

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Blessing of Shire horses**

## Image of the day

### Blessing of Shire horses

Last Sunday was Shire Horse Sunday at the Chapel of Hampton Court. The Blessing of the Shire Horses took place before and during Evensong. Responses: Gibbons/Barnard. Setting: Stanford in C. Anthem: Let all the world, Vaughan Williams. An indication that Shire Horses have impeccable taste in church music. You would be welcome at services - 8.30 Holy Communion, 11.00 Sung Eucharist, 3.00 Evensong. Hampton Court is served by half-hourly trains from London Waterloo. Buses 111, 216, 411 & R68 serve the palace. Parking is available onsite, at Hampton Court Green and at the Railway Station.

## News reports

### Ballymacash churches launch community cafe

**In response to the ongoing cost of living crisis, churches in Ballymacash, Lisburn – including St Mark’s Parish – have come together to offer a free lunch five days a week to anyone who wants to drop in.**

The Rev Lynne Gibson, rector of Ballymacash, explained: “The idea and vision for the cafe came from Jonathan Oates, the manager of the local Costcutter for the past 20 years. Jonny has been witnessing at first hand the food and fuel pressures which people are already experiencing.



“Following discussions with the four churches in Ballymacash and our community centre, and with the support of local sponsors, the Community Cafe was launched.”

The drop in café – nicknamed ‘A Bowl and A Roll’ – first opened on Monday October 31, and runs five days a week from 12 – 2pm, providing hot soup and a roll along with tea/ coffee and biscuits.

Each local church runs the café on a particular day. Emmanuel Baptist on a Monday, Trinity Methodist on a Tuesday, Elmwood Presbyterian on a Thursday and St

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Mark's each Friday, while the community centre is open for the lunches on Wednesdays.

Lynne added: "It has been heartening to have the local churches working together to help their own community, and to have local sponsorship.

"This service is free and available to everyone who wishes to drop in for warm food in a warm space with warm conversation."

## **Mothers' Union Walk at Colebrooke Park will highlight gender-based violence**



**Preparing for the Mothers' Union walk at Colebrooke Park.**  
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**A walk on Saturday, 26 November at Colebrooke Park organised by Clogher Diocesan Mothers' Union will be highlighting the issue of gender-based violence.**

The walk is expected to attract people from across the diocese and beyond and will also launch the Mothers' Union's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence initiative. The MU has been active on the issue of domestic violence for a number of years.

Speaking about the event, Diocesan President Heather Ellis said: "We are using this as an event to launch our 16 Days of Activism, and also for the launch of the 16 days diary."



As well as the walk, those attending can learn more about the work of different agencies attending on the day, including Women's Aid, the PSNI, An Garda Síochána, Enniskillen-based The Aisling Centre, Tearmann, a domestic abuse service based in Monaghan, and Hourglass, a UK-wide charity with a base in Omagh that deals with the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK.

## Young people explore leadership through SERVE



**Connor Youth are running the SERVE course for the second time. This year, seven young people are taking part, meeting weekly at the Hub Chaplaincy over seven sessions.**

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SERVE explores how young people can step into leadership, exploring topics like the character of a leader and reflecting on their own gifts and skills.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: “We are delighted to have these young people linked into this course to explore how they can serve and lead in their local parish. It is such an encouragement to meet with them and explore what they can offer and grow in.

“We think this provides a great foundation and look forward to running the course each year in the diocese.”

The 2022 group will have a graduation ceremony on Sunday December 4 in Lisburn Cathedral to celebrate their development and achievement.

## **Pantomime based on The Prodigal Son is a sell out**



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## **Hundreds of people have enjoyed a four-night run of a pantomime with a difference.**

‘The Two Sons’ written by Revd Stephanie Woods, who is in charge of Inishmacsaint Parish, near Derrygonnelly in Clogher diocese, is based on the parable “The Prodigal Son” but with local characters in mind.



