



## Archbishop Welby announces 5 days of prayer approaching Brexit

The Church of England is planning to urge churchgoers to take part in five days of prayer in a bid to help Britain's departure from the EU.

Congregations will be asked to pray for the country as Britain approaches 29th March.

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**So far, 20,250 disadvantaged people have been trained by Mothers' Union in Savings and Credits projects equipping them with skills to manage finances and provide for their families.**



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said "life will go on" after Brexit and the nation must rise to the challenge and unite around a common good that cares for the most vulnerable.

A church spokesman said the move would wedge support behind politicians, with healthy conversations taking place to try to ease unrest.

The Synod members urged churchgoers to pray for "all who are in high positions, as it is easier to stand on the sidelines and judge, as we do not have to make the decisions".

Speaking at the meeting of the Church of England's General Synod, he said Britain was facing signs of division "more clearly than for generations".

The Archbishop said: "Today we see signs of division, perhaps more clearly than for generations in peace time,

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they concern inequality and injustice and they obscure hope for many.

"There is exclusion from the sense of common purpose and of equal rights in our society, politically, economically and socially.

"Life will go on, and God's mission is not stopped by such events, rather we are called to rise to the challenge here and across Europe, where the diocese is particularly affected.

"Brexit has revealed how our politics and society have for many decades not paid sufficient attention to the common good that is shared life in a society in which everyone is able to flourish.

"The pain and exclusion continues in this country. If we do not as a nation pay attention it will cause greater division."

He added: "We hear the prophets tell us that justice must roll down like rivers and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, the Bible does not do trickle-down economics, a theory long discredited.

"It does rolling rivers of justice, the scriptures call us to solidarity with the poor and to common good.

"The reality of exclusion and division is seen in the difficulty of our political system to build a consensus and find a common path forward.

"How we recover from and heal these divisions may be the biggest challenge that lies ahead of us."

The Archbishop of York John Sentamu said a prayer ahead of Britain leaving the EU.

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This would be an open welcome plea to reconnect the fractured state of politics in the nation, working alongside other faith leaders.

## **Pope Francis vows to end Catholic Church sex abuse cover-ups**



**Abusive clergy are 'tools of Satan', says Pope Francis**

Pope Francis has concluded his extraordinary summit on preventing clergy sex abuse by vowing to confront abusers with “the wrath of God”.

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**Archbishop Eamon Martin with Sr Veronica Openibo (Nigeria) and Sr Patricia Murray (Ireland) at PBC2019 in Rome after Sr Openibo's powerful address about "transparency " in dealing with abuse**

Francis also pledged to end the cover-ups by their superiors and prioritise victims of this "brazen, aggressive and destructive evil".

Francis delivered his remarks at the end of Mass before 190 Catholic bishops and religious superiors who were summoned to Rome after more abuse scandals sparked a credibility crisis in the Catholic hierarchy and in Francis' own leadership.

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The Jesuit pope noted that the vast majority of sexual abuse happens in the family. And he offered a global review of the broader societal problem of sexual tourism and online pornography, in a bid to contextualise what he said was once a taboo subject.

But he said the sexual abuse of children becomes even more scandalous when it occurs in the Catholic Church, “for it is utterly incompatible with her moral authority and ethical credibility”.

“We need to recognise with humility and courage that we stand face-to-face with the mystery of evil, which strikes most violently against the most vulnerable, for they are an image of Jesus,” he said.

Francis summoned the bishops from around the world to the four-day meeting to impress upon them that clergy sex abuse and cover-ups are not just a problem in some countries but a global problem that threatens the very mission of the Catholic Church.

“Brothers and sisters, today we find ourselves before a manifestation of brazen, aggressive and destructive evil,” the pope said. He offered an eight-point pledge of priorities going forward, calling for a change in the church’s defensive mentality and a vow to never again cover-up cases.

Victims, he said, must take centre stage while priests must undergo a continuing path of purity with the “holy fear of God” guiding the examination of their own failures. “In people’s justified anger, the church sees the reflection of the

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wrath of God, betrayed and insulted by these deceitful consecrated persons,” he said.

