



CNI



Next Presbyterian Moderator: Names unveiled

As the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's 19 Presbyteries prepare to meet independently at different locations around Ireland to select the denomination's principal public representative for 2017-2018, the Church's next Moderator will come from one of three counties - Antrim, Armagh, or Down.

The four ministers who are eligible to be considered on the evening of 7th February will be Rev. Brian Boyd of Kells and Eskylane, Rev. Tony Davidson of First Armagh Presbyterian Church, Rev. Charles McMullen of Bangor West and Rev. Noble McNeely of First Holywood Presbyterian Church.

Looking forward to this stage in the annual process, Rev. Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said, “The first Tuesday in February is always an important day in the life of our Church, as ministers and elders from our 539 congregations from Bushmills in County Antrim, to Aghada in County Cork, meet in their respective Presbyteries to nominate our next Moderator of the General Assembly.

“Our constitution clearly states that ‘The Lord Jesus Christ is the sole King and Head of the Church...’ so as a denomination the Moderator is not the ‘head of the church’, but our most senior office bearer and principal public representative. As such he or she plays an important role in the life and ministry of the Church across Ireland and further afield.”

Mr Gribben explained that the vote in each Presbytery is by simple majority. This means that whoever receives the most votes within a particular Presbytery – which are local regional church bodies that are made up of a minister and an elder from each congregation in that particular area - receives the single vote of that Presbytery. The person who receives the majority of these votes from the 19 Presbyteries

becomes Moderator-Designate and is formally nominated to the General Assembly in June.

While a relatively straightforward process, if there is a tie in the number of Presbytery votes received on the first count, which has happened four times in the last 16 years – most recently in 2014 when there was a three-way tie – Presbyteries will continue to meet that night until one minister is clearly ahead.

“As I’ve often said, democracy is one of the strengths and hallmarks of Presbyterianism. We will know who our new Moderator is around 9 O’clock that evening and I look forward to working with him in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ,” Mr Gribben said.

The candidates

Rev. Brian Boyd B.Sc., B.D.

Brian Boyd has been minister of Kells and Eskylane since 1992. Born in 1959, he was ordained as assistant in High Kirk Presbyterian, Ballymena in 1986 and installed two years later a minister of Culnady and Swatragh. He convened the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee from 1997 to 2000.

Rev. Tony Davidson B.A. (Q.U.B.), B.D. (Aber.)

Currently the minister of First Armagh Presbyterian Church, Tony Davidson was born in 1957. He was ordained as assistant minister in Stormont and installed as minister of Christ Church, Limerick in 1986, moving to First Armagh in 1994. Tony was convener of the Irish Church Relations Committee from 1995 to 2002, Inter-Church Relations Board from 2002 to 2004, Church Relations Committee 2004 to 2007 and Nomination Committee from 2014 to 2016.

Rev. Charles McMullen, M.A., M. Litt., B.D.

Charles McMullen was ordained as assistant minister in Harmony Hill, Lisburn, in 1988 and was installed as minister of Legacurry Presbyterian Church in 1991. Born in 1960, he has been minister of West Church, Bangor since 1999. Charles convened the Magee Fund Scheme Committee from 1993 to 2000, National and International Problems Committee from 1993 to 1997 and Global Concerns Committee from 2005 to 2010.

Rev. Noble McNeely, B.Ed., B.D.

Noble McNeely was born in 1954. Ordained as assistant Minister in 1982 in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church in Belfast, he was installed in First Ballymoney in 1984 where he ministered

for 13 years before being called to First Holywood in 1997, where he is the current minister. He convened the Youth Education and Mission Committee from 1990 to 1994, City Area Committee from 1996 to 1998, Ministerial Studies and Development Committee from 2007 to 2010, Board of Christian Training from 2010 to 2014 and the Council for Training in Ministry from 2015 to 2016.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has over 225,000 members belonging to 539 congregations across 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland. The Presbytery of Monaghan and the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster are located in the Republic of Ireland while the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal is cross border with congregations located in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Irish Presbyterianism had its origins in Scottish migrations to Ulster in the early seventeenth Century. Ballycarry Presbyterian Church in County Antrim is the oldest congregation dating back to 1613. In 1840 the coming together of two Presbyterian Churches, the General Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod formed the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The most senior office-bearer and its public representative is the Moderator of the General Assembly, who is also known as the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The serving Moderator is given the honorific style, Right Reverend (Rt. Rev.), former Moderators are known as Very Reverend (Very Rev.). The Moderator is tenth in the Order of Precedence in Northern Ireland along with the two Archbishops of Armagh. The current Moderator is the Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, minister of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church in east Belfast. The first Moderator was the Very Rev. Dr. Samuel Hanna, elected in 1840.

