



Church Army chief from N Ireland leaves for new post

Northern Ireland man, Mark Russell, has announced that after nearly 13 years, he will be leaving Church Army to become the CEO of The Children Society, a C of E charity. Colleagues in the Church Army commented, “A big congratulations on your new role Mark but you’ll be missed!”

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The Archbishop of Canterbury has welcomed the news. He said, “ Delighted to see Mark Russell has been appointed to lead The Children Society. He has done a wonderful, humble and brilliant role with the ChurchArmy who will miss his insightful, powerful leadership.” The Archbishop added, “This is wonderful news for the poorest of the UK’s children.”

President appoints leading ecumenist to Council of State

Methodist minister Dr Johnston McMaster is to be a member of the Council of State.

The President has made his seven personal appointments to the Council of State for his second term... including C Augustenborg, Sinead Burke, Sindy L Joyce, Maurice Malone, Dr Johnston McMaster, Mary Murphy and Seán Ó Curreáin

- Maurice Malone is CEO of the Birmingham Irish Association
- Dr Johnston McMaster is an adjunct professor at TCD's Irish School of Ecumenics, He is a doctoral graduate of Garrett-Evangelical United Methodist Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.
- Dr Mary Murphy is of Department of Sociology at Maynooth University
- Seán Ó Cuirreáin is former Choimisinéir Teanga

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Church leaders unite to urge government to avoid no-deal Brexit

Leaders representing the Baptists, Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have come together to call on the government to do all that it can to avoid an unplanned no-deal Brexit.

In a statement, they said that while they've chosen not to make political statements around Brexit the risk to the poorest families across the UK compels them to speak up.

In a strong worded statement, they said: "As Christians we are called to demand justice for the millions locked in poverty. A No Deal Brexit risks tightening poverty's grip on families up and down the country.

"Over the past decade, our churches have witnessed and responded to the slowly rising tide of hunger in the UK. A no-deal Brexit risks restricting the nation's supply of food and increasing prices. This, alongside further cuts to benefits on Monday 8th April, could have grave consequences for many in our communities.

"Many charities are warning us that food supplies to the most vulnerable are most at risk - hospitals, prisons and those reliant on surplus or donated food. Supplies of essential medicines are likely to be disrupted. Again, the most vulnerable will be the least able to cope with this."

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The three church groups represent a combined membership of 350,000.

Explaining the reasons behind the statement on Premier's News Hour on Friday, Paul Morrison from the Joint Public Issues Team (which represents the three churches) said: "We already see people coming into our churches who are hungry and who need the help of food banks.

"The last thing we want to see is more people in that position needing that sort of help. So we are speaking out now because we really have no choice."

The intervention comes as Theresa May formally requests to delay Brexit until the end of June.

Her plea will be considered at an emergency European Union summit next week.

The prime minister also wants an option to leave sooner if MPs back her withdrawal deal.

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BBC unveils its Easter programme schedule

The BBC has unveiled its Easter programme schedule for this year: a mix of music and services with the now ubiquitous celebrity reality-show format.

Two special episodes of Songs of Praise will be broadcast from the Holy Land, with Aled Jones accompanying young Christians as they visit holy sites for the first time. On Easter Day, Songs of Praise will come from Jerusalem, and will feature the faith stories of the musical theatre star Shaun Escoffery and the soprano Laura Wright.

The choirmaster Gareth Malone will explore Easter traditions in the UK in a two-part programme, Britain's Easter Story, to be shown on Good Friday and Easter Day.

A new three-part series, Pilgrimage: The road to Rome, follows the same format as a previous series that turned celebrities into modern-day pilgrims following the Camino de Santiago. This new series, which starts today, follows the actor Les Dennis, dancer Brendan Cole, and athlete Greg Rutherford, and others, as they walk 1000km of the Via Francigena to Rome. When they arrive in St Peter's Square in the final episode, on Good Friday, they are granted a private audience with the Pope.

The Easter from King's service will feature the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah and a Crucifixus by Antonio Lotti. There will also be a live Easter service from St Mary's,

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Warwick, and a broadcast of Pope Francis's Easter Day message.

BBC Radio highlights include a Good Friday Meditation on Radio 4 at 3 p.m., which reflects on Psalm 22 through readings, music, and personal stories, including a guest reader, Maxine Peake; and a four-part special, The Psalms, read by Jeremy Irons, starts after the Meditation.

Radio 4's Thought for the Day on Good Friday, will be given by the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally.