## Patrick's Mysterious Adventure coming to Lisburn

The fantastic Patrick's Mysterious Adventure is back again for its third year this March with the saint's story coming to life in Christ Church Parish, Lisburn.



This is a joint venture by Connor Diocese Children's Council and Christ Church staff and parishioners.

Patrick's Mysterious Adventure is an all-age exhibition and story trail, themed around the life of Ireland's patron saint Patrick. Live actors will re-enact the tale from Patrick's capture by Irish pirates to his return to serve the people of Ireland that he loved so well.

Visitors will have the opportunity to connect with the life story of St Patrick, discover more about him and be inspired by his faith and faithfulness to God.

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## **13th -15th March – School Days**

Opening hours 10-2:30 pm

Invited primary schools from the surrounding locality have been invited to participate on these days. The experience for school groups will include the interactive story trail and two workshops.



**The life of St Patrick will be retold in the interactive exhibition and story trail in Christ Church, Lisburn.**

## **15th March – Uniformed Organisations' evening**

Opening hours 7:00-9:00pm

Invited uniformed organisations from the local area will attend on Thursday evening and experience all the fun and drama. The experience will include the interactive story trail and two workshops.



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## **17th March – Public Day**

Opening hours 11am-4pm

Everyone is welcome to come in and explore the St Patrick trail.

During the day the exhibition can be explored independently or through a timed performance where actors bring the story to life.

As well as the interactive story trail and exhibition, visitors can enjoy performances of live Irish music and dance, take part in craft workshops and have some tea and cake in the café.

To keep the children entertained throughout, there will be plenty of hands on activities including a photo booth with costumes to dress up, and craft and colouring activities in the café. And what's more, this family friendly event is free!

## **Irish Youth Ministry gathering in Belfast**

There will be an Irish Youth Ministry gathering taking place between May [16-18 2019](tel:16-18%202019) , at Assembly Buildings, Belfast, organised by John Kee and Summer Madness.

This event will partner with 25 plus agencies, including Exodus, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Crown Jesus, Care for the Family, Scripture Union, Tearfund, International Justice Mission and Youth for Christ.

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Each day will be themed for the following audiences:

- \* Thursday evening – church leaders, pastors, clergy and parents
- \* Friday – full-time youth workers and people in associated employment
- \* Saturday – youth work volunteers and full-time youth workers

Speakers confirmed:

\*GAVIN CALVER - FANTA CLARKE - RACHEL GARDNER - MALCOLM DUNCAN - CALVIN SAMUELS\*

Further information and ticketing details at

<http://www.facebook.com/theIYMG/>

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## Portstewart Mothers Union support for Baby Basics

Church Army Evangelist Karen Webb and Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton, third and fourth from left, receive a filled Moses basket from representatives of Agherton MU.

Baby Basics Belfast has been partnering with Connor Mothers' Union over the last year.

After discussions with the Diocesan Mothers' Union trustees, it was decided that each of Connor's six areas would donate a filled Moses basket to this project which supports families in need with a new born or a baby soon to be born.

Since adopting this as a Mothers' Union project, branches of Mother's Union across the diocese have been busy collecting items for Baby Basics, along with a new, or second-hand Moses basket and filling it with all the items required to make up a complete pack for a family in need. The branches in each of the six areas were in contact with one another so that they could support this shared initiative.

Baby Basics Belfast, located at the Connor North Belfast Centre of Mission Connect Base, have already received donations from several of the areas and of course, donations far exceeded the original target of filling one basket.

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**Church Army Evangelist Karen Webb and Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton, third and fourth from left, receive a filled Moses basket from representatives of Agherton (Portstewart) MU.**

Church Army Evangelist Karen Webb and Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton visited Agherton Mother's Union on February 18 to speak to the members about Baby Basics and the work that goes on through the Centre of Mission at Connect Base.

The ladies had all the donations from North Connor Mother's Union ready to be picked up and also supplied extra items from the parish knitting group.