Some of those attending the pantomime in Derrygonnelly Orange Hall had travelled from over a wide area. Some local groups also made it a night out such as Cleenish and Mullaghduin Mothers’ Union, SEFF and the Fermanagh Visually Impaired Group.

Local talent contributed to not only the acting but in support roles such as creating the scenery, make-up, sound and filming for a DVD which will be on sale.

Local businesses also supported the event by sponsorship.

## **Presbyterian Church calls for victims to be at forefront of legacy debate in House of Lords**

**In a rare intervention, the Presbyterian Church has called for significant changes to the Government's Troubles Bill, saying the controversial legislation passing through the House of Lords does the "very opposite of the gospel", Allison Morris writes in the Belfast Telegraph.**

Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, said "reconciliation" should be at the heart of the legislation.

Former Secretary of State Brandon Lewis announced the Government's plans to move away from a previous legacy agreement in March 2020.

Following that the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill was introduced to parliament.

It not only brings an end to future criminal prosecutions, with immunity from prosecution for information provided, but also any future legacy inquests or civil cases.

Despite local political opposition to the bill from right across the spectrum, it passed through the Commons and is now in the Lords today for its second reading before it moves on to committee stage.



Tory peer Lord Jonathan Caine will lead on the amendments but is said to be open to suggestions from across the floor of the house.

While the Lords will not overturn legislation already passed by the elected Parliament, they can make changes via agreed amendments.

Speaking ahead of the debate, Rev Gribben said he hoped peers would keep “the stories of victims and survivors, many of whom are from our own Presbyterian family, at the forefront of their minds”.

“Furthermore, if Northern Ireland is to move forward, and relationships across these islands given an opportunity to flourish, then reconciliation must be at the heart of this process,” he added.

One of the criticisms of the Bill is that there are no consequences for those who fail to give information or provide inaccurate information to any truth recovery panel.

*Derragh Parish*

**Christmas  
Tree  
Festival**

**FRIDAY 2nd DECEMBER -  
MONDAY 5th DECEMBER 2022**

*Festival times*  
**FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 10.00am to 7.00pm,  
SUNDAY: 3.00pm to 7.00pm,  
MONDAY: 10.00am to 7.00pm**

*Refreshments available - Group bookings welcome*  
Contact Melanie McAlister on 07789 208465  
or [melaniemcalister39@gmail.com](mailto:melaniemcalister39@gmail.com)  
**PROCEEDS IN AID OF CHURCH FUNDS** Registered Charity No. 101734-0

“Members of the Upper House will note that while the word ‘reconciliation’ is included in the title of the Bill, there is no definition within it, said Rev Gribben.

“Without a definition, or even principles on which reconciliation can be founded, how can this legislation be an agent for change, building on the patient and tireless work towards reconciliation between and within communities across these islands that is being done by so many different organisations?

“It requires more than words on a page,” he said.

“There is little incentive for perpetrators of violence to engage with the process of ‘information recovery’, removing from those who have lost loved ones the hope of justice, should they wish to seek it. This is the very opposite of the gospel which unites hope and justice in the person of Jesus Christ.

“There was broad consensus around the four pillars of the Stormont House Agreement of 2014, which sought to address the legacy of the past, which gave us all hope.

“The UK Government has, however, singlehandedly managed to create a position where this legislation is universally opposed by the vast majority of victims groups, political parties and the churches.

