

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Sod turning ceremony at the
Irish National War Memorial Gardens**

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A sod turning ceremony took place at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, to mark the beginning of construction of the new Commemorative Bridge across the River Liffey.

The ceremony was attended by Brian Crawford, Hon. Secretary of the Royal British Legion – Republic of Ireland, who participated in his capacity as one of the trustees of the Irish National War Memorial Trust, at the invitation of OPW Minister Kevin “Boxer” Moran.

This important project will complete part of Sir Edwin Lutyens’ original vision for the Gardens. When first conceived, Lutyens designed four entrances, including a northern approach over the Liffey. Due to financial constraints, this northern entrance was never built — until now.

Work commenced in September, ahead of the salmonoid season, and will continue through the coming winter and summer months. The project, undertaken by Sisk and the Office of Public Works, is expected to be completed by September 2026.

The new bridge will span the river in a single graceful arch, linking Cunningham Road near the University Boat Club

directly to the “Temple”, the War Stone, and the Cross of Sacrifice. Its design is both elegant and symbolic: a balustrade of stainless-steel reeds inspired by the natural landscape, a timber leaning rail encouraging visitors to pause and enjoy the river views, and subtle footprint patterns across the bridge to honour those who walked before us but did not return. When complete, the Commemorative Bridge will provide a beautiful new ceremonial entrance to the Gardens — a thoughtful link between remembrance and renewal.

News

Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle celebrates 60 years



November 1, 2025

“We had a wonderful day today celebrating 60 years since the dedication of our Ballycastle Centre with founding members, brilliant musicians, encouraging words, and good friends”.



The prayer in 1965 was that Corrymeela would become an Open Village for all people of good will. We remain a place and a people open to all -- and open to being changed by a growing sense of 'us.'

We are Corrymeela and you are always welcome.

Video from the celebration is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbMYoV5Gd1k&t=4105s>

PCI's 'Graciously Confident' podcasts enables outreach on issues that matter

As the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) continues to speak into the public square on 'a range of issues that matter to people and the Church, impact society and

day-to-day lives’, the all-Ireland denomination has launched a podcast series called ‘Graciously Confident’.

For a number of years PCI has produced podcasts on a range of church related subjects, and areas of broader interest. This is the first time, however, that it has committed to making a series of 12 podcasts over the course of a year that focus on big issues, trending topics and current affairs. The Church’s Council for Public Affairs is responsible for the content and output, and its Convener, Rev Daniel Kane, explained the thinking behind the new monthly initiative.

Speaking at the launch, which was held in PCI’s Assembly Buildings in central Belfast, Mr Kane said, “Podcasts have become a part of everyday life for millions of people on a global scale and can be listened to anytime and anywhere, turning ordinary moments into opportunities for learning and inspiration. The Graciously Confident podcast is a significant moment for us in the Council for Public Affairs, as it is the first time that we are taking a look at a range of issues in this way. In using this platform and this format, we can take a deep dive into issues that matter to the Church, impact society and people’s day-to-day lives.”

The minister of West Presbyterian Church in Ballymena continued, “In each podcast we want to bring a gospel focus to our discussions on a particular issue. In doing so, we also hope that they will enable members of our Church to be graciously confident when they talk about these issues, which are in the news and invariably have an impact on society. This is why we have called the podcast ‘Graciously Confident’, but it is not just for our church members, we

hope that anyone interested in the issues that we will be covering will find the podcasts engaging and useful.”

Recorded and produced at Commission Studios in Dundonald, by the veteran journalist and broadcaster Will Leitch, with an episode a month, the first kicks off a four-part mini-series that explores the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia. Hosted by Mr Leitch, he sits down with Professor Max Watson, a leading palliative care specialist, and Rev Daniel Kane, to discuss one of the most sensitive and significant ethical issues of our time.

Also speaking at the launch, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Rt Rev Dr Trevor Gribben said that he was excited about this initiative. “I really want to thank everyone involved in the development in The Graciously Confident podcast and the initial episodes. People, especially younger people than me, get their news and information from social media and its different platforms, especially podcasts.

“It may not be listened to by people older than me, but as a means of communicating gospel truths, and speaking into some of the issues we face on this island, this is a sphere that we need to be in. I welcome this important development and have used the QR Code to download the first episode.”

Speaking about the podcasts, Mr Leitch said, “The beauty of the medium is that it is radio on demand. You can listen to the podcast at any time, on any device, whatever you are doing - and listen again and again if you want. It’s a simple four-part series, full of profound truths - and I have been richly blessed by being a part of it.”

Mr Leitch continued, “You can hear guests who really know their stuff, experts in palliative care, people who support and encourage quality end of life care in our community, people full of wisdom, experience, insight and innovation. But there are also real human stories of heartbreak and trial, inspiration, joy and grief. Even at the end of a life. We also hear from a minister who is living with cancer and someone who cared for and supported a loved one in their final years.”

