

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of  
the day -  
Signs of  
Spring**

# Image of the day

## Signs of Spring

Daffodils in bloom on Plymouth Hoe at the Royal Naval War Memorial to those who have no graves.

## People and places

### Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance at St. Nicholas

**The service of thanksgiving held at St. Nicholas (Green Church) last week was an opportunity to pay tribute to key workers and remember those who died during the Covid pandemic ,The Argus reports.**

The service was conducted by The Most Rev. John McDowell Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and was a service of both remembrance and thanks to all of those who were frontline workers over the last two years.

Around twenty frontline representatives joined the service, from a range of local organisations including The Red Cross, Coast Guard, 27th Battalion and a colour party from the National Ambulance Service.

At the heart of the service was remembering the lives lost over the last two years.

During the ceremony loved ones had an opportunity to place the names of those who had died on the 'Tree of Remembrance.'

The event was one of a number of events held locally, and across the country, over the last week to reflect on the impact of Covid-19.

Photos at - <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/louth/news/service-of-thanksgiving-at-green-church-41475763.html> ]

## **Weekly welcome for refugees and asylum seekers at Kilroot parish**

**Every Wednesday afternoon, the parish hall at St Colman's Church in Kilroot, Carrickfergus, welcomes a group of refugees and asylum seekers who are currently housed in a local hotel.**

There is space inside and outside the hall for the visitors to relax, chat freely with each other and with volunteers from St Colman's and All Nations Ministries, enjoy refreshments, and take part in board games or play basketball or football and sometimes table tennis. [Photo Gallery below].

Recently, the women and children living in the local hotel were moved to Belfast and rather than let friendships fade, St Colman's Parish has been bussing these families back to Kilroot on special days so they too can enjoy some space away from the confines of their hotel.



Wednesday March 16 was such an occasion, when a local business provided pots of Irish stew as the refugees and asylum seekers joined with volunteers to celebrate St Patrick's Day.

Connor Diocesan Press Officer paid a visit to St Colman's on March 16 to hear about the impact of this project on those who have had to flee their homelands and to learn more about the initiative from the rector, the Rev Nigel Kirkpatrick, and parishioners who give up their time each Wednesday. She writes -

Every refugee has a story to tell and some were willing to talk in halting English about the lives they have left behind. In our photo gallery you will see a man speaking to his daughter via What's App. He is Masoud Ali, a 45-year-old



father who fled Syria leaving his wife and seven children behind. A video call on his mobile is the closest he can get to his family at present, but he dreams of the day he will be reunited with them, outside of Syria, where he describes life as ‘very grim.’



You will also see Rajaa and her 10-year-old daughter. Rajaa fled Aleppo in Syria with her two oldest children and spent two years in a refugee camp in Greece

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before she reached Northern Ireland. She wipes away tears as she speaks of her other two children, aged seven and four, who remain in Syria with their father and his new wife.

They are difficult stories to hear, but the smiles on the faces of Masoud, Rajaa and the many others who came along that day bear testament to the value this initiative by St Colman's is having on the lives of those it reaches out to.

We will have a full report on the project and the people it supports in the summer issue of the diocesan magazine Connor Connections which will be available in June.

## **Bishop meets with Church's Ministry of Healing**

**Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore met recently with the Board for CMH The Mount for discussion and prayer.**

From left to right;  
Rev Rab Mollan,  
David Matchett,  
Bishop David McClay,  
Canon Chris Matchett,



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Rev Pat Mollan, Sally King, Revd Emma Rutherford, Wesley Dickinson and Canon David Brown. “Our time together was truly blessed, as we sought God's direction for the Ministry of Healing.”

## **Garrison Parish gives thanks for interim ministry**

In Garrison Parish Church (Clogher) on Sunday, Joy Graham, Church Secretary, expressed thanks from the congregation for Canon Johnston's dedicated service and ministry over the last year during the vacancy.

Charlotte Elliott presented Canon Billy Johnston with a token of thanks, on his final Sunday in Garrison Parish Church before the New Rector arrives. Adrian Elliott, Churchwarden presented a hamper to Mrs Johnston.

