



A computer-generated image of how the new Carnmoney Church halls complex will look when work on the 2.4m pound project is complete.

Work to begin on £2.4m building project at Carnmoney Presbyterian Church

Work is scheduled to begin later this month on construction of a new £2.4million community hub at Carnmoney Presbyterian Church.

Newtownabbey Times - The ambitious project, which has been several years in the planning, will involve the demolition of the Greenmount Hall, Lecture Hall and Minor Hall, and the construction of a new state-of-the-art community facility connected to the existing church.

The new building will be significantly larger than the existing halls complex and will feature a sports hall, a cafe area/social centre, a child-friendly space, meeting/counselling rooms, a kitchen, reception area, toilets and staff accommodation. The existing vehicle entrances/exits and car parking will also be reconfigured as part of the 50-week project.

Initially the plan had been to replace the old youth centre on Ballyduff Road. However, as the church's youth and community outreach work has grown, so has the need for new facilities to enable it to continue to increase its presence in the community through initiatives such as youth projects, debt counselling services and the Newtownabbey Foodbank.

"We have no space at the moment because in the last 10 years all of our youth work has grown so substantially - it has really bucked the trend," the church's minister, Rev John Dickinson, explained.

"All of our work has grown and really outgrown what we have at present."

He continued: "The whole scheme is designed around making our presence felt in the community, knocking down the buildings that hide who we are, getting the walls down so that people can see in, being more visible to the community and hopefully having the kind of premises that the community might want to use."

Directed by their Congregational Strategy, church leaders looked at several different options, including extending and improving the existing halls, but eventually opted for the £2.4m new build project.

And while Rev Dickinson knows that not everyone in the congregation is supportive of spending so much money on redeveloping the halls, he believes the church can't simply stand still and must invest for the future.

"It's a massive undertaking and a big step to make a decision to spend this kind of money and do this kind of work, but I think for many of us we have just been talking about this for so long we just need now to get it done. And it will provide huge benefits for our work in all sorts of ways and improve many of the services to the community that we are currently offering," he added.

Rev Dickinson is hoping that workers will be onsite by the end of May and that construction will be complete by summer 2016.

Archdeacon says 'No' referendum posters are homophobic

'No' posters in the same-sex marriage referendum campaign which say every child should have a mother and a father are homophobic, a senior Church of Ireland figure said at its General Synod in Armagh.

Patsy McGarry writing in the Irish Times Retired Archdeacon of Dublin Gordon Linney
pointed out that the posters' "real target is gay
people and a crude attempt to discredit them as
suitable parents. This is where we can talk
candidly about homophobia because the
implication is that gay people are at best
incapable of caring for children or at worst a
danger to children."



They were also "rich," he said, "given that it is not so long since the State and the churches supported Magdalene homes and similar institutions and considered it acceptable to put young mothers to work and take their little ones from them in many cases to be exported and, it is alleged, in some cases sold. Hypocrisy knows no bounds."

No one would deny "the ideal of the mother and father model but it is not what it used to be in this age of working parents where small children spend more of their waking hours with minders or in creches," he said.

The poster was also offensive to single parent families, whose situation was sometimes caused by tragedy such as the death of a partner or the breakup of a relationship, by suggesting their parenting role was in some way inevitably defective.

"The same is true for adoptive parents who are providing secure and loving homes for children with whom they have no biological connection."

Speaking as "a strong supporter of the Yes campaign" he admitted "it is not easy for me to be here today because my wife died on Sunday."

He continued: "We would have been 50 years married on 4th September. My personal grief today is the measure of what those 50 years have meant in terms of a loving relationship that has found expression in our shared lives and the privilege we enjoyed as a married couple recognised and supported by society.

"What this referendum is about is allowing those with a different sexual orientation to us to enjoy what we heterosexuals take for granted. I am here today because Helen would want me to be here and to speak for both of us."

