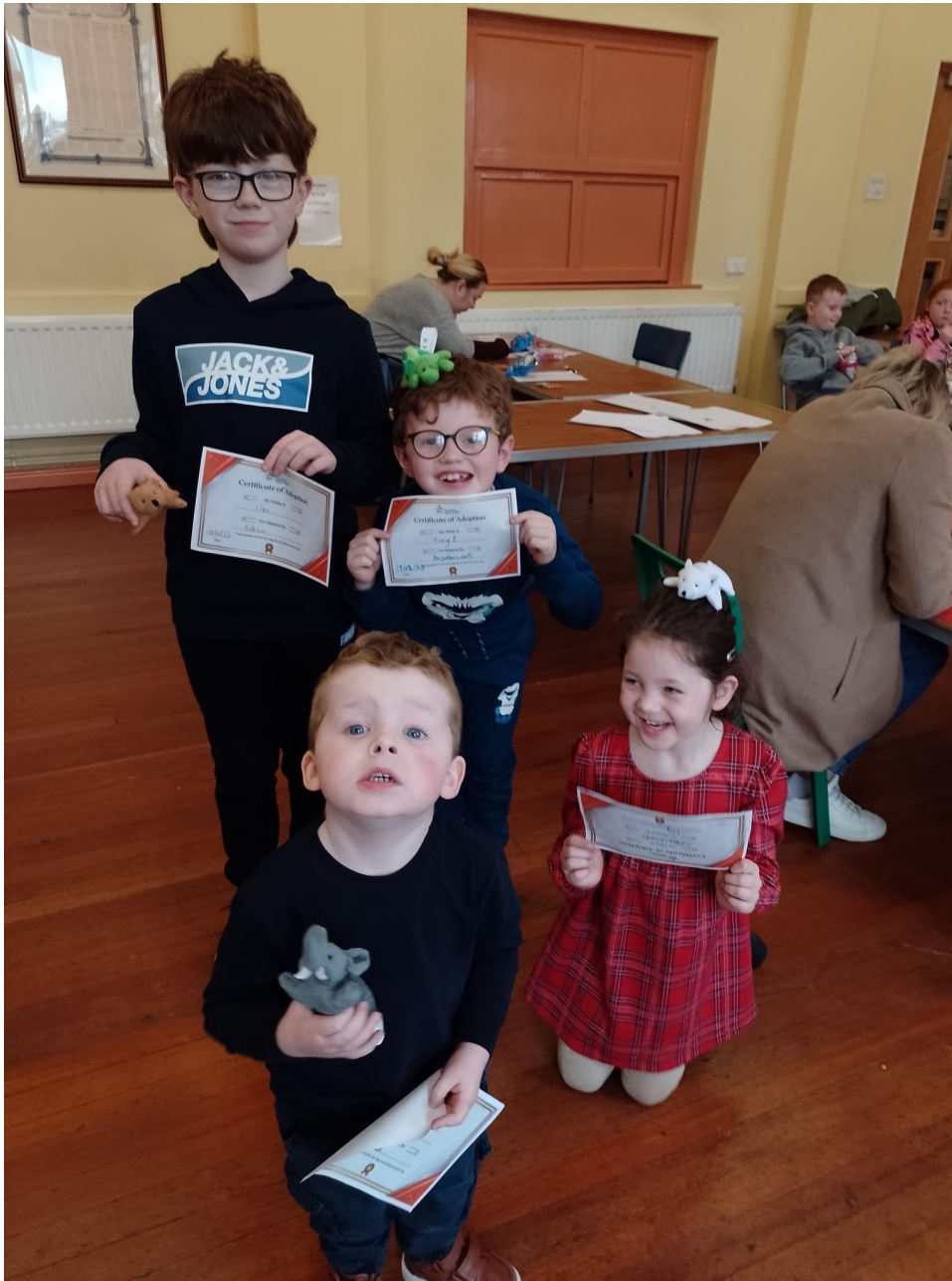


Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bible buddies

Image of the day



Bible buddies help spread The Word

A 'Bible Buddies' initiative is proving a big hit with families – especially children – in Derry and Raphoe. 145 Bible Buddies have found their way

into homes across the diocese, this Lent, and are having lots of adventures with the boys and girls.

Noah and Nathan the turtle went to the beach for their first adventure. Grace and Pandy the panda went to school – Pandy even had a school bag! And the children of St.

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Augustine's enjoyed naming their buddies and getting to know one another.

Bible Buddies are small soft toys that need to be cared for and looked after, and the easiest way of doing this is spending time with them and reading the Bible together. Each family who registered has been sent a Bible Buddy with an adoption certificate, care advice information and a Bible-reading plan, and there was the option of getting a Bible in their packs, too.

The Diocesan Children's Ministry Officer, Kirsty McCartney, has thanked the Board for Ministry with Children and Families for contributing to the cost of the scheme.

