



***The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Most Rev David Chillingworth with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the Archbishop of Canterbury.***

## **Historic ecumenical agreement between Scots Presbyterians and C of E**

The Church of Scotland has unanimously agreed to move "towards fuller communion" with the Church of England in an historic vote in Edinburgh. It is a landmark agreement to enter

into an historic ecumenical partnership with the Church of England.

The Columba Declaration officially ties the two churches which have been separate since the sixteenth century Reformation. It was passed at the Scottish Church's general assembly yesterday Wednesday. The CoE's general synod passed the measure in February.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, became the first head of the CoE to join a debate at the general assembly and urged support for the report. He acknowledged significant differences in the doctrines of the two churches but said the Columba Declaration provided a framework to affirm common ground.

Earlier in the assembly's five day meeting the CoS agreed to accept ministers who are in same-sex marriages, something the CoE has not done.

"We won't always necessarily find ourselves walking in step with one another, something I've been particularly conscious of, as, like you, we have been considering the issues around same-sex marriages, and following your earlier debate on ministers in same-sex marriages," Welby said in his address.

"But what we believe we are providing in this report is a sound framework for us to affirm and build on the agreement we have, for the sake of our common witness to Christ."

The move was announced prematurely after it was leaked to the [Telegraph](#) in December. Welby acknowledged the announcement had caused "deep hurt" to the CoE Anglican partner in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC).

He said, "First, for me at least, is an apology."

He continued, "The Columba Declaration is one that I support strongly and I hope you will, but the handling of its announcement caused much consternation and deep hurt to the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC).

"That hurt is exclusively my responsibility and I want to put on the record to you and to them my apology. We know that the goal of unity envisaged in the Columba Declaration cannot be pursued by some churches in isolation from others, and in our context that must mean a particular place for the Scottish Episcopal Church as your Anglican partner in Scotland, and as our immediate neighbour in the Anglican Communion

(we have many close links, including ordained ministers moving between our two churches, as we do with the Church in Wales).

“For this reason there is great importance in the motion at our Synod saying that the Contact Group to take the Columba Declaration forward should include an SEC representative, whom we ask to be a full participant...”

A representative from the SEC thanked Archbishop Welby for the apology and said the SEC had had "a very human reaction" to the announcement.

"It was a bit difficult when our sister begins to take an interest in our best friend especially when our best friend showed interest back," said Mark Strange, the Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness in the SEC.

"Thank you to everyone who has expressed their sorrow," he told the assembly. "You must now make your decision.

"Now it is time to get on with the real task ahead of sharing all we have in Christ."

The tie between the Anglican CoE and the Presbyterian CoS is landmark step. It allows clergy to minister in the other's churches but crucially formalises an agreement to move "towards fuller communion".

Following the approval yesterday by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland of the joint report with the Church of England 'Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission', the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Most Rev David Chillingworth, said:

“We are grateful to the General Assembly for extending an invitation to the Scottish Episcopal Church to appoint a member to the contact group being created to take forward this agreement between the Church of Scotland and Church of England. That will give us the opportunity to be actively involved in future developments. Our representative at the Assembly this year, the Rt Rev Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, was able to express our common desire to move forward in furtherance of the Gospel of Christ and expressed our thanks for the gracious apology given by the Archbishop of Canterbury during his address to the Assembly.”

Archbishop Welby's speech -

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/05/archbishop-justin-welbys-speech-to-the-general-assembly-of-the-church-of-scotland.aspx>

## **Iona Community 'at significant risk' if funds not urgently raised**

The future of one of Britain's most iconic Christian communities is in "serious jeopardy".

The Iona Community, based at the historic site of St Columba's monastery off the west coast of Scotland, has been a place of refuge for pilgrims and tourists for decades. Now based across two Christian centres it runs a monastic retreat and regularly welcomes visitors to stay.

However in a report to the Church of Scotland's general assembly on Tuesday, the community's board said the poor conditions of accommodation facilities "if not addressed immediately, will place the long term sustainability of the Centre at significant risk".

