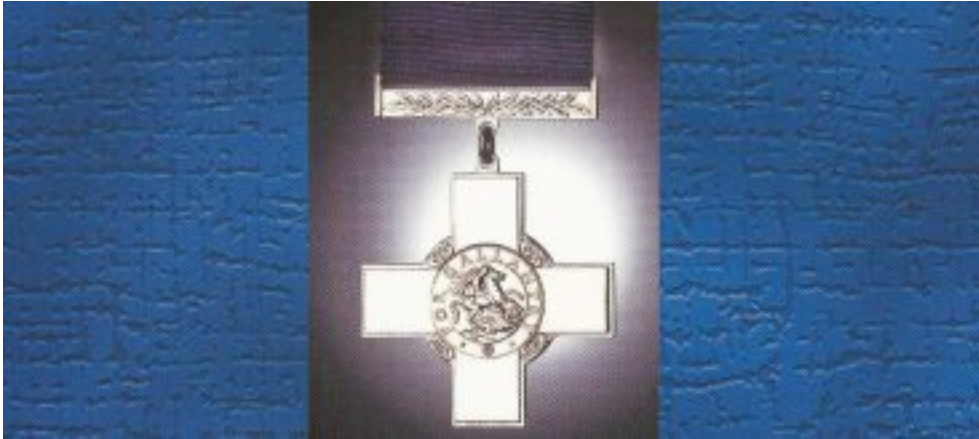




**Image of the day**

June 8, 2021

## Church leaders take part in RUC GC annual service



To mark the foundation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on 1st June 1922 the Trustees of the Foundation have declared the first Sunday in June each year to be “Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Day”.

**The annual Royal Ulster Constabulary, George Cross Day Thanksgiving Service, was held on Sunday past, June 6.**

Organised by the RUC GC Foundation, which was established in 2000, to mark the sacrifices and honour the achievements of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the annual Thanksgiving Service is held on the first Sunday in June. For the second year running, however, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the service took place virtually, with the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Rt Rev Dr David Bruce, hosting it from the Weir Chapel in PCI’s Assembly Buildings in Belfast.

June 8, 2021

The Most Reverend John McDowell, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Rev Dr Tom McKnight, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and Rt Rev Monsignor Christopher O'Byrne of the Roman Catholic Church, also took part, along with representatives of the RUC GC Foundation. The four main churches have participated since the first service in 2003.

Speaking ahead of Sunday's service, Dr Bruce said, "For too many families the length and breadth of Northern Ireland, to have a day in the year that acknowledges, remembers and honours the sacrifice of their loved ones is, I hope, a genuine comfort and an opportunity to remember with pride.

"While we cannot be together physically and pay tribute to loved ones, for me it is a great privilege to be able to take part in the service, at a time when, in the words of Her Majesty The Queen's George Cross citation, we 'recognise the collective courage and dedication to duty' of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

From the RUC's formation in 1922 to the year 2001, 312 police officers were killed in terrorist attacks, 302 of them during the period 1969 to 1998. Over 10,000 officers were injured, some 300 being severely disabled. During this time policemen and policewomen received 370 individual gallantry awards. In April 2000, The Queen presented the George Cross personally to the force at a special ceremony at Hillsborough Castle.

Speaking before Sunday's service, Dr Bruce said that he would preach on verses from the Gospel of John (15:9-17),



The Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation was established for the purpose of "marking the sacrifice and honouring the achievements of the Royal Ulster Constabulary".

when Jesus talks about love for others and the nature of sacrifice. "During the service, we will remember the men and women who served, and especially those who laid down their lives. This is not only appropriate, but a good and necessary thing to do, as it is an annual reminder of the price that was paid by so many," Dr Bruce said.

"Their sacrifice points us to the greatest example of such love, which is Jesus Christ. Just as his sacrifice has produced the fruit of a better world with the hope of heaven, so we pray that the fruit of the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the service of others would be the peace and stability we long for, and the healing of wounds which have scarred us and divided us for long enough."

The chair of the RUC GC Foundation, Stephen White OBE, welcomed those joining the online service with a message recorded in the Weir Chapel. Foundation Trustee, Sandra Best, read the RUC GC Prayer. The service can be viewed

June 8, 2021

online via the Foundation's website  
[www.rucgcfoundation.org](http://www.rucgcfoundation.org).



