



Dublin to host Northern European Cathedrals' Conference

This year's Northern European Cathedrals' Conference is being co-hosted in Dublin this year by Christ Church Cathedral and Saint Patrick's Cathedral, with the theme of 'Cathedral music as a gateway to God.'

One hundred and twenty delegates will gather from across Northern Europe from 12 - 15 February to discuss issues relating to the life and ministry of European cathedrals. This is a prestigious occasion for the two Dublin cathedrals to showcase life in the Church of Ireland to our European neighbours.

While the conference itself is already fully subscribed, there will be several special services taking place during the conference which are open to members of the public to attend 18:00, Choral Evensong, including excerpts from Handel's Messiah, sung by the combined choirs of Christ Church and Saint Patrick's Cathedrals

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C of I Historical Society's W.G. Neely Prize winner

The Church of Ireland Historical Society has announced that the 2018 W.G. Neely Postgraduate Prize Winner is Matthew Houston.



2018 W. G. Neely Postgraduate Prize Winner, Matthew Houston, from Queen's University, Belfast

His paper was entitled 'The great crusade? The Church of Ireland and interpretations of the Second World War'.

He will receive his cash prize of €150 at the forthcoming COIHS Spring conference in April and will be given the opportunity to submit his essay for publication in Ireland's premier historical journal: *Irish Historical Studies*.

Matthew holds BA and MA degrees in History and a Graduate Diploma in Theology from Queen's University, Belfast. He is currently working on a DEL-funded PhD at QUB entitled 'The churches, Northern Ireland, and the Second World War, 1939-45'. His research explores how leaders within major denominations responded to the challenges raised by the war.

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The committee of the COIHS has thanked all postgraduate students who submitted an essay and comments. “They were of an exceptionally high standard and we strongly encourage candidates to consider entering the 2019 competition with a new topic”.

Details of the 2019 Neely Prize will be announced shortly.

The Society has congratulated its last prize winner from 2016, Kathryn Sawyer, whose essay was published in the recent issue of [*Irish Historical Studies*](#) in November.

The W.G. Neely Prize, named in honour of the Society’s founder, provides an excellent opportunity for postgraduate students to promote their work that considers aspects of the Church of Ireland.

Irish Methodists Follow the Star outreach by local churches

February’s *Methodist Newsletter* includes several stories that show what can happen when people ask God to plant his dreams in their hearts and then trust him to realise them in his way and at the time of his choosing.

On the centre spread, Janette McCormick (*pictured*) shares the story of ‘Follow the Star’. ‘Back in 2004, while working in a primary school... I asked God for a dream,’ she writes. ‘... I thought to myself there must be something different whereby children could be exposed to the true meaning of Christmas and also be participants in it.’ In 2006, Janette joined the staff of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children’s Department and her dream was ‘taken down off the shelf’.

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The result was ‘Follow the Star ‘ – an outreach resource hosted by local churches and supported by the Irish Methodist Youth and Children’s Department (IMYCD) – which once again this year saw hundreds of children engage with the true meaning of Christmas.

Read Janette’s account and what participants had to say about Follow the Star 2019 in the February magazine – out next week!

SF moves to caravan clinic after church hall abortion row

Sinn Fein has held an advice clinic in a caravan after permission was withdrawn from using a Catholic church building in light of pro-life objections.

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The clinic was planned for a parochial hall in Moy on Saturday past, however the republican-linked pro-life group, East Tyrone Pro Life Network, voiced strong opposition.

Spokeswoman Catherine Sewell had said Sinn Fein is “terrified” of a voter backlash come the local government election this May, as it backed liberalisation of abortion laws in the Republic last year.

She believed that Sinn Fein was “trying to align itself with the Catholic Church in the public eye in order to somehow mitigate their abortion stance”.

On Saturday Sinn Fein MLA Colum Gildernew tweeted a photograph of himself outside the caravan which had Sinn Fein posters attached. The party held the clinic in the caravan in Moy instead of the parochial hall.

Mr Gildernew wrote: “Great constituency clinic in the Moy this morning. “Brilliant as always to engage with our constituents on a wide range of concerns about the Moy specifically and other issues. We will roll out the service across South Tyrone in the time ahead to make it more accessible for all.”

Parish priest Fr John Connolly said he was “surprised” at the attention the advice clinic had attracted.

“I didn’t want to offend or annoy any parishioners, so I thought it best to call it off,” he stated. “It wasn’t because of any other political party’s reaction. I withdrew permission to use the church hall, it was very amicable.

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“I would probably not allow Sinn Fein to hold other events in the church hall. It depends what it is, I would have to look at each case as it came up,” he told the Belfast Telegraph.