Two Easter services will be broadcast live from Southwell Cathedral. Radio 4 will broadcast Easter Day Worship (lighting of the Easter fire and holy communion) at 8.10 a.m., and choral evensong at 3 p.m. will be on Radio 3.

The head of Specialist Factual commissioning for the BBC, Tom McDonald, said: "We are excited to bring viewers a range of programmes to celebrate the Christian calendar's most important date. Easter is a time of thoughtfulness, introspection and also great joy, and we will be reflecting that

Church Times review of best selling Christian books

The Church Times review of the best selling books last month - previous month place shown in brackets.

1 Pilgrim Journeys: The Beatitudes by Steven Croft (Church House Publishing, £2.99) (8)

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- 2 The Merciful Humility of God by Jane Williams
(Bloomsbury, £9.99) (1)
- 3 The Way of Ignatius by Gemma Simmonds (SPCK,
£8.99) (-)
- 4 Reconciliation by Muthuraj Swamy (SPCK, £9.99) (2)
- 5 The Resilient Disciple by Justine Allain Chapman (SPCK,
£9.99) (6)
- 6 Reflections for Lent (Church House Publishing, £4.99)
(7)
- 7 Parish Safeguarding Handbook (Church House
Publishing, £5.99)
- 8 At Home in Lent by Gordon Giles (BRF, £8.99) (3)
- 9 The Road to Grantchester by James Runcie
(Bloomsbury, £16.99) (-)
- 10 From Now On by Rachel Mann (DLT, £6.99) (4)

Participating bookshops: Church House Bookshop, London;
Cornerstone Bookshop, Edinburgh; and Sarum College
Bookshop, Salisbury.

Church of England safeguarding group admits 'failure to respond compassionately' to abuse victims

A major independent review into abuse within the Church of England "makes for very difficult reading", its body responsible for safeguarding has said.

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The [review](#) by the Social Care Institute for Excellence examined 42 safeguarding audits carried out across Church of England dioceses between 2015 and 2017.

The report makes several recommendations, including that the Church establish a new body to centralise safeguarding and handling of abuse cases, although the Church has reportedly ruled this out.

In addition to looking at safeguarding audits, the review also heard responses from 58 survivors of clergy and other Church-related abuse.

Many of the survivors expressed dissatisfaction with the Church's handling of their cases, with some even saying they had never received a "meaningful response" from the Church after reporting the abuse.

When survivors were asked what improvements they wanted to see, recommendations included churches displaying a national helpline on the back of toilet doors, safeguarding training for church staff, and awareness campaigns to educate church members about the signs of abuse.

Survivors also stressed the importance of being believed and supported by church leaders in coming forward.

"If everyone is aware that safeguarding is taken seriously and abuse is not tolerated then it makes it easier for a victim to come forward," said one respondent.

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WITH THE **DISCOVERY GOSPEL CHOIR**
TO LAUNCH THE **MIND YOURSELF** PROJECT

7th April, 2019

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St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildane

Tickets: €15 available at the door

Concessions €10



Proceeds from the evening
are going to AWARE.



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Another said: "Survivors can feel 'safer' suffering alone in silence than taking the perceived risks of the consequences of telling their story."

One respondent said it was important that abuse could be reported to a responsible person who was not a member of the clergy and that the Church needed to avoid giving "the impression that concerns are all dealt with internally by friends and colleagues".

Asked what churches should avoid doing upon receiving an abuse complaint, respondents said "gossiping" about victims of abuse, "victim blaming" and "yelling" at them.

One respondent said their church leaders had been "extremely difficult to deal with".

"Every time you talk about the abuse, they butt in with words like 'alleged abuse' and this despite my abuser being in prison," they said.

The Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) said the report "makes for very difficult reading" and that the Church's "failure to respond compassionately has undermined confidence in its own safeguarding practice".

Bishop Peter Hancock, the Church's lead safeguarding bishop and chair of the NSSG said: "It is essential that victims and survivor organisations have confidence that anybody coming forward to disclose abuse to the Church are treated with compassion, offered support and their concerns and allegations are taken seriously.

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"They must have confidence that the Church will act to address instances of abuse and do all it can to prevent future harm.

"The Church recognises that significant changes will be required before survivors will have this level of confidence in the Church, and that this undertaking is no simple task.

"However, it is one that I and my fellow bishops and the whole Church are absolutely committed to."

