



**Young  
leaders  
in Down  
and  
Dromore  
graduate  
from  
training  
course**

**Twenty–four young people from eleven different churches have just celebrated their graduation from the SERVE Young Leaders' Training Course.**

Parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters came for a meal and graduation ceremony in Holywood Parish Centre on 28 November. In an evening bursting with potential, the SERVE participants, all aged between 15 and 18, took the lead in worship, reading, praying and sharing.

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Bishop Harold Miller presented the graduation certificates and was full of encouragement for the young people.

He said: “I’m just thrilled to be here tonight, thrilled to see all of you who have done the SERVE course standing up here so confidently, speaking about your faith, speaking about what you’ve learnt and seeing how important it is to you to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Let me encourage you to keep your Christian faith central, not just as a hobby or sideline. Make it your whole life so that your whole life becomes an example.”

The Class of ‘18 is the second group to complete the course and this year it ran in two locations – Church House, with Mark Wells, Rosie Woods and Tim Burns and in Holywood Parish, with Paul O’Neill and Charlotte Geddis.

Every one of the graduates would recommend SERVE to other young people in the diocese. Here’s what some of them said when they were interviewed on stage:

*At the start it was strange and difficult to actually think of yourself as a leader and to realise how hard it is. You have to challenge yourself and push yourself for the benefit of others. I also saw how important it is to surround yourself with Godly friends who will give you the encouragement that you need.*

*SERVE was a once in a lifetime experience. There’s so much that you can learn from session to session every week.*

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*The biggest challenge was delivering talks to the rest of the group. I'd never done anything like that before but it was definitely a challenge I learned loads from.*

*I really enjoyed the fellowship that we had and the teaching. You learnt so much about how God can use you in your inabilities and that God is with you through everything.*

*The day we gave the speeches was one of the best. Just seeing how everybody had developed from the start of the course to the end and seeing our friends up there being able to deliver a speech and show leadership.*

SERVE came from a vision to develop the young people who were coming through the Kilbroney Adventure Camps and in general to develop young leaders across the diocese. Written by Tim Burns, Down and Dromore's Youth Development Officer, it's an eight-session discipleship course with four core elements: dinner together; a spiritual discipline 'taster'; a chapter review of 'Storylines' by Mike Pilavachi and Andy Croft and finally, teaching and discussion guided by the SERVE material. The participants also get some practical experience when they go along to the Kilbroney Blast Weekend as leaders.

## **Connor Mothers' Union vigil highlights violence against women**

**The issue of violence against women at home and around the world was highlighted at a Vigil hosted by Connor Mothers' Union in Belfast City Hall on Monday November 26.**

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**Attending the Reception and Vigil in Belfast City Hall are, from left: Cathy Doig, Connor MU, Valerie Ash, Diocesan President, Michele Marken, Deputy Lieutenant for Belfast, Archdeacon George Davison, speaker Jacqui Armstrong, Joyce Bond, Connor MU, and Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President.**

The Vigil and Reception, attended by Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast, Mrs Michele Marken, was organised to raise the profile of the Mothers' Union's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign.

The guest speaker was Jacqui Armstrong, All Ireland Faith and Policy Co-ordinator. Other high profile attendees included Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland Mothers' Union President; the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven George



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Davison; and Heather Flanigan of the Christian Police Association.

Representatives of branches across Connor Diocese were among the 75 guests.

The international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign takes place each year from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) until December 10 (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins many others globally in calling for an end to gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

Guests were welcomed to the Connor Vigil by Valerie Ash, outgoing President of Connor Mother' Union, who played a short video about the work of Mothers' Union.

All Ireland President Phyllis Grothier highlighted the importance of the 16 Days of Activism. "This campaign is at the core of what Mothers' Union is all about as we reach out to families who don't enjoy all that should be in a family relationship," she said. "We seek to stand with people who are in trouble and let them know that we care, to let them know that there is another life out there."

In her address, Jacqui Armstrong said that when she began working on this campaign in 2014, she had no idea of the extent of gender-based violence, particularly against women.

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“Gender-based violence is a new term and means violence against women and men, but our 16 Days campaign focuses on women due to the disproportionate number of women affected,” Jacqui said.

One in three or one on four women will be affected, and the statistics are the same in every continent, she said. In Northern Ireland five people a year are killed by their partner, and the victims are predominantly women.

The campaign aims to explore the root causes of gender-based violence, to highlight the issue of abuse and to seek to end it.

