

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – autumn at St Patrick's

News reports

C of I Historical Society conference

The next conference of the Church of Ireland Historical Society will take place on Saturday 12 November and will be an online event via Zoom.

The conference will start at the earlier time of 10.30am when Prof Ann Lodge will talk on “Reluctant progression”: the story of primary teacher education in the Church of Ireland tradition from 1922 to 2022’ followed at 11.15am by Dr Robbie Roulston on “Universal Church” or “Protestant Church”: competing articulations of the Church of Ireland voice in mid–twentieth century Ireland’.

The final paper in the morning session will be given at 12 noon by Prof Brian Walker whose topic will be ‘Protestant experiences during the revolutionary period as recorded in Church of Ireland synod reports, 1919–1923’.

After lunch, at 1.30pm, Stephen Heffernan will speak on ‘Four bullets and a bone of contention – the killing of Henry Colclough, 1923’ followed at 2.15pm by Dr Ian d’Alton on ‘Guests of the nation? The southern Irish Protestant condition through the lens of literature’.

The conference will conclude with a paper at 2.50pm by Dr Ida Milne on ‘Southern Protestantism, a personal perspective’.

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It will be available to all paid up members (€40/£40 with a reduced rate for students €15/£15) and also to persons who chose to purchase a 1–day membership (€10/£10). The link to the conference will be sent automatically c. 24–48 hours before the event to everyone on the membership list.

Clogher institution

On Thursday evening at 7.30pm, the Bishop of Clogher will institute the Revd Stephen McWhirter as Rector of Rossorry in Rossorry parish church. The Rt Right Revd Patrick Rooke, former Bishop of Tuam, Killala & Achonry, will be the preacher.

Sandford parish Choral Compline

A short service of evening prayer sung throughout will resume in Sandford parish church, Ranelagh, Dublin, this Friday evening at 6.00pm. All are welcome to come to this beautiful meditative service

Methodist President visits Lisburn Food Bank and Damask Community Outreach

Attempting to deal with poverty and its root causes has from its inception under God been a major part of the DNA of Methodism.

As a result, as well as local congregations attempting to elevate poverty and all the other “spin-offs” which accompany it, the Methodist Church in Ireland established 5

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Missions (one in the Republic of Ireland) and 4 in Northern Ireland - e.g. East and North Belfast, Londonderry, Belfast Central Mission all of whom are telling of the needs that people are coming with either seeking financial help or to make use of the Food Banks.

On Thursday 27th October, the Rev. David Nixon, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and Lay Leader, Tom Wilson, along with others, went to learn of the work of the Lisburn Food Bank, part of The Trussell Trust network, and the partnership that it has developed with Damask Community Outreach, based in Seymour Street Methodist Church.

Meeting with Lynsey Cagueua, who manages the Community Support work of Lisburn City Church through its Community Trust, Alan Crawford, Christians Against Poverty, and with Dr Lindsay Eason, Chairman of Damask, the President and Lay Leader heard of the work that goes on between the three organisations.

The Lisburn Food Bank is seeing first hand how many families are struggling to meet essential needs with the number of clients being referred continuing to rise due to the impacts of the cost of living crisis.

Currently there are around 40 churches within the wider Lisburn area who support the Lisburn Food bank and they are seeing around 50 clients calling at the food bank every week.

Damask Community Outreach began in 2011 by the members of Seymour Street Methodist Church in Lisburn.

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Through the Lisburn Food Bank, they partner with The Trussell Trust who currently support 22 food banks in Northern Ireland (5% of the total number of food banks in their network across the UK).

Helping to address the issues that may underly why clients have had to seek the help of the food bank, the Damask Welfare Adviser, Febbie Francis spends one morning a week with food bank clients, helping to identify the benefits to which they may be entitled and assisting with application forms.

The Lisburn Food Bank also works closely with Christians Against Poverty (CAP) providing an Advice Service dealing with people struggling with debt. The Damask adviser refers clients to CAP and to the Food Bank, and CAP will



refer clients to Damask who need support to access benefits to which they are entitled.

