



CNI



Methodist speaker at Ecumenical Celebration at Lough Derg

Lough Derg will hold an ecumenical celebration of Friendship & Prayer on Ash Wednesday 18th February from 10.30am until 3.00pm.

This year's guest speaker is the former president of the Methodist Church, Rev Dr Heather Morris. The event will conclude with an ecumenical prayer service in St Patrick's Basilica.

Please note: distribution of Ashes and Eucharist are not part of the event.

Everyone is welcome including community interfaith groups. Admission €25/£22 includes refreshments and lunch.

Advance booking is essential. For more information/bookings phone 00 353 71 98 61518 / email info@loughderg.org

Presbyterians prepare to elect new Moderator

Presbyterians from across Ireland will meet next Tuesday evening to elect a new Moderator of the General Assembly, the most senior office bearer of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from a shortlist of four ministers.

Known as the Moderator-Designate, the new Moderator will officially take up office at the start of the Church's General Assembly on 1st June and will be the the 176th since the election of the Very Rev. Dr. Samuel Hanna in 1840.

The ministers, who are from Ballyclare, Ballymoney, Belfast and Newtownabbey, are:

- Rev. Robert Bell, minister of Ballyclare Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Liz Hughes, minister of Whitehouse Presbyterian Church in Newtownabbey
- Rev. Ian McNie, minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney, and
- Rev. Frank Sellar, minister of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church in east Belfast

The voting will take place in the Church's 19 Presbyteries - local groupings of a minister and an elder from each congregation in a particular area - meeting independently around Ireland in locations as diverse as Dublin and Londonderry, Monaghan and Carrickfergus.

Rev. Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the Presbyterian Church's General assembly, explained that next week's vote is the second stage of an annual process that began in the autumn of last year.

"The process for the election of Moderator is laid down in our constitution. Around November time the first phase of the process begins when presbytery members suggest the names of the ministers they would like to see considered for Moderator. This year four ministers have agreed for their names to go forward for the second stage, when presbyteries will prayerfully consider and vote next Tuesday.

"The vote is by simple majority and whoever is selected within each Presbytery becomes the nominee of that Presbytery and the person who receives the support of the majority of our 19 presbyteries across Ireland becomes Moderator-Designate," he said.

While straightforward, there have been ties in the past. Last year three nominees, Rev. Michael Barry, Rev. Liz Hughes and Rev. Ian McNie, received the votes of five presbyteries each in a three-way tie. The second round of voting, that same evening, was just as close with Dr. Barry elected with seven votes to the six votes Mrs Hughes and Mr McNie received.

The next Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should be known by 10pm on the evening of Tuesday, 3rd February. He or she will

take up office at the opening of the session of the General Assembly in Belfast on the evening of Monday, 1st June. Biographies of nominees and further information at -

<https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/Article/January-2015/Presbyterians-prepare-to-elect-new-Moderator?feed=cfd8e3f5-88c6-46c8-9f48-6f31a698b9b7>



At the launch of new C of E research project into small primary schools - INTO President Sean McMahon; Chairman of the Church of Ireland Primary Schools Management Association, the Revd Brian O'Rourke; Principal of the Church of Ireland College of Education, Dr Anne Lodge; Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson; President of Dublin City University, Professor Brian MacCraith; Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education (RI), Dr Ken Fennelly

C of I begins new research on community benefits and challenges of small Irish Primary schools

A new collaborative study into small Irish primary schools will focus on their communities, cultures, benefits and challenges. The research programme, which is overseen by the Church of Ireland College of Education, is being funded collaboratively between the Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education (RI), the Church of Ireland Primary Schools Association, the Governors of the Church of Ireland College of Education and Dublin City University. It will be carried out between January and July 2015 and published in the autumn.

The study was launched in Church of Ireland House, Rathmines, yesterday evening (January 27). Among those present were representatives of each of the funding bodies as well as INTO President, Sean McMahon.

Aimed at addressing the gaps in our understandings of small Irish primary schools, it will provide specific insights into the culture of small schools from a range of perspectives, including those of principals, teachers, members

of Boards of Management, patrons, children, parents and education policy-makers. It will examine both the challenges and benefits of teaching and learning in a small school context. This will enable comparisons to be made between the Irish experience of teaching and learning in small schools and research published in Finland and the UK where similar studies have been conducted.