He had no doubt that voting Yes was "the Christian way – the Jesus way – who went out of his way to bring together people who differed in all sorts of ways." See -

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/archdeacon-says-no-referendum-posters-are-homophobic-1.2204082#.VUvNe_QDV60.twitter

Irish Times - C of I cleric's review of various churches' stances on Same-sex marriage

Revd Canon Professor Patrick Comerford lectures in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. Writing in a personal capacity he presented a comprehensive review of the various Irish churches asking on same-sex marriage, "Why are the churches so concerned about civil legislation?".

The referendum on same-sex marriage has led to a number of religious groups and individuals calling for a conscience clause. One petition, drafted by Galway Quaker Richard Kimball, has been signed by a diverse group, from the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland and the Irish Council of Imams, to individual evangelical churches and individuals.

A similar intervention has comes with "A Cross-Denominational Response". The 50 signatories calling for a "No" vote include the Roman Catholic Bishop of Elphin, the Most Rev Kevin



In February, the Church of Ireland urged its members to vote according to their consciences. The Methodist Church supports the traditional view of marriage as being between a man and woman, and the Presbyterian Church is also advocating a 'No' vote. But is there "one traditional view of marriage"? And why are faith groups so exercised by civil legislation?'

Doran, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore, the Right Rev Ferran Glenfield, and others who claim that "freedom of conscience will be challenged by a 'Yes' vote".

On the other hand, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, supports a "Yes" vote. Yet in a BBC interview last year [May 2014], he explained: "I also recognise the Church of

Ireland's definition of marriage is for itself and I adhere to that discipline."

In February, the Church of Ireland urged its members to vote according to their consciences. The Methodist Church supports the traditional view of marriage as being between a man and woman, and the Presbyterian Church is also advocating a "No" vote. But is there "one traditional view of marriage"? And why are faith groups so exercised by civil legislation?

To take the Church of Ireland, as an example, an individual's conscience is formed by Scripture, and informed by tradition and reason, the three foundational principles of Anglican theology.

The General Synod voted in 2012 that "marriage is in its purpose a union permanent . . . for better or worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side." It goes on to affirm: "The Church of Ireland recognises for itself and of itself, no other understanding of marriage than that provided for in the totality of Canon 31."

Canon law and the decisions of the General Synod are binding on the bishops and clergy of the Church of Ireland, as Bishop Colton accepts. But is the tradition frozen in time? Or can it be in a process of developing? This question is raised by Bishop Michael Burrows of Cashel. In an interview with the *Church of Ireland Gazette* (April 24th,2015), he says the 2012 resolution is "open to difference of interpretation" and that the church's understanding of "the essential nature of marriage is capable of development, and indeed has already significantly developed over the years"....

... Professor Comerford continues -

Paradoxically, many who do not define marriage as a sacrament can be among the most defensive about its sacred character, its indissolubility and in restricting it to one man and one woman capable of having children.

Bishop Burrows suggests in his interview that those with difficulties with the referendum proposals "have perhaps failed to consider sufficiently the nature of Anglican moral theology over several centuries" and "with the way in which Anglicans have reflected on relational ethics over the centuries".

However, the move in recent years towards accepting same-gender marriages, particularly in the US and Canada, has caused deep division within the Anglican Communion. It has led to demands for an Anglican Covenant, although

this too has been frustrated by voting in diocesan synods in the Church of England.

In the past, Bishop Harold Miller of Down and Dromore has said in a book on liturgy: "The Church of Ireland has always recognised the total validity of civil marriage ceremonies, as marriage is essentially an ordering of civil society . . ." But even if the faith traditions left civil society to legislate on marriage, they would still be left with divisions and the dilemma about the limits of conscientious dissent and assent.