## Service of Celebration and Commemoration of St Columba – Colm Cille

**St Columba – Colm Cille – whose birth is being commemorated this year, spoke and preached in Irish.**

Among all the celebrations of the 1500th anniversary of his birth, it was fitting that a service was held ‘as Gaeilge’ – in Irish – at his namesake church, St Columba’s, in Gleann Cholm Cille in west Donegal on Saturday past.

June 8, 2021

The 'Service of Celebration and Commemoration' was held outdoors on a sunny day. Among the congregation, parishioners of St Columba's were joined by members of community organisation Lár-Chomhairle Pharóiste Ghlen Chholm Cille (Glencolmcille Central Parish Council) and the local Irish language college, Oideas Gael.

The service was thoroughly Anglican, based on the Irish-language version of the Book of Common Prayer. It was led by the Rector of Castlerock, Dunboe and Fermoy, Rev Chris MacBruithin, with participation also from local resident Fr Proinnsias Mac a tSaor.

Local musician, Ellie Níc Fhionnghaile, contributed psalms in plainchant as would have been sung in early Christian  
[The Temple of the Winds and Downhill Beach](#)



June 8, 2021

Ireland, as well as the locally composed hymn 'Colm Cille'. As an act of commemoration, three oak trees were planted, using soil from Gartan where the saint was born.

The Raphoe part of the United Diocese of Derry & Raphoe contains one quarter of all native Irish speakers. The service was a visible display of meitheal, or 'community togetherness', and a reminder that Gaeilge is part of our joint Christian heritage.

## **Saul parishioner raises over £11,000 for MAF**

**A highlight of National Volunteers Week is a Select Vestry member of Saul Parish and amateur cyclist who has raised more than £11,000 for Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and volunteered for the charity for more than 50 years.**

Greer Lowe (photo next page, far right), marked his 75th birthday on 1 May by cycling a 75-mile route along the County Down coast and Ards Peninsula in aid of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). MAF is the world's largest humanitarian airline and delivers aid to some of the world's most remote communities.

Greer, who describes himself as 'fairly new' to cycling, gathered a team of local cyclists from the Downpatrick area to complete a challenging route between Strangford and Dundrum. For some, this was the longest cycle ride they had ever completed, all had volunteered their time during the winter lockdown to train for the event.

June 8, 2021



Participating in MAF’s 7&5 challenge – a fundraising campaign to honour the charity’s 75th anniversary – Greer decided to mark his special birthday and celebrate MAF’s by setting an ambitious £7,500 fundraising target. The team have been overwhelmed by support from the local community and fundraising has far exceeded what they thought was an impossible target. To date, the team has raised over £11,227 towards the airline’s life–saving work.

Greer has volunteered and supported MAF for over 50 years, having developed a keen interest in aviation from a young age. He is particularly fond of the charity because his son, Jonathan Lowe, has been a mission pilot with MAF in Timor Leste, and Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, for over a decade. Having visited Jonathan on a number of occasions, Greer describes the unique MAF flying experience as “spectacular”.

With a fleet of 123 light aircraft, MAF delivers humanitarian personnel, medical cargo and carries out disaster relief operations in remote or inaccessible communities across 25 developing countries. The charity was founded in the



June 8, 2021

aftermath of WWII by a handful of RAF veterans, and now flies to more remote destinations than any other airline.

1000 miles

Departing Strangford at 7:50am on Saturday 1 May in keeping with the '7&5 theme', the charity cyclists took the 8.00 am ferry and completed a 25-mile route around the southern Ards Peninsula before returning to Strangford and cycling to Dundrum and back, crossing their finish line at 4.00 pm. During the day, the team cycled over 1,000 miles for the cause.

Greer said, "I'm overjoyed that we have exceeded our target – and I'm so grateful for everyone who has supported us so far.

"I'm also proud of the guys and girls who completed the bike ride with me – it was a great day and the conditions were on our side. This will certainly be a birthday to remember!"

