

# Church News Ireland

---



**Image of the day – Lincoln Cathedral**

May 16, 2022

# People and places

## Canon's Christian Aid Week 72 hour sponsored fast

Canon Stuart Lloyd is planning a 72 hour sponsored fast to coincide with Christian Aid Week.

For 27 years, Canon Lloyd was rector of Ballymena Parish in County Antrim and since his retirement lives in the nearby village of Broughshane where he attends St Patrick's Parish Church, Broughshane.

Just last June, Canon Lloyd climbed the nearby Slemish mountain 50 times over the course of seven days - a total ascent equivalent to the height of Mount Everest - raising almost £15,000 to support charitable projects in Nepal.

Now he's planning another gruelling challenge to raise funds to tackle poverty overseas, this time going without food for 72 hours (19-21 May). Each day during his fast, he will sit in the mall outside McNeill's grocery and hardware shops in Broughshane (9am til 6pm) to collect donations and raise awareness of the work of Christian Aid.

If you'd like to join him on the fast, even for part of the time, you can drop him an email on [sgelloyd@btinternet.com](mailto:sgelloyd@btinternet.com)

But if you'd rather stay home and eat Hob Nobs, you can still feel good about yourself by making a donation to support his efforts. 😊

May 16, 2022

You can click the link below to read the story in this week's Ballymena Guardian.

<https://www.ballymenaguardian.co.uk/news/2022/05/08/gallery/72-hour-fast-for-christian-aid-week-in-broughshane-24652/>

## **Oldest Mothers' Union branch in the Diocese of Connor reaches 130th anniversary**



Mrs Gina Wysner, oldest member of Ramoan and Culfeightrin Mothers's Union, cut the anniversary cake with members looking on.



May 16, 2022

Congratulations to Mothers' Union in the Parishes of Ramoan and Culfeightrin, which has reached its 130th anniversary

Members celebrated with a prayer walk in Ballycastle followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre.

The branch is the oldest in the Diocese of Connor, and was formed in 1892, with the first meeting taking place at 34 Quay Road.

Over the years, the branch has supported many different projects in the local community, including the provision of soap bags for hospitals and nursing homes, knitted garments for neonatal units.



## **Kilbroney Family Break is back**

**The team at The Kilbroney Centre have announced that their much loved Family Break will be back this year from the 20–22 July.**

May 16, 2022

They will be offering a range of outdoor activities, great food and some quality Christian teaching in a glorious setting.

The Kilbroney Christian Residential and Conference Centre is located in the beautiful surroundings of Rostrevor, nestled between the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough.

For more information and to book your place please email [booking@kilbroneycentre.com](mailto:booking@kilbroneycentre.com)

## Book launch - Methodism, Moravianism and the Rise of Evangelicalism.

By kind permission of the governors of the Erasmus Smith Trust

**RATHFARNHAM PARISH**  
**FÊTE 2022**  
**SATURDAY MAY 21ST**  
at The High School, Rathgar, 10.30am-3pm

*Join us for a great family day out!*

**Raffle: 1st Prize €500 Harvey Norman Voucher**  
(sponsored by Lisney)

**Bric-a-Brac Tombola Games Blazen Burgers**  
**Bouncy Assault Course Sweets & Candy Floss**  
**Refreshments Plants & Garden Toys Clothes Stall**  
**Dancing Display Accessories Country Kitchen Books**  
**Cakes & Bakes Gift Stall and lots, lots more!**

Fête Brochure with quizzes, crossword and competitions

Rathfarnham Parish  
CHURCH OF IRELAND

A percentage of the Fête profits will be donated to the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough initiative to help Ukrainian people arriving in Ireland.

WE STAND WITH UKRAINE

The Reverend Bob Cotter's book on "John Cennick 1718-45: Methodism, Moravianism and the Rise of Evangelicalism" will be launched in Cennick Hall, Gracehill, on Wednesday 17 August at 7 pm. There will be two other speakers along with the author - Professor Crawford Gribben of Queen's University Belfast

May 16, 2022

and Dr David Jones of Aberystwyth University. All are welcome.

## News reports

### Martyn Percy quits the Church of England after long-running dispute

**Former Christ Church Dean, Martyn Percy, has announced his decision to leave the Church of England, calling it an "unsafe place to work".**

Percy was dean of both the Oxford University college and cathedral until last month.

He agreed to step down from his position after a settlement was reached in February, ending a long-running dispute with the governing body following a safeguarding complaint.

