



***The congregation loyal to Rev Alan Kilpatrick meet in Craigavon***

## **Rev Alan Kilpatrick's first service held in social club**

More than 100 worshippers have attended the first Sunday service of a breakaway Church of Ireland congregation led by a controversial cleric

- although the congregation had to leave the social club before the bar opened.

Una Brankin in Belfast Telegraph - The casually dressed Rev Alan Kilpatrick's modern style of evangelical ministry has divided a rural parish near Portadown, with his followers gathering at the Goodyear Sports and Social Club in Craigavon yesterday.

Yesterday morning's "missional congregation" was almost twice as large as the more traditional gathering at St Matthias Church, Knocknamuckley, where worship was led by Rev Tom Conway.

The decision to split the flock was authorised by Bishop Harold Miller, of the diocese of Down and Dromore, following an emotional parish meeting at the church last Wednesday evening.

There were tearful scenes as people realised they would be leaving lifelong friends and the place they had worshipped in for years. At the meeting - according to the bishop in a letter issued yesterday to both sets of worshippers - "comments on issues about the rector's ministry and leadership were divided more or less equally in terms of encouragement and criticism".

Scottish-born Rev Kilpatrick, who wears ear studs and jeans while preaching and is linked to the spiritualist Bethel Church, said he was excited to be setting up "a new church".

"We are still Church of Ireland but it won't be part of St Matthias parish; it will be a separate entity completely," he said ahead of the service. "I think I'm allowed to stay in the rectory for another few weeks while I establish the new church and get a name for it. I have several in mind - it's important to have a name for a new identity."

Currently house-hunting, Rev Kilpatrick (47) was joined in the club's function room by his two teenage sons, Nathan and Rowan (Ronnie), and by his Kenyan-born wife Jan (49), who led some of the prayers.

"This has been tough on Alan. It will all work out and it will heal," said a tearful Mrs Kilpatrick.

"He's the same humble man he always was, who wants to serve God. I'm very proud to be married to him."

**Rev Tom Conway at  
Knocknamuckley : 'If you print a**

## **picture of me I'll sue. There's a lot of hurt over what you write'**

At Rev Alan Kilpatrick's Craigavon service, my colleague and I were greeted with coffee and croissants. At Knocknamuckley, we got the cold shoulder and - in the photographer's case - a right good drenching.

Una Brankin in Belfast Telegraph - For a second, I thought the intermittent rain might have been falling in a funny direction.

I was standing at the church gates talking to an elderly lady when water went flying over the hedge between churchyard and the sloping road - and all over Kevin Scott, who was snapping Rev Tom Conway.

He had given me short shrift when I asked him for a comment on maverick rector Rev Kilpatrick's alternative service in Craigavon, which had attracted some 100 worshippers from Knocknamuckley parish. About 60 were expected to follow the ear-studded Scot to his cheery, music-led gathering at Goodyear Sports and Social Club.

How did Rev Conway feel about the 130 or so at St Matthias? "They were here to see what's

going on and to hear the word of God. They've heard it and that's it," he declared, bucket in hand. (I've no idea what it was originally meant for.)

Anyway, Rev Tom wasn't any happier when he pulled up afterwards at the church gates, where a dripping Kevin had joined the elderly lady and me.

"If you post a photograph of me in the paper, I'll sue you," he shouted, climbing out of his small, silver runaround. "There's a lot of hurt over what yous (sic) are writing... I'll sue you both!"

Incensed, the minister took a grip of Kevin's right arm and wouldn't let go, until the photographer gave him three warnings, and pointed out we were on public ground.

With that, he took off.

The mostly elderly churchgoers were generally complimentary about the minister's "emotional" service.

A visiting Quaker couple had attended "to see what all the fuss was about".

"It's not very Christian, the way things have gone on," said one of the visitors.

"There's a bit of a move away from tradition, with these young ones, and the gay game and so on. This church has always had good numbers coming; it's not their fault I hope it all works out. It's all the one God, after all."

Another lady shrugged off the notable absences in the country church pews.

"It's their choice. I won't go with Rev Kilpatrick," she remarked. "It's not about the earrings; it's more about this Bethel church. That will cause division in the whole church."