"We look forward to hearing more from our Bible Buddies," Kirsty says, "and hope all the families are enjoying reading the Bible together. When Lent finishes, each family who participated will receive a Holy Week Pack – including a certificate of completion, a treat to enjoy together and a few more suggested reading plans."

People and places

Agency Opens Ulster-Scots Community Festivals Programme

The Ulster-Scots Agency has opened an Ulster-Scots Community Festivals Grant Programme for 2023/24.

This programme is for Community Festivals from 1 June 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Ulster-Scots Community Festival Programme 2023

Now open for applications



The annual Community Festival Programme supports the delivery of Ulster-Scots Community Festivals which will provide people with opportunities to experience and learn about Ulster-Scots culture, heritage, and language.

Ulster-Scots Community Festivals have an essential role to in raising awareness of Ulster-Scots within the wider community. The grant allows Ulster-Scots people to celebrate their cultural identity and educate and strengthen Ulster-Scots communities.

The programme also supports the inclusion of Ulster-Scots content in other Community Festivals.

Groups interested in applying should visit the Ulster-Scots Agency website, follow the link for Community Festivals and register here: <https://form.jotform.com/230613076420344>

An application form and guidelines will be emailed to the group after a successful registration. A separate Festival plan document will be emailed to groups who register.

The maximum grant available is:

- £8,000 for a minor festival
- £20,000 for a major festival

Groups must provide match funding of at least 25%.

The Community Festivals Programme is traditionally a competitive programme. Groups are therefore encouraged to read the detailed guidelines, eligible costs, and rates before completing an application form.

Support is available from the Ulster-Scots Community Network if groups require assistance with their submission.

Please note: The Community Festival Programme will close at 12 noon on Thursday 6 April 2023. Late or incomplete applications will be rejected.

For further information, contact the Agency's Community Development Officer Derek Reaney on reaneyd@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk or 07843 279 912.

Epic youth events in Connor

Connor Youth Forum have two epic events coming up for young people across the Diocese.

Check out the details and get in touch with Christina on christinabaillie@connordiocese.org if you want to come along!

HIKE
HIKE
HIKE
HIKE
HIKE



Organised by Connor Youth Forum
Saturday 25th March / 2-6pm
Glenariff Forest Park



**BEACH
BONFIRE**
WORSHIP & S'MORES

Organised by Connor Youth Forum
Sunday 30th April / 5-8pm
White Rocks Beach, Portrush

BENEFIT CONCERT
Monday 13th March
At the Gathering Grounds in Kilternan
7pm Krapka;KOMA

Krapka;KOMA

€10 Suggested Donation
All donations go back to
Ukraine to support
various causes.



Ukraine Benefit Concert in Kilternan

Benefit Concert next Monday the 13th March at 7pm in the Gathering Grounds

🇺🇦 Krapka;KOMA is a multi-instrumentalist electronic duo touring around Ireland raising much needed money to support Ukraine. “We are lucky to host them in the GG on Monday - €10 Suggested Donation at the door. Also, join us

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before the concert from 5:30pm-6:30pm to engage in supportive craft making and letter writing along with some Ukrainian inspired foods”.



Wilson's Hospital School confirmation

Congratulations to the Wilson's Hospital school students who were confirmed in the school Chapel this week by the Bishop of Meath & Kildare, Most Rev Pat Storey.

Chaplain Hawkins prepared the candidates for confirmation and led the service. Mr Milling read the gospel at this special service in the lives of these young people and their families.



New young members of Newry Methodist Circuit

Pictured with the new young members, Melissa, Melanie, Rachel & Reuben is Rev Andrew Gibson, Rev Louise Donald, Lay Reader, Tom Wilson; President, David Nixon; Circuit Stewart, Kathy Whiteside and Church Stewart, Dick McConnell.

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Celebrity chef's success at Corvally Presbyterian Church

Lovely evening had by all in Corvally Presbyterian Church Hall last week with celebrity chef Paula McIntyre.

This evening would not have been possible without the support of the Ulster-Scots Agency. (See also page 3)

Ever wondered what it's like to be a Cathedral Chorister?

The choristers of Saint Patrick's have been singing in the Cathedral for nearly 600 years and on Tuesday 14th March we are holding another Be a Chorister event for children to experience for themselves what life is like in the stalls.

So if your son or daughter is in either 2nd or 3rd class and they enjoy singing or making music then come and join us on the 14th from 4.00-6.00pm and they can become a Cathedral Chorister for an afternoon.

Visit the cathedral website for more details and to register. www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/sing NB places are limited.

For more details about the Cathedral Choir & its School visit www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/learn/choir-school/
<https://youtu.be/rYTVbWtDRHQ>

Send help to the earthquake zone

The folks at The Gathering are collecting items for transport to the earthquake zone in Turkey and Syria. Read below to find out how you can help.