## **Get clicking for General Synod competition**

**General Synod 2022 approaches and the Church of Ireland's Central Communications Board (CCB) is inviting submissions to its photography competition with the theme of 'New Beginnings'.**

Following judging, selected entries to this special competition will win a prize and be featured on the Church of Ireland's website ([www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org)) and social media platforms.

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The competition, which is sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance, is open to photographers of all ages and experience to take part. The idea is to focus on signs of hopeful new beginnings as new life thrives in the season of spring and as we continue to emerge from the Covid–19 pandemic.

Bishop Pat Storey, the chair of the CCB, says: “We are desperately in need of the good news of ‘new beginnings’ after two years of restrictions and isolation. Thus the theme of our photography competition this year invites you to look at photographs that represent, in some way, a new beginning for you, your parish, or indeed for our Christian faith. Use your imagination and get snapping!”

Each entrant to the competition may submit one image which should be submitted via email to [press@ireland.anglican.org](mailto:press@ireland.anglican.org) along with the entrant’s name, full contact details, and parish. Images must be jpegs, and at least 300 dpi in resolution and 3 MB in size but not over 4 MB, and be submitted with the date on which the photograph was taken.

The deadline for entries will be 12 noon on Tuesday, 26th April 2022. Judging will be undertaken independently of the CCB and prizes will be announced at General Synod, which is this year meeting in Belfast from Wednesday, 4th May, to Friday, 6th May.

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**“Heritage Live” Free concert at Down Cathedral, Downpatrick, featuring soprano Lisa Dawson**

**Wednesday 30th March will see a special free concert take place in Down Cathedral featuring soprano Lisa Dawson.**



It is part of an Arts Council supported series called Heritage:Live, and will feature the singer performing new arrangements of traditional music from Ireland and Scotland while blending classical, contemporary and traditional musical styles.

Lisa Dawson is a classically trained singer who has performed in vocal ensembles in venues including the Royal Albert Hall and Carnegie Hall, New York. She is presently a member of the Choir in Down Cathedral and has performed with them as a soloist on BBC Songs of Praise and on BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship.

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Come and reconnect with your musical heritage, in the beautiful surroundings of the historic cathedral.

30th March 7.30pm. Free admission.

For more info please email

[lisadawsonmusic@gmail.com](mailto:lisadawsonmusic@gmail.com)

## News reports

### The only vicar to be spray-tanned with Debbie McGee to retire

**TV's vicar Reverend Richard Coles has been dubbed 'the only vicar to be spray-tanned with Debbie McGee' ahead of his retirement next month.**

He will be stepping down from his current role in Northamptonshire in order to work with prisoners.

He has frequently appeared on the BBC, as a regular host of BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live programme. He is a regular contributor to QI, Would I Lie to You? and Have I Got News for You.

Prior to becoming a Church of England vicar, Fr Coles played multiple instruments in The Communards; a 1980s band.

It was during his time on Strictly Come Dancing - where he compares his abilities to that of a walrus - that he worked

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alongside Debbie McGee, and also enjoyed a spray-tan, earning him his rather bizarre claim.

The former popstar has shared his thoughts on stepping down, and reflected on the loss of his partner, Reverend David Coles, two years ago.

Fr Coles told the BBC: "When your life partner dies what dies with them is your future and I realised I wanted to be with people who I love and care about and know well and it just so happens that some of them live in Sussex and one of my oldest friends, a house two doors up from hers was up for sale, and she said 'why don't you move here' so I did.

"I think David on a good day would have wanted me to face forwards and step forwards; on a bad day he'd have loved me to stay at home stirring polenta and thinking of him again.

"But it's just part of the process of bereavement, you get used to a world in which the other person's not in it and then you start thinking, 'well, I'm in it', so what am I going to do?

"I think I've got some more to do."

## **Pastoral concern for Ukraine and anti-trans legislation at Episcopal bishops' retreat**

**The Episcopal Church House of Bishops passed pastoral statements/resolutions both on the war in Ukraine and on anti-trans legislation during a business**

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**meeting on  
March 19 at a  
retreat  
gathering in  
Texas.**

Presiding  
Bishop Michael  
Curry delivers  
his opening  
meditation.



