

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Aspects of Remembrance**

## Image of the day

### Aspects of Remembrance - Foyle College

**Foyle College Head Boy and Head Girl were accompanied by Mrs McLaughlin in attending the Remembrance Day Service at the city's Cenotaph.**

The Head Prefects laid a poppy wreath on behalf of Foyle College, in respectful memory of those who served and sacrificed.



### Lisburn Squadron Air Cadets Remembrance weekend



## 817 Lisburn Squadron Air Cadets Remembrance

## **weekend included cadets attending the Festival of Remembrance at Lagan Valley Island Centre Lisburn**

There they met up with their Squadron President, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim Mr David McCorkell, and Mrs McCorkell. An act of worship was conducted by Canon Nicholas Dark, rector of Magheragall and Chaplain to Lisburn and district RBL.

## **Remembering the Fallen**



**In  
November  
1976,  
Captain  
William  
Rolston  
Bond,  
Second-in-  
Command  
of the West  
Foyle  
Company,  
5th**

**Battalion, the Ulster Defence Regiment, died from gunshot wounds sustained ten days earlier while off-duty.**

Captain Bond – known as Ronnie - was a part-time member of the regiment, and also employed by the Housing Executive in an administrative post. He had been one of the first members of the regiment when it was formed. Captain



## The city war memorial at The Diamond, Londonderry

Bond had served with the Royal Navy during the second world war, on the landing crafts for allied troops during the invasion of Italy. Later he worked for a time with the police force in Kenya.

On the day of his death he had arrived home after the short

**Dungannon Presbyterian Church**

**choice**  
Together we enrich lives

# **Sacrifice Remembered**

**Poppy Festival of Reflection & Remembrance**

Event Details:

- Friday 7th November: 10am – 9pm
- Saturday 8th November: 10am – 9pm
- Sunday 9th November: 2pm – 6.30pm
- Closing Service - All Welcome: Sunday 9th November at 6.30pm

**Refreshments in the adjoining hall throughout the weekend**

For group bookings please contact  
Anna Martin – 07753 649133  
May Miller – 07787 125128  
Gladys Smith – 07565 408916

*Join us as we honour the past, reflect on the present, and look with hope to the future*

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walk from his office when two IRA gunmen shot him twelve times in the back. He was taken to hospital, but his wounds were too grievous and he passed away ten days later.

Ronnie, from Londonderry, was 53 years old.

## Knitters create thousands of poppies to mark Remembrance Day



**BBC News - Cascades of hand-knitted poppies and displays of treasured uniforms, diaries and medals are among the ways two villages in Northern Ireland are marking Remembrance Day.**

St Colmanell's in Ahoghill, County Antrim, and St Matthew's in Richhill, County Armagh, have both transformed their churches to remember those who fought and died at war.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgkz28y6mv2o>]

# News



## Archbishops pilgrimage of prayer and solidarity in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory

**On Saturday Archbishop Stephen of York began a pilgrimage of prayer and solidarity in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory with The Most Revd Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem.**

Together, they will be spending time in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the South Hebron Hills, Ramallah, and Nazareth, meeting local church leaders, congregations, and community organisations.

Ahead of the visit Archbishop Stephen said: “To walk where Jesus walked and to meet the Living Stones — our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Christ who bear faithful witness in the Holy Land today — is a profound privilege. This pilgrimage is an opportunity to listen, to pray, and to stand in solidarity with those who continue to work for peace, dignity, and hope amid deep and complex realities. My prayer is that our time together may be a sign of our shared faith and our longing for God’s reconciling love to be known by all.”

You can find out more about the pilgrimage here:

<https://www.archbishopofyork.org/news/latest-news/pilgrimage-prayer-and-solidarity-holy-land>

## National Churches Survey results are in

**The National Churches Trust surveyed thousands of churches, chapels and meeting houses across nations and denominations, from medieval churches and Nonconformist chapels to Catholic parishes and vibrant Pentecostal spaces.**

The Trust says, “We asked about everything from community activities, services and volunteers to repairs, facilities and hopes for the future.



