

**The essential brief on
the Irish churches**



**Malaysia Airlines crash:
across globe, prayers said as
grief turns to despair**

*A memorial in Melbourne for
Shaliza Zain Dewa, husband
Johannes van den Hende and their
children Piers, Marnix and
Margaux*

The [crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17](#) has cast a web of grief around the globe, as communities from the [Netherlands](#) to [Australia](#) struggle to come to terms with the losses in their midsts.

Guardian - Many of the victims' stories, such as that of the Van den Hende family, speak of the globalised nature of family in the 21st century. The Melbourne-based family of five, travelling on Dutch and Malaysian passports, had been returning from a holiday visit to Hans van den Hende's family in the

Netherlands when disaster struck over eastern [Ukraine](#).

Having met at university in England, Van den Hende, 45, his Kuala Lumpur-born wife Shaliza Dewa, 45, and their children Piers, 15, Marnix, 12, and Margaux, eight, had moved to Australia for work seven years ago.



People pray during a special mass in Saint Vitus church in Hilversum, Netherlands, for three families from the area who were killed in the crash.

On Sunday, the children's schoolmates laid down bouquets, cards and drawings at Bacchus Marsh grammar school in Melbourne, while relatives grieved in [Europe](#) and Asia.

In the Netherlands, where most of the victims had lived, prayers were said on Sunday at church services around the country. The chairman of the Dutch bishops' conference, Cardinal Wim Eijk, called on churchgoers to "pray for strength and courage for the relatives". Since Thursday, the number of Dutch citizens among the 298 victims has risen to 192.

King Willem-Alexander and his wife, Maxima, expressed their sadness in a condolence book opened by the government: "Many thousands of people in our country and elsewhere are mourning the loss of relatives, friends, colleagues, classmates and acquaintances. We are with them in our thoughts. We feel with all those affected."

As concerns rose about treatment of the bodies of the victims, the relative calm and composure that had still dominated in the Netherlands on Friday threatened to tip over into anger and frustration.

"Enough is enough" ran the headline on the front page of bestselling Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf, calling for a deployment of Nato troops in eastern Ukraine. "Special forces should be used to trace the perpetrators of this

massacre and transfer them to the Netherlands for trial," [the paper said](#). "It is now time for action."

A former assistant coach of the Dutch national team, John van 't Schip, [called for a boycott of the 2018 World Cup in Russia](#).

Commenting on reports that separatist militia were refusing emergency helpers access to the crash site, the prime minister, Mark Rutte, said: "This is totally disgusting. It is also serious because it undermines the investigation."

Rutte said he had told Russian president Vladimir Putin in an "extremely intense" telephone conversation that "time is running out to quickly show the world that he intends to help".

"He must take the responsibility now with the rebels and show the Netherlands and the world that he is doing what is expected of him."

His anger was echoed in [Malaysia](#), where there is despair at the failure to bury the deceased quickly, in accordance with Islamic custom. "Pro-Russian terrorists have not handled #MH17 victims with dignity. Putin promised PM @NajibRazak he would help. He hasn't," Malaysia's youth and sport minister, Khairy Jamaluddin, [tweeted on Sunday](#).

Forty-three of the victims were Malaysian, and Malaysia Airlines has announced it is "retiring" the flight code 17 in honour of the victims.

Archbishop writes to ecumenical partners about women bishops

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has written to ecumenical partners about the C of E's General Synod's decision to allow women to become bishops, emphasizing that churches "need each other."

This comes to you with warm Christian greetings and the wish to communicate personally to you the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England to admit women to the episcopate.

This is an occasion of deep rejoicing for many, especially for many of the women clergy in the Church of England. They feel that this decision affirms their place and ministry in the life of the Church. For others in the Church of England, the decision may be a source of disappointment and concern.

As the Synod moved towards the decision many were struck by the spirit of the debate: frankness, passion and, I am glad to say, a good deal of Christian charity. It all indicated an intention and sincere assurance to hold all of us together in one Church. There appeared a determination that the genuinely held differences on the issue of the ordination of women to the episcopate should not become a dividing factor in the Church of England, and there was care and expressions of love for those troubled by the outcome.

The Bishops have sought to build trust across the Church. The five principles outlined by them in their declaration form part of the package approved. Principles 3 and 4 are ecumenically relevant.

