



The Rt Rev Angus Morrison and Most Rev Justin Welby at February's General Synod of the Church of England

Archbishop of Canterbury to make history at Scotland's General Assembly

The Archbishop of Canterbury is set to make history on Wednesday when he will become the
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first head of the Church of England to take part in a debate at the Church of Scotland's General Assembly.

The Most Rev Justin Welby will speak in support of a landmark report, the Columba Declaration, which proposes that the two denominations enter into an historic ecumenical partnership.

Under the terms of the proposal, which is closely modelled on existing ecumenical agreements between other churches, both denominations would welcome one another's members into congregations and ordained ministers would be allowed to exercise ministry within the existing discipline of each church only within England and continental Europe.

The Moderator of last year's General Assembly, the Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison, took part in a debate on the Columba Declaration at February's Church of England's General Synod in London, which formally approved the agreement.

Dr Morrison said: "We all look forward to welcoming the Archbishop of Canterbury to the General Assembly on Wednesday to speak to the historic Columba Declaration.

“It was my privilege to address the General Synod of the Church of England on the same document and by a very large majority the Synod affirmed it.

“I am confident that our General Assembly will do so too.

“In itself the Declaration is largely of a symbolic nature but it does pave the way for our further growth in fellowship and for extending partnership in mission as sister and national churches who share many common roots, challenges and opportunities.

“We wish this to happen in the closest possible fellowship with other sister churches in the United Kingdom as we seek together to address the challenges of mission in our country today.”

Archbishops of Canterbury have regularly visited and addressed the General Assembly, most recently Dr Rowan Williams in 2012, but none have taken part in a debate.

Church of Scotland votes to allow gay marriages for ministers

The Church of Scotland has voted to allow ministers to continue serving if they are in a gay marriage.

After years of deliberation on the issue within the Church, the Assembly voted in favour of allowing individual congregations to appoint ministers or deacons who are in same-sex marriages.

Commissioners decided by 339 votes to 215 to update Church law to stay in tune with the civil law in Scotland.

However, the decision does not overturn the Kirk's traditional view of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Instead it allows individual congregations to "opt out" if they wish to appoint a minister or a deacon who is in a gay marriage.

Neither does it mean church ministers will be able to register same-sex civil partnerships or solemnise same-sex marriages themselves.

Following the vote, the Very Rev John Chalmers, principal clerk to the General Assembly, said: "Today's decision means it will be possible for kirk sessions and congregations to depart from the traditional understanding of marriage to call not only potentially a minister in a civil

partnership but one who is in a same-sex marriage.

“In some ways we crossed the Rubicon last year when it was agreed that kirk sessions could call someone in a civil partnership and for many people what today was about was simply tidying up and making the law of the church consistent with Scots law.”

Mr Chalmers said a report on the Christian understanding of marriage would be presented to the General Assembly next year.

But he made clear it was not inevitable that commissioners would endorse same-sex marriage ceremonies being held in churches, saying each General Assembly was unique and had a mind of its own.

After the vote, Mr Chalmers added: “I hope we have now put this issue to one side and we can now get on with what I believe are important issues – developing our vision for the church, increasing membership and developing our work around mission.”

Since 2008, 25 ministers have left because of discussions about ministers in same-sex relationships.

A report into whether gay marriage ceremonies should be allowed in the church has also been commissioned.

The Assembly, which opened in Edinburgh on Saturday, was attended by more than 850 commissioners from across Scotland, the rest of the UK, Africa, Asia, North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

It began with a formal ceremony attended by Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. A letter from the Queen was also read during the event.

"At a time of such upheaval and unrest across the world, it is reassuring to hear that the Church of Scotland has made a particular priority of working to develop a co-ordinated response to the issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers," she said.

"This international crisis requires a compassionate and generous response and we are pleased that in keeping with your priority to serve the poorest and most vulnerable, you are making such a valuable contribution."

In the letter the Queen also acknowledged the Church's contribution to the United Nations climate change conference in Paris last year.

Association of Catholic Priests urge Irish bishops to hold a national synod

The Association of Catholic Priests has urged the bishops to support their call for a national synod for the Irish Church.

