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Presbyterian Women raise £1/2 million for mission



Pictured at the Annual Conference of Presbyterian Women (PW) which was held in Belfast, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, with (left) the incoming PW President, Karen Craig, who is a member of Kilfennan Presbyterian Church in Londonderry/

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Derry and the outgoing President (right) Lynda Stothers who is a member of Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church in Belfast. The organization is part of women's ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland which has 465 groups across Ireland.

Presbyterian Women (PW), a part of women's ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), has unveiled its two special projects for 2019/2020 at its annual conference, in Belfast today (9 May) and reported that last year PW Groups across Ireland raised over £500,000 (€582,000) for mission at home and overseas.

Around 1,600 women from 465 PW Groups from across the denomination, and their guests, gathered together to worship, hear from God's Word and to find out how Presbyterian Women has made a difference at home and overseas this year.

Last year's Overseas Special Project supported the work of the International Justice Ministry IJM and supported child victims of cybersex trafficking. The Home Mission Special Project supported Trinity House, PCI's residential care home in Garvagh, with a specific focus on dementia care.

Outgoing PW President, Lynda Stothers saw first-hand IJM's work in Cambodia. Talking about her visit she said, "I experienced God at work through men and women who bathe all they do in prayer, making many personal sacrifices. They are used mightily by God in amazing rescues and restorations of individuals and families who are used, abused and devalued by others."

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Talking about her year in office she said, “Serving as Presbyterian Women’s President could be summed up with one word ‘privilege’. This year I have witnessed how Presbyterian Women share in the work of mission to bring freedom and hope in Christ throughout Ireland and the world.

“I have heard many stories of how Presbyterian Women have been used by God to pray for and speak into lives of others going through difficult times, just as they prayed and supported me as I struggled with self-doubt and lack of assurance following my stroke. It has been a privilege to serve Presbyterian Women and to experience God in special ways.” Lynda said.

Through the PW’s Mission Fund, the Special Home Project for 2019/20 will support the work of the PCI’s Council for Social Witness through Thompson House, which provides supported housing for male ex-offenders; Carlisle House, a residential substance misuse treatment centre and Gray’s Court, which is a move-on supported living project. Carlisle House, for example hopes to purchase exercise equipment to aid residents’ rehabilitation.

The Special Overseas Project will support the publication in Arabic of a devotional book to help young Christian girls grow daily in their relationship with God. The initiative comes on the back of the 2018 visit to Lebanon by Presbyterian Women representatives, where they met staff from a Christian publishing house in Beirut. The publishing house is dedicated to helping Arab women find their peace in God amidst everyday life challenges.

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As well as unveiling this year's two special projects, this year's theme was also launched at the annual conference. 'Restore' focuses on Psalm 23, at the heart of which is the comforting and powerful assurance in verse 3 that 'He *restores* my soul.

Incoming President Karen Craig, who is a member of Kilfennan Presbyterian Church in Londonderry, said that she was excited by the theme and is looking forward to the next 12 months. "Our theme for this year reminds us that our God is in the business of restoration. He will and does restore our souls. Throughout the year ahead I am look forward to seeing God at work in each of our lives as His Spirit works at restoring us. So no matter where or in what circumstances we find ourselves let us look to God to restore our souls.

"I am also looking forward to having opportunities to represent PW within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and further afield and also to be a support and encouragement to the individual women and groups with whom I meet. Being involved in PW for many years has been a great privilege for me, especially working alongside women who serve their Lord with faithfulness and courage, who grow together, share with each other and support one another in all aspects of life. As we do this, we are able to develop relationships which enable us to strive to be Disciples of Christ," she said.

One of the invited guests was Presbyterian Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen who praised the work of Presbyterian Women. "Throughout my year in office, going around the denomination, I have met all kinds of people

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doing so many wonderful things in the name of Jesus. It has really shown me that there is such a tremendous heart in our Church.