I give below these principles:

- 1. Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;*
- 2. Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;*
- 3. Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;*
- 4. Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and*
- 5. Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.*

The Church of England continues in its quest to make our unity more visible with those with whom we are in communion, and to seek greater unity with those with whom we are not yet in communion. Some of our Sister Churches in communion will share the joy of those in the Church of England, who welcome the development of having women in the episcopate. But we are also aware that our other ecumenical partners may find this a further difficulty on the journey towards full communion. There is, however, much that unites us, and I pray that the bonds of friendship will continue to be strengthened and that our understanding of each other's traditions will grow.

Finally, it is clear to me that whilst our theological dialogue will face new challenges, there is nonetheless so much troubling our world today that our common witness to the Gospel is of more importance than ever. There is conflict in many regions of our world, acute poverty, unemployment and an influx of oppressed people driven away from their own countries and seeking refuge elsewhere. We need each other, as we, as churches empowered by the Holy Spirit, rise to the challenge and proclaim the good news of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and strive for closer fellowship and greater unity. I do recognise that there are issues that raise difficulties, but I do also take courage from the words communicated to one of my predecessors by a significant Orthodox brother which have become dear to me:

In spite of such obstacles, we cannot allow ourselves to congeal the love between us which is also manifested in dialogue so "let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us" with the good hope that the Lord of powers and mercy "will not let us be tested beyond our strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that we may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

It is therefore in this spirit that I greet you and ask for your prayers for our ministry in the Church of England.

*The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury*

NZ: Church mourns death of Christchurch dean
The Diocese of Christchurch is grieving the death of the Dean of Christchurch, the Very Rev'd Lynda Patterson.

Lynda died at home of natural causes after a recent illness. She was aged 40.

The Bishop of Christchurch, Victoria Matthews, says Lynda spoke of the God she loved, in all she did and said.

“Lynda was highly respected across the Diocese and Province and we all benefitted from her extraordinary preaching and teaching. She was also a great pastor who brought both compassion and appropriate humour to every situation.”

Bishop Victoria has asked for prayer for Lynda’s father and extended family in Northern Ireland.

The Archbishops of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, have asked for prayer for the Cathedral family to remember Lynda, a priest who called others to prayer for the glory of God.

Taught at Oxford University

Lynda Patterson first visited Christchurch in 2002 while on sabbatical from teaching theology at Oxford University.

She had studied theology at Oxford and lectured there for 12 years.

Her first year in New Zealand involved becoming "acclimatised to New Zealand culture", learning Maori and studying for church ministry.

She was appointed Director of Theology House in Merivale in 2006, as well as assistant to Dean Peter Beck at the Cathedral.

She became Theologian-in-Residence in 2008, and took over the role of Dean last October.

Update on clergy entering same-sex marriages

Simon Sarmiento presented the following update on the Thinking Anglicans web site - This roundup has been somewhat delayed due to the distractions of General Synod, but here it is now. Our previous report was on 9 July, and [is here](#).

Madeleine Davies wrote in the *Church Times* on 11 July: [Chaplain is blocked from new post after same-sex marriage](#). She included this:

...Canon Pemberton said that he had mentioned his application for the new job during his meeting with Bishop Inwood on 29 May, and that he was “not surprised, but disappointed”, to learn that the Bishop had subsequently refused to issue a licence.

“The unequal position that I find myself in is that I have a licence now, and am working in a trust in Lincolnshire; so I am a suitable person to work in the NHS; but if I attempt to move 30 miles away, I become unemployable, apparently.”

He went on: “It needs to be considered that the NHS is bound by the Equality Act 2010, and it does seem odd that, if this offer is withdrawn, it is because the Church has obliged the NHS to act in an unequal way. Is that proper or legal?”

“My action has exposed a faultline here with an NHS that acts strictly under the rules of equality according to the law, and a Church that does not.”

Chaplains are appointed by NHS trusts. The UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy, with whom Canon Pemberton is registered, states that: “It is usual for job descriptions and person specifications for chaplaincy posts that include a religious function to specify that a chaplain will have the endorsement of their faith community, often referred to as ‘being in good standing’.”

It continues: “The situation may arise that the standing of a chaplain in relation to her or his faith community or belief group changes during the term of employment. Whilst this may affect the official status of the chaplain as a ‘minister of religion’ or ‘office holder’ of a belief group, it may have no consequences in relation to their terms of employment so long as they continue to practise ethically and professionally.”

