

## **Fresh call by church to save Chinook disaster record**



**The memorial cairn in memory of the 29 people who died in the helicopter crash on the Mull of Kintyre.**

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The Church of Scotland has issued a fresh call on the Ministry of Defence not to destroy records relating to a RAF helicopter disaster 25 years ago.

The General Assembly unanimously backed a motion calling for all documents relating to the Chinook helicopter crash on the Mull of Kintyre on June 2, 1994 to be “kept in a safe place and not deleted”.

A total of 29 people died after the aircraft, which was on its way from RAF Aldergrove near Belfast to Inverness, crashed in a ball of flames.

Very Rev Dr Alan McDonald told the General Assembly that the Ministry of Defence had confirmed that records closed in 1995 and 1996 “will be reviewed for release or alternative disposal this year”.

The pilots, Flt Lts Jonathan Tapper and Richard Cook, were accused of gross negligence over the crash.

In 2003, the General Assembly called on the Ministry of Defence to “revisit” the tragedy while Jonathan Tapper’s father, Michael, watched from the public gallery.

Dr McDonald, who was convener of the Church and Nation committee at the time, said the families of the victims felt “encouraged and supported” after the Kirk took up their case.

A fresh review was ordered and in 2011 found that the pilots should not have been blamed and the earlier ruling was set aside.

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## Dr McDonald

But David Hill, a retired MOD helicopter engineer and Dr Susan Phoenix, whose husband RUC Det Supt Ian Phoenix, was killed, recently said the review had no remit to inquire into the actual cause of the crash.

Dr McDonald, who lives in Cromarty in the Highlands, told the General Assembly that the response from the church on Mull of Kintyre and nationally was “much, much appreciated” by the families.

“It is widely recognised that this friendship and wider pastoral care has continued over the past 25 year,” he added.

“It has helped to offer strength and encouragement, no more so when the General Assembly of 2003 unanimously approved a deliverance supporting the families.

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“Family members were present on that occasion and were so grateful that the Church had heard their voices at a time when they thought they had been forgotten by everyone.

“As we approach the 25th anniversary, I am sure those families would want to know that we still keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

“The Ministry of Defence is reviewing the records of the accident on the Mull of Kintyre, whether they should be retained or deleted.

“The families are once more feeling very vulnerable and their voices are being ignored again.

“Because of everything that has happened to them over the years, the families simply do not want these records to be deleted.

“Their preference is that the records are kept in a safe place where they can be easily assessed from now on.”

Dr McDonald, who was Moderator in 2006-07 and used to lead St Leonard’s Parish Church in St Andrews in Fife, said family members have expressed a hope that the Church of Scotland will “once again” speak out for them.

“They believe that we will do this because the Church of Scotland was there on the Mull of Kintyre when the families could not be there,” he added.

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## *Constant companion*

Dr Alison Elliot, the first female Moderator of the General Assembly, spoke out in support for the call.

She took part in a memorial service on Mull of Kintyre in 2004 to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crash.

Dr Elliot said there was still a question mark over the circumstances of the accident that has never been satisfactorily resolved.

She said it is a “constant companion” for the victim’s families.

Dr Elliot said: “For their sake and ours too, it is important to preserve the records that we have.”

Rev Dr Richard Frazer, convener of the Church and Society Council, said members “whole heartedly” support the call.

Recalling the General Assembly debate in 2003, he said: “There was an enormous amount of pressure by the Ministry of Defence at the time, suggesting that our persistence in pursuing the truth of this was only extending and exacerbating the grief of families.

“The way in which the Church has stood by these families is a cause to be proud and grateful.”



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## Prince Charles meets Kinder survivor during Belfast Synagogue visit



**HRH The Prince of Wales meets Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis as he arrives at the Belfast Hebrew Congregation.**

Prince Charles used his official visit to Northern Ireland this week to call in on Belfast's Jewish community, where he met an 82-year old woman who came to the UK on the Kindertransport.

Ruth Kohner told the Prince of Wales how she escaped from Czechoslovakia in 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, as he visited the synagogue in north Belfast.



**Ruth Kohner, 82, who was part of the Kindertransport in 1939, met the Prince of Wales during his visit to Belfast Synagogue.**

“It saved our lives,” said Kohner about the Kindertransport rescue effort which brought 10,000 Jewish children to the UK by train in the months leading up to war.

“It must have been very difficult for my parents, who had travelled ten days by train, to bring me and my sister to escape, but they saved our lives.”

Kohner spent the war at a farm in Millisle, near Belfast, along with other rescued children, and went on to run a family clothing business, but said her father lost many relatives in the Holocaust, including his own mother, who he had to leave behind.



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The heir to the throne has been a longstanding friend of the UK's Jewish community and takes a personal interest in Holocaust education. In November, he attended a reception for the Association of Jewish Refugees, marking the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport, where Holocaust survivors sang 'Happy Birthday' to him.