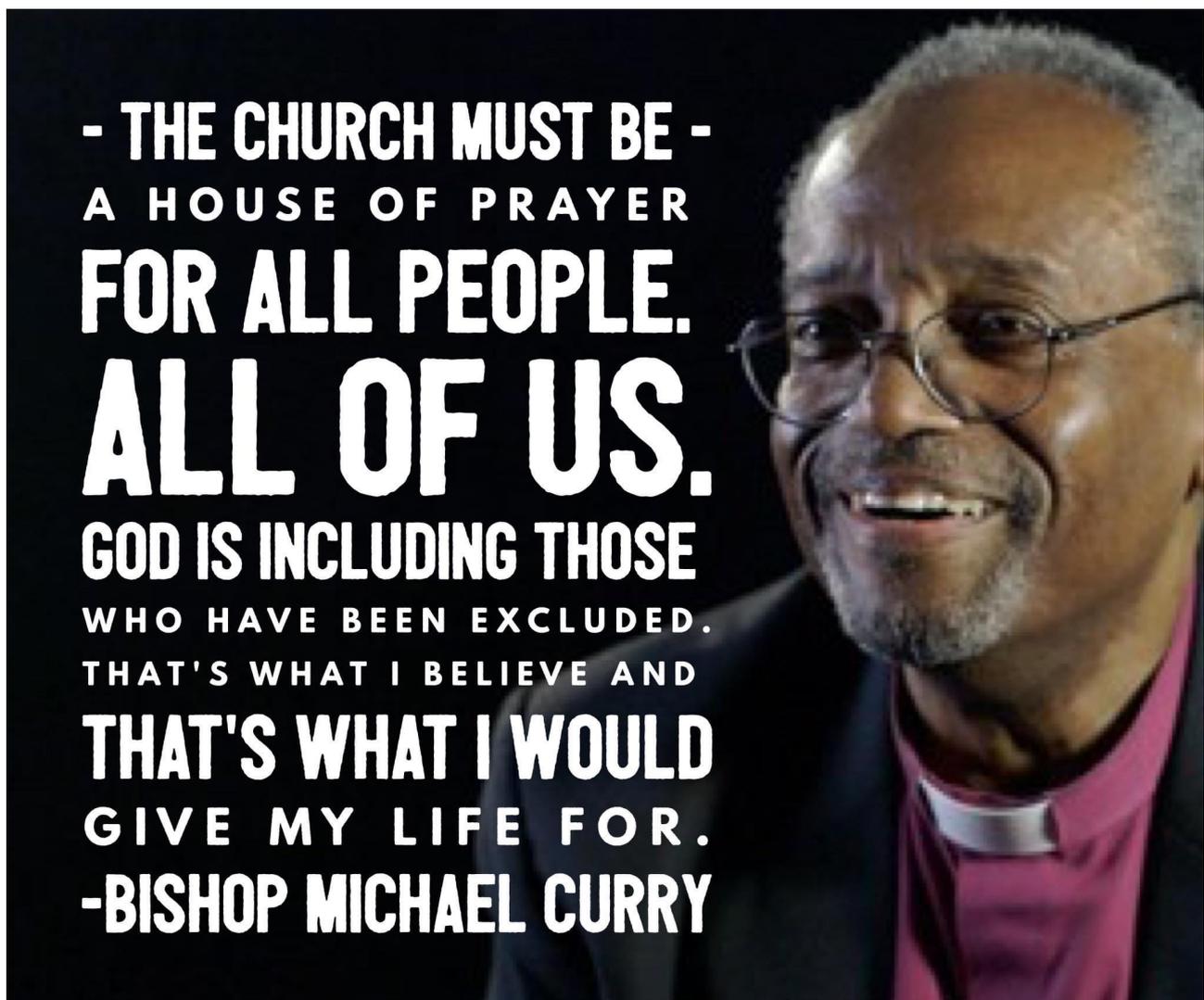
“With this opportunity for members of the House of Lords to debate the purpose and key principles of this legislation, it is our prayer that amendments can be tabled even now, which will ensure any final legislation can act as a means to

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ensuring that hope for the future, and that the hard work of reconciliation, will win out.

“That we are still having this conversation almost 25 years on from the historic peace agreement requires serious reflection from all of us – as churches, elected representatives and legislators across these islands, along with wider civic society, as we seek to play our part in building a better future,” Rev Gribbon added.

Report courtesy the Belfast Telegraph. November 23 2022.