“That certainly goes for the PW Groups who contribute so much to the life, ministry and work of our local congregations, disciplining and building relationships. Their commitment to mission, at home and overseas, is wholly commendable and carries with it the undoubted love of God as He grows and nurtures His Kingdom.”

Peter Weil to keep quiet for Belfast Central Mission flagship Copelands project

A Belfast Central Missions board member is to keep schtum for a full 24 hours to raise funds for Copelands, the organisation's flagship project on the Co. Down coastline.

A BCM Board member is to keep schtum for a full 24 hours to raise funds for Copelands, the organisation's flagship project on the Co. Down coastline.

Notorious chatterbox Peter Weil from Helen's Bay has been on the Board of BCM (Belfast Central Mission) since January and has been inspired by the fantastic work carried out by the various projects across Northern Ireland. So much so, he has vowed to say nothing for a full 24-hour period.

Peter said; “I am slightly nervous as those who know me will attest to the fact that I barely stay quiet for five minutes,

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never mind a full 24 hours! I am hoping my friends and family, former teachers and colleagues will rally behind my effort, otherwise I am not sure how I will manage!"



Pictured launching the sponsored silence at the Grand Central Hotel are Deputy General Manager Deborah Galloway, Peter Weil and BCM Chief Executive Nicky Conway.

All funds raised will support the build and fit out of Copelands, the major investment by BCM to provide practice-leading residential, nursing and dementia care for up to 60 residents at its unrivalled location nestled between the Irish Sea and the rolling Co. Down countryside.

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BCM Chief Executive, Nicky Conway, said; “We think this is a brilliant idea from a member of our Board. Former broadcaster Peter, who has also been a marketer, lecturer, politico and communications professional, certainly knows how to talk – it’s the getting him to stop that is the issue!

“Hopefully, those who know him and have experienced his innate gift of the gab will dig deep to support his efforts and the Copelands project as the build continues apace.”

Peter’s 24 hour sponsored silence will begin at 9am on Friday, 24th May to coincide with Dementia Awareness Week, and take place in the controlled environment of a room at the Linen Quarter’s landmark Grand Central Hotel, which is kindly being sponsored by The Hastings Group.

Deborah Galloway, Deputy General Manager at the Grand Central Hotel, said; “The Hastings Group is delighted to be partnering with BCM for this fun and worthwhile endeavour. Having met Peter, we can appreciate his enthusiasm and dedication to the cause, and why BCM is getting behind it so fervently!

“As a fellow Linen Quarter resident, we are especially delighted to be supporting BCM during its 130th year. Having been a pivotal presence for the local community for generations, we hope to emulate its successes with the Grand Central Hotel continuing to prove a landmark for residents and visitors to this historic part of the city centre for years to come.”

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BCM is celebrating its 130th anniversary in 2019 with a series of fundraising efforts and initiatives to continue the life changing – and often lifesaving – work of its various projects across communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Kirk moderator urges voters to take part in European elections "whatever the future holds"

The Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Susan Brown, has urged voters to take part in the upcoming European Elections on Thursday 23 May "whatever the future holds".



In a message sent to ministers, Rt Rev Susan Brown said: "As the European Elections approach there will be mixed emotions within our communities given the uncertainty of the UK's position within the European Union.

"Whatever the future holds politically however, we will remain, geographically, a part of the continent of Europe

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and we need still, to give the issues facing this part of the world, careful consideration.

"These elections provide the vital opportunity for conversations and discussions to take place around the challenges and dreams we all have across borders and they will help to shape our thoughts on the kind of Europe we want to live in both now and in the decades to come."

The Church of Scotland has previously spoken out against a possible no-deal Brexit outcome.

Research and Resource Development Officer for the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office Irene Mackinnon said: "The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) has produced a resource for churches and church groups that they can use in the lead up to the European Parliament Elections on Thursday May 23.

"We would encourage congregations to vote in these elections to select people that will represent Scotland in the European Parliament.

"This resource can be used to facilitate conversations among church groups that may help in making these decisions, and we hope that it will be useful."

