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Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, with new Chapter member, the Rev Canon Kevin Graham who was installed at Evensong on Sunday past

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Rousing send-off for Bishop Ken and Mary at Guildhall Songs of Praise event

There was a standing ovation for Bishop Ken Good and his wife Mary at the end of Saturday evening's Songs of Praise Event, 'To God Be the Glory', in Londonderry Guildhall. Clergy and parishioners from throughout the diocese gathered to give thanks to God for Bishop Ken and Mary and for their ministry in both church and community.

The celebration – which was hosted by Paul Clark from UTV – was the penultimate public event of the Goods' joint ministry. The new Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District, Cllr Michaela Boyle and her husband, Paul, were among those in the congregation. Also present were Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the County Borough of Londonderry, Dr Angela Garvey and her husband Gerard, the Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, and the former Methodist President Rev Peter Murray.

The Guildhall event was a significant family occasion for Bishop Ken and Mary, with their three children all present, many of their grandchildren, and two of the Bishop's brothers. For many in the audience, the highlights were the couple's two separate interviews when they joined the host on stage to talk about their time in the Diocese.

There was a strong musical element to the evening. The audience enjoyed a number of rousing performances by soloists Joanna Higgins and Margaret Keys, and joined the choirs of St Eugene's and St Columb's Cathedrals, and Altnagelvin Hospital choir, in singing a number of hymns



chosen by the Goods because of their personal significance. A brass quintet provided musical accompaniment. The organist was Nicky Morton and the conductor was Derek Collins.

The evening ended with Paul Clark evoking Matthew's Gospel to congratulate Bishop Ken, telling him, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The last event of the Bishop's ministry will be an Ascension Day Service of Holy Communion at Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, in Raphoe, on Thursday evening. The Bishop will preside at the Holy Communion Service and his brother-in-law Bishop Ken Clarke will be the preacher.

Gospel of Inclusion focus of Dublin event

Pastor and public theologian Rev Brandan Robertson contends that the Christian gospel calls the Church to

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deconstruct oppressive systems & structures and to celebrate the full spectrum of human diversity as a reflection of God's creative intention.

He is the speaker at an event in Dublin's Mercy International Centre, 64 Baggot Street Lower. For details see eventbrite.

Reverend Brandan Robertson is a noted author, activist, and pastor, working at the intersections of spirituality and social renewal. Named by the Human Rights Campaign as one of the top faith-leaders leading the fight for human rights, Robertson has worked with political and social leaders around the world to end conversion therapy and promote LGBT+ rights.

Robertson speaks to audiences across the globe and has been an honored speaker at renowned institutions like The White House, Oxford University, The U.S. Peace Corps Headquarters, and The Parliament of the World's Religions.

Rev. Brandan Robertson's talk will be followed by a Q & A where he will be joined by with Rev Rich McCullen Brandan Robertson will also be signing of his new book "The Gospel of Inclusion" which will be on sale at the meeting.

Iraqi Christianity May Soon Be Persecuted to Its End, Archbishop Warns

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda of Iraq is warning that Christianity in his country is close to disappearing.

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“One of the oldest Churches, if not the oldest Church in the world, is perilously close to extinction. Those of us who remain must be ready to face martyrdom,” Archbishop Warda, a Chaldean Catholic cleric who’s archbishop of Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, said in a recent address in London to Christian British lawmakers.

The picture for Christianity is mixed in the Middle East. In February, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass in the United Arab Emirates that drew 135,000 migrant Catholics. In Saudi Arabia, the first Christian Mass was allowed this past December. But Christians in Iraq have faced more than 1,400 years of religious persecution.

The long-standing abuse is culminating in a rapid decline, signalling a possible end to Catholicism in the majority-Muslim nation, BBC News reported on its website on May 23.

Since the United States invaded the country in 2003 to oust then-dictator Saddam Hussein, Archbishop Warda has seen the Christian community decline from 1.5 million members to 250,000 now. He attributes the drop to the presence of ISIS in Iraq. He cited one ISIS attack in 2014 that resulted in the displacement of more than 125,000 Christians.

