

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – 50 years of Ulster Project

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50 years of Ulster Project marked with a cross-community church service

A cross-community church service was held in Enniskillen last week to mark 50 years of the Ulster Project. As part of the service attendees crossed from St. Macartin's Cathedral to St. Michael's Church.

Attendees included faith leaders, elected representatives, past participants of the project and their families as well as visitors from the USA. The project enable teenagers to visit the USA where they took part in a variety of experiences which enabled their skills.

Acknowledgment - Impartial Reporter

News

Packed church for Eglantine's 150th Anniversary

There was a packed church for a service of Choral Evensong to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Church.

The choir sang Preces and Responses by Simon Mold, and the anthem was the Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah, including handbells.



A massive thanks has been expressed to Jonathan and the choir for all their hard work and to Vaughan for conducting. The parish stated - We also want to



thank Bishop Ian Ellis for a truly uplifting and inspiring sermon, and for dedicating the organ. Our celebrations continued on Sunday with the Patronal Eucharist at 11am

November 3, 2025

and a Service for the Faithful Departed at 6pm". Well done everyone!



Order of Malta director's award for excellence

This year this is awarded to Comdr Brian Power, PhD.

Brian has developed the clinical practice guidelines we all use today and wrote the Ambulance Corps first SOP over 20 years ago!

He has instigated massive change in the organisation over the decades making us the professional organisation we are today including introducing CPR standards and AEDs. As an Advanced Paramedic he continues to serve out on duty, providing essential community care and invaluable support

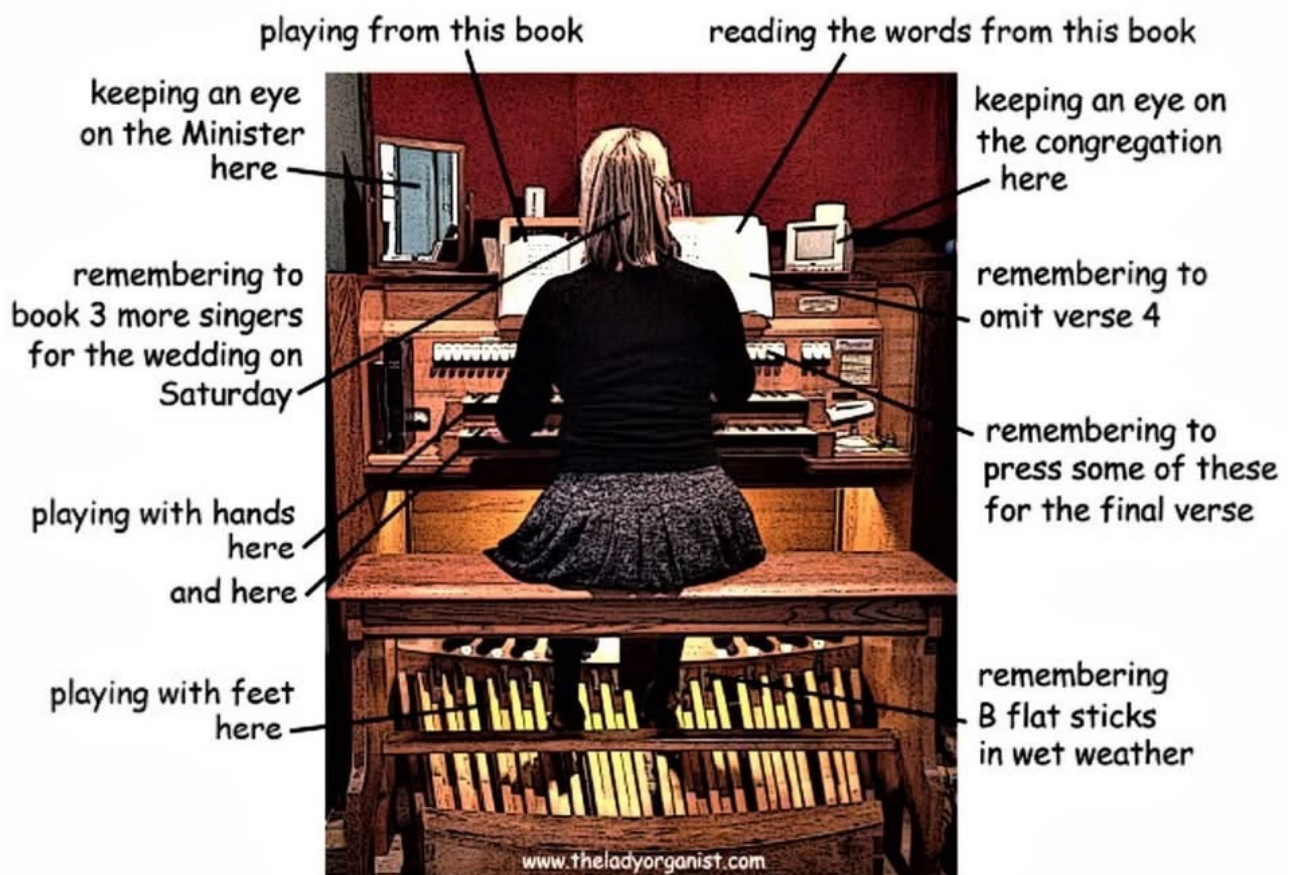
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to everyone from young new members to the National Director.