A spokeswoman for Knocknamuckley Concerned Parishioners group expressed surprise on hearing Rev Kilpatrick had called for two minutes' prayer for the St Matthias congregation.

"That's quite... solemn. We had a lovely service here," she said. "Things are back to normal now and hopefully everything will work out."

Given the stiff breeze and the photographer's wet clothes, we could have done with another coffee, but no one was putting the kettle on.

I don't think we'll ever be offered one at Knocknamuckley, unless the wind changes radically...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/knocknamuckleys-rev-tom-conway-if-you-print-a-picture-of-me-ill-sue-theres-a-lot-of-hurt-over-what-you-write-31268364.html>

## **Praise for Presbyterian who backed same-sex marriage**

An estimated 1,000 gay rights campaigners took to the streets of Belfast at the weekend, ahead of what is expected to be a larger rally in less than a fortnight's time.

News Letter - Among those attending the gathering on Saturday was a cross-border pressure group called Faith in Marriage Equality (FiME), predominantly made up of Anglicans and Catholics, which issued a statement praising Presbyterian minister Rev Christina Bradley in Portadown for recently backing gay marriage.

Speaking about Rev Bradley, Anglican FiME member Canon Charles Kenny said: "FiME welcomes that a Presbyterian minister in Northern Ireland has spoken up for equality for same-sex couples...Many Christians support marriage equality because their Christian faith guides them that this is the loving and Christian thing to do."



***Rally held at Belfast City Hall in support of gay marriage***

FiME member and lay Anglican Dr Richard O’Leary said that the upcoming gathering on Saturday June 13 would be a “major event”, with many thousands expected to attend.

“The one on Saturday wasn’t the main one,” he said. “It was called at short notice.”

Although the police had no estimate for the crowds, Rev Chris Hudson from All Souls Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in south Belfast (who addressed the rally) put the figure at roughly 1,000.



Referring to the recent same-sex marriage referendum in the Republic, Rev Hudson said: “What is interesting is that despite all the churches calling for a ‘no’ vote the people took the decision to ignore them and act according to their own conscience.

“I have no doubt people in Northern Ireland would be no different.”

Meanwhile, Rev Ian Brown of Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church said yesterday: “No matter what pressure may be brought to bear on society the scripture stands unalterable. God instituted marriage between a man and a woman. Jesus endorsed it and we are obligated to follow that template.”

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/praise-for-presbyterian-who-backed-same-sex-marriage-1-6772821>

## **Christian Aid Workshop Highlights Gender Justice Issues**

Gender, gender based violence and development was the subject of a challenging and fascinating workshop organised by Christian



***Chairman of Bishops' Appeal Bishop Patrick Rooke, Róisín Gallagher of Christian Aid, Lydia Monds of Bishops' Appeal and Peter Byrne of Christian Aid.***

Aid in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (May 28). Christian Aid is currently looking at how the issue of gender affects their work as an aid agency.

One of the contributors to the workshop was Róisín Gallagher, Programme Development Advisor, Gender & Inequality, Christian Aid. She presented case studies from Christian Aid's work with Syrian refugees and Iraqi internally displaced people.

Lydia Monds, Education Advisor with Bishop's Appeal, reported from the recent Gender Justice Network Conference in London, where faith leaders from UK and Ireland are building a global inter-faith movement to work on gender justice.

Introducing the morning, Christian Aid's Church and Community Manager, Peter Byrne, said that last week marked the 70th anniversary of the foundation of Christian Aid. This, he said, was a significant milestone but it was also double edged – the organisation could look back and see all that they had done but at the same time they were conscious that there was much more to do.

He said that the issue of gender impacted the work they did in all the countries in which they operate. "We as aid agencies understand that this is something we have to grapple with in the countries in which we work but also in the churches which support our work. We are looking at this in a new way so it is exciting. It is also deeply challenging," he stated.

Róisín Gallagher said she hoped for three outcomes from the morning. She hoped participants would think about what their gender meant to them, gain a better understanding of

the impact of gender on development and leave having made a commitment on gender equality.

She explained the difference between the terms gender and sex: Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and attributes of and relations between men and women. Because its socially constructed, it can change over time and from country to country. Sex refers to biological characteristics which define humans as female or male.

In reporting from the recent conference, Lydia Monds a conference presented a wonderful proto framework for a theology of gender and justice.