The Council for Public Affairs is one of nine council’s and commissions of PCI’s General Assembly, which addresses issues on which the Church seeks to have its voice heard clearly in the public square. Dr Bex Stevenson is PCI’s Public Affairs Officer.

“The first episode of the Graciously Confident podcast is available now on the PCI website, www.presbyterianireland.org, and wherever you listen to your podcasts. In this first tranche of episodes, we unpack what assisted suicide means in practice, we also examine the proposed legislative changes in GB, and possible legislation on this island, while discussing why Christians should care deeply and engage thoughtfully with the debate. Whether you approach the issue from a faith perspective, a medical background, or simple human concern, we hope the podcasts are both thought-provoking and engaging,” Dr Stevenson said.

Explaining that there will be one podcast per month, after the four-part series on assisted suicide and euthanasia, Dr Stevenson said that, “in the coming months the podcast will

feature a range of subjects, which will include peace and reconciliation, poverty and the continuing cost of living crisis in Ireland, ending violence against women and girls, migration and issues around it, so watch this space. We will also look at new issues when they emerge.”

@ @

The Graciously Confident Podcast episodes

Episode One: The State of the Debate

Will sits down with Max and Daniel to better understand the issue of Assisted Dying and Euthanasia. In this first episode, they discuss the proposed legislation currently progressing through Westminster and why as Christians we should care and respond.

Episode Two: A Better Way

Hosted by Will, Max is joined by Dr Matthew Doré, Consultant in Palliative Medicine at Northern Ireland Hospice, to discuss palliative care, debunk some of the myths that have emerged since the proposed legislative change, and discuss the importance of having a good death.

Episode Three: Stories that speak

In this moving and powerful episode, Will sits down with Rev Ian Harbinson, former minister of Moneydig Presbyterian Church in County Londonderry, and Dr Olwyn Mark, Lecturer in Practical Theology, as they share their personal lived experience. Ian talks about his ongoing experience of living with cancer and his ministry to support those in the same situation. Olwyn shares her experience of

her father's battle with cancer, and the role the hospice and palliative care played.

Episode Four: Be the difference

In the final episode of this four part mini-series of the Graciously Confident podcast, Will meets Bex and Rev Linda Keys, a fundraiser with Hospice NI, who discuss practical ways that you can support palliative care charities and how you can engage with your MLAs and MPs on this life changing issue.

Education

Nursing with the Open University NI

Nancy's journey into nursing was driven by her passion for supporting children and young people with learning disabilities and her commitment continues to inspire others following the same path.

If you're ready to begin your own nursing journey, The Open University's nursing degree programmes are now open for recruitment.

Flexible, practice-based learning means you can earn while you learn and make a real difference in your community.

Read Nancy's story: <https://ow.ly/9iM450Xe7v3>

Explore our local nursing roadshows here:



<https://ow.ly/5LgH50Xe7v1>

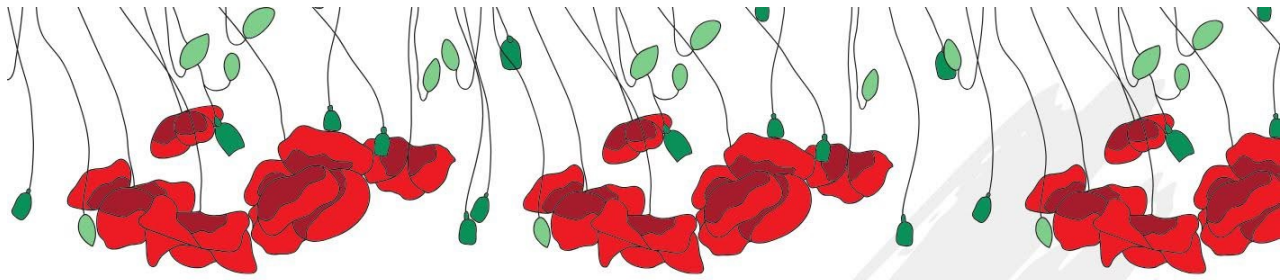
Legal roles explored at MCB

Methodist College Belfast Law Society were pleased to welcome Fergal McGoldrick, Partner at Carson McDowell Law firm and Jonathan Dunlop BL.

They talked to Sixth Formers about the different roles of solicitors, barristers and judges within the legal system in NI.

This was a really informative session for those considering law as a career and prompted lots of questions at the end.

Events



LEST WE FORGET

Thousands of hand crafted poppies beautifully
displayed in Lisburn Cathedral

Lisburn Cathedral
7th - 9th November

The Cathedral will be open for viewing as follows:

Fri 7th 10.30am - 4pm

Sat 8th 10.30am - 4pm

Sun 9th 2pm - 4pm



Admission is free.

Donations are welcome for the Poppy Appeal and the
Lisburn Cathedral Hall Restoration Fund.



Christ Church Derry Recital

Remember, remember, the 5th of November...

Ben McGonigle writes - I'll be giving a recital at Christ Church, Derry/Londonderry, on Wednesday 5th, and it would be great to see some familiar faces there.