During the 16 days, Mothers’ Union members are lighting candles, tweeting daily, writing to politicians and undertaking other activities to highlight the issue, Jacqui said.

She spoke about how the Mother’s Union was also tackling gender based violence overseas, using as an example the Democratic Republic of Congo where, thanks to intervention by the Mothers’ Union Prison Programme, prison authorities had agreed to house women and children in separate sections of a prison to men.

Jacqui concluded quoting the words: “Let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth.”

As the Vigil ended Connor MU Social Policy Contact Cathy Doig lit a candle, and following a pause for reflection, prayers were read by Mothers’ Union members Jean, Evelyn, Cathy and Joyce.

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Before leaving, guests were invited to view the exhibition 'Souls of our Shoes', which uses footwear to tell stories of survivors of gender based violence.

## **The Life and Times of the Earl Bishop attracts Derry audience on 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

There was a large turnout at St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry on Thursday evening for a commemorative lecture marking the arrival and enthronement as Bishop of Derry of Frederick August Hervey 250 years ago.

The lecture, 'The Life and Times of the Earl Bishop', was delivered by the renowned broadcaster and historian Ken McCormack, at an event hosted by Radio 4 broadcaster Helen Mark. The evening was organised by the Hervey Heritage Group, funded by the Honourable the Irish Society and Derry City and Strabane District Council, and supported by the Bishop's Gate Hotel.

The evening included musical interludes by harpist Tracey McRory and an organ recital of music from the period by Nicky Morton. There was also a dramatic re-enactment of the arrival in the city of the Bishop and his wife Elizabeth in 1768.

Mr McCormack recounted the Earl Bishop's role as a philanthropist and collector of art, and how he had embarked on an extensive programme of church-building in his diocese, including in Tamlaghtfinlagan, Tamlaghtard, Banagher and Ballyscullion. He also built the Cassina – now in the grounds of Lumen Christi College – Downhill House

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and Mussenden Temple. The Deputy Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Cllr Trevor Clarke was among those in the audience for the lecture, along with the Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, and a former Dean, Very Rev Cecil Orr.

The event concluded with remarks by the Chair of the Hervey Heritage Group, Jim Hunter, who spoke about the 'Earl Bishop Trail',

## **Veritas to close three outlets and invest in online sales**

Veritas, the religious books and gifts retail company of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, is to close three of its outlets as part of a rationalisation process to invest in online sales. These outlets are located in Sligo, Monaghan and Naas and the closures will take place by the end of January 2019. Veritas currently has nine retail outlets in Ireland.

Mr Aidan Chester, Director of Veritas, said, "Veritas has made the difficult decision to close three outlets which have found trading difficult in recent years. I have been discussing the closures with the four full-time and nine part-time employees concerned. Redundancies at any time are difficult for all involved, but especially so in the lead up to Christmas. While the closures are regrettable, Veritas has done its best to keep job losses to a minimum and is working to relocate staff where possible.

"The decision to close these outlets is based on our company's strategic planning in response to the changing shopping behaviours of our customers.



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Our plan includes continuing investment in our online business which has performed strongly, increasing by 52% this year. For the future, Veritas will continue to focus on opportunities to increase our online sales including click and collect and mobile enabled shopping alongside new opportunities in our remaining store network.”

## **C of I Bishops’ Appeal 2019 Calendar now available**

The Bishops’ Appeal 2019 Calendar is now available and funds raised through its purchase will support communities all over the world.

For just €10, the calendar will raise funds to make a difference on the ground throughout 2019. It commemorates the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland – the 150th anniversary of which starts next year – and each month provides a reflection from its bishops on issues or projects that have been supported by Bishops’ Appeal over the years.

The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Chair of the Bishops’ Appeal Advisory Committee, said: “2019 marks the 150th anniversary of the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Throughout those 150 years, this Church has worked to support the disadvantaged in some of the poorest parts of the world. The calendar is both a celebration of that partnership but also a reminder of how life is for so many. Those who purchase a calendar will be supporting this ongoing work as we seek to bring relief to disaster situations

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as well as supporting health, education and rural development projects”.

You can buy the Bishops’ Appeal calendar online at <https://store.ireland.anglican.org/donations/the-bishops-appeal> and then by choosing the most convenient collection point or adding €4 for postage to your preferred address. Please email [bishopsappeal@ireland.anglican.org](mailto:bishopsappeal@ireland.anglican.org) with delivery instructions.

