

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ballintoy Harbour

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Ballintoy Harbour

Ballintoy Harbour is at the end of the road which passes the local parish church whose scenic impact is such that it is likely to be the most photographed church in Ireland. The Harbour on the north coast of County Antrim is also a popular attraction to fans of “Games of Thrones” It is definitely worth a visit on a sunny day. The photograph right gives an indication of the descent and the necessary winding route.



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People and places

C of I Council for Mission tells of busy year

The work of the Council for Mission was showcased at General Synod with the fruit of a busy year put under the spotlight.

Proposing the report of the Council for Mission, the Revd Tim Wright said that representatives were drawn from every diocese across the island and other interested groups.



The Mothers' Union Worldwide President Sheran Harper visiting Mombasa Diocese

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He thanked Bishop Ferran Glenfield, the Revd Colin McConaghie and Derek Neilson for their support and hard work.

He said that the Missio Dei was central to what the council understood mission to be -
They focused on the Five Marks of Mission: Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure.

Mr Wright reminded Synod of the videos which had been produced by the council which can be viewed on their website and Facebook page. He said they were launching the final two this year: Tend and Transform.

Now that the videos are complete the council hopes to [The](#)



[Mothers' Union Worldwide President Sheran Harper visiting Mombasa Diocese](#)

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launch a series of podcasts highlighting what God is doing across the Church of Ireland and they are actively looking for stories.

Seconding the report, Archdeacon Paul Mooney commended the work of the council.

Bishop David McClay (Down and Dromore) asked members of Synod to think about the persecuted Church. He said Christians were the most persecuted people in the world. All

over the world Christians worship in secret and do God's work but they often pay a high price for following Christ, he said. He outlined nations where Christians were persecuted, with North Korea being the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian. "We are part of a world wide Church where people risk everything to follow Christ. Yet in those nations those worshipping Christ are growing," he



The Board of Ministry with Children and Families displayed resources at the General Synod

said. He added that choices we make in the west put Anglicans around the world at risk. Christians in these nations are not in decline and they proclaim Christ in every way they could, he said. The Bishop commended those across the world who suffer because they bear the mark of the cross.

Moderator set for Lebanon

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, left yesterday to travel to Lebanon, a visit he describes as a “precious opportunity to stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ”.

The Board of Ministry with Children and Families displayed resources at the General Synod





The five day visit will focus on a biennial conference organised by one of PCI's Middle East global mission partners, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL).

Accompanied by PCI's Global Mission Secretary, Rev Uel Marrs, who was last in the country in 2018, they will travel to Dhour Chweir, a town 20 miles from Beirut, just north of the main highway to Damascus in the mountains, for the three-day NESSL 'Partners' Consultation'. While the meeting takes place every two years, and draws representatives of Presbyterian and Reformed churches from Europe and North America, the Consultation is taking place for the first time since the Covid Pandemic.

Looking forward to the visit, Dr Kirkpatrick said, "Historically, PCI has had a long association with the Church in both Syria and Lebanon going back to the 1840s, when Irish Presbyterian missionaries helped to establish a congregation in the Syrian capital Damascus. From that time to the 1970s we sent men and women to the region, our last minister returning in 1984. Today, the connections and partnerships that we have there continue to run deep, and this includes the relationship that we have with one of

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our oldest partners, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.”

Lebanon has the largest Christian population of any Middle Eastern country, with PCI sending representatives to many of the Partners’ Consultations over the years. This is, however, the first time that a serving Moderator has attended since 2011, with Dr Kirkpatrick contributing to the morning Bible studies on the theme of ‘Hope in the midst of despair’.

The Moderator continued, “The principal purpose of the meeting is to listen to leaders and ministers from Syria and Lebanon as they share with us the challenges that they face, but equally the opportunities that are being grasped as well.

“The effects of the civil war of the 1970s, 80s and 90s still punctuates Lebanese society, as does the challenge of migration, where one in three people in the country are not from Lebanon, mainly due to the forgotten conflict in neighbouring Syria and the Palestinians who have lived in the country for generations. There is also the devastating impact of the Covid pandemic largely coinciding with an economic and banking collapse, ongoing political upheaval, and the 2020 Beirut port explosion, which made a third of a million people homeless.

“This is the demanding context, a ‘perfect storm’ of challenges, in which we will meet, but it is a precious opportunity to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. A time to worship and pray together, particularly in the current difficulties, as we acknowledge

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that through Christ, there is hope even in the midst of despair,” Dr Kirkpatrick said.