The bishops'  
statement on

Ukraine identified “a direct link between our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of all people in Christ and the demand to respect the will of nations to determine their own destiny—the rule of jus cogens, in international law—when expressed freely in the ballot box.”

The group denounced Russian attacks on civilians, including “civilian residences, medical facilities, even agreed corridors for the humanitarian withdrawal of civilians in areas of combat,” and described these actions as a flagrant breach of international norms.

The bishops acknowledged the context of meeting in Texas three weeks after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called upon citizens to report parents pursuing gender-affirming medical care for their transgender children, saying:

"[We] voice our love and continued support for all persons who identify as transgender or non-binary and their families.

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133 bishops and bishops-elect at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas.

We decry legislative initiatives and governmental actions targeting trans children and their families. We urge all in our church to create safe spaces and shield all people from harassment based on gender identity." Photos by Bishop Frank Logue

Read more: [https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/at-spring-meeting-house-of-bishops-speaks-on-ukraine-anti-trans-bills/?mc\\_cid=ca51475f69&mc\\_eid=UNIQID](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/at-spring-meeting-house-of-bishops-speaks-on-ukraine-anti-trans-bills/?mc_cid=ca51475f69&mc_eid=UNIQID)

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## **Responding to housing need is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England'**

**'Our hope is that others will catch this vision and be willing to share our mission – to provide homes and build communities where people love to live'**

The Church of England's Bishop for Housing, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, writes about the progress that has been made a year on from the publication of *Coming Home*, the Archbishops' Commission for Housing, Church and Community.

Around eight million people in England live in overcrowded, unaffordable or unsuitable homes.

This is a shocking statistic. Whole sections of society are affected, with those living in poverty bearing the worst of this injustice.

The crisis is 'neither accidental nor inevitable' found the *Coming Home* report, from the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community. The Church of England needs to 'lead by example' in tackling the crisis, as part of a wider effort at all levels of society, including Government, local authorities, landowners and individuals.

The Commission set out a vision for what good housing should look like - rooted in five core values – the five 'S' s: sustainable, safe, stable, sociable, and satisfying.



## The Church of England's Bishop for Housing, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani

In July, the General Synod of the Church of England gave overwhelming backing to the report, recognising “that the housing crisis harms all society and responding to housing need is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England, particularly in so far as it affects the poorest and most marginalised.”

What are we doing to move forward with these aims?

In almost every community there are local churches, often with land and buildings. Can there be small scale developments of four to 10 homes there, for young families unable to afford a local home, or older people with nowhere

local to downsize to, or people needing supported living accommodation, or prison leavers with nowhere to go?

Coming Home shows examples of the transformation to lives that can occur when churches become involved. Keswick Community Housing Trust, in the Lake District, has built more than 40 affordable homes in an area where local people are priced out of the housing market. The catalyst to this work was a relatively small area of land made available by a local Church of England parish.

We have larger plots too, where we can play a key role in shaping new communities – again, emphasising the importance of true affordability and inclusivity.

This isn't about selling off church land. By retaining ownership where possible, we can more actively help to ensure high quality, eco-friendly homes for those who need them most.

In the North East, churches of all denominations are working to identify church land where homes can be built, using expert consultants funded by Big Society Capital.

In the Diocese of Chelmsford which I serve, we have several emerging initiatives in East London for new churches and almshouses for key workers.

In Kent, the Church Commissioners and Shepherdswell with Coldred Community Land Trust, working with English Rural Housing Association, have received approval for 13 new homes, in line with the aims of Coming Home.



In Gloucester, the church is seeking to turn a redundant church site into homes for homeless people. And just outside the city, a new factory is building “living pods” – modular homes – for ex-prisoners and others to live in, using modern methods of construction, and closely aligned with the diocese, whose Bishop is the Bishop for Prisons.

At national level, a team is being formed with development experience and expertise, able to support dioceses and parishes who want to help tackle the housing crisis.

Gloucester Diocese has a property development company, The Good and Faithful Servant, with a growing number of projects across the diocese. They are now exploring how they can work with other dioceses to expand the model across the country. Work has also started towards setting up and registering a Church Housing Association with a national remit and strong local management and pastoral support structures.

