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The White Rocks, Portrush

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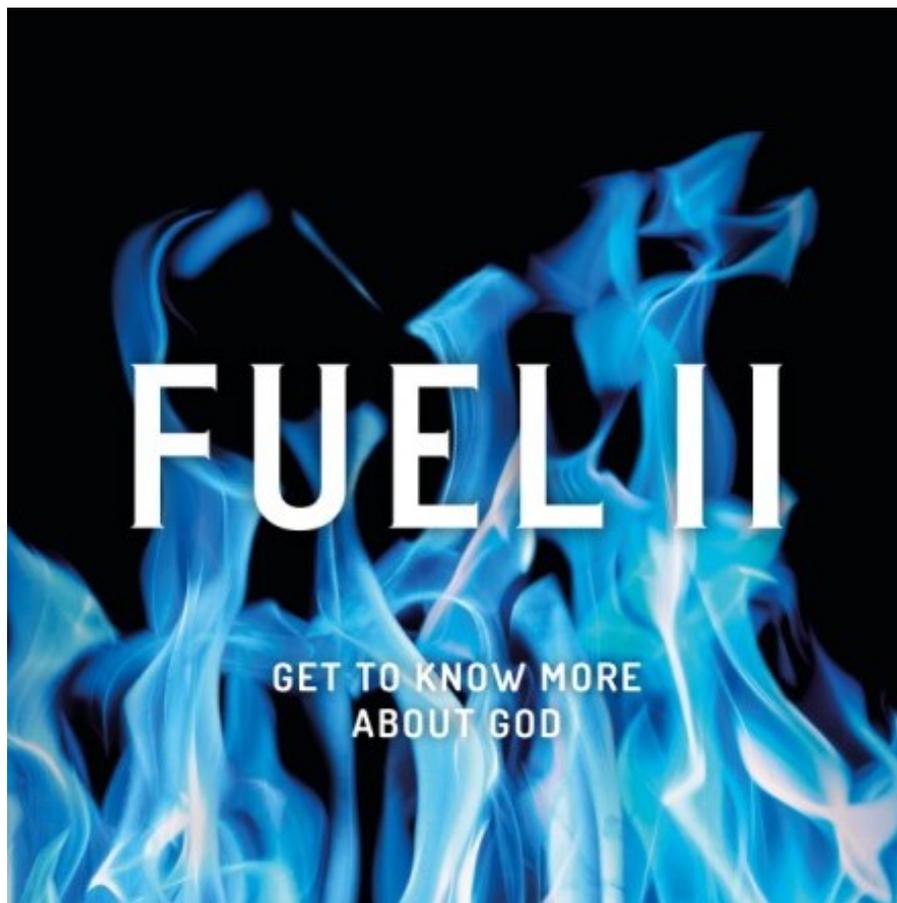
First Minister Paul Givan has not joined Presbyterian Church, according to DUP -

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## People and places

**Church of Ireland Youth Department launches Lent Bible reading resource**



**The Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) has launched the second version of its resource to help young people hear God speaking through His words in the Bible.**

Its format will encourage young people and their leaders around the island of Ireland to read through Luke's Gospel over the 40 days of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday (March 2).

For each short reading, questions will prompt readers to think about

What word, phrase or sentence stood out to me as I read?  
How does it make me feel? What does it lead me to think about?

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What does this Scripture say to me about who God is?  
What might God be trying to say to me through it?  
How do I want to respond to what God is saying to me?  
How will what God has said impact or change my life?  
What would I most like God to do in my life today?  
Pages are also provided to give space to creatively respond to God. Fuel II is for anyone who is open-minded and hungry for something deeper than what they've experienced so far in life, no matter whether they think they are 'spiritual.'

“Lent is a great time to start good habits that will benefit your relationship with God,” says National Youth Officer Simon Henry. “There is space for 50 days in this book – when you've started to read your Bible and get into the habit, we want you to continue. This is an example of a daily reading plan with bite-sized portions of the Bible to read. We want to help you get started.”

Throughout the Bible, forty-day seasons are times in which God prepared people for His purposes as we can see in the lives of Jesus, Noah, Moses, David and Elijah. The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change, and the

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disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection.

Fuel II also introduces young people to the Celtic Christian idea of ‘thin places’ – where God seems more near to us than anywhere else and where we and God enjoy each other’s full attention. “Throughout history, God has never failed those who have desired to know Him,” the booklet notes. “It is very important to have people in your life that bring the best out in you, that encourage you to trust more and more of yourself to God.”