Near East School of Theology

Along with NESSL, which has around 12,000 members in 30 congregations across both Syria and Lebanon, PCI's other longstanding partnership in Lebanon is the Near East School of Theology (NEST), which was founded in 1932. More recently, PCI has been relating to SAT-7, which has been broadcasting Christian TV programmes from their production studios in Beirut to the Middle East and North Africa since 1996. PCI also works with the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development.

“Over the years many representatives from our partners in Lebanon have been welcomed guests as visiting delegates to our General Assembly, or have taken part in our conferences that we have held. Next week's visit will also be

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an important opportunity to spend some time with a number of them,” Rev Uel Marrs explained.

“I know that the Moderator is keen to meet and encourage as many of our partners as possible, so we hope to go to SAT-7’s studios in Beirut, and visit NEST’s president, Dr George Sabra, to hear about School of Theology’s ongoing training programme for ministers and church leaders in Arab speaking Reformed churches in the region.

“A meeting with Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development, whose Tahaddi support centre in southern Beirut is the main project for PCI’s Word Development Appeal, has been scheduled. We also hope to see Dr Mike Bassous, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Lebanon, who spoke at a PCI conference ‘Hope Unexpected – Lessons from the life of the church in the Middle East’ in 2017. It will be a busy, but I hope, fruitful week,” Mr Marrs said.

Two Irish ecumenical bodies have helped make the “unthinkable” happen

Bishop Andrew Forster has praised the work of two of Ireland's foremost ecumenical bodies, the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, for helping to make the "unthinkable" - joint prayer walks between the Churches in Derry-Londonderry - "matter of course".



Bishop Andrew Forster

He was speaking during a discussion at General Synod on the Report of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue. "One of the things I enjoy most," he told delegates, "is my involvement with the Irish Council of Churches, and this year the Irish Council of Churches celebrates 100 years since its formation and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting celebrates 50 years since its formation.

"Now, if you think back to 100 years ago, Ireland was emerging from the conflagration of partition and civil war; we didn't know what the future looked like; and the Churches came together because they believed they had a message of hope, that if they shared it together would make an impact on wider society.

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“If you go back to 50 years ago – in the height of the worst days of the Troubles – representatives of the Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church got together in Ballymascanlon and said, ‘We have something of hope that we can offer to the society around us.’

"That's why I love being involved with the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting [Bishop Andrew is President of the former and joint-chair of the latter] because what happens is Christians come together, from different backgrounds, from the wonderful variety and colour of the Church of Jesus Christ on this island, and we share hope together. We share love together. We share what it is to be a follower of Jesus in a rapidly changing world with all the joy and the challenge that that brings.

“So, we're delighted to have a hundred years of the Irish Council of Churches, and 50 years of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, and I want to leave you with a little bit of a thought. In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, this year, myself and my Catholic colleague and Brother Bishop, Donal McKeown, led a prayer walk around Derry's walls – a brilliant night and we actually had a very good turn out as well.

“30 years ago, 20 years ago, even 15 years ago – unheard of. 30 years ago, 20 years ago, if it had happened there might have been protests. There certainly would have been Press about to see what was going on.

“We did it this year and what at one time was abnormal is now normal. What at one time was completely unthinkable is now something that we do as a matter of course.


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"And I can't help but think that the work of the Irish Council of Churches and the work of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting has brought us to that place right across this island. Whereas, we were in our silos for far, far too long, and we were battling on issues of doctrine that the world around us didn't really care about, when what really counts is that we love Jesus Christ and we've a message of hope for this island, and we can share it more powerfully together than by doing it alone."

**DAVIDSON UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH CHOIR AND
HANDBELLS**

NORTH CAROLINA, USA
Director: Reverend Kevin Turner

ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH CASTLECONNELL
COUNTY LIMERICK
Tuesday 30th May 2023 at 7.30 pm



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ACFEA FOUR CONSULTANTS



The Moderator's other hat



When you are a keen motorcyclist and your congregation is in Portrush being a chaplain and a supporter of the famous North West 200 racing club...

In the media

Lord Sentamu forced to step back from ministry

Church of England's former No 2 failed to act on child sex abuse disclosure, independent review finds, Gabriella SWerling writes in the Daily Telegraph

Lord Sentamu, the former Archbishop of York, has been forced to step back from ministry after he failed to act on a disclosure of child sexual abuse and claimed that “safeguarding is very important, but it does not trump Church Law”.