The group, which represents over 30% of Irish priests, would like to see something similar to the process which took place last month in the diocese of Limerick.

At the first meeting between representatives of the priests' group and representatives of the Irish hierarchy in two years a frank discussion took place on the crisis in the Irish Church.

The bishops' delegation was led by Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel & Emly and he was accompanied by Bishop Ray Browne, Bishop Philip Boyce and Bishop Denis Nulty.

Dublin priest Fr Dermot Lane made a presentation on the future of the Catholic Church in Ireland. He listed the problems currently faced by the Irish Church including the decline in practice and the decline in vocations.

He suggested that people were asking “what’s the plan to deal with the crisis?”

“The Church is at a cross-roads,” he said, “and we could get stuck at the cross-roads unless we decide to respond proactively”.

Fr Lane suggested that as a Church it needed to initiate a process in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and in the spirit of Pope Francis who was a beacon of hope and possibility.

He put forward the following three strategies and urged the bishops to implement them:

(i) to realistically ascertain what the present situation is by gathering precise data on the present situation, the resources available to us and what needed to be prioritised;

(ii) to train lay men and women for ministry;

(iii) to underline the importance of bishops, priests and people working together.

The ACP proposal for a National Synod envisages something that would move from discussion and consultation at parish level to diocesan level to national level.

The ACP representatives said they were ready and willing to further this proposal through

ongoing engagement with the Bishops' Councils for the Clergy, for Faith Renewal and Faith Development, and for Liturgy.

“This proposal would put flesh on Pope Francis’s encouragement of a synodal Church, pursuing a synodal process. In other words the Church would become a listening Church, an inclusive Church, that through active participation and involvement could generate new energy, enthusiasm and hope,” the priests’ representatives said.

The important point, Dermot Lane concluded, is that the process of engagement is central as it presents a model of Church where everyone works together.

The ACP delegates asked that this proposal for a synod be presented to the Irish bishops.

On the well-being of priests, Fr Brendan Hoban told the meeting that the ACP was becoming more and more aware of a growing problem around the well-being of priests.

Many priests were struggling as a result of huge mental and physical pressure from a variety of sources: age resulting in a decline of energy and enthusiasm; isolation; ever-increasing work-load; ever-increasing demands of ministry; low morale;

despair as vocations decline so massively; little free time; ill-health; and a lack of confidence in dealing with difficult emerging social issues in parish work, he said.

“At present many diocesan priests, unlike in the past, lived unhappily alone without the support-systems they needed in their declining years.”

He warned that younger priests were distressed by the reality they faced: increasing work-loads; few vocations; wondering whether or why they would stay with priesthood; the difficulty of saying Mass when so few of their peers attend; and the difficulty some experienced of even attending meetings with older priests with whom they had little in common.

More at -

<http://www.catholicireland.net/acp-urges-irish-bishops-hold-national-synod/>

Strong Irish link with India's St Columba's Hospital

After a period of uncertainty, the future is looking bright for an Indian hospital which has



Nurses outside St Columba's Hospital in Hazaribagh, India

been linked with the Church of Ireland for more than a century.

Each year parishes in Connor, and further afield, are asked to support the work of St Columba's Hospital in Hazaribagh, India. The hospital was established in 1892 as part of the Dublin University Mission to Chotanagpur.

The Irish link has continued for more than 120 years and is fostered especially in Northern Ireland by the Friends of St Columba's Hospital. This group was set up in 1968 by the late



Canon Stuart Lloyd, retired rector of Ballymena Parish, visited India recently as Chairman of the Friends of St Columba's Hospital.

Sydney Stewart, a member of Eglantine Parish, a teacher at the Friends' School, Lisburn, and a Connor diocesan lay reader.

The Friends continue to encourage support for the hospital and thus the annual appeal. From monies donated in 2015 the Friends have been able to send £13,000 to the hospital in 2016 – much of which was given by people in Connor diocese.

Canon Stuart Lloyd, a former rector of Eglantine and retired rector of Ballymena Parish, recently paid another visit to the hospital as Chairman of the Friends. He was accompanied by Ian McKay, a parishioner in Ballymena

Stuart said: “For some years there has been a contraction in the work of the hospital caused mainly by the difficulty of attracting doctors. With this and with the retirement of some who had served the hospital for a lifetime the future of the hospital was in the balance.”