“Our tormentors confiscated our present,” he said in London, according to the BBC report, “while seeking to wipe out our history and destroy our future. In Iraq there is no redress for those who have lost properties, homes and businesses. Tens of thousands of Christians have nothing to show for their life’s work, for generations of work, in places

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where their families have lived, maybe, for thousands of years.”

While jihadists have continued to be expelled from cities in the Middle East, in the process Christian churches, monasteries and homes have been targeted and destroyed, driving families out of Iraq in droves

Churches damaged by lead thieves targeting roofs

Two churches have been targeted by thieves looking for lead from their roofs.

St Patrick's Church of Ireland at Cairncastle and the St John the Evangelist Catholic Church at nearby Carnlough were both damaged in the incidents.

It is understood the thieves were unsuccessful in removing lead from St John the Evangelist Church, but did manage to take lead from St Patrick's.

Minister at St Patrick's, Philip Benson described it as “hurtful” that thieves would target a church.

He added: “Obviously in the process of taking the lead there's been quite significant damage to the roof and to lightening rods. This is somewhere where the community comes to baptisms, wedding, funerals so it's central to the community and quite sad that this should happen.

“But we are on a rural road where there's not much traffic so perhaps were seen as an easy target.”

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Rev. Benson said that they have not yet got estimates for the repair bill, but believes it could be around £2,000.

In a post on [PSNI](#) Larne's Facebook page, they said "considerable damage was caused by the thieves when they unsuccessfully tried to remove lead trim from around the perimeter of the church roof".

In a statement, the police said they are "appealing for information and witnesses following recent incidents at two churches which may be linked".

They said it was reported that sometime between 9pm on Tuesday, May 21 and 6am on Wednesday, May 22 "an attempt was made to remove lead from the roof of church in the Bay Road area of Carnlough".

A second report was received, they added, "that sometime between Sunday, May 19 and Thursday, May 23 lead was stolen from a church in the Ballymullock Road area of Larne". Sergeant Lander added: "Did you see anyone acting suspiciously in any of these areas? Were there any vehicles being driven in a suspicious manner? If you did, or you have any information that could assist us with our enquiries please call Larne police station on the non-emergency number 101, quoting references 252 22/05/19 and 1893 23/05/19." The police added that witnesses can also call Crimestoppers on anonymously 0800 555 111.

Today in Christian history

May 29, 1453: Constantinople, capital of Eastern Christianity since Constantine founded it in 324, falls to the

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Turks under Mehmed II, ending the Byzantine Empire. Muslims rename the city Istanbul and turn its lavish cathedral, Hagia Sophia, into a mosque.

May 29, 1546: In retaliation for the execution of Reformation preacher George Wishart, Scottish Protestants murder Cardinal David Beaton in St. Andrews. John Knox, who was not part of the assassination plot, went on to lead the Scottish Reformation.

May 29, 1660: England's King Charles II triumphantly enters London, marking the full restoration of the monarchy. Though he promised religious liberty, he cracked down on Dissenters.

May 29, 1874: English essayist, poet, and writer G.K. Chesterton is born in London. The 400-pound man was occasionally absent-minded, but brilliant. He loved paradoxes, which he called "supreme assertions of truth," and used them often in his writing. Poet T.S. Eliot credited him with doing "more than any man in his time ... to maintain the existence of the [Christian] minority in the modern world." Chesterton converted from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism in 1922 .

May 29, 1967: Pope Paul VI names 27 new cardinals, including then-archbishop of Krakow, Poland, Karol Wojtyla, later to be Pope John Paul II

News briefs

+++ Service to education recognised - The Rev Canon William Bell, retired rector of Eglantine Parish, was thanked

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for his years of service on the Board of Governors at Knockmore Primary School at a special presentation. Canon Bell retired as rector of Eglantine in April 2011 after 22 years in the parish, but remained on the Board of Governors in Knockmore until the end of 2018. He served on SEELB as a Transferor Member 2001 – 2015 EA Community Member 2015 – 2018. Other SEELB duties included the Library Sub Committee and General Purposes Sub Committee. The Rev Nicholas Dark, rector of Magheragall Parish, is Chair of the Knockmore Primary School Board of Governors. “William was involved in education for 38 years,” Nicholas said. “He was with us in Knockmore from 2001 to 2018 and it was his last post, he will continue to do assemblies. Clergy are by default Governors and some like William really give a lot.”

