

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ballyclare parishes pop-up school uniforms shop

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Ballyclare parishes pop-up school uniforms shop

The team at The United Parish of Christ Church & St John's hosted a special School Uniform Pop Up in St John's Church on Saturday morning. The Pop Up will be back again on Saturday with a wide selection of good quality, pre-loved school uniforms for local schools, Free of Charge, including summer outfits for local primary schools. Call in next Saturday between 10am and 12 and take a look. You'll be very welcome.

People and places

Pope Francis recognises service of Hollywood parishioner

A Co Down woman has been recognised by Pope Francis for her dedicated service over many years to the Catholic Church.

Ann Moore was presented with the Benemerenti Medal at a special Mass in her home church of St Colmcille's, Hollywood.

Mrs Moore (80) is a former sacristan at St Colmcille's and also led the Legion of Mary group in the parish for decades.

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Another parishioner, May McCaffrey, was also due to be recognised before she passed away last year.

The Mass was concelebrated by Holywood parish priest Fr Stephen McBrearty, who nominated Mrs Moore, as well her son Fr David Moore, who is parish priest of Pomeroy in Co Tyrone.

Mrs Moore said it was her pleasure to give any service to the Church but "the greatest privilege of my life has been to be a member of the Legion of Mary here with May".

Fr David Moore told the congregation his family has been "truly touched" and honoured by the award.



Corrymeela on RTÉ on Maundy Thursday

Corrymeela members, leaders, musicians and friends will be part of the Maundy Thursday service on RTÉ to be broadcast 6 April.

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Centred around the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the service features many inspirational figures (victims, survivors, pastors and presidents) who continue to work for peace on this island.



A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

With the Rt Revd Andrew Forster
and Revd David Skuce
21-30 November 2023

10 days based in Jerusalem & Galilee

Derry Holy Land pilgrimage

More than 40 people attended an information evening in the Diocesan Centre, on Monday evening (27th March) to learn more about this autumn's planned Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The meeting was hosted by the Rector of the Dunfanaghy Group of Parishes, Rev David Skuce, who will be leading



the pilgrimage along with Bishop Andrew Forster. Around two dozen people have already 'signed up' for the trip and many more expressed an interest after the meeting.

The pilgrimage will take place from Tuesday 21st to Thursday 30th of November, and the schedule will include visits to some of the Holy Land's - and the Bible's - best known locations. These will include the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Jordan River baptismal site, the village of Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem.

Monday evening's meeting offered an opportunity to ask questions about practical aspects of the pilgrimage - including insurance, currency and security in the region.

For bookings received by this Friday, the 31st March 2023, the tour operators offer an advanced booking price of

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£2,605 per person, a saving of £200 off the full tour price of £2,805 (based on sharing a double or twin room with ensuite bathroom).

To reserve a place, contact Rev David Skuce at The Rectory, Horn Head Road, Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal. Tel: 0863404847 (ROI) or 07764221963 (NI), or email dskuce56@gmail.com



Canon Bob Wilkinson's 102nd birthday

The Rector of Portrudh, Canon Peter McDowell visited the wonderfully indomitable Canon Bob Wilkinson on his 102nd birthday to pass on the love and good wishes of the parish. We join with him to wish Canon Bob every blessing and many happy returns.

Maghera Parish hosts a fantastic lost sheep hunt



**LOST SHEEP
SCAVENGER HUNT**



SUNDAY 26TH MARCH @ 11AM



**Family fun in
the Rectory
grounds!**



GAMES

CRAFTS

**TEA, COFFEE AND HOT
CHOCOLATE PROVIDED**

**FACE-
PAINTING**



The Parish of St. Lurach's, Maghera and Killelagh had a fantastic day all about Jesus coming to find the lost sheep - that's you and me!