Speaking to The

Church News Ireland

A decorative poster for a flower festival. The background features a watercolor illustration of white and yellow flowers with green leaves and blue accents. The text is centered and includes the location, title, dates, times, and contact information.

CHRIST CHURCH CASTLEROCK BT51 4RA

## Flower Festival

**“Lord, for the Years”**

Artistic Director Alan Beatty  
assisted by James Burnside

**Friday 27th May - Sunday 29th May 2022**

**Festival Times:**  
**Friday 10am-7pm**  
**Opening service at 11am**  
**Saturday 10am-7pm**  
**Sunday 2pm-6pm**  
**Closing service at 7pm**

Refreshments available  
Group bookings welcome  
Contact Debbie Moore  
07751 542013 or  
debbiemooore573@aol.com

Proceeds in Aid of Church Funds  
Registered charity in NI 104695-0



May 16, 2022

Times earlier this month Percy said that the dispute had pushed him to the brink of suicide and caused him to have a "pretty serious breakdown", which he said was "largely triggered by" the Bishop of Oxford.



# COURAGE TO LAMENT

**21 JUNE 2022  
11.30AM - 12.30PM  
ST ANNE'S CATHEDRAL  
BELFAST**

A SERVICE TO REFLECT ON THE PAIN  
OF THE TROUBLES AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

**corrymeela**



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



May 16, 2022

He has now announced in the June edition of Prospect magazine that he is to leave the Church of England altogether.

In his article, he said the Bishop of Oxford "has no accountability, save only to God", and described a "culture of bullying and harassment afflicting many clergy".

"In the face of... partisanship, failure to neutrally manage conflicts of interest, double standards and incompetence in the CoE's safeguarding, I finally took a decision: to leave the Church," he wrote.

"Though I have been ordained for more than 30 years, and continue with my faith in God, the Church of England has destroyed any trust I might have had in it. It is an unsafe place to work."

He said that safeguarding in the Church of England was in a "parlous state" and that millions were being wasted on procedures that "lack the professional standards one would find in other spheres".

He decried the "catastrophic errors" made in the handling of other cases, including London priest, Alan Griffin, who took his own life after unsubstantiated claims of child abuse. The Church of England later admitted that its failings in the handling of this case "led to unreasonable pressures" on Griffin.

Percy, 59, condemned the current system for dealing with complaints and said "that the Church of England lacks



May 16, 2022

transparency, accountability, external scrutiny and, as far as I am concerned, integrity".

The Diocese of Oxford said in a statement, "The Bishop of Oxford and many others have gone to considerable lengths to care for Martyn in his four year dispute with Christ Church and to ensure fair treatment of all involved.

"This has included the offer of conversations about future ministry and a way of marking his departure.

"Much of what has happened has been inaccurately played out by supporters of Martyn in the media and online. Many people have been left damaged and hurt by their campaigns."

In a statement, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop, Jonathan Gibbs, said: "We recognise and acknowledge that the situation at Christ Church Oxford has had a significant impact on many people including the former Dean, Dr Martyn Percy.

"We are committed to ensuring the Church is a safe place for all through professional safeguarding both nationally and in every diocese.

"The safeguarding processes in the Church of England have improved out of all recognition in the last 10 years but we cannot be complacent.

"The Church now has an Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB, chaired by a former Children's' Commissioner for England.

"Along with Oxford Diocese, we have referred Martyn's safeguarding concerns to the ISB for review which will be both rigorous and independent.

"Its finding will be public save only for protection of vulnerable people.

"As the internal questions at Christ Church are a matter for the college and the university, we will not comment on them.

"Martyn Percy has had a long and very distinguished service to God through his work in the Church of England in many roles.

"We are grateful for what he has done and wish him well in the future."

## **Episcopal Bishop in Europe describes Ukrainian 'Catastrophe'**

**"This is a catastrophe in a humanitarian way," said Bishop Mark Edington, describing the current Ukrainian refugee situation.**

"We are the front line of what is becoming a really difficult humanitarian situation in Europe." Bishop Mark Edington was addressing the Province II Synod

Edington, bishop of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, said people are also leaving Russia and moving into such places as Georgia, the home of a Convocation



May 16, 2022

church in Tbilisi. “Georgia is afraid that they may be next” to be invaded, he said.

Presenting to the Province II Synod on May 5, Edington cited stats from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) that from February 24, when the Russian invasion of Ukraine started, to May 1, the adjoining countries have sheltered more than 5.5 million refugees, with more fleeing every day.

