

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Shane's Castle Banshee**

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## Image of the day



### Shane's Castle Banshee

The Banshee is a 150hp Scammell Highwayman built in 1964. It was supplied new to Hamblins Supplies Ltd, Leicester. It had several subsequent owners and was then purchased in 1986 by the present owner, Lord O'Neill, and restored over the years. It is used to tow a Showman's Living Van and Fairground Organ and provides electrical power to operate the organ. Info and photos by Timothy Ferris



# People and places



EASTSIDE  
AWARDS

2022  
BELFAST  
CITY AWARD

## WINNER

THE EASTSIDE AWARD FOR  
FAVOURITE EATERY (CAFÉ/  
RESTAURANT) IN EAST BELFAST

Dock Café

solv  
energy as always

## The Dock Café is a winner

Huge congratulations to Stephen McIlwaine and the team at The DOCK Café who recently won the Eastside Award for Favourite Eatery in East Belfast!

It is even more of an achievement as the café has just reopened after suffering significant flood damage.

This is yet more recognition for the DOCK Café's quirky atmosphere and friendly service as it holds first place in the Trip Advisor list of top 10 cafés in Belfast.

The DOCK Café first opened in 2012 on a 'meanwhile lease' in the Titanic Quarter and quickly became a focal point for students, tourists and residents. Managed by Stephen with a group of volunteers, it operates a unique donations box

policy where customers pay what they can or want to pay for their drinks and eats.

Also sharing the space is the DOCK Prayer Garden, a light-filled little oasis of greenery and peace in a corner of the café, for those times when we all need somewhere to take refuge and reflect.

There's some reading material available, and a prayer wall if visitors would like to leave a request or write their own prayer.

## Student Community

Andrew McCaw, Youth Worker at The Gathering Belfast is working to establish a student Christian community within the Titanic Quarter and is partnering with the Dock Café and YWAM East Belfast to facilitate a hang-out space. Students can come for conversations, games, advice, and prayer once or twice a week with plans for an Alpha Course, and then further discipleship. Visit

The DOCK  
Café, 2K  
Queen's Road,  
Belfast, BT3  
9DT



## Co Armagh clergyman taking to heavens for skydive in aid of Southern Hospice

**Rev Matthew Hagan has provided care and support to many patients and their families since he became a Chaplain in the Hospice almost 13 years ago, reports Micheal McKenna**

The Co Armagh clergyman will be going 'Nearer My God, to Thee' when he takes to the heavens for a parachute jump in aid of the Southern Hospice.

Rev Matthew Hagan, rector of Tynan, Aghavilly and Middletown, is one of the Southern Area Hospice Chaplaincy team.

And the hard-working and dedicated cleric has signed up to take part in a 'Skydive for the Hospice' on Saturday, May 21.

When Matthew is not helping patients and their families by providing chaplaincy support, he is also helping the Fundraising Team by taking part in challenges to raise funds for our local Hospice services.

Matthew, who is a well-known Church of Ireland rector from the combined rural Co Armagh parishes, has provided care and support to many patients and their families since he became a Chaplain in the Hospice almost 13 years ago.

Southern Area Hospice Services relies so heavily on fundraising initiatives to enable them to continue to provide

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the care and support they do in the Southern Trust Area.

Rev Matthew Hagan has provided care and support to many patients and their families since he became a Chaplain in the Hospice almost 13 years ago



Fundraising Officer, James McCaffrey, said: “Matthew is no stranger to fundraising for our Hospice, having completed a 5k a day challenge in 2020.

“I was delighted when he called me and said he would like to challenge himself once again and sign up for our Skydive. We really appreciate his efforts and support. Good Luck Matthew.”



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If you would like to show your support, you can do so by following this link:

[ <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/matthewhagan> ]

or by giving him donations in person or sending them to him at the Hospice. Report and photo courtesy Armagh.i

## **Approval for new building for Holy Trinity NS, Westport**

There was good news this week for the pupils and staff at Holy Trinity National School in Westport, as approval has been given for a new school building.

The Church of Ireland school is currently housed in a 230 year old building in the town.

The school was approved for a new building several years ago, but the Department of Education subsequently proposed that a second primary school would be located on the same site.

This proposal has now been abandoned and the Minister for Education has given approval for a new school building for Holy Trinity National School.

