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Presbyterian church forced to close donates £40,000 organ to St Malachy's College



An organ worth £40,000 has been given to a Catholic boys' grammar school by its Presbyterian church neighbour which closed recently.

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The instrument, which once graced Fortwilliam and Macrory Presbyterian Church on Antrim Road in north Belfast, has now taken up residence down the street in the assembly hall at St Malachy's College.

The church was forced to shut its doors in October after 133 years due to a dwindling congregation, and has since merged with Whitehouse Presbyterian Church.

Since then, it has been finding good homes for some of its equipment and resources, including the 250 kilo organ which is just 10 years old.

David Strange, head of music at St Malachy's College, said they were delighted with the "huge, generous gift", pointing out that the school and the church had a long association and been doing outreach concerts with each other for a number of years.

The church's organist and director of music Robert Briscoe has also been a visiting brass teacher at St Malachy's for the past 20 years.

Mr Strange said: "They wanted to find a good home for it and while we have a nice organ in the chapel we had always wanted one for the assembly hall.

"It really is a gesture of goodwill across the community."

The Copeman Hart digital organ was installed in December, with a specialist company brought in to set up the electrics and the speakers.

And the instrument made its debut at the annual senior prize ceremony that same month, played by teacher Mark McGrath who directs the school choir.

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The event was attended by Mr Briscoe and the Rev Ken Doherty, representing the church congregation.

The gift, along with two scholarships sponsored by a former pupil, also means that for the first year two students are able to avail of subsidised organ lessons.

"It's the first year of organ lessons and the new organ sounds great. The scholarships are to encourage organ playing in the school and to encourage those students to play the organ in their own parishes, and also to contribute to events in the school," Mr Strange.

"And if boys are considering places like Oxbridge where they have organ scholarships, it helps them in the application process."

The school plans to use the organ in its annual concerts and recitals and to open its doors to visiting schools who need to avail of it. Other schools and groups which have received donations as a result of the church's closure are Our Lady of Lourdes (Park Lodge) Primary School, the Northern Ireland Hospice, Christian Aid, 174 Trust, Whitehouse, Saintfield Road and Helen's Bay Presbyterian Churches, The City of Belfast School of Music, Methodist College and the Now Group - Report courtesy the Irish News

C of I Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces visits Lebanon

The Rev Fran Grasham (Church of Ireland Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces) writes -

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Memorial to Irish personnel

“I was privileged to be invited to accompany Major General Cotter, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Defence Forces on a recent trip out to Lebanon, from 17-21 December. The trip also included Commandant Peter Norton and Father Seamus Madigan.

“As well as spending time at the main UN camp in the hills of South Lebanon we were able to visit two observation posts and the regional and national UN headquarters. The main purpose of the trip was to meet personnel currently serving out there and it was a huge honour to spend time with them and learn more about their day to day tasks.

“I have two particular highlights. Firstly, being asked to co-lead an act of remembrance at the monument to Irish

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personnel who have lost their lives whilst serving in Lebanon over the last 60 years. This is in the grounds of a church in one of the neighbouring villages.

“The second was leading a Carol Service in the small chapel of the main camp. To be hearing the nativity story unfold and sing carols with the men and women who are currently working to maintain peace so close to the region where this story first unfolded was indeed special.”

Accord publishes 2018 returns for its marriage preparation courses and for marriage and relationship counselling

Ahead of the Feast of Saint Valentine this Thursday, 14 February, Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin and President of Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG, will bless engaged couple Ms Emer Duffy from Rathfarnham, Dublin 16 and Mr Killian Casey from Ballyboden, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16 at the Shrine of the holy relics of Saint Valentine today in the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Whitefriar Street, in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Newly released returns for Accord in 2018 show that 16,048 individuals attended its marriage preparation courses across the island of Ireland in 2018.

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Separately, Accord counsellors provided 24,180 counselling sessions to individuals and couples during 2018 throughout Ireland, north and south.

The first Accord centre in Ireland was established in 1962 at Saint Mary's Parish, Belfast, in the Diocese of Down & Connor. Up until recently Accord was an agency of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and operated as an unincorporated association.

Since 2017, Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service has changed its governance structure to operate as three distinct companies limited by guarantee.