Revd Ross Munro, Leader, writes - "It's taken a few weeks to secure a safe and reliable travel corridor for provisions to get to the worst affected areas of the earthquake zone. Our



partners Tarsin Transport have made this possible, so as a church we can now ask you for your support.

“The list of items we’re collecting is below and you can help the process by boxing and labelling what you’re donating. We will also be taking financial donations to help with the cost of transportation.

“Thank you for your support as we actively participate in loving our neighbour. Church will be open Tuesdays, Fridays and on arranged times for drop offs, 10.00am to 1.00pm.”

Items needed

Blankets

Clothes in good condition

Personal hygiene items

Dry food eg pasta, rice, biscuits

NO canned meats, except beef which is Halal.

Drop-off address - St Martin’s Church, 88 Newtownards Rd, Belfast, BT4 1GW, Belfast

News reports

New Pioneer Evangelist appointed – St Brigid's Centre of Mission, Kildare

The appointment has been announced of Ms Kelley Bermingham as Pioneer Evangelist in the Centre of Mission, at St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare.

The St Brigid's Cathedral Centre of Mission' is in partnership with Church Army. It is being led by Rev Philip McKinley, ordained for the parish Group of Dunboyne and Rathmoylon, from where he is seconded part-time to lead this initiative.

To find out more about what a Centre of Mission is, visit <https://meathandkildare.org/news/new-initiative-for-kildare-cathedral/>

Following her appointment, Kelley said: "Having worked as Community Officer in the National Cathedral – Saint Patrick's (2017 – 2022), the Mission of the Church and Christian faith in action is very close to my heart."

She continued, "I'm excited to embark on this journey with the Kildare Community, serving the needs of the People in the county I reside, and the place where my ancestors originate on both sides of my family. Saint Brigid's Cathedral is an iconic space, historically rich place, and I look forward with great excitement to working with the Clergy, Vestry and Congregation team there."



Kelley has a long history working and volunteering in the community with people who have additional support needs (mental health, physical and intellectual health needs, people in and from the justice system). She also has a history of experience in the travel & tourism sector, retail and other areas.

Kelley is passionate about social justice,

connection, human rights and all this is on a foundation of strong Christian faith.

In Kildare, Kelley would have helped with the Derby Festival, is a founder and former President of Kildare Toastmasters, and lives in Celbridge.

Kelley is a member of Celbridge, Newcastle & Lyons Parish and is deeply committed to a path of faith in action.

Pioneer Ministry is a new initiative within the Church of Ireland which the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare look

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forward to partnering with. Reaching those with little or no connection to church

<https://www.pioneerministry.org>

Bishop Pat Storey said “I am delighted to welcome Kelley and congratulate her on her appointment. She brings very significant experience to the post, including her previous experience of working as Community Officer in St Patrick’s, our national cathedral. We warmly welcome her into the dioceses and wish her the very best in her new role.”

‘Do not turn your backs on persecuted Christians’ – New Global Guide launched

A growth in extremism and increasing government control over religion in some regions are among the trends noted in the fourth edition of the Church in Chains Global Guide. The Global Guide aims to raise awareness in Ireland about the situation of persecuted Christians around the world by giving an overview of what is happening in 60 countries. It also seeks to motivate people to respond.

The Global Guide was launched in Buswells Hotel in Dublin on Thursday March 2 by the Revd Trevor Sargent, Rector of Bunclody Union, who appealed to Christians not to ignore the plight of persecuted Christians but to “be a voice for those who cannot speak or seek justice the way we can”.

The Guide divides the countries into three colour coded categories – severe (where many or all Christians face persecution including imprisonment, torture, murder or



Deputy Mattie McGrath, Deputy Carol Nolan, Minister Ossian Smyth, the Revd Trevor Sargent and Church in Chains staff Susanne Chipperfield, David Turner and Virginia Chipperfield at the launch of the Global Guide.

violent mob attacks), significant (where some, but not all, Christians face arrest, attack or serious restrictions) and limited (where some churches or individual Christians face restrictions or discrimination).

David Turner, director of Church in Chains, explained that the new Global Guide documents how persecution of Christians is increasing right across the globe – from Latin America to some countries in Europe; from the Middle East to a growing number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; from the former Soviet states of Central Asia through the religiously diverse countries of South Asia to the communist-led countries in East Asia.

A number of TDs and people working in Government departments attended the launch and Mr Turner said: “The persecution of Christians worldwide has been ignored for far too long by successive Irish governments which have repeatedly stated a commitment to prioritising freedom of religion or belief in foreign policy. Regrettably, Irish governments have not followed this through by raising individual cases of persecution of Christians directly with the governments that are actively persecuting Christians or facilitating the persecution of Christians. This new Guide demonstrates the overwhelming need for action to give credence to their words.”

