certainly not hearing any rumours of ...

[[] <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/most-presbyterian-clerics-who-protested-against-lgbt-policy-retired-no-sign-of-further-resignations-after-rev-ian-carton-3257741>]

Some Light in the Darkness of the Percy Affair?

Surviving Church

It is entirely disproportionate that this matter should be referred to a tribunal. With these and other similar words, Dame Sarah Asplin, the President of Tribunals and the most senior legal voice in the Church of England, delivered her verdict on the Martyn Percy affair. The legal effect of this judgement is that process of the complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure has been killed stone dead. When and how all the existing Kafkaesque prohibitions imposed by the church lawyers against Dean Percy will be lifted, remains to be seen. More at:

[[] <http://survivingchurch.org/2021/06/01/some-light-in-the-darkness-of-the-percy-affair/>]

Pointers for prayer

Your hand is upon your people, O God,
to guide and protect them through the ages.
Keep in your service



those you have called and anointed,
that the powers of this world may not overwhelm us, but
that, secure in your love,
we may carry out your will
in the face of all adversity. Amen.

O God our ruler and shepherd, you anointed Jesus
as the king and servant of your people. Make us attentive to
your word, that we may accept your reign over us and serve
you alone. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.

Intercessions

....

Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son

June 3, 2021

free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.
As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.

...

Intercessions

....

Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of
death and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.

...Intercessions....

Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world. Amen

Speaking to the Soul

Those who believed what Peter said were baptised and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Acts 2:41-42 NLT

I love the fact that this earliest description of the church is so similar to what we do today. The world looks completely different in almost every respect, but Christians continue to be nourished in the same way.

Teaching was at the heart of their life together. We need to remember that it was decades before any part of the New Testament was written, and so teachers had a crucially important role in the early church. We have the privilege of easy access to the New Testament and innumerable books of Christian teaching, but we still need gifted teachers to help us to understand the Bible and to apply it to our lives.

The New Testament knows nothing of solitary Christianity. Christians belong to one another and are sustained by mutual love and support. From day one, fellowship was seen as vitally important and it found expression in the sharing of meals. Eating together is often a powerful way of building relationships and as the early church did so they naturally wanted to celebrate the Lord's Supper. No doubt their meeting was very different from what we would call communion or the eucharist these days but they were

June 3, 2021

strengthened as they reminded themselves of Jesus' Last Supper and obeyed his command to do so in memory of him.

And finally, the early Christians met together to pray. Their prayers bound them together and strengthened them for the challenges that were to come. No-one could possibly have guessed how fierce and violent those challenges would be. Prayer would hold them together on the harshest days. Nothing has changed and it is unquestionably the case that the churches that pray together, stay together. Through prayer God gives us the spiritual resources to be able to stand for him whatever the challenges.

QUESTION

How closely does your church resemble the description of the early church in these verses?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for the blessing of belonging to your church. Help us to receive teaching with joy, to build fellowship in love, and to be constant in prayer. Amen

