

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Connor parishes respond to Ukraine**

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### Connor parishes respond to Ukraine

Supplies collected by the Parish of Christ Church and St John, Ballyclare, and destined for the Polish border with Ukraine are loaded into lorries in Ballyclare.

## People and places

### Connor parishes respond to plight of Ukrainians

**Supplies collected by the Parish of Christ Church and St John, Ballyclare, and destined for the Polish border with Ukraine are loaded into lorries in Ballyclare.**

Parishes across Connor Diocese have responded generously to appeals to donate items to help those refugees from Ukraine arriving at the border with Poland and other European countries.

In **Ballyclare, the United Parish of Christ Church and St John** collected donations which are being channelled to the Polish border via Hope for Youth Ministries who set up a collection hub in Kinallan, near Dromara.

The Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth said that the entire community had given generously. “We were completely



## **At St Peter's Parish Church, Antrim Road, Belfast**

overwhelmed by the response and apologies to those we had to turn away,” Jonny said.

He expressed thanks to John Jenkins & Dennisons who provided the lorry to go to Kinallen.

“When we arrived there, we were astonished by the volume of donations. Twenty five x 40ft lorries had already been filled to go to Poland. What an incredible witness of the love of God to those in so much need at this time,” Jonny said.

March 9, 2022

The initiative was established by Colin Tinsley of Hope for Youth Ministries. Anyone wishing to donate to the work that Colin Tinsley is doing can do so on his GoFundMe page.

**St Peter's Parish Church, Antrim Road, Belfast**, has thanked everyone who donated to its appeal for items for delivery to refugees crossing the border from Ukraine. Pictured above are Clare and Anna, who brought generous donations from the staff at TKMaxx.

St Peter's will continue to receive and ensure the delivery of items in the coming weeks.

**St Paul's, Lisburn**, also saw a generous response to its Ukrainian Appeal, with donations again being sent to Poland through Youth for Hope Ministries in Kinallen.

Please note that due to the generosity of people in Northern Ireland, the Hope for Youth Ministries hub in Kinallen is no longer accepting donations after 30 x 40ft lorries were filled ready for transit to Poland over the weekend.

Two **Lisburn Cathedral** parishioners are going to Poland to support those fleeing the fighting in Ukraine. Sam Shaw is setting out this week to drive supplies to a city just over the Polish border, while his Brazilian-born wife Silvana is already in Poland working with other women to secure safe passage for refugees making their way out of Ukraine. We hope to speak to them on their return next week.



March 9, 2022

The parishioners of Whitehead and Islandmagee are more than two thirds of the way to completing a 3,381 mile hike to the USA!

The challenge, which began on New Year's Day, is not only to get fitter, boosting positive mental health, but to support the caring work of St Patrick's & St John's churches in the local community.

Parishioners are aiming to clock up the full 3,381 miles by St Patrick's Day to complete the challenge.

An update on the parish Facebook page reveals that to date parishioners have walked a tremendous 2,776 miles and are (virtually) mid-way through Newfoundland in Canada, with a further 1,002 miles to reach their destination of Washington DC by midnight on March 17!

## **Northern Ireland Resounds launched**

**Seven unique lunchtime concerts are taking place across Northern Ireland on Tuesday 5 April at 1.15pm.**

This strand of the 10th anniversary celebrations of NIIOC - - N Ireland International Organ Competition -was launched in Belfast Cathedral, with representatives from the churches involved. They were -

John Leonard - Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Belfast

March 9, 2022

Michael  
McCracken –  
Down  
Cathedral,  
Downpatrick,  
Co Down

Ann Cassidy  
– St Patrick's  
Church of  
Ireland  
Cathedral,  
Armagh, Co  
Armagh

Monsignor  
Peter  
O'Reilly – St  
Michael's  
Church,  
Enniskillen,  
Co  
Fermanagh