CIYD’s President, Bishop Pat Storey, says: “It is more important than ever that we all take time to reflect in a post-Covid world. What have we missed? What did we learn? Where have we heard, or indeed missed, God’s voice? As the Holy Spirit continues to speak to us through the Scriptures, we are more determined than ever to be a people who document and reflect our listening to the divine Word. May this resource be a support to those thoughts. May your reflections bear much fruit.”

Copies of Fuel II can be ordered by getting in touch with your Diocesan Youth Officer or Diocesan Youth Council representative. If you need more copies, please email [admin@ciyd.org](mailto:admin@ciyd.org).

## **Walking in unity in Derry**

**Bishop Andrew Forster and Bishop Donal McKeown led members of different Christian denominations on Londonderry’s west bank in a prayer walk around the**



## **iconic city walls to mark the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**

The theme for 2022 is ‘We saw his star in the east’. The weather was remarkably benign for the walk, with the rain holding off for its entire duration.

Participants gathered by the car park below St Columb’s Cathedral, where the two bishops led them in a brief prayer. They were then sent on their way – socially distanced and in their own ‘bubbles’ – to walk round the Walls, starting their circuit at the steps beside St Augustine’s Church.

The groups stopped at various points along the route to pray together, using a resource prepared specially for the occasion. They were invited to pray that political leaders and elected representatives would be united in governing in

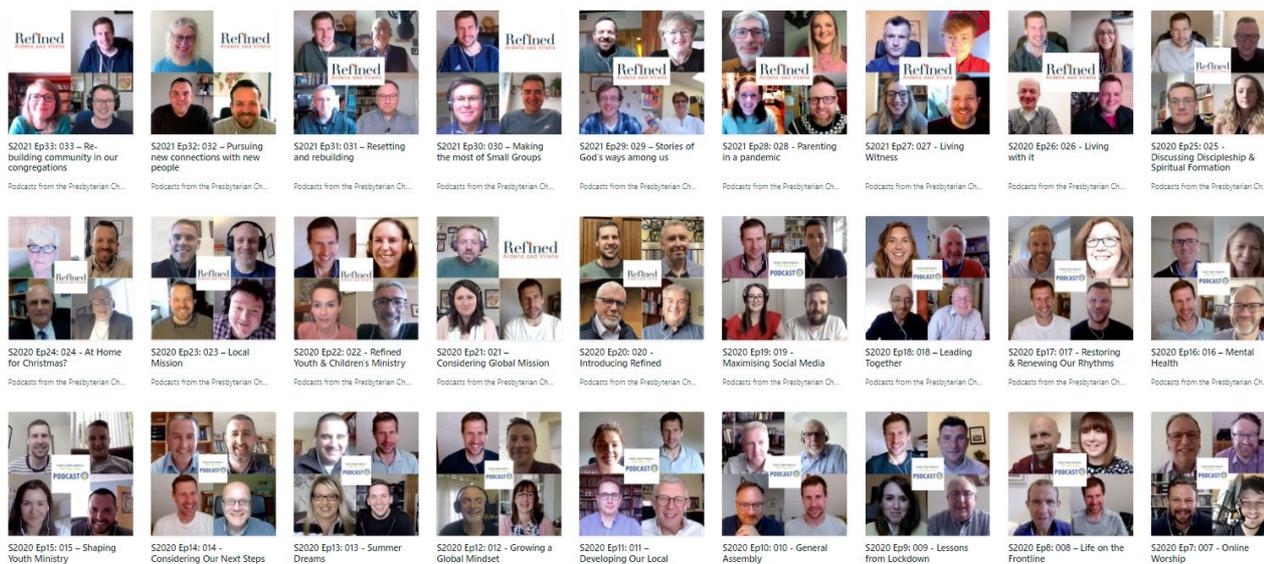


everyone's interests; to pray for people who had lost their livelihoods in the pandemic; for doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers; for residents and staff in care homes; for those seeking a cure for Covid; for people "enslaved by addiction"; for young people, teachers and all involved in education; for members of the city's emergency services; and for those in the arts sector, which had experienced much hardship during the pandemic. The groups were also invited to reflect on the city's shared Columban heritage and to give thanks for the diversity which had enriched the city.

## **Presbyterian Church podcast reaches milestone**

**One of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) digital resources reached a significant milestone yesterday (19**

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## January) with the release of PCI's 50th episode in its 'Refined' podcast series.