The work at Damask centres around the Low Road area of Lisburn, two areas of which have been assessed as the 3rd and 7th most deprived of the over 100 areas of the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. As well as their work through the Lisburn Food Bank, Damask offer advice and counselling, Carers and Toddlers, after-school clubs, and outreach work with teenagers.

The youth programmes are run in partnership with Youth Initiatives whose Lisburn base is in Seymour Street. It was commented at both the food bank and by the youth leaders that there has been a steep rise since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the number of young people with mental health problems.

At the conclusion of the visit, the President spoke of his appreciation of the partnership which now exists between our Council on Social Responsibility, Christians Against Poverty and the Trussell Trust.

“Today the Lay Leader and I have been able to see the positive work all of these organisations are doing to support many different people who need help and support at this trying time. I also want to commend and thank the Trussell Trust, CAP and Damask and their partner organisations for the community outreach and support in this City of Lisburn.”

The President also praised the many congregations who are seeking to reach out and serve their local communities

through many innovative schemes and those volunteers who make such ideas work.

Thinking of our Methodist City Missions the President said:

“There is a fear that these and other charities may not have the resources to meet the needs, especially as we go towards Christmas which has always been a period when extra expenses are incurred and so I would encourage everyone to be as generous as possible to our five Methodist City Missions as well as the charity work which is going on around you.”

In conclusion, the Methodist President reminded all present that the Church Leaders have again and again highlighted the desperate need for HM Government to step up their support for those extremely vulnerable in our society.

Bishops highlight Travellers' experience of racism and discrimination

Last month, National Traveller Mental Health Day was marked with a celebration of Mass at Knock Shrine, Co Mayo.

During their Autumn General Meeting in Maynooth, Bishops received a report from their Commission on Social Issues and International Affairs that gave an account of an enlightening meeting with representatives of the Archdiocese of Dublin's Parish of the Travelling People, on aspects of community life, including their deep faith, devotion to prayer and the sacraments, as well as culture.

Bishops said it was totally unacceptable that Travellers experience racism, discrimination and dangers on a daily basis in Ireland, and that it was most regrettable that this situation often forces young Travellers to hide their own identity. Bishops asked all Catholics to show solidarity with Travelling people and to work for change of attitude in society to enable Travellers participate more fully in the life of the community – including the faith community – and to encourage a greater respect for Traveller identity and its unique culture.

Bishops were also advised of the high level of mental health problems and large number of suicides among Travelling people, specifically, that the suicide rate of young Traveller men is seven times higher than in the settled community. Concern too was raised at the high proportion of Travellers in the prison system in Ireland, and about the volume of financial resources returned to the exchequer relating to projects to assist Travellers, particularly on housing, due to third party objections and other systemic blockages.

Bishops thanked the priests, religious, and many parish and other voluntary groups, for their continued support and solidarity with the Travelling community. Bishops expressed their deep gratitude to the Parish of the Travelling People for its significant contribution to the Synodal Pathway, and look forward to close collaboration into the future.

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Bishop of Cork appoints new Secretary and Personal Assistant

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton has announced the appointment of Denise Stobart (née Brueckl) as Bishop's Secretary and Personal Assistant.

For the past sixteen months Denise has been working as the Diocesan Media and Information Technology Officer and from today, 1st November 2022, she takes on this additional role. Also included in this role is the grants administration for Saint Stephen's Protestant Orphan Society and Cork Indigent Roomkeepers' Society.

With this announcement Denise has also decided to use her new married name going forward.

Announcing the appointment, the Bishop said:

I am hugely pleased that, in addition to her half-time work as Diocesan Media and IT Officer in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Denise Stobart has accepted my appointment as my part-time secretary and personal assistant. With some re-ordering of work in our offices – the Diocesan Office and the Bishop’s Office – Denise will also assume responsibility for the grants administration of the Saint Stephen’s Protestant Orphan Society and the Cork Indigent Roomkeepers’ Society.

