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**Image of the day -
First chaplain to the construction industry**

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Insight on ministry in Cashel

Bishop Michael Burrows in his monthly letter to the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory shares insight into current developments in the diocese. He writes -

Commissioning of three Diocesan Readers

We are always so indebted to our Diocesan Readers for the huge contribution they make to the diocese, of course following demanding and university-accredited theological training which is coordinated by the Very Reverend Tom Gordon. On 9th January at 4 p.m. in Leighlin Cathedral three new Readers will be added to the band – Andrew Pender (Baltinglass), Thomas Cooke (Kilcooley) and Heidi Good (Kilkenny).

We wish them every blessing as they are commissioned and sent forth for service. Furthermore, it is good to report that three further candidates will embark on Reader training in the New Year. It is interesting that all are from the Munster section of the diocese – perhaps somehow the Holy Spirit is drawing our attention to particular current needs in providing liturgical and pastoral cover in that region, and thus raising up aspirants to Readership and perhaps in due time to Ordained Local Ministry also. That said, we hope that many people all over the diocesan area might give heed to what they might be in a position to offer through service not least as Readers.

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Ordination of the Reverend Pat Coleman to the priesthood (olm)

In the context of Ordained Local Ministry, the Reverend Pat Coleman will be ordained priest again in Leighlin Cathedral at 4 p.m. on Sunday January 30th. Pat was ordained deacon in September 2020 and is a familiar face in several of the parishes of the Barrow Valley, but her diaconate has lasted rather longer than the customary year given the occurrence of lockdowns and the fact that she was waiting to undergo orthopaedic surgery, from which she is now recovering well. So we can look forward joyfully to her ordination as a priest in the Church of God.



Institution and installation – Kilkenny

On Tuesday February 1 at 7.30 p.m., the Feast of St Brigid, the Reverend Stephen Farrell of whose coming I wrote last month will be instituted as rector of Kilkenny Union and also installed as dean of Ossory. Such ceremonies are always


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powerful and historic liturgical occasions, and our thoughts are very much with Stephen and his family as they pack boxes and move to the vast and elegant house by the cathedral gates which must be a wonderful place for children with a sense of adventure and imagination to grow up!

Dean of Cashel

There has been much joy in the diocese (although bittersweetness in Kells and Inistioge) that the new dean of Cashel comes from among our own clerical family. We all know and admire Canon James Mulhall particularly in the context of his work with children and with Safeguarding. Again and again, we have been grateful for his huge expertise and professional background in this area. He will bring an abundance of pastoral wisdom and lightly-worn learning to his ministry in Cashel, where he will be instituted

as rector of Cashel Union and installed as dean at 7 p.m. on Sunday February 13th. He will continue his work with Safeguarding for a transitional period (which is most generous of him) but already we are giving consideration to how this vital work

A person with long hair, wearing a dark hoodie and pants, is sitting on a large rock, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The person's back is to the camera.

You bid us to come;
You call us to confess;
You wait till we bow down;
You expect our penitence.
And then You say, stand up, my friend.
Come closer.
You are forgiven.
You need fear no more.

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may otherwise be provided in our midst. James will also kindly assist with a measure of pastoral support in Clonmel Union while the vacancy there continues and the best way forward in ministry is charted.

Pope's World Day of Peace message is good advice for 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday - Bishop Donal McKeown

Pope Francis' World Day of Peace message is good advice for us in Derry as we will soon recall the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. Fighting the battles of the past, we learn little – Bishop Donal McKeown

Link - <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2022/01/03/pope-francis-world-day-of-peace-message-is-good-advice-for-us-in-derry-as-we-will-soon-recall-the-50th-anniversary-of-bloody-sunday-fighting-the-battles-of-the-past-we-learn-little/?swcfpc=1>

Reflect & Resource Day for children's and youth ministry in Derry & Raphoe

The organisers say - “On Saturday 15th January we are running our Reflect & Resource Day for anyone who is involved with children's or youth ministry in their parish. This could be the minister of the parish, a Sunday school leader, someone who is looking to start a youth fellowship....anyone! We want to create a space for people to come and have the tools to reflect at their ministry and see where they currently are, where do they want to take it

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over the next few years and how they might make their ideas a reality. There will then be the opportunity to see all the resources that the youth & children's departments have to offer - we have so many programmes, leaders information, games equipment along with the Diocesan Centre itself and the Youth Officer & Children's Ministry Officer.