Election Process of the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The annual process to select the principal public representative of the Church and the General Assembly's senior office bearer begins in November, when members of Presbyteries throughout Ireland suggest the names of ministers who they would like to see considered. These ministers are then approached by the Clerk of the General Assembly to ascertain if they would like their names to go forward to the second stage. This takes place on the first

Tuesday in February and involves all 19 Presbyteries meeting to prayerfully consider those eligible to be considered. Once proposed and seconded within a Presbytery, whoever receives the most votes within that Presbytery receives the single vote of that Presbytery. The person who receives the majority of these votes from the 19 Presbyteries becomes Moderator-Designate and is formally nominated to the General Assembly in June.

Leading US expert keynote speaker at Sacred Art and Architecture Seminar

The National Centre for Liturgy in association with the Bishops' Advisory Committee on Sacred Art and Architecture will hold a seminar for artists, architects, clergy and for members of parish/diocesan committees relating to the liturgy as well as places of worship. The seminar will be held on Thursday 9 February in Renehan Hall, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

The guest speaker will be Rev Dr Richard S. Vosko, a sacred space planner in the USA since 1970. Father Vosko has worked on more than

100 renovation projects including the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles; the Cathedral of Saint James, Seattle; the Central Synagogue in New York; and San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio, Texas. Father Vosko has also worked on projects for the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in the USA.

A new exhibition entitled *Art for Faith* will be formally opened as part of the seminar and will be available for public viewing from Friday 10 February until Friday 24 February. *Art for Faith* will feature 30 different pieces from 13 artists and will include two pieces of stained glass by Margaret Becker as well as a wood sculpture of Christ on the Cross made by Charles Perpoil.

Commenting ahead of the seminar Mgr Joseph McGuinness, Chairperson of Bishops' Council for Liturgy said, "I welcome this seminar for artists and architects. It is so important to encourage the gifts that artists and architects bring to us in the Church. Pope Saint John Paul II in his letter to artists in 1999 said, *'In order to communicate the message entrusted to her by Christ, the Church needs art. Art must make perceptible, and as far as possible attractive, the world of the spirit, of the invisible, of God. It must therefore translate into meaningful terms*

that which is itself ineffable. Art has a unique capacity to take one or other facet of the message and translate it into colours, shapes and sounds which nourish the intuition of those who look or listen. It does so without emptying the message itself of its transcendent value and its aura of mystery’.

“The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that the Church constantly seeks the noble assistance of artists and their works. The Church is intent on preserving the artistic treasures of the past and she strives to promote new works in harmony with each contemporary age. Here, as well, attention is given to the appointment of artists and what works of theirs are chosen to serve the liturgy. What is required is that true excellence in art that nourishes faith and which accords authentically with the meaning and purpose of the liturgy.

“We are grateful to the individual artists and to the parishes of Prosperous, Co Kildare, and Knocknacarra, Co Galway, for lending us their beautiful pieces of liturgical art for this exhibition.

I encourage people to come and see it for themselves and to stop and pause for a while the next time they are in a church to appreciate the craftsmanship of so many talented people.”

Brian Quinn, Chairperson of the Bishops' Advisory Committee on Sacred Art and Architecture said, "In liturgy we enter into a dialogue with the divine. We use our senses and we use movement to carry out this dialogue.

Through speech and listening, our sense of hearing acts as one of a number of channels of communication. Music enriches this dialogue so that we get a glimpse of the divine in a way that mere speech and listening cannot do. Similarly, liturgical art allows a glimpse of the divine through our sense of sight in a way that mere observing of ritual cannot. Unlike music, however, art is an under-used resource, a channel of communication that we do not use to its potential. I warmly welcome this seminar for artists and architects as a welcome opportunity for us to continue to highlight liturgical art as a vital means of glimpsing the divine and enhancing the liturgy.

"I am delighted to see the *Art for Faith* exhibition taking shape. What we have put together in this modest exhibition is just a flavour of the wealth of wonderful pieces of liturgical art we have in our parishes. We are blessed to have so many creative people giving their time and their talents to enhancing our sacred spaces."