The Refined digital hub was created to support and develop congregational life and witness across the all-Ireland denomination during first lockdown in March 2020, when the familiar rhythms of church life had been turned upside down.

Initially under the banner 'These Three Remain: Stories of Faith, Hope & Love', the bundle of resources made available at the time sought to draw together practical examples of how congregations were responding to the lockdown and the unprecedented challenges of continuing ministry and mission at the time. Today, the Refined hub on the PCI website continues to provide a range of updated content that is focused on supporting congregations and their members in responding to the impact of the pandemic.

Explaining the background to the podcast series, Rev David Thompson, Secretary for PCI's Council for Congregational Life and Witness, which has responsibility for resourcing PCI's 500-plus congregations said, "While the disruption of

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the pandemic to church life at all levels has seen so much coming apart, it's good to step back and see how God has also been at work bringing new things together.

“The podcast series was born as an agile response to a moment when we could not be together in church and in person, but even as those restrictions have eased the podcast has become an ongoing expression of our togetherness in heart, mind and spirit as the family of Irish Presbyterians,” David Thompson said.

The first episode, which was hosted by PCI’s discipleship development officer, Rick Hill, aired on 1 April 2020. For the first of the weekly podcasts three ministers, two from churches in Belfast and one from County Monaghan, joined him to talk about how their congregations were adapting given that churches were closed and activities have ceased.

Lasting between 30-45 minutes, since then he has hosted the majority of the now fortnightly podcasts, with colleagues Ruth Bromley, PCI’s Children's Development Officer, Graeme Thompson, Youth Development Officer, Neil Harrison, Mission Development Officer and Sarah Harding, editor of the Presbyterian Herald, also hosting a number of episodes.

Together they have been joined by over 120 guests from inside and outside of PCI, in conversations ranging from mental health, parenting in a pandemic, and rebuilding community in congregations, to making the most of small church groups, engaging with the Bible, children’s ministry, climate change and supporting people in a crisis. With over 400 listens per episode, the podcasts to date have attracted

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nearly 22,000 individual listens since the first one aired in April 2020.

Since then, ministers, church staff and volunteers from congregations across Ireland, global mission workers, the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly, to name but a few, have contributed to over 32 hours of discussion. Thanking everyone involved, Rev David Thompson said, “Across the first 50 episodes the podcast has been a place in which a conversation across the whole church has been hosted, with a rich variety of voices from around PCI, and beyond.

“Each podcast has sought to encourage listeners to look to God for grace, joy and hope in this unusual season of life. The conversation about how we develop the podcast medium further is already under way and I have no doubt that it will continue to flourish in the future.”

Episode 50, which is out today, is entitled ‘Renew: Our vision for reaching the lost’. Neil Harrison is in conversation with Donna Jennings from Evangelical Alliance NI and James Cochrane, PCI Global Mission Worker in Porto, Portugal. Together they share their insights into the growing cultural gap between church and society and discuss how this makes it more difficult to reach new people with the gospel.

All episodes of the Refined podcast series can be found on [[www.audioboom.com/channels/5019668](http://www.audioboom.com/channels/5019668).] This feed also contains audio from various PCI addresses, lectures and events. Listeners can subscribe via Apple Podcasts, Spotify,

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TuneIn, RSS, or other audio streaming services by searching for 'Podcasts from the Presbyterian Church'.

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books**

### **Course for pastoral carers**

“Those of us who engage in Pastoral Care owe ourselves the space and time to reflect on how to practice this ministry well.”

This 12 week course runs on Thursday mornings from the 27th January and explores many useful aspects and perspectives on Pastoral Care to help us become better at looking after those who are in need of care and support.

