



Armagh to stream six-day ‘Home of St Patrick Festival’ to the world

Armagh sets the stage to celebrate online from March 12. Armagh, has unveiled details of a packed six-day schedule of events to celebrate the island’s famous patron saint with the world next month.

March 6, 2021

Armagh, Ireland's ecclesiastical campaign and the historic, legendary city which St Patrick founded on his mission of change, wants millions of people at home and away to join in on an enthralling showcase of events designed to inspire a new global audience.

Starting on Friday 12 March and concluding on St Patrick's Day (Wednesday 17 March), this fully online 'At Home with St Patrick Festival' will take you through a thrilling showcase of rousing events themed with snakes, shamrocks, history and culture, traditional music and dance – and plenty of inspiring food and drink ideas.

From the iconic Navan Fort – one of Ireland's most iconic archaeological sites and steeped in myth and legend – to its famous orchards, cathedrals, theatres and libraries, few will be untouched by the spirit of a city that St Patrick made his home.

“Built, shaped and steeped in St Patrick, Armagh remains the true home of Ireland's first citizen and we're proud to celebrate his iconic legacy from a remarkable city that will bring laughter, enjoyment, reflection and hope to the world in this challenging year,” Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Councillor Kevin Savage, said.

“Famed for its orchards, its warm hospitality, friendly people, history, culture and outstanding food and drink, Armagh will continue to surprise many for its must-visit destination appeal and we really hope that this local and global celebration will inspire and engage many people of all ages to experience this place for real when all of us can.”



With 19 free-to-attend events planned, the festival line-up includes:

– Irish dance masterclass from Riverdance’s Jason O’Neill: Irish dance sensation and Riverdance lead, Jason O’Neill takes centre-stage to present a high-energy dance masterclass from Armagh’s Market Place Theatre. Jason is joined by two inspiring local female dancers, twelve-year-old world champion Blaithin Mohan from Armagh City and Ciara McGivern from Markethill who is placed ninth in the world.

– The Story of St Patrick & Daire: An exciting online dramatisation at Navan Fort which will uncover St Patrick’s early life and his discussions with lord chieftain and legend Daire as he searched for a site in Armagh to establish his first church.



– The Staff, The Snake and The Shamrock: An illustrated talk of by Dr Rachel Moss of Trinity College Dublin will be providing an illustrated presentation that gives insights into the iconic symbolism and arts linked with St Patrick.

– Réalta – Live from The Market Place Theatre: Réalta take a lively, exciting and respectful approach to Irish traditional music at this must-visit event. Reared on a staple diet of The Bothy Band, Planxty and other such classics, this big-name band captures the timeless aspects of the tradition and presents it in its raw form – fresh and beautiful.

– The great St Patrick’s Day Fry-up: Simon Dougan from Yellow Door cooks up a storm with leading theatre entertainer May McFettridge to share hearty Ulster breakfast using the finest ingredients from across the region’s food heartland.

– All Folk'd Up – Live from [XX]: One of Ireland's most popular groups who play a mix of classic sounds from folk and country music traditions, while still sprinkling their own unique, modern twist.

All events are free to attend, however some events require registration in advance. To download the full programme of events, visit[[visit\[visitarmagh.com/stpatrick \]](http://visitarmagh.com/stpatrick)]

Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Cllr Kevin Savage, added: "From our home to your home, our 'At home with St Patrick Festival' will safely delight and excite everyone from near and far. Let us awaken your senses!"

Report courtesy Armagh i

Patrick – Music and Stories celebrating Ireland's Patron Saint by New Irish Arts

Patrick - Music and stories to celebrate Ireland's patron saint will be broadcast live from St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

New Irish Choir and Orchestra, directed by Jonathan Rea s promise an informal, fun presentation, good for the whole family, with high quality music, presented from one of Belfast's most beautiful buildings, with additional outdoor filming.

It will be livestreamed on Saturday 13 March at 8pm and you can watch any time until Monday 22 March.

