



Research shows most Sydney Anglicans found faith as teenagers

Youth and children's work in churches received a boost in Australia after research analysis revealed the majority of

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Sydney Anglicans became Christians in their teens. Sydney Anglican's youth section, *Youthworks*, has issued a renewed call for churches and families to work together to support the faith of young people.

Youthwork's head of ministry support, Ed Springer, said: "78 per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years. That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

However, he said it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s. The report's statistics came from questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher, Dr John Bellamy.

Seagoe Youth Group

(Portadown)



YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER-IN-CHARGE (EXTENDED PROVISION) 24 hours per week *Temporary Contract to 31st March 2020*

Seagoe Youth Group seeks to appoint a Worker in Charge of its Extended Provision. Under the direction of the Leader in Charge of Seagoe Youth Group the worker will lead a team of four part-time staff.

The person appointed will work directly with young people to develop their social education by providing programmes of activities and learning both within the youth centre and schools programmes and in the local area.

Job descriptions and application forms are available by emailing youthgroup@seagoe.co.uk

The closing date for applications is **23rd July 2019** at noon
Interviews will be held on Tuesday 30th July 2019

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The report's statistics came from questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher, Dr John Bellamy.

“Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional young people ministries,” Mr Springer said. “We need to equip parents to be active disciplers and to encourage the whole Christian body of all ages to be involved.”

Mr Springer said, “It mirrors a report from 2011 which said the most significant people in faith development are still Christian parents. When they actively read the Bible, pray and then to a lesser extent, discuss Christian things or talk about questions and doubts, that helps young people stay in church.”

A challenge for churches across the world is to retain youth and children attenders into adulthood. The report found retention for Sydney Anglicans, at 59 per cent, was slightly better than the average for other Anglican or Protestant churches but Mr Springer warns the dangers are real.

“We know that a certain percentage of young people will choose to walk away from Christ at some point . . . this is part of the adolescent season. But the important finding is that there is no data that youth come back to church in their 30s.”

According to the research, Christian faith wasn't the result of a Christian household for many church attenders.

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Mr Springer said: “Youth ministry is a very significant time for young people coming to faith from non-believing families. That encourages us to keep looking outward, helping build pathways from local friends, from school, into churches where faith development can be explored.”