2,000 CofE clergy condemn trans ‘welcome’ service

A new Church of England service for transgender people could harm children, more than 2,000 clergy have claimed in an open letter, Tim Wyatt writes in the Daily Telegraph.

Some 2,155 bishops, priests and lay members of the Church added their names to the letter, condemning guidance released last month on gender transition.

In December, the Church announced vicars would be able to hold a special service so transgender people could celebrate their new identities.

But there was a steadily growing backlash to the proposals, culminating in the letter that attacked them as “deeply concerning” and “lacking in serious theological analysis”.

The signatories cautioned rapidly-developing theories about gender could cause “more harm than good” to children experiencing gender dysphoria and called on the Church’s House of Bishops, which approved the reforms last year, to “revise, postpone or withdraw” them until the concerns had been addressed.

The letter stated that while gender dysphoria was an “emotionally painful experience that requires understanding, support and compassion”, the House of Bishops appeared to have ignored the potential for damage caused by “novel

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and largely untested theories about sex and gender”. It argued the guidance implicitly undermined the Church’s understanding of marriage by endorsing the idea there was no difference between male and female.

Among the senior Anglicans who added their names to the letter were two archdeacons, two former bishops, and a member of the Archbishops’ Council, one of the Church’s central governing bodies.

Another group to have criticised the new liturgy is the Church of England Evangelical Council, which said in a statement that the guidance was “highly divisive and theologically and pastorally questionable”.

Even the Bishop of Blackburn, the Rt Rev Julian Henderson, a leading evangelical who piloted the process of drawing up the gender transition service, has disavowed his own reforms and said he regretted his involvement in the process.

But a spokesman for the Church insisted the guidance had not changed its doctrine on sexuality or gender. “The guidance is not a restatement or a new statement on matters relating to gender, nor does it change the Church of England’s teaching,” they said. “The bishops will give the letter their serious consideration, especially in the context of the preparation of a major new set of teaching and learning resources on identity, relationships, marriage and sexuality which will be published next year.”

Despite the huge outburst of opposition, many in the Church want its hierarchy to move faster and further in affirming LGBT people.

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The Rev Tina Beardsley, a transgender priest who helped draw up the service, said opponents were burying their heads in the sand by trying to delay churches holding services for their trans parishioners.

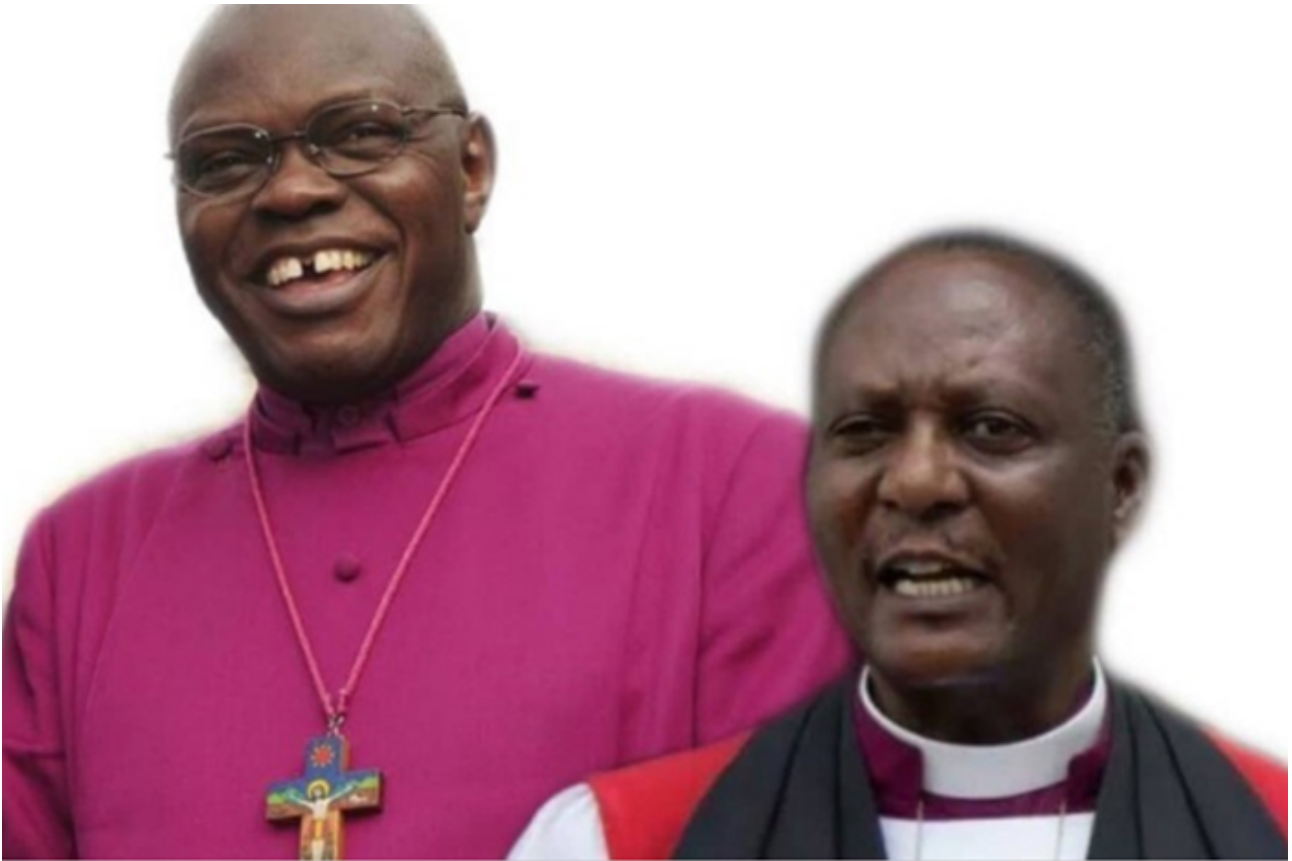
“It does seem a little strange to be saying ‘I’m sorry but you’ve got to wait another two years and possibly longer beyond that before we can actually pray with you’. That doesn’t feel right to me.