Apply today at: <https://www.belfastbiblecollege.com/pastoral-care>

### **Archbishops of Armagh on Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

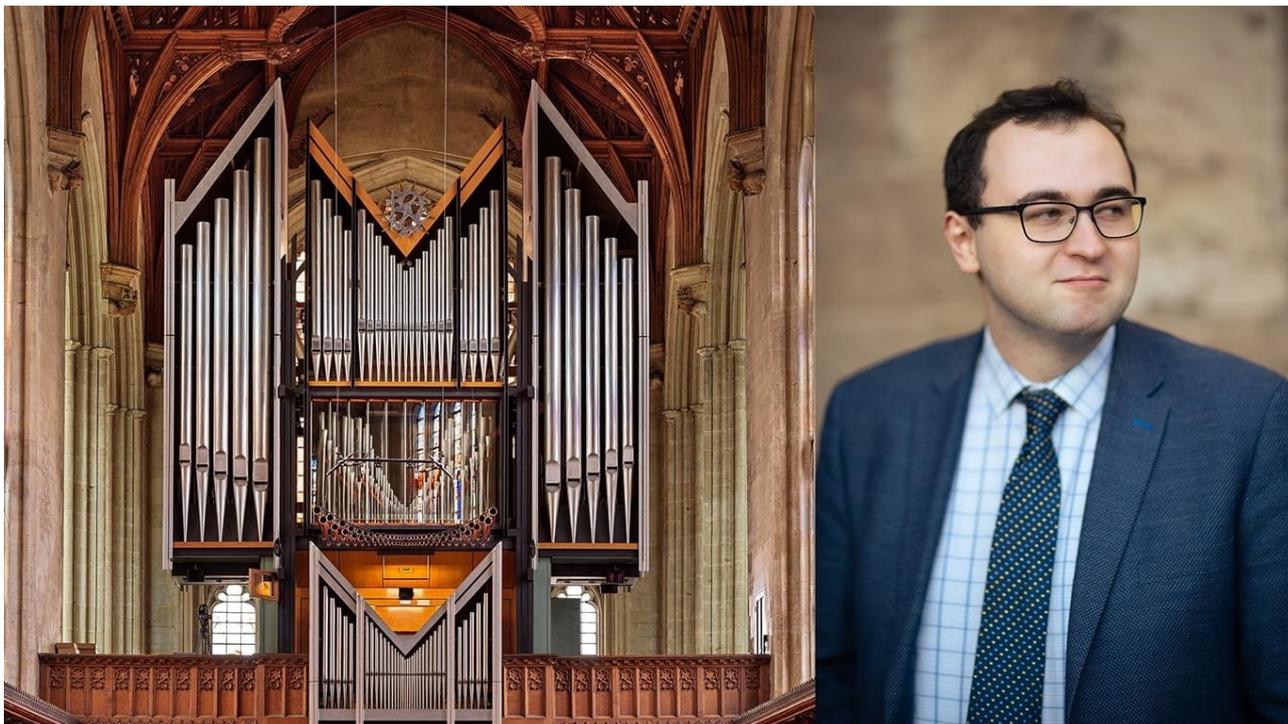
Link at -[<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/11154/archbishops-of-armagh-mark-christian>]

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### **Music at New College Oxford today**

Organ recital series for Hilary Term begins today, Thursday at 1:15pm. Join Assistant Organist, Dónal McCann (photo)

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for works by Morley, Frescobaldi, Cabanilles, Couperin and Walther.

The Choristers are joined by harpist Oliver Wass to perform Britten's evergreen Ceremony of Carols, today Thursday at 6:15pm.

All are welcome, either in-person or via the college's livestream:

<https://youtu.be/YFqvvdYOV5I>

## **MozART Group to give March Gala Concert for Saint Columb's School of Music**

Saint Columb's School of Music is “delighted to welcome the world-wide famous MozART Group to the city - their first ever visit to Northern Ireland”, They will head a Gala Concert on Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm in St. Columb's Cathedral

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You can book your ticket(s) now (£20) by visiting [www.stcolumbsschoolofmusic.com/events](http://www.stcolumbsschoolofmusic.com/events) or alternatively, by calling in to the School of Music during opening hours (Monday-Thursday 3-9pm).

A link of the MozART Group performing can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/Nxgm27oWu3s>

To avoid disappointment, please book ASAP... The Cathedral is restricted in number due to Covid protocols.



## **Join the Community of St Anselm**

Put ancient rhythms of prayer, study and service at the heart of your everyday life. Apply now to join the Community of St Anselm, based at Lambeth Palace (above), in September:

<https://www.stanselm.org.uk/apply>

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## **Special online talk celebrates 270 years of Belfast Charitable Society**

“As we mark the 270th anniversary of Belfast Charitable Society (BCS), join us for a very special discussion with Sir Ronnie Weatherup, President of BCS, and Dr Éamon Phoenix, highly esteemed local historian, who will examine Belfast’s oldest charity through its buildings, people and influence across the centuries.

'Georgian Bricks and Belfast Mortals' talk will take place via Zoom on Wednesday 26th January at 7pm.

