

Belfast church woman's community service recognised

Mrs Jacqueline Weir was awarded an MBE for services to the community in north Belfast in the Queen's New Year Honours.

Mrs Jacqueline Weir

A lifelong member of St Matthew's Parish Church, Shankill Road, Belfast, Jacqueline is a member of Connor Diocesan Council, Connor Synod and General Synod.



In her parish she is Glebewarden, Freewill Offering Secretary and has been a member of the Select Vestry for more than 40 years.

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Jacqueline has been a leader in St Matthew's Guides since the age of 18, moving straight into the role from being a guide and ranger herself.

She also sits on the Board of Governors of three north Belfast schools.

Jacqueline, 64, has lived in north Belfast all her life. Her maiden name is Craig, and her late husband was Mr Harold Weir.

Jacqueline graduated from Queen's University in 1975, and was among the University's first Computer Sciences graduates. She began her career in computing in Shorts, where she worked for around 20 years before moving to Queen's to work in IT. She retired from Queen's three years ago.

Speaking of her long commitment to Guiding, Jacqueline says it is something she thoroughly enjoys. "Guiding is a superb organisation and has given me opportunities I would not have had otherwise," she said.

"Over the years I have held all sorts of roles, including representative of the Chief Commissioner for Ulster. I am currently Training Officer for Ulster.

"Through Guiding, young women get to build confidence and resilience – resilience is something young people need to cope with what is a very different world, with all the issues of mental health and well-being.

"They also learn to be good citizens and play a role in their community as they grow up."

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Jacqueline said that she had been delighted that at a recent ceremony, a number of her former guides received awards for long service to the organisation.

Jacqueline is currently a transferror and Chair of the Board of Governors of Glenwood Primary School which lies within the boundaries of the Parish of St Matthew's; Chair and a transferror on the Board of Belfast Girls' Model School and she is also a member (and former Chair) of the Board of Governors of Belfast Royal Academy.

"I have been involved in school governorship since the mid-70s. At the time schools didn't have their own governing bodies, instead there were District Boards. My rector, the late Jim Rooney, suggested they needed someone younger for the Board and I have been doing it ever since!"
Jacqueline said.

"I feel it is very important to help young people to achieve their potential. I also enjoyed it because it was something different to my own professional life.

"I want to give back to a community that has suffered a lot over the years. Many of my contemporaries moved away through the height of the Troubles and I feel it is incumbent on me to give something back."

Jacqueline said she was absolutely delighted to receive the MBE. "It is a lovely honour and the fact that people felt they could nominate me means a lot. People have said a lot of lovely things over the past few days."

Jacqueline is now looking forward to a trip to Buckingham Palace later this year.

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Monsignor Liam Kelly elected Diocesan Administrator of Kilmore

Following the acceptance by Pope Francis of the retirement of Bishop Leo O'Reilly as Bishop of Kilmore on 31 December last, the College of Consultors of the Diocese of Kilmore, met yesterday afternoon in Cavan, in accordance with its rights and duties under Canon Law, and elected Monsignor Liam Kelly, Vicar General and Parish Priest of Killsherdany and Drung, Co Cavan, to be Diocesan Administrator. He takes up his responsibilities immediately.

The Diocesan Administrator will have responsibility for administering the day to day affairs of the diocese until a new bishop is appointed by Pope Francis. In his role as Administrator, he will also attend the quarterly meetings of the Irish Bishop's Conference in Maynooth.

Speaking after the meeting, Monsignor Kelly said that he was honoured to accept the role of Diocesan Administrator and would endeavour to serve the diocese until a new bishop is appointed. He thanked and paid tribute to Bishop O'Reilly, who had served the diocese as bishop for 22 years, which had been very challenging in the life of the Church in Ireland.

Monsignor Kelly said, "It has been a privilege for me to have worked with Bishop Leo, to have learned from his example of generous service, and to have benefited from his great kindness and support. I wish him happiness in his retirement and pray that he will enjoy good health and every blessing in the years ahead."

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Monsignor Kelly thanked the College of Consultors for their support and good wishes, and asked for the prayers and support of the priests and people of the diocese in the time ahead.

Parish raises £3,000 for Cancer Centre

A coffee morning organised by Magheragall Parish Church at the request of 90-year-old parishioner Jimmy Skelton raised £3,000 for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

The event was held on November 24 and on December 16 Jimmy, who has received treatment at the Cancer Centre, helped rector the Rev Nicholas Dark present a cheque for £3000 to Mr James Napier, an ambassador for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

In a letter to the church, Jimmy's family expressed their thanks to everyone who supported the coffee morning.

They wrote: "Friends of the Cancer Centre is very close to Dad's heart as is the Parish of Magheragall and he was overwhelmed by the support he received from organisers and those who donated towards the charity."

Following the presentation of the cheque, a thank you letter was received from Claire Hogarth, Fundraising Manager of Friends of the Cancer Centre. Claire wrote: "Please pass on my sincere thanks to everyone who supported the event, it is greatly appreciated and will make a huge difference to the lives of local people affected by cancer."