Following on from the visit, Stuart now reports that the Diocese of Chotanagpur has taken a renewed interest in the hospital and a new board, administrator and medical director are determined to turn around the life of the hospital

He explained: “In this regard they have been encouraged by what has happened at another mission hospital in the diocese – St Barnabas in Ranchi. This hospital was at a very low ebb but a development strategy has resulted in 40 doctors, most of them Christian, now being based part-time on the site and offering clinics over a range of disciplines

“The board at St Columba’s Hospital, which includes some of the core group from Ranchi,

hopes to emulate the strategy from St Barnabas and already a start has been made.”

Stuart said that the upgrading of basic facilities is part of this and money from Ireland has recently greatly improved the water and electricity supply throughout the hospital. Modern equipment is needed to attract doctors and some of this was installed in the operating theatre during Stuart and Ian’s visit.

“St Columba’s Hospital has a wonderful site with great potential, it has a history that gives it respect in the local community and now there is a determined group of people with a plan to rejuvenate its life,” Stuart said. “Thankful of support in the past, all those associated with the hospital, given the many challenges ahead, would value the continued prayer and financial giving of people in Ireland and especially those in Connor Diocese.”

Growing old religiously, a response to a report

Oliver Pritchett, Daily Telegraph columnist, in his contribution yesterday wrote -

“I forecast another dangerous schism in the Church of England and daggers drawn at the



Picture posted on Twitter showing Church of England bishops dancing in St Paul's Cathedral, London, on Pentecost Sunday.

next General Synod. [A new study suggests that attendance at church – even irregular attendance – will help you live longer.](#) The question now arises: which kind of service is best for longevity? Does the good old Book of Common Prayer add years to your time on this earth? Or does the newfangled order of service get the heart beating more strongly?

“There will be competing claims, for example, between the parish church of St Gerald and All the Saints, which is considered to be High

Cholesterol, and St Karen's, which is Low Cholesterol but has killer draughts. At St Gerald's, however, they go in for the sign of peace in a big way, which is likely to spread germs.

"The happy clappy dispute is bound to resurface. There are certain bishops who are convinced that the sound of tambourines can raise a worshipper's blood pressure to dangerous levels. On the other hand, some of the best hellfire preaching may persuade the congregation that the hereafter is going to be so ghastly that they ought to try to cling on to life.

"The charming old church of St Maurice, with its delightful Norman features, would add years to anyone's life. The sermons are good for a doze, the pews are comfortable, the hymns are familiar and the tea and biscuits afterwards are just so. The only problem concerns its state of repair. A hefty piece of masonry falling from above the west door could hit you on the head and finish you off."

Cathedral, choral and musical

The Archbishop of Dublin presided at the **Patronal Festival Eucharist in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin**, at which the preacher was

the Dean of Cork, the Very Revd Nigel Dunne. After lunch the **Friends of the Christ Church** held their AGM which was followed by Festival Evensong.

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The **Friends of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin**, will hold their AGM next Wednesday in the Deanery.

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On Wednesday at 8pm the **University of Maine Singers** will give a concert in St Columba's church, **Kells, Co. Meath**. They will sing again in St Patrick's cathedral, **Armagh**, on Friday evening at 8 pm when the concert will be in memory of the late Theo Saunders, Director of Music in the cathedral, with a collection in aid of the Southern Area Hospice Services.

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St Bride's Church of Ireland, Kilbride Road, Doagh, cordially invites you to its inaugural Kilbride Recital Series with organ performances by Beth Aiken (Director of Music and Organist at Kilbride Parish Church; Diocesan Organ Scholar and pupil of Dr Joe McKee) and Gordon Myers (Former Director of Music and Organist at Dromore Cathedral). The recital will be held on Sunday June 5 at 3pm and will feature works by

JS Bach, Handel, Purcell and Pachelbel.
Admission is free with a retiring collection for church funds. Tea and coffee will follow.

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In **Sandford parish church, Dublin**, there was a hymnathon on Saturday from 10.30 until 5pm. The singing was accompanied by Sandford's Director of Music, David O'Shea, with the help of local organists and choirs. This event was in aid of the restoration of the Sandford organ.