“We are hoping that it will be in person in the Diocesan Centre, but have plans that it can be taken to zoom if it needs to be. We are very excited to be working with David Rock from The Big House to make this happen to encourage your ministry”.

Please book by emailing Kirsty or Claire by 7th January 2022

Service of Healing at Ballymacarrett on Thursday

The Reverend Pat Mollan of the Church's Ministry of Healing is the guest speaker at Interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries. Service of Healing on Thursday 6th January at 7.30pm in St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, Ballymacarrett, Belfast, BT4 1GZ. The Reverend Pat has been asked by Fergus McMorro, to speak on prayer.

Dublin post for Youth & Children's Worker

Are you passionate about serving children and young people in a church and community setting? Urban Junction

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in Blackrock, Dublin are hiring a part-time Youth & Children's Worker.

More info here: buff.ly/3fLGg1b

<https://irishmethodist.org/vacancies>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

Join in an Episcopal Epiphany

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you ... and nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” (Isaiah 60:1, 3)

Epiphany is the time of the church year when we celebrate the revealing of Christ to the world. During this season, we celebrate the arrival of the One who is the light of the world: a light that brings life, a light that brings hope. This light shines its brightest when we are in community



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- with God and with one another.

This year, we celebrate this season and the worldwide community to which we as Episcopalians belong —the Anglican Communion. 2021 is an especially good time to celebrate our connections to the Communion, as we celebrate 100 years of the Good Friday Offering, 20 years of the Young Adult Service Corps, General Convention, and the Lambeth Conference. We hope you will join us in celebrating and rejoicing with our siblings in Christ around the world.

The Office of Global Partnerships of The Episcopal Church invites individuals, small groups, congregations, and dioceses to use this video series throughout the season of Epiphany to draw closer to each other and our Lord. Our weekly videos include a Lectio Divina style study on the gospel passage for each Sunday, read by Episcopalians and Anglican Communion partners from around the world. You will hear an introduction from the partners, the passage read at least twice, and a short reflection offered by the partners. Then, you will be invited to do your own reflection individually or as a group.

Learn more and participate at
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/global-partnerships/epiphany-gp/>

Find additional Epiphany resources at -
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/epiphany-resources/>

News Reports

‘Shocking’ threat to C of E parishes as more than 400 churches close in less than a decade

More than 400 churches have been shut down in less than a decade, The Daily Telegraph reveals, as senior clergy warn of the “shocking” threat to parishes as “the bedrock of the Church of England”.

Analysis of Church of England data by this newspaper found that 423 churches were closed between 2010 and 2019, Gabriella Swerling, Religious Affairs Editor, writes

The figure demonstrates the accelerating downward trend regarding the number of churches in the country. Further analysis reveals that almost 1,000 churches have been forced to close in a little more than 30 years – 940 churches between 1987 and 2019. This means that the total number of remaining churches stands at around 15,496.

It marks the first full analysis of church numbers because the Church’s official data contained in its annual reports only cover individual years.

The research does not take into account the impact of the pandemic, and both clergy and lay people fear the total figure could be much higher.

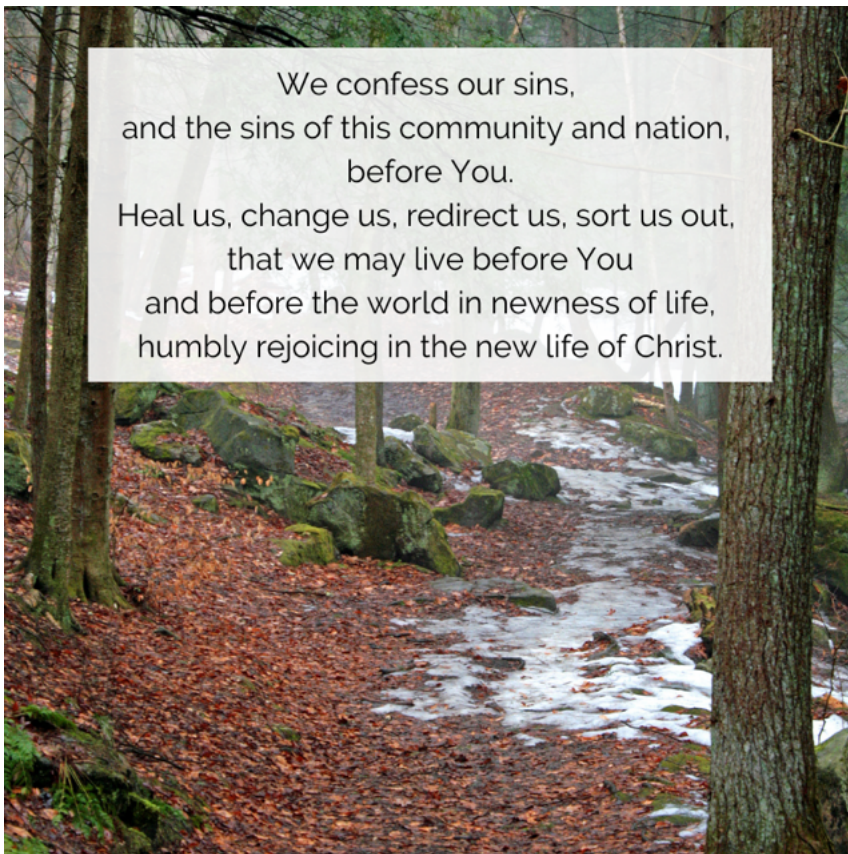
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The Very Rev Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral in London, who is one of the most senior Anglican priests, called the rate of increase in the number of church closures “shocking”.