Archbishop of York launches crowd-funding appeal for Ugandan bishop’s cancer treatment

The Assistant Bishop of Kampala, Hannington Mutebi, could receive life-saving chemotherapy and bone marrow transplant treatment, if a crowd-funding appeal by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, is successful. Archbishop Sentamu, who leads the Church of England’s northern province, said that friends in Bishop Hannington’s cathedral and diocese in Uganda have already raised £35,000 GBP in just a week. Dr Sentamu is now urging the international community to fund the £155,000 shortfall of the £190,000 cost of treatment.

Bishop Hannington has been diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia, and needs urgent chemotherapy and bone marrow transplant treatment. No such treatment is available in east Africa and the Archbishop is organising treatment at King’s College Hospital in London, England.

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The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu (left) and the Assistant Bishop of Kampala, Hannington Mutebi

“Can we in the UK and round the world raise the rest by Thursday 31 January?”, Archbishop John said. “This means getting as many people as possible to give in this very short time. Every gift will make a difference. I ask you to join me in doing what we can to help.”

[According to Uganda Radio Network](#), the 59-year-old bishop has commenced treatment at the hospital.

The Anglican Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Stanley Ntagali, has asked supporters in the country to contribute to the cost of treatment through the Archbishop’s Emergency Fund.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has also endorsed the appeal, tweeting: “please consider supporting Archbishop @JohnSentamu’s urgent fundraising effort, and hold Bishop Mutebi in your prayers.

[Dr Sentamu’s crowd-funding campaign is being hosted by the *Just Giving* online platform.](#) Dr Sentamu says money raised would be sent directly to King’s College Hospital to pay the medical bill. Any unspent money will be sent to Cancer Research UK, a leading charity working to find treatments for cancer.

- *You can support the appeal by [clicking here](#).*

10,000 people queue to collect Pope tickets from Dubai church

More than 10,000 people flocked to St Mary's Catholic Church in Dubai on Monday night to collect tickets to see the Pope during his upcoming visit to the UAE.

Tickets were made available for the public to apply for free of charge since January.

Officials allocated the parish 43,000 tickets for the public Mass in Abu Dhabi next week despite about 7,000 more local worshippers indicating that they wanted to attend.

Mathew Thomas, vice president of St Mary's parish council told Middle East website The National: "We have people here this evening from communities all over the world and it has been a hectic day.

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"Because we only have 43,000 tickets for the 50,000 people who registered, we had to allocate them on a first come, first served basis."

Pope Francis is set to arrive in the UAE for the first time on Sunday.

He will celebrate a public Mass at Zayed Sports City in the capital Abu Dhabi on Tuesday morning.

Thomas added that he was overjoyed by the huge response to the pontiff's visit.

"There has been a huge response and it's been really encouraging to see," he said.

"The biggest representation has been from the Filipino and Indian communities."

St Mary's parish has announced it will be running a bus service to the Mass from Dubai on the night before.