Consolidating all of this portfolio of activities and roles in Denise, who is a very creative and active person and who has come to know and understand our United Dioceses well, represents a wonderful step forward for us all in this part of the Church of Ireland. I wish Denise well as she takes on these new roles and I look forward very much to working with her.

Upon her appointment, Denise said:

I really enjoy working part-time as Media and IT Officer for the Diocese and I have been having a great time getting out and about meeting people from all over Cork, Cloyne and Ross. I particularly enjoy working with Bishop Paul and I am delighted that he is giving me this opportunity to work more closely with him.

Lisburn Cathedral set to celebrate 400 years

Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, in the Diocese of Connor, is set for a year of celebration in 2023, as it marks the 400th anniversary of worship on the cathedral site in the heart of the city.

The first church on the site was built by Sir Fulke Conway who, when he moved from England to settle in Lisburn, constructed his castle in the park adjacent to the site of what was then called St Thomas' Church, serving the castle family and staff and the small population of the immediate area.

Some 40 years later, Charles II established the church to be the Cathedral Church of Down and Connor, and later Lisburn Cathedral was recognised as the cathedral of the Diocese of Connor.

The original church was left in ruins after a rebel army attack on Lisburn in 1641. It was restored but was destroyed by fire, as was most of the town, in 1707. Again the cathedral was rebuilt – the foundation stone was laid in 1708. The current chancel was added in 1889.

HISTORIC EVENTS

The cathedral has connections with such historic events as the American War of Independence, the Siege of Delhi 1798, and the United Irishmen. Also, the Huguenot settlement in Ireland, the development of the linen industry



The Rt Rev Sam Wright, Dean of Connor and rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, presents a copy of the 400th anniversary calendar to the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. Photo: Norman Briggs.

and events following the killing of the Mayor of Cork and the subsequent murder in Lisburn of the senior police officer whose men were accused of that murder.

The first event in the year of celebration is '400 minutes of Prayer' on Saturday January 7, beginning at 9.30am. People can call in for however long they would like for both silent and led prayer.

A service to officially launch the 400th anniversary will be held on Sunday January 15, and will be attended by the

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Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and other dignitaries.

On May 15, there will be a Gala Dinner, open to all, at a venue to be confirmed.

A celebration weekend will run from June 9-11, featuring a Friday night party, a 1623-themed afternoon tea on the Saturday, and celebration service on the Sunday afternoon. Organisers are in the process of contacting former curates, vestry members, parishioners who have moved out of the area, and people who were married or confirmed in the cathedral over the last 30 years to invite them to the weekend's events.

Several themed open days are planned for July and August, along with a series of talks on the history of the cathedral.

A concert featuring New Irish Arts will take place on the last weekend in September, and a 400th anniversary closing service will be held before Christmas.

PERMANENT MARKER

The cathedral is also considering ways of creating a permanent marker of this historic year, with ideas including a new Prayer Garden; a memorial in conjunction with Lisburn Museum, and cataloguing the contents of the cathedral's 'History Room' – currently in a state of dishevelment – to make the information freely available online.

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As part of the 400th anniversary celebrations, a 2023 calendar has been published. Images featured include an aerial view of the cathedral site, the old Huguenot graves in the churchyard, the refurbished interior (2012), Harvest, Remembrance, Easter outreach in the Hillhall Estate, the old Cathedral Gates (1925), hope in the face of Covid-19, and more.

Copies will be on sale at £4, with all funds raised being funnelled back into the cathedral.

Welcoming people to attend services and events as part of the year of celebration, the Dean of Connor and rector of Lisburn Cathedral, the Very Rev Sam Wright said: “Over the past 400 years, through many times of trials and challenges, joy and celebrations, worship has been given to Almighty God on the site where Lisburn Cathedral sits today.

“Throughout this anniversary year, it is our desire to give thanks to God for his faithfulness and for the many generations of Christian people who have provided a faithful witness to the Gospel in Lisburn and beyond. At the same time we look forward to, and pray for that worship, Christian teaching, prayer and outreach continuing and flourishing into the future.”