“I share the concern of many people that the policies that lead to the closure of churches may also mean that we will be seeing more and more changes to the parish system, which is, after all, the bedrock of the life of the Church of England for England.”

Across the Church’s 42 dioceses, there are on average almost six per cent fewer churches, with the total falling from 16,436 in 1987 to 15,496 in 2019.

The Church of England defines a “church” as “a building which is licensed as a place of worship within the parish system”.



We confess our sins,
and the sins of this community and nation,
before You.
Heal us, change us, redirect us, sort us out,
that we may live before You
and before the world in newness of life,
humbly rejoicing in the new life of Christ.

This can include former mission halls and less permanent buildings.

Officials said that of the 423 church closures between 2010 and 2019, 209 were traditional church buildings.

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Only three dioceses buck the trend. Canterbury – the diocese overseen by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who is the most senior member of the Anglican church – saw its number of churches increase from 325 to 360, a 10.8 per cent increase.

Coventry saw its number of churches rise from 240 to 242, an increase of 0.8 per cent, and the number of churches in the diocese of Worcester rose from 271 to 274, up 1.1 per cent. The figures come as religious leaders claim that many church buildings are “in the wrong locations” as “communities have moved away and left the old infrastructure of society stranded”.

A spokesman for the Church of England said: “While there is always sadness when a church closes, the number of churches closing has fallen steadily.”

Courtesy The Daily Telegraph 4/01/2022

Link - The Telegraph leading article on church closures:
Church closures hollow out Britain

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/01/04/church-closures-hollow-britain/>

Tutu remains interred amid call to rename Cape Town airport

The remains of Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Anglican archbishop emeritus of Cape Town, were interred early Sunday during a private family service at the city’s Anglican cathedral.



Archbishop Thabo Makgoba laid a small box containing Tutu's remains to rest in the floor in front of the high altar at St George's Cathedral. Tutu's widow, children and other family members attended the 30-minute service.

Makgoba suggested that to honor the late Nobel laureate, Cape Town's airport should be renamed Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu International Airport.

He called on all South Africans to "turn a new page" and commit to "the radical, revolutionary change" that Tutu advocated.

"Let us live as simply as he lived, exemplified by his pine coffin with rope handles," Makgoba said in his homily. "Let those of us who have resources pull in our belts, that others can eat enough to fill their stomachs. Let us reorder our

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society to end inequality and create equal opportunities for all.”

The box with Tutu’s remains were placed under a memorial stone inscribed with the words: Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Oct. 1931 – Dec. 2021, Archbishop of Cape Town 1986 – 1996.

The morning service was underway as a fire swept through South Africa’s nearby Parliament building. A pall of smoke later hung over the cathedral and the surrounding area.

A requiem Mass was held in the cathedral for Tutu’s funeral on Saturday. Church officials said Tutu’s body was prepared for interment with water in a process called aquamation.

Tutu requested the method because it uses less energy and is more environmentally friendly, church officials told journalists.

‘I’m a mate for the journey’ – Britain’s first chaplain employed to the construction industry

Previously an electronics engineer, and then a church leader for 30 years, Ewen Huffman was seconded to the Diocese of Bath and Wells in January 2020 and appointed as Chaplain on the site of the new Hinkley Point C (HPC) power station in Somerset.

The workforce at HPC is a diverse community of more than 5,000 people – predominantly male, and younger and more

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multiethnic than the surrounding areas on the Somerset coast.