## **Decline in number of Irish Presbyterians continues**

The number of Presbyterians in [Ireland](#) has dropped by almost 40 per cent in the past 40 years – and the decline is steady and ongoing, according to latest figures from the church.

The 2015 [General Assembly](#) annual reports of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland show that, in 1975, it had a membership of approximately 375,000 across the island. Today, that figure is

230,000 in 545 congregations across its 19 presbyteries, north and south.

Between 2013 and 2014 membership dropped by 3,534, or 1,420 families, while there had also been a drop of 1,249 in those who attended at least one Communion between 2013 and 2014, and a drop of 111 in baptisms and of 19 ministers in active duty.

## **Five hundred people attend Mass for the ordination of nine men to the diaconate**

- Fourteen ordinations to the priesthood have or will take place in the coming weeks

Nine men reached a milestone in their priestly formation on Sunday past - Trinity Sunday, when they were ordained deacons by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, during a Mass celebrated in College Chapel of the national seminary, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. The congregation, of approximately five hundred people, was made of family, friends, seminarians, deacons and priests.

Commenting on the celebration, Monsignor Hugh Connolly, President of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, said, "The entire community here in Saint Patrick's College is truly delighted that the formation and seminary year has culminated in such a joyful and moving celebration. We wish our nine new deacons well as they embark upon their ministry and complete their formation for priesthood. Taken with the fourteen ordinations to priesthood which have or will take place in these next weeks, this has really been a remarkable year for our college. I ask the faithful to join me in prayer for these men, and I wish them well as they embark upon this phase of their service to the Gospel and to the people of God.

"Let us pray too that others inspired by their witness will discern a similar call to service within their hearts and respond with courage and generosity," Monsignor Connolly said.

Ordination as a transitional deacon generally occurs after a seminarian has completed at least three years of study in theology. In addition to their assignments as transitional deacons, the nine will spend the next year completing their priestly formation in Maynooth. Transitional deacons exercise the very same ministry as permanent deacons, as such they are now

ordinary Ministers of Baptism; are able to preside at weddings; assist the priest at Mass; proclaim the Gospel and preach, as well as preside at wakes and funeral services.

The following deacons were ordained in Maynooth:

Archdiocese of Armagh Damian Quigley

Diocese of Clogher Kevin Malcolmson

Diocese of Cork & Ross Patrick Nugent

Diocese of Derry Christopher McDermott

Diocese of Down & Connor James O'Reilly

Diocese of Galway Michael King and John O'Halloran

Diocese of Meath Conor Magee and Noel Weir

## **Re-Dedication and Ecumenical Blessing of Drumcondra Well**

A liturgical and historical treat is in store for the afternoon of Sunday 14 June when the choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin will sing Choral Evensong in the church of St John the Baptist, Church Avenue, Drumcondra at 3:30pm, accompanied by the cathedral organist and with the Revd Garth Bunting, residential priest vicar of Christ Church preaching.

The service will include the re-dedication and ecumenical blessing of the ancient and historic holy well of St John the Baptist which has been beautifully restored by a number of kind parishioners and friends. The well is reputed to cure eye complaints and is of great antiquity and local importance. A very warm welcome is extended to all to come along and join the celebration. *Church of St John the Baptist, Drumcondra/Drumcondra National School*

## **Archbishop of Canterbury preaches in China**

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby preached on Sunday at Muen Church, Shanghai, China. In his sermon the Archbishop spoke of "the community of the church" in the light of the Trinity.

Archbishop Welby is visiting China on 27 May to 5 June 2015 at the joint invitation of SARA (China State Administration for Religious Affairs) and CCC/TSPM (China Christian Council/ National Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Association of the Protestant Churches in China).





The purpose of the visit is to build on existing friendly relations with the Christian Church in China, and to meet and learn about faith communities and their role in the major economic and social developments in the country.