## In the media

### Troubles families urge Sunak to scrap new Bill

**The families of two Troubles victims have joined forces to urge the Prime Minister to “scrap” its new Legacy Bill -Danielle Sheridan, Defence Editor of the Daily Telegraph writes.**

In a letter sent to Rishi Sunak today, before the Bill’s second reading in the Lords this afternoon, the families of Majella O’Hare, 12, and Army Pte Tony Harrison, 21, have warned that the proposal “protects the perpetrators of serious crimes rather than those who suffered at their hands”.

They added that if the Government goes ahead with this proposal it will mean any “meaningful truth, accountability or justice will be cruelly taken away from us”.

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill is expected to bring an end to the prosecution of retired soldiers over deaths during the conflict.

However, it will also give an effective immunity to terror suspects on both sides provided they co-operate.

In August 1976, Majella O’Hare was on her way to church in the Armagh village of Whitecross when she was killed by two shots fired from a British soldier’s gun.

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Pte Harrison was murdered by the IRA while off duty and visiting his fiancée in Belfast. A double-agent working for the IRA and the RUC admitted involvement.

**The Daily Telegraph. November 23 2022.**

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

### Mothers' Union Days of Activism



### Marking the United Nations 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence – November 20 to December 10.

Mothers' Union of Dublin and Glendalough will mark the United Nations 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence with a series of daily broadcasts. The broadcasts, which will be on YouTube and Zoom, are open to all and will

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take place at 8pm each evening starting this Friday, November 25, and continuing until December 10.

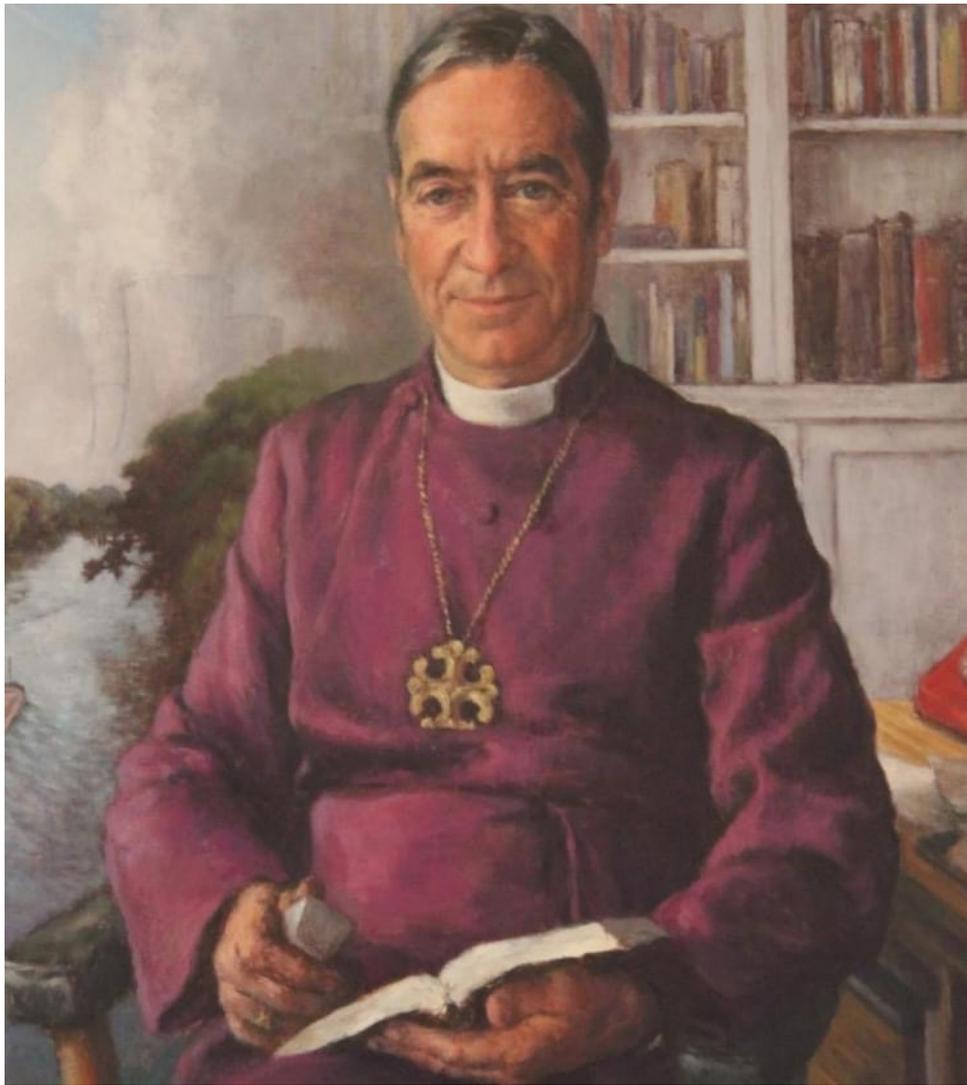
Speakers are drawn from a number of organisations supporting women who suffer from all kinds of abuse including Safe Ireland, Womens' Aid, Christian Aid, City of Sanctuary, Rape Crisis Centre, Ruhama, National Womens' Council, St Vincent de Paul, GFS, and Mothers' Union D & G.