Ruth Whitaker, CEO at MAF-UK, said, "Greer and his cycling team have truly gone the extra mile in cycling a very challenging distance and for raising such an impressive amount for MAF. It's heartening to see people joining from across the world to support MAF and mark Greer's birthday – Greer is truly an exceptional volunteer. From everyone at MAF, a very big thank you to everyone who volunteered, cycled, donated and supported this memorable event."

To support Greer's fundraising, visit [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/greer-lowe](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/greer-lowe)

June 8, 2021

## People and places



### **New canoeing camino**

Mark Devenport and Martina Purdey reunited for an adventure on St Patrick's Way. He launched the new canoeing camino on the Quoile River on Wednesday June 2nd. Booking and info 02844 619000

<http://saintpatrickcentre.com>

### **50 @ 50 4 £5,000 at Drumglass**

After turning 50 years old, the new rector of Drumglass Parish, the Rev. Bryan Martin, has asked his parishioners to raise over £5000 as he, and others, walk 50 miles from St.



Elizabeth's Church of Ireland, Moygashel, to St. Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry to meet their former rector, the Rt. Rev. Andrew Forster (now Bishop of Derry and Raphoe).

The parish is currently refurbishing their hall at St. Anne's in Dungannon, and half of the money raised will be allocated to the parish hall refurbishment project and the other half to bore a well in East Africa with Fields of Life.

The group set off at 7am on Friday 4th June and plan to walk for just under 9 hours that day, through Donaghmore, Pomeroy, and finishing up in Sperrin; approximately 28 miles.

The next day, they walked from Sperrin to Claudy and then on to the Maiden City and to St. Columb's Cathedral where

June 8, 2021

they met Bishop Andrew and rest their weary feet after a combined 2 day walk of 50 miles.

Mr Martin said: 'We are looking forward to opening our newly refurbished hall later in October and hope that many of the people of Dungannon and further afield can come and be part of our church community. But greater still, will be the encouragement that through walking 50 miles and raising over £5000 we will have helped some of the 884 million people around the world who do not have access to safe drinking water.'

If you would like to sponsor the walk you can give to the Just Giving page through this link – <http://alturl.com/6v37z> - or alternatively you can send a cheque, to Drumglass Parish c/o The Rectory, 26 Circular Road, Dungannon.

## **100th birthday of parishioner of St Thomas Church, Belfast**

Clem Shaw, a parishioner of St Thomas' Parish Church, Belfast, Diocese of Connor, who celebrated his 100th birthday on June 2.

With the easing of restrictions, the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, was an honoured guest at a birthday party for Clem in Richmond Nursing Home, Cultra, where he has been living for a number of weeks.

Staff joined Clem's family for the celebrations, which included balloons, birthday cake, tea and cupcakes, and Clem responded to all the good wishes by sharing some key moments from his life.

June 8, 2021

## **A Bishop of Raphoe**

6 June 1638: John Leslie, Bishop of Raphoe, then in his 60s marries Katherine Cunningham. They had at least 8 children. Leslie died on 8 Sept 1671, just short of his 100th birthday.

## **Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars**

### **Reimagining Family Church**

Woo woo! The Children's Ministry Network Ireland has a very special training coming SOON with limited availability. It's suitable for clergy, children and family workers and sunday school teachers.

Our gifted colleague and trainer Lynn Storey will be facilitating 'Reimagining Family Church' on Monday June 28th from 7.30pm - 8.45pm and exploring a simple, creative and accessible to all liturgy.

Everyone who books in for the training before June 18th will receive a great pack (anyone who knows Lynn knows she doesn't do things by half!) full of all the things you might use in such a service to encourage prayer, participation and engagement from people of all ages, learning and spiritual styles.

So don't miss out! See below the flyer and here is the link to the Eventbrite Page for more information and for bookings:

June 8, 2021

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/reimagining-family-church-tickets-157931207493>

## **Eco–Congregation Ireland online ceremony for presentation of its first Gold Awards**

The Eco–Congregation Ireland Gold Award is for those churches who have already received their initial Eco–Congregation Ireland Award. In order to receive an ECI Gold Award, churches have to show continuing work in all four areas of their initial ECI Award, and mentor another parish/community on their Award journey. So far, Westport Eco–Congregation (Co. Mayo), SAGE – Shankill Action for a Green Earth (St Anne’s Parish, Co. Dublin), and the Faith in Action Group (Ballineaspig Parish, Co. Cork) have been awarded a Gold Award. This Zoom event, for all three groups, will take place this Wednesday 9 June 2021 at 7.30pm and you are welcome to attend.

