

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Beaver Scouts 60th

Image for today - Beaver Scouts 60th anniversary

News -

Down and Dromore admin team on the road

Clogher MU Spring Council

MU Worldwide President at inauguration of Pope Leo XIV

Archbishop McDowell in group of five Anglican Primates to attend audience with Pope Leo XIV

Archbishop McDowell meets President Higgins at Rome

CofE sees worship numbers rise for fourth consecutive year

Education -

Pastoral care awards for Ashfield and Donard schools

Global citizens schools welcomed by President and Mrs Higgins

GB Leadership Training

Storm school repair focus

Cathedral Calls -

St Patrick's choristers in San Francisco

Clergy and ministry -

Fresh air beating bounds of Derry parish

Events

Radio Ulster Morning Service from Ballynure, May 25

LEGO Festival on Fathers' Day, June 14-15

A grand night for singing, Stormont, June 20

East Belfast Mission Big Buffet Brunch sneak peek, May 28

The One Big Walk at Stormont Estate – Saturday, 16th August

Poem for today -

Spring by Gerard Manley Hopkins Image of the day

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Beaver Scouts 60th anniversary

A huge well done to the Scouts NI team who delivered the Northern Ireland Beaver Rally Day last weekend - celebrating the 60th anniversary of Beavers at Crawfordsburn Activity Centre.

Over 492 Beavers and 180 volunteers took part in everything from grass sledging, crate-stacking, bouldering, soft tomahawk throwing, drumming and backwoods cooking.

Scouts Ambassador Sean Conway joined them and awarded 66 top Chief Scout's Bronze Awards!



News

Down and Dromore admin team on the road

The Down and Dromore admin team have been on the road, facilitating training in the use of the online data capture system.

Thank you to those who came along and to Knockbreda Parish for hosting us.

https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2025/05/diocesan-admin-team-are-on-the-road?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

May 23, 2025

Clogher MU Spring Council

Spring Council was held in St Macartin's Cathedral Hall.



In the photo are Liane Armstrong (Dioc Sec) Heather Ellis (President) and Rev Maureen Desborough in her new role as Dioc Chaplain.

Some Parishes have been awarded Bronze Certificates for their participation in the RISE

Church News Ireland



May 23, 2025

UP against Domestic Abuse Campaign. These were presented at Spring Council

Heather Ellis presenting a certificate to Anne Rowley for Derryvullen South and Garvary Mothers' Union Branch. Also in the photo is Valerie McMorris Faith and Policy coordinator for Clogher Diocese MU.

MU Worldwide President at the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV

Following her attendance as part of the Anglican delegation at the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV on Sunday 18 May, Kathleen Snow, Worldwide President of Mothers' Union, shared her reflections on the significance of the event and the spirit of unity it represented.

Mothers' Union Reflects on the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV



Mothers' UNION

Read here: www.mothersunion.org/news/mothers-union-reflects-on-inauguration-pope-leo-xiv



Archbishop McDowell in group of five Anglican Primates to attend audience with Pope Leo XIV

The Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, attended the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV. Archbishop McDowell was one of the five Anglican Primates of the Anglican Communion to have attended a later audience with Pope Leo XIV and heard his deep commitment to Church unity.

On the morning of the service, Archbishop McDowell said: "I'm delighted to be here. I think [it's](#) probably the first time the Church of Ireland primate has been at this sort of thing. And the relationship between Catholics and Anglicans in Ireland is very strong... And these occasions, in a way,

almost do more than the theological dialogues to cement the partnership and the gospel between the churches.”

Making the point that theological dialogues involve relatively few people, he remarked that the attendance of groups at the inauguration is “... quite visible...” a “symbolic attendance at the inauguration mass... is of tremendous significance for Anglicans and for Catholics.”

The meeting with the Five Anglican Primates was held at the Vatican in the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Leo XIV received in audience the representatives of other Churches and ecclesial communities, and of other religions, present in Rome for the Eucharistic Celebration for the beginning of his Petrine Ministry.

