



***The Rector of Mount Merrion, Belfast, Revd Adrian Green, receiving a Bronze Award for the Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence by Cllr Matt Garrett, Chair of Belfast Community and Policing Partnership.***

## **Belfast parish award for Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence**

Mount Merrion Parish, Belfast, has been presented with a Bronze Award for the Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence. The award recognises that Mount Merrion Church is both a safe place for anyone affected by domestic violence and that they have policies in place to ensure they provide support to any of their employees who fall victim of such abuse. The award was made after he and Assistant Pastor, Angela Megarry, completed 2 training days.

Adrian said: “After this training we are much better equipped to assist victims of domestic violence. Its another step along the way in realising our goal of being a place where anyone and everyone can find support and encouragement and experience his love and grace.

“Thanks to @OnusNI for the training and support and Greenway Women’s Centre for hosting the workshops.”

## **Dublin Ecumenical Bible Week now in full swing**

Ecumenical Bible Week is now in full swing. The week was launched on Pentecost Sunday with a family fun day in Dundrum Methodist Church



***Ecumenical Bible Week 2016 was launched with a family fun day in Dundrum Methodist Church on Sunday.***

and it runs until Trinity Sunday (May 22). The theme this year looks at the Christian attitude to the environmental crisis and global warming: “In the beginning God created.. Gen 1:1 The Gospel and Care of our Common Home”. Ecumenical Bible Week (EBW) is now in its third year. It includes parish based events in Dublin and surrounding areas. There are 45 events, across 13 locations in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow, with over 40 presenters. There are debate, talks, music and lots of participation.

Thinking Allowed – with Church Leaders in St. Paul's Church, Arran Quay, Dublin, on Thursday May 19 from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm. The discussion topic will be: *What Bible passages inform and challenge my response to climate change?* Speakers will be: Rachel Bewley–Bateman (Society of Friends), Archbishop Michael Jackson (Church of Ireland), Gillian Kingston (Methodist Church), Archbishop Diarmuid Martin (Roman Catholic Church), Rev Katherine Meyer (Presbyterian Church) and Pastor Nick Park (Evangelical Alliance). The forum will be chaired by Philip McKinley.

Theological Symposium 2016 takes place on Thursday May 19 from 2.00 pm to 5.30 pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay. It will be on the subject of *Climate change: what can we as Christians do?* The Symposium will consist of a series of simultaneous directed workshops covering the following topics: Science, Biblical Resources, Orthodox Teaching and Theology. The cost is €10 (with concessions). See [www.bibleweek.ie](http://www.bibleweek.ie) to book.

Closing Celebration – The EBW 2016 Closing Event will take place on Sunday May 22 at 7.30 pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay at 7.30 pm. The theme will be: *And then God saw that it was Good!* This will be a musical service of

celebration of Creation and all that EBW 2016 is. The Musical Director will be Ian Callanan who will be joined by choirs and music groups from across the different Christian traditions. It is a free event and all are welcome however places are limited so early booking is encouraged. See [www.bibleweek.ie](http://www.bibleweek.ie) or join the conversation on [www.facebook.com/bibleweek](https://www.facebook.com/bibleweek)

## **Open-air Psalms Service marks 350 years of Presbyterian worship in Garvagh**

To mark 375 years since its foundation, First Garvagh Presbyterian congregation held a weekend of special events with the theme of 'Lord for the Years'. The Moderator, Rt Rev Dr. Ian McNie was welcomed to Garvagh on the Sunday morning to join the congregation for an open-air Psalms Service at the site of the old Session House, before leading the Sunday morning service in the current church. In the evening, a thanksgiving praise service, with The Route Singers and Rt. Rev. Dr. Godfrey Brown was held, in which Dr. Brown reflected on church life over the 375 years.



***The congregation of First Garvagh celebrating their 375th Anniversary with an open-air Psalms service at the old churchyard site in Garvagh.***

Commenting on First Garvagh having reached 375 years since its foundation, Dr. McNie said, “It was a privilege and an honour to join with the congregation and participate as they celebrated this considerable milestone in their history.”

“Over the special open-air Psalms service, traditional morning service and then the fellowship lunch, I wanted to take the opportunity to encourage the congregation as they continue to worship God, grow His church and share and spread His love. ‘Lord for the Years’ has been the theme for the weekend, and

it is clear that serving our Lord Jesus Christ down through the years has been at the heart and purpose of all that they do – and will continue to be.”

Rev. Mark Donald, minister of First Garvagh, highlighted the importance of remembering the humble beginnings of the congregation.

“The congregation’s forefathers had assembled for worship in the open-air for many decades before they had a meeting house and we wanted to reflect this in our church anniversary celebrations and for many people this was very poignant with some suggesting that the service should be a yearly feature,” he said.

“We also wanted to mark the significance of the occasion with a more permanent reminder, so during the morning service everyone in the congregation received a commemorative Communion token specially made with the date 1641, marking the founding of the congregation,” Rev. Donald continued.

Besides the special Sunday services, also taking place over the weekend was a concert on the Saturday evening with the Band, Pipes and Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment, where a ‘Roll of Honour’ plaque to those who served from the congregation during the First World War was

unveiled. Then from the Friday through to the Sunday, a Historical Exhibition, illustrated with flowers and a classic vehicle display, was viewed by the many who visited. Alongside this, a booklet on the history of the congregation has been produced and is available from the [church website](#).

## News briefs

### **Watch and Praise - Young Adult Ministry**

**Down and Connor** are hosting an evening of prayer, Eucharistic adoration and praise on Thursday 19th May, 2016 in the Chapel of the Adoration Convent on the Falls Road, Belfast. The evening is organised for young adults (18-35) but all are welcome. It will consist of a Holy Hour with reflective music and then tea and chat.