## **Media digest**

### **Catholic Church needs to empower the laity - Irish Times**

Gerry O'Hanlon explores Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's 'taking a hard look at ourselves' approach

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/catholic-church-needs-to-empower-the-laity-1.2232747>

### **Mail/Ind/Tel**

Further reports that women in the Church of England have held discussions about referring to God as "She", aiming to challenge the use of exclusively male language and imagery in the Lord's Prayer, hymns, art and the language of church services. A spokesman for Lambeth Palace said, "The transformations steering group is an independent group made up of women clergy exploring issues relating to the reception of women in ministry. The Archbishop of Canterbury offers a meeting space at Lambeth Palace, but does not have a formal role in the group or participate in its discussions. Any change in the formal liturgy of the Church of England would require consent, revision and final approval of the General Synod. Even prior to that point, there would need to be substantial consultation with the Liturgical Commission." (scroll down on *Mail* comment link)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3104672/Women-priests-want-rewrite-Church-England-religious-services-God-called-SHE.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/female-clergy-propose-referring-to-god-as-she-to-counter-idea-only-men-are-made-in-his-image-10287795.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11641880/Calls-to-overhaul-service-texts-to-refer-to-God-as-first-female-bishops-take-up-posts.html>

<http://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/debate/article-3105220/DAILY-MAIL-COMMENT-moral-case-British-Bill-Rights.html>

### **Times/Express**

Further report on findings from survey by the NatCen Social Research Institute claiming the proportion of Britons identifying themselves as C of E or Anglican dropped from 21 per cent to 17 per cent - a fall of about 1.7 million people, while the number of Muslims grew. One researcher is quoted saying a reason for the decline could be, "that people are less likely than in previous years to see being Christian as an important component of being British. Therefore, fewer British people may feel that the Church of England is an important part of their identity." A Church of England spokesperson is quoted as saying: "The figures for the survey are based on a less reliable sample than that used in the National Census in 2011 which showed almost

60% of those questioned self-identified as Christian."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4456701.ece>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/581181/Muslims-increase-Church-of-England-in-CRISIS>

## **Times**

Melanie Phillips writes about why assisted suicide must not be made legal

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4456718.ece>

## **FT**

Article looking at European and US oil companies' views on climate policy and fossil fuel investments. It says all western oil groups have been under pressure from shareholders to curb their capital spending. It states BP shareholders have overwhelmingly backed demands led by the Church of England and institutional investors requiring the oil major to be more open about how climate change might affect its business.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ede0412c-0780-11e5-9579-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3bbMlrpF3>

## **Mail**

Columnist Andrew Pierce criticizes salaries paid by Church Commissioners, saying the Church of England is being hypocritical and falling into the big business trap. It quotes the Commissioners' report, stating the salary package paid to the Church Commissioners' director of investments. It states 10 of the commissioner's 229 staff earn more than £100,000 a year and quotes the report, which says: "The Church Commissioners is a large and sophisticated institutional investor investing in a broad range of asset classes including significant property holdings and as such seeks to attract and retain high-calibre investment professionals. Accordingly salaries are designed to reflect the market for investment specialists."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3105153/ANDREW-PIERCE-Church-fat-cat-s-salary-climbs-409-000.html#ixzz3bmVbtX3V>

## **BBC**

Report that an hour-long peal of bells was sounded in memory of BBC Radio Derby presenter Colin Bloomfield. The former Derby County commentator and BBC reporter, died in April from skin cancer. It states Derby Cathedral began sounding its bells from 15:30 BST, to reflect the fact Bloomfield was 33 years old

when he died. The church has the oldest ring, or set, of 10 bells in the world.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-derbyshire-32944975>

## **Tel**

An article on Pope Francis comments to members of the Italian Science and Life Association on Saturday, when he said letting migrants die at sea was an "attack against life" akin to abortion or euthanasia. The pontiff said that progress in civilisation should not just be measured technological advancements, but also by the ability to "protect life during the most fragile stages."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/the-pope/11641723/Leaving-migrants-to-die-at-sea-is-akin-to-abortion-or-euthanasia-says-Pope-Francis.html>

## **Mail**

Report on a large cross, under construction at a cemetery in Karachi, Pakistan. It says the 42-meter (140-foot) Christian cross towers over this violent port city in Pakistan, where Islamic militant attacks and gangland shootings remain common, in the Muslim-majority country: The cross, which is being built by a businessman who said the idea came to him in a dream, is

rising as Christians in Pakistan often face discrimination.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3104363/Giant-cross-rises-Pakistan-home-Christian-minority.html#ixzz3bmglI96p>

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