These companies are known as Accord Northern Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG (Accord NI CLG); Accord Dublin Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG (Accord Dublin CLG); and, Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG (Accord CLG) which represents 34 Centres in the Republic of Ireland and Central Office in Maynooth.

The three Accord companies currently operate in 54 centres throughout the island of Ireland – north and south – and are committed to providing a professional service serving the pastoral needs of individuals at different stages in their development in schools, through Relationship and Sexuality Education programmes; by helping couples prepare for the sacrament of marriage; and through providing support for couples and individuals through its marriage and relationship counselling service.

Accord's marriage facilitators and marriage and relationship counsellors come from a wide variety of backgrounds and

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are trained and work under supervision in accordance with best practice. Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (RoI) is a major funder of the two Accord companies in the Republic of Ireland. Accord CLG also operates with the support of the Health Service Executive (RoI) and in Northern Ireland some funding comes from the Policy Unit of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI).

Facebook can't replace the Church, says bishop

The idea that Facebook can replace religious communities is “a delusion”, a Church of England bishop has said, as the social network surpasses global Christianity in numbers.

Figures released by the social network for 2018 show that it has 2.32 billion monthly active users, more than the most recent available figures for the reach of Christianity.

Data from the Pew Research Centre suggests that the faith has 2.3 billion adherents worldwide.

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, told *The Sunday Telegraph*: “It’s a delusion to think that Facebook is going to be the new way forward in building community – that will never be a substitute for human community”.

Mark Zuckerberg, chief executive of Facebook, which was founded 15 years ago last Monday, said “people’s experience in the past was defined by large hierarchical institutions – governments, mass media, universities,

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religious organisations – that provided stability but were often remote.”

South Sudan's first Episcopal radio station named in honour of Mothers' Union President

The Central Equatoria internal province has established the first Episcopal radio station in South Sudan's capital Juba. It has been named to honour the tremendous role played by the first Provincial President of the Mothers' Union, Mama Sarah Meling, who served what was then the Episcopal Church of Sudan, from 1985 as its first MU President: Sit Sarah Radio 98.1FM – the word “Sit” is coined from an Arabic word meaning Madam in English.

Sit Sarah received Christ as her personal saviour in an East African Revival-movement crusade conducted in Yei in the 1940s. She moved to Juba in 1951 and subsequently started the revival movement in Juba, working with the Mothers' Union. Her tireless work earned her a chance to visit the Mary Sumner House in the UK both in the 1989 and 1994.

She was recognised for her work in building families and as a counsellor for many young married couples. She eventually formed and started the first young family group at the All Saints Cathedral in Juba, before starting a Widow's Relief and Rehabilitation Programme at St James Parish church in Juba.

Mama Sara had a passion of visiting all the revival members from home to home around Juba and is being remembered for her love in the country, the mothers union in the whole

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won't forget about her works her legacy remains forever. She died in October 1996, but many church leaders still talk about her works.

During the inauguration of Sit Sara Radio 98.1FM, the Dean of All Saints Cathedral, Canon Jackson Moses, said: "Sit Sara placed herself in full service, serving people as a leader,

counsellor and as a mentor for young couples. One instant thing I can't forget is that she had helped many families in a state of collapse or even divorce. She managed to reconcile many, many families that I cannot count. She had done a lot that we can take time to narrate her story; but I want to thank the Archbishop of the Internal Province of Central Equatoria for coming up with this initiative and making Mama Sara's legacy remain through this radio station."

News briefs

+++The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church visited his home town of Omagh - He later commented, "A poignant moment as I laid flowers at the Omagh bomb

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invite
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Community,
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leader](http://corrymeela.org/leader)

memorial. Many
of the names I
knew from my
childhood in the

town. It was seeing the ages of the victims that underlined
the sadness and the futility. My Moderator's theme stresses
the need to build relationships.”

+++Thrive Ireland Day Conference - From Africa to
Ireland- A global re-imagining of Christian Peacebuilding in
Northern Ireland. Thursday 28th February . Dunsilly Hotel
Antrim 9.30 am- 4.30pm For info and bookings contact:
info@thriveireland.org Ph: 90730068. Speakers:
Christophe Mbonyingabo (Rwanda) ; Useni Sibanda
(Zimbabwe) and Derek Poole, Lesley Carroll and Diane Holt

+++A concert with the Discovery Gospel Choir - to
launch the Mind Yourself project, on Sunday 7th April 2019,
6.30–8.30pm at St Brigid’s Cathedral, Kildare. Tickets €15
(available at the door). Concessions: €10. Proceeds from

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the evening are going to Aware, a charity helping people experiencing depression.