## **Irish Methodist work in Bulgaria**

In Bulgaria, a newly opened Methodist social centre for Ukrainian refugees has daily attendance of 20+ people. A recent event organised in the park beside the centre saw 250 people attend.

Find out more about how Irish Methodist donations are helping:

<https://irishmethodist.org/ukraine>

## **Presbyterian Women return to Assembly Buildings**

With the exception of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI), General Assembly, the largest annual meeting held by the Church is the Annual Conference of Presbyterian Women. A part of PCI's women's ministry, known within the denomination as 'PW', due to the pandemic it has been unable to hold an in person conference for two years.



**Photo - Pauline Kennedy, PCI's Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer**



This Saturday (7 May) however, upwards of 1000 women will gather in Assembly Buildings in Belfast once again to elect a new president, worship and hear from God's Word, and to find out how PW's work has continued to make a difference at home and overseas during the pandemic.

Looking forward to Saturday, Pauline Kennedy, PCI's Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, said that it would be a very welcome return to Assembly Buildings. "For most organisations whose members would have met locally, and for society itself, the last two years have been difficult and very different times. The fact that we can come together after what seems to be such a long time, and not over a screen like last year, makes this Annual Conference all the more special, and everyone is very welcome."

Most congregations in PCI have a Presbyterian Women's group. Each of the 465 PW Groups around Ireland are envisaged as fellowships in which women of all ages, and stages of life, are able to come together to grow in their faith through Bible study, prayer, teaching and through growing in community together.

"It has been very encouraging to see how Presbyterian Women throughout our congregations responded to the pandemic. Groups have been active in their local communities and have found ways to come along side each other using technology to support their members. Meetings were held on Zoom and social media, like WhatsApp, enabling women of all ages to stay in touch, join together and support each other in different ways, but especially through prayer. Women growing in faith together and reaching out to others is at the heart of Presbyterian

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Women, and will continue to be our focus going forward,” Pauline Kennedy said.

This year’s guest speaker will be Amy Summerfield, the Derbyshire born CEO of Kyria, a leadership network that seeks to champion, empower and release women into their spheres of influence.



The conference will also hear from outgoing President Heather Clements and how PW and women’s ministry have contributed to the life, mission and ministry of the Church at home and overseas. While the past two years have been financially difficult for Groups, the conference will hear how Presbyterian Women has funded two the Special Projects for 2020 to 2022.

The Home Project supported Care NI to set up retreats for couples who have suffered the pain of pregnancy loss. The Overseas Project helped to refurbish the mothers waiting home in Okhaldhunga Community Hospital in Nepal. The Conference will also hear how in 2020 and 2021, a total of £206,000 was given to support the work of PCI Deaconesses and Global Mission Workers, with two new trainee deaconesses starting their training at Union Theological College in September 2021.

This year’s home and overseas special projects will be unveiled at the conference as Presbyterian Women looks forward to welcoming Esther Parker, a member of Sinclair

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Seamen's Presbyterian Church in Belfast, as incoming PW president for 2022/23.

Talking about the Presbyterian Women's theme for the year, Pauline Kennedy said, "Our theme for the forthcoming year will be 'Deeper Together' and it is inspired by Romans 12:10, when the Apostle Paul encourages us to 'Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.' Deeper Together will enable us to take all that we have learned about what is important over the two years, assess where we have come from, where we are, and decide how we can best move forward together.

"This is important as it has become, notwithstanding the societal effects of the pandemic, increasingly apparent that there has been growing generational gap within women's ministry over the years that makes build an effective ministry to women of all ages it less straightforward. We need to ask ourselves 'How can we think differently about women's ministry and what approaches can we adopt to help us grow deeper together?' During our morning meeting, Amy will give her first talk on 'Deeper Together' and help us to think about that. During the afternoon celebration she will give her second talk and further unpacks God's Word," Pauline said.

# Church News Ireland



## News reports

### The Episcopal Church's stance on possible overturn of Roe v. Wade

One of The Episcopal Church's presiding officers and its Office of Government Relations affirmed the church's commitment to equal access to reproductive health care on May 3, after a leaked draft of a pending U.S. Supreme Court ruling indicated the court was poised to overturn the landmark 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade that ensured for women nationwide the right to obtain an abortion, David Paulsen reports.

