

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Choral precision

The choirs of St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey align with the tile pattern beneath the historic London dome.

News

Supreme Court hearing challenge to RE norms in NI schools

Supreme Court has heard a case challenging established norms of religious education and collective worship in schools

Last week the Supreme Court concluded two days of hearings in a legal case challenging a school's religious education and collective worship in Northern Ireland, with claims that provision is too Christian in nature.

The case is being brought by a parent on behalf of their child, known as JR87. According to supremecourt.uk, the case began when the child—who attends a controlled school, a type of maintained school managed and funded by the Education Authority in Northern Ireland—took part in non-denominational Christian religious education and collective worship as part of the curriculum. Her family does not practise any faith.



Belfast City Hall to cranes from above

At home, the child began repeating prayers she had learned at school before meals and would ask her parents questions about God and religion.

In May 2019, the parents wrote to the school questioning how balanced their child's religious education was. The school confirmed its provision of religious education and collective worship was "Bible-based".



The work of skilled ornithologists

The parents challenged this, arguing that compulsory RE contravened their right to respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as protected by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which requires the state to provide public education that “respects



Gracehill Moravian Church in its Unesco setting

the right of parents to ensure such education... is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions”.

The family initially won their case at Northern Ireland High Court but lost at the Court of Appeal in 2024. The court ruled that parents had an “unqualified statutory right” to withdraw their children from RE and collective worship and that there was no evidence the child had been forced to participate.

The case is now before the Supreme Court on appeal, with a ruling expected in the coming weeks or months.

Northern Ireland Humanists are supporting the family’s case.

Gaza - We in Ireland must pray for a change of heart – Irish Bishops

“It appears that humanity has lost its heart” – Irish Bishops

Irish Bishops meeting in Maynooth on Monday offered prayers for peace in the Holy Land, for Ukraine, Sudan and in other troubled parts of the world. In particular, bishops discussed the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, stating:

From all over Ireland, parishioners are reporting their horror and helplessness on seeing images of death and communal destruction in Gaza. Exhausted mothers can no longer nourish their young, children are dying of malnutrition, while aid lorries full of supplies are being refused entry into the territory, or are not safely arriving at their destination.

“We in Ireland must pray for a change of heart. Throughout the month of June – the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – we call on everyone to pray for an outpouring of the compassion of God on a heartless world.

“To see the relentless bombardment of civilian areas, the deliberate withholding of food from the starving, as well as the callous holding of hostages, it appears that humanity has lost its heart. In the face of these horrors, we invite everyone to turn to the heart of Jesus throughout the month of June by praying for the renewal of heart that our world so desperately needs. We call on all Catholics to make the first Friday, 6 June, a day of prayer and fasting in solidarity with

our sisters and brothers who are suffering at this time in the Holy Land.

“We echo Pope Leo XIV’s recent appeal to allow into Gaza ‘the entry of dignified humanitarian aid and to put an end to the hostilities, whose heartbreaking price is paid by the children, elderly, and the sick.’”

This statement is on behalf of the members of the Standing Committee of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, who met on Monday in Columba Centre of Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth.

C of E bishops renew efforts to address gender inequality in the Church

The Church of England’s House of Bishops has agreed each diocese should appoint an adviser on women’s ministry.

This came as part of renewed efforts to address gender inequality in the Church, as reported by Church Times.

Plans are underway for a major study examining how gender-based disparities still affect ministry.

A statement said: the aim is to help men and women “work better together” and offer “Gospel hope and transformation” rather than reflect the “negative elements of wider culture”.

The discussions follow fresh calls from campaign group Women and the Church (WATCH) to abolish the Five



'Called to Preach'

A morning of encouragement for female preachers, lay/ordained

We are delighted that Grace, Anne and Jaclyn, 3 internationally experienced female preachers, have agreed to take part in a zoom conversation with us. They will share their own convictions about being called to preach and teach as female theologians. This morning is also intended to connect you with like minded female preachers and theologians from across Ireland. It is for anyone currently involved in preaching/teaching ministry (lay or ordained) and those seriously considering this pathway.