+++The C of I Children's Ministry Newsletter - for Lent and Easter is now out, including craft ideas for knitting, 'Lent in a Bag', 'Holy Week in a Box' and a Lego challenge for Holy Week and Easter. Tom Tate, a part-time children's and youth worker from Co. Dublin, also writes on the Church, children and mental health.

+++Come to Lambeth and express your differences - The Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, has called on Anglican bishops to attend the next Lambeth Conference despite differences within the Anglican Communion. Thabo chairs the international Design Group, brought together by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to plan the once-in-a-decade gathering of Anglican bishops, which will take place in Canterbury, Kent, July 23-Aug. 2, 2020. "I know people talk about the fabric of the communion as torn," he said, "but we are all fallible human beings in need of God's love and grace, and we need each other."

+++30 Bishops in training - Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has welcomed nearly 30 new Anglican bishops from around the world to his official London residence Lambeth Palace. Earlier in the day, the bishops were at the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) in west London. They are taking part in an annual 10-day course run by Canterbury Cathedral – the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion – to teach them about the role of a bishop and the Anglican Communion. This year's cohort comes from Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Melanesia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Scotland, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

+++Anglican Communion's Director for

Communications steps down - Adrian Butcher, is stepping down after three years. Butcher, who worked for BBC News for 25 years before coming to the Anglican Communion Office (ACO), took up the post just before the last meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-16) in Zambia. He will leave in May after ACC-17 in Hong Kong.

+++Thought for reflection - "Surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of man he is." C S Lewis

February 13 in Christian history

February 13, 1633: Called to trial by the Inquisition, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei arrives in Rome ready to explain his belief that the earth revolves around the sun. He was compelled to recant the view, and was placed under house arrest until his death in 1642.

February 13, 1826: The American Temperance Society (later renamed the American Temperance Union) is founded in Boston to promote total (but voluntary) abstinence from distilled liquor. Among the 16 founders were Protestant clergymen.

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News links

[Armagh to have two St Patrick's parades on different days as breakaway parade announced](#)

The Irish News

On the morning of St Patrick's Day the Catholic and **Church of Ireland** archbishops will lead their congregations to the Shambles Yard area for a ...

[Government Minister criticises Catholic Church's 'catastrophic moral failures'](#)

Irish Times

Addressing the meeting, she asked why, where women were concerned, the Catholic **Church** was not more like Protestant **churches** in **Ireland**, which ...

[Religious order is ignoring legal requests to transfer land](#)

Irish Examiner

A **religious** order that is supposed to hand over a lucrative Dublin property as part of the decade-old clerical abuse compensation deal has been ...

[Madigan accuses Church of 'brazen discrimination' against women](#)

RTE.ie

The Minister for Culture has questioned the credibility of the Catholic **Church's** teaching that God approves gender discrimination against women who ...

[New Bishop of Catholic diocese of Clogher is ordained in Monaghan](#)

Irish Times

The attendance included members of the Irish Episcopal Conference as well as Bishop John McDowell **Church of Ireland** Bishop of Clogher and his ...

[All schools should encourage respect and LGBT acceptance](#)

The Guardian

Rev Simon Wilson Heacham, Norfolk, **Church of England** ... Rabia Mirza Director of **media**, engagement and lobbying, British Muslims for Secular ...

[Kenya's Catholic bishops provoke debate over public health and contraception](#)

Citing an acute shortage of priests as a reason to obey the Vatican's longstanding ban on artificial forms of family planning, a bishop ignited a larger debate about family size and poverty. [More from Religion News Service](#)

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Southern Baptist leaders vow to improve addressing sex abuse after papers' report

'I am committed to doing everything possible to ensure we never make these mistakes again,' Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear said in response to an investigation by Texan newspapers. [More from Religion News Service](#)

Popular Israeli band drops out of Eurovision rather than perform on Shabbat

An Israeli band made up mostly of young adults with disabilities will perform during the 2019 Eurovision telecast. But a dispute over performing on the Sabbath kept the Shalva Band from representing Israel in the Eurovision contest. [More from Religion News Service](#)

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