March 6, 2021



This event has been generously funded by the



arts council
of Northern Ireland

NEW IRISH ARTS

Patrick

Live from St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

Livestream on Saturday 13 March at 8pm
Watch any time til Monday 22 March

Tickets are FREE - book now at newirisharts.com

Tickets are FREE. This event has been generously funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

New Irish Arts is a dynamic and vibrant organisation whose choir, orchestra and youth choir & orchestra has presented over 100 large concerts and events across Ireland. As well as playing in venues such as the Belfast Waterfront Hall and the Ulster Hall we have also produced regular broadcasts on BBC and RTE TV and Radio, often producing scripts for

March 6, 2021

services as well as music. In 2019 they provided a choir of 1000 participants for Sing Belfast at the SSE Arena.

During the current pandemic, New Irish Arts has diversified into online presentations. Their recent Christmas concert was one of the highlights of the “Live From the Ulster Hall” Concert Series.

[\[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/patrick-music-and-stories-celebrating-irelands-patron-saint-tickets-144274128803?utm_campaign=post&utm_publish&utm_content=shortLinkNewEmail&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eventbrite\]](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/patrick-music-and-stories-celebrating-irelands-patron-saint-tickets-144274128803?utm_campaign=post&utm_publish&utm_content=shortLinkNewEmail&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eventbrite)

Keith Getty - Four ideas to inspire your songwriting

Keith writes: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!” (Psalm 96:1). God’s glory and grace call forth fresh expressions of wonder in every generation. If God has given you the ability to write songs, why would you not seek to use your creativity to give him praise?

Ever since co-writing “In Christ Alone” twenty years ago, I have had the absolute joy of meeting fellow hymn writers from around the world. They have inspired me and taught me much. Often in these conversations, I have been asked what are some of my top tips for aspiring songwriters. Here are four encouragements:

1. Study the great hymns of history. Classic songs last for good reason. Grab an old hymnal and dissect the very best songs to figure out what has made them so timeless. Often,

March 6, 2021

you will find that the melody has an unpredictable twist that makes it irresistible to sing. Or you will find a folk tune with a slightly irregular rhythmic structure, which makes it feel distinct and memorable. The best-loved hymns usually express a key theological idea in language that is so evocative, so profound, it makes your heart soar merely to read the words on the page.

2. Dive into poetry. As we see in the Psalms, the goal of a congregational song is not only to declare doctrinal truths. It is to express the depths of our hearts to God. Any time you spend reading great poetry, writing down lists of unique words, or polishing up your understanding of poetic devices will yield fruit in your songwriting. Consider lyrics such as: “Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die,” and “Summer and winter and springtime and harvest; sun, moon, and stars in their courses above; Join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.” These words stir our hearts because the hymn writer made every single syllable count.

3. Write for your local church. The goal is to build up the people of God that you sing with each week. Let that inform every aspect of your writing. Rather than trying to imagine your song being sung in a Nashville recording studio, try to hear the voices of your brothers and sisters in the Lord so that you shape your melody to the musical comfort zone of your congregation. Pick a theme and focus for your song based on what your church needs to sing right now.

4. Collaborate. Surround yourself with the most creative and thoughtful people you know. Pray that the Lord would send you co-writers with strengths in your areas of

March 6, 2021

weakness. I can honestly say that I've never regretted opening up my song to others who can make it stronger. And once you have a draft of your song ready, share it with your pastor and music team to get their feedback. Keep rewriting and polishing—the goal is quality, not quantity.

If you want to go deeper into these themes and many more, I am beyond excited to be hosting a new training course called the International Hymn Writing Collective. This program will allow you to interact with the amazing group of songwriters on the Getty Music team, get feedback on your hymns, engage in 1-on-1 mentorship, learn from a series of webinars, and enjoy a community of like-minded writers from around the world. I hope you might consider joining us.

Click here to learn more -

[\[\[https://www.gettymusic.com/hymnwriting?mc_cid=9bf784b702&mc_eid=33d184a477 \]](https://www.gettymusic.com/hymnwriting?mc_cid=9bf784b702&mc_eid=33d184a477)

Connor seeks to appoint Children's Ministry Development Officer

Connor Diocese is seeking to appoint a Children's Ministry Development Officer to develop and expand existing children's ministry throughout the diocese.