“The National Churches Survey sets out clearly the challenges that churches are facing and also the opportunities for renewal, if we act together”.

Explore the full results on The National Churches Trust website now:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/survey>

## Education

**Ulster University welcomes Chancellor Colin Davidson and broadcaster Mark Carruthers**



**Last week we were honoured to welcome Chancellor Colin Davidson and broadcaster Mark Carruthers to our Belfast campus for a special event celebrating the launch of: ‘Colin Davidson: Twelve Paintings – conversations with Mark Carruthers’, their new book of discussions exploring art, memory and place.**

Hosted in partnership with the Belfast International Arts Festival and facilitated by Marie-Louise Kerr, the evening offered a heartfelt look at twelve of Davidson’s key works,

from early Belfast street scenes to iconic portraits of Queen Elizabeth II and John Hume.

Read more: <https://ow.ly/SiqE50Xoj7H>

## Cathedral Calls

### Parish Mass of Remembrance at Armagh Cathedral

**During their Parish Mass of Remembrance, Archbishop Eamon prayerfully remembered those who died during the last year and also told the story of one of Armagh's most famous sons, St Malachy on his feast day.**

“May we all be blessed through St Malachy's intercession and experience the peace of knowing our loved ones who have died are in the company of Jesus and the Saints.”

## Clergy and ministry

### Christ Church, Strabane, homecoming

**There are homecomings and there are homecomings - in Christ Church, Strabane, Rev Robert Wray was introduced as Priest-in-charge of the church literally across the street from the home on Bowling Green where he spent much of his adolescence.**

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It was, the preacher, Ven. Robert Miller, said, a case of “the right people meeting the right leader”.



The homely feeling of the evening Service of Introduction was enhanced by the presence of Rev Wray’s mother, Ruby, and his wife, Karen, who shared a pew with his sister, Naomi Kirkpatrick and niece Catherine McDonald.

A number of clergy from surrounding churches were in church to formally welcome their colleague. Also present were the retired Bishop of Mahajanga, in Madagascar, Rt Rev Hall Speers – a native of Urney and a former neighbour of Robert’s wife, Karen – and Father Declan Boland, Priest-in-Residence at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Strabane.



This evening's service was led by the Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, who welcomed the congregation to "a special night" for the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Mourne. "I know that Robert has been in the parish, now, for a number of months," Bishop Andrew said, "but we wanted to mark the beginning of this new chapter of ministry for Robert and for the parish by having this special Service of Introduction, this evening.

"And, Robert, it's particularly great to see you sitting where you're sitting," the Bishop said. "You've been familiar with that chair since you were a small boy coming to this church and God has led you on this wonderful journey that has brought you back to your home parish to serve him, to love the place that you grew up in – again, in a new way – as pastor for this parish."

The sermon was delivered by Rev Robert's first Rector, the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller, who described it as a pleasure to be preaching on this occasion. "There's a wonderful understanding in Scripture of the word blessing," he said, "as being the right person, in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. And there certainly seems to be a sense that this evening has 'blessing' written all over it. The Reverend Robert is someone returning home to serve as Priest-in-charge of this parish and to serve the community where he grew up."

Bishop Andrew was assisted during the Service of Introduction by Diocesan Registrar, Rev Jonathan Brown, who read the certificate of nomination. The scriptural readings were delivered by the parish secretary, Jason Foy, and parish treasurer, Philip Smith. Archdeacon Miller read the Gospel reading.

Musical worship was led by Elaine McKenna on the organ and guitarist Andrew White, and after the Service, the congregation enjoyed refreshments and fellowship in the church hall.

## **To be Rector of Derryloran**

**After the process of a Board of Nomination, the Archbishop of Armagh has announced that the Rev'd Matthew Topley, currently Curate Assistant of Drumglass Parish, has been appointed to become Rector of the Parish of Derryloran.**

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The date of Matthew's Institution Service has yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, may we remember Matthew and Erin, as well as their children Lilly, Sammy and Tommy in our prayers, and we look forward to Matthew's ministry in his new parish early next year.