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Friday is the **Feast of Corpus Christi**. In Christ Church cathedral, Dublin there will be a Solemn Eucharist at 6pm and at 7.30pm in St Bartholomew's church, Dublin, there will be a Solemn Eucharist at which the preacher will be Canon Peter Campion, Precentor of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin.

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A choir of solicitors, barristers and judges has raised £10,000 for **Northern Ireland Hospice** through sales of its Christmas CD.

The **Pro Bono Choir** [launched](#) a collection of Christmas carols titled Midwinter in the Royal Courts of Justice last December, one of two



A choir of solicitors, barristers and judges has raised £10,000 for Northern Ireland Hospice through sales of its Christmas CD.

concerts the choir performed over the festive season.

Donations and proceeds from ticket sales contributed to the total.

Bobbie-Leigh Herdman BL, a member of the Pro Bono Choir, said: “We are thrilled to raise these funds for the Northern Ireland Hospice. I would like to extend the Choir’s thanks for the tour of the new state of the art 18 bedroom hospice which will provide world class palliative care. We hope our donation will make a real difference to patients and families at such a difficult time.”

Marcus Cooper, head of fundraising at Northern Ireland Hospice, added: "I would like to thank the Pro Bono Choir for their wonderful donation of £10,000 from the sales of their CD of Christmas Carols, 'Midwinter'. As we look forward to caring for patients in the new Northern Ireland Hospice this Spring the support of the Pro Bono Choir is very much appreciated and will be used towards helping purchase some of the vital pieces of equipment we still need for the new Hospice."

News briefs

In **St Michael's church, Aghold**, Co. Carlow, which is part of the Tullow group of parishes where the rector is the Archdeacon of Ossory & Leighlin, the Ven. Andrew Orr, there will be a **Bible Reading Marathon** next Thursday from 3pm to 7pm with different volunteer readers every fifteen minutes.

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Agherton Parish Church, Portstewart, which celebrates its 175th anniversary this year, is holding a **flower festival** from May 27-30. The festival opens at 6pm on Friday May 27 and is open until 9pm, then from 10am-8pm on the

Saturday, 2pm-8pm on the Sunday and 10am-5pm on Monday 30th. Morning coffee, afternoon tea and a cold evening buffet are all available by prior arrangement. Contact the parish office On 028 9083 3277 or email aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk.

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The Parish of **Billy and Derrykeighan** is holding a **Family Fun Day** and static display of vintage cars & tractors at St Colman's Parish Church, Dervock Village, on Saturday May 28 from 11am-4pm. There will be home baking, bric-a-brac, teas, barbecue, face painting, a bouncy castle, a car boot sale and much more. Events take place in the parish grounds and in the Allen & Adair Hall, Castlecat Road, Dervock, BT53 8BP. Proceeds in aid of the parish building and repair fund.

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The Institution of the **Rev Mark McConnell**, as Incumbent of the Parish of **Ballymena** and Ballyclug, will take place on Wednesday June 1 2016 in St Patrick's Parish Church, Ballymena.

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The annual IDAHOT service was held yesterday on **St Anne's Church Shandon**. It the final event of LGBT awareness week. Choral Con Fusion

directed by Joanne Murphy sand. The speaker was Ronnie Doreny LINC founder member in Cork.

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The Archbishop of Dublin was in **Mohill, Co. Leitrim**, on Saturday where preached at a Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for the Bi-Centenary of St Mary's church where the Revd Linda Frost is Bishop's Curate.

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Yesterday St Mark's church, Armagh, welcomed **Bishop Jered Kalimba** from the **Diocese of Shyogwe in Rwanda**. St Mark's has a mission partner relationship with the Diocese of Shyogwe, through the Church Mission Society Ireland.

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Church Leaders took part in Thinking Allowed on the evening of May 19, as part of **Ecumenical Bible Week 2016**. The Church Leaders gathered in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay, to discuss the topic: *What Bible passages inform and challenge my response to climate change?*

Speakers included: Rachel Bewley-Bateman (Society of Friends), Archbishop Michael

Jackson (Church of Ireland), Gillian Kingston (Methodist Church), Archbishop Diarmuid Martin (Roman Catholic Church), the Revd Katherine Meyer (Presbyterian Church) and Pastor Nick Park (Evangelical Alliance). The forum was chaired by Philip McKinley.