While Charles met the Jewish community, the Duchess of Cornwall visited a homeless charity complex beside a section of Belfast's longest peace wall which divides the mainly Unionist/Loyalist lower Shankill Road from the mainly Nationalist/Republican Falls Road.

## **Dublin joining in the Thy Kingdom Come Global Wave of Prayer**

Archbishop Michael Jackson is encouraging the clergy and people of Dublin & Glendalough to join a global wave of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus Christ. Thy Kingdom Come will light up the world in prayer from May 30 to June 9 2019.

Thy Kingdom Come began in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England. Since then it has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, pray for God's spirit to work in the lives of those they know and come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer.



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The Archbishop has been contacted by the Very Revd Robert Key, Anglican Communion Lead for Thy Kingdom Come. Dean Key is asking that clergy and lay leaders engage with the initiative by visiting the Thy Kingdom Come website **[www.thykingdomcome.global](http://www.thykingdomcome.global)** and registering to pray. He is also encouraging them to incorporate Thy Kingdom Come into their services for Ascension and Pentecost.

There are many resources on the Thy Kingdom Come website.

## **Polish bishops address clerical abuse crisis in letter to the faithful**

The Permanent Council of the Polish Bishops' Conference is meeting this week to confront the problem of the clerical abuse of minors.

In a letter to be read in churches throughout the country this coming weekend, Poland's Bishops admit that "as



## **Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, President of the Polish Episcopal Conference**

shepherds of the Church, we did not do everything to prevent harm.”

“There are no words to express our shame at the sexual scandals involving priests”, the Bishops say. “They are a cause of great scandal and demand total condemnation, as well as severe consequences for the perpetrators, and for those who conceal such acts.”

The Permanent Council for the Polish Bishops’ Conference was convened this week by the President of the Conference, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki in response to recent public revelations of the extent of abuse and cover-up in the Polish Church.

The main goal of the Bishops, according to Archbishop Wojciech Polak, the Primate of Poland, “is to review the

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effectiveness of procedures as soon as possible, so that the shortcomings that have appeared... may be amended.”

Archbishop Polak, who is also the Delegate for the Protection of Minors and Young People for the Polish episcopate, said the Bishops intend to establish a working group to assist in the implementation of the procedures concerning abuse cases, which were mandated by Pope Francis in the motu proprio *Vos estis* earlier this month.

In their letter to the faithful, Poland’s Bishops acknowledge that the recent revelations about abuse in their country have tried the faith of many people, and have caused great scandal. “Together with all people of good will,” they say, “we unite our efforts to identify and eliminate the factors that contribute to this crime.”

The Bishops conclude their letter by entrusting all those who have been harmed to the “power of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church” and praying for “the spirit of humility and courage, so as not to be overcome by evil; but rather to care for all.”

## **Today in Christian history**

**May 24, 1089 (traditional date):** Archbishop of Canterbury, scholar, and church reformer Lanfranc dies. Known primarily for his development of the doctrine of transubstantiation, in which the eucharistic bread and wine become Christ's body and blood, he also educated brilliant scholar Anselm and future pope Alexander II.

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**May 24, 1543:** Polish astronomer and cleric Nicolas Copernicus dies in Poland. His heliocentric (sun-centered) concept of the solar system was radical, though not unheard of before his time. Still, some theologians strongly criticized the theory. The Roman Catholic church never ordained Copernicus, but he participated in a religious community at the cathedral of Frauenburg.

**May 24, 1689:** Parliament passes England's Toleration Act, granting freedom of worship to Dissenters (non-Anglican Protestants). but not to Catholics and atheists.

**May 24, 1738:** Father of Methodism John Wesley feels his "heart strangely warmed" when he hears a reading of the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans at London's Aldersgate Chapel.

**May 24, 1844:** Samuel Morse sends the first long-distance telegraph message: "What hath God wrought."

**May 24, 1854:** Presbyterians found the first black college in the United States: Pennsylvania's Lincoln University.

**May 24, 1878:** [Harry Emerson Fosdick](#), popular champion of liberal Christianity and often called "the most influential interpreter of religion to his generation," is born.

## **News briefs**

**+++ Festival Brass comes to Coleraine with Ceara Grehan** - On Saturday 1st June at 7.30pm the outstanding Festival Brass is at the Riverside Theatre Coleraine. The band has a wide repertoire of classical and modern music having entertained large audiences throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom. They are conducted by Alan Corry brother of the famous Peter Corry. Ceara Grehan one of  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)



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Northern Ireland's leading theatrical and opera singers will contribute to what will be a great night of music. The concert compère is Wilfred Piper M.B.E. All proceeds are in aid of Portstewart Methodist Church Building Fund. Tickets are available at £15.00 from the Riverside Theatre and online.