New roof costing about €9m needed at St Patrick’s Cathedral

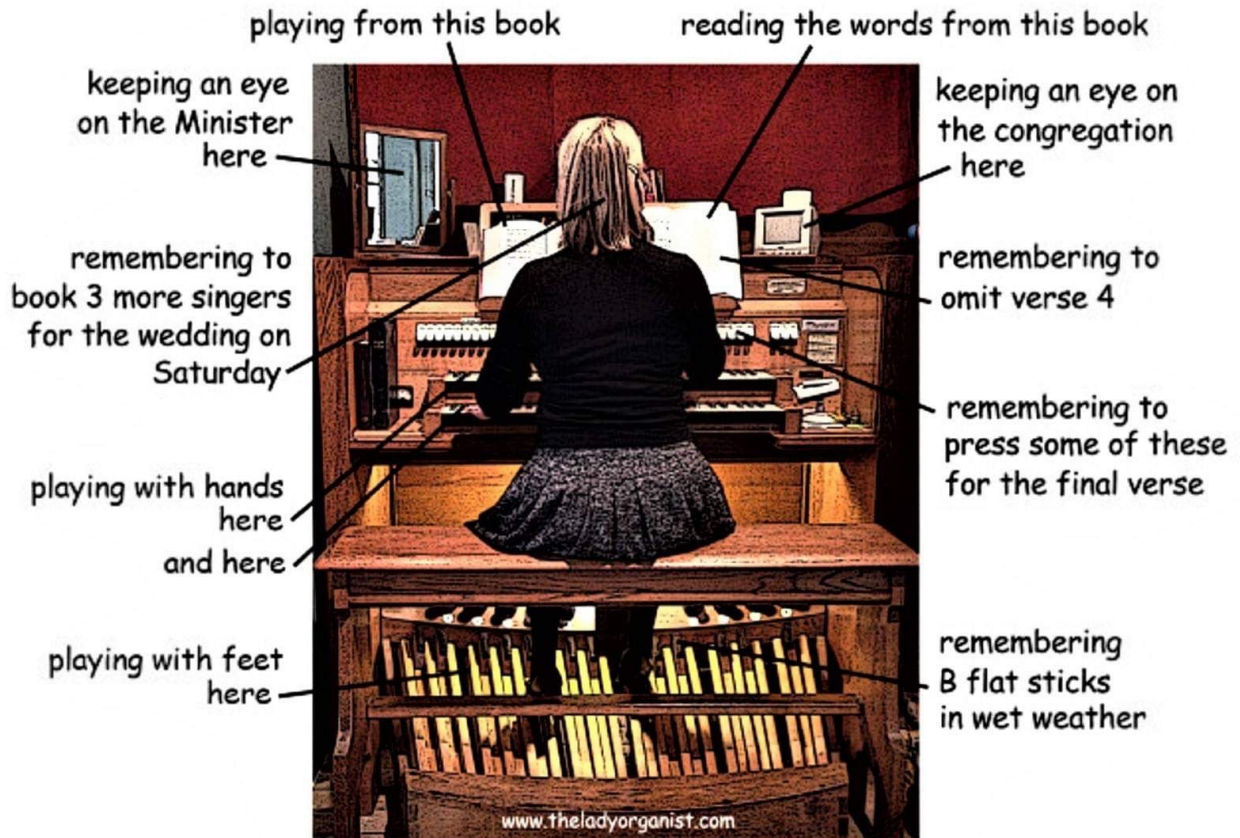
You could drive a “Mini car” through holes in the roof of Dublin’s St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dean William Morton says, as it is in such “a perilous state”.

“About four years ago two large holes were blown in the roof when slates were removed in gale or hurricane conditions. It would have been possible to place a Mini car through either of them,” he says.

Luckily it happened over part of the building where there was a stone vault ceiling. “If it had happened where there is lathe and plaster ceiling we would have been in major trouble, because the whole lot would have caved in around us.”

A major €9 million roof-refurbishment programme is about to get under way. It should take 22 months to complete, but that “could be a little elongated”, advised the cathedral’s dean, only too aware that, even in a cathedral, the best laid plans can go astray.

Refurbishing the roof will require 12,777 new slates at an average cost of €250 each, in “six different sizes and three different widths”, he says.



THE CHURCH ORGANIST

Guinness funding

It will be the largest such venture at St Patrick's "since the Guinness restoration of the cathedral which happened between 1860 and 1865". That was "a complete restoration" and funded by [Benjamin Lee](#) Guinness at a cost the equivalent of "€20/30/40 million" today – "an act of huge generosity".

Then, the ceiling was lowered, meaning there is "quite a sizeable area between ceiling and roof timbers, which date from the 12th century". Tested scientifically these were found to be "in very good condition" and are not being replaced.

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It prompted unbidden thoughts of the four-letter word – fire. Notre Dame had “certainly sharpened the focus for us here”, the dean says. Dublin city fire services had been in “to get to know the layout, in case. God forbid.” It will mean another €1.4 million, for fire prevention purposes, he says.

‘Irish history’

St Patrick’s is almost as old as Notre Dame, being founded in 1191 to Notre Dame’s 1163. “To stroll through it is really to take a stroll through Irish history,” the dean says. “We have to try to restore and conserve it and provide something for this generation and future generations.”

To date, the cathedral has raised €5 million towards the roof refurbishment from tourism. One of the most visited places in Dublin, it had 600,030 visitors in 2018. Monies raised during Eucharist services and from candle stands, however, is ring-fenced for charitable purposes, “for people at the coalface, [amounting to] €1 million in the past 10 years,” he says.

‘Very sympathetic’

There had been discussions with the Government about assistance towards the refurbishment. They were “very sympathetic” and €200,000 had been received from the Department of Heritage.