Book your place today: <https://cliftonbelfast.com/event/georgian-bricks-and-belfast-mortals-belfast-and-its-charitable-society-by-dr-eamon-phoenix-belfast-charitable-society-270-years/>

## **News Reports**

### **Bishop speaks out against government plans to abolish BBC licence fee**

**A leading Church of England bishop has spoken out about government plans to abolish the BBC licence fee – and praised the Corporation's role in developing greater understanding of religion.**

Dr Helen-Ann Hartley is Bishop of Ripon and Chair of the Sandford St Martin Trust that promotes 'excellence in broadcasting about religion, ethics and spirituality'.

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**Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry of the Episcopal Church was honoured to join The King Center this week for the 2022 Martin Luther King, Jr. Beloved Community Commemorative Service. “A special thank you to Dr. Bernice A. King, CEO of The King Center, for the invitation to be part of this incredible event.”**

She said: "It is with concern that we at the Trust have read reports that the BBC is to be hit by a funding freeze and that the culture secretary Nadine Dorries is anticipating the abolition of the licence fee after 2027.

"The BBC plays a critical role in the promotion and enhancement of public and personal understanding of religion. This has never been clearer than during the last two years when so many UK citizens depended on the BBC

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for content that helped support their own religious practice and connected them with their communities.

"As a funding mechanism, the licence has served as contract between the broadcaster and the UK public – the only stakeholder that its output exists to serve.

"We, at the Trust, would be very sorry to see this or the BBC's reputation as a world-class public service broadcaster and creative leader jeopardised."

Bishop Hartley said the Trust would welcome an opportunity to discuss how public service broadcasting and the BBC could be funded to "truly represent all communities and viewers in the UK".

In a statement, the bishop pointed out that the BBC had consistently produced or commissioned programmes that been shortlisted or had won prestigious Sandford St Martin awards in recent years.

Last year the BBC dominated the shortlists in all five of the Trust's annual categories and won three – for children's broadcasting, for journalism and for a radio/audio production.

The BBC was established as a Corporation in 1927 with the motto 'Nation shall speak peace unto Nation'. The BBC's commitment to religion includes its broadcasting of the radio Daily Service since 1928, and TV's 'Songs of Praise for more than 50 years.

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## In the media

### **New plans to improve treatment of clergy**

The Tablet - The Association of Catholic Priests has said it is hoping to work with the four archdioceses in the Irish Church to set up a structure to deal with priests' complaints about bishops' treatment of clergy.

Spokesman for the ACP, Fr Tim Hazelwood, told the Tablet that what the association was asking for and working towards was establishing a system for engaging with the problems highlighted to the group by priests.

[[] <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/14898/new-plans-to-improve-treatment-of-clergy> ]

### **Violence against women is unacceptable – shout it from the rooftops,' urges Catholic bishop ...**

Independent.ie - A bishop has appealed to people to shout it “from the rooftops” across all organisations and communities, from schools to sporting bodies, to the Catholic church and families, that “violence against women is unacceptable”.

In his homily at Ashford Church in the parish of Killeedy, Bishop of Limerick Dr Brendan Leahy recalled that he was present at Ashling Murphy's graduation at Mary Immaculate Teacher Training College in Limerick last October.

“Little could I have thought that in a few short months, this shining star would have been eclipsed with such darkness.”

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[[] <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/violence-against-women-is-unacceptable-shout-it-from-the-rooftops-urges-catholic-bishop-41246045.html> ]

## **First Minister Paul Givan has not joined Presbyterian Church, according to DUP -**

Belfast Telegraph - First Minister Paul Givan has not joined the Presbyterian Church, according to the DUP.

Mr Givan, who resigned from the Free Presbyterian Church late last year, was pictured at a vigil for murdered Co Offaly woman Asling Murphy at First Lisburn Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening.

His appearance at the event, which was organised by Alliance MLA Sorcha Eastwood, gave rise to speculation that Mr Givan had joined the church..

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/first-minister-paul-givan-has-not-joined-presbyterian-church-according-to-dup-41248604.html> ]

## **Poem for today**

### **Down By the Salley Gardens by William Butler Yeats**

Down by the salley gardens  
my love and I did meet;  
She passed the salley gardens  
with little snow-white feet.

She bid me take love easy,

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as the leaves grow on the tree;  
But I, being young and foolish,  
with her would not agree.

In a field by the river  
my love and I did stand,  
And on my leaning shoulder  
she laid her snow-white hand.  
She bid me take life easy,  
as the grass grows on the weirs;  
But I was young and foolish,  
and now am full of tears.

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