A true role model to others his impact on Order of Malta and indeed the wider Pre-Hospital Emergency care community will be felt for generations to come!

Sinclair Seaman's Church, Belfast, wins regional National Church Award

The winners of the National Church Awards 2025 have been announced.



THE CHURCH ORGANIST

The National Church Awards celebrate the dedication, care and impact of the people who care for the UK's wonderful church buildings and who share them with others.

The winner of Church of the Year - the pinnacle award that celebrates a church that fulfils its potential and makes a mark on its community and beyond - is St Peter & St Paul, Old Bolingbroke, Lincolnshire. The judges praised St Peter & St Paul for its outstanding example of what a small rural church can achieve through energy, imagination, and community spirit. St Peter & St Paul is also the winner in England for the Church and Community Volunteer Awards.

The Church and Community Volunteer Awards, in partnership with Marsh Charitable Trust, centre around the contribution that volunteers make to both caring for and making best use of churches, and especially using churches to reach out to local communities and using the building as a hub for activity.

The winner in Wales is St Sadwrn, Henllan, Denbighshire. The judges praised St Sadwrn for the extraordinary commitment of its small team of volunteers and the huge difference they make within their rural community.

The winner in Scotland is Ness Bank Church, Inverness. The judges praised Ness Bank for its extraordinary community outreach and the sheer scale of its impact.

The winner in Northern Ireland is Sinclair Seaman's Church, Belfast. The judges praised Sinclair Seaman's Church for its strong sense of community connection, excellent heritage maintenance, and impressive contribution to church tourism.

Find out more about the awards and the winning churches on our website: <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/winners2025>

Daily aid trucks to Gaza are still not enough

Christian Aid partner speaks of the challenges in bringing relief to the people of Gaza

Despite the ceasefire, people in Gaza still face challenges in getting aid and shelter, a spokesman for a Palestinian NGO has said.

“The number of trucks that enter daily is not enough. The flow of medicine is not enough. We talk about all the people in need. We talk about the people that have lost everything. We talk about people that need everything to restore their dignity, to restore their lives, to restore the minimum requirements to be a human,” the director of development and strategic partnership for the Agricultural Development Association — PARC, Hani Al Ramlawi, said.

Other restricted items include agricultural materials that support farmers to restore their livelihood capacities. He said that the Association’s work includes providing emergency response to affected communities, and rehabilitating the agricultural land as well as working with farmers to restore their production.

“We try to utilise from what exists in the local market, and we try to provide the small scale farmers with the needed agricultural input, seeds, seedlings, irrigation network, to rehabilitate their farms to start to plant and restore that the capability of their lands to produce and to harvest the agricultural crops.”

The biggest obstacle is access to material, Mr Ramlawi said. “Without materials, we can’t progress with rehabilitation and reconstruction. So we hope that the UK Government push in terms of enhancing the flow of materials to entering the Gaza Strip.”

The organisation, previously named the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Society, was established more than 43 years ago and focuses on rural development and humanitarian work for the affected communities in Palestine.

It has been a strategic partner of Christian Aid for more than 20 years; their joint intervention includes providing immediate response and food-security support. “The most important thing is we work with them to empower people to be able to organise and to provide the services to their displaced communities. This is improving their environment and infrastructure, and to apply much more sustainable intervention which addresses the real needs for the community,” Mr Ramlawi said.

“We work with Christian Aid in delivering messages for those affected communities to the world, and to document the violation that happens inside Gaza.”

He said that the Association had three top priorities. The first was “providing immediate and emergency response supplies, such as food, shelter and protection to the affected and displaced people”.