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On Sunday evening, the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr. Ian McNie, and his wife Anne, travelled to Co. Donegal to take part in the special 180th anniversary evening service at **Alt Presbyterian Church**.

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**Sister Anne Cahalan**, from Roscrea, Tipperary received the religious habit and veil at the



weekend. She is a member of the community of the **Sisters of the Adoration** , on Belfast's Falls Road.

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On Saturday 14th May, Bishop Noel Treanor and Fr. James Boyle celebrated **Mass for the Reception of RCIA** (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) candidates, in **St Marys Chapel Lane**, Belfast. Congratulations and Blessings to those who were Baptized and Confirmed during the Mass.

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**St Mary's, Ballybeen, Dundonald**, wishes to appoint a **children's worker** on a part-time basis (up to 20 hours per week). The successful applicant will work as part of a staff team and be responsible for delivering the core elements of our children's ministry. This will involve Sunday ministry, as well as evening and weekend work. To request an application pack, please email Revd Noel Gordon: [ngordon@tricord.com](mailto:ngordon@tricord.com)  
Deadline for applications: 5.00 pm on Friday 27 May 2016

**News links to reports on faith,  
politics and education**

## **NI Report recommends automatic minimum payment to historic abuse victims**

News Letter

A report into how to deal with those who suffered historic abuse has recommended that all residents of homes where it occurred should all be entitled to an automatic minimum payment.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/abuse-home-residents-should-get-automatic-compensation-1-7385704>

## **Muslims in Northern Ireland united despite divisions across the world**

BBC News

Despite sectarian divisions that reach across the world, Northern Ireland's growing Muslim community remains united.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36301548>

## **Nationalists with small 'n' not interested in unity**

News Letter

What should we make of the fact that the nationalist/republican vote has fallen again: down to 36%, their lowest combined total for a quarter of a century?

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/irish-unity-does-not-seem-to-be-a-key-issue-for-many-small-n-nationalists-1-7384233>

## **Chaos at funeral**

Irish Independent

Priest says it was 'lucky no one was killed' after thugs almost rammed hearse off the road during funeral chaos

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/crime/priest-says-it-was-lucky-no-one-was-killed-after-thugs-almost-rammed-hearse-off-the-road-during-funeral-chaos-34719078.html>

## **University reveals suicide attempt call-outs**

BBC News

Half of all ambulance call-outs to the University of York this year have been for incidents of self-harm or suicide attempts.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-36276593>

## **Times**

Report that the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, is set to back remaining in the European Union. He made his comments to the *Times* during an interview on the last leg of his current pilgrimage but stressed he could not speak for the Church of England and would research the topic thoroughly before setting out his view in full. "I haven't yet heard a cogent argument for why we should be out."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/archbishop-will-put-his-faith-in-staying-with-eu-f29th76j6>

## **Mail/Charity Times/Int Business Times/ Premier**

Further coverage of the annual report of the Church Commissioners which achieved a return on investments of 8.2 per cent in 2015. Mail continues the focus on the Commissioners

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investment in Alphabet Inc, Google's parent company, noting this is despite its promise to confront companies accused of tax avoidance

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3592368/Church-England-invests-millions-Google-despite-tax-criticism.html>

<http://www.charitytimes.com/ct/church-commissioners-investments-return-8-2pc-in-2015.php>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/church-england-has-sold-250m-equities-amid-market-slowdown-fears-1560296>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-makes-massive-8.2-return-on-investments>

### [Christian Today](#)

Further coverage previewing a safeguarding item for next week's House of Bishops agenda on the [Elliott Review recommendations published in March](#) which include training for senior clergy on how to deal with disclosures.

### [Christian Today](#)/Pink News

Further coverage of the decision by the Chapter of York Minister to allow a Zen Sangha group to meet for meditation. Articles note opposition from evangelicals.

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/05/16/evangelicals-attack-york-minster-for-running-meditation-sessions-and-blessing-pride-parade/>

### **Exp/Ind/Tel/Mail/Metro/Mirror**

Reports that Harvard University researchers have found going to church is good for your health and can reduce the risk of dying early by a third. In a survey covering 20 years women attending once a week had lower rates of heart disease and cancer, according to a study. The researchers cannot say exactly why but it is thought a higher level of optimism and stronger sense of community among church-goers combats poor lifestyles and stresses associated with diseases.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/670862/Church-health-live-life-longer>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/church-women-lifespan-mortality-live-longer-harvard-catholic-protestant-christian-a7032856.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/16/everlasting-life-how-going-to-church-could-help-you-live-longer/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3592985/Going-church-save-life-Wom>

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/05/16/one-religious-step-that-could-extend-your-life-5884546/>  
<http://metro.co.uk/2016/05/16/one-religious-step-that-could-extend-your-life-5884546/>

## **Mail**

Reports that a mock burial ground could be erected in a bid to offer Goth visitors an alternative to the churchyard of St Mary's Whitby, North Yorkshire. The idea follows an online petition, backed by almost 1,000 people, calling for the closure of churchyard for the official Goth Weekend in November to avoid 'damage' and 'undesirable behaviour.'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3593881/Whitby-plans-build-fake-graveyard-Dracula-fans-want-pose-headstones-visitors-upset-residents-disrespecting-loved-ones-graves.html>  
[en-worship-week-25-cent-likely-die-early.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3593881/Whitby-plans-build-fake-graveyard-Dracula-fans-want-pose-headstones-visitors-upset-residents-disrespecting-loved-ones-graves.html)

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