Matthew commented: Erin and I have known God's richest blessings in ministering alongside our church family in Drumglass over the past four years. They are the most wonderful people who have shown us what it means to love and serve the Lord faithfully, 'in season and out of season'.

As we prepare to leave, we do so with full hearts, deeply thankful for all that God has done among us. We have a

deep peace about our move to Cookstown, and are very much looking forward to serving the Lord and his people in Derryloran.

Please pray for Erin, Lilly, Sammy, Tommy, and me, that we may faithfully 'proclaim Christ crucified'.

## Events

### Rural Community Banking Network

**Earlier this year, Rural Community Banking Network provided evidence to the Finance Committee as part of their Banking Inquiry.**

Since then, RCN has been working alongside NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) who represents the Community and Voluntary Sector on the UK Banking Forum, to highlight the challenges rural communities face in accessing finance, both at a public level and for community and voluntary groups.

Significant issues remain, with some rural areas being successful in obtaining banking hubs whilst others have not.

To continue this important conversation and to showcase some of the positive initiatives happening in rural areas, RCN are hosting a rural banking event.

RCN will host MLAs from the Finance Committee, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and NICVA who will discuss issues and explore solutions with you.

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Friday 28 November 2025



11am to 12.30pm



RCN office, Cookstown

Light lunch provided.

Contact [kelly@ruralcommunitynetwork.org](mailto:kelly@ruralcommunitynetwork.org) or sign up here:  
<https://lnkd.in/eyMpbDBd>

## Women in Agriculture Conference

**The Rural Community Network hosted a Workshop:  
“Seeds of Security – Cultivating Financial Wellbeing” at  
the Women in Agriculture Conference**

RCN Policy Officer, Samantha Gallagher, had the pleasure of delivering a workshop on rural financial wellbeing at the Women in Agriculture Conference at Loughry on 23 October 2025.

Huge congratulations to the Rural Affairs Sub-Committee at Ulster Farmers Union for organising such a fantastic, sold-out event.

It was inspiring to hear from speakers including Eve Blair (BBC), Ulster Bank, Nicola Wordie (Livestock FarmHer, Scotland), Lorna Sicksmith (Farmer & Writer, Republic of Ireland), and Emily McGowan (Millbank Farm & Farmshop, County Down).

Samantha’s session focused on the three pillars of financial wellbeing:

-  Knowing your rights and entitlements
-  Everyday support
-  Planning ahead

The conference celebrated forward-thinking, resilient, and positive women, highlighting the strength and innovation of rural Northern Ireland.

## Resources

### We Few, We Band of Brothers

**Available now - "We Few, We Band of Brothers" - the latest episode from The Commission Files made by Will Leitch at Commission Christian Radio.**

Join Will and his guest for a remarkable insight into life as a chaplain in the Armed Forces. Rev James Burnett from Belfast is a chaplain in the Royal Naval Reserve. Known as "Bish" or "Padre", whilst on deployment he regularly hears serving men and women ask why they rarely meet any Christians. This is his mission field. And his wish is that church life could be like the bonds he finds among serving men and women. "We few - we band of brothers..."

James tells Will about his work as a chaplain in a deployment aboard a Royal Navy vessel standing off the shore of Gaza. Where people still found faith - or continued in faith.

Find the episode here: <https://pod.fo/e/3487c4>

## In the media

### Newman's readable prescriptions - Christopher Howse in the Daily Telegraph

**It's striking that in 1988, 37 years ago, Ian Ker should have written in the preface to his biography of Newman: "My reading and rereading of his writings over the years have only deepened my conviction that John Henry Newman is to be numbered among the Doctors of the Church." And that is what he was declared last week.**

He is the 38th such doctor to be named. Some had long been renowned, such as the four noted doctors of the Latin Church: Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose and Gregory (who kindly sent some Benedictine monks to convert England). Others are sympathetic characters such as St Teresa of Avila and St Thérèse of Lisieux, who make for agreeable reading in their autobiographies. Some more recent additions are less likely choices for the Christmas book list, such as St Hildegard of Bingen (better known for her music) and St John of Avila (sound though his teaching may be).