As Chaplain, Ewen is there for everyone, of all faiths and none, providing spiritual leadership amid a pressured workforce and drawing together people together across boundaries, nationalities, beliefs, and religions.



Ewen's presence also offers the opportunity to bring faith into the workplace. He has held ceremonies of prayer before tunneling and concrete pours and provided a pastoral presence and spiritual support in times of trouble.

"People are spiritual beings," he explained.

"Even the people who say they are irreligious at times want me to pray with them, and they want to receive a blessing and the peace."

Throughout the pandemic, Ewen's role has been for the most part centred on supporting a workforce "trying to find their life and rhythms during Covid."

"I'm a mate for the journey," he said.

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“I’m big into building friendships, it’s a privilege to get to be there for people when they have a significant need and to get to talk with them about spiritually significant things.”

Perspective

Tutu’s English parish experiences were formative - by Charles Moore, former editor of the Daily Telegraph

In the warm obituaries of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, I was sorry not to read more about his time as a curate in Surrey in the mid-1960s. The Guardian said that “initially stand-offish Tories took him to their hearts”. No one else said anything much.

In fact, Tutu’s 18 months in the Home Counties were quite important in his formation as an Anglican priest, and I know of no evidence that Tories (or anyone else) were stand-offish.

The part-monastic Anglican Community of the Resurrection was a strong influence on the young Desmond, especially through Bishop Trevor Huddleston, after whom Tutu named one of his sons. After Tutu’s first curacy in Golders Green, his friends cast about for an inner-city post for him while he completed his master’s degree (on Islam, interestingly) at King’s College, London.

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At this point, however, my wife's cousin Uvedale Lambert stepped in. He was a devout Anglican, a member of the Community of the Resurrection's lay fraternity, a Guardian of the Shrine of Walsingham, and a High Church "bells and smells" man. He was also a Master of Foxhounds and squire, if such a word can still be used, of the then rural Surrey village of Bletchingley (which he insisted was rightly spelt Blechingley).

Uvedale and his wife, Melanie, used to hold annual weekends of spiritual study and reflection – known as their "gin and God" parties – in their house, South Park, and its adjoining private chapel. They organised many Christian pageants and missions. Uvedale helped secure the Bletchingley curacy for Tutu, and made sure he and his family were properly housed.

It was from this little world that Desmond learnt more about the ecumenical catholicity of the Church of England. At the gin and God party during his time in the parish, Tutu gave a talk on "Obedience", and later another on "Merit".

According to Uvedale's daughter, Dame Sarah Goad, Tutu made a great and favourable impression. The content of his individual sermons was not especially memorable, but he was "joyous" and "radiated the love of God", as did his whole family. Sarah's daughter, the future jeweller Cassandra Goad, became a close friend of one of the Tutu daughters, Mpho. Years later, Tutu returned to marry Cassandra and her husband in the South Park chapel. Sarah remembers no example of racial feeling against the Tutus in the village, but that he liked to joke about his colour. "You can't see when I blush," he would say, and pointed out

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that when he mounted into the darkness of the pulpit, only his teeth were visible.

He was also “fairly hopeless” with money. When he returned to South Africa, the parish bought him a car and later, for his ministry in Lesotho, a horse.

I find no evidence that the African curate ever indulged in Uvedale’s passion for foxhunting, but when he returned as a bishop to visit Bletchingley he appeared in his episcopal robes to bless Richard Gurney, the son of Uvedale’s groom, before the hunt meet. Like Tutu, Mr Gurney benefited from Uvedale’s support early in life, and is now a Master of Foxhounds himself.

There is some evidence that the very lack of racial animosity which Tutu experienced in England helped embolden him to try to change the terrible divisions in his native South Africa. I like to think his Surrey sojourn did its bit.

Poem for today

I sit before the fire and think

I sit beside the fire and think
of all that I have seen
of meadow-flowers and butterflies
in summers that have been;

Of yellow leaves and gossamer
in autumns that there were,
with morning mist and silver sun

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and wind upon my hair.

I sit beside the fire and think
of how the world will be
when winter comes without a spring
that I shall ever see.

For still there are so many things
that I have never seen:
in every wood in every spring
there is a different green.

I sit beside the fire and think
of people long ago
and people who will see a world
that I shall never know.

But all the while I sit and think
of times there were before,
I listen for returning feet
and voices at the door.

'I Sit Beside the Fire and Think' was a song found in J.R.R. Tolkien's 'The Fellowship of the Ring'. Bilbo sings this song, mostly to himself but with Frodo present, just after he gives Frodo the mithril vest and Sting in Rivendell.

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