Jill said: "They were very interested in hearing some of the stories that are passed on to us through the health

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professionals of vulnerable families and the circumstances behind some of the financial need they find themselves in. “The ladies were very glad to help, and we were delighted with such a generous response to the MU Baby Basics project. A very big thank you to all involved. Also to other areas who have already supported us. We can assure you that the donations will be put to very good use, going to families in need across Belfast city and beyond.”



## **Lisburn and Castlereagh Safe Church Programme**

Churches in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area are invited to sign up to the

Safe Church Programme, funded by Lisburn and Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).

This programme offers churches the opportunity to assist in helping their local area to become a ‘safe place’ for people living with domestic violence or abuse.

Programme dates are as follows:

\*Tier 1:\* Wednesday March 20 2019, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

\*Tier 2:\* Wednesday April 3 2019, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

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This course is particularly suited to members of the clergy and those with a responsibility for safeguarding within the church. Completion of tiers one and two will lead to the Safe Church award.

The venue for both sessions is Lagan Valley Vineyard Church, Altona Road, Lisburn, BT27 5QB.

The training is CPD accredited, and thanks to the PCSP funding can be delivered free of charge, along with a supply of Safe Place Resources.

To book a place on the Safe Church programme please contact Yvette Wilkinson on 028 9267 1887 or email [yvette@laganvalleyvineyard.com](mailto:yvette@laganvalleyvineyard.com)

## **Huge turn-out at Derry and Raphoe's annual 'Confirmation Day'**

There was a huge turn-out of teenagers for the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe's annual 'Confirmation Day' at the Diocesan Centre in Londonderry on Saturday.

The event was organised by the Board of Derry and Raphoe Youth (DRY), and facilitated by the Church of Ireland Youth Officer, Simon Henry, assisted by the Youth Officer of Ballyholme Parish in Bangor, Andrew Watson.

More than one hundred young people – from all across the diocese – turned up for the event, creating an immediate logistical problem: there weren't enough chairs to

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accommodate everyone. The 90 chairs were instead lifted and stacked at the side of the council room, and the young people sat on the floor.

Simon and Andrew engaged the teenagers in a range of 'ice-breaker' games before leading them in periods of direct teaching, using resources pertinent to our Church of Ireland confirmation preparation.

The chairman of DRY, Rev Peter Ferguson, said he was grateful to the young people and parents who had responded so positively to the Confirmation Day, and to the many parish youth leaders from the diocese and fellow clergy who had turned up to lend a hand.

“This is a glorious day, there’s international rugby union on the television, there are plenty of other things these young people could be doing today,” Rev Ferguson said, “so, I’m delighted – and very thankful – that they’ve taken the time and the trouble to come to our Confirmation Day. Confirmation is an important milestone in their lives, and it’s really encouraging for us to see them recognise its significance.

Rev Ferguson, who is Rector of Derg and Termonamongan, said, “When we relaunched DRY, recently, we chose a phrase from one of my favourite Bible verses, Ephesians 3:20, as our theme – ‘immeasurably more’ – and certainly the encouragement we, as clergy and leaders, have drawn from this event is immeasurably more than we had expected. So, we’re grateful to the Lord for that.”

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# CofE unanimously backs plan to create new churches on housing estates

The Church of England has unanimously backed plans to establish churches on all major social housing estates in England, with one bishop claiming communities had been “abandoned”.

The church's annual assembly voted in favour of a proposal which would urge dioceses to include evangelism on housing estates in their plans for the future.

The Bishop of Burnley and head of the estates evangelism task group, Philip North, said the idea was: "To have a loving, serving, worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the nation.

"To plant back in the estates we have abandoned, to better support our presence in the places where we're struggling.”

Around one in five of the Church of England's 12,500 parishes are thought to be "estates parishes", meaning they have more than 500 social housing units.

But one clergy member warned that such a big undertaking would require working with other partners and services.

Reverend Rosemarie Mallett, who works in a parish in Angell Town, in Brixton, said: "In the estate, the work that I have been able to do with young people has been because



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of the work in partnership with our school, the school is at the heart of the community.