A preview of some of the pieces will be available on liturgy-ireland.ie

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2017/01/26/national-centre-for-liturgy-to-host-art-and-architecture-seminar/>

Cashel conference on reducing church energy costs

The Environment Committee of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory invites people from all denominations to 'Inside & Out', a half-day conference on how to save energy expenses and explore new ways to improve your church environs.

It will be held on Saturday 18th February 2017 from 10.00am – 1.00pm in Kilkenny College (Castlecomer Road), by kind permission.

Admission is free; there is ample parking and refreshments will be served.

The Speakers are:

Ms Ruth Buggie from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) will speak about the €30 million of grants available under the Better

Energy Communities Programme and how heritage buildings have benefited under such SEAI schemes.

Dr Úna Fitzpatrick from the National Biodiversity Data Centre will speak about how parishes can help encourage pollinators, thus helping bees and agriculture.

Ms Alison Harvey of the Heritage Council will also speak.

A Q&A session chaired by Cllr Malcolm Noonan from Kilkenny County Council.

For more information contact: The Ven. Andrew Orr, Tullow Rectory. 087-4196051.

New Dean for Diocese of Edinburgh

The Rev Canon Frances Burberry has been appointed the Dean of the Diocese of Edinburgh, succeeding the Rev Susan Macdonald .

Canon Burberry will continue as Rector of St Ninian's, Comely Bank but will relinquish her role as



Synod Clerk to the diocese, to which she was elected in 2016.

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, says 'The role of Dean is a challenging one. I believe that Frances has gifts and experience that will be of great service to our diocese. Last year her clergy colleagues showed their confidence in her by electing her Synod Clerk. Frances will continue to be the Rector of a busy

congregation whilst also becoming a key member of our diocesan leadership team.”

Commenting on her appointment, Canon Burberry said “it is an enormous honour to have been invited by Bishop John to be Dean of the Diocese of Edinburgh. I’ve been truly humbled by the warmth of support and encouragement I’ve received during my time as Synod Clerk; and by the confidence and trust that Bishop John and others have placed in me. I’m very much looking forward to working alongside Bishop John, and with people throughout the Diocese as we participate in God’s mission and face future changes and challenges together, and to continuing in my role as Rector of St Ninian’s, Comely Bank.’

Order of Malta to hold emergency meeting following resignation of leader

The Order of Malta has summoned its top governing body for a special session to formally accept after the Pope announced a takeover of the sovereign lay Catholic group.

The meeting is set for Saturday.

The Vatican announced it was taking over the Order after the chief knight, Fra' Matthew Festing, openly defied Pope Francis in a public spat over a condom scandal. Fra' Matthew resigned on Tuesday and [the resignation of its leader](#) the Vatican announced it would name a papal delegate to run the order.

The Vatican's intervention is extraordinary given the Order of Malta isn't a typical religious order like, for example, the Jesuits, but rather a sovereign entity under international law, one that has diplomatic relations with more than 100 countries, the Holy See included.

Writing in The Catholic Herald yesterday Fr Alexander Lucie-Smith commented:
"The Vatican [takeover](#) of the Order of Malta has a possible precedent – from 1981, when St John Paul II intervened in the internal affairs of the Jesuit Order. The then General, Padre Arrupe, elected for life, had been incapacitated by a stroke. The Jesuits decided to elect a certain Fr O'Keefe to run the Order in the incapacity of Arrupe, but the Pope intervened and appointed [Fr Paolo Dezza](#) to run the order until such a time as a new General could be elected. After a period of two years the Pope gave permission to the Jesuits to elect a new superior.



Grand Master Matthew Festing resigned after a meeting with Pope Francis

“At the time, this extraordinary intervention by the Sovereign Pontiff was considered by some as an outrageous interference in the affairs of a religious order which, like all religious orders, had been until then allowed to govern itself and rejoice in its own autonomy. There were many who saw this action by John Paul II as a sign of creeping papal power, and an arrogation to himself of powers that no other Pope had used for centuries. But amidst all the noisy criticism, others were quietly pleased by the Pope’s action, seeing it as a necessary take over of the Jesuits who, under Arrupe, had lost their way. One thing was certain: as Supreme Pontiff, the Pope was quite within his rights to intervene as he had. The Pope has “supreme, full, immediate

and universal ordinary power” in the Church, as [Canon 331](#) puts it.