The second was entering the early recovery phase, which Mr Ramlawi describes as rehabilitating and reconstructing agricultural land to restore its productive capacity and strengthen the food system, to provide a more sustainable source of water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and to support the livelihoods of young people and women by providing income opportunities that help to restore their economic stability and capacity.

The third was to “raise the voice for the affected population, the affected community on the ground”, and to share “what the people need”.

“The main message we want to deliver after the ceasefire, after two years during which people suffered every single minute, is to start working together, to collaborate, and to support people in restoring their dignity. Palestinian and Gazan people need the support from UK people, from the UK Government, because now is time to work. . . to make changes for this country, to rebuild the country,” he said.

In 2024, Mr Ramlawi left Gaza for Egypt. He said that losing his homeland was “the most difficult feeling”. He has family members still living in Gaza but said that communicating with them was difficult: “We still hope that we will meet together soon.

“Simply, we miss our normal lives. In Gaza, there are teachers, doctors, and engineers who have dreams, passions, and careers. We miss all the parts of daily life we were used to. We miss our families, our friends, the roads, the places. We miss everything.”

Mr Ramlawi said that reports on rebuilding Gaza estimated that it could take 20 to 30 years, but he hoped that, with support from the UK and other countries, this timeframe could be reduced — “to help the people get back to their normal lives”.

“Please do not see the Gazan people as martyrs. Inside Gaza, there are doctors, there are teachers, the youth have passion, have dreams and futures; so we need to work together to restore all of these aspects for their lives.”

Education

BRA at Jubilee of the World of Education – Rome

**Our final day
of the Jubilee
of the World
of Education
was truly unforgettable. We began with a visit to the**







Vatican, where we attended a special Papal Audience in Aula Paolo VI and heard a message from the Pope.

Later, we explored the magnificent Colosseum, taking in its fascinating history.

It has been a very enjoyable trip, and throughout the Jubilee, we've built wonderful connections with pupils and teachers from all over the world.

La Scuola é Vita!

Up Everest for Inst

Join RBAI Governor & Scout Group Trustee Dawson Stelfox MBE (RBAI 1969-76) for a special evening as he



THE MAGNETIC NORTH

14 NOVEMBER | 8PM
Dining Hall | RBAI





A talk from Dawson Stelfox about the first Irish ascent of Mount Everest

Tickets available from www.eventbrite.co.uk

£10
+fees

shares his experiences leading the first Irish team to ascend Mount Everest on May 27th 1993.

All funds from the evening will support the School Scout Group (74th Belfast).

Purchase tickets here:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-magnetic-north-tickets-1629139111939?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&keep_tld=1

Cathedral Calls

Christ Church celebrates St Laurence O'Toole

You are invited to Choral Evensong on Thursday 13th November at 6pm, at which the 800th anniversary of the canonisation of St Laurence O'Toole will be celebrated.

In 1162 Laurence became Archbishop of Dublin and played a pivotal role in a time of great political and ecclesiastical change. He died in Eu, Normandy in 1180, and was canonised by Pope Honorius III in 1225, becoming Dublin's first canonised saint.

Christ Church states - We are honoured to welcome delegates from Eu, Normandy, the place of St Laurence's death and burial, as we join together to celebrate this anniversary.

The Community of St Laurence will continue the celebration by hosting a dinner in the Cathedral Crypt following Evensong. All are welcome to join. Further details and ticket information are available via Eventbrite on the cathedral web site.

Northern Ireland Hospice Carol Service at St Peter's

We're a little over a month away from our annual Carol Service at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast!

November 3, 2025

Join us on Sunday, 7th December for an uplifting afternoon of music and festive readings with performances from the Salvation Army and Cavehill Community Choir.

7th Dec, 3:00 pm This is a free event - open to all."

Clergy and ministry



Rev Sheila Johnson

Tributes have been paid to a Church of Ireland Minister who was tragically killed in a road collision last week.

Rev Sheila Johnson died in the single-vehicle crash, which occurred near Glenties on last Wednesday afternoon.

Her husband, Rev Canon Stanley Johnson, also suffered what are believed to be non-life threatening injuries in the collision.

Both had moved to Donegal in 2001, with Stanley serving as a Rector and Sheila as a Priest-in-charge until their retirement in 2009.

Bishop Andrew Forster has led tributes to Sheila in the wake of the tragedy.

“I am deeply saddened by the news of Shiela’s death,” the Bishop said.

“She served God with distinction during her ministry. She had an adventurous spirit and was a friend to many, sharing her gifts of warmth and generosity, and lending those who needed it a listening and compassionate ear. Shiela had a great love for her parishes but supremely for Stanley and their family. I ask you to remember them in your prayers.”