7th June

10 am-12 pm

**Dunmurry
Presbyterian Church**

Dr. Grace Al-Zoughbi Arteen lead the bible studies department at Bethlehem Bible College 2011-2018 and teaches online at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Anne E. Zaki is Professor of preaching and practical theology at The Evangelical Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt

Rev Dr Jaclyn Williams is Assistant Professor of Preaching at Fuller Seminary and an American Baptist-ordained minister. She has been awarded the Parish Pulpit Fellowship (Fuller Theological Seminary).

The event is free but you must register using the link provided.



Churches
in Ireland
Connecting
in Christ



**This morning is made possible
by the Pauline Webb
Ecumenical Fund,**



Guiding Principles, which were part of the 2014 agreement on women bishops.

In response, traditionalist group Forward in Faith argued that assurances made to those with theological objections must be upheld.

Speaking at the recent Forward in Faith Festival, Bishop of Aston, the Rt Revd Esther Prior, acknowledged differing views on ordination but emphasised unity: “I don’t think I want the C of E without you: we would be the poorer for it.”

The bishops also reflected on last year’s review of the appointment of the Bishop of Blackburn, reaffirming the need to ensure women’s ministry flourishes and that all church traditions are respected.

Other topics included the Gaza conflict, condemned in an official statement as “a grave sin that violently assaults God-given human dignity”, as well as updates on the Living in Love and Faith process, clergy pension proposals and new data on Gen Z’s openness to faith.

Pope warns of AI ‘challenge to dignity, labour and justice’

Pope Leo XIV has said that artificial intelligence is the main challenge for humanity in his first address to cardinals.



The new pontiff vowed to continue some of Pope Francis's missions, including making the Catholic Church more inclusive.

The first American Pope told the cardinals who elected him that he was fully committed to the reforms.

He singled out AI as one of the main issues facing humanity, saying: "In our own day, the Church offers everyone the treasury of its social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour."

Pope Francis had become increasingly vocal about the threats to humanity posed by AI and called for an international treaty to regulate it. He warned that such

powerful technology risked turning human relations into mere algorithms.

Ahead of the conclave, the secret process of electing a new pontiff, an artificially generated image of Donald Trump dressed as the pope sparked criticism across the globe.

The picture depicted the US president draped in white robes while wearing a gold crucifix and mitre hat and pointing his right index finger to the sky.

The post by Mr Trump was called insulting by some Catholics, while the president claimed they “loved it”.

Other AI videos were shared widely on the internet. One depicted cardinals turning the conclave into a party, with a DJ booth, drinking games and karaoke.

Pope Francis used his 2024 peace message to call for an international treaty to ensure that AI was developed and used ethically.

Pope Leo also said in his first Mass on Friday that the Church must do more to reach places around the world where there was a lack of faith.

In his homily, he said people with a lack of faith often suffered a “loss of meaning in life”, adding: “A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society.”

He said he had been elected as the Pope so the Church could be an increasingly bright beacon in a troubled world.

Anglican bishops say Gaza war now 'aggression', not defence

Church of England bishops have renewed their call for an immediate end to the war in Gaza, calling the suffering a “grave moral failure” and “a violent assault on God-given human dignity”.

In a strongly worded statement issued after their meeting in York, the bishops said Israel's actions had shifted from self-defence to aggression. “Nothing justifies the heinous terror attacks committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023,” they wrote, “but the Government of Israel has shown... this is no longer a defensive war, but a war of aggression.”

Although the Israeli government allowed some aid into Gaza this week, the UN reported major challenges in reaching the people most in need.

The bishops condemned the use of siege and starvation, saying: “We have watched with horror and outrage as siege and starvation are used as a weapon of war in Gaza, and as hospitals and health facilities have been systemically targeted. Over the last three months, the Israeli government's deliberate denial of food and medical aid to an entire civilian population is an atrocity that defies our common humanity. It is the very definition of collective punishment and has no moral justification.”

It continued: "We note that the Israeli Government has been challenged before the International Court of Justice. Starving children cannot wait for legal rulings given that every country has an obligation to prevent crimes against humanity. As Bishops we are compelled to state clearly and unequivocally that the death, suffering and destruction being inflicted on Gaza is a grave sin that violently assaults God-given human dignity and the very integrity of God's creation."

Welcoming the UK's suspension of trade talks with Israel this week, they called it a "necessary first step", and urged governments to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state.