+++ New Camino guide by Brendan McManus SJ - “My new Camino booklet addresses the need that many Camino pilgrims feel for preparing themselves spiritually for the Camino pilgrimage. Physical exercise and preparing equipment are relatively simple and easily done, but the deeper questions of “why am I walking”, “what do I believe in” and “how do I interpret what happens on the walk”, often remain unaddressed or illusive. Many acknowledge that something special happens on the Camino but are reluctant to name it.

“Designed to fit in your pocket, this is virtually the first booklet to address this need directly, using the Ignatian method of reflecting on experience, which is enormously practical and useful. Spirituality is brought down to earth using personal anecdotes from the author’s pilgrimage experience across 20 years of walking and leading groups. The Ignatian approach is spelled out in terms of what one is

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looking for (desire), who God is (present to us in our experience), how to connect more to the divine through listening, reflection, and prayer as being 'real' with God about the struggles and joys of walking."

<https://www.messenger.ie/product/contemplating-the-camino-an-ignatian-guide/>

+++ Exhibition and sale of Revd Berni McAvoy's photography - in Sean Hollywood Arts Centre, Newry on Friday evening 31 May. All proceeds to Southern Area Hospice Services

+++ Lyra, accept responsibility for your actions - Lyra McKee's sister has offered to meet the 29-year-old journalist's killer and support him in "accepting responsibility for your actions". Nicola Corner said the unknown gunman's guilt must be as difficult to live with as her family's grief. "It is my hope that you need relief from your guilt," she said. Ms McKee was shot dead while observing rioting in Londonderry's Creggan estate on 18 April. The New IRA said its members were responsible. Mrs Corner was speaking at a peace rally in the city to mark the end of a three-day walk from Belfast to Derry in memory of Ms McKee. More than 160 walkers took part in the 70-mile (110km) walk, setting off from Belfast on Saturday and arrived in Derry city centre earlier on Monday evening.

+++Alexa, put me in touch with God - The Daily Telegraph says - Tens of thousands of people have "connected with God" through Amazon's Alexa thanks to a Church of England app. The Church said that more than 75,000 people had interacted through a digital assistant since it set up its own voice controlled app a year ago. Users can access the churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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app by saying: "Alexa, open the Church of England." They can then ask questions about God, or ask to hear prayers and reflections. Instead of the normal Alexa voice, the responses were recorded by clergy and churchgoers, a mix of male and female voices.

The Times says "Christians and the curious" are using the Church of England's smart-speaker app to connect with God. The Church has told the paper that users have engaged with the service more than 75,000 times since it became available a year ago. Two-fifths of recent requests were to hear prayers, while a third apparently involved questions such as, "Who is God?" or "What is faith?". The Times picks up on some positive reviews, including one user who says he loves the app - despite being a Catholic.

+++ International call-up for goalie Dylan - Talented Dylan Braik of Connor diocese is well on his way to achieving his dream of becoming a professional footballer after his selection for the Northern Ireland U14 Club Squad.

+++ Stranorlar youth workers commissioned - Two new youth workers were commissioned at a special Youth Celebration Service in St John's Church of Ireland, Kiltreevogue, near Stranorlar, on Sunday evening. The service was held to celebrate the Stranorlar Group's new partnership with the Christian youth ministry, Exodus N.S. The initiative is supported by the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund. "As parents and grandparents and as members of His Church," the Rector, Rev Adam Pullen said, "God places the responsibility on each of us to support and encourage our young people in the development of their faith." Rev Pullen told teenagers in the congregation that the older generation



weren't seeking to talk down to young people; they were getting involved because they cared.

