



# CNI

## Elvis in Eglinton church service

St. Canice's Church in Eglinton is presenting a service with a difference next month – one based on the songs of the late, great Elvis Presley.

Asked where the idea came from, the Rector of the church, Rev Paul Hoey, said, “Last year I heard Elvis tribute singer, Andy Rodgers, from Coleraine, sing at a concert. As I listened it began to dawn on me how many of the songs related to the message of the church. I suppose this service will be partly like an Elvis gig and partly an act of worship. We obviously hope that it will attract worshippers who are Elvis devotees, but also others who are just curious to see how songs that are not normally sung in a church setting still have a lot to say about the message of Christianity.”

Elvis was known for singing some gospel greats, such as “Peace in the Valley”, “If I Can Dream” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, but there will also be a focus on the message of his more

‘secular’ songs, many of which have a spiritual message in their own right

Rev Hoey acknowledged that there might well be people who see this kind of music as inappropriate for performance in a church.

“There were people who objected to Jesus bringing the gospel into the market-place,” he noted. “But there is a long tradition of the church using popular music to convey its message. Besides, it’s the same God who inspired the music of Elvis as inspired the hymns we sing. It all gives glory to him.”

The special service takes place on Sunday 12 March at 7pm, and everyone is welcome.

“We won’t mind if anyone turns up wearing the Elvis gear,” Rev Paul says. “I am genuinely excited by the challenge of engaging with people who might not be in church for a regular service. God gives us many means through which we can worship him and this is a wonderful new way to try and do so.”

## **C of I Clogher appointments**

A new Diocesan Registrar has been appointed by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right

Revd John McDowell. It is one of a number of appointments announced by the Bishop.

The Revd John McClenaghan, rector of Aghalurcher, Cooneen and Mullaghfad Group of Parishes, succeeds the Revd Chancellor John Stewart, rector of Garvary and Derryvullan South parishes, as Diocesan Registrar.

In making this appointment the Bishop paid tribute to Chancellor Stewart who has been Diocesan Registrar since 1998. The Bishop said: "Anyone who knows Chancellor Stewart will be aware of his attention to detail and his care in decision-making, two characteristics of great value in the painstaking work of a Registrar. Chancellor Stewart has been efficient and meticulous in the preparation of the many registry documents required in the normal running of a Diocese and has always responded with sensitivity and care to any request for advice which I have made. He has been an exemplary servant of the Diocese and the Church in this regard and I have valued his wisdom on many occasions. I wish the Revd John McClenaghan well in his new task and know that he will work with enthusiasm and will continue to draw on Chancellor Stewart's experience."

Chancellor Stewart is also standing down as Secretary of the Diocesan Glebes Committee, a post which he has held since 1994.

On standing down from this post, Chancellor Stewart said: "Since my appointment as Rural Dean of Enniskillen in 1991 and then Glebes Secretary since 1994, I have found myself meeting many fine committed church people north and south of the Diocese working in a voluntary capacity. I have learned a great deal and have enjoyed my time on the committee. I am glad to have made a small contribution. I wish the new Secretary and members continued success in their important work on behalf of and for the Diocese."

The Bishop also made the following further announcements.

**Clogher Diocesan Glebes Secretary:** At its meeting on 7 February, Mr Robert Forde was appointed as the new Clogher Diocesan Glebes Secretary. Bishop McDowell thanked Mr Forde for his willingness to take on this role and looked forward to working with him in the years ahead.

**Rector of Carrickmacross:** The Bishop welcomed the appointment of a new rector in Co. Monaghan. The Revd Colin McConaghie has [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

been appointed Rector of the Carrickmacross Group of Parishes. Colin is currently serving as curate–assistant in the Dunboyne Group of Parishes in the united Dioceses of Meath and Kildare. His Institution in Carrickmacross will take place on Friday, April 28, at 7.30pm.

Diocesan Communications Officer & Diocesan Magazine Editor: Bishop McDowell also announced the appointment of Mr Brian Donaldson who takes over the functions of Diocesan Communications Officer and Diocesan Magazine Editor. The Bishop said: “In addition to a lifetime’s experience of regional journalism, Brian also brings deep knowledge of farming life and a close involvement in his home parish of Rossorry to his new role. I cannot think of anyone better suited to help the Diocese in its communications task.”

## **Obit : Reverend Robert William Wylie (Bill) Clarke, who spearheaded healing ministry in Omagh**

The Rev Robert William Wylie (Bill) Clarke, a former long-serving minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Omagh and a noted

educationalist in the area, has passed away aged 92, Belfast Telegraph reports.