Speaking at last night's launch, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, said that both the General Synod Board of Education and the Board of Governors of CICE were aware of the vital role small schools played in Church of Ireland communities across the country. However, he said less was known about the lives of small schools and it is this that the research will delve into enabling an understanding of the enormous contribution small schools made to society.

President of DCU, Professor Brian MacCraith, described the launch as a milestone event for DCU and CICE. He said small schools were an integral part of Irish education and formed an intrinsic part of their communities. He said the

details emerging from the research would inform education policy.

Speaking on behalf of school patrons, the Bishop of Tuam, the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, welcomed the initiative said that in the west of Ireland all



Dr Anne Lodge outlining the research to be carried out.

Church of Ireland schools were small schools. “We don’t see them as a problem, we see them as a bonus and we see them providing for the whole community not just the Church of Ireland. We have got to look after them,” he stated.

Principal of CICE, Dr Anne Lodge, who is leading the research, thanked all the funding bodies for supporting the study and her research advisors on the project. The current study arises from a survey of 1,500 parents carried out by Dr Lodge, Dr Ken Fennelly and David Touhy SJ in 2011. The new research aims to add the views of principals, teachers members of Boards of Management, patrons and children to that work.

“Too often the rhetoric surrounding small schools is negative but the experience of learning in small schools is positive and enriching,” Dr Lodge commented. She said that 29 percent of Irish schools were small schools and well over half of Church of Ireland schools were small schools but little is known of life in small schools.

Initially the research team will contact the entire network of Protestant schools and later will engage on a deeper level with about 15 schools. They also plan to engage with the Department of Education and Skills. It is planned to complete the study by July and launch the report in the autumn. “The danger is that if we don’t tell our story we won’t have a story to tell,” Dr Lodge concluded.

Sean McMahon spoke of the increasing pressure on small schools. He criticised the focus on pupil numbers when deciding whether a school should lose a teacher and said that the department should look at the work which may have been carried out on a school building, the ethos of the school and its place in the community. He said currently 38 primary schools had been reduced to one teacher schools which was in conflict with the rest of Europe where the number of single teacher schools was falling. He predicted that there would be an explosion of one teacher schools on the western seaboard. He said the new research would be vitally important.

The study will be based in the Church of Ireland College of Education and will be overseen by the College Principal and guided by an expert advisory board which will include experienced practitioners and teacher educators as well as drawing on international expertise.

North Belfast church appeals for relatives to claim loved ones' ashes

A Whitewell church which is facing closure is trying to track down people whose loved ones' cremated remains are stored in its columbarium.

Newtownabbey Times - St Ninian's Parish Church on the Whitewell Road, which has seen its congregation dwindle in recent years, is expected to shut this summer.

Rev Elaine O'Brien, Rector of the United Parishes of St John's, Whitehouse and St Ninian's, Belfast revealed that while an exact closure date hasn't yet been confirmed, the final service is likely to take place in June.



Rev Elaine O'Brien pictured outside St Ninian's Parish Church on the Whitewell Road.

Rev O'Brien, who has been Rector of St Ninian's for four years, said that with just 20 people regularly attending services, it is no longer economically viable for it to remain open.

She puts the demise of the once-thriving church down to "an aging population and changing demographics" in the local area.

Expressing her sadness at the pending closure of the church, Rev O'Brien said: "It's resonating quite deeply with a lot of people - not just those who still attend the church, but people who grew up in the area and no longer live here. A lot of people are very sad to see it closing."

The original church was built at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, while the present building, with its distinctive green roof, was erected at the site 51 years ago.

It's understood that the property could be sold off by the Church of Ireland and the historic buildings demolished to make way for new social housing.

With closure looming, efforts are now being made to track down people whose loved ones'

remains are stored in the columbarium at the church.

An advert due to run in the local press over the next few months advises that “it has become necessary to remove all cremated remains from the columbarium and re-inter them in consecrated ground, or in some place set aside for that purpose.”

Rev O’Brien said that several cinerary urns have already been moved from the columbarium, but a number of others remain unclaimed.

“There were about 48 cremated remains in the columbarium and we have managed to track down some family members already, but we are still looking for others,” she explained.

“The individual families will be able to decide where they want to re-inter their loved ones’ remains, whether that be in a church graveyard or a garden of rest.”

It’s understood the Church of Ireland doesn’t permit the scattering of ashes, except at sea by special permission.