[Fáilte Ireland](#) contributed €125,000 towards the cathedral’s tourist experience and there was some discussion with [Dublin City Council](#). Dean Morton also intends visiting the US next November to give talks about St Patrick’s.

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People who wish to help can do so by donating amounts from €50 upwards at www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/support-us/

“Another way to support is to visit the building. It is the best way to learn in depth about the history of the place,” the dean says. Report by Patsy McGarry in the Irish Times.

Exciting choral music summer camp for children in Kilkenny

This year, as part of its musical outreach programme, St Canice’s Cathedral is running a choral music summer camp for kids aged 8 -12.

The camp runs from July 1 - 5 from 10am - 5pm, culminating with the children singing at the morning Choral Eucharist on Sunday, July 7. Participants can expect superb voice and musical training from choral director Harry Meehan (pictured).

Mr Meehan was himself a choirboy in St Patrick’s Cathedral before he studied music in Oxford. While at university he directed the choir of Queen’s College Oxford, and later worked as assistant director of music in Christ Church, New Zealand before joining the music team of St Canice’s.

“This week long camp will introduce children to the delights of singing in an Anglican cathedral choir,” says Dean of St Canice’s David MacDonnell.

“It’s open to children from all backgrounds, both boys and girls. No experience of choral singing is necessary. We very much see this as part of our outreach to the people of Kilkenny.”

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Choral Director at St Canice's Cathedral Harry Meehan showing how the cathedral organ works

On Saturday, at the same time as the Summer Fair, 80 children from choirs around the country descended on St Canice's for a Royal School of Church Music workshop. Their beautiful music, which can be found on the St Canice's Cathedral Choir Facebook Page, will give readers an idea of the standard of vocal music that can be achieved with proper training.

It's not just about choral singing — the camp will also include many other fun activities. Attendees will learn how the organ, which contains 3,600 pipes, works. They'll also get a chance to try out uilinn pipes, take part in nature trails and a workshop on painting.

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Participants should take their own packed lunch each day. Many famous singers started out as child choristers, among them Ed Sheeran, Justin Timberlake, Usher, and Britney Spears. Even Graham Norton was at one time a chorister in St Canice's Cathedral, so maybe that's where he got his training for his wonderful rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody in Father Ted!

Places are limited, and those interested should contact administrator@stcanicescathedral.com for an application form. Report courtesy Kilkenny People.

Contentious Rituals: Parading the Nation in Northern Ireland – Essential Reading for the Summer Season

[Contentious Rituals: Parading the Nation in Northern Ireland](#) (Oxford, 2019), a new book by [American political scientist Jonathan Blake](#), is essential reading as Northern Ireland's summer parading season begins in earnest. Gladys Ganiel's review on the Slugger O'Toole website.

Blake helps us understand why those who parade – and those who don't – are almost always talking past each other.

Readers of this book should gain a better understanding of why those who parade genuinely feel that their culture is under attack and believe that their participation in parades should not be understood as divisive. This is not because paraders are deliberately disingenuous or hopelessly bigoted. Rather, it is because participants think of parades as strictly cultural, and specifically *not political* events. They

