



Presbyterian Church sorry over hurt caused by rejection of same-sex members

The clerk of the Presbyterian Church today apologised for the pain caused by a report which ultimately led to the

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exclusion of gay people from becoming members of the church.

At last year's general assembly the church in Ireland adopted a new policy that means anyone in a same-sex relationship cannot be a full member of the church nor can their children cannot be baptised.

Rev Trevor Gribben said the two-year report presented and passed at last year's assembly had been a very narrow report based solely on theological issues.

He said a new task force led by Very Rev Rob Craig had been set up to correct the initial report and explore same-sex attraction issues in relation to the church more extensively.

He told the general assembly that last year's report was missing a "warm, open, pastoral, caring compassionate section".

He said: "If as a church, by the way we've done our business, by the fact that perhaps we didn't have a holistic report last year and caused hurt and pain, we should say sorry.

"But we should also struggle as we have to do as Bible-believing Christians with the full balance of God's word and try to apply that truth in a loving way to a world that is fallen, broken and in pain."

Earlier in the session the general assembly heard from the convenor of the Implementation Task Force, former moderator Very Rev Alastair Dunlop.

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He said as part of his role he had listened to three past and present PCI members talk about their experiences with the church in regard of gay relationships.

He said: “I couldn’t help but be impressed by the honesty and courage of all three in telling their stories in a hall full of strangers as they bared their souls, shared their fears and concerns, and expressed the frustrations and tensions they feel about the church and its approach to this subject. It was very moving.

“We must pay more attention to the angst that some of our fellow Christians go through due in part to the uncertainty about how openness disclosure of same-sex attraction will be greeted within the family circle and within the church, and due in part to how this might impact on young people’s mental health.

“At times we can speak very glibly about fellowship and pastoral care and the church as a loving community but how many of us actually practise these things in our own congregations?”

He added: “We must not be dismissive of people or not judgmental. People matter to God, all people, including our members and families who live with same-sex attraction.”

Another former moderator, Rev John Dunlop, spoke of gay Christians like Padraig O’Tuama who have shared their painful experiences with select members of the Presbyterian Church, adding: “I regret that it has not been possible for the whole assembly to hear him and other such stories first hand from our fellow Presbyterians; it’s not enough to send people like Rob Craig out on our behalf, for there is no

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substitute for face to face and mouth to ear, and heart to heart encounters.”

Rev Cheryl Meban, chaplain at Ulster University Jordanstown, said: “The presence of difference among us is a gift. That’s what makes it possible for us to learn to love, to grow in patience and humility and to listen. Let us cherish our diversity. Surely on this we can agree, all our relationships go as short as the glory of God.”

Rev John Dickinson of Carnmoney Presbyterian said that last year’s decision came as a “hammer blow” to members of his congregation with sons who were gay or daughters who were lesbians.

He said: “It’s good that this report reflects how some officers went above and beyond the call of duties. It would be helpful if the report has also said sorry to those who we so deeply hurt.” Report courtesy News Letter.

General Assembly to review pressing public concerns

At its annual General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s Council for Public Affairs will present an Alternative Presentation, which gives members of Assembly an opportunity to listen and explore specific aspects of church life, or matters of pressing public concern / policy. In doing so, it allows the Church to explore these issues with recognised experts and other interested parties.

Life Always Matters seeks to speak into the professional world and public square on the dignity of human life. Through specially commissioned video, a presentation and

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an informal panel discussion involving three Presbyterian elected representatives and others. *Life always matters* will be looking at:

- Dementia care
- Palliative care and
- Child and adolescent mental health services

Those taking part will be:

- Professor Max Watson, former Medical Director of the Northern Ireland Hospice, Palliative care consultant with the Western Trust
- Dr Caroline Thompson, consultant clinical psychologist, Belfast Trust
- Denise Keegan, PCI's Head of Older Peoples Services
- Stewart Dickson MLA (Alliance)
- Gordon Lyons MLA (DUP)
- Roy Beggs MLA (UUP),

Dementia

The first video on the area of dementia was filmed at the Church's residential care home, Adelaide House in Belfast, will highlight some of the work that PCI does and the challenges presented by a lack of funding and the need to update the Government's dementia strategy.

Palliative care

In a resolutions at last year's the General Assembly, members voted to 'strongly oppose any legislation which allowed assisted suicide or euthanasia' and commended palliative care, 'calling on the governments in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to ensure the adequate

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resourcing of both research and delivery in this important area.’ In today’s presentation, the leading Palliative Care consultant Professor Max Watson, will give a presentation on end of life care in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Adolescent Mental Health.

The third area, in relation to human dignity, is contained a short video shot at The Big House. The North Belfast Christian charity was set up around 15 years ago and exists to help young people know God’s love and that they are cared for by the church, especially when life is difficult. This part of the presentation will challenge the church in relation to the needs of young people and social services in terms of statutory provision.