Anyone who has an interest in any of the cremated remains in the columbarium at St

Ninian's should contact Rev O'Brien on 028 9036 9955 or email elaineobrien1@btinternet.com as soon as possible. Any urns left in the columbarium after April 30 will be removed and re-intered in the Garden of Rest at St John's Church, Whitehouse.

<http://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/local-news/church-appeals-for-relatives-to-claim-loved-ones-ashes-1-6546518>

Faith in Sport - an evening conversation about faith, life and sport



Alan Lewis

As part of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute's and The Methodist Church's Edgehill Theological College's "Faith in Everyday Living" series 2015, Thursday February 12 will see Alan Lewis (pictured) speak about his life and experiences following many years at the top level of international sport.

Having captained and played cricket for Ireland on 122 occasions and having refereed 47 international rugby matches, Alan brings considerable life experience and insight that many will find both interesting and challenging!

"Faith in Sport", will be held at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Braemor Park, Dublin 14 from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Cost € 5.00 per person (including refreshments).

For more information, or simply to register attendance, please email David Brown, CITI Lay Training Co-ordinator at davidbrown@theologicalinstitute.ie

Columba Community Derry - New Life in the Spirit Seminars

Fr Neal Carlin and the Columba Community welcome you to a series of talks and prayer times for personal renewal of your faith. Based on the Life in the Spirit seminars these series of talks, led by members of the Columba Community will be held in Columba House, 11 Queen St, Derry every Wednesday from 7.45pm – 9.00pm beginning Wed 11th Feb (for 7 weeks). These seminars are free and open to all but spaces are limited. Please contact us for more info or to reserve a place. Tel: 02871 262407 E: columbacomunity@hotmail.com

St Brigid's Cross Making Demonstration

Veritas, Shipquay Street, Derry, will host a St Brigid's cross-making demonstration by Mr John Rankin, on Saturday 7 February 2015, from 12.00noon – 2.00 pm. If you are interested in learning how to make a St Brigid's cross, come along to this event. John will provide rushes, or you can bring your own. Everyone is welcome.

Bishops to advice GB Catholic voters due in coming weeks

Advice for Catholics on how to vote in May's General Election will come out in the next few weeks, a bishop involved in drafting it has said.

Tablet - Bishop of Shrewsbury Mark Davies told a diocesan justice and peace group in Chester that the "concise and readable document" would prompt Catholics to reflect on the major issues facing voters.

Each Catholic voter should keep those issues – which he said might include economics, care of the elderly, immigration, religious freedom and the alleviation of poverty – in mind "before making that fateful decision", he added.

Other important questions for Catholic voters cited by the bishop include the UK's relationship with the European Union, British military intervention, humanitarian aid, marriage and the family, and the value of human life itself in the form of questions about assisted suicide.

The document, which will be similar to the statements issued before the 2005 and 2010 General elections, will not specify which party Catholics should vote for.

Media digest

Vintners optimistic that Minister will allow pubs to open on Good Friday

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/vintners-optimistic-that-minister-will-allow-pubs-to-open-on-good-friday-659983.html>

How the other half studied: Trinity College Dublin in the 1960s

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/how-the-other-half-studied-trinity-college-dublin-in-the-1960s-1.2082491>

Hardline Catholic group buys gay-friendly 'bar of Sodom' next to church 'to redeem it'

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/hardline-catholic-group-buys-gayfriendly-bar-of-sodom-next-to-church-to-redeem-it-30945712.html>

Pope Francis 'embraces transgender man in meeting at the Vatican' and tells him there is a place for him in the Catholic Church

www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/pope-francis-embraces-transgender-man-in-meeting-at-the-vatican-and-tells-him-there-is-a-place-for-him-in-the-catholic-church-30946228.html

'I never thought it would take more than fifteen years to have women bishops'

www.theguardian.com/world/guardianwitness-blog/2015/jan/28/first-female-bishop-libby-lane-consecration-anglicanism-readers-story?CMP=twt_gu

Tel - Report on the Archbishop of Canterbury's [blog on the Lambeth Palace website](#), about the dangers of social media and warning against tweeting in anger. It states Justin Welby, although confessing he was a fan of social media, urged people to think twice before saying something online which could be conveyed face-to-face, saying social media could turn simple disagreements into vicious online feeding frenzies with the scars from such public arguments being felt for years.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11375294/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-do-not-tweet-in-anger.html>