With the help of Knight Frank and Eido Research, a geospatial map of all Church of England land and buildings across England has been created to assist dioceses in stewarding their assets and strengthen their approach to housing and other developments.

We are also supporting some pilot schemes that could be blueprints for the future and models for other churches to follow. These include a ‘how to guide’ for parishes and churches wishing to develop their land or buildings.

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The Commission has already been active in supporting pioneering schemes that could be expanded across the church.

As Joanne Thorns, the Church of England priest who is helping coordinate efforts to locate land in the North East, said: ‘we don’t want to just build accommodation and then walk away’ – this is about creating communities as well as homes.

There’s a sixth ‘S’ – Sacrifice. At the heart of the Christian story is the sacrificial self-giving of Jesus Christ. So we’re working to mobilise the Church to play a far more substantial – and sacrificial – role in tackling the scandal of rotten, unaffordable, unsafe housing which too many of our fellow citizens have to endure.

Our hope is that others will catch this vision and be willing to share our mission – to provide homes and build communities where people love to live.

- Bishop Guli was appointed the Church of England’s first Bishop for Housing last year, leading the work to implement the Coming Home report.

## In the media

### The behaviour of Patriarch Kirill harms Orthodoxy

#### The Times

The head of Russia’s National Guard has said that the religious icon recently presented to him by the Russian

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Orthodox Church will bless the soldiers fighting in Ukraine and speed a Russian victory. In a ceremony in Moscow's main cathedral, Patriarch Kirill gave Viktor Zolotov, once President Putin's personal bodyguard, the Augustow Mother of God icon depicting the appearance of the Virgin Mary to Russian soldiers during the First World War. There could be no more potent symbol of the Patriarch's support for Russia's invasion and the backing the Orthodox hierarchy has given to Mr Putin. It is support that is as important to the Kremlin as it is odious to most other Christians. - Extract from editorial

## **Arlene Foster claims unionists being 'gaslighted' by US administration**

### **The Irish News**

Arlene Foster has accused the current US administration of gaining its understanding of the north from the "Ladybird book of Irish republicanism".

The former DUP leader said unionists are being "gaslighted" by President Joe Biden and Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi because the pair fail to acknowledge that a "majority of people in Northern Ireland are very content to be British".

Writing in her regular column for the Daily Express, Mrs Foster cast a critical eye on Washington's annual celebrations for Ireland's patron saint.

"Americans are tone deaf to anybody that is Northern Irish or heaven forbid British during St Patrick's day," said the former first minister.

Mrs Foster recalled her own visit to Capitol Hill in 2016, when she planned to leave "before all the greenery really kicked in".

[\[https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/03/22/news/arlene-foster-claims-us-administration-gains-its-understanding-of-the-north-from-the-ladybird-book-of-irish-republicanism--2620575/\]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/03/22/news/arlene-foster-claims-us-administration-gains-its-understanding-of-the-north-from-the-ladybird-book-of-irish-republicanism--2620575/)

## **More than 300 EU laws govern life in Northern Ireland now due to Protocol**

### **News Letter**

The Lords Protocol Committee 49-page investigation predicts that even more legislation in Brussels will give the EU much more power over the Province.

Its chairperson Lord Jay said that their report concluded that the Protocol had created a "democratic deficit" in that EU law is not subject to the consent of parliamentarians in either Stormont or Westminster.

The scrutiny group consisting of peers including Lord Dodds and Lord Empey as well as Baroness O'Loan has called on both the British Government and the EU to be more transparent with the people of Northern Ireland over the Protocol's practical implications.

[\[https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/more-than-300-eu-laws-govern-life-in-northern-ireland-now-due-to-protocol-3621211\]](https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/more-than-300-eu-laws-govern-life-in-northern-ireland-now-due-to-protocol-3621211)

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## **Alison Suttie: Ukrainian children are traumatised and exhausted - We can and must do more**

### **Huffington Post**

Baroness Suttie writes -

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/refugee-crisis-poland-baroness-alison-suttie\\_uk\\_62335e62e4b046c938d87904?](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/refugee-crisis-poland-baroness-alison-suttie_uk_62335e62e4b046c938d87904?)

## **Poem for today**

### **Dover Beach by Matthew Arnold**

The sea is calm tonight.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanchèd land,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow

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Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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