## Ian Knox in the Irish News

**+++Bishop's last diocesan council meeting** - Bishop Ken Good's retirement moved a step closer this week when he chaired his last meeting of the Diocesan Council. Afterwards, members walked to a nearby hotel for lunch, at which they were joined by Mrs Mary Good and a number of the Diocesan staff.

The group was addressed by William Oliver on behalf of the Honorary Secretaries and Archdeacon David Huss on

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behalf of the clergy. Both thanked the Bishop for his leadership of the Diocese over the last 17 years and complimented him on his skilful chairmanship of Diocesan Council meetings.

In reply, Bishop Good thanked the Honorary Secretaries, Council members, clergy, Diocesan staff and – most of all – his wife Mary for their support during his episcopal ministry.

**+++ Presbyterian Women's Special Home Project for 2018-19** - was to support the work of PCI's newest residential care home, Trinity House in Garvagh.

PW giving is helping to provide specialist dementia care training for staff, and work has begun on the conversion of a caravan which will provide an outside tea room for residents to enjoy.

Member's donations have also been used to help provide specialist equipment for dementia care residents, including the Tovertafel Table which aims to break through apathy by stimulating both physical and cognitive activity, and encourages social interaction too.

**+++ Coffee morning for Cancer Focus** - The Controlled Schools' Support Council raised £182 for Cancer Focus NI at its coffee morning in Stranmillis University College on Wednesday (22 May), which brings the total raised by the Council to date to over £2,000. Funds are being raised in memory of the Council's former Head of Corporate Services, Pearse McCormick. The Transferor

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Representatives' Council contributed £100 to the fundraising efforts throughout the last year.

## **News Links May 24**

### [In Pictures: Royal visit round-up. All the best images from the visit by The Prince of Wales and the ...](#)

Belfast Newsletter

Press Eye - Belfast - Northern **Ireland** - 22nd May 2019 - 'The Prince of Wales is pictured at St Patrick's Roman Catholic **Church** in Armagh with ...

### [Royal visit: Charles and Camilla in Belfast and Armagh](#)

BBC News

Prince Charles also visited Armagh Cathedral, where he was greeted by Catholic Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and **Church of Ireland** ...

[Charles's visit to NI 'a challenge to dissident republicans' - shropshirestar.com](#)

[Stout will spoil cup of tea, jokes Charles during Belfast visit - shropshirestar.com](#)

[Prince Charles referees 'symbolic match' between young rugby and Gaelic players in Armagh](#) - Armagh i

[Full Coverage](#)

### [Welcome for Charles 'shows that Northern \*\*Ireland\*\* wants to move on'](#)

Belfast Telegraph

The head of the Catholic **Church in Ireland** has told dissident republicans that Prince Charles' visit to Northern Ireland is a clear message that the ...

### [Bishop Good warns needle of the education crisis dial 'in red zone'](#)

Derry Journal

In his last ever address to the General Synod of the **Church of Ireland** as a bishop on Sunday, Bishop Good said an entire "generation of young ...

### [Belfast MP Robinson among 200 politicians calling for fossil fuel-free pensions](#)

Belfast Telegraph

If successful, the campaign would see Parliament joining investors such as the **Church of Ireland** and Queen's University Belfast in committing to fossil ...

## **News Briefing: from Britain and Ireland**

The Tablet

Gay couples should be allowed to marry in Methodist **churches**, according to a report released ahead of this summer's Methodist **Church** Conference.

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[Knock Marriage Introductions has served its time says director](#)

The Irish Catholic

Have you heard the **news**? ... Only those 'free to marry' in the **Church** (single, not previously married in **Church** or with **Church** annulments) could use ...

[Irish Bishop: Vote for common good and core values](#)

Vatican News

Speaking to Vatican **News**, the Bishop says in these European elections it's important to be informed about what the candidate actually stands for.

[Info board puts historic Urglin church on the map](#)

The Nationalist

The board details the history of this **Church of Ireland** chapel, its connection with the Duckett family of Duckett's Grove and its nearby Urglin Centre, ...

[Ugandan children's choir guests of honour at top UK school](#)

[pmldaily.com](#)

Ugandan children's **choir** guests of honour at top UK school ... Children from the Ugandan charity **choir** made new friends and took part in a series of ... the UK and Northern **Ireland** to help raise funds and awareness of Abaana, a Christian charity that supports children in Uganda ... Features. 39. **NEWS** ...

[Abolishing the priesthood will not save the Catholic Church](#)

National Catholic Reporter

Carroll was scandalized by Francis' claim during his August 2018 visit to **Ireland** that until then he knew nothing about the Magdalene laundries or ...

[Former Bishop of Chester may have sexually abused 19 children and adults](#)

Cheshire Live

These details were released as it was announced retired judge, His Hon David Pearl, had been appointed by the **Church of England's** National ...

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