More at -

http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/same-sex-marriage-why-are-faith-groups-so-concerned-about-civillegislation-1.2202411

Same-sex marriage: Church of Ireland defers report on 'elephant in the room'

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/samesex-unions-church-of-ireland-defers-report-on-elephant-in-the-room-31205064.html

Divided opinions on gay marriage in the Church of Ireland

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/divided-opinions-on-gay-marriage-in-the-church-of-ireland-31205072.html

The Tablet - Irish RC archbishop gay marriage comment

http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/2048/0/threat-to-irish-church-s-counselling-service-by-vote-in-favour-of-gay-marriage

Charter for good conduct in C of I

Progress was made at the General Synod to establish what in fact is a code of conduct for church members. The draft Charter presented seeks to articulate the Church's commitment to harmonious relationships in Church life with reference to the Christian principles underpinning those relationships.

The Synod Bill enabling this process also empowers the Representative Body to develop policies, regulations and rules to give effect to the Charter and submit them to Standing Committee for approval. Policies and procedures under the Charter are currently being developed in three areas: dignity in Church life and the prevention of bullying and harassment; grievances of members of the clergy; and the management of long term illness of members of the clergy.

The Bill was proposed by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe and Mr Kevin Bowers at the request

of Standing Committee and the Representative Church Body.

In proposing the Bill, Bishop Ken Good said that the Bill was about improving the way people in the Church of Ireland related to each other by establishing a workable process of good practice. He said the Bill had two parts – a charter entitled 'Dignity in Church Life' which was a statement of Christian discipleship; and enabling legislation.

He said that the booklet was still a work in progress and said that the RCB would welcome submissions from members of Synod over the coming weeks.

Seconding the Bill, Mr Bowers outlined the process that had been undertaken in developing the charter over the last 18 months. He said the unique characteristics of the Church of Ireland were taken into consideration in adapting best practice policies for the Church: the policies must incorporate an understanding of the vocational nature of ministry and the needs of the clergy must be balanced with the needs of the Church. The policies must work within the existing structure of the Church and must comply with relevant civil legislation.

He said the policies were drafted at every stage to be in line with Gospel values. They were intended to provide clarity and consistency of approach, across the Church, he added. The policies also incorporated best practice principles such as: Natural Justice, Confidentiality, Prevention, Early Intervention & Local Intervention, Informal Procedures, Mediation and Reconciliation.

Inter-church relations a major focus of C of I Synod

Relationships with other churches was a major focus of the C of I General Synod. In particular the covenant with the Methodist Church and the development of dialogue with the Moravian Church were presented and discussed. The Revd Canon Dr Donald Watts, President of the Irish Council of Churches

Covenant Council with Methodist Church

The Report of the Covenant Council which deals with C of I - Methodist Church relations was presented by the Revd Barry Forde. He said that the last 12 months would be remembered as a historic time in the life of the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland following

last year's General Synod Bill on Interchangeability of Ministry.

He said that the challenge now was to ensure that "we do not lapse into congratulating ourselves for historic moments, but to keep pressing forward together in unity and mission".

He commented, "Interchangeability was not the vision but rather a step along the road towards the vision expressed in the 2002 Covenant to share a common life and mission and to grow together so that unity may be visibly realised.

"If we over–celebrate interchangeability we miss the point. If we relegate it to the dusty shelves of Canon law we must ask, what was the point? The point is mission. The point is to grow together so that, as Christ prayed in the High Priestly prayer recorded in John 17, his disciples may be one," Mr Forde said. "The challenge, for Synod, and for all churches in both traditions, is to make this happen. Covenant Council encourages parishes, chaplaincies, our respective training establishments to 'think covenant'. For ministry, ordained and lay, to 'think covenant'. For established churches, new churches, and as yet un–thought of, communities of faith to 'think covenant'. "

Mr Forde suggested one small step along that road that all parishes could enter into was to celebrate the Covenant and communicate its vision in each local context, on or around the date of 24th May, this being John Wesley Day in the Church of England.