Face painting and crafts were popular at the Lost Sheep Scavenger Hunt





The power of a cuppa reaches from Knockbreda to Bangladesh

Have you ever thought about the power of a cup of tea? Many heartfelt conversations start with ‘I’ll stick the kettle on’. A cuppa offers connection and brings people together. The Big Leprosy Mission Tea Party at Knockbreda Parish did just this.

Over a warm cuppa and a sweet treat, over 100 people were brought on a journey from Belfast to the lush green tea gardens of Bangladesh. Here the beautiful scenery and flourishing greenery are contrasting the desolation and devastation that leprosy is causing. Leprosy is acting like a weed; choking the potential, livelihoods, and growth of those who live and work in the tea gardens, many of which pick the tea leaves that brews our cuppas here in Northern Ireland. Leprosy cases are 20–30 times higher here than anywhere else in the world. Just like an invasive weed, leprosy has taken root in these communities and is spreading at a truly shocking rate. It will continue to do so,

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robbing livelihoods, relationships and independence, unless we do something about it.

Pam Gaston (TLMNI's Programme Funding Officer) visited these tea gardens last year and shared her experiences at the tea party. She shared the needs faced by those affected by leprosy, who are already the poorest of the poor in our world. She shared of the impact of poverty and natural disasters on top of alarming leprosy case rates. The most striking element of Pam's experience was the devastating consequences of late diagnosis of leprosy. Aloka was just one of many who experienced this. Late diagnosis for her meant life altering disability to her hands. This meant she was unable to pick as many tea leaves; half the amount in fact, and half the leaves meant half the pay. Many can relate on some level to the crippling weight that financial insecurity can have. It left Aloka asking heart wrenching questions like 'how will we survive?' and 'who will look after my family?'



Aloka

However, Pam shared about the incredible impact the kindness of those gathered, can make in the lives of people

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like Aloka. Aloka joined a TLM self help group. A group formed with the intention of empowering and supporting leprosy affected people. This group gave hope to Aloka in the form of a loan to purchase goats, helping bridge the gap in lost wages due leprosy. This has lifted the burdening weight of financial insecurity as well as inspiring her to be an agent of change in her community though encouraging people to get tested, to diagnose and cure leprosy early.

Over a cup of tea, £1,494 was raised, exceeding the target needed to form and train a self–help group. A group of caring individuals from across Northern Ireland, meeting over a cuppa in Belfast has the power to reach out in love all the way to Bangladesh, and touch the lives of people like Aloka.

You can help

So like the individuals gathered in Knockbreda a few weeks ago, The Leprosy Mission (TLM) is challenging people across NI to use their cuppa to make a difference in the lives of those affected by leprosy. They are calling individuals and churches host their own tea party to raise awareness and funds for those affected by leprosy, who are in great need.

It could be like the one hosted in Knockbreda, or simply at home with friends and family. It could even be as simple as leaving a TLM money box by the tea and coffee station after the service in church and ask people to throw in their loose change. Big or small a cuppa has the power to show love to those affected, who are often the outcasts and lonely in their community.

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The Big Tea Party

For more information on hosting a tea party visit The Leprosy Mission's website - link below.

If you also feel compelled to support people like Aloka, and be the hands and feet of Jesus today, you can visit the donate page at the link below.

Something as little as £24 can find and cure someone like Aloka, and free them from leprosy's choking grip.

Let's finish what Jesus started, who cured leprosy in his lifetime, and is calling us to end it in ours!

<https://www.tlm-ni.org/flourish>

For more information email info@tlm-ni.org or call the office on 028 92629500.

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News reports

Presbyterian minister's child dies in Nashville school shooting

Church vigils were held in Tennessee just hours after a former pupil shot dead three children and three adults at a Christian primary school related to Covenant Presbyterian Church.



The children who were killed have been identified as Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, and William Kinney, all aged 8 or 9. Hallie is the daughter of Chad Scruggs (pictured) a senior pastor at nearby Covenant Presbyterian Church.