St John Henry Newman scores high on biographical interest. His *Apologia* is probably the place to start, a Victorian classic in a style closer to Robert Louis Stevenson than to Gibbon. The two books that influenced Pope Benedict XVI, who came to England in 2010 to beatify Newman, were *The Development of Christian Doctrine* and *The Grammar of Assent*.

The first showed how the teaching of the Church grew more specific through the centuries: the implicit became explicit. The second concerns the process by which we become certain of a belief. I once went down a long way in the estimation of Lord Black of Crossharbour by saying I'd never read it.

Perhaps I'd taken too seriously the story that the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein had been given a copy and after reading a few pages had thrown it out of the train window. This hardly fits the evidence that from 1946 until 1951 Newman's Grammar of Assent was the greatest stimulus for Wittgenstein's thought. He produced notes that became his posthumous book On Certainty, which Sir Anthony Kenny observed "covers many of the same topics as the Grammar of Assent, uses many of the same illustrations, and draws some of the same conclusions".

Anyway, being attractive to Wittgenstein is no criterion for being declared a Doctor of the Church. A more pastoral appeal is preferred. In 2010 I followed Benedict XVI to a muddy field in Birmingham, where he beatified Newman.

He had been a fan for 65 years, since his days at seminary. Those began in January 1946, with 60 others who slept in freezing dormitories. Even more demanding they had to start from zero after years of Nazism. The Theological Faculty of Munich had been closed in 1939 by the Nazis and the Rector at Freising seminary in 1946 had spent years in Sachsenhausen and Dachau after writing against Hitler. "Newman was not a topic like any other," Alfred Läpple, Benedict's prefect of studies, remembered. "He was our passion."

In 2000, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict still was, recalled one Nazi saying: “‘I have no conscience. My conscience is Adolf Hitler.’ The appalling devastation of humanity that followed was before our eyes.” Newman helped them rebuild humanity in the light of the truth of God discerned by conscience.

“The characteristic of the great Doctor of the Church,” Benedict said in 2000, “is that he teaches not only through his thought and speech but also by his life, because within him, thought and life are interpenetrated and defined. If this is so, then Newman belongs to the great teachers of the Church.”

## Speaking to the soul

### The one true God

No pagan god is like you, O Lord. None can do what you do!  
Psalm 86:8

There have always been lots of gods on offer. A god is anything that calls for our commitment and devotion, and in every age, there has been a colourful variety of options. I once stayed with a journalist in Mumbai who had a remarkable variety of gods in his flat. There were pictures of many Hindu deities, but Jesus and Mary were there as well. Gods also come in more subtle forms. A person's family or their job, house, bank balance, hobby or sport can be their god. All of those things are good in themselves, but when

they are turned into gods, they take on a completely different and potentially destructive significance. King David was well aware of the wide range of gods that he could worship, but he concluded that the God of Israel was incomparably great. He alone was worthy of David's commitment and devotion.

The prophets spent a lot of time mocking the false gods of their time. Isaiah mocked the wood carver who carefully worked with his chisel and plane to carve a human figure. He created a little shrine out of it and fell down in worship before it, crying: "Rescue me! You are my god." He then took another part of the wood to make a fire with which he warmed himself and baked bread. Isaiah laughed at the sheer absurdity of this and called the wood carver a "poor, deluded fool" (Isaiah 44:20). Tough talk, but Isaiah knew that worshipping the one true God was something of infinite importance.

David and Isaiah's straightforward approach to false gods needs to challenge our own attitudes. Like them, we would let other people down if we didn't make it clear that any other god will be a complete disappointment. They may give encouragement for a while, but ultimately they are bound to let us down. Only the one true God will be faithful to us for time and eternity. Only he is worthy of our commitment and devotion.

## **QUESTION**

What are the most common gods in our society?

## **PRAYER**

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Lord God, I commit my whole self to you as the one true God. Help me to be faithful to you and to take every opportunity to speak to others about your incomparable greatness. Amen

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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