Edington presented an impassioned overview of the Russian invasion. “What’s happening in Ukraine is not really about Ukraine, at least it’s not only about Ukraine,” he explained. “It is really about the objective of Russia and its government to change the map of the post-Cold War settlement in Europe.”

He continued, “Russia would prefer to see Europe return to a sort of 19th-century era of spheres of influence, where America is sort of stuck to its home and Russia had much more influence on the continent of Europe.”

Expanding on the major concern, he said, “What we’re very worried about is that Russia is trying to drive this conflict into what we speak of as an Article 5 confrontation” which calls for an attack on one NATO member to be treated as an attack on all members.

“Russia is trying to drive our country into a very difficult choice about whether we would risk a nuclear confrontation with the government of Russia over an attack on, say, Estonia, or Latvia, or a country in the Baltics, or even maybe Poland.” He said a failure to respond would destroy NATO.

Edington spoke of the longtime ministry to refugee work in Europe. As home to the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center in Rome, which serves 10,000 refugees a year, “The convocation has a historic commitment to ministry with refugees and migrants.” Edington said that plans call for expansion of the center.

Assistance can be offered through Episcopal Relief & Development as the convocation partners with them.

He concluded, “This is a very, very dangerous moment in history. It is a difficult moment in the church.”

Edington grew up in Michigan, and before entering ministry pursued a career in international relations. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was consecrated in 2019 as the 26th Bishop of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, but only the second elected bishop.

With 20 churches in seven European countries, the convocation is one of 12 dioceses in Province II, which also includes two New Jersey dioceses and six in New York, and the Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Haiti.

## **Southern Baptists numbers fall over a million members in the past three years**

**The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has lost over a million members in the past three years, with back-to-**



May 16, 2022

## **back years of the COVID-19 pandemic following a decade-plus of decline.**

Reported SBC membership fell to 13.7 million in 2021, its lowest tally in more than 40 years, according to the latest Annual Church Profile released on Thursday.

Membership in America's largest Protestant denomination has dropped from 14.8 million in 2018 and a peak of 16.3 million in 2006, and church attendance continued to dwindle during the pandemic.

One area of promise for Southern Baptists is their key metric: baptisms. After falling by half in 2020, reported baptisms were up by a quarter last year. SBC churches baptized 154,700 people in 2021, still significantly lower than 236,000 a year before the pandemic.

“The reasons that baptism numbers matter to us is because they represent conversion,” said Adam Blosser, pastor of Goshen Baptist Church in Spotsylvania County, Virginia.

His congregation of about 100 people didn't baptize any new believers in 2020, when they shut down for the first few months of the pandemic before spending most of the year gathering outside. In 2021, the church held some baptisms again—but Blosser says not at a level he's satisfied with.

## **In the media**

**Parents 'requested' to pay €60 for child to make confirmation in south Dublin parish**

Irish Independent

A parent has complained that they have been “requested” to pay up to €60 for their child to make their confirmation in a south Dublin parish.

A woman, who was not named, contacted RTÉ’s Liveline programme regarding a letter which she received from the Sandyford Parish.

“It’s a new one for me, you have to give money to the catholic church to make your confirmation,” the woman said. [\[\[\] https://www.independent.ie/news/parents-requested-to-pay-60-for-child-to-make-confirmation-in-south-dublin-parish-41645752.html \]](https://www.independent.ie/news/parents-requested-to-pay-60-for-child-to-make-confirmation-in-south-dublin-parish-41645752.html)

### **Widow speaks out 40 years after IRA murder: I had to tell our daughter God took daddy to heaven because some people don’t like soldiers**

Belfast News Letter

The widow of a man slain by the IRA four decades ago has spoken out about the killing and its aftermath – and her belief that one day divine justice will be done.

Mary Robinson made the comments after the government unveiled fresh amnesty-style plans for Troubles perpetrators this week.

A practicing Catholic, Mary also spoke of her distaste for Sinn Fein, following its emergence as the largest party in the Province in last week’s election.



May 16, 2022

Her husband Tom Cunningham (23) was killed on May 12, 1982, and this Sunday she will attend a small commemorative service for him in Leckpatrick Church of Ireland near Strabane (Tom's background had been Anglican)....

.... As to Sinn Fein now being NI's biggest party, she said: "I can't bear to think of them in office. I can't bear to think of them having the authority to decide what's right for any of us. I've just no time for them at all. None whatsoever.