Bishop Harold Miller spoke of the event on St Patrick's Day for the launch of the 'Into All the World Report' by the Anglican Consultative Council and World Methodist Council. The Bishop said that the Covenant had made a huge difference to the relationship between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

The Revd Peter Murray, President of the Methodist Church, brought the greetings of the Methodist Conference. He said that the 'Into All the World Report' was a very important document. He said that the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland at parish level must ask "is this something we can do together". He said working together at local level could produce a much more effective ministry for the Lord into these communities.

President of the Irish Council of Churches

Synod was addressed by the Revd Canon Dr Donald Watts, President of the Irish Council of Churches. He said these occasions were important in the life of the Church in Ireland and highlighted the value of relationships between churches. He thanked the Church of Ireland on behalf of all the churches for drawing them together at Synod. He recognised the role of Archbishop Richard Clarke in helping to reshape the role of the Irish Council of Churches and recognised that any organisation had to change and move forward.

Canon Watts said the scene of the churches in Ireland was rapidly changing but added that there was always a role for those who had been historically part of the landscape and continued to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Relationship with the Moravian Church

A Motion dealing with the Church of Ireland's relationship with the Moravian Church of Great Britain and Ireland has been approved by General Synod.

The motion, in the names of the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and the Bishop of Clogher called on General Synod to welcome and affirm the conclusions and proposals contained in the report of the recent dialogue between the two Churches.

It also asked Standing Committee to ensure that legislation providing for the interchangeability of ministry between the two Churches was laid before Synod for consideration as soon as practicable and following further examination of the developing relationship between the Moravian Church and the Church of England.

Proposing the motion Bishop Michael Burrows said this was a big moment in our ecumenical life in Ireland and added that the Moravian Church was one with a very rich tradition. He welcomed the Revd Sarah Groves and the Bishop John McOwat.

He said the motion sought to build on an agreement reached in the 1990s. He said that the Church of Ireland was taking the lead in the current negotiations and that the Church of England were significant observers of the process. The current motion, he explained, looked forward towards interchangeability of ministry between the two churches. He proposed the motion with the hope that it was a step along the way.

Bishop John McDowell said the motion was a recognition of what each church had always been and exploration of how they could continue the work of God.

The Revd Sarah Groves of the Moravian Church brought greetings from the Moravian Church. She spoke of the church being relational and said that relationships were at the heart of what we do and say as Christians. She highlighted the importance of the conversations with the Church of Ireland. She said she was deeply grateful to the Church of Ireland for the time it had given to them. She said that the understandings and practices of both churches were similar.

Ms Groves said that traditional churches faced huge challenges and coming closer together would benefit the Moravian Church and hoped it would bless the Church of Ireland and bring together the Body of Christ in all its glorious variety. She prayed that the lead of the Church of Ireland would inspire the sister community in England.

Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh

The Archbishop of Armagh, welcomed the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Eamonn Martin.

Archbishop Martin received a warm welcome and said it was a joy and an honour to attend. He said it was wonderful to see people who have a real interest in their Church, their faith

and willing to give up their quality time to ensure the Church remains fresh and new.

He said that when he became Archbishop he was asked to pick a motto and he chose 'Sing to the Lord a New Song'. "Ever since that I've been troubled by my own motto and I'm not sure what it means to me," he said.

Archbishop Martin said that the real inspiration was a call to conversion for each one of us every single day. He wondered if it meant new words or a new melody. Then along came Pope Francis and he put down a challenge to people to try doing things in a new key – so it's the same words and melody in a new key. And Pope Francis says this is a missionary key. "We are challenged to get out there with the message of the Gospel to get out to the messiness of people's lives, to the reality of where they are living. We're in the present and we're called to sing a new song. I know that's not always easy. In wishing you well for your deliberations for these days I encourage you to consider how you sing a new song to the Lord, delivering the challenging message of the Gospel without alienating people but calling them to Come and See," he concluded.



Down parish gift of bikes to South Sudan clergy

Killaney & Carryduff Parish has developed a relationship with Olo Diocese in South Sudan which has just taken delivery of 7 bicycles.