The community is based around the ancient monastery founded by St Columbus who evangelised much of northern Scotland.

The report read: "If action



is not taken now to improve the fabric of the buildings and the associated utilities, there is the prospect of the accommodation being unfit for purpose in five to seven years' time which would in turn place the Iona Community's presence on Iona in serious jeopardy."

It continued: "Failure to carry out the urgent works required will undoubtedly place the Iona Community's presence on Iona in serious doubt.

"The impact of this on the island community of Iona would be catastrophic."

The leader of the Iona Community, Peter Macdonald, commented that the aim of the report

had not been to alarm people but be honest that something needed to be done. He said they hoped to raise about £1.5m from grant making bodies but needed another £1m in donations. He added: "I am very hopeful we can do this."

The renovation would mean the abbey's facilities would not need more work for another 25 years and would "improve guest experience," said Macdonald.

"As well as the general upgrade it is also about putting in lift access so for the first time people with disabilities are able to stay in the abbey," he told Christian Today.

The monastic community was first established in the depression of 1938 when a Presbyterian minister George MacLeod took unemployed labourers and trainee clergy to the island of Iona. Nearly 1,500 years ago the Irish monk Columba founded a monastic community on the island that went on to evangelise large parts of Scotland and become an important centre for Christianity in Europe.

MacLeod's community rebuilt the monastery and abbey and formed the Iona Community based



around daily worship and prayer. The movement has now expanded and runs two centres on Iona and the nearby Isle of Mull.

Iona Community / [www.iona.org.uk](http://www.iona.org.uk)

## **New general secretary Catholic Primary Schools Management Association**

Mr Martin Hanrahan, chairman of Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, today welcomed the appointment of Mr Seamus Mulconry as general secretary of the association.

Mr Hanrahan said, “Seamus’s experience as former director of Philanthropy Ireland, along with his more recent work as policy advisor to Minister of State Damien English in the Department of Education & Skills, will greatly support boards of management and principals of Catholic primary schools as they seek to meet the many challenges involved in the management of our schools.”

Mr Hanrahan also expressed his appreciation to Rev Dr Tom Deenihan, the outgoing CPSMA

general secretary of almost three years. Mr Hanrahan said, “Father Deenihan brought enormous energy, commitment and professionalism to the role of general secretary, and did so while also holding the demanding positions of diocesan secretary, and diocesan education secretary, for the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Personally, and on behalf of our board, I wish Father Deenihan well in his future ministry and I look forward to his continuing contribution to CPSMA.”

## **A children’s diocesan Praise Party ‘Out of the Box!’**

This year’s Children’s Praise Party was truly out of the box! Moira parish Centre was inundated with children from all over Down and Dromore as just under 300 kids and 90 leaders packed into the halls for 3 hours of non–stop activity.

Lynne Gibson (Assistant Chaplain at The Hub at Queen’s) spoke about stepping out and doing something for God. Using Peter the disciple as an example, Lynne and her ‘volunteers’ dramatized the story using cardboard boxes!



Peter's faith and trust in Jesus helped him to do something amazing; he stepped out of the boat and walked on water. The children learned that when Peter kept his eyes fixed on Jesus he was able to do the incredible, but once he stopped looking and trusting in Jesus he began to wobble and be unsure of himself. In our lives we need to fix our eyes on Jesus and choose to do great things for God too.

The children made hovercraft cds, prayed with their colourful prayer boxes, got fit with 'Lifeguards' sporting activities, sang and danced

with the puppets, snacked with Big Hero 6, worshipped with the praise band and chatted and laughed the whole day long.

Every year there is a challenge for the Sunday Schools to bring something they have prepared. This year we decided to make a box and ask the children to decorate it with what God meant to them and inside place items that told or showed how God was in their lives.

The kids came up with inspirational ideas. Many told of all the incredible things we should know about God and inside, many of the boxes had the most heartfelt prayers. First prize went to Magheralin, second place Dromore Cathedral and Braniel Community Church took third place.