In response, Israel's foreign spokesman said external pressure would "not divert Israel from its path in defending its existence".

The bishops also encouraged churches to support the rebuilding of the Anglican-run Al Ahli Hospital and reaffirmed their solidarity with both Jewish and Palestinian communities.

Education

BBC Guardians docu-series by past-pupil gets Wallace High interest

Everyone at Wallace High School is looking forward to watching the first episode of Guardians, an exciting



docu-series which explores the life of wildlife rangers across the world.

Launched by Prince William and the Royal Foundation's United for Wildlife, this will be of special interest to everyone in Lisburn as it is directed by Wallace's very own Mark McClean.

We have followed the exciting career of renowned wildlife filmmaker Mark, from Blue Hare Films and have been delighted to welcome him back to Wallace to share his experiences with current pupils and staff.

Echoing Wallace High's determination to protect the environment and promote sustainability, Mark is a past pupil clearly continuing to follow #thewallaceway.

You can watch the BBC Earth series via this link:
<https://zurl.co/yKKXc>

Our Schools' Mission in a Digital Era

Kieron Sparling attended the 38th Annual Conference of the AMCSS & Joint Managerial Body (JMB) in the Europe Hotel in Killarney, on behalf of the Board of Education of the Church of Ireland (RI).

The theme was “Our Schools’ Mission in a Digital Era: Embracing Change and Upholding Values”. As part of the programme, addresses were given by Mr. John Barry (President of the AMCSS & JMB) and Ms. Helen McEntee (Minister for Education)

Calling young traditional musicians

Young musicians aged 18–23 residing on the island of Ireland are invited to apply for a fully-funded residential bursary, offering an unforgettable week of music, learning, and cultural exchange at the Belfast TradFest Summer School.

The All Island Residential Bursary Scheme aims to remove financial barriers for talented young students from every county across Ireland, covering tuition fees which includes access to the full programme of afternoon events, accommodation, and meals — allowing recipients to fully immerse themselves in the Summer School experience.

Apply now or find out more via the Belfast TradFest.
Submissions close Monday 2 June at 6pm.

Cathedral Calls

Christ Church Cathedral Patronal Festival

The Patronal Festival in Dublin will be celebrated on Trinity Sunday 15th June.

A Festal Choral Eucharist will be sung by the Cathedral Choir at 11am.

It will feature movements from Montiverdi's Vespers and Howells's Te Deum

The Preacher is Bonnie Perry, Bishop of Michigan

The Friends of Christ Church will meet for lunch and their AGM at 1pm in the Chapter House.

Festal Choral Evensong with the Past Choristers is at 3pm. If you are a Past Chorister of the Cathedral Choir or Girls' Choir and would like to sing, please RSVP to pastchoristers@christchurch.ie for more information

Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin's oldest actively used building, has stood at the heart of the city for nearly a millennium. As a sacred space and one of Ireland's top visitor attractions, the Cathedral has been an important part of Dublin's fabric and an iconic presence on the city skyline.

May 28, 2025

“We will celebrate a series of significant milestones in 2028, including our 1000th anniversary”.

Canon Treasurer of Saint Canice's Cathedral installed



The Revd. Canon Ian Coulter was installed as Canon Treasurer of Saint Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, at a Service of Choral Evensong on Sunday 25th May 2025.

Canon Coulter's appointment follows the retirement of Canon Brian O'Rourke from the Chapter. The new Canon Treasurer was appointed by Bishop Adrian Wilkinson in January 2025. Prior to this role Canon Coulter had been the Prebendary of Blackrath on the Cathedral Chapter since 2022.



Canon Coulter was joined at the service by his family, a large number of Parishioners from the Templemore Union and by friends and colleagues from across the Diocese.

Welcoming worshippers to the cathedral the Dean, the Very Reverend Stephen Farrell, spoke of the historic role of a Canon Treasurer and welcomed Ian to this new position within the Chapter. In his sermon Canon Coulter, who was ordained in the cathedral a quarter century previously, said it was psalm 127, the psalm at the installation Evensong that had gripped him all those years before and set him on the path to ordination. He spoke of his joy at being installed into his new Office and how he looked forward to working with the Dean and Chapter Colleagues to continue the cathedral's ministry of inclusion and welcome.