Rev Clarke was the father of the Belfast Telegraph's former Political Editor, Liam Clarke, who died in December 2015.

Born in 1924 in Co Monaghan, Rev Clarke was educated at Trinity College Dublin where he obtained a BA and MA, and was installed and ordained in Dundalk Presbyterian Church in October 1949.

He remained there until May 1971 when he became minister to the Trinity and Gillygooley congregations in Tyrone.

Rev Clarke served there until his retirement in 1992.

He was the first occupant of the new manse at Trinity which was completed shortly after his installation and during his ministry a further extension to the church hall was planned and completed. The church organ was also fully restored.

During his time in Omagh he was officiating chaplain at Lisanelly Army base - standing in for the padre when required - and he was also a driving force behind the establishment of a

healing ministry in the area which still continues today.

Rev Robert Herron, who succeeded Rev Clarke at Trinity, said: "Bill had a great empathy with those who were sick or disadvantaged and that may have resulted from his own experience of losing his father when he was quite young."

Rev Clarke was chairman of a number of boards of governors in the Omagh area and also a member of the Western Education and Library Board for a time.

At one stage he was appointed president of the Association of Education and Library Boards.

After his retirement Rev Clarke and his wife Alice went to live in Eglinton, Londonderry, where Alice died in April 2011.

In his later years Rev Clarke stayed at a nursing home in Ballymena.

During his earlier life he was a keen fisherman and enjoyed boating on the lakes of Fermanagh.

He kept a boat moored near Castle Archdale and he was also a keen shooter.

Another pastime in which Rev Clarke took great pleasure in was making his own wine - and

according to friends he was generous in sharing the fruits of his labour.

Rev Clarke's funeral service will take place at Faughanvale Presbyterian Church in Eglinton tomorrow and he will be buried in the adjoining graveyard.

He is survived by his daughter-in-law Kathryn, grandchildren Adam, Daniel and Alice, and sister-in-law Martha.

## **C of E Synod welcomes signs of reconciliation to mark Luther 500**

The Church of England's General Synod has welcomed signs of "convergence" between churches on key doctrinal differences which divided Christians for centuries in the wake of the Reformation.

Members of the Synod, meeting in London, backed a motion supporting further reconciliation between Roman Catholic and reformed churches as Christians around the world commemorate the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation and celebrating the "rich spiritual blessings" the Reformation brought to the Church of England.



Moving the motion, the Bishop of Coventry, the Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth, Chair of Faith and Order Commission, said: "The 500th



anniversary of the Reformation, which began with Luther's courageous insistence that salvation is not for sale, invites every Christian to join with the whole church to be renewed in the grace of God and share the astounding news of God reaching out to the world, running to meet us in Christ and embracing us into his life by the Spirit with an infinity of love that lifts us into the full stature of our humanity and raises us into the joyful responsibility of being human."

In a paper distributed to Synod members ahead of the debate, Bishop Christopher also noted

that one legacy of the Reformation in England had been a "threefold division" between Anglicans, Roman Catholics and "dissenting" protestants.

"The Church of England, for all our fondness for boasting of tolerance, still bears a heavy burden in terms of the persecution of Christians whose response to the Reformation was at variance with the national church," he wrote.

"It therefore has a particular responsibility for ensuring that the commemoration of the Reformation Anniversary this year can be an occasion of healing and for growth in unity between the churches in this country."

In a joint statement earlier this year, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, spoke of the need to "repent of our part in perpetuating divisions".

Although the origins of the Reformation are complex, Martin Luther's protest against indulgences and other church practices, in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, is regarded as the trigger for the period of upheaval across Europe from which protestant churches, and ultimately Anglicanism, emerged.

One crucial dividing line between churches for  
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centuries were disagreements about salvation. But more recent dialogue between churches led to a joint declaration by the Roman Catholic Church and World Lutheran Federation in 1999, setting out broad agreement on the doctrine of justification - or the forgiveness of sins.

The declaration, which was affirmed by the Anglican Communion last year, asserts that people are saved "by grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part".

General Synod supported a motion "welcoming signs of convergence between the churches on the doctrine of salvation".

The motion also commends initiatives during the anniversary year "to foster mutual understanding and reconciliation between churches, for the sake of our deeper renewal in the grace of God and our ability to share the gospel of salvation with all the world".