NHS Employers was contacted but was unable to comment at the time of going to press.

On Wednesday, the Revd Justin Gau, a barrister specialising in both employment and ecclesiastical law, and Chancellor of the diocese of Bristol, said that the removal of Canon Pemberton’s licence was, in his opinion, “unlawful, as there has been no breach of canon law”.

And **Hugh Muir** in the *Guardian* had [this tidbit](#):

Battle lines are drawn in the Church of England after the first gay British clergyman to marry a same-sex partner was blocked from taking up a promotion within the NHS. Canon Jeremy Pemberton works as a chaplain for an NHS trust in Lincolnshire. The Right Rev Richard Inwood, acting Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, said he is “unable” to issue a licence for Pemberton to work for the NHS in Nottinghamshire “in light of the pastoral guidance and for reasons of consistency”. A number of people have expressed outrage. Add to their number Prof Diarmaid MacCulloch, the Oxford historian of the church. “I trust that you realise what an appalling impression of pastoral insensitivity you and your fellow bishops are providing to the nation,” he tells the acting bishop. “None of you seem to understand the widespread contempt that your stance provokes, particularly among the young.” They can’t even claim to have history on side.

Changing Attitude has had several articles relating to this action:

- [Time to revise or withdraw the Pastoral Guidance on equal marriage](#)
- [Archbishop of York replies to emails supporting Canon Jeremy Pemberton](#)

At the press conference in York on the evening of 14 July, after the vote on women in the episcopate, the journalists **Rachel Younger** for *Sky News* and **David Sanderson** for *The Times* both asked the archbishops how soon there would also be bishops who were in same-sex marriages. Needless to say the answers predicted no timescale for this. There is an audio recording of this press conference [available here](#). The *Sky News* questions come at the very beginning of the conference, and *The Times* questions come at the very end (about 24 minutes in). A transcript of part of the latter is included here, below the fold.

The **Archbishop of York**, replying to a question from *The Times* said:

... All I know is, that we need to find probably a language of conversation just like the Church in New Zealand, which talks about same-gender relationships, which is bigger than purely sex, that language is a more creative language. And if you have read *Issues in Human Sexuality* the Church of England is very clear that sexual orientation really, and that is what you are talking about has never been a bar to ministry or to anything else. Now a new thing has arrived, called same-sex marriage. That poses in terms of the doctrine of marriage, a problem for the Church of England but I still hope even when that happens, people will still be treated as made in God’s image and likeness and as children of God. And though you may feel that they don’t quite fulfil the exemplifying nature of Christ and His Church,

nevertheless they mustn't be diminished, they mustn't be treated in a way that doesn't give love and grace and care. And I actually think our two years conversation could give us a language of talking, so that people don't automatically just cause all kinds of.... And the other worry that I have got, if for example you have got single people, we live in a society in which immediately, they assume if you happen to be a single unmarried bishop this must be xyz, and those kind of things worry me. And people casting aspersions and assuming people's behaviour and life when actually if you dig deep deep, that is not actually what they are standing for. So I want to find a new way of speaking, a new way of understanding...

Another attack on North Belfast church

Police are treating the arson attack on a north Belfast church as a hate crime.

News Letter - Scorch damage was caused to the front door of St Mary's Star of the Sea church around 1.30am today.



A PSNI spokesman said police believe that flammable liquid was set alight causing scorch damage to the door.

“A forensic examination of the scene has taken place,” he said.

A spokesman for the Diocese of Down and Connor said the “cowardly and destructive attack on St Mary's Star of the Sea Church has left the parish priest, parishioners and wider community deeply appalled and upset”.

“This futile action is completely at variance with the very strong cross community relationships experienced by local clergy and parishioners and they have taken great consolation in receiving support from all following this attack on their place of worship,” he added.

“Such senseless actions only serve to escalate tensions at a time of the year when every effort must be made by all citizens to promote respect and peace.

“Places of worship hold deep significance for their entire community and for their congregation and they should not be targeted.

“I appeal to all who have information in relation to this attack on Star of the Sea Church to assist the PSNI with their investigations.”

North Belfast DUP MP Nigel Dodds has condemned the incident as “a senseless attack”.