“No Catholic could possibly dispute the claims made by Canon 331. Whether they permit the Vatican intervention into the Order of Malta is another matter: Ed Condon [has argued](#) that they do not. But whatever the legal situation, such huge powers lose their force and effectiveness the more they are invoked. The Pope’s authority, paradoxically, is diminished through use. As in the British Constitution, the Royal Prerogative is best left unused and unchallenged. For the Pope’s power, though having a sound legal basis in Canon Law, is something more than that – it is a moral authority, and to be preserved by being used sparingly.

“That the Pope should now intervene in the affairs of the Knights of Malta, at the behest, it seems, of the friends of a disgruntled member of the Order, sacking the Grand Master for no very clear reason, brings the papal power into disrepute. As with the [reports](#) of the [sacking](#) of three officials from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, this seems to be an example of the papal supreme power used for the purposes of micromanagement.

“One of the unique selling points of this papacy was supposed to be synodality and the devolution of power to the margins. Instead what we seem to be seeing is the centralisation of power and decision making to a degree unimaginable in previous papacies. Members of Protestant and Orthodox churches may perhaps with some justification point to this sort of behaviour as an abuse of papal power.

“So what is happening in the Order of Malta? One thing is certain, and that is Fra’ Matthew Festing, the former Grand Master, a true son of the Church, will not tell us, but will keep loyally silent. But those who read about these things in the papers will ask the question. And they may well ask, too, what is happening in the Catholic Church?”

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2017/01/26/francis-isnt-the-first-pope-to-intervene-with-an-orders-affairs-but-papal-power-can-go-too-far/>

C of E's European diocese explores implications of “post-Brexit Britain”

The Church of England's Diocese in Europe has begun exploring the implications that Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) might

have on British-national clergy deployed to the continent. At present, as members of the EU, British nationals – including clergy – can travel, reside, and work in any of the other 27-member states without requiring visas or work permits. That may change when Britain leaves the EU. There are also questions about whether the reciprocal health-care arrangements for citizens of EU member states will also continue to apply to British nationals once the UK completes the withdrawal process.

The decision to leave the EU was made by the British people in a referendum last year with 52 per cent voting in favour of departure and 48 per cent voting to remain. Prime Minister Theresa May has said that she intends to trigger Article 50 of the EU Treaty – the formal start of a two-year exit negotiation period – by the end of March. This will allow the UK to complete its exit before the next round of European Parliamentary elections. This week the country's Supreme Court ruled that, despite the referendum, the government could not trigger Article 50 using reserved executive powers known as the Royal Prerogative. The justices ruled that an Act of Parliament, approved by both Houses of Parliament, was required before the Article 50 notification could be triggered.



The European Parliament in Strasbourg, France: The British government hopes to complete the UK's withdrawal of the European Union ahead of the next scheduled elections to the European Parliament in 2019.

The shape of the implications of Brexit on British citizens in Europe won't be known until the conclusion of the negotiations on Britain's new relationship with the EU. But the Diocese in Europe is beginning the process of exploring what the effects might be on its churches and their members across the continent.

The diocesan bishop, Robert Innes, hosted a meeting last month involving delegates from

across the Diocese and British government minister Lord Bridges. “Major concerns centre on future health provision abroad and in the UK, pensions affected by the lower rate of exchange for sterling, clergy recruitment and the problems of families with dual nationality,” the Diocese in Europe explained on its website.

“I was personally very pleased that the Government, in the form of Lord Bridges, was prepared to put a whole day in his diary to meet with us. . . ” Bishop Robert said. “We were taken very seriously by the staff at the UK Representation in Brussels(#), and it is staff in this building who will be conducting the actual negotiations, so I do feel we have been properly listened to, and by the right people.

“The event brought home to me the sheer range and complexity of the issues that the government will have to sort out. It was very clear that the biggest worries are over health care and pensions. Of course for me as a bishop, I have particular concerns that the most vulnerable people should not be placed in situations of real stress, uncertainty and possible poverty.

“I will want to keep up my own contacts with government as the actual negotiations get

underway to help ensure that the needs of people in our diocese, who sadly risk being treated as negotiating chips in a bigger game, are properly understood and respected.”

(# CNI note - UKREP is virtually the UK's Embassy to the EU. The UK also has an Ambassador to Belgium).

News briefs

+++ Agony of Christ painting for Belfast

Cathedral - A 17th Century painting entitled The Agony of Christ in Gethsemane has gone on display in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. The 6ft X 3ft oil on canvas painting, attributed to French painter Jean-Bernard Restout, has been given to the Cathedral on long-term loan by Mr Samuel Greer from Co Armagh, who does not have a suitable hanging space where it can be best displayed to its credit. Art and restoration experts Colin Finley and Dougie Bickerstaff from Grallagh Studios, Rathfriland, were in St Anne's on Thursday January 26 to hang the picture in the Ambulatory for visitors to view.