Popular Rector of Clonard prepares to bid emotional farewell

A popular priest who is preparing to leave his senior role at Clonard in west Belfast has told how he hopes the iconic

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monastery and church will continue to be a "place of dialogue, hospitality and of risk-taking".

Fr Noel Kehoe, who has been Rector of Clonard since April 2015, said there is a "touch of sadness" as he approaches his final days at an "amazing place".

On arriving to take up the post, Fr Noel was the youngest member of the Redemptorist community at Clonard.

Now four years on, the 46-year-old Newry man is moving to Dundalk to take up the role of Administrator and Rector at St Joseph's Parish.

Fr Kehoe said his time at Clonard had changed him, describing it as a "significant training ground".

"I didn't really know Clonard before I came here, I thought I did," he said.

"Clonard is very famous but I'd never been based here before and one of the things that struck me was the dedication and commitment of so many people to the mission of Clonard.

"At times I'm really stunned at the goodness of people to members of the community, to myself personally, to different things and initiatives - people just went with them. The absolute commitment and the investment that people have in what Clonard is and what it stands for, its role in the wider community as a very significant spiritual home for many people."

Highlights from the past four years include the "joy and sense of goodwill" of the Christmas Masses at Clonard -

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attended by up to 9,000 people - as well as the generosity of those who support its activities.

[Read More: New App launched ahead of annual Clonard Novena](#)

Clonard Rector Fr Noel Kehoe: All welcome on day one of the annual Clonard Novena in west Belfast

The Redemptorist said he was particularly moved when more than £70,000 was raised inside a week for a Syrian appeal and the response to the crib fundraising initiative, which supported several charities.

"You see it, you put it out there and people are just so unbelievably generous," he said.

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"To me, it's not about the money, this is about people putting their faith into action, showing a deep concern.

"Clonard is a very significant platform in the Irish Church and we as the community and the co-workers and the team that work here, we can choose whether to use that platform for good and I think that's what we've tried to do over the last number of years. We use that profile to raise awareness over any justice issues both at home and abroad.

"I think life for everybody can be very difficult at times. When we use this profile to highlight what is going on in the world, you can develop this sense of solidarity."

The Co Down man said his time at Clonard has also had its challenges.

"One of the first great challenges for me was fairly early on when Fr Gerry Reynolds died," he said.

"That was a moment of real privilege of being with him as he died in the hospital, and a sense of that you have lived with a really good man, we lived in the midst of a mystic.

"What Fr Gerry Reynolds was, in many respects, (was) the memory of Clonard, he knew families going back, he had been here so long.

"I found that a huge challenge. How could you preserve the really important ministry of peace and reconciliation which is going to be one of the most important ministries we have moving into the future. Losing one of the great spiritual figures of Clonard, his great sense of community and friendship."

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Fr Noel also spoke of the difficulty of seeing his Redemptorist friend Fr Michael Dempsey suffering a very serious and rare form of MS.

The popular 50-year-old became ill in August 2016 and been hospitalised ever since.

"Michael had just moved back from Mozambique," he said.

"When he came back, he was finding his feet again and had been here at Clonard. I invited him at that stage to consider the chaplaincy (at the Royal Victoria Hospital) because Michael had been a children's nurse.

"Michel had really found his niche. He thrived with working in the hospital.

"Michael was my class mate. We joined the Redemptorists the same day. Even though our lives and ministries went to very different places, we found ourselves here. There's a connection you have with the people you journeyed with. That really deeply affected me."

Looking towards the future, Fr Noel said he and the team at Clonard have been working to "develop a strategic direction".

"Things have to change," he said.

"Clonard is a very significant place and it has played a really important role in both the faith and social life of the community. There's no getting away from the fact that the number of Redemptorists is diminishing.

"How do we still offer quality service of ministry here in Clonard with an ageing community?

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"We have to prepare for the future and put structures in place."

Fr Noel said the Redemptorists, having worked all over the world, have seen "other models of the church that are sustainable and sometimes even more alive".