+++ Third suspension at Lincoln Cathedral - The Chapter Clerk of Lincoln Cathedral, William Harrison, has been suspended — relating to “procedural matters” — pending an investigation, a spokesperson for the cathedral said on Wednesday last. “The Chapter Clerk is still in post; however, we can confirm that, as of this weekend [18 May], he has been suspended. We would like to make very clear that this investigation relates to procedural matters. The suspension is a neutral act, and we are unable to say more while investigations are taking place.” It comes weeks after the cathedral announced that the Dean and the Canon Chancellor had taken a leave of absence while a historic safeguarding matter, thought to involve vulnerable adults, is

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being investigated. The Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Revd Christopher Lowson, was suspended last week.

+++ Suspension of the Bishop of Lincoln - see above.

David Lamming has written a detailed analysis of the legal issues arising from this suspension. You can [read this document here](#) . (PDF)

He summarises as follows:

Whatever the nature or details of the “information” on which the Archbishop of Canterbury based his decision to suspend Bishop Christopher, in the light of the clear statement that “there has been no allegation that Bishop Christopher has committed abuse of a child or vulnerable adult”, the legal basis for the suspension is at least doubtful. An appeal to the President of Tribunals that would clarify the legal position would seem to be justified and appropriate. David is a retired barrister, whose professional interests include ecclesiastical law. He is a member of the House of Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England, elected from the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Another article has been published on this topic. Philip Jones has written: [Safeguarding and Suspension: The Case of the Bishop of Lincoln](#) .

+++ C of E names new Head of Vocations - The Ministry Division of the C of E has appointed the Assistant Curate at St Mary Magdalene’s, Reigate, in Surrey, the Revd Helen Fraser, as its new Head of Vocations, as part of its drive to increase the number of candidates for ordination. Ms Fraser was responsible for discipleship, training, and vocations at St Mary’s. The director of the Ministry Division, Canon Mandy Ford, said: “Helen has an impressive track record, and her skills and abilities will be crucial in helping to build

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on this success.” The C of E has increased the number of candidates for ordination by 22 per cent in two years — almost halfway towards its national target of a 50 per cent by 2020.

+++ Belfast Philharmonic Mendelssohn Elijah - comes to the Ulster Hall 7 June. The 100-strong Choir will be joined by the Ulster Orchestra and soloists performing an evening of beautiful music. Tickets on sale now!

+++ Your prayers please - Pray for Leslie and Mabel Brush, community outreach workers in Tartaraghan Presbyterian Church. Give thanks for opportunities they have to share God’s Word in meetings & Bible studies. Leslie leads Bible studies in three different homes.

News Links May 29

[NI bishop bares soul on refocusing his faith, a fight with depression and new cancer battle](#)

Belfast Newsletter

The **Church of Ireland** Bishop of Connor has recently opened up about his battle ... That wasn't good **news** but the tumour wasn't as bad as it might be.

[Ireland: Archbishop encourages Church to use 'more joyful language'](#)

Independent Catholic News

Archbishop Eamon Martin celebrated Mass yesterday at the National Marian Shrine, Knock in Co Mayo yesterday, for the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer ...

[Church in Ireland moderator given honorary doctorate](#)

Premier

The next Moderator of the Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland**, the Minister of Maze Presbyterian **Church**, Rev William Henry, has been awarded an ...

[Acclaimed American symphony to play Christ Church this week](#)

Dublin People

At Christ **Church** Cathedral, the all-student symphony will perform the ... this year the Wind Symphony has decided to include **Ireland** and Scotland.

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[Irishman who died on Everest sent text from mountain saying he was coming home](#)

Irish Times

Climbing Mount Everest was Trinity College lecturer Shay Lawless' "biggest ambition", the congregation at the Holy Redeemer **Church** in Bray, Co ...

[Vicar resigns after **Church of England** school keeps pupil transitioning from male to female secret ...](#)

The Sun

A VICAR has resigned after a **Church of England** school made plans to ... but butted heads with the bishop over his plans to keep the **news** secret.

[1915: Remembering 'Flanders Fields'](#)

Crossville Chronicle

McCrae recited portions of the **Church of England's** "Order of Burial of the Dead" from memory, and a wooden cross was placed to mark the grave-site.

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