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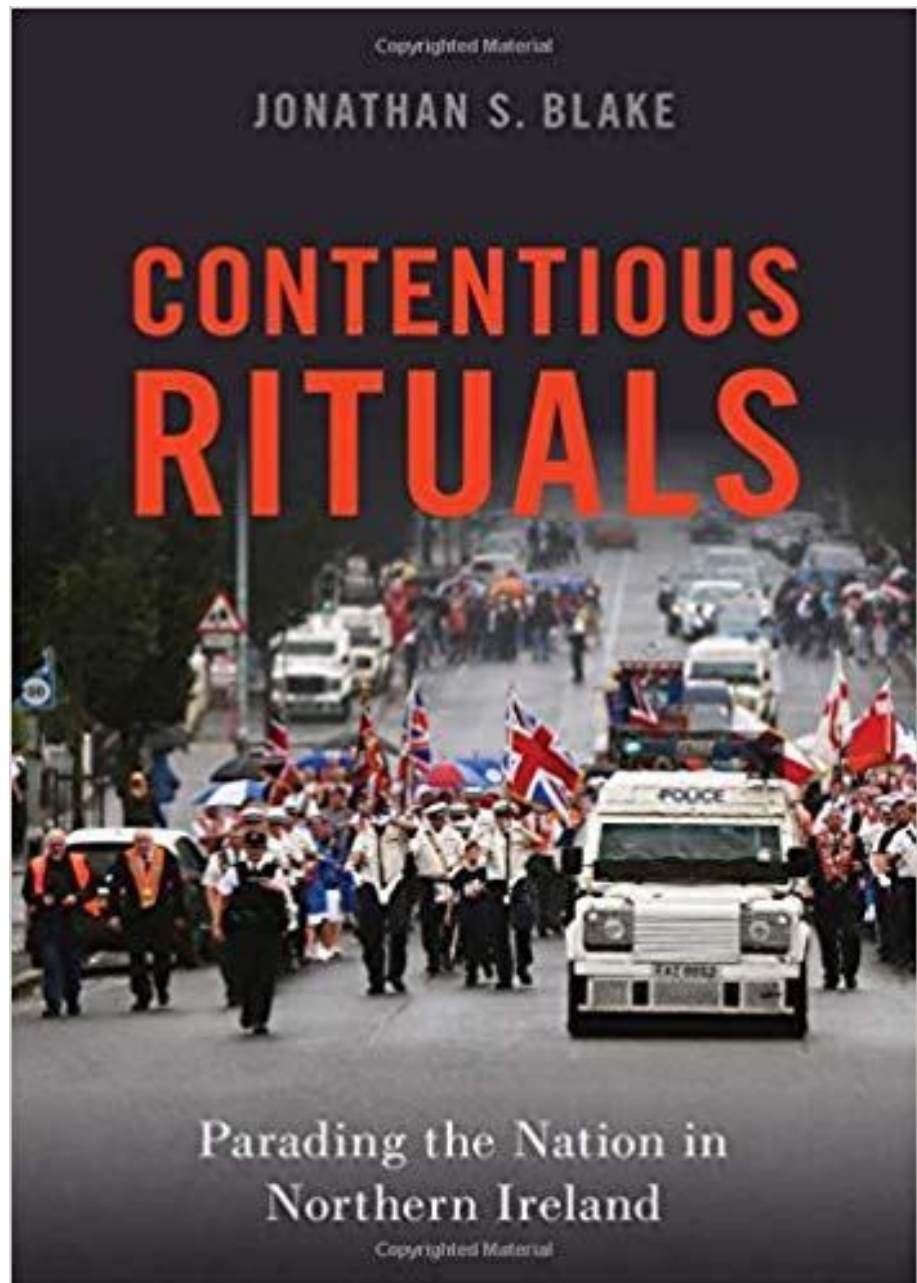
participate in parades for 'fun', the intrinsic pleasure they gain from the process itself, which includes hours of preparation ahead of the events themselves.

This is a much different reading of parading than the typical accusation that it is an elaborate exercise to

send a message of intimidation to opponents, an interpretation often articulated by parading's critics. While Blake does not dismiss this more malign interpretation altogether, he privileges participants' own perspective, calling it 'the paradox of anti-politics'. This 'helps explain how participants seem to downplay or ignore the divisive consequences of their parades' (p. 17).

But while carefully articulating paraders' perspective, Blake does not accept it at face value. He points out that even though paraders may at times feel powerless or hard done

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by, only groups who have a relatively privileged relationship with the state are able to continue rituals that others interpret as contentious. For example, this may be facilitated through a police force that upholds and protects participants as they engage in their practices. Blake further explains (p. 143):

‘... there is political power in anti-politics. This power is premised on the idea that culture transcends politics and is therefore exempt from practices of democracy, such as critique, debate, and compromise. ... The discourses of culture and tradition are thereby a free pass to act in ways that would not normally be acceptable in society.’