"That means we recognise the role of lay people by right of their baptism to also fulfil their call to be in ministry.

"Planning how can we maintain a good quality religious ministry here with five active Redemptorists and lay people working in complete partnership in ministry."

One change that has "worked extremely well" was the appointment of Tom Brady as church manager, a role traditionally held by a Redemptorist.

"We have different people working in youth ministry, ministries that are now at the core and the centre of what Clonard is to be in the future. We appointed a church ministry team... all roles that traditionally would have been held by Redemptorists.

"That's the vision for planning for the future."

Fr Noel said the news from the Provincial Council that he was to be moved came as a surprise.

"It has taken me a little time to get my head around it. It wouldn't be unfair to say that I got a bit emotional.

"Clonard is an amazing place. It is also a very challenging place and when it comes to the moment you are asked to leave, you find you are much more emotionally attached to the people, the place and its mission."

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Fr Noel will preach for the final time at Clonard on Sunday and Fr Peter Burns will be officially installed as the new rector on Sunday May 18.

He will then be installed as the new Administrator and Rector of St Joseph's in Dundalk on Sunday May 25.

As he prepares to leave, Fr Noel said there is some sadness especially for "the people I work with most closely".

"My experience of people from Clonard is they say what they mean, there's a huge generosity, they would give you the shirt off their back, and if they don't like what you are doing, they let you know. That all makes for an attachment that you are not even aware of until you find out you are leaving.

"I really do have a real sense of gratitude to God. I never expected to come to Clonard, it wasn't on my 'to-do' list. It has changed me."

He added: "My hope for Clonard is that it doesn't get caught up in the glory of the past but it continues to chip away at the mission that has always been central to Clonard.

"Peace and reconciliation is an issue, much work still needs to be done in the wider community and my hope is it will continue to be that place of dialogue, of hospitality and of risk-taking that it's always been."

Today in Christian history

May 10, 1310: In Paris, 54 Knights Templar are burned alive. The Catholic Church created the Templars to protect Holy Land pilgrims from bandits, but the Knights' quick rise

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in power and wealth made them unpopular. Philip the Fair of France against them trumped up charges of blasphemy and homosexuality to convince Pope Clement to disband the order and persecute its members.

May 10, 1886: Karl Barth, the most important theologian of the twentieth century and opponent of theological liberalism and political fascism (especially under Hitler), is born in Basel, Switzerland. When asked in 1962 (on his one visit to America) how he would summarize the essence of the millions of words he had published, he replied, "Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so".

News briefs

+++ Cork IDAHO Sservice - Once again this year, IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia) will be marked at the 10.15am service in St. Anne's Church, Shandon in Cork on Sunday next (12th May). The Service will be led by the Rector, the Reverend Sarah Marry, and all are welcome to attend.

Choral Con Fusion Choir from Cork will be present to sing. (Photo above of a previous service).

The theme this year is 'Allies for Inclusion' and is borrowed from this year's Cork City LGBTI+ Awareness Week which

will be launched on Monday 13th May at Cork City Hall and run until 19th May. The speaker at the Service, Sara-Jane Cromwell, will tell something of her story reflecting on what it has been like for her with and without allies. Sara-Jane was diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria and completed gender reassignment in 2015. She is the co-founder and Chair of TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland), CEO

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of GIDI (Gender Identity Disorder Ireland) and author of 'Becoming Myself' and 'Wrong Body, Wrong Life'.

+++The President's week - The President of the Irish Methodist Church, Rev Billy Davison, has the following engagements next week -
Sunday 12th: Craigyhill, Larne 50th Anniversary Service am. Ballymoney pm.
Monday 13th: Meetings Belfast
Tuesday 14th: Honorary Awards Ceremony, Belfast
Wednesday 15th: Balmoral Show Methodist Stand & North East prayer beacon Glengormley 7:30pm
Thursday 16th: Church of Ireland - The General Synod in Millennium Forum, Derry/ Londonderry
Friday 17th: Church of Ireland - The General Synod
Saturday 18th: Church of Ireland - The General Synod.