Ecumenical Bible Week (EBW) is now in its third year. It includes parish based events in Dublin and surrounding areas. 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".

Archbishop Jackson's comment is available at -

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2016/05/Church-Leaders-Discuss-Their-Biblical-Influences-on-the-Subject-of-Climate-Change>

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The funeral has taken place at St Mary's Parish Church, Blessington of **Jack Boothman, a former President of the GAA**. The service was conducted by the Reverend Leonard Ruddock. The current President of the GAA Aogán Ó Fearghaíl said 'It was his sense of fun, his sense of humour, and the fact that he simply loved people, and he knew how to bring them back to earth. He never let anyone run away with

themselves. He was on a visit to Kerry as President in 1996. Kerry hadn't won an All-Ireland in ten years. That was a famine. There was a Kerryman in the company of Jack and he was advising Jack that Wicklow hadn't won too many all-Irelands. And Jack was getting a bit tired. The Kerryman further reminded him that there was a neighbour in the next parish with two All-Irelands, and that was nothing.

'Eventually Jack snapped when this Kerryman eventually said to him that, "Jack, up in the graveyard there's 16 All-Ireland medals". And Jack said, "Well, you better go up and dig them up so, because you're getting no more".
<http://www.independent.ie/regionals/braypeople/news/jack-had-a-sense-of-fun-and-a-way-with-people-34723257.html>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Sinn Féin lose seat on Education Authority board following election

BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36346694>

BBC/Obs/ITV/Exp/Tel/Ind/Mail/Premier

Reports that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has voted to allow ministers to continue to serve if they are in a civil same-sex marriage. However, the Church will not conduct same-sex weddings within its churches. The decision means that the Kirk has adopted a position which maintains a view of marriage between a man and woman, but allows individual congregations to "opt out" if they wish to appoint a minister or a deacon in a same-sex marriage or a civil partnership. The Revd Christina Beardsley, a member of The Sibyls, a Christian spirituality group for transgender people, is reported in the *Telegraph* as suggesting that churches in England would benefit by using the same model.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-36342931>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/21/church-of-scotland-ministers-same-sex-marriages>

<http://www.itv.com/news/2016-05-21/church-of-scotland-votes-to-allow-gay-clergy-marriages/>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/672606/The-Kirk-Church-Scotland-vote-allow-ministers-same-sex-marriage>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/21/church-of-england-could-accept-clergy-in-same-sex-marriages-foll/>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/church-of-scotland-votes-to-allow-gay-marriages-for-ministers-a7041206.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3602363/Church-Scotland-votes-allow-gay-marriage-clergy.html>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-of-Scotland-recognises-ministers-in-gay-marriages>

Exp/Tel

Reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at a reception for other faith leaders has said that Christians should not actively “proselytise” towards non-Christians. When asked where he drew the line between evangelism and proselytism, Archbishop Justin reportedly said, “I draw the line in terms of respect for the other, in starting by listening before you speak; in terms of love that is unconditional and not conditional to one iota, to one single element, on how the person responds to your own declaration of faith; and of not speaking about faith unless you are asked about faith.”

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/672579/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-orders-Christians-keep-faith-quiet>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/21/dont-speak-about-your-faith-unless-youre-asked-to-says-archbisho/>

York Post

Reports that the Archbishop of York is nearing the end of his six month Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing. Archbishop Sentamu has released videos of people he met along his pilgrimage online, and said the reaction had always been positive, paying special credit to the farmers who let him walk on their land when footpaths were flooded, the 148 schools he visited, and all those who came out to greet him as he passed. The Pilgrimage ends today with a service at York Minster.