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, responded with a written statement that cited decades of General Convention resolutions in support of women's access to birth control and abortion. In particular, Jennings said, The Episcopal Church's governing body passed a 1976 resolution that expressed "unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter and to act upon them."

"And yet, for half a century, the promise of equal access to reproductive health care has never been fully realised," said Jennings, who is 71. "For nearly my entire adult life, Christian extremists have fought to restrict access to abortion with invasive laws, demeaning patient requirements and clinic regulations that go far beyond what is required for

patient safety. ... Now, these extremists are on the verge of making good on a half-century of threats.”

Jennings’ statement was in response to Politico’s May 2 report on a leaked document it obtained showing at least five Supreme Court justices willing to uphold a Mississippi law that outlaws abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The draft decision, written by Justice Samuel Alito, would go further and overrule the court’s previous decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and the related *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* from 1992. “It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people’s elected representatives,” Alito says in the draft decision.

Chief Justice John Roberts on May 3 confirmed that the leaked draft was real but not final, and the court would investigate it as an unprecedented breach of protocol and a “betrayal of the confidences of the court.”

The U.S. Constitution supersedes state law, however, “powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.” In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that the “due process” clause of the 14th Amendment prohibited states from denying women access to abortion. Overturning *Roe v. Wade* effectively would return the matter of abortion’s legality to the states.

The procedure is now legal in all 50 states, but abortion rights groups predict that about half of all states will severely limit or outright ban abortion if allowed to do so. By another estimate, the resulting abortion clinic closures would reduce the number of legal abortions in the United States by 14%,

while abortion rights advocates warn that new restrictions will have the effect of driving up the number of life-threatening illegal abortions carried out through dangerous alternatives to professional care.

Public opinion on abortion has been narrowly divided for years, though a consistent majority of Americans have said they do not want to see the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*, according to Gallup.

The Episcopal Church's positions on abortion generally have sought to balance a pastoral approach to supporting women who face unwanted pregnancies with the church's stance on political responses — that governments must ensure women have control over their medical care and are free to make decisions based on their own consciences.

“All human life is sacred, it is sacred from its inception until death,” the 69th General Convention said in a resolution that it passed in 1988. “We regard all abortion as having a tragic dimension, calling for the concern and compassion of all the Christian community.”

That resolution, however, concludes by questioning the effectiveness of legislative solutions, and it calls on state and federal governments to “take special care to see that individual conscience is respected, and that the responsibility of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter is acknowledged and honored.”

The church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations released a brief statement on May 3 in response to the pending decision in the case known as *Dobbs v.*



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Jackson Women's Health. "The Episcopal Church reaffirms our commitment to 'equitable access to women's health care, including women's reproductive health care,' which we view as 'an integral part of a woman's struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being,'" the office said, citing a resolution passed by the 79th General Convention in 2018.

"The Office of Government Relations will continue to advocate at the federal level to protect reproductive rights," it said, and it shared its previously assembled overview of church positions on abortion and women's reproductive health.

Jennings also underscored the language of the 2018 resolution in her statement on May 3.

"As Episcopalians, we have a particular obligation to stand against Christians who seek to destroy our multicultural democracy and recast the United States as an idol to the cruel and distorted Christianity they advocate," Jennings said. "Now – before this outrageous opinion becomes law – we must make our Christian witness to the dignity of every human being by insisting that we support the right to safe and legal reproductive health care because our faith in a compassionate God requires us to do so."

– David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for Episcopal News Service. He can be reached at [dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org).

## Church News Ireland

## In the media

### After years of loud debate, conservatives quietly split from United Methodist Church

RNI

After decades of rancorous debate over the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ United Methodists, a schism finally came 'without fanfare, but full of hope, faith, and perseverance.'

[[] <https://religionnews.com/2022/05/02/after-years-of-loud-debate-conservatives-quietly-split-from-united-methodist-church/> ]

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

### Celebrating St Joseph

This month we celebrate the feast of St Joseph. ✨

Today St Joseph is venerated as the patron saint of workers, pilgrims, fathers, and carpenters. Yet we know very little about him since the Bible has so few references to his character and life. This seems remarkable given his role in Jesus' birth and early years!

This collection of free resources will help you discover more about St Joseph.