The five Anglican Primates were the Most Revd Leonard Dawea, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia and a participant on IARCCUM (The International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission); the Most Revd and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York and Primate of England; the Most Revd John McDowell, the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd Sean Rowe, the Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church and the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. They were accompanied by the Rt Revd Anthony Ball, Director for the Anglican Centre in Rome.

In an address given during the meeting, Pope Leo expressed a deep commitment to church unity and his intention to continue the emphasis of Pope Francis’ on

universal fraternity. His address stated: "My election has taken place during the year of the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. That Council represents a milestone in the formulation of the Creed shared by all Churches and Ecclesial Communities. While we are on the journey to re-establishing full communion among all Christians, we recognise that this unity can only be unity in faith. As Bishop of Rome, I consider one of my priorities to be that of seeking the re-establishment of full and visible communion among all those who profess the same faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Pope Leo's address also appealed for peace and justice, saying: "In a world wounded by violence and conflict, each of the communities represented here brings its own contribution of wisdom, compassion and commitment to the good of humanity and the preservation of our common home. I am convinced that if we are in agreement, and free from ideological and political conditioning, we can be effective in saying 'no' to war and 'yes' to peace, 'no' to the arms race and 'yes' to disarmament, 'no' to an economy that impoverishes peoples and the Earth and 'yes' to integral development."

Speaking about their meeting with Pope Leo, the Archbishop of York said:

"It is clear to me, that he longs for the unity of God's Church and sees working for that unity as one of his priorities, so that the world may believe. I look forward to continuing the work we have been doing to increase the co-operation and understanding between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches."

Archbishop McDowell meets President Higgins at Rome reception



Archbishop John McDowell, the Church of Ireland's Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, met with President Michael D Higgins on Sunday (18th May) at a reception hosted by the President to mark the 400th anniversary of St Isidore's, the Franciscan Church in Rome.

Archbishop McDowell was visiting Rome as part of a delegation from the Anglican Communion which attended the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV on Sunday morning.

Church of England sees worship numbers rise for fourth consecutive year

The Church of England has recorded its fourth consecutive year of growth in attendance, according to early figures from its latest Statistics for Mission report.

The number of regular worshippers rose to 1.02 million in 2024 – a 1.2 per cent increase from the previous year. Sunday attendance also climbed by 1.5 per cent to 582,000, continuing a steady post-pandemic recovery. Weekly in-person attendance across the week reached just over 701,000.

“The Church of England exists to share the good news of Jesus Christ and to love and serve our neighbours in every community in England,” the Archbishop of York, Most Rev Stephen Cottrell said. “So it is encouraging to see further signs that more people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ and having their lives changed.”

The rise was led by a return of adult worshippers, with Sunday attendance for over-16s up by 1.8 per cent. Although figures have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels, the church said trends are moving in a positive direction.

ACChurchNearYou.com, the Church’s online tool for finding local congregations, also saw a sharp rise in use, with page visits up 55 per cent to nearly 200 million.

Debbie Clinton, Director for Vision and Strategy, said the growth reflects “exciting stories” across diverse parishes, from coastal towns to city estates. “Each represents an individual who is part of a local church, serving their community across the country,” she added.

May 23, 2025

At St John's Upper Norwood in south London, church attendance has surged through outreach to families. Events like 'Messy Church' and a Friday toddler group now attract hundreds, with over 2,000 people attending an Easter barbecue.

"We were a church in decline but we are not in decline any more," Fr John Pritchard said. "People are looking for a community and to feel valued, and the Gospel gives them this."

Further investment through national grants has supported staffing and youth initiatives at St John's, with plans to grow the music ministry among children and families.

The full Statistics for Mission report is expected later this year.

Education

**Exceptional
pastoral care
awards for
Ashfield and
Donard
schools**



Ashfield Boys' High School, Belfast and Donard School, Banbridge have been recognised for exceptional pastoral care at an award ceremony hosted by the



Department of Education and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

The Derrytrasna Pastoral Care award was created by the Department of Education in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) in 2014. It seeks to recognise through nominations, those school communities that have demonstrated exceptional effort in supporting the pastoral care of pupils and their families.