If you would like to attend this event, please send an email to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com) to receive the Zoom link and event programme. If you would like to read the Gold Award submissions, visit the Eco–Congregation Ireland website here.

More info at:

<https://ireland.anglican.org/news/10692/eco>

## **Church Times Book club choice: The Girls of Slender Means, by Muriel Spark**

Muriel Spark enjoys a reputation as one of the greatest British novelists — if not the greatest — of the post-war era.



She first came to prominence with her third novel, *Memento Mori*, published in 1959, which won great critical acclaim, including warm praise from Evelyn Waugh (to whom she bears a passing resemblance). *The Girls of Slender Means*, published in 1963, is the work of a writer at the height of her powers — not that there was ever much evidence of any later falling-off with Dame Muriel.

The novel starts with the splendid assertion that “Long ago in 1945 all the nice people in England were poor, allowing for exceptions.”

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/4-june/books-arts/reading-groups/book-club-the-girls-of-slender-means-by-muriel-spark?utm>

## **Opinion - Minister's stance is an example of real love in action - Fionola Meredith**

**How far would you be prepared to go for your principles? Fionola Meredith writes in the Belfast Telegraph.**

June 8, 2021

We live in a time of strongly held opinions. Political tribalism is rife. Our world is full of loud, intolerant people hammering their views down each other's throats, then crying victim when they are challenged.

Anyone can spout off on social media. Signing petitions of complaint is easy. We can all join a protest, should we choose. But which of us would be prepared to give up something of vital personal importance, in support of our beliefs?

Could you give up your home? Your job? Your whole way of life?

Not many people — and I include myself in that — could honestly say yes.

That's why the Rev Ian Carton is such a remarkable man. This week, he announced that he will be stepping down as minister of Whitehead Presbyterian church, where he has served for 14 years.

Rev Carton said he could not live with the decision, taken in 2018 by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), to deny same-sex couples full membership. This also means that their children cannot be baptised.

In a quietly-delivered but deeply emotional address to his congregation on Sunday, he said: “The decisions taken by our denomination mean that [LGBT+ people] can never belong”.



June 8, 2021

He and his wife, June, have found the church's position “painful and hard”. In fact, June Carton left last October. According to Rev Carton, “she felt if it was a church that was saying to anybody that you're not welcome, that you're not invited on the basis of gender, on the basis of your sexual orientation, that wasn't a place that she could be”.

After talking with LGBT+ people about how they'd been treated within the church, and hearing story after story of “really dreadful, painful experiences”, Rev Carton knew he could not stay any longer. “It spoke to me of mass injustice,” he said sadly, “and not the way that I believe a church ought to be behaving.”

Indeed not.

It is beyond me how anybody who cares about justice and equality — let alone those who call themselves Christian — could remain a member of a group which treats some human beings as lesser than others.

As for denying their children baptism, how low can you go? Where exactly in the Bible did Jesus say: “suffer the little children to come unto me — except the kids of gay people, sorry, they're not included.”

I don't buy for a moment all the self-serving theological waffle that the doctrine committee of the Presbyterian church came out with in 2018, when this invidious motion was passed.

Apparently churches could “reach out with compassion” and adopt “a posture of grace” towards non-heterosexuals but

June 8, 2021

this should not be mistaken for “moral indifference or approval of any behaviour contrary to God's Word.”

In other words, gay people and their children can come to church, but they must occupy a separate, secondary place. As I wrote at the time, if this is the PCI's idea of a warm welcome, I'd hate to see a chilly one.

Rev Carton is not a revolutionary. He respects the internal processes of the church that he grew up in, and he's not calling for a mass exodus of members. “It's not up to me to tell anyone else what they should or shouldn't do,” he said.

All he knows is that he can't do it any more.

As for his future plans, he has none. “Haven't a clue — haven't a notion, not a baldy”. He's quite prepared to stack supermarket shelves, he says, if that's what it takes.

No doubt the wrench will hurt. In his resignation sermon Rev Carton spoke of the love that he and June have for each and every one of his congregation. He will miss them and they will miss him.