He said: “Those who carried out this utterly appalling action only want to stir up tensions and cause offence. I hope everyone will be calm and there will not be a tit-for-tat response.

“Places of worship should be respected. Everyone should treat another place of worship in the way they would like theirs to be treated.

“I trust the police will fully investigate this act and any one with information will assist them in their efforts.” More at -

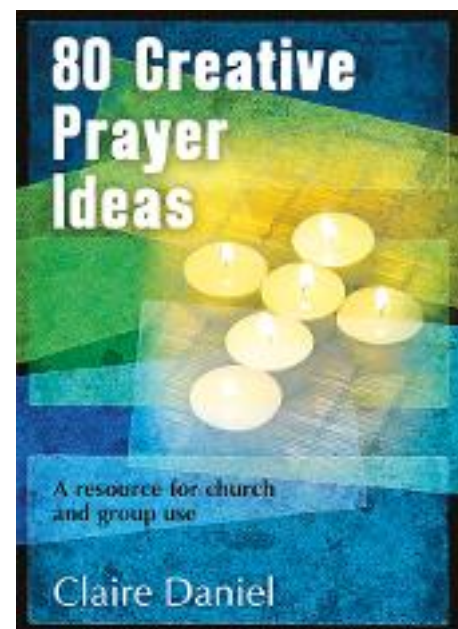
<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/co-antrim-church-damaged-in-arson-attack-1-6189347>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-28391625>

Diocese commends new guidebook and ideas for preparing and running prayer stations

The C of I diocese of Down and Dromore is over halfway through the diocese’s year of 24–7 Prayer, and it has recommended a book too help people to pray.

A spokesperson for the diocese said, “Many of us appreciate how the use of creative prayer ideas can help people experience a deeper relationship with God. Indeed, prayer stations can now be found in churches of many denominations around the UK.



“As an aid to worship and reflection, prayer stations are distinct from the other types of prayer that form people’s regular worship experience, allowing them to discover a new level of closeness and connection to God...

A wide range of ideas can be found spread across several websites for churches to begin to resource creative prayer, but, to make it simpler, creative prayer enthusiast Claire Daniel has put together a diverse collection of 80 tried-and-tested creative prayer ideas, grouped into 20 themed chapters, in her new book appropriately entitled '80 Creative Prayer Ideas'.

The prayers use the senses, tactile responses and reflective prayer to engage actively with Bible passages and themes including forgiveness, thanksgiving and renewal. Also included are prayers based specifically on the Christian calendar and the needs of our community and world.

Each idea is clearly laid out under five headings: Prayer focus, Bible reflection, What I need (to run the prayer station), Reflect (the reflection for pray-ers to consider) and Pray (the act of creative prayer).

Many of the ideas include Bible verses to be kept or objects to be created as part of the response. These keepsakes serve as visual reminders both of the things shared with God and the things he has communicated, encouraging users to continue to pray, persevering, growing and developing in the journey of faith through prayer and reflection.

[Read a sample chapter from the book here.](#)

The individual ideas are but one part of the value of this book for church leaders. Claire also includes helpful details on what is needed to create and run a prayer station event, covering furniture, lighting, sound, health and safety, required kitchen facilities and props—a complete toolkit to help reduce stress and uncertainty for the time-pressed leader.

“I hope this book will spur on leaders who want to include creative praying in church services and home groups as well as individuals who want to explore new ways of encountering God in the place of prayer. Jesus clearly showed us our responsibilities as his followers: to pray for his kingdom to come and for his will to be done in and for our families and our neighbours, in our communities, our nation and our world. Let’s use these creative methods of prayer and see where God leads us as we sense our own prayer journey developing, reaching up to God and out to those he puts on our heart to pray for and about.” Jane Holloway, World Prayer Centre, Birmingham

About the author - [Claire Daniel](#) has led creative prayer sessions for a variety of age groups at Aldridge Parish Church near Birmingham, and also for The Hothouse, a fresh expression of church and growing worshipping

community in the West Midlands. She is passionate about encouraging others to explore different ways of praying and supporting groups and churches to use creative prayer ideas in ministry.

80 Creative Prayer Ideas is available now, priced £8.99, ISBN 978 1 84101 688 7, pb, 192 pages. [Click here](#).

Equality Commission a 21st century Nero for persecuting Ashers Bakery - Sammy Wilson

It seems that the first response of many politicians when faced with a new issue or problem is to call for the setting up of a commission.