Margaret Cummings – First Presbyterian Church, Omagh,  
Co. Tyrone

Adrian Anderson – Ballywillan Presbyterian Church,  
Portrush, Co Antrim

Fr Eugene O'Hagan – Presenter of the Belfast Cathedral  
Gala, with all 10 winners on Wednesday 6 April



NORTHERN IRELAND  
INTERNATIONAL  
ORGAN  
COMPETITION

# NI Resounds

*A unique series of free recitals across Northern Ireland, marking a decade of the competition. Everyone welcome.*

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 1.15pm**

## **First Presbyterian Church**

Dublin Rd, Omagh BT78 1HF

**Andrew Forbes**

## **St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral**

Cathedral Close, 43 Abbey St, Armagh BT61 7DY

**Laura Schlappa & Ben Comeau**

## **St. Michael's Church**

4 Darling St, Enniskillen BT74 7EW

**Ben Bloor**

## **Christ Church, Londonderry**

Infirmary Rd, Londonderry BT48 7DE

**Sebastian Heindl**

## **Down Cathedral**

35 English St, Downpatrick BT30 6AB

**Johannes Krahl & Alexander Hamilton**

## **Saint Peter's Cathedral**

St. Peter's Square, Belfast BT12 4DH

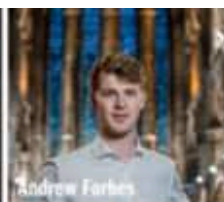
**Mona Rozdestvenskyte & Ivan Bogdan-Reincke**

## **Ballywillan Presbyterian Church**

131 Atlantic Rd, Portrush BT56 8PB

**Richard Gowers**

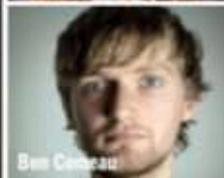
Find out more about the performers at [www.niioc.com](http://www.niioc.com)



Andrew Forbes



Laura Schlappa



Ben Comeau



Ben Bloor



Sebastian Heindl



Johannes Krahl



Alexander Hamilton



Mona Rozdestvenskyte



Ivan Bogdan-Reincke



Richard Gowers

Richard Yarr – Founder & Chair, NIIOC

These regional concerts, in each county of NI, are free of charge, and everyone is welcome.

## **A Bishop is on his bike**

**Monday 7 March was Day 1 of the Bishop's Big Bike Ride to raise funds for the Down and Dromore Lent Appeal. They are counting on your support!**

Bishop David McClay and a small, ever-changing group of cyclists will make 83 stops over 6 Days covering approximately 350 Miles, all in support of two projects in partnership with Bishops' Appeal, Christian Aid and Tearfund.

The Christian Aid project is in Honduras, working with their local partner organisation in eight communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The Tearfund project is in Jordan, helping mobilise the Anglican church there to work amongst Jordan's poorest communities.

The bishop will cycle into every parish in the diocese and hopes to meet many of you along the route. Watch out for some photos!

Day 1 departed from Holywood Parish, taking in North Down and the western side of the Ards Peninsula before finishing in Portaferry. Details of the route at [this link](#).

How to give





Visit the Bishops' Appeal Giving page where you can also download a Gift Aid form:

[www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give/](http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give/)

Send a sterling cheque, payable to Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal to:

Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, Church of Ireland House,  
Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Ireland

# Online Lent Course: Life on the Breadline

Thursday 10th March, 7-8:30pm

## 'Christian Responses to Poverty'

with:



Revd Chris Howson



Stef Benstead



Church Action on Poverty



The Methodist Church



JOINT PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM  
CHURCHES WORKING FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

Register at [bit.ly/breadlinelent](https://bit.ly/breadlinelent)



## Appointed to Comber

The Revd Sam Johnston who has been appointed Incumbent of Comber Parish in Down Diocese. Sam and his wife Gayle have been part of the Comber community since September 2019 when Sam was introduced as Minister-in-Charge. A date for the service of institution will be confirmed shortly.