Panel discussion

Along with three Presbyterian elected representatives from East Antrim will share their views on these important issues, how they manifest themselves in their constituency and wider policy issues.

Clergy from Dublin & Glendalough and Jerusalem explore challenges and joys of ministry together

A group of clergy Dublin & Glendalough’s partner diocese in Jerusalem have joined clergy from Dublin & Glendalough for a shared retreat. The retreat is based in the Emmaus Centre in Dublin and over the course of the event clergy will consider the theme of ‘the Challenges and Joys of Ministry’.

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Clergy from Jerusalem and Dublin & Glendalough on the first day of their joint retreat in Dublin.

The retreat is being organised in two parts with the second part taking place in St George's Cathedral Guesthouse in Jerusalem in November 2020. It is part of the five year link between the dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough and Jerusalem. Clergy will share experiences from across their diverse ministry contexts and build relationships.

The visiting clergy, including Archbishop Suheil Dawani, arrived in Dublin on Monday and the retreat got underway on Tuesday morning. Following Morning Prayer, participants met Dr David Tuohy SJ who spoke to them about Dublin & Glendalough's Come&C intentional discipleship programme.

Dr Tuohy outlined the link between Dublin and Jerusalem – the first Bishop of Jerusalem, Bishop Michael Alexander, had studied and was ordained a deacon in Dublin. He was consecrated in Lambeth Palace in 1841.

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He explained the concept of developing intentional discipleship in the dioceses, where people could look for ways to deepen their relationship with God more deeply.

“With Come&C there is a link between discipleship and mission. There is an intentionality. People follow Jesus in different ways. Part of Come&C was to explore what it means to hear the call and how we can find ways of deliberately exploring it rather than waiting to see what happens next,” he explained.

He said the basic text used was John 1 which talks about how Jesus called the early disciples. Within this text, Dr Tuohy said there was invitation, affirmation, calling, revelation and promise and they set out to explore how the church entered into this.

The Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion were key to exploring discipleship, he said, adding that they were not widely used here but quickly became part of the fabric of the dioceses. They are: TELL – To proclaim God’s Kingdom; TEACH – To teach, baptise and nurture; TEND – To respond to human need; TRANSFORM – To transform unjust structures; TREASURE – To safeguard creation. He added that parishes and individuals were already doing these intuitively and they were then invited to explore the Five Marks.

Dr Tuohy asked the clergy present to examine the Five Marks and identify activities in their own ministries which reflected them.

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The retreat continues with small group discussions, prayer and reflection. On Wednesday they heard from Philip McKinley, Church of Ireland chaplain in DCU, on the spirituality of reconciliation. In the evening Fr Peter McVerry brought perspectives on social and economic challenges for ministry.

This morning the group will visit Glendalough where they will learn about the Glendalough Camino project from the Revd Brian O'Reilly who will also lead them on a guided prayer pilgrimage through the monastic site. This evening they will attend Choral Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral.

Down team commissioned for Albany youth work

With a month to go before they leave, this year's Albany Youth Team was commissioned at the summer Saturday Night Live last weekend.

Mark Wells (Youth Worker with Bangor Parish) and his wife Abi will lead the team as they spend two weeks assisting at Beaver Cross Ministries Summer Camp.

Beaver Cross Ministries is the youth ministry aspect of our partner diocese of Albany which is in New York State. Our team will be joining two camps: Discoverers and Beaver Bound, which are tailored for ages 5 – 13.

Six of the team of nine come from Banbridge parish plus one each from Donaghcloney and Waringstown, High

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L–R (front row): Caitlin Moore, Lauren Tucker, Amy Stevenson, Leon Wright. L–R (back row): Rebekah Maxwell, Jessica Laird, Remi McAnerney, Luke Rushton, Abi Wells (leader), Mark Wells (leader) and Joel Martin.

Street Methodist in Lurgan and Brannockstown Baptist, Kildare.

Bishop Harold Miller is attending the Albany Convention so in his absence Archdeacon Roderic West commissioned the team and Mark and Abi.

The mission trip will be a brilliant opportunity for the young people to experience youth ministry in a different context, to learn and grow personally and spiritually and to be part of a significant ministry in the diocese of Albany.

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The team will be serving in various ways, from helping out in the kitchen or helping care for the grounds, to helping to lead groups of around 12 – 14 children and young people as they engage in various camp activities. They will also be sharing their faith through a Christian Education programme. The days will be long and hard work, but also a lot of fun.

What are the team looking forward to?

I'm looking forward to working with young children and working with a team and developing and growing in my faith as well.

Rebekah

I think we're all kind of excited to be there to encourage the kids and build them up in their faith. It will be really exciting, and it'll be nice getting to know them.

Jessica

I'm looking forward to meeting the kids and sharing my faith with them.