The Service was sung by St.Canice's Cathedral Choir

Following Evensong fellowship continued over refreshments provided by Canon Coulter's family.

Clergy and ministry



A Ministry of Presence - University Chaplaincy in Dublin

What does a normal day or week look like for a university chaplain in Ireland today?

In this new film in the Inspiring Angles series, Canon Paul Arbuthnot and lay chaplain Eric Hughes talk through their respective roles in serving staff and students at Trinity College Dublin and the three-campus Dublin City University.

May 28, 2025

For them and for the people with whom they journey, this is a relevant ministry of presence in a place where many are searching for meaning beyond themselves and are open to listening to what is offered through the Christian faith.

Watch the video here:

https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2025/05/23/a-ministry-of-presence-universityutm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

Events

C of I summer camps

Do you want to know what summer camps are on in your diocese?

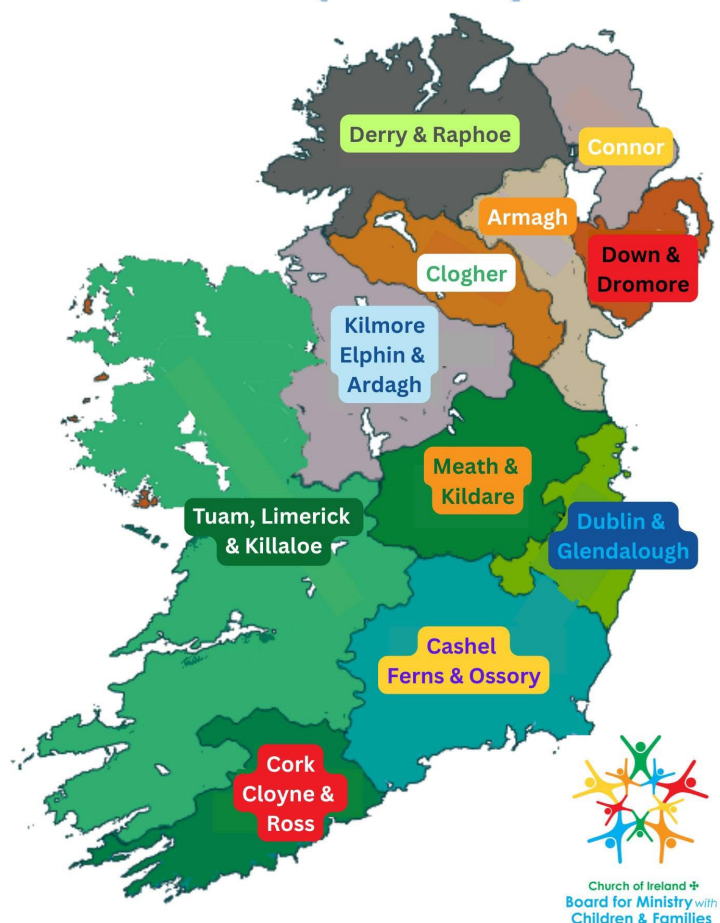
Click the link here to find out!

<https://cfm.ireland.anglican.org/coi-summer-camp-family-event-map/>

If you want to add your summer camp or one day Childrens/Family event to the list simply complete the form here:

https://form.jotform.com/Rachael_Murphy/SummerCamps

Click on a Diocese to see the list of Summer Camps & Family Events



Christ Church Friends themed Cathedral tour, June 3

First Tuesday themed cathedral tours, at 1.30pm, continue this month. On Tuesday 3rd June, this will be The Cathedral Liberty, a walk around the exterior, to examine traces of something few know about.**

It was a medieval privilege, that lasted until the 19th century, giving exclusive control to the cathedral of a tiny area, about 1 acre, around the building. The area was soon full of houses and shops, later to contain St John the Evangelist church and the Four Courts.

Our guide is **Adrian Le Harivel**, an art historian who specializes in city walks. Our meeting place is by the cathedral's main entrance. This event is free though exclusive to Friends, yet another reason to join!

Poem for today

High Flight

by John Gillespie Magee

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, --and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of --Wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air...



Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark or even eagle flew --
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

Please recommend to your friends