## **Derry parish’s book of inspiration to help replace flooded church hall**

The parishioners and friends of St Canice’s Church in Eglinton have taken to print in the latest stage of their campaign to raise enough funds to replace their church hall which was destroyed by flooding in August 2017.

They’ve published a book called ‘Just For Today’, which is described on its front cover as ‘a book to encourage and inspire’. The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, and his wife, Mary, were among the first to receive a copy when they visited St Canice’s recently.

The Rector of Faughanvale, Rev Canon Paul Hoey, who has been leading the parish’s fund-raising drive, says the book would make an ideal gift for Christmas. “We’re very proud of the book,” Canon Hoey said. “We think it looks and reads very well. It is beautifully produced, with pictures not only of St Canice’s Church but of the other local churches of all denominations.

“We’re very grateful to Fr Noel McDermott and Rev Lindsay Blair – and their congregations in Star of the Sea Roman

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### **Bishop and Mrs Good with Rector, Rev Paul Hoey**

Catholic Church and Faughanvale Presbyterian Church – for their help and support in compiling and distributing the book.

“It contains daily inspirational quotes, prayers, stories and humour chosen by the people of St Canice’s and our friends in the wider community. ‘

“Just For Today’ would make an ideal Christmas gift, and the fact that it will reward readers every single day of the year makes it a gift that’ll keep on giving.”

Copies of ‘Just For Today’ – costing £6 each or 4 for £20 – are selling fast but are still available from Canon Hoey on 07712 873322.

All proceeds will go towards the St Canice’s Hall Flood Renovation Fund.

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## Church of Scotland signs up for Thy Kingdom Come



**Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly, formalised the arrangement with Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, in London**

The Church of Scotland has joined the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come, set up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 2016.

Thy Kingdom Come aims to encourage Christians to pray between Ascension Day and Pentecost for conversions. It has grown into an international and ecumenical movement crossing denominational and political boundaries.

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The Church of Scotland has formally announced its participation in 2019, as Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly, said saying in a joint declaration : 'We rejoice in this opportunity to build on the commitment of our churches to pray together.

'We join our prayers with those of the Church throughout the world as we pray "Thy Kingdom Come".'

The two churches made a commitment in 2016 to work more closely together in the Columba Declaration.

Thy Kingdom Come includes 'Beacon Events' at venues like cathedrals, which draw hundreds of Christians together in prayer and worship. It also offers the opportunity to 'Pledge2Pray', in which people can sign up to pray during the Ascension period, and resources for church, individual and family prayer.

After last year's event, Welby said: 'I'm more excited by Thy Kingdom Come than anything I can remember for many, many years.'

## **Anglicans around the world prepare to take part in the AdventWord digital Advent calendar**

As the Season of Advent gets underway, the global digital advent calendar *AdventWord* is once more seeking to engage Anglicans with a series of online interactive



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reflections.  
Originally  
developed  
by the  
Society of St  
John the  
Evangelist  
with the  
support of  
the Anglican  
Communion  
Office,  
*AdventWord*  
is now  
produced by  
Virginia  
Theological  
Seminary

and seeks to engage participants in online reflections.



Each day during Advent, participants will receive a daily reflection on the theme for the day. They are then encouraged to think and pray about the theme before sharing their own reflection, which could be an image or a “meaningful reflection”; and then share it to social media using the [#AdventWord](#) hashtag and the hashtag of the daily theme.

To encourage creativity, the organisers have this year published the full list of daily themes in advance of Advent.

Many of the daily reflection authors are from the US-based Episcopal Church, including its Presiding Bishop Michael

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Curry. But others are drawn from around the world, including Canon Rosemary Mbongo from the Anglican Church of Kenya, Anne Fredericks Cooper from the Diocese of Liberia, Susan

Lukens, from St George's College in Jerusalem, and Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons in the UK Parliament.

- ***[Click here to find out more and to sign up for AdventWord](#)***

## **News briefs**

### **RTÉ 1 television service from Howth**

On Sunday, 9th December, on RTÉ 1 television at 11.10am, a Service of the Word will be broadcast. The Service will be

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led by Canon Kevin Brew, with parishioners from St Mary's Church, Howth.

## **Advent Children's Ministry Newsletter**

The Children's Ministry Newsletter for Advent features a range of creative ideas to help parishes prepare for and celebrate Christmas. These include Advent prayer bags, story and craft ideas, a reverse Advent calendar, and resources from Bible Society, Scripture Union, and Godventure. [www.cm.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cm.ireland.anglican.org)

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