+++Music at St Columb's, Derry - This Sunday at 11.00am a service of Choral Matins with music by John Ireland (Te Deum in F) and Philip Stopford (O thou who camest from above). Then at 4.00pm there is a special order of service in place of normal Choral Evensong. On Thursday at 10am, a Choral Eucharist, sung by the Cathedral Choir as the opening service of the General Synod. Music includes Richard Shephard's 'Wiltshire Service' and César Franck's 'Panis Angelicus'. All are welcome.

+++Teaching vacancy in Kilkenny - Head of Butler House, Boys Boarding Forms 1–5 (Residential by Licence) – Kilkenny College: The Board of Directors of Kilkenny College, a Co-Educational Boarding and Day School with a

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Church of Ireland Ethos seek applications from suitably qualified candidates for the following position:

Head of Butler House Boys Boarding Forms 1–5

(Residential by Licence). This is a Senior Position with overall leadership responsibility for 200 Boarder Boys, Leadership of the Boarding House Team and Reporting to the Senior Management Team. Applicants will be likely to have previous experience in a boarding / residential work setting.

Application requirements :–

- * Letter of Application
- * Current C.V.
- * Proof of relevant qualifications
- * Two named references

Full Job Description available at
doloresdowling@kilkennycollege.ie

The closing date for receipt of application is: 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, 23rd May 2019.

Addressed to: Mr. Simon Thompson, Headmaster /
Principal, Kilkenny College, Castlecomer Road,
Kilkenny R95 CF61

+++ICC Finance and Administration Assistant position –

The Irish Council of Churches wishes to appoint a Finance and Administration Assistant. The successful candidate will have a key role in the administration of small payroll pensions and all submissions to Revenue in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, book-keeping (SAGE) and maintaining of financial records in line with best practice. Also, providing financial information as required to support financial planning and assisting the Treasurer and General Secretary in preparation of budgets. Together with

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our part-time Communications and Administration Assistant he/she will share the administration of the organisation, ensuring the office is covered at all times, often being the first point of contact for our members, partners and the general public.

The Finance and Administration Assistant will be a vital member of a small team providing key support to the General Secretary in our Belfast headquarters and financial administration for the Programme Officer, based in Dublin.

The Job Description can be found at - [https://
www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Fin-Admin-Job-Desc-2019.pdf](https://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Fin-Admin-Job-Desc-2019.pdf)

The Personnel Specification can be found at [https://
www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Fin-Admin-Pers-Spec.pdf](https://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Fin-Admin-Pers-Spec.pdf)

The Application pack can be downloaded at [https://
www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Finance-Administration-Assistant-Application-Pack.pdf](https://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/Finance-Administration-Assistant-Application-Pack.pdf)

Please note ICC cannot accept CVs.

The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Monday 17th June

+++Volunteers wanted for CIYD cafe at Summer

Madness - The Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) Connect Café for leaders at Summer Madness provides tea, coffee, hot chocolate, fluffy scones and sticky tray bakes on offer in the Café. The venue also facilitates plenty of good conversations, networking and space for leaders to 'escape' the rest of the event.

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Come and join our great team – hard work but very rewarding 😊 (if you can't make it this year please pass this info on to any over 18's that you think may be interested 😊)

<https://coiyouth.wufoo.com/forms/s1fzpciw1fozext>

+++ Please pray for - Maridi Diocese in South Sudan. Pray for Bishop Moses who attended the new bishops training event in Canterbury in February and asked us for prayer for wisdom to lead the diocese. Pray for his ministry and all the clergy in Maridi – that they would know God's blessing in all they do.

+++ Food for thought - Christianity isn't meant to simply be believed; it's meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. ... Try as I may, I can't be a Christian on my own. I need a community. I need the church." – Rachel Held Evans, in "Searching for Sunday"

+ Please share CNI with your friends
www.churchnewsireland.org