Claire explained that for more than 30 years, Friends of the Cancer Centre has been dedicated to making a real and

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Jimmy Skelton, centre, helps Magheragall rector the Rev Nicholas Dark, right, present a cheque for £3000 to Mr James Napier, an ambassador for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

meaningful difference to local people with cancer and their families across Northern Ireland. The charity enhances the quality of patient care and support through life-changing and life-saving work, and does this by funding additional nurses, supporting local research and providing practical support through financial grants and complementary therapies.

Claire's letter concluded: "We are only able to do this thanks to the amazing support of people like you."

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Holy Rumpus: New partnership for CMS pioneer mission programme



A design by pioneer missionary Emma Moreton

Church Mission Society and the Church of England's Bath and Wells Diocese are joining forces to launch a new regional hub, known locally as Holy Rumpus, to train lay people in pioneering mission.

Holy Rumpus will offer the CMS Certificate in Pioneer Mission and is for people looking to develop their understanding and practice of pioneering mission. Study will be based around six modules: What is pioneer mission?, Reading the Bible for Context, Doing Theology, Mission Spirituality, Mission Ecclesiology and Pioneering in the Rural Church.

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The initiative is part of CMS's growing network of training hubs for lay pioneers which began with the St Cedd Centre for Pioneer Mission in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Pioneer mission workers are encouraged to explore unconventional ways of connecting with unchurched people. One practitioner is Emma Moreton, who has opened a hat shop in Battle, East Sussex, and creates tailored outfits for steampunks, goths and the alternative community, building relationships and sparking conversations with people who are unlikely to be in a church.

Tina Hodgett, pioneer and evangelism team leader, said: 'At Bath and Wells we are looking for explorers and dreamers who want to follow their God-given dreams to reality; those who can see the culture gap between the church and the local community context and want to help bridge it.'

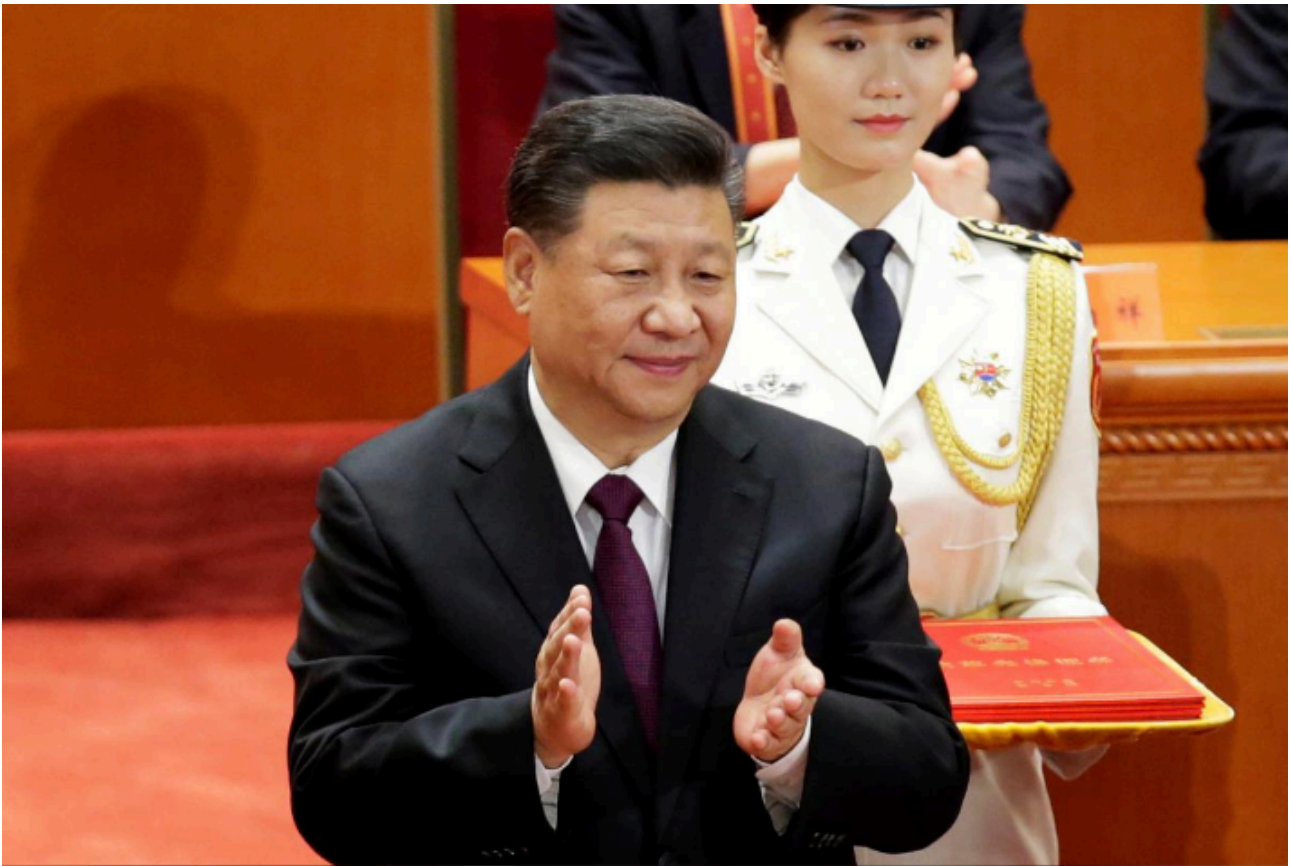
The first Holy Rumpus [CMS pioneer leadership course](#) starts in May 2019; a 'taster day' has been arranged for February 2.