Family notice

The death has occurred of Rev. Shiela Johnson, (nee Rowe) Rainbow’s End, Carrickmacafferty, Derrybeg, Co. Donegal. Taken from us suddenly. Her loving husband Stanley, married for nearly 60 years, son Timothy, daughters Melanie and Wendy, son in law Derrick, daughter in law Fiona, grandchildren Cian, Aoife, Roisin, Diarmuid, Caoimhe, Ruth, Katy and Thomas and great grandchildren. Sister Kathleen and brother Teddy, and extended families,

predeceased by her brothers Bertie and Bobby, sisters Doreen and Hilda.

Funeral service

Funeral service will take place at St John's Church, Ballymore today Monday 3rd at 2.00 p.m. Cremation will take place in Lakelands Crematorium, Co. Cavan on Tuesday 4th November 2025 at 2.00 p.m. Family flowers only please, donations in lieu if desired to the MS and ME Associations c/o any family member or James Harkin, Funeral Director.

Rector of the Parish of Castlerock & Dunboe appointed

Rev Andrew Neill has been appointed Rector of the Parish of Castlerock & Dunboe, a short car drive along the Coleraine mountain road from his current parish, Drumachose, in Limavady.

The news was shared with congregations at services in both parishes, yesterday morning. The Service of Institution is expected to take place early in the New Year.

Rev Andrew has been serving as Curate in Drumachose since the autumn of 2023, when he was priested in Christ Church Limavady. This morning, he described his sense of anticipation as he waits to find out what God has planned for the next phase of his ministry, and expressed profound gratitude to his Rector in Limavady and the congregation there.



“I am both honoured and humbled to be nominated to serve as the next incumbent of the Parish of Castlerock and Dunboe,” Rev Andrew said. “It is a really exciting time for us as a family and we are looking forward enormously to moving into the parish in the New Year, and discovering what God has in store for the years ahead.

“I am incredibly thankful for my time as Curate in Drumachose Parish – grateful to the wonderful parishioners there who made us feel so welcome and to Canon Aonghus Mayes for his continual support, guidance and friendship.

“I would truly value your prayers for myself, our family and for the Parish of Castlerock and Dunboe as we look to the future together.”

The new incumbent was brought up the eldest of four children in County Armagh. He studied at Banbridge Academy before reading Law with Politics at Queen’s University Belfast. During a year out – working with children and young people in St. Jude’s Parish on Belfast’s Ormeau Road – Andrew said he felt the call to ordained ministry. “From there,” he said previously, “the trajectory of my life changed.”

Rev Andrew will succeed Rev Chris Mac Bruithin, who left Castlerock over the summer to take up a new role as Lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) in Dublin.

Christ Church Strabane introduction

A reminder of this very special service taking place on Wednesday night (5 November) at 7.30pm when we will be joined by Bishop Andrew Forster at a Service of Introduction for Rev. Robert Wray to the Parish.

This is a very important night in the life of the Parish, it's open to everyone and it would be great if you can join us as we formally welcome Rev. Robert to the Parish and the local community.

Supper follows the service.

Events

November's webinar on the Lambeth Call on Reconciliation

The Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, the Archbishop of Southern Africa, will be one of the contributors in this November's webinar about the Lambeth Call on Reconciliation.

He has a firm commitment to peace and reconciliation in his ministry, challenging social injustice, inequality, and racism.

This week, he attended the International Meeting for Peace in Rome. He spoke about building up the next generation, tackling inequality and youth unemployment, saying:

'When power forgets compassion, it turns prosperity into oppression... How can our riches serve the common good? How can we ensure that the young inherit not debts and disillusionment but dignity and direction?'

Hear more about Archbishop Thabo's ministry and perspectives on peace. Register for the webinars on 19 and 20 November: <https://bit.ly/4oDPkWo>

Resources

New Charities Statement of Recommended Practice

The new Charities Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities ('the SORP') has been published, The Charities Commission reports.

The new SORP will ensure charities' financial reporting requirements are more proportionate to their size. This is reflected in a refreshed approach to Trustees' Annual Reports to include a wider range of achievements and risks, alongside the introduction of three new tiers that require the most detail and transparency from the UK's largest charities.

These changes confirmed in the SORP update will take effect for accounting periods starting on or after 1 January 2026.

The new SORP and a summary of the changes can be viewed on the SORP micro site: <https://lnkd.in/eBw8c2Gz>

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

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

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