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News briefs

+++New rector for the Fermoy Union of Parishes - The Very Reverend Gary Paulsen, who is currently Rector of Killaloe, and Dean of Killaloe and Clonfert, has been nominated by a Board of Nomination in the Diocese, and appointed to the Parish of Fermoy Union by the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton. The Fermoy Union of parishes is in the north and north-east of County Cork. The parish covers a large area of North-East Cork from Mitchelstown in the north to Watergrasshill in the south, and from Ballyhooly in the west to Conna in the east.

+++Bilingual Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral - Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise - Lá Fhéile Bríde 2019. Urnaí na Nóna, Ardteampall Chríost, 31 Eanáir ag 6.00pm Bilingual Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral on the eve of St. Brigid's Day. 31 January 2019 at 6pm

+++DCU's University of Sanctuary - In just two years DCU's University of Sanctuary has provided 42 scholarships to students living in Direct Provision in Ireland. It's a movement that began in DCU and has spread rapidly throughout Ireland's other Higher Education Institutions.

+++International and ecumenical future - Almost 30 international students from the World Council of Churches at Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Switzerland, are embarking on a future of ecumenism, dialogue and unity that began with months of intense study and fellowship.

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+++Manchester Cathedral introduces sign language

- to provide interpreted services. The first service will take place on Sunday 3 February, the 10.30am Eucharist will be BSL interpreted. The cathedral community look forward to welcoming BSL users to the Cathedral congregation.

+++Yesterday in 1859 - Edward Martyn, playwright, founder of the Palestrina Choir, co-founder of Irish Literary Theatre, sponsor An Tur Gloine, and Sinn Féin president, was born in Tulira, Co. Galway

+++Job Opportunity - A Part-time Administrator at Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School. Two-year fixed contract. Applications close in one week's time, Tuesday February 5th @ 12 noon. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/2UmB8TG>

+++Irish Biblical Association's annual meeting - is coming up in a few weeks, Saturday 16 February 2019, 10am-5pm Trinity College Dublin -- you are invited

+++Suicide-prevention initiative - Flourish! is a suicide-prevention initiative organised in partnership between Lighthouse Ireland and clergy from Churches throughout Northern Ireland. 26th February'19 at NICVA, (61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GB) from 9.30am-4.30pm.

+++C S Lewis - "The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so

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heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken..."
- The Weight of Glory

January 31 in Christian history

January 31, 1561: Anabaptist leader Menno Simons, for whom Mennonites are named, dies in Wustefeld, Germany

January 31, 1686: King Louis XIV of France, having already revoked the Protestant-tolerating Edict of Nantes, orders all Waldensian churches burned. The Waldensians, members of a pre-Reformation tradition that stressed love of Christ and his word and a life of poverty, were soon devastated: 2,000 killed, 2,000 "converted" to Catholicism, and 8,000 imprisoned.

January 31, 1737: Jacob Duche, Episcopal clergyman and chaplain to the Continental Congress, is born in Philadelphia. He later had a change of heart about the war and asked George Washington to have Congress recall the Declaration of Independence.

January 31, 1892: Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest public speakers of his day, dies at Mentone, France.


News links

[Asia Bibi free to leave Pakistan after court dismisses challenge to her acquittal](#)

Bibi, a Christian whose death sentence for blasphemy was overturned last year, will likely leave Pakistan after a court rejected an appeal of her acquittal. [More from Religion News Service](#)

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Vatican official who handled sexual abuse cases quits after being accused of sexual abuse

Father Hermann Geissler maintained his innocence but said he was resigning from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to protect the Catholic Church. [More from The Washington Post](#) 

The science of Sabbath: How people are rediscovering rest—and claiming its benefits

People of different faiths are rediscovering the practice of Sabbath, and some point to science suggesting such a day of rest — including time away from social media and digital devices — benefits longevity and mental health. [More from Religion News Service](#)

Auschwitz survivors pay homage as world remembers Holocaust

The world marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Sunday amid a revival of hate-inspired violence and signs that younger generations know less and less about the genocide of Jews, Roma and others by Nazi Germany during World War II. [More from Religion News Service](#)

A grim anniversary for Dietrich Bonhoeffer marks what might have been

Eighty years ago, the anti-Nazi activist Dietrich Bonhoeffer traveled back to Germany. Had he survived World War II, he might have become a global leader in fostering respect between Christians and Jews, writes A. James Rudin. [More from Religion News Service](#)

Dementia and religion: Inside a church's Alzheimer's caregiver support group

When they shared how they can be angry or wonder why God gave them this situation, a facilitator reminded the group: 'Job also questioned God.' [More from Religion News Service](#)

Martin Luther King Jr. and Anne Frank: contemporaries with a common legacy

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Two great souls who never lost their faith in love and humanity help us to understand the meaning of each of their lives, writes Nancy Churnin.
[More from Religion News Service](#)

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