Click here to view:

<https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/focus/>

## Perspective

### **Pornography is harmful. We need a public health approach to it – as with alcohol and tobacco, by Sophia Worringer**

**It is right that there has been an outcry against the now former Conservative Member of Parliament, Neil Parish, who was found to be viewing pornography on two separate occasions whilst in the House of Commons chamber.**

However, there is something about the ferocity of the distain – especially from women – which has exposed our hypocrisy about pornography.

Some declare that pornography has no lasting impact on either the male or female psyche, and that when it is viewed by informed consenting adults then no harm can be done. Were this true, however, the Parish incident would not have sparked such an outpouring of apologies to women for the misogyny of Westminster, or caused women in Parliament to share their own stories of sexual abuse and harassment.

Many women feel threatened when hearing that pornography has been viewed in their presence because they know the degrading and damaging nature of its essence. While both men and women watch pornography, it is overwhelmingly still women who are degraded, abused and damaged by the industry.



The outcry is more than just about a taxpayer-funded Member of Parliament, who was sent to the green benches by his constituents to represent their views and scrutinise legislation, not being attentive to his job. When Nigel Mills played candy crush for two hours during a Work and Pensions Select Committee hearing, he apologised and the story was soon forgotten. So although MPs are not sent to Parliament to scroll on their phones, there is something inherent about the content of Parish's viewing choices – not just the context – that was so offensive.

The depth of distress that the incident has provoked shows that we need to talk about the public health harms of pornography. Viewing it is so commonplace that many have been duped into accepting its neutrality. But those who use it need to understand its far-reaching consequences and its grip on our society. It is not prudish to want a public health approach to pornography.

It is also difficult to separate the expansion of the multi-billion dollar pornography industry from the trafficking of young women and children around the world to meet the demand. There is huge cross-party consensus on the need to tackle modern slavery, but less political will given to making clear the connection between the trafficking of people and the 'work' for which they are trafficked.

When viewing pornographic videos online, it is almost entirely impossible to guarantee that exploitation and abuse do not follow closely behind. Many who may be very concerned about their groceries being fair trade have no qualms about the sexual abuse in the supply chain of their porn.

Soma Sara, who set up Everyone's Invited to expose the sexual abuse of young women in some of Britain's top schools, has warned against the dangers of online pornography. Young women feeding into the Everyone's Invited site reported being asked to recreate scenes from violent and degrading pornography in their first sexual encounters. Some even reported physical injuries from the acts that their boyfriends expected them to replicate.

There are very tangible dangers when online fantasies break into the real world. Few commentators made the link between the actions of the murderer of Sarah Everard and his frequent use of pornography: Wayne Couzens replicated the violent scenes he had watched online with devastating consequences.

Pornography is not passive. It changes expectations of sex, removes sex from consenting loving relationships, and rewires your brain meaning you are always wanting more. 'Vanilla' pornography doesn't satisfy for long and sophisticated algorithms manipulate users into harder and darker content.

If any other activity came with such a health risk, it would have a forensic public health analysis. Users of pornography should be warned of its impact in the same way that there is a requirement to warn consumers of other goods with potential harms such as alcohol or tobacco.

Pornography users need to be aware of the potential damage even as they click on the next video. Restricting the

choice of over-18s to access pornography is impossible, but ensuring that people make an informed decision is not.

**Sophia Worringer** is parliamentary researcher for **Iain Duncan Smith**, and was formerly a researcher at the Centre for Social Justice.

## Poem for today

### Twice Shy by Seamus Heaney

Her scarf a la Bardot,  
In suede flats for the walk,  
She came with me one evening  
For air and friendly talk.  
We crossed the quiet river,  
Took the embankment walk.

Traffic holding its breath,  
Sky a tense diaphragm:  
Dusk hung like a backcloth  
That shook where a swan swam,  
Tremulous as a hawk  
Hanging deadly, calm.

A vacuum of need  
Collapsed each hunting heart  
But tremulously we held  
As hawk and prey apart,



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Preserved classic decorum,  
Deployed our talk with art.

Our Juvenilia  
Had taught us both to wait,  
Not to publish feeling  
And regret it all too late -  
Mushroom loves already  
Had puffed and burst in hate.

So, chary and excited,  
As a thrush linked on a hawk,  
We thrilled to the March twilight  
With nervous childish talk:  
Still waters running deep  
Along the embankment

## 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)