Full details, including job description and application pack, are available in their **Vacancies** section of Connor diocesan web site.

<https://connor.anglican.org/vacancies/>



The post is a three-year, fixed term contract and there is an occupational requirement for the post-holder to be a practicing Christian who must be committed to work within the Christian ethos and doctrine of The Church of Ireland.

Jill Hamilton, who has served the diocese as Children's Project Development Officer for the past seven years, is leaving Connor Diocese following the appointment of her husband, the Rev Geoff Hamilton, as rector of Kilhorne Parish, Annalong, Diocese of Down and Dromore.

Jill announced her departure in January, saying: "I have really loved getting to know both clergy and voluntary children's leaders throughout the diocese. It's been a privilege to work alongside you and to get an insight into the fabulous work that is going in in the parishes with children and families."

March 6, 2021

The deadline for completed applications for the post of Children's Ministry Officer is March 31 2021.

Opinion - Pandemic means religion for religion's sake is gone. That's not a bad thing - Maria Jansson

Leadership will not come from a moribund clerical caste, but from those who must now step up to the bar, Maria Jansson writes in the Irish Times. Very Rev Maria Jansson is the Church of Ireland Dean of Waterford.

On March 10th, 2020, we closed the doors of the cathedral here in Waterford, asked that the Friends of the Cathedral stay at home, cancelled choir practice and a planned youth group weekend away, little knowing what lay ahead.

On March 15th, 2020, we broadcast our first Sunday service from the cathedral and have done so since.

The first lockdown was horrendous, as much-loved parishioners died in quick succession, firstly with 100 present at their funerals, then 10 at the funeral of a young mother of four. Ireland "does death well" and the gathering of the community is a hugely important element in the grieving process. However, not only are the bereft denied the community recognition due to their loved one, the community has no means of grieving its cherished members. And yet we have all now adapted to online funerals on rip.ie.

March 6, 2021

Usually Baptisms happened during the Sunday service but now they occur privately. Confirmations have been cancelled because preparation would not be safe or feasible, as this is done at parish, not school, level.

There have been three weddings. The first, tragically, in Waterford University Hospital when a terminally ill man married his partner of many years just days before his death. The second had 25 present and the third was during this latest lockdown, allowing only six people to be present.

A real casualty of the pandemic has been communal life; simply meeting each other, in church, bell-ringing, in Sunday school, in choir, on vestry, at parish events, dropping in on each other . . . the list goes on.

In future, older parishioners will be wary of coming back to church. Given that you can now turn off the preacher if he/she is waffling online and “church hop” on the internet from bed, the habit of faith community may have been broken for good, not just for the “occasionals” but also the “regulars”.

“Even though telephone calls are not an ideal means of communication, they have enabled real conversations with many who otherwise would have been at work or too busy”

Over the year, connections with the diocese and larger church have been contrived and artificial, having the usual synods and meetings by Zoom; the superstructure of bishops and administration, at best distant in most parishioners’ lives, is now utterly redundant. Clergy must be local, visible, in contact and engaged . . . or become irrelevant.

March 6, 2021

To date, thankfully, parishioners' donations in the Waterford parishes have held up but the income we make in the cathedral from the shop and concerts has simply ended and this pays the huge costs of running, insuring, staffing, heating and maintaining a cathedral. Luckily, we went into the pandemic debt free with the belfry and roof renovated recently but there are huge financial challenges ahead.

Despite all this, there have been some really important changes for the good. Even though telephone calls are not an ideal means of communication, they have enabled real conversations with many who otherwise would have been at work or too busy. I have got to know some members of the community better because of lockdowns.

People were rather reticent about talking about their faith but I have been blown away with their engagement in a venture that started on October 22nd last, Prayer at Breakfast, which lasts six to eight minutes each day. Now we have just passed the 100th day of this and between 130-160 tune in daily. If I went to the cathedral and did morning prayer there every day, I would be lucky to have three people with me.

“In the past, non-talk prevailed: women and minorities sat and listened, children and young people were irrelevant, finance and church fabric took precedence”

For some, smaller funerals have been strange but more intimate. The tremendous crowds of the past offered valued respect for the dead and the bereft, but were equally challenging for the grieving when at their most vulnerable.