Any group or individual interested in attending these events or wanting to arrange a separate visit can make contact via the cathedral website or Facebook.

[\[https://lisburncathedral.org/\]](https://lisburncathedral.org/)

Appreciation - Bob Fryer

The death took place last month of Robert (Bob) Fryer, Belfast Cathedral Steward and Connor Diocesan lay reader.

Bob was one of the longest serving of the Belfast Cathedral Stewards, and was usually to be found at the cathedral on a Thursday. In 1996, the late Dean Jack Shearer made a television appeal for volunteers to join the stewards' team at St Anne's. Bob responded, and continued as a steward until September 2020 when he decided that, after 24 years, it was time to take a rest.

Across the years, Bob showed people from around the world the features of St Anne's Cathedral and explained the history of the building, delighting visitors with anecdotes and stories from his past. Such was his appeal, that Bob received cards of appreciation from many countries including the United States, England, Scotland and even the Czech Republic. On one occasion those who had been shown around the cathedral by Bob invited him to attend their wedding in Washington DC! Of course Bob accepted.

The cathedral was represented at the funeral by Canon Raymond Fox.

Bob's interests were not limited to Belfast Cathedral. He had been a lifelong member of the Boy's Brigade, as anyone who took time to speak with him soon discovered. His shaped his own life around the BB motto of "true Christian manliness".

This was further expressed in the 40 years which Bob served as a Lay Reader in the Church of Ireland. At his retirement as a Lay Reader in 2016, Bob received as special presentation from Bishop Alan Abernethy at St Mary's Church on Belfast's Crumlin Road.

Over 1,000 Church of England clergy say they would conduct same-sex marriages, survey reveals

At least 1,100 clergy have indicated they would conduct same-sex marriages should it become allowed in the Church of England, according to a survey.

Carried out by the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England, the survey was launched at the beginning of September to compile a list of those favouring changing the Church of England's current stance on same-sex marriages.

During this year's Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Rev Justin Welby, acknowledged there's a "plurality of views" within the Anglican Communion regarding the same-sex marriage issue, but admitted the Church only recognises a Christian marriage as between a man and a woman.

Announcing the results, Nigel Pietroni, Chair of the Campaign, said: "It is clear from the feedback after Living in Love and Faith that the majority want the current situation to

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change and from the Archbishop's own comments that the need for change has been accepted."

The group says the names of all signatories are being cross-checked against clergy databases and all personal details are being kept completely confidential.

Only those licensed as clergy are being counted, and dioceses across the country are being represented in the survey, according to the group.

The Campaign for Equal Marriage was among those groups meeting bishops at Lambeth Palace in September as part of the Living in Love and Faith process.

Pietroni continued: "There can be no more delay. We look to the bishops to allow freedom of conscience for clergy who wish to bless same-sex couples, and for clergy married to their same-sex partners to serve in ministry. The bishops must give a clear message that marriage equality will follow."

Those opposing the change in the Church of England have also urged bishops not to change the Church's stance. John Dunnett, director of strategy and operations, The Church of England Evangelical Council has previously said the Church needs to "find a better way ahead - a settlement without theological compromise that is best for all."

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Creation Care or Climate Crisis – Join the conversation

Conversations about Mission. November 15 online - Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission is holding the next in their series of Conversations About Mission on Tuesday November 15 at 8pm on Zoom. The theme is 'Creation Care or Climate Crisis' and the conversation will be led by Lydia Monds and Stephen Trew. To book a place email dgcouncilformission@gmail.com.

Poem for today

An October Garden by Christina Rossetti

In my Autumn garden I was fain
To mourn among my scattered roses;
Alas for that last rosebud which uncloses
To Autumn's languid sun and rain
When all the world is on the wane!
Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,
Nor heard the nightingale in tune.

Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,
You are but coarse compared with roses:

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More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses,
Faint-scented, pinched, upon its stalk,
That least and last which cold winds balk;
A rose it is though least and last of all,
A rose to me though at the fall.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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