There will be an in-person seminar on Saturday November 26 at 10.30am Dublin City University, All Hallows College, Drumcondra. Entitled 'Understanding gender-based violence', the presenters will be Professor Pat Barker, Volunteer Counsellor with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and Lydia Monds, Education Advisor for the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal. Entrance to the seminar is free and you are asked to register on Eventbrite – [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/understanding-gender-based-violence-tickets-441297963087](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/understanding-gender-based-violence-tickets-441297963087)

## Archbishop Blanch Lecture

**The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell delivered the 25th, and final lecture, in the series of Archbishop Blanch Lectures at Liverpool Hope University on 22 November 2022.**

His theme 'Opening the Scriptures' explores what this means in an increasingly secular culture and why it still matters for Christian discipleship. To read the lecture in full



at: <https://www.archbishopofyork.org/speaking-and-writing/archbishop-blanch-memorial-lecture>

About the Archbishop Blanch Lectures - Stuart Blanch, a former Bishop of Liverpool and later Archbishop of York was a gifted biblical scholar and teacher. His love of scripture and his passion to commend it as a vital element in Christian life and witness marked his numerous books and public speaking.

The annual Blanch Lecture established in his name and honouring his legacy has become an integral and important occasion in the life of the Diocese of Liverpool. Over the years it has brought a wide range of thoughtful and inspiring

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speakers from within the Church and the academy to engage a large and receptive audience in contemporary issues and how an informed and lively faith might respond to them.

## Gifts for Life - a Church Toolkit

Everything you need to promote Methodist Word Development Gifts for Life in your church and online, including:

- All-age talk
- Short video
- Promotional Slide



Gifts start from £10/€12 and include breeding goats for farmers in Ghana, schoolbooks for at-risk children in Zambia, gardening tools for communities in Zimbabwe & more!

- Download at: [bit.ly/GFL-Toolkit](https://bit.ly/GFL-Toolkit)
- Shop at: [bit.ly/GFL-Shop](https://bit.ly/GFL-Shop)

A promotional graphic for Mothers' Union's Black Friday event. The background is dark with a bokeh effect of light circles. At the top, the logo 'Mothers' UNION' is displayed in white, with a globe icon for the letter 'O' in 'UNION'. Below the logo, the text 'Black Friday Event' is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, 'Online shop exclusive' is written in a smaller white font. The main offer, '10% off ALL products until 11pm 25/11/22', is highlighted in a white box. At the bottom, another white box contains the text 'Use code: BLACK22 at checkout' and '£20 minimum spend'.

## Mothers' Union Black Friday Event

The Mothers' Union Black Friday Event has begun and you have the opportunity to get 10% off ALL our products until 11pm on 25/11/22! Only on [www.mueshop.org](http://www.mueshop.org)

## Poem for today

### To Autumn by John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,

For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;

Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last ooziings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river shallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

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# Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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