An amendment, moved by the Revd Angus MacLeay of Rochester, added that Synod gave thanks for the "rich spiritual blessings that the Reformation brought to the Church of England".

The statement by the Archbishops of Canterbury

and York can be read [here](#)

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 1999, can be read [here](#)

The Bishop of Coventry's paper can be read [here](#)

### **Facts about Reformation anniversary:**

- There are around 80 million Lutherans in the world today, around 200,000 of which are in the UK. However, the influence of the Reformation stretches far beyond the Lutheran church, with around 800 million Protestants worldwide.
- The 500th anniversary celebrations are being funded in part by the German government, recognising that the impact of the Reformation went far beyond the Church. For example, Luther's translation of the Bible into German had an enormous impact on the German language.
- A Playmobil figure of Martin Luther is the best selling Playmobil figure of all time, selling 34,000 figures in 3 days - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/31514940/playmobil-say-martin-luther-is-their-fastest-selling-toy>
- A bus telling the story of the Reformation is travelling around Europe - it started in Geneva in

November 2016, and finishes at Wittenberg in May 2017. It visits 67 cities in 19 countries, including Liverpool (21 Feb), Cambridge (23 Feb) and London (25 Feb).



## **C of E Synod: Donald Trump is part of a ‘fascist tradition of politics’, says Archbishop Welby**

Donald Trump is part of the same “fascist tradition of politics” as far-right European politicians such as Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders, the Archbishop of Canterbury suggested

in his address to the Cof E General Synod this week.

In his most outspoken comments since the [American president's ban on travellers](#) from some Muslim-majority countries was announced, the Most Rev Justin Welby accused Mr Trump of being part of a group of leaders from a “nationalist, populist, or even fascist tradition of politics”.

His comments came after John Bercow was criticised for accusing Mr Trump of “racism and sexism”, and are likely to further complicate the planning for the president’s state visit later this year.

Addressing the Synod, the Archbishop said both Brexit and Mr Trump’s rise had been caused by factors including globalisation and social “marginalisation”.

Archbishop Justin said it was a time when the future offered a wider range of opportunity, or of threat, than we have been used to culturally, politically and economically: "There are a thousand ways to explain the Brexit vote, or the election of President Trump, or the strength in

the polls in Holland of Geert Wilders or in France of Madame Le Pen and many other leaders in a nationalist, populist, or even fascist tradition of politics. Almost certainly there is no simple explanation, almost certainly the impact of globalisation economically, or marginalisation politically and of post-modernity culturally have some role to some extent."

Archbishop Justin said these developments would be studied for years to come but at present, "we are in the middle of it all and we see neither the destination nor the road."

However he also said it was a moment of potential opportunity and challenge – but challenge that as a nation could be overcome with the right practices, values, culture and spirit. He told Synod members that for the Church, it was an extraordinary opportunity to be part of reimagining a new Britain, its practices, values, aspirations and global role: "We can be part of the answer, we have a voice and a contribution and a capacity and a reach and above all a Lord who is faithful when we fail and faithful when we flourish."

Both Archbishop Justin and the Archbishop of York came out in favour of the UK remaining in the European Union in the EU referendum last

year; he said that in the necessary reimagination of the country, the church could not dictate but had to participate; “Participation means being a listening, suffering and reconciling presence, not a hectoring, self-interested one. The language of public life at present is deeply, savagely divided and may become worse.”

He said the heritage of the Church of England is to be used confidently, but not arrogantly: “We have at present the extraordinary privilege of sitting in parliament, the remarkable gift and responsibility of educating, chaplains in every sphere of life, and a role in public life of the nation. We have a heritage of presence across England, burdensome although it may sometimes be, and the vocation of being the default point of help and support in times of trouble, or celebration in times of joy.”

Sketching a pessimistic view of Britain, he spoke of a “very serious and ultimately unsustainable balance of payments deficit, the appallingly low levels of investment by the corporate sector, the near absence of research and development funding, the dreadful levels of educational aspiration amongst those who have the least opportunities, the growing demands of care for an older population to a degree that will put massive strain on government funding, the skills



gap, the lack of progress towards our goals of a carbon neutral economy”.

Archbishop Justin concluded by setting out the challenge for the church: "In this time of a choice between national hope and opportunity or threat and fear we may play the part to which we are called in reimagining our country and seizing the best future that lies before us.”

## **C of E Synod: Serving bishop joins criticism against C of E stance on gay marriage**

A serving Church of England bishop has added his name to an open letter written by retired bishops to their successors criticising the church for lack of leadership over gay relationships.