+++ Dublin service of introduction - The Service of Introduction of the Revd Eoghan Heaslip to St Catherine's Church will take place on Sunday January 29. Archbishop Michael

Jackson will preside and the preacher will be the Revd Dr William Olhausen. Worship will begin at 6.45 pm with the service following on at 7pm. Light refreshments will be served afterwards. All are welcome.

Free parish resources

+++ Free online Lent bible studies in migrants

- The Biblical Association of the Church of Ireland (BACI) launched its 2017 Lenten Bible Study in Church House, Dublin, on Tuesday. “God’s Heart for Migrants – Biblical Wisdom for a World in Turmoil”, has been produced by David Shepherd of TCD for BACI and comprises five Bible studies focusing on migration. The five Bible Studies are designed to aid reflection on the lessons offered today by the migration experiences of the Jewish people: from Abram on – to Canaan, Egypt and back, through the Exodus experience and the giving of the Law, to Ruth the Moabite and the challenges that faced her, and on again through the Babylonian exile to consider the perceived status of “pilgrims and sojourners here on earth” common to Jews and Gentiles alike in the early Church. Copies are available from Christ Church Cathedral and St Patrick’s Cathedrals in Dublin and further stockists may be advised by BACI hon treasurer and distribution manager, Barbara Bergin

(berginba@gmail.com). The copies cost €2.50. Copies are also available to download for free from the BACI website www.bibliahibernica.wordpress.com

+++ Racial Justice Sunday - will, this year, be marked on the second Sunday in February (12th February). This year's material has been produced by Scott Boldt in partnership with EMBRACE, Belfast, Northern Ireland. It provides an introduction to the issue of racism, group work, suggestions on how to respond, an order of service, plus an appendix providing a wealth of extra resources relating to racial justice. Please click [here](#) to access these resources on the CTBI website.

+++ Free Resource from 'Who Let the Dads Out' - WLTD0 states - We are making the Daddy Cool! course free and available to download from our website. We've done this because we believe that it is a fantastic way to enable the dads from Who Let The Dads Out? to explore their roles as fathers in greater depth and it can lead on to conversations about faith and spirituality. The course is a lot of fun, with a takeaway meal at its heart and it will feed stomachs as well as minds and souls! (A way to a man's heart is after all through his stomach - so it has been said!). Head over to our website

for everything you need: <http://www.wholetthedadsout.org.uk/running-group/daddy-cool-parenting-course>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Post-Catholics adrift, unsure of their values and in denial

Irish Times - 'It wasn't just priests or politicians who kept Catholic Ireland alive. It was also us, the Irish people'

<http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/post-catholics-adrift-unsure-of-their-values-and-in-denial-1.2926797>

Growing up gay in Belfast: 'I used to bargain with God not to send me to hell'

Irish Times - Belfast journalist Lyra McKee's account of being gay in a hostile environment has been turned into a short film

<http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/growing-up-gay-in-belfast-i-used-to-bargain-with-god-not-to-send-me-to-hell-1.2950791>

BBC

Report on debates in Parliament (scroll down) includes comment from the Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, in the House of Lords, in support of an amendment to the Higher Education and Research Bill to help asylum seekers access financial support. The amendment includes provision for financial support for those who have been brought to the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-parliaments-38739005>

BBC/Guard/Premier

Articles following the publication of figures by the Department for Communities and Local Government showing the number of rough sleepers in England has more than doubled in six years. The Guardian article focuses on homelessness in Bristol with a picture showing the city's mayor at a church hall talking to a homeless man. Premier quotes the Director of the Church Housing Trust, Miriam Morris.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-38679501>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jan/25/bristol-launches-spectrum-of-activity-to-tackle-homelessness>

<https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Government-absolutely-not-doing-enough-for-homeless-slams-Christian-charity>

Hull Daily Mail

Report that the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will visit Holy Trinity Church in Hull next month in recognition of the central role it plays in the community as Hull celebrates its year as UK City of Culture. The Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Rev Canon Dr Neal Barnes, is quoted.

<http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/city-gears-up-for-royal-visit-as-prince-charles-heads-to-hull/story-30084960-detail/story.html>