Read more-

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/local-schools-are-recognised-exceptional-pastoral-care>

Global citizens schools welcomed by President and Mrs Higgins

May 23, 2025

President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina welcomed students from 12 schools from across the island of Ireland to Áras an Uachtaráin.

The reception enabled the schools to show their projects in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals as part of the @into_news Global Citizenship School

Storm school repair focus



Education Minister Paul Givan MLA visited Drumrane Primary School to meet with the Principal Alison Steen, staff members and pupils.

The Minister toured the school and discussed developments to repair the roof of the assembly hall after it was damaged during Storm Éowyn.



**Leadership
Training**

**APPLICATIONS
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gbni.co.uk/leadership-training

The Girls' Brigade logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the poster.

Cathedral Calls

St Patrick's choristers in San Francisco

This week 8 of the cathedral choristers jetted off to San Francisco to perform in (amongst other venues) the Irish Consulate to an invited group of VIPs.

May 23, 2025

Day one was largely spent travelling with a much needed spot of grub before an even more needed night's kip!

Alcatraz beckons today, hopefully just a short stay, assuming they behave. — in San Francisco, CA, United States.

Clergy and ministry

Fresh air beating bounds of Derry parish

The Rector of the Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and Tamlaghtard Group of Parishes, Rev Rhys Jones, led a group of parishioners on a rogation walk around the



Parish of Balteagh near Limavady on a recent evening, in a ceremony steeped in antiquity.

As they stepped out for this evening, the Balteagh group prayed for the various families of the parish, asking for God's love and comfort, strength and guidance.

The tradition of 'Beating the Bounds' dates back to medieval times and, as they made their way round the parish, the participants gave thanks for creation and prayed for those who live and work in the community.

Next weekend, churches will celebrate Rogation Sunday, which falls on the 6th Sunday after Easter.

The word rogation comes from the Latin verb rogare, which means 'to ask', and in earlier times it was a festival in which parishes sought God's blessing on the land, its people, its crops and livestock, and on all that dwelt upon and within God's creation.

Events

Radio Ulster Morning Service from Ballynure, May 25

This Sunday's Morning Service on BBC Radio Ulster, broadcast just after the 9am news on May 25, will come from Christ Church, Ballynure.

LEGO Festival on Fathers' Day, June 14-15



The Grouped Parishes of Kilmore & Inch
Invite You to a free fun event for the whole family

Lego Festival

June 14th & 15th 12-5pm

Lego Display	Bouncy Castle
Puppets	Games
TableTennis	Ice-cream
Tray Bakes	Drinks

@ Christ Church Kilmore, 19 Church Road, BT30 9HR
Under 18 years must be accompanied by an adult