The Venerable Alex Amvuti, Olo Diocese Development Coordinator, has written to the rector, Canon Stephen Lowry, to share their joy at the recent gift of 7 new bicycles: "We, all the Pastors are very happy for the wonderful things which you have done by providing seven bicycles for the Pastor to run the church activities among our local community. Here are the photos of the bicycles and distributed for the top senior Pastors of Olo Diocese, include one female Pastor (sic)."

It isn't an exaggeration to say that these 7 bikes will transform ministry for the pastors whose only alternative is to travel long distances on foot on rough tracks through the bush.

Primus Chillingworth comments on General Election outcome

Commenting on the outcome of the General Election the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church says:

"The outcome of the General Election of 2015 has delivered a result notable both for its clarity and its complexity. The people have spoken through the ballot box. They have expressed hopes, aspirations, needs, passions – and some fears.

"Those of us who live in Scotland must recognise that we are living through times of profound change. Our prayer for Scotland, its people and its leaders, must be that we shall find at the end of our journey new and creative ways of relating to the peoples and nations with whom we share these islands.

"Democracy in operation has a cruel face. Political careers of those who have served their country faithfully have been brought to a premature end. We honour their commitment and their service.

"It is the duty of Christians to honour and to pray for those who exercise authority in the state. Those who now take office as MP's or in government are assured of our good wishes and our prayers in the days to come."

 See more at: http://www.scotland.anglican.org/ comment-on-general-election-outcome/ #sthash.YLkJpLBi.dpuf

Massive funding boost for Church of Scotland's dementia arts programme

The success of a pioneering CrossReach dementia arts project operating across Scotland

has been recognised with a major funding boost of £230,000.



The 'Heart for Art' project, created by the social care arm of the Church, involves artists supported by specially trained CrossReach staff leading creative arts groups for people living with dementia and their carers. The groups offer them the opportunity to develop new or existing artistic skills, build confidence, and develop social relationships through creative arts, as well as providing access to support and advice.

The groups are already operating in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Broughty Ferry, Stonehaven, Kirkudbright, Bankfoot and Garelochhead.

Welcoming the £230 000 grant from the Life Changes Trust, Allan Logan, Director of Services to Older People of CrossReach, said: 'CrossReach, the Social Care Council of the Church of Scotland, are delighted to have been granted funding from the Life Changes Trust for the Heart for Art project. This exciting initiative has promoted and enabled the medium of creative art to impact positively on the lives of many people with dementia across Scotland, and those closely connected. The funding will ensure the project remains sustainable over the next three years as well as provide the security for further developments in this transformational work.'

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: 'Because of the stigma associated with dementia, many people living with dementia stop taking part in activities that may have given them great pleasure in the past, or which allowed them to mix with their peers. Others believe that, because of their dementia, they will be unable to learn a new skill. Initiatives like 'Heart for Art' challenge this stigma and bring people together in a dementia friendly community of interest where they have opportunities to be part of something that is meaningful to them.

Through the medium of the art, and through creative workshops, they can express themselves and connect with others. This funding will help CrossReach continue with the great work that they do for those with dementia and those who care for them across Scotland'.

The Heart for Art project aims to challenge the stigma and discrimination associated with a diagnosis of dementia, by promoting positive images of people living with the condition and increasing the knowledge and awareness of it in the local community.

'Missionaries of mercy' to forgive abortion under Pope Francis' orders

Pope Francis will send out "missionaries of mercy" to forgive sins all over the world next year, including transgressions such as abortion, which is usually reserved for high-ranking officials to absolve.

The Catholic Church opposes all forms of abortion according to its Canon law, and undergoing the procedure can result in automatic excommunication. Usually, it can only



be forgiven by bishops or the Pope, but as part of Francis' Holy Year of Mercy beginning in December, women who have had abortions and doctors that have performed them may seek absolution from specially designated priests.