While *Contentious Rituals* is an academic book, Blake has a clear writing style that is accessible for a general readership. It also is worth pointing out that Blake’s definition of ‘contentious rituals’ has a specifically academic meaning: ‘repeated, symbolic actions that make contested claims and that are actively challenged by others in society’ (p. 5). Blake includes a theoretical discussion of ritual which allows him to compare Northern Ireland’s loyal order parades with public ritualistic practices elsewhere in the world. Indeed, citing Donald Horowitz’s research, he notes that contentious rituals are ‘one of the most frequent precipitants of ethnic riots globally’ (p. 10).

Yet Blake also critiques the academic literature, which has tended to focus on what elites gain from contentious rituals and to ignore the perspectives of participants themselves. Blake wanted to avoid that trap. So his own research drew on more than 80 interviews with participants from a variety of loyal orders and bands, people who no longer parade, politicians, community leaders, ex-prisoners, and Protestant

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clergy; a randomized household survey of paraders and non-paraders in a Protestant area of Belfast; and observations of parades and band practices.

The result is a book which has as its greatest strength the space it gives participants to speak for themselves, with Blake quoting extensively from interviews. *Contentious Rituals* is not uncritical of parading, the way it has been managed, and its often divisive impact in Northern Ireland. But Blake's depiction of paraders is refreshingly human.

June 22/23 - Today in Christian history

June 22, 431: The Third Ecumenical Council opens in Ephesus to condemn Nestorianism, which holds that Christ was two separate persons rather than one person with two natures.

June 22, 1714: Matthew Henry, English Presbyterian pastor and Bible commentator, dies. His work is still published as Matthew Henry's Commentary.

June 22, 1750: Colonial preacher Jonathan Edwards is dismissed from his Massachusetts pastorate for pursuing tests for church membership.

June 23, 1683: English Quaker William Penn, an advocate of peace and religious toleration, signs a treaty with the American Indians of Pennsylvania. Voltaire said the agreement was the only treaty never sworn to and never broken.

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June 23, 1780: American troops, using hymnal pages from the First Presbyterian Church for gun wadding, stops the British advance on Springfield, New Jersey.

June 22 News Links

[Church of Ireland bishop retires after over two decades](#)

Belfast Newsletter

He has spent more than 22 years in the post, and is the longest-serving bishop of the diocese since Bishop

Robert Knox retired after 37 years in 1886.

[Retiring bishop Harold Miller in parting shot at Northern Ireland political process](#)

Belfast Telegraph

A **Church of Ireland** Bishop has spoken of his frustration at the state of Northern **Ireland** politics, as he said that he plans to retire after more than two ...

[Survey suggests 50% neither unionist nor nationalist](#)

BBC News

The Northern **Ireland** Life and Times Survey on social attitudes was ... The responses were also broken down by gender, **religious** background and ...

[Pooh and friends stars of charity exhibit in Randalstown](#)

Belfast Telegraph

Because today's the day a **Church of Ireland** rector and his hundreds of ... on display at Drummahaire **Church** Hall in the Co Antrim village until Sunday.

[Birmingham Archdiocese 'ignored abuse to protect reputation'](#)

BBC News

Children could have been saved from abuse if the Church had focused less on its ... light upon dark areas of the Roman Catholic **Church in England** and Wales. ... The BBC documentary led to the cardinal issuing a **press** release ...

[Safeguarding not just about box-ticking, say senior clergy in Blackburn](#)

Church Times

... officers to read the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report on the **Church of England**, which was published last month (**News**, 9 May).

[Croft warns of climate state of emergency](#)

Church Times

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THE Bishop of Oxford, Dr Steven Croft, has called on the **Church of England** to declare a “climate emergency” as ... 10,000 people from around the UK are expected to meet their MPs to **press** the case for action on climate change.

AN INVITATION

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