News briefs



+++Limerick and Tuam quiet day - A Joint Quiet Day for the clergy and readers of Tuam and Limerick was held in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, on Thursday 28th March. The day began with a celebration of the Holy Communion

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by Bishop Rooke assisted by the Dean of Tuam, the Very Revd Alistair Grimason. Reflections for the Quiet Day were led by the Very Revd Michael Sadgrove, Dean Emeritus of Durham. The Dean focused his reflections on three of the Psalms: Psalm 1, 'Happiness in Wisdom'; Psalm 77, 'When Life Hurts'; and Psalm 8, 'Living the Praises of God'. Lunch was served to some 66 attendees in the Synod Hall by parishioners of the Cathedral and the day drew to a close with Bishop Kearon thanking Dean Sadgrove for his excellently contemplative addresses.

+++Overcoming vandalism - St Dorothea's, Gilnahirk, welcomed Bishop Harold Miller to their morning worship on Sunday 24 March. During the service he dedicated the newly restored Vestry Window, which was destroyed during a break-in over the summer. The window was restored thanks to an anonymous donation. After the service, Bishop Harold planted a tree in memory of all those parishioners who helped build the church over the years since 1965, who are now in a different place and a greater light. The tree which was planted for this purpose during the 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015 was vandalised. The rector, Revd Nigel Kirkpatrick said: "We are not defined by the bad things which may happen to us, but we move forward with renewed purpose and hope, in the faith that is ours! What is broken will be replaced."

+++C of I Synod service and meetings - The opening service of the General Synod 2019 will take place in St Columb's Cathedral on Thursday 16th May at 10:30. The preacher will be the Rt Rev Dr Ferran Glenfield. The following events will take place in St Augustine's Church:

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- Friday 17th May – Mission Breakfast at 08:00
- Thursday 16th & Friday 17th May – Lunch of soup, bread, biscuits, tea & coffee @ €5 per person at 13:00
- Friday 17th & Saturday 18th May – Silent Prayer at 08:00

+++Evangelical Alliance is recruiting Research

Assistants - Each year EA take on a number of research assistants, offering training and experience in church, politics, culture and communications. These posts last 10 months and involve committing 4 days a week to EA. Interns receive £5000 over the 10 months and expenses are covered. EA are “looking for people who love Jesus, his church and want to see a change in Northern Ireland. Candidates should have an interest or experience in some of the following areas - church, media and communications, theology, social sciences, research, public speaking, writing, law or policy. We are not looking for the finished article - this programme is to help you develop.” If you or someone you know might be interested, please forward this email on to them and encourage them to apply. You can find out more about the post and what this year's interns thought on the EA web site.

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+++Food for thought - “Humility, after the first shock, is a cheerful virtue.” CS Lewis - The Problem of Pain

News Links

[Religious congregations indemnity deal was 'a blank cheque', says Michael McDowell](#)

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Irish Times

... and tracing the history of the Catholic **Church** in **Ireland** from the late 18th ... He heard the **news** while “queuing at a chipper, on a transistor radio.

[Republic of Ireland played integral role in supporting IRA, says historian](#)

Belfast Newsletter

Republic of **Ireland** played integral role in supporting IRA, says historian ... His new book 'A Broad **Church**' is based on much of his thesis. And now ... that the book aims to do, is to put the Troubles in context,” he told the **News** Letter.

[New home view: Honouring Georgian inspiration](#) [Independent.ie](#)

During the first 75 years of the 18th century, **Church of Ireland** archbishops enjoyed some of the highest landed incomes in the country. Charles Cobbe ...

[BBC NI School Choir of the Year final for Carrickfergus Grammar](#)

Carrickfergus Times

Carrickfergus Grammar School singers are fine tuning their performance ahead of Sunday's final of BBC Northern **Ireland** School **Choir** of the Year.

[Alkermes choir hitting the right notes for charity event](#)

Westmeath Independent

The staff **choir** at Alkermes in Monksland has been staging weekly ... Athlone, mental health support groups, COPE Galway, and Family Carers **Ireland**.

[Signs project is digging up a wealth of information on our local graveyards](#)

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Southern Star Newspaper

The graveyard contains graves of members of Roman Catholic, **Church of Ireland** and Methodist **churches**. Many of the plots have been in families for ...

Walking the way of Christ in the precincts of Parliament

Anglicannews

These days the Lords Spiritual comprise 26 bishops of the **Church of England**. They read prayers before daily business and contribute to the scrutiny ...

That relic, Christ Church Cathedral, must go **Stuff.co.nz**

Canterbury was founded as a **Church of England** colony. Dominant in its centre was this Anglican place of worship. Unfortunately it was never just a ...

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