Persecution of Christians is 'set to rise' in 2019

Release International has warned that the persecution of Christians worldwide is set to rise in 2019.

The charity has welcomed a review of Christian persecution ordered by Britain's foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt and led by the Bishop of Truro, Philip Mounstephen. Its chief

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China's President Xi Jinping has launched a crackdown on religion.

executive Paul Robinson said there was a 'worrying upward trend' in persecution and backed calls for the UK to do more to 'support the suffering church worldwide'.

Release said its partners support the view that persecution is rising and have warned the trend will continue into 2019. Among the countries it names as of particular concern for 2019 are Nigeria, India and China.

In Nigeria Fulani militants are set to continue devastating attacks against Christians in the north and centre of the country. In the first six months of 2018 alone, they killed up to 6,000 people and drove 50,000 from their homes.

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A Release partner said: 'The escalation in killing is very clear. There is a deliberate plan to destroy and take over the predominantly Christian communities in the region.'

In China there has been a sharp increase in government opposition to religion, including Christianity. Tough new rules, which came into effect in 2018, have banned children and young people from church meetings. In some areas, house churches unwilling to come under state control have split down in order to survive.

China has been continuing a policy of removing Christian symbols and closing churches. Increasingly, they are targeting the larger unregistered house churches. A Release partner believes they have been emboldened to close these higher profile churches by the lack of opposition from the West. 'The government wants to reduce Christianity to just a minor activity by unimportant older people,' the partner said.

Up to a million Uighur Muslims are believed to be detained in Chinese 're-education' camps.

In India, attacks against Christians by Hindu nationalists are on the rise. Violent mobs have broken up prayer meetings, several states have passed laws prohibiting so-called forced conversion (effectively outlawing all evangelism), and pastors have been attacked.

Other countries of specific concern for 2019 include North Korea, Eritrea and Pakistan, where Christian Asia Bibi is still not free to leave, despite being acquitted of blasphemy.

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January 3 in Christian history

January 3, 1521: Pope Leo X creates a bull of excommunication for Martin Luther that would have deprived him of civil rights and protection, but before its execution, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V allows Luther the opportunity to recant his beliefs at the Diet of Worms. When Luther instead affirms his beliefs, the bull is carried out.

January 3, 1785: The Methodist "Christmas Conference" concludes at Baltimore, Maryland, having created the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and elected Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke its two first "general superintendents".

January 3, 1840: Joseph de Veuster, who, as Roman Catholic Missionary Father Damien gave his life ministering to lepers in Hawaii, is born in Tremelo, Belgium.

January 3, 1892: Literature professor J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the Lord of the Rings trilogy and a devout Catholic, is born in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

News links

Bishop warns against 'inglorious watermark' on abortion

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/bishop-warns-against-inglorious-watermark-on-abortion-1.3743211>

NI education: New online-only admissions system begins

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-46732273>

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Boarding schools in Republic seeing 'Brexit bounce' in enrolment

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/boarding-schools-in-republic-seeing-brexit-bounce-in-enrolment-37663284.html>

BBC News: Education review 2018: Financial pressures hit schools

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-46592624>

Church Times review of the year 2018

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/21-december/features/features/review-of-the-year-2018>

William Gladstone believed his mission as prime minister was to pacify Ireland

Belfast Newsletter

In the late 1860s virtually identical considerations were at play when Gladstone took up the cause of disestablishing the **Church of Ireland** as an ...

Eileen Battersby funeral takes place in Drogheda

Irish Times

Her funeral was held at St Peter's **Church of Ireland** in Drogheda followed by cremation at Glasnevin Crematorium. She is survived by her daughter ...

One in ten members of clergy victims of violence as anti-Christian hate crimes rises

[Telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk)

... Churchwatch, who requested the funding for the survey, told The Telegraph that the **Church of England** should do more to support its clergy. He said ...

Church of England urges compassion for Channel migrants

The Guardian

The **Church of England** has urged greater compassion in the migration immigrants; giving succor to racists or targeting journalists and the **media**.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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One wedding and five funerals: What a typical CofE church will host next year as their decline ...

Daily Mail

A typical **Church of England** parish church now hosts only one wedding every ... social **media** ... and millions encounter the Church in their daily lives.

[REVEALED: Why the Queen keeps Christmas decorations up till February - it's VERY emotional](#)

[Express.co.uk](#)

... proposing to Wallis Simpson, an American divorcee, in a move which was regarded as incompatible with his role as head of the **Church of England**.

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