## News reports

### God will not forgive' suffering of Ukrainians - Zelensky

**Volodymyr Zelensky has told the Kremlin that "God will not forgive" the suffering of the Ukrainian people after nearly two weeks of bombardments by Russian forces.**

The Ukrainian president delivered the strongly worded condemnation of Russia's war in an address to the nation on



the evening of the Orthodox Christian holiday, 'Forgiveness Sunday'.

He promised to avenge civilian deaths, including that of a family of four killed in shelling as they tried to flee the city of Irpin, near capital Kyiv.

"We will not forgive. We will not forget," said Zelensky.

"We cannot forgive the hundreds upon hundreds of victims. Nor the thousands upon thousands who have suffered." He added, "God will not forgive. Not today. Not tomorrow. Never."

The UN estimates that at least 1.5 million people have fled Ukraine in the last 12 days since the launch of the Russian invasion.





## Trial period underway for Anglican Church of Canada's new gender blessings

**The Anglican Church of Canada has prepared a set of gender-themed liturgies for trial use, including a blessing on gender transition, that the church's director of faith, worship and ministry says could be the first of their kind for a national church in the Anglican Communion if they are eventually authorized.**

On Nov. 6, Council of General Synod (CoGS) voted to commend "Pastoral Liturgies for Journeys of Gender Transition and Affirmation" for study, trial use, evaluation and feedback for a one-year period where permitted by bishops. The liturgies, a supplement to the Book of





L-R: Anglican priest the Rev. Carolyn Herold speaks at the 2019 Calgary Ecumenical Pride worship service at Knox United Church, alongside United Church ministers Hillary Van Spronsen and Shannon Mang. Photo: Pam Rocker

Alternative Services, include a blessing on the gender transition process, an affirmation of gender identity, additional prayers and pastoral prayer resources, suggested Bible readings and an appropriate hymnody.

Liturgies to mark gender transition and affirmation for transgender Christians are available in a number of Anglican Communion provinces, but primarily at the local or diocesan level, says the Rev. Eileen Scully, director of faith, worship and ministry for General Synod. See also -

<https://anglicanjournal.com/new-gender-blessings-for-trial-use/>

## District of Columbia's newest mega-church

**The Washington Times has declared Washington National Cathedral to be the District of Columbia's newest mega-church. Due to the pandemic the cathedral has 30,000 on-line viewers.**

The Washington Times: The District's newest megachurch doesn't have a smoke machine, praise band or rock concert-style musical numbers.

But livestreaming daily prayer services and Sunday worship has allowed the Washington National Cathedral to attract 30,000 weekly worshippers online, nearly 10 times its sanctuary's seating capacity.

"We became more of a 'national' cathedral when we were forced to close our doors," said the Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, the dean, or chief resident cleric, at the cathedral. ... "I had always wanted to build a sort of a digital cathedral, to have a presence outside," he added. "Our building is incredible and we'd love it when people come to the cathedral, but to also be the cathedral 'beyond the walls.' I thought we would take five years to do it. But when the pandemic hit, we had to take about five weeks to do it."

## **Too many disadvantaged women are 'overlooked' and 'lost' in the system - new UK report**

**Valuable lessons can be learned from Christian organisations in how to care for disadvantaged women and make them "truly visible", a new report by Theos has said.**

The publication of "Valuing Women: Making Women Visible" coincided with International Women's Day.

The report looks at the experience of women who have experienced a variety of issues like abuse, mental ill-health, homelessness, trauma, sexual exploitation, and alcohol or drug abuse.

It warns that these women are often "unseen" and "face severe and multiple disadvantage".

They report says they are being "failed" by a system that is "increasingly not fit for purpose" and "unable to holistically support" them.

Authors Dr Kathryn Hodges and Dr Sarah Burch said that there were "sizeable gaps" in the support available to these women. Where support was provided, it was not always in a way that was helpful or "safe" for the women.