I've been Organist and Director of Music here since 2008, and it's been a real privilege to help build up the church's music and see our monthly concerts become a regular part of Derry's musical life.

This recital will feature music for both organ and piano, with a mix of reflective and uplifting pieces — something for everyone, really.

Alongside my work at Christ Church, I've been lucky to direct Cantemus for BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship, and to perform with groups such as Allegri, Codetta, and the Ulster Orchestra, as well as on BBC Radio 3's In Tune.

Date: 5th November

Christ Church, Derry/Londonderry

Admission: Free, with retiring voluntary donation

Everyone's very welcome to come along and enjoy a lunchtime of music in the beautiful surroundings of Christ Church.

In Loving Memory – A Service of Remembrance

You are invited to join us at Christ Church, Derry/Londonderry (Infirmary Road) on Saturday 8th November at 6pm for a gentle and reflective Service of Remembrance.

This special evening, led by Archdeacon Robert S Miller and featuring the beautiful voices of Cantemus, will include

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anthems, readings from scripture, and reflective poetry – offering space to pause, remember, and give thanks for those who are no longer with us.

Everyone is welcome — no matter your background, faith, or no faith at all — to share in this time of reflection and peace. Entry is free.

newirisharts.com

 **NEW
IRISH
ARTS**

 PART OF LAGAN VALLEY & SOUTH DOWN CIRCUIT

**New Irish Arts
in concert at
Donard Methodist**

An evening with musicians from
New Irish Choir and Orchestra

37 Central Promenade, Newcastle
Saturday 8th November, 7:30pm
Supper included

Suggested donation £20 at the door.

Tickets reserved by
contacting Richard on
richard.wright@irishmethodist.org
or by text at 07702 090 486



Perspective

Julian of Norwich: Mysticism and Love

A reflection from Ellen Clark-King

I was ordained on the eve of St Julian's Day in 1994, the first year the Church of England allowed women to be priests. At the end of the service as we processed out dozens of balloons were dropped from Hereford Cathedral ceiling all bearing the words 'All shall be well'.

Julian's most famous quote, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well", is almost too well-known, and sometimes used too glibly, to feel like a real revelation of her encounter with God. But it is fundamental to the nature of the God that she saw in her visions: a God without anger but with consistent love yearning for the wellbeing and flourishing of all the world.

It is this confidence in God's loving nature that gives Julian her conviction that all shall be well: "What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love."

This, for me, is the beginning and end of mysticism: the encounter with a God who is pure love. For some it comes in ecstatic visions, for most of us it comes in bright moments in the middle of the everyday. In the beauty of a garden at evening, in the sense of being companioned through pain, in

the everyday round of labour well done, in the voice and touch of one who loves us.

This is why all shall ultimately be well because all that is, including you and I, are held in the hands of our loving God who is always willing our good and always closer than our own breathing. Mystics or not, God is there for each one of us every day.

The Revd Dr Ellen Clark-King is Dean of King's College London. She has written and worked on the theme of spirituality in the US and Canada as well as in the UK.

In the media

No public inquiry into 1974 IRA Birmingham pub bombings, government announces

<https://www.itv.com/news/central/2025-10-30/government-will-not-launch-public-inquiry-into-birmingham-pub-bombings>

JD Vance hopes his wife will convert

Daily Telegraph - JD Vance has said he hopes his wife, second lady Usha Vance, converts to his Christian faith.

The US vice-president, a devout Catholic, said that Mrs Vance, who was raised as a Hindu, regularly attends church

with him and that they had raised their children as Christians.

Mr Vance told students at the University of Mississippi on Wednesday that his wife had been raised in a “not particularly religious” Hindu household and that when they met, both would have considered themselves agnostics.

“Do I hope eventually that she is somehow moved by the same thing I was moved by [in](#) church?” he asked.

“Yes. I honestly do wish that. Because I believe in the Christian gospel, and I hope eventually, my wife comes to see it the same way,” he said.

“But if she doesn’t, then God says that everybody has free will, and so that doesn’t cause a problem for me. That’s something you work out with [...] (#) the person that you love,” adding: “One of the most important Christian principles is that you respect free will.”

Mr Vance converted to Catholicism six years ago and is one of several prominent Catholics in Donald Trump’s administration. He said two of his three children attend a Christian school and that his eldest, Ewan, had his first communion a year ago.

Mr Vance previously said his wife was “very supportive” when he “started to re-engage” with his faith. Their 2014 wedding ceremony in Kentucky included a Hindu blessing.

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<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/2246/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/2246/pub/2246/page/45/article/NaN>

Heritage



Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn

November 1, 2025

An ornate church with an even more ornate fountain before! Identified as Lisburn's Seymour Street Methodist Church, we suspected the fountain was long gone - but to where?

Date: ca. 1860-1883 (but likely 1875-1880)

NLI Ref: STP_2290

Courtesy of the National library of Ireland.

Northern Ireland Historical Photographical Society.

[https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069506203554)

[id=100069506203554](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069506203554)

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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www.churchnewsireland.org

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

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