Researcher and writer with Church in Chains, Virginia Chipperfield, highlighted some trends that became apparent during the writing of the fourth edition of the Global Guide. One striking trend was the expansion in sub-Saharan Africa of militant groups affiliated to Islamic State. “These groups attack Christians, government forces and institutions and moderate Muslims and are increasingly spreading into countries where Christians and Muslims previously co-existed peacefully. These regions are now experiencing the kind of violence that has beset Nigeria for years,” she commented. They noticed a similar growth of extremism in South Asia.

Another trend was the increasing government control of religion, particularly evident in Central Asia and East Asia. China was typical of this where government restrictions are part of a campaign to control all religions.

Ms Chipperfield said there had been an improvement in some countries, notably Egypt where positive government



Deputy Ivana Bacik and the Revd Trevor Sargent at the Church in Chains Global Guide launch.

actions in promoting religious tolerance and supporting churches had made a difference to the Coptic community. Reforms in Sudan had led to advances in religious freedom, she said although there had been a setback since the military coup in 2021. In the Middle East there had been a sharp reduction of violence in Iraq and Syria which had led to some improvements in religious freedom although Christians continued to flee.

Launching the Global Guide, Mr Sargent said that the document highlighted abuse of human rights and tapped into the consciences of anyone with a concern for human rights. It provided an accessible way to take action and he

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pointed out that Church in Chains organises a letter writing team to write to ambassadors, presidents and government officials.

“Where there is injustice, and climate change has a big part to play, there is a tendency to blame the person closest to you. In the case of a community, often the minority religion is blamed. There is a need to examine the root causes but today is a day to ask how we can respond... There are a lot of Christians in this country who are turning their backs by doing nothing. I appeal to all Christians to reach out, as Jesus Christ did, to the marginalised or persecuted... Globally there are over 200 million Christians who have to make the decision to speak out or hide away for fear of being persecuted. There are Christians around the world who do speak out. Church in Chains has done the heavy lifting. All we are asked to do is choose a country and write a letter. There is a template. This makes it very easy to be a voice for those who cannot speak or seek justice in the way we can,” he stated.

Every TD and Senator was sent a copy of the Global Guide and they were asked to sign a petition seeking the reversal of Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.

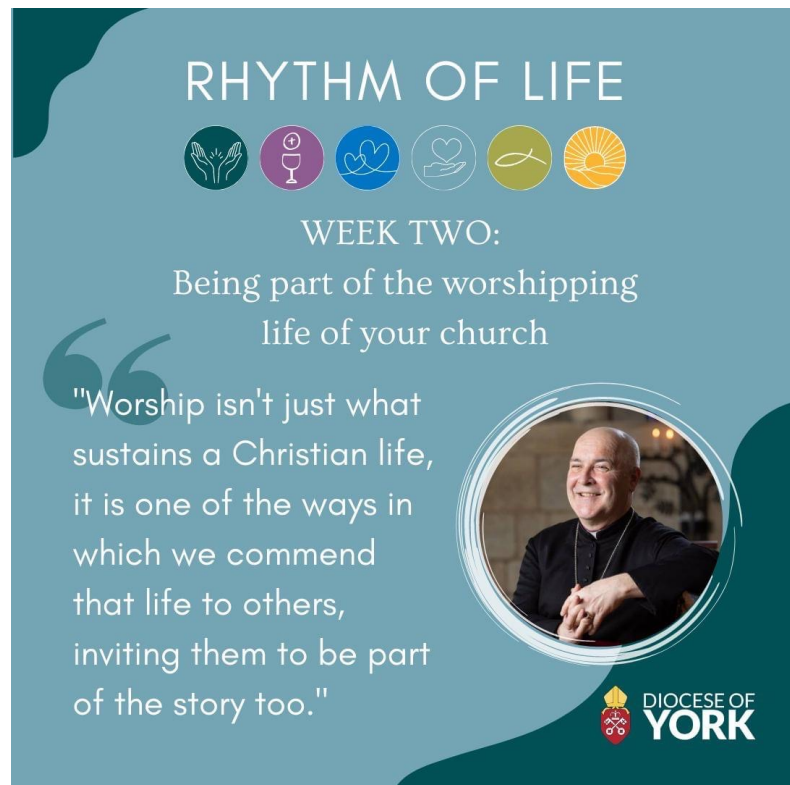
You can find out more about Church in Chains and the Global Guide at <https://www.churchinchains.ie/>

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Rhythm of Life - Lent with Archbishop of York



As we continue our spiritual journey through Lent, the Archbishop of York leads us in exploring a Rhythm of Life. In this second part of the series, we hear from Archbishop Stephen reflecting on being part of the worshipping life of your church – watch the video here: vimeo.com/798404169

You can find all the downloadable resources on York's website: www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/rhythmoflife

Church News Ireland

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