Sammy Wilson, MP writing in his regular Friday column in the News Letter - Northern Ireland is full of them, most set up since the Belfast Agreement. Apart from the fact that they are expensive (the average cost is between £8m and £10m), my real problem with them is that they add to state intervention and tend to attract those left-wing liberals who see themselves as pillars of tolerance, but many are some of the most intolerant individuals one could encounter.

In fact, I used to joke that the Alliance Party had its own version of the TV show “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire” – it was called “Who Wants To Be A Quango Chair”, because it seemed that the favourites of the public appointments body were the well-heeled, well-connected, golf club-types from Cultra who populated the ranks of the Alliance Party, and of course they were nice middle-class, tolerant types!

One only has to look at the decisions of the Parades Commission, whose chairman up until this year was a former Alliance [councillor](#), and the amazing decision by the Equality Commission to prosecute the Christian owners of Ashers Bakery to see how tolerant these organisations are.

The Parades Commission has consistently rewarded violent republican protestors whilst banning peaceful Orange parades.

When republicans threatened violence as they did in north Belfast, if the Parades Commission did not do their bidding, it didn't take much persuasion for the Parades Commission to fall back to its default position, which is “if in doubt ban the Prods!”.

The organisation which ordered the cake has denied that this was a set up of Ashers Bakery, a Christian-owned [business](#). But even so, the Equality Commission's willingness to race to the aid of this homosexual group speaks

volumes about the inbuilt bias of this body.

This will be the eighteenth sexual orientation case the Equality Commission has taken up since 2008 but, despite increasing discrimination against Christians in the workplace and elsewhere, it has yet to take up cudgels on behalf of Christians.



Ashers Bakery refused to make a cake with a pro-gay marriage message.

Now the Equality Commission has decided that its role goes further than representing people who feel discriminated against. It has now become the blunt instrument of the thought police, bludgeoning into submission those who dare to deviate from the politically correct speech and behaviour demanded by the intolerant liberal elite who seem to hate everything that Christians stand for.

This might seem very strong language but believe me the fanatical liberals in our society can be vicious when crossed. Even I was surprised by some of the letters I received after using this column to defend the rights of Christians to speak out on political and moral issues such as worldwide religious persecution of Christians in Muslim countries, and the abortion and gay marriage issues in Northern Ireland.

One constituent from Whitehead described me as a “loathsome little redneck” for daring to hold such views. Neither he nor others were keen to be quoted publicly, presumably because they like to maintain the public façade of being nice, fair-minded and liberal while harbouring a bilious bigotry that would make a “redneck” blush.

This intolerance now finds its expression in bodies set up by government, peopled by left-leaning liberals who will take up the politically correct causes on behalf of their favoured minority groupings.

Let us be in no doubt about what the intention of the Equality Commission in this case is. It is determined to make the owners of this Christian-owned business conform to its view of life.

In Roman times Nero threw Christians who would not conform into the Colosseum to be eaten by the lions. The modern-day Neros want to throw them into the courts, to be savaged by the lawyers.

Let us be clear about the case which is now threatened against Ashers Bakery. It is not that they refused to sell goods to a gay couple, merely that they refused to promote a message advocating gay marriage.

The question that needs to be asked is whether the Equality Commission would have been as quick to jump to the defence of the British National Party if a printer from an ethnic minority group had refused to print literature he regarded as racist. I doubt it and I wouldn't expect them to either.

There are three responses which I can think of in relation to this case. First of all, the £10m budget of the Equality Commission must be looked at. During times of austerity, when schools and hospitals are in dire need of money, can we afford a body which thinks that it is OK to use thousands of pounds to prosecute a Christian business, even if that means putting scores of jobs at risk?

Secondly, we need a conscience clause which exempts individuals from laws which interfere with their beliefs. Thirdly, the public should rally round [the business](#).

I enjoy frequent Ulster fries in their cafes. Their Madeira cakes with orange icing are a delight. Their pies are succulent. Their scones are soft and fruity, and I could go on.

The Health Minister, who continually goes on to me about healthy eating, might recommend moderation in purchases, but I am sure that he would agree with me that the best way of the public showing their contempt for the Equality Commission persecution of this business is to support Ashers with their custom.

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