Luke

And what are they most nervous about? Travel, sunburn, scary bugs and snakes!

Here's what the team would love us to pray for them:

- Safe travel for the team and the children.
- Good teamwork and a willingness to serve.
- That the team would set a good example and encourage the kids in their faith.
- That the kids on the camp would hear about Jesus through them.

(The guys leave on Friday 5 July and will return on Wednesday 24 July)

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Always be Ready – Ecumenical Bible Week 2019

‘Always be ready’ is the clarion call from Ecumenical Bible Week 2019 which runs from June 10 to 16. Now in its sixth year, there will be parish based events around Dublin and Glendalough with lots of talk, debate and participation.

This year’s key verse is ‘Always be ready to give an answer for the hope which you possess’ [1 Peter 3:15]. During the week there will be presentations and discussions on the Bible, the Beatitudes, talking about faith, Luke’s teaching on prayer, a portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John, accounting for hope, Pentecost and examining who is our neighbour.

The opening event will be a breakfast at St Paul’s Church, Arran Quay, Dublin, on Monday June 10 at 7am. It will be addressed by Fr Bryan Shortall of the Capuchins and Sean Mullan on the theme ‘Come and have breakfast, Jesus said ...’ (John 21:12). Entry is free.

On Thursday June 13 from 2pm to 5pm, Archbishop Michael Jackson will host a symposium in the Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe. The subject is ‘How can we be Christian in Ireland today? Voices of Hope in a secularised Ireland’. Speakers include the Revd Paddy McGlinchey of CITI and Patricia Devlin who is a laywoman imagining a new way of being church. It is hoped that the Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP will also join them. The cost for the symposium is €12 and registration is encouraged.

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On Thursday evening the ever popular Thinking Allowed event will take place in the Holy Cross centre at 7.30pm. Discussion will centre on 'What does it mean to you to be a Christian in Ireland today?' Panellists include Bishop Pat Storey, Meath and Kildare; Julie Wisdom McKinley of the National Bible Society of Ireland; Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Dublin; the Revd Julian Hamilton, Methodist Chaplain at TCD; and Sharan Kelly, of Tearfund Ireland and the Evangelical Alliance. This is a free event and there will be an opportunity for audience participation.

There will be events in 10 different locations during the week. Church of Ireland venues include Whitechurch on June 10, St Mary's Howth on June 11 and 12, St John the Baptist Clontarf on June 12, Rathfarnham on June 12. Full details of the events are in the flyer below. All talks begin at 7.30pm. The closing service takes place at St Finian's Lutheran Church, Adelaide Road, Dublin 2, on Sunday June 16 at 7.30pm. This will be sung Lutheran Vespers and the speaker will be the Revd Sam Mawhinney of Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church.

See www.bibleweek.ie or www.facebook.com/bibleweekie for details.

International Anglican Environment network encourages churches to tackle air pollution

Churches are being encouraged to support a call to action to tackle air pollution – the focus for yesterday's World Environment Day (5 June). Air pollution has been described

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as one of the greatest environmental challenges of modern times by the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN). The campaign #BeatAirPollution encourages faith-based organisations to lead the fight for cleaner air and a better environment.

Canon Rachel Mash, Environmental Coordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, said: “World Environment Day invites us all to consider how we can make changes in our daily lives to reduce air pollution, which in turn can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benefit people’s health.”

Resolutions from the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Hong Kong, published this week, recognise that there is a global climate emergency and encourages all Anglican churches to live out the fifth Mark of Mission – “to strive to

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safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

Calls to action from the [environmental resolution](#) include: a day of public repentance and a Lenten fast for creation; sustainable living action plans, resources and policies to minimise waste, increase use of renewable energies and incorporate “creation care” into liturgy; identifying climate threats and running strategic planning conferences on the sustainable development goals and climate change, and encouraging the Lambeth Conference 2020 to be as environmentally sustainable as possible.

World Environment Day is being hosted by China this year and Bishop Andrew Chan of Western Kowloon in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, has written a prayer for the day which is available on the [ACEN Green Anglicans website](#) along with sermon and liturgy resources.

According to the site there are 4.2 million deaths every year as a result of exposure to ambient (outdoor) air pollution, while 91 per cent of the world’s population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO guideline limits. It also states that more people die from air pollution than HIV and Malaria.

The website offers practical ways for communities and churches to help make a difference through cutting down on electricity use, planting trees and organising litter pick-ups.

The day is being backed by the United Nations which has also issued [guidelines](#) to help faith groups support the campaign.

June 6 - Today in Christian history

June 6, 1654: Christina, Queen of Sweden, abdicates her throne and joins the Roman Catholic church. She spent the rest of her life engaged in religious thought (though she twice attempted to resume the crown).

June 6, 1844: English merchant George Williams founds the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) out of his London meetings for prayer and Bible reading.