"If we think we must do this by ourselves, we will struggle.

"We need to find partners in the gospel, and partners in social action."

On Thursday, the General Synod voted to reverse the 400-year-old rule that all churches must hold a weekly Sunday service.

## **Cathedral shelves plan for Jane Austen statue after complaints**

Proposals to erect a statue honouring Jane Austen on the grounds of Winchester Cathedral have been scrapped following numerous objections.

The church authorities at the Hampshire landmark said they had "listened carefully" to feedback and subsequently shelved their plans for the memorial.

A spokesman said: "We have listened carefully and, alongside support and enthusiasm for the project, we have also been fully aware of serious concerns expressed regarding the type of sculpture, the location and the timing of this significant commission.

"As a result of this listening, Chapter has decided, with regret, not to go ahead with this concept. There are other

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priorities within the cathedral and city that need to be the focus of attention.”

Cathedral leaders had been hoping to raise £250,000 for a monument which would "seal her place in the rich and complex identity of Winchester". A sculptor, Martin Jennings, had been commissioned to create it.

According to the local Southern Daily Echo newspaper, the proposals attracted a "barrage of criticism". One letter said a gravestone and nearby museum devoted to Jane Austen were "adequate".

Another stated: "There is a strong body of opinion that rejects the idea of another Jane Austen statue anywhere, or any statue at all in the Cathedral Close”.

Austen died in Winchester approximately 200 years ago. She was buried in the cathedral.

## **Recitals by Northern Ireland International Organ Competition winner**

The 9th NIIOC will take place in Armagh, Northern Ireland, 19-21 August 2019.

NIIOC has announced a series of recitals by its 2018 Senior winner, Johannes Krahl -

April 27: King's College, Cambridge

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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July 21: St. Michael's church, Dun Laoghaire

July 24: St. John's college (RCO TOSE)

August 18: Westminster Abbey, London

August 23: Stockholm cathedral

May 10 (2020): St. Thomas church, New York

You can read Johannes' bio here

<https://www.niioc.com/past-winners>

<https://www.niioc.com/news/2019/2/18/recitals-by-johannes-krahl-2018-senior-winner>

**###Appointments in Clogher** - Bishop Larry Duffy appoints Mgr Joseph McGuinness, Carrickmacross and Mgr Peter O'Reilly, Enniskillen, to be his Vicars-General; and also names 5 new Canons

**###Appointment in Connor** - Canon Malcolm Ferry of St. Augustine's, Derry, to be Incumbent of Agherton (Portstewart), Connor Diocese. Institution in May.

## **February 25 & 24 in Christian history**

**February 25, 616 (traditional date):** Ethelbert, the first Christian English king and instigator of the first written code of British law, dies.

**February 25, 1570:** Pope Pius V excommunicates England's Protestant Queen Elizabeth I, declaring her to be a usurper to the throne. It was the last time a pope "deposed" a reigning monarch.

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**February 25, 1536:** Anabaptist Jakob Hutter is tortured, whipped, and immersed in freezing water (to mock baptismal practices), then doused with brandy and burned. King Ferdinand had ordered the persecution of all Anabaptists because of a few violent, millennialist revolutionaries in Munster, Germany—even though most Anabaptists were pacifists and renounced the Munsterite rebellion.

**February 24, 1208:** Francis of Assisi experiences a vision in the church of Portunicula, Italy. Though not his first vision, it convinced him to begin a mission of preaching repentance, singing, caring for lepers, and aiding the peasants. Most notably, he and his followers renounced wealth and followed absolute poverty.

**February 24, 1582:** Gregory XIII issues a bull requiring all Catholic countries to follow October 4 with October 15 and replace the Julian calendar with the Gregorian (which we still use today). By 1582, the Julian calendar had drifted from the equinoxes by a full ten days.

**February 24, 1633:** English poet and cleric George Herbert dies. His devotional poems, most of which are collected in *The Temple*, exemplify the metaphysical tradition (as do the poems of his contemporary John Donne).

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