If the pandemic changes the way we do weddings, that will be a good thing. People know they do not have to remortgage their lives now to wed; things have become simpler and more genuine.

Religion has big challenges ahead, over and above financial ones. There are parishes where the bond between priest and people has deepened over the last year and others where it has vaporised.

Relying on the ways things were done in the past will not be adequate. People have recovered their faith and need for God and if that is not the foundation of what we do going forward, then forget it.

Religion for religion's sake is gone and that is not a bad thing.

We will have to meet as people of faith with a renewed authenticity and open a real conversation about rebuilding church. In the past, non-talk prevailed: women and minorities sat and listened, children and young people were irrelevant, finance and church fabric took precedence over energising community and faith. The challenge and the opportunity will be in developing authentic Christian community again.

Leadership has not come and will not come from a moribund clerical caste; it will come from the people who want community, who reclaim their voice, who know the connection between faith and real life, who have found the spiritual strength in the pandemic to prevail and who now

March 6, 2021

must step up to the bar and start rebuilding. Exciting times ahead.

Courtesy the Irish Times. 02.03.2021

Pointers for prayer

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

CMSI tells of ordinations in Gitega Diocese, Burundi -
In a wonderful service in January, 28 priests, 25 deacons
and three pastors were ordained. Give thanks for their
calling and pray that God will guide them through His Holy
Spirit and provide for them and their families.

Hold in your hands, Lord
our families & friends

March 6, 2021

our neighbours
those whom we worry about
& those who worry for us.
And in these same hands
hold every family,
especially those for whom today
has brought new burdens
and fresh sorrows

Today we pray for those with symptoms of cancer. A new study shows that almost half of those with a potential symptom didn't see a GP during the first wave of the pandemic, because they did not want to burden the NHS.

Today we pray for countries unable to access vaccines. The UN secretary general has criticised the unfair distribution of Covid vaccines, identifying that 130 countries have yet to receive a single dose.

Pray for the launches of new Church Army centres of mission in Rochdale, Gwent Valley, North Sutton and Ipswich; that these will launch as planned and new staff will find ways to engage with their communities when they are appointed.

Pray for all teachers and parents involved with students or their children. We ask for stamina and creativity as they seek to educate in less than ideal circumstances.

It has been announced that on Ascension Day - 13 May 2021, Bishop Hosam Naoum will be installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, bearing the title Archbishop. Please pray for Bishop Naoum, his family and the Diocese.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

Page 16

March 6, 2021

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers' Union members who, over the years, have used their God-given gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we'll also be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all
things,
now and for ever.

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts



that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your
Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;

March 6, 2021

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever, who with you and the Holy Spirit
reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Speaking to the Soul

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

Psalm 46:1-2 NLT

When disaster strikes it's often without warning. A death, a car accident, a serious illness or a fall. In those moments of shaking it's so important to know that we can look to God and know that he is our refuge and strength and always ready to help us.

As a minister I've often visited the homes of people at times of traumatic change. I remember once visiting an old lady who knew that she had terminal cancer and that she only had a short while to live. She lived in a dark cottage in a village and when I visited her it was late in the afternoon and there was very little light in the room where we met. But I will never forget her glowing smile in the fading light. She knew the Lord well and had every confidence that her life was in his hands. She knew without a doubt that God was her refuge and strength.

March 6, 2021

The next day I visited another person who was dying of cancer and the situation couldn't have been more different. She had no Christian faith and the news of her cancer was a complete disaster, and she was terrified at the thought of death. It was an agonising situation and felt as unlike the previous day as could be imagined. I spoke to her about God's love for her and told her that he wanted to walk with her and to fill her with his peace. I prayed with her and she was grateful for my visit. But what made me so sad was that she had lived a life that had offered her no preparation for this moment.

Let's make sure that we place our lives firmly in God's hands right now, so that whatever challenge we face we will be confident in the knowledge that God is our refuge and strength.

QUESTION

In what ways have you experienced God to be your refuge and strength?

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, that I can look to the future with serenity and peace because you will never fail to be my refuge and strength. Amen.