A spokesperson for the organisers said, “DDYC absolutely love running this event each year for the children in our amazing Sunday Schools. Thank you to all of our many, many volunteers who work tirelessly with our children and give of their time and energy to give them ability to get to know our amazing God and Saviour.”

## **US Methodist LGBT row continues as thousands call on Church to allow same-sex marriages**

Thousands of people have urged one of America's largest religious bodies to end all "legislative harm" against LGBTQ people.

The UMC currently does not allow "self-avowed practising" gay people to be ordained, or same-sex marriages.

More than 4,700 people have urged the United Methodist Church (UMC) to allow clergy to be actively LGBTQ, to permit same-sex marriages within UMC sanctuaries and to allow UMC clergy to officiate them.

The petition follows an announcement from the UMC's Council of Bishops on May 18 which said a special commission would be set up to examine and possibly revise the UMC's Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality.



The bishops also committed to exploring "options to help the church live in grace with one another – including ways to avoid further complaints, trials and harm while we uphold the Discipline."

"Punishment of LGBTQ persons and allies is at the heart of the growing divide in The United Methodist Church," the petition reads.

"Immediately stopping all such actions is the only way to ensure the work of the special commission has credibility and can work towards a solution or set of solutions that will finally mend The UMC."

The UMC currently does not allow "self-avowed practising" gay people to be ordained, or same-sex marriages, and activists sought to promote the advancement of LGBTQ rights at the Church's General Conference earlier this month.

They want what they consider "discriminatory language" in the Book of Discipline – the law and doctrine of the UMC – to be removed, for gay and lesbian ministers to be ordained, and for same-sex weddings to be performed in UMC churches.

A day before the conference began on May 10, [more than 100 clergy](#) came out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and inter-sex in an attempt to force light onto the issue.

The Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) then started the petition following the conference as it says concrete action needs to be taken.

"While the Council of Bishops has made significant strides by historically recommending a special commission to address all aspects of the Book of Discipline related to human sexuality, there are still immediate concerns we need to address," RMN said in a statement.

## Cathedral, choral and musical

**Séan Mac Erlaine and Unni Løvliid are in Concert** at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, this Friday, May 27 at 8.30 pm in the Music Room

**Seán Mac Erlaine** is a Dublin-based woodwind instrumentalist, composer and music producer, recognised as one of Ireland's most forward-thinking creative musicians. Seán's works intersects folk, free improvisation, jazz and traditional music. He also collaborates with a range of non-musical artists particularly in theatre and radio.

Seán maintains a busy performance schedule in Ireland and internationally working with a hugely diverse range of musicians and artists reflecting his own versatility and interest in cross-platform work. He holds a practice-based PhD centered on solo performance with live electronics. Fascinated by performance and movement, he is also a qualified, practicing teacher of Alexander Technique in Dublin.

**Unni Løvliid** - The voice of the west-coast of Norway. UNNI LØVLID is the national champ in



vocal folk music. Unni has been taught folk music by several authorities in Hornindal, among others Marta Seljeset Frøland. Unni is full time freelance performer and teaches at the Norwegian State Academy of music. She is also known for her projects within contemporary music and is not afraid of doing what she really believes in. Unni Løvlid has received several awards for her work with the folk song and contemporary music. She was the first person to receive the prize “Musician of the year” in 2006. She made her CD solo debut “So ro liten tull” in 1999. In 2005 she released another solo album called “VITA”, recorded in Tomba Emmanuelle. In 2008 RITE arrived, and in 2013 LUX. In November 2016 she’ll released her fifth solo album. Among the countries she has toured in is Europe, America, China, India, Vietnam, Japan, Bangladesh, Canada and Tanzania. She’s worked with musicians as Håkon Thelin, Garth Knox, Frode Haltli, EVA-quartet and Sam Lee. This will be her first visit to Dublin.

Please note that the Music Room is only accessible by stairs.

**Northern Ireland barristers and solicitors** took over the Ulster Museum last night for the **Pro Bono Choir’s** Summer concert.

Members of the legal profession and the public were invited to hear the choir of solicitors, barristers and judges for £25 each.