"The missionaries of mercy are priests sent out by the Holy Father at the beginning of Lent. The Pope is sending them out [to dioceses and parishes] as a concrete sign of how a priest should be a man of pardon, close to everyone," Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the president of the Pontifical Council organising Holy Year events, told reporters at the Vatican this week. Fisichella added that those priests chosen for the task will be patient, good at taking confession and have "an understanding of human fragility".

The motto of the Holy Year is 'Merciful like the Father' and its logo, unveiled by Fisichella, shows Jesus carrying a man over his shoulders. This "serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure," the archbishop said.

In his Bull of Indiction, a document explaining the purpose and intention of the Holy Year, Pope Francis implored the Church to show more grace. "Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy," he said.

"Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love."

It was in this document that Francis first outlined his plan to send out the Missionaries of Mercy. "They will be a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the People of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith," he explained.

"There will be priests to whom I will grant the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, so that the breadth of their mandate as confessors will be even clearer. They will be, above all, living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon."

The initiative has been welcomed by many as a sign of Francis' determination to change the Church's judgemental reputation. Some have appeared concerned that the move indicates leniency on abortion.

"Regardless of this decision by the Pope, the Church will continue to consider abortion a sin. I hope it does not cause confusion," Cardinal Velasio De Paolis told Italian newspaper La Nazione.

'He is the Pope of mercy and wants to show the benevolence of the Church towards sinners. This does not cancel the sin of abortion.'

Media digest

Irishman funds Belfast's Homeless Jesus

An Irishman is to fund a sculpture of the Homeless Jesus for Belfast - but where shall it find a haven?

An Irishman who remembers the kindness he received when he lived in Belfast has offered to fund a special statue for the city.

Canadian sculptor Tim Schmalz was in Dublin last week at the unveiling of his "Homeless Jesus" statue in the grounds of Christ Church Cathedral.Now, the funds for a Belfast statue have been granted by an anonymous benefactor.http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32622517

Post-crash Ireland desperately needs the faith

http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/may-8th-2015/post-crash-ireland-desperately-needs-the-faith/

HERITAGE

Tragic deaths should be honoured and remembered with due respect - President

The sinking of the Lusitania is a story that has gripped the imagination of the world over the intervening decades and filled the pages of many books and articles, President Michael D Higgins said in his speech marking the centenary commemorations.

http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/video-tragic-deaths-should-be-honoured-and-remembered-with-due-respect-329412.html

Lusitania's victims must be honoured, says President

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/lusitania-victims-must-be-honoured-says-president-1.2204079

100 Years On, Cunard Remembers Lusitania in Cobh, Ireland

http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/100-years-oncunard-remembers-lusitania-in-cobhireland-300080020.html

Mail

Review of new book on former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, entitled, *God And Mrs Thatcher: The Fight For Britain's Soul* by Eliza Filby. It is described as the first attempt at a serious portrayal of her religious beliefs and spiritual values, connecting them to events in the turbulent era in which she governed Britain. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-3072526/Maggie-PM-DID-God-refreshingly-original-view-famously-controversial-prime-minister.html#ixzz3ZW9Z3me9

Eve Standard

Item that *Grantchester* detective series author James Runcie, son of former Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, publishes his latest volume this week, and will be going on a tour of England's cathedral cities to promote the book.

http://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/londoners-diary-the-capitals-best-place-to-hatch-a-political-plot-10232376.html

Mail/Mirror/Guard

Various papers report on sentencing of a former church treasurer, Ian Walters, who was convicted of murdering his wife in an 84mph motorway crash. Yesterday he was ordered to serve at least 17 years in prison after a jury ruled he had deliberately veered off the M1 on the way home from an unsuccessful 'make or break' holiday. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/ article-3072125/lan-Walters-jailed-17-yearskilling-wife-Tracy-driving-M1.html#ixzz3ZWLfq9zO http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/m1murder-cctv-captures-moment-5653813 http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/ may/07/man-jailed-for-life-after-killing-wife-indeliberate-m1-car-crash

Are you a Twitter user?

Please click on TWITTER on home page to receive daily headlines from CNI