Five more retired Anglican bishops have also signed the letter, bringing the total to 19, along with 500 church members and supporters of gay rights.

Alan Wilson, the bishop of Buckingham, said a recent report by bishops on the issue of sexuality was “just trying to keep a lid on things”.

He told the Guardian: “I want to know, what is the good news of the Church of England for gay



***Bishop Alan Wilson***

and lesbian people? I don't see it in the report. The bishops are just trying to manage things, which is not going to get us where we want to be.”

The letter from retired bishops was [an unprecedented intervention on the eve of the C of E's four-day synod](#), or general assembly, which began in London on Monday. (See CNI yesterday)

Synod members will be asked to “take note” of [a report by bishops](#) which upholds traditional teaching that marriage is a lifelong union of a

man and woman. Gay rights supporters are planning a rebellion on the floor of the synod.

Despite a warning from the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, that protests and campaigns at General Synod meant that “hackles will rise” and the media “circle like wolves”, efforts to mobilise a vote against taking note of the Bishops’ report on marriage and same-sex relationships are gathering steam.

On Tuesday, OneBodyOneFaith (the group formerly called LGCM) published a series of proposals offering an alternative way forward to that proposed in the Bishops’ report. The recommendations include the publication of a teaching document to “to make clear that clerical civil marriage is not of itself . . . a matter for discipline”.

Other proposals include a new sexuality-and-relationships working group of the Archbishops’ Council, “responsible for holding the theological diversity of the Church of England”, a national lead for LGBTI matters at Church House, and the publication and recommendation of an approved liturgy for prayer and thanksgiving with same-sex couples after a civil partnership or marriage.

OneBodyOneFaith says that these proposals are “very far from being all we want to see, but it would be a way forward”.



## **York Minster bells to ring again, in aftermath of heavy dispute**

The bells of York Minster could ring out on Easter Sunday after it began the search for a replacement bellringing team following the controversial [mass sacking](#).

The 15th-century cathedral, whose [bells fell silent on Christmas Day](#) for the first time in 600

years, has advertised for its first paid ‘head of bell tower’ to lead a new team of volunteer bellringers.

York Minster [disbanded its 30-strong ringing group in October](#) in the culmination of a bitter and long-running dispute over safeguarding.

The mass dismissal caused an outcry among campanologists around the country, with some refusing to ring York’s bells on Christmas Day in solidarity with their sacked colleagues. A [petition](#) for their reinstatement was signed by more than 18,000 people.

The famous bells may not be silent for long, however, as York Minster [advertised online](#) for a ‘head of bell tower’ to recruit and establish a new team of campanologists. The role, which was previously unpaid, will command an annual salary of £7,000 for 10 hours of work a week.

## **Pope Francis sending bishop to Medjugorje**

Pope Francis is sending a bishop to a Medjugorje, Bosnia, shrine to gain “deeper knowledge” of the pastoral needs of millions of

Catholics drawn there by reports of apparitions of the Virgin Mary.



***Pilgrims pray at a statue of Mary in 2011 on Apparition Hill in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina.***

Vatican spokesman Greg Burke said Polish Bishop Henryk Hoser's mission doesn't involve deciding the merits of the reported apparitions.

Six youths in 1981 reported having regular visions of Mary there. The Vatican's study of the doctrinal merits of the reported sightings is still ongoing.

The Vatican says Hoser above all will study "the needs of the faithful who go there on pilgrimage,"

and his mission, to wrap up by summer's end, has "exclusively pastoral character."

Last year, a Bosnian court convicted an Italian of belonging to a group extorting money from foreigners' escorting shrine pilgrims.

## News briefs

**+++ C of I marriage questionnaire** - The Church of Ireland Marriage Council is asking clergy to complete a short online questionnaire. This is to assist the Council to get a better picture of what marriage preparation and marriage counselling is being offered by the Church throughout Ireland. The survey can be accessed by [following this link](#).

**+++ Morning service on BBC NI** - BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service on Sunday, 19th February, will be broadcast from St Michael's Church, Castlecaulfield, at 10.15am. The Service of Holy Communion will be led by the Revd Dr Peter Thompson. Morning Service programmes are available online after broadcast.

**+++ Second video on choir training** - Church Music Dublin is pleased to announce that the second video from the set on Choir Training, with

February 15

Mark Duley, is now available at  
[www.churchmusicdublin.org/choir-training-videos](http://www.churchmusicdublin.org/choir-training-videos)