‘He ignored disclosure of rape... blamed everyone else... refused to apologise ... He is an arrogant bully’

An independent review published this week concluded that Lord Sentamu, who was the Archbishop of York from 2005 to 2020 – second-in-command of the Church of England – failed to act on a disclosure of child sexual abuse carried out by a Church of England priest who took his own life while awaiting trial.

In response, Lord Sentamu rejected the reviewer’s findings, insisting there had been a “fundamental misunderstanding” of the responsibilities of bishops and archbishops.

He also issued a furious rebuttal of the findings and claimed the reviewer’s stated opinion that individuals must act on safeguarding issues regardless of Church law was “odd and

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troubling”, adding: “Safeguarding is very important but it does not trump church law.”

His comments prompted uproar from survivors of church-related abuse as well as clergy.

The Bishop of Birkenhead, the Rt Rev Julie Conalty, who is the deputy lead bishop for safeguarding within the Church of England, responded, saying: “I am so ashamed and angered by this response. Church law and our complex structures are no excuse for failing to do the right thing.”

However, it emerged yesterday that Lord Sentamu is stepping back from ministry as a result of both the findings of the review and his response.

The victim who reported the abuse, the Rev Matthew Ineson, welcomed the news and described Lord Sentamu as an “arrogant bully”, calling for him to be “barred from ever entering ministry again”. The current Archbishop of York, the Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, is also “fully supportive” of his predecessor stepping back from ministry.

Rev Ineson, who was 16 at the time and went on to become a vicar, was sexually abused by the late Rev Trevor Devamanikkam in the 1980s in Bradford, the independent review found.

Devamanikkam was charged with six serious sexual offences in May 2017, all relating to the Rev Ineson, but was found dead in his flat, having killed himself before he was due to appear in court.

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A decade ago, Rev Ineson told some senior clergy about his abuse. The review, commissioned by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team, said clergy, including Lord Sentamu, "failed to act on his disclosures".

Rev Ineson said he reported the abuse in conversation with two bishops in 2012, and again to an archdeacon and a third bishop in 2013. He then wrote letters to the Rt Rev Steven Croft – now the Bishop of Oxford, but then Bishop of Sheffield – copying in Lord Sentamu, and claimed he had "suffered sexual abuse as a youth by a priest".

Following the news that Lord Sentamu has been forced to step back from ministry in the wake of his comments, Rev Ineson said: "I welcome this news. It should have happened a long time ago.

"He ignored disclosure of rape and abuse, failed to consult his safeguarding adviser, failed to take action against Steven Croft, blamed everyone else for his failures, has consistently attempted to bully me into silence, refused to apologise for his actions and now criticises the 'reviewer' for not getting it right.

"The man is an arrogant bully. His Permission to Officiate should be withdrawn and he should be barred from ever entering ministry again."

Gabriella Swerling is Social and Religious Affairs Editor

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

The
British
Academy

Image credit: James McCosh, ca. 1870s. Box AD013, Historical Photograph Collection, Individuals Series, Soley G. Mazel Manuscript Library, Princeton University; published by Princeton University Archives.

The Religious Studies Research Forum presents
THE McCOSH LECTURE 2023
JAMES McCOSH AND THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

The McCosh Lecture 2023

The Religious Studies Research Forum presents The
McCosh Lecture 2023

James McCosh and the Idea of a University

by Professor David Livingstone FBA
of Queen's University Belfast

on Wednesday, 17 May 2023, at 2pm - 4pm

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in the Canada Room & Council Chamber, Lanyon Building,
Queen's University Belfast

When James McCosh left Queen's College Belfast in 1868, it was to take up the Presidency of the College of New Jersey in the United States. There he transformed the College into one of the world's leading institutions of higher learning – Princeton University. In an era of religious revival, Darwinian evolutionism and the professionalisation of science, McCosh navigated his own distinctive path through the challenges of a rapidly changing intellectual culture drawing on his earlier experience in Belfast. In this lecture, we revisit McCosh's educational philosophy and its religious underpinnings, and pause to consider what relevance, if any, it has to current debates about the nature and purpose of the modern university.

Summer Madness 2023 worship leader



SM are so excited to have Sarah McDonald with them this summer at Summer Madness 2023 to lead in worship.

Sarah is a talented musician who has a huge heart for leading the church in worship! We

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cannot wait to have Sarah with us this summer at the festival!

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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