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14508639.Archbishop_approaches_end_of_pilgrimage/

Times (Sat)

Feature article on how religious views might influence the EU referendum vote. Polls are cited as suggesting that more Anglicans and Catholics will vote Leave than Remain, while most Muslims and Jews support Remain. The article notes that Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, is the most prominent Christian figure to have publicly endorsed Leave.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/why-christians-are-being-converted-by-the-gospel-of-brex-it-x5zlqgngt>

Metro

Further coverage of comments made by the Archbishop of Canterbury against racism. Speaking at a *Near Neighbours* event at Lambeth Palace, Archbishop Justin says that thinks racism is 'deeply embedded' in British culture and has warned of its effect on integration. He praised the UK's growing interfaith engagement but insisted there are inherent challenges and said, "It is a deep shame that it is ever anywhere, I'm not looking at any political party, it's deeply embedded in so much of our culture in society."

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/05/20/racism-is-embedded-in-british-culture-according-to-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-5895036/>

Premier/ITV

Further coverage of the apology of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Jersey's Dean Bob Key and his wife for the "hurt" they have received over the past years during the ongoing handling of a safeguarding case on the Island. Bob Key met with Archbishop Justin last week and a letter from the archbishop to the Bailiff of Jersey is quoted. Articles note that the Bishop of

Winchester has sent a private apology to the survivor in the case and that the Steel Report is not expected to be published but wider findings on safeguarding practice on the Island, currently being carried out by Bishop John Gladwin, will be released later in the summer.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-Justin-Welby-says-sorry-to-Dean-of-Jersey-over-abuse-case>
<http://www.itv.com/news/channel/2016-05-20/the-big-anglican-church-fall-out-in-brief/>

BBC

Reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury has met representatives of the Loyalist Communities Council in London. Friday's private meeting was held over lunch at Lambeth Palace. Archbishop Justin spoke about "his experience of reconciliation and peace building". In a tweet, the LCC's Winston Irvine said it briefed the Archbishop on its role in committing former loyalist paramilitary groups to the peace process.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36342222>

[Christian Today](#)

Comment article on the Archbishop of Canterbury. Welby walks the line: evangelism and interfaith in 21st century.

Ind

Further report on the scale of child sexual abuse in England and Wales which is being exposed by evidence from thousands of victims, with cases being passed to police at a rate of 100 a month by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse being chaired by Justice Goddard. The Anglican Church in England and Wales is one of the 13 investigations the Inquiry will be carrying out.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jimmy-savile-child-abuse-allegations-soaring-in-light-of-inquiry-police-say-a7039956.html>

Tel

Reports that the headteacher of a C of E High school in Croydon called the police when Year 11 students at St Andrew's High School ended their final day of school by throwing eggs and water bombs and writing derogatory messages about her on the walls. Kerry Targett, who has led the school for a year, is quoted as saying, "We had to call the police just to disperse the numbers so we could clear the streets and get them to go home and study."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/20/head-calls-police-after-pupils-leave-derogatory-graffiti/>

BBC/Guard/Christian Today/Premier

Reports that the Church of Scotland is due to decide whether to allow its ministers to be in same-sex marriages. The vote comes on the first day of the Kirk's annual General Assembly in Edinburgh. Last year, the Assembly agreed that ministers could enter into civil partnerships. It has also commissioned a report into whether same-sex marriage ceremonies in churches should be allowed. *CT* and *Premier* note that the Archbishop of Canterbury will address the Assembly today, the first leader of the C of E to do so, in a debate on the Columba Declaration.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-36342931>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/20/scottish-churches-push-forward-on-gay-rights-same-sex-marriage>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Justin-Welby-set-to-make-history-at-Church-of-Scotland-General-Assembly>

Times

Reports that the company seeking to carry out the first fracking in Britain for five years failed to report a gas leak to the regulator. It is

claimed Third Energy released 74,000 cubic metres of gas while repairing the leak last November but did not inform the Environment Agency. Third Energy has applied to North Yorkshire county council to hydraulically fracture a well to extract shale gas near the village of Kirby Misperton. The former Bishop of Maidstone, Graham Cray, a resident of the village, is quoted.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fracking-firm-stayed-silent-on-gas-leak-mwqjzqgsk>

Comment

Telegraph: We've been ignoring an epidemic of child abuse in Britain, writes Joan Smith, chair of the Mayor of London's violence against Women and Girls Board.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/weve-been-ignoring-an-epidemic-of-child-sex-abuse-in-britain/>

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