They said there could be "misunderstanding" within institutions about the women's specific needs, and that quality and access of services must be improved.

"When women are unable to access effective, trustworthy, and reliable helping services, there can be fatal consequences," the report reads.

"Effective help for women needs to understand the impact of the things that happen to women, provide continuity of care, and build trusting, respectful relationships."

The report suggested other institutions could learn from the example of six Christian charities working in this field - Amber Chaplains, Caritas Bakhita House, Eve, the Salvation Army-run Faith House, Lighthouse, and Youth with a Mission.

While the report notes that high levels of care are not unique to the faith-based sector, it said that staff and volunteers within these six charities "took a distinctive approach which made the women they worked with truly visible through their regard".

"They drew on their faith and the resources of their organisations, committing to a continuity of care, which fostered trust," the report said.

"They valued the women they worked with and described their work as a privilege. A number commented that they met women in the image of God, as equals with whom it was a privilege to work.

"For many their faith was a source of strength and comfort, in which prayer could be offered as a gift, provided an



opportunity to reflect on their work, or was experienced as a source of unity."

Writing in the foreward to the report, Theos director Chine McDonald said that women experiencing multiple disadvantages were "often overlooked, lost in a system creaking at the seams following years of austerity".

She said that Christian charities were "extremely well placed to make visible the women they work with".

"Internally, their faith motivations and theological understanding of the value of every human being as made in God's image encourage them to treat the women as of equal worth and in no way less deserving of stability, care and love," she said.

"Externally, Christian organisations are supported by their faith community who can act as added resource, including through raising much-needed funds for specific purposes, and enable the organisations to have a level of independence that helps them navigate the systems that are increasingly not fit for purpose.

"We hope this report will go some way towards a better understanding of the complex challenges faced by some of the most disadvantaged women in our society, draw attention to the changes that are needed in supporting women, and demonstrate how the wisdom, experience and practice of Christian organisations might help to meet some of these challenges."

# Perspective

## Ukraine and unity

### **Churches Together in England General Secretary Rev Dr Paul Goodliff explains why churches need to face challenges together**

The churches often faced the challenges in the Covid pandemic together, in greater ecumenical collaboration than ever before. That was as true of national responses as local, and one of the fruits was closer ecumenical relationships. Will the same be true as we face this new, unexpected, challenge of European (and global) political instability? The tectonic plates of global security are shifting, and we feel that in the 'earthquakes' of sanctions, rising prices, and anxiety about a possible new European, or even, world war.

We had not paid too much attention to this, even as Covid receded, until President Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine. The signs were there, of course (small tremors before the destructive earthquake) in the Russian annexation of Crimea, but recent events in the West have served to embolden Putin and strengthen his sense that he was right, and could succeed, creating a much more unpredictable and dangerous world.

All of this is serious for the church. How far should we embrace the need for conflict? What should our message be

in the debate about constraining Putin? Political theology has become the most urgent of theologies.

The impact of this war in Ukraine has profound implications for migrants and refugees. Churches have already spoken with a common voice to call for greater compassion in the UK government's policies. Global food security is challenged, and we work best in response when we do so ecumenically, as witnessed by the work of Christian Aid. It also impacts the climate crisis: the churches spoke with the same voice last year as we contributed to COP26, and that global crisis will become even more urgent, and we need to ask if that voice remains as strong.

It seems almost certain that prices for food will rise. For those already in food and energy poverty, that will bring destitution, including for many in Britain. Here annual energy costs of almost £3,000 a year and increased food and transport prices are making living costs impossible to meet for more and more people. Churches have already been at the forefront of addressing food poverty through the provision of foodbanks, and that need will grow more urgent. And we will need more imaginative ways of working ecumenically to share the burden and care for the most vulnerable.

And throughout it all the churches pray, act in compassion, comfort the anxious and are a prophetic witness to the kingdom rule of Christ. We do all of that best if we do

# Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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