But wherever life leads him next, I hope that he can breathe easier, walk taller, knowing that he has faithfully followed his conscience and done the right thing. The minister's decision is not a deliberately assumed “posture of grace” — words that are more accurate than the PCI leadership may realise — but an act of authentic integrity and solidarity for those who have been so abysmally treated.

June 8, 2021

Virtue-signalling — the adoption of various “postures” which seek to show how noble, enlightened or caring a person is — is the curse of our age. It's a theatrical performance of compassion which quite often disguises the opposite impulse. And it doesn't belong solely to the “woke”.

Thank God for people like Ian Carton. No posturing there. Just real love in action.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph 04.06.2021

## **Media review**

### **Warning Ireland could lose over €2 billion a year**

The world's seven richest countries have reached a deal which will have major implications for the Irish economy - agreeing to set corporation tax at a minimum of 15%. The Minister for Finance has warned Ireland could lose over €2 billion a year | More: [bit.ly/3fUa9fN](https://bit.ly/3fUa9fN)

### **DUP members quit as party rocked by ‘purge’ and Donaldson breaks silence to warn more may go**

Belfast Telegraph

Elements are running amok destroying party unity, warns MP

Party accused of bullying and sexist attitudes

Two DUP councillors, a former Westminster election candidate, and members of the South Down association

June 8, 2021

have resigned from the party after what Sir Jeffrey Donaldson described as “a purge”.

Newry, Mourne and Down councillors Glyn Hanna and Kathryn Owen have quit along with constituency secretary Diane Forsythe who was the party’s South Down candidate in the 2017 Westminster election.

They resign after what Jeffrey Donaldson brands "a purge". He warns Edwin Poots more will go if he doesn't act. Those leaving make explosive sexism & bullying claims

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dup-members-quit-as-party-rocked-by-purge-and-donaldson-breaks-silence-to-warn-more-may-go-40508702.html> ]

### **New NI envoy to America Trevor Ringland: ‘I want to dispel myth of British occupation’.**

Northern Ireland’s new special envoy to the USA has told the News Letter he hopes to use the role to challenge narratives about the Province being an “occupied” state.

### **Harsh criticism at appointment of Trevor Ringland as US special envoy by Michelle O’Neill - ‘arrogant and disrespectful’**

Harsh criticism has been levelled at the decision to appoint former Ireland rugby player Trevor Ringland as US special envoy by Deputy First Minister Michelle O’Neill who has described the decision to “unilaterally” appoint a special envoy to the US as “arrogant and disrespectful”.



## Pointers for prayer

Lord, you have taught us  
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:  
Send your Holy Spirit  
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,  
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,  
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.  
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

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

June 8, 2021

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  
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.

June 8, 2021

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.

## Speaking to the Soul

**“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!” Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”**

Acts 2:36-37 NLT

In his Pentecost sermon Peter had carefully explained to his Jewish audience that what had happened had all been in fulfilment of God’s plans. He had been very respectful of their patriarch King David, but in all his greatness David had

June 8, 2021

not risen from death, unlike Jesus the Messiah whom they had had a hand in crucifying. Peter's challenge pierces them to the heart and they want to know what to do in response.

I wonder whether you can think of a moment when you were pierced to the heart. It's an agonising moment when you know that you cannot avoid the challenge that has been put to you. It reminds me of the time when King David was confronted by the prophet Nathan. David was feeling so pleased with himself. He believed his adultery with Bathsheba would go unnoticed and had now taken her as his wife having successfully arranged the murder of her husband. Job done. But the prophet Nathan bravely confronted David by telling him the story of a rich man who had cruelly prepared a meal for a visitor by killing not one of his many sheep, but the one much loved little lamb that was the family pet of a very poor family. David seethed with anger and was determined that the rich man should die and make generous restitution to the abused family. Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" Ouch. David couldn't dodge the challenge. He had to admit that he had done wrong and come before God in repentance.

It's not easy to be challenged, but when we are confronted by the truth it is vital that we take action.

## QUESTION

When have you been deeply challenged by someone else's words and what action did you take?

## PRAYER



June 8, 2021

Lord God, thank you for loving me so much that you confront me with the truth about myself. Amen