June 6, 1903: Brother Bakht Singh, Indian evangelist regarded as one of the most well-known Bible teachers and pioneers of the Indian Church movement was born in Punjab, India.

June 6 News Links

[Gay Presbyterians fearful of coming out, says ex-Moderator](#)

Belfast Telegraph

The Presbyterian **Church's** ruling body has been told "there are a ... from the **Church's** 500-plus congregations across **Ireland** are attending the General ... the good **news**, the offer to all of forgiveness, salvation and hope," he added.

[Presbyterian **Church** sorry over hurt caused by rejection of same-sex members](#)

Belfast Newsletter

At last year's general assembly the **church** in **Ireland** adopted a new policy that means anyone in a same-sex relationship cannot be a full member of ...

[Alf McCreary: A complex issue with no easy solution](#)

Belfast Telegraph

The decision by the Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland** (PCI) not to grant full membership to LGBT people or to baptise their children hurt many **Church** ...

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[Everyone needs a message of hope, new leader tells General Assembly gathering](#)

Belfast Telegraph

Addressing an audience of 800 **church** members and delegates from all over **Ireland**, as well as overseas guests and civic dignitaries, Rev William ...

[Moderator urges Presbyterians to “enjoy God”](#)

Ulster Star

In his address to the Opening Night of this year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland** in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, the ...

[Scapegoating a minority on whatever grounds is antithetical to Christian faith](#)

Irish Times

We learnt of the use of systemic fake **news** and the demonising of minorities in ... Last month the **Church of Ireland** met in Derry for its annual General Synod. ... Very Rev Maria Jansson is **Church of Ireland** Dean of Waterford.

[Nicola Tallant: 'For too long, criminal gangs have used the Church as their theatre, the altar as their ...](#)

[Independent.ie](#)

When they came to mourn 23-year-old Zach Parker, a number of his "friends" lined up in Colmcille's **Church** in Swords, North Dublin, wearing the ...

[Priests may have to refuse funerals for Dublin gangs says Archbishop Diarmuid Martin](#)

[Independent.ie](#)

Speaking on RTE Radio One's 'Morning **Ireland**' programme, Archbishop ... "We will provide, and do provide, **religious** services for the family of the ...

[reland: Archbishop Neary at diaconal ordination of Shane Costello](#)

Independent Catholic News

It is the day when the **Church** celebrates the Ascent of Jesus to His Father, from where he will send the Holy Spirit. It is also the Sunday preceding the ...

[A Culturally Catholic Era](#)

The Clare People

Ireland was once regarded as The Island of Saints and Scholars. ... We had the various **Church** scandals, the Celtic Tiger bringing with it a wave of ... who come to Him to hear the message of eternal life, the good **news** of the Gospel.

[TripAdvisor's 10 Highest-Rated Irish Landmark Attractions in 2019](#)

Ireland Before You Die

Ireland is ripe with things to do and places to see. ... National Cathedral of the **Church of Ireland** and among the top landmark attractions in the country.

[Louth Contemporary Music Society presents: Stations of the Sun](#)

The Journal of Music

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Composer Kaija Saariaho makes her first visit to Ireland plus new works from Catlin Smith, Kurtág, ... St Nicholas **Church of Ireland**, Dundalk, 5pm.

[CofE given funds to train leaders for estate churches](#)

Premier

The **Church of England** has been given over £150,000 to invest in training for ... In a world of fake **news** there's never been a greater need for quality ...

[Humanist weddings are now more popular than religious ones](#)

Metro

Religious ceremonies on the other hand are no longer as appealing; **Church of England** weddings declined by 28%, while Catholic and Baptist ...

[Bishop of Chelmsford issues Ad Clerum regarding John Parker](#)

Diocese of Chelmsford (press release)

... a **Church of England** school in the diocese given support in the context of gender transition, and the resignation of a member of clergy, John Parker.

[Putt your faith in Christ: Cathedral to house mini-golf course](#)

Premier

"We hope that we'll reach more people with the message the good **news** ... The **Church of England** recently announced that Cathedral attendance is ...

[Church Hatches Very Unconventional Plan to Get More People Through the Doors](#)

Faithwire

A **Church in the British** town of Rochester has launched an unconventional ... Rochester Cathedral's Rev, Canon Rachel Phillips told Premier **News**.

[Thousands of worshippers expected to descend on Portchester Castle to mark the end of a global ...](#)

The News

'It came out of a desire by the **Church of England** to make personal evangelism a top priority. Thy Kingdom Come has been a fantastic way to get us on ...

[Bishop questions Christians who support Donald Trump](#)

ChristianToday

Donald Trump's Christian faith has been questioned by a senior figure in the **Church of England** as the US President embarks on a three-day state visit ...

AN INVITATION
to get Twitter leads from CNI

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the CNI home page**

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www.churchnewsireland.org**