"I don't think they've moved any way from their original plan. I'm a Catholic myself, and I'd have absolutely no time for any of this."

As she prepares for the wreath-laying church service this Sunday, she reflected: "40 just seems such a huge milestone. I can't believe it's 40 years....

To mark the anniversary, she has spoken to the News Letter about the crime and its aftermath... More at -  
[[ <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/crime/widow-speaks-out-40-years-after-ira-murder-i-had-to-tell-our-daughter-god-took-daddy-to-heaven-because-some-people-dont-like-soldiers-3693986> ]

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

**Children's Ministry training course** - See next page



**certificate in children's ministry**

Republic of Ireland      Aurora Children

Aurora Children is a children's ministry training course from St Peter's College (part of Sheffield Diocese) designed for those involved in Christian children's work, and is made up of three modules:

**Children's Ministry and the Children's Leader, Understanding Children and Children's Ministry Practice, and Managing the Ministry.**

It is ideal for anyone who can commit to a number of training sessions over 8 months, in order to develop their practice, gain new skills and grow in confidence.

Running from September 2022 to May 2023, we plan to deliver the course using a blended approach of online and in-person learning. Saturdays will be run in-person - starting in Dublin with future venues TBC. Wednesday evenings will be on Zoom. More details on our website.

Students can work towards the St Peter's College Certificate in Children's Ministry by completing a number of written assignments.

Cost €300 per student (some discounts and bursaries available)

For more details and to book a place, visit [www.auroratraining.org.uk/eire](http://www.auroratraining.org.uk/eire)

## Perspective

### Sinn Fein's win brings a United Ireland no nearer - by Tom McTague

**The knottiness of Northern Ireland is by design. Remaining stuck is the only way the place works.**

May 16, 2022

Three seismic events have occurred in one go in Northern Ireland. One, for the first time in Northern Ireland's 100-year existence, an Irish nationalist party placed first in an election —and not just any nationalist party, but Sinn Fein, the longtime political wing of the Irish Republican Army. Two, the Alliance Party, which challenges the traditional Protestant-Catholic division that has defined Northern Ireland since its inception, scored its best-ever result and has now established itself as a genuine third force in Northern Irish politics. And three, the great political row that has dominated Northern Irish politics since Brexit—over the so-called protocol establishing new border controls—was tested with the public, and while those that oppose it have hardened in their opposition, a majority voted for parties that are fine with it.

The truth of Thursday's elections, then, is surely that the reunification of the island of Ireland is now more likely, and that Northern Ireland will finally be able to put to bed the divisions over Brexit and move on. Right? Wrong.

The reality is that Northern Ireland remains as stuck as ever, a Gordian knot without an Alexander to slice it open. In fact, in Northern Ireland there can be no Alexander—and that is the point. The knottiness of Northern Ireland is by design. Remaining stuck is the only way the place works.

Two inescapable truths continue to govern Northern Ireland. The first is that while Sinn Fein emerged ahead of all other parties in Thursday's election, a sizable majority of the electorate is still in favor of remaining part of the United Kingdom rather than joining the Republic of Ireland. The second is that the Northern Ireland that exists is a strange,



unfair, and largely dysfunctional place that works only when both its nationalist and unionist communities consent to the system governing it. While more people are now voting for the third-way Alliance Party, which argues that other bread-and-butter issues matter more than unionism or nationalism, for now, Northern Ireland's political and constitutional reality remains unchanged.

Under the Good Friday Agreement, power must be shared between the two largest designations elected to the Northern Irish Assembly, which has thus far been made up of blocs identifying as unionist and nationalist. Until those that declare themselves “other”—such as the Alliance Party—finish in the top two, it doesn't matter whether a nationalist or union party finishes first or second, because they must share power with the other.

This reality most directly affects the future of the Northern Irish protocol agreed upon by the United Kingdom and the European Union in 2019 as part of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Brexit divorce deal. Under the terms of this agreement, a trade-and-customs border was erected between Northern Ireland and mainland Great Britain (that is, within the same country), in order to avoid one being imposed between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (that is, between two different states that share the same island). Ever since, Northern Ireland's unionist parties have fiercely resisted this protocol, arguing that it is unfair because it prioritizes the wishes of one community in Northern Ireland (nationalists) over the other (unionists). In Thursday's elections two things happened, each pulling in the opposite direction. First, parties that supported the protocol won more votes than parties that opposed it. But

second, among the unionist parties that oppose it, it was the most hardline of the parties that increased its share of the vote at the expense of the others.