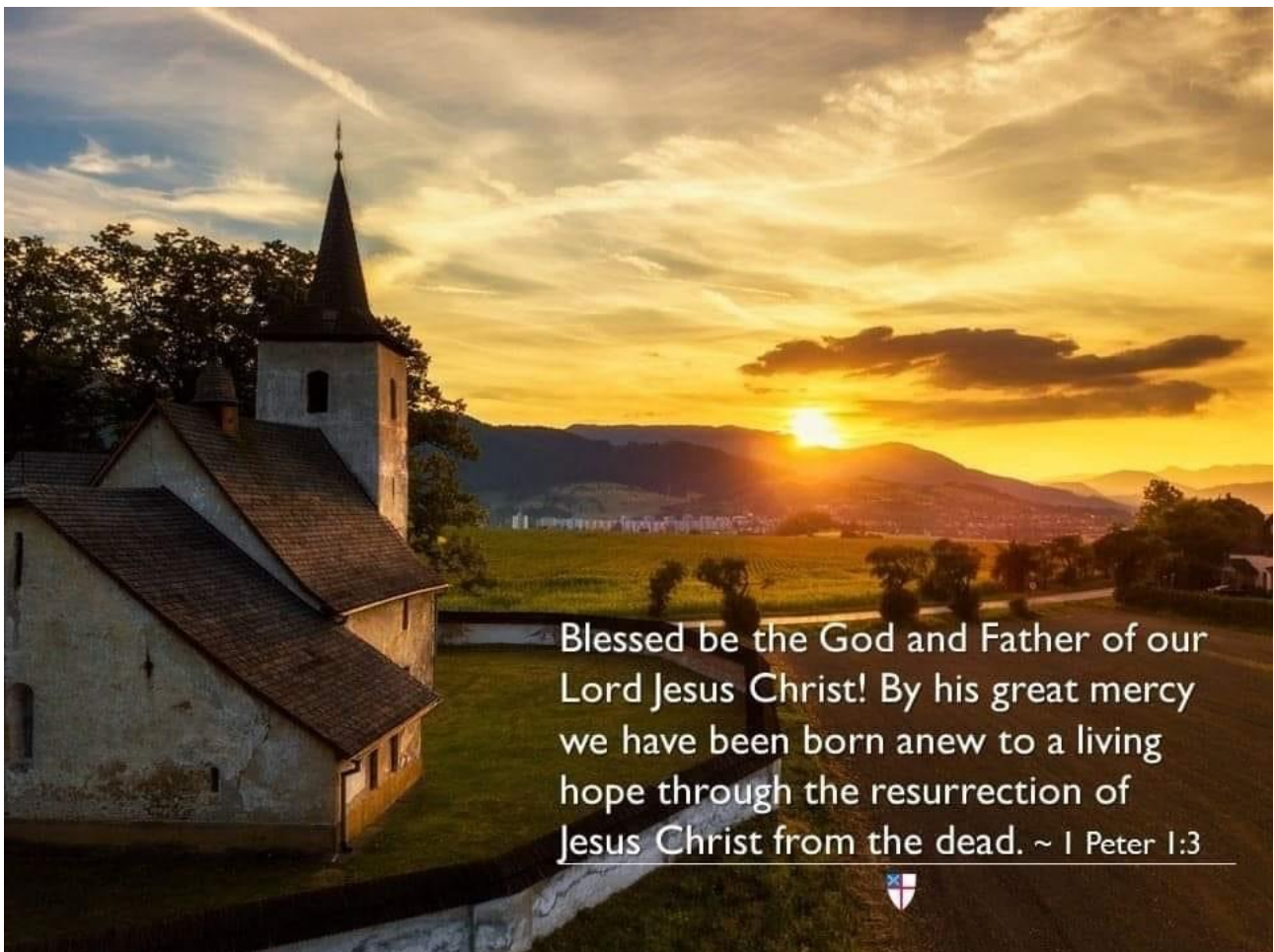
28 year old Audrey Hale who identified as transgender, was armed with two assault weapons and a handgun and fired through doors at the school, before being shot dead by officers. Hale had drawn detailed maps of the Covenant School which is a private school in Nashville for children aged between three and eleven.