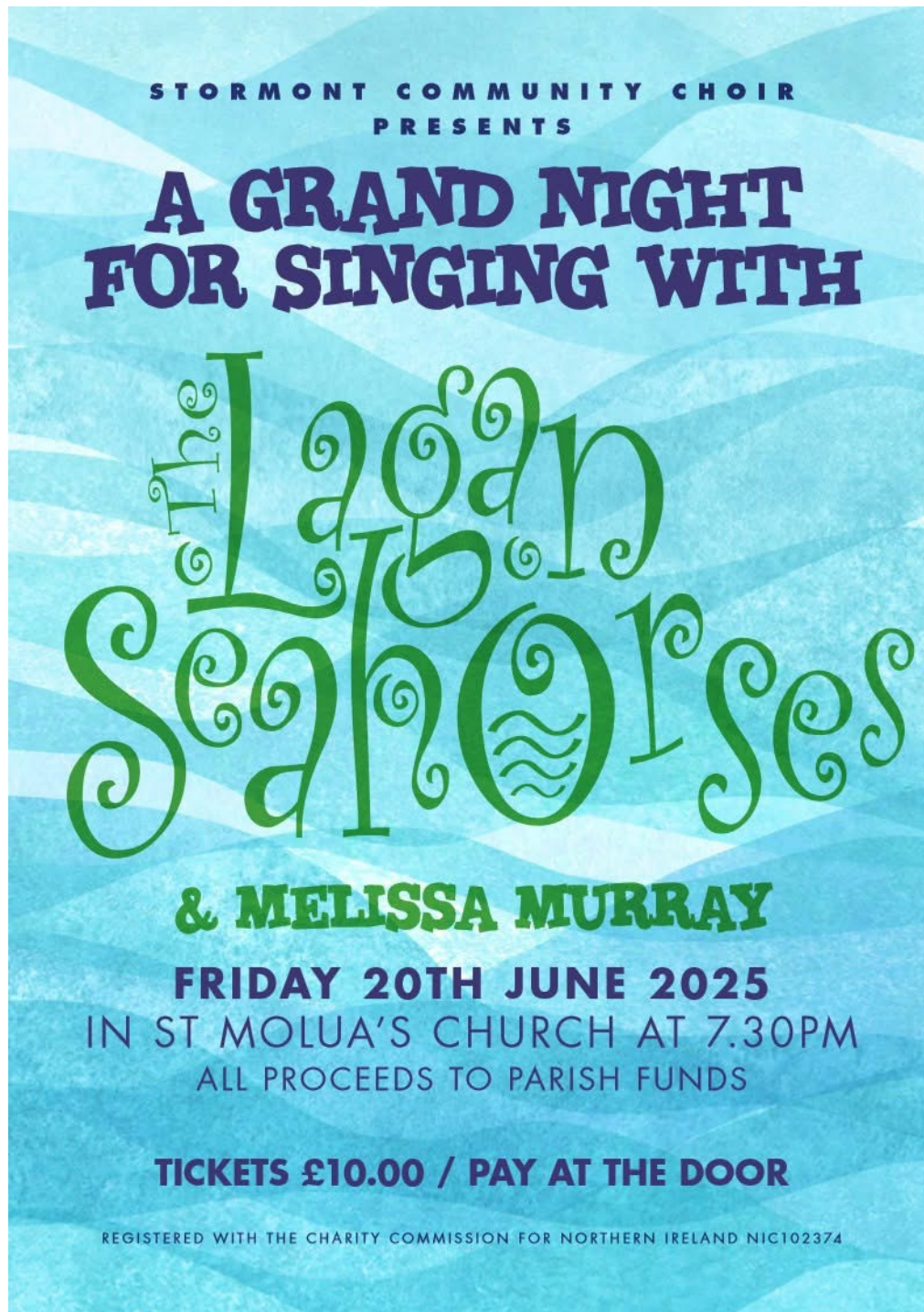
Funded by Church of Ireland Priorities Fund

A FREE fun event for the whole family this Fathers' Day weekend!

Drop in at Christ Church Kilmore on 14 & 15 June from 12-5.00pm. Kilmore & Inch Parish

A grand night for singing, June 20

A date for your diaries – Following the great success of their concert in St Molua's last year, Stormont Community Choir and The Lagan Seahorses present "A Grand Night for Singing" on Friday 20 June 2025.



They will be joined by singer Melissa Murray at 7.30pm in St Molua's Church, 645 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3LR.

Tickets £10 / pay at the door.

May 23, 2025

🎵 All welcome – please feel free to invite family, friends and neighbours 🎵

East Belfast Mission Big Buffet Brunch sneak peek, May 28

The menu for next week's Big Buffet Brunch. You wouldn't want to be missing out on that, would you?

Wednesday 28th May from 10 am - 12pm at Refresh Café, 239 Newtownards Road.

Get your tickets now!

<https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/BigBuffetBrunch>

The One Big Walk at Stormont Estate – Saturday, 16th August

We're giving our beloved hospice walks a fresh new look by bringing everyone together for one incredible event at Stormont Estate: The One Big Walk – Step Up for Care That Counts!

Join us in this exciting revamp of our cherished tradition as we unite for a walk that truly makes a difference.



Location: Stormont Estate



Date: Saturday, 16th August



Walk in memory of a loved one

♥ Walk to celebrate care that matters

♥ Walk to give hope and support to local families

Poem for today

Spring

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

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

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

Please recommend to your friends