And so we are back to where we have always been when it comes to Northern Ireland, with everything upended in theory but nothing changing in practice. Once again, we have fallen down the rabbit hole of the Northern Irish border problem into a world of the absurd. “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” asks Alice of the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” replies the cat. The same is true for Northern Ireland.

One side, led by the EU, holds up the protocol as an almost sanctified document that must be adhered to in order to keep the peace in Northern Ireland. Without it, this side argues, checks on goods moving between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland would have to take place on the land border, stirring up the resentment of Irish nationalists, and therefore undermining support for the political settlement established by the Good Friday Agreement. Yet the protocol has never been implemented in full, because to do so would cause such disruption that it would further stir up the resentment of unionists, therefore undermining support for the political settlement established by the Good Friday Agreement.

In essence, then, the protocol is held up by one side as an agreement necessary to keep the peace, but has never been implemented in full because to do so would undermine the peace. (The truth is, neither the U.K. nor the EU has ever fully implemented the protocol: The British government

has unilaterally extended “grace periods” for businesses to avoid disruption, while the EU has agreed not to implement parts of the protocol that would restrict the flow of medical supplies from Britain to Northern Ireland.) Yet because it has not been implemented in full, the situation has never become so intolerable that anyone has actually changed it. This is a look-the-other-way solution where everyone acknowledges that the agreement cannot be enforced or scrapped.

The fear, though, is that the situation cannot last much longer. As of today, Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party, the most successful unionist bloc in Thursday’s election, have six months to set up a new power-sharing executive (a Northern Irish government, essentially) before the British government imposes direct rule from London and sets a date for another round of elections to break the deadlock. Again: The British government would call elections to break a deadlock over a deal that is essential to security but that cannot be implemented because it would undermine security.

To find a way through the crisis, Johnson is flirting with the idea of passing a law giving the British government the power to bypass bits of the protocol it considers intolerable. Such a move, critics argue, would be a breach of international law. Proponents counter that the British government has obligations to two international agreements that are now in conflict: the Good Friday Agreement and the protocol. To maintain the former, the latter will have to change. To balance such a move, some experts believe the British government will offer concessions to Irish nationalists that have, so far, been blocked by unionists. By granting



concessions to both sides, officials hope that a route through the crisis might be found. If you're confused, that is because the whole issue is so fiendishly complicated that nobody has managed to solve it in the six years since Britain voted to leave the EU.

The truth, as has always been the case in Northern Ireland, is that the choice is between compromise and chaos. "The simple reality is if you want Northern Ireland to work, we need a new offer on the protocol and a new historic compromise," says Paul Bew, a professor of Irish politics at Queen's University in Belfast who was intimately involved in the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement. The final compromise itself matters less than the fact that everybody—the EU, Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and the two (or three) sides in Northern Ireland—must be equally unhappy with it. Only once everyone is somewhat aggrieved will the solution be somewhat tenable.

Northern Ireland can feel like a land where raw power and violence still matter in a way that should not be the case in a modern state. Yet in many ways, it is also a deeply unreal place, where the politics of make-believe is the only thing that works: where democracy is real, but not really; where peace settlements rule, but do not settle anything; and where sectarian division is lamented, but entrenched by the system lauded by all. It is a place where Irish nationalists win but are no closer to Irish unity; where unionists lose but are no less powerful; and where clean, rational solutions that look good on paper need to become dirty, irrational compromises that look terrible on inspection if they are to stand a chance of working.

May 16, 2022

*Tom McTague is a staff writer at The Atlantic based in London.*

[\[\[\] https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/05/sinn-fein-win-northern-ireland-election/629787/ \]](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/05/sinn-fein-win-northern-ireland-election/629787/)

## Poem for today

### Epic by Patrick Kavanagh

I have lived in important places, times  
When great events were decided; who owned  
That half a rood of rock, a no-man's land  
Surrounded by our pitchfork-armed claims.  
I heard the Duffys shouting 'Damn your soul!'  
And old McCabe stripped to the waist, seen  
Step the plot defying blue cast-steel –  
'Here is the march along these iron stones'  
That was the year of the Munich bother. Which  
Was more important? I inclined  
To lose my faith in Ballyrush and Gortin  
Till Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind.  
He said: I made the Iliad from such  
A local row. Gods make their own importance.

## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

---