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60 year old headteacher Katherine Koonce was among the adult victims. She was described as a "saint", who "knew every single student" and worked tirelessly to help families who struggled with money. Nashville Police say another victim, 61 year old Cynthia Peak was a substitute teacher who had been working at the school for the day. 61 year old school custodian Mike Hill was also killed.

Tributes to the victims on social media include calls for prayers for the Scruggs family. Church planter JC Groves said :

“Please pray for the Scruggs family. Chad is the pastor of Covenant Church, in Nashville where the shooting occurred today. Chad and Jada’s daughter Hallie was one of the



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victims killed. Praying for God given strength as he has to pastor while mourning the loss of a child.”

Following the shooting, President Joe Biden has renewed calls for gun control legislation.

In the media

Transgender row teacher seeks to have C of I clerics testify in High Court case

Senior church figures all have connections to Northern Ireland

Belfast Telegraph

Sacked Irish schoolteacher Enoch Burke says he has subpoenaed three senior Church of Ireland clerics, who all have connections to Northern Ireland, to testify in the High Court case taken against him by Wilson's Hospital School.

Mr Burke has filed an affidavit stating he personally served subpoenas on Patricia Storey, the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, who is the patron of the school; Ferran Glenfield, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh; and Canon Alistair Graham, who is based in Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

Ms Storey and Mr Graham were both born in Belfast, while Mr Glenfield was once a rector in Hillsborough, Co Down.

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The move indicates Mr Burke will seek to raise the Church of Ireland's views on transgender issues in the trial of the action, which is due to begin today.

The teacher, who is an evangelical Christian, was suspended from the Co Westmeath school last August after a number of incidents in which he clashed with management over a request from the then principal Niamh McShane to call a transgender student by a new name and by “they/ them” pronouns.

This included the interruption of a chapel service, at which Bishop Storey was present, and the questioning of Ms McShane following a school dinner afterwards. Mr Burke claims he could not comply on religious grounds.

In an affidavit of service, Mr Burke said he had served the subpoenas on the religious leaders over the weekend as the case between him and the school “concerns a religious issue”.

Extract from a report by Sean Phelan, Belfast Telegraph
28/03/2023

Windsor Framework: This time it's different?

RTE news analysis by Tony Connelly

In a rare moment of harmony, EU and UK officials seem convinced that the Windsor Framework is the elusive common ground that will resolve the Northern Ireland issue and open up the first post-Brexit era of warm cooperation.

"This is the first agreement I've seen on Northern Ireland since Brexit that I've genuinely believed will work and will stick, or at least has a very strong chance to do that," said one senior figure.

Why is it different this time?

There is a combination of factors. Both sides have been over and over these same issues for the past seven years, so the subject matter is familiar and the passage of time has acted as a balm on some of the harsher politics.

There is also the desire by Brussels and London to get the Northern Ireland Protocol behind them so they can deal with the existential geopolitical issue of our time, the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ursula von der Leyen and Rishi Sunak have certainly forged a warm relationship (as have negotiators Maroš Šefčovič and James Cleverly), but there is also self interest. The German president of the European Commission is expected to seek a second term, and the British Prime Minister has desperately needed a diplomatic win in the face of grinding economic problems.

Mr Sunak's arrival opened up fresh space for a more cooperative negotiation. He was less tainted with the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill (NIPB) than either Boris Johnson or Liz Truss.

More at -

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[\[https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2023/0311/1361539-windsor-framework/\]](https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2023/0311/1361539-windsor-framework/)

Windsor Framework's grocery border - why it won't be enforced even if it is breaking the law

Sam McBride - Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/sam-mcbride/the-grocery-border-why-it-wont-be-enforced-even-if-it-is-breaking-the-law/262268098.html>



Poem for today

A Prayer in Spring by Robert Frost

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here

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All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfil.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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