**Barrister David John Reid, a member of the Pro Bono Choir**, said: “With such a fabulous setting, this year’s concert was very special for both the choir and the audience.

“All ticket sales and proceeds will support the vital work of the Bar of Northern Ireland and Law Society’s Charities of the Year, The Boom Foundation and Clic Sargent.”

**Solicitor Joe Rice, a founding member of the Pro Bono Choir**, added: “It is wonderful to see both sides of the legal profession come together. This is the first time the choir has performed in this venue and the audience enjoyed a magical evening.”

## **[News links to reports on faith, politics and education](#)**

### **Prince Charles views £1.5 million restored Presbyterian Church in Portaferry**

Belfast Newsletter

Prince Charles visited one of Ireland's oldest Presbyterian churches in Co Down which has been converted for community use. Also in attendance were the local priest, and the **Church of Ireland** and Methodist ministers. The Ulster Unionist leader Mike Nesbitt MLA was among ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/prince-charles-views-1-5-million-restored-presbyterian-church-in-portaferry-1-7399418>

## **The Prince of Wales has visited the birthplace of Orangeism in County Armagh.**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/prince-of-wales-visits-museum-of-orange-heritage-1-7399116>

### **BBC**

Reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury is to become the first head of the C of E to take part in a debate at the Church of Scotland's General Assembly. Archbishop Justin will speak to a landmark report that recognises the longstanding ecumenical partnership between the C of E and the Church of Scotland and which lays the groundwork for future joint projects. The Columba Declaration was formally approved at General Synod in London in February.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-36373874>

### **Northern Echo**

Further coverage of the end of the Archbishop of York's Pilgrimage of Prayer.

[http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/14512939.Archbishop\\_puts\\_his\\_best\\_foot\\_forward\\_more\\_than\\_1\\_5m\\_times/?ref=rss](http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/14512939.Archbishop_puts_his_best_foot_forward_more_than_1_5m_times/?ref=rss)

## **FT/Guard/BBC**

Further coverage of the annual shareholders meeting of Exxon Mobil. Calpers, the largest US state pension fund, is pushing for greater access to the board of the oil giant as it seeks to raise concerns over the energy group's climate change policies. The article notes that the Church Commissioners and the New York state retirement fund were the leaders of a group of investors that filed a proposal resolution for Exxon to publish an annual assessment of the long-term impact on its assets and finances of climate policies designed to keep the increase in global temperatures to below 2 degrees C. Guardian piece quotes Edward Mason, head of responsible investment for the Church of England: 'The resolution is part of a much wider trend following the Paris Agreement for investors to ask companies to improve disclosure on how they are positioned for the risks and opportunities posed by climate change.'

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c663123a-21b2-11e6-aa98-db1e01fab0c.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel\\_Moreover//B2B#axzz49Xvu6JO8](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c663123a-21b2-11e6-aa98-db1e01fab0c.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz49Xvu6JO8)

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/may/24/exxonmobil-shareholders-climate-change-impact-investments>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-36332076>

## **BBC**

Reports that the Diocese of Truro is supporting plans for an unsubsidised wind farm to be built by renewable energy firm Good Energy. The planned wind farm will be built on land in the north of the county. The Archdeacon

of Cornwall, Bill Stuart-White, who chairs the diocese's environment group is quoted.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-36353851>

## **Comment**

**Telegraph:** Fewer churchgoers? That's no bad thing if it means they're there for a reason writes Lucy Denyer.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/24/fewer-churchgoers-thats-no-bad-thing-if-it-means-theyre-there-fo/>

**Christian Today:** The rise of the 'nones': Why are people leaving the Church?

**Mirror:** As nonbelievers outnumber Christians for the first time we ask is Britain better off without religion?

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nonbelievers-outnumber-christians-first-time-8042958#|CID=ns>

**Times:** Faith schools need to stamp out prejudice

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/faith-schools-need-to-stamp-out-prejudice-50tsvv55p>

**Guardian:** The enduring fascination of relics from Becket's elbow to Elvis' Graceland

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/24/relics-becket-elbow-fragment-bone-england-elvis-graceland>

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