Mail/Times

Further articles on the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon at an evensong at Trinity Church on Wall Street New York. The Mail articles says he warned vicars against filling their sermons with "moral claptrap" about being "a bit nicer" to everyone. Justin Welby was speaking about deprivation and called on people to "get their hands dirty" if they are to tackle inequality in society. *Times* leader says the Archbishop is right to show the church believes in something, more than just taking social action.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2929612/Vicars-avoid-preaching-moral-claptrap-nice-Christianity-s->

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

[message-radical-call-violent-revolution-says-Archbishop-Canterbury.html#ixzz3QBWpDQgX](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/thunderer/article4337608.ece)
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/thunderer/article4337608.ece>

Guard

Article on [St Alban's Church of England academy](#) in Highgate, Birmingham, where the vast majority of students are Muslim. It looks at how the school is working to foster respect for all faiths. It states the school was ranked outstanding following an OFSTED visit in 2011 and was praised for its ethos that nurtures mutual respect and tolerance. It also says from September [the academy chain Ark](#), which sponsors St Alban's, is taking over two schools affected by the so-called "Trojan Horse" affair last year.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/28/-sp-st-alban-birmingham-academy-multi-faith-integration>

Times

Columnist, Janice Turner writes about her negative experiences of a non religious, non Anglican funeral and said Anglican clergy are noting a trend among undertakers to push funerals out to 'crem cowboys'. She writes that no formal training is required and the 'cowboys' can undercut the cost of a priest (and the diocese loses fees). But all the careful meetings

with relatives to build a full picture of a life and the pastoral care of the bereaved are trimmed into a hasty, soulless affair.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4337599.ece>

Guard

Article by the Revd Anna Macham, priest-in-charge at [St Philip & St Mark's in Camberwell](#) who shares her view on the "new chapter" in the church after the consecration of Bishop Libby Lane, on Monday, which she describes as "like breathing new air."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/guardianwitness-blog/2015/jan/28/first-female-bishop-libby-lane-consecration-anglicanism-readers-story>

Guard

Comment on the practice of 'wexting' (using your phone as you walk). The columnist says it is a bit antisocial, but also refers to a photograph of women priests celebrating [the first female bishop](#), holding their phone screens aloft, as they paraded outside York Minster at the consecration of the new suffragan bishop. [http://](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/28/wexting-walking-texting-women-priests-libby-lane)

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/28/wexting-walking-texting-women-priests-libby-lane

Tel

Report that John Charles Weetman, vicar of the 1,000-year-old Selby Abbey says the North Yorkshire town is experiencing a sudden boom in tourism after one of Taiwan's biggest pop stars got married there. Jay Chou married model Hannah Quinlivan at Selby Abbey recently. Mr Weetman said the church did not usually attract Asian visitors but in the past 10 days there had been around 500.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/11374481/Yorkshire-town-xxx.html>

BBC

Report that St Ninian's Parish Church in Newtownabbey has issued an appeal for anyone whose loved ones' cremated remains are kept there to come forward before it closes in a few months. The church has a columbarium underneath the building for urns containing the cremated remains of parishioners. Rev Elaine O'Brien said changing demographics in the area meant the church had an ageing congregation "and it's no longer financially sustainable" and the remains have to be disinterred and reinterred elsewhere.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-31028670>

Guard

Article commenting on trends for 'perfect weddings' with wedding planning companies promising it won't rain. But Peter Ormerod says getting married is among the most real and that the wording of the Anglican service makes it clear 'for every better there's a worse, for every richer there's a poorer, for every health there's a sickness.'

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/28/rain-wedding-day-100000-pounds-stop>

BBC

Article looking at the tensions ahead of elections in Nigeria, as voters will have to choose between a Christian presidential candidate from the south and a Muslim candidate from the north. It asks to what extent voters will pay attention to the religion of the candidates. Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi, who has played a key role diffusing religious tension in Jos, is quoted saying politicians often exploit religion for their own gain.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31026554>

Guard

Article commenting on Labour party policies refers to a new book entitled [Blue Labour: Forging a New Politics](#) - a collection of essays

compiled by Adrian Pabst, senior lecturer in politics at the University of Kent. It says the foreword is by Rowan Williams, former archbishop of Canterbury.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/2015/jan/28/labour-interesting-alliances-forming-to-plot-partys-future>