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Songs of Praise from Down on St Patrick's Day



Churches in the Diocese of Down and Dromore will feature on both BBC Radio 4 and BBC One on St Patrick's Day, Sunday 17 March.

At 8.10 am, Sunday Worship on Radio 4 will come from Down Cathedral led by the Very Revd Henry Hull, Dean of Down. Bishop Harold Miller will give the address.

The service may be heard again later that morning on Radio Ulster at 10.15 am and will then be available online at churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007cphq/episodes/p>

Songs of Praise will be broadcast at 1.15 pm on BBC One. The crew filmed in Holy Trinity Banbridge where they featured the stained glass window erected in memory of hymn writer Joseph Scriven. Scriven was born 100 years ago and is famous for writing 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'.

The crew along with presenter Katherine Jenkins also visited the Dock Café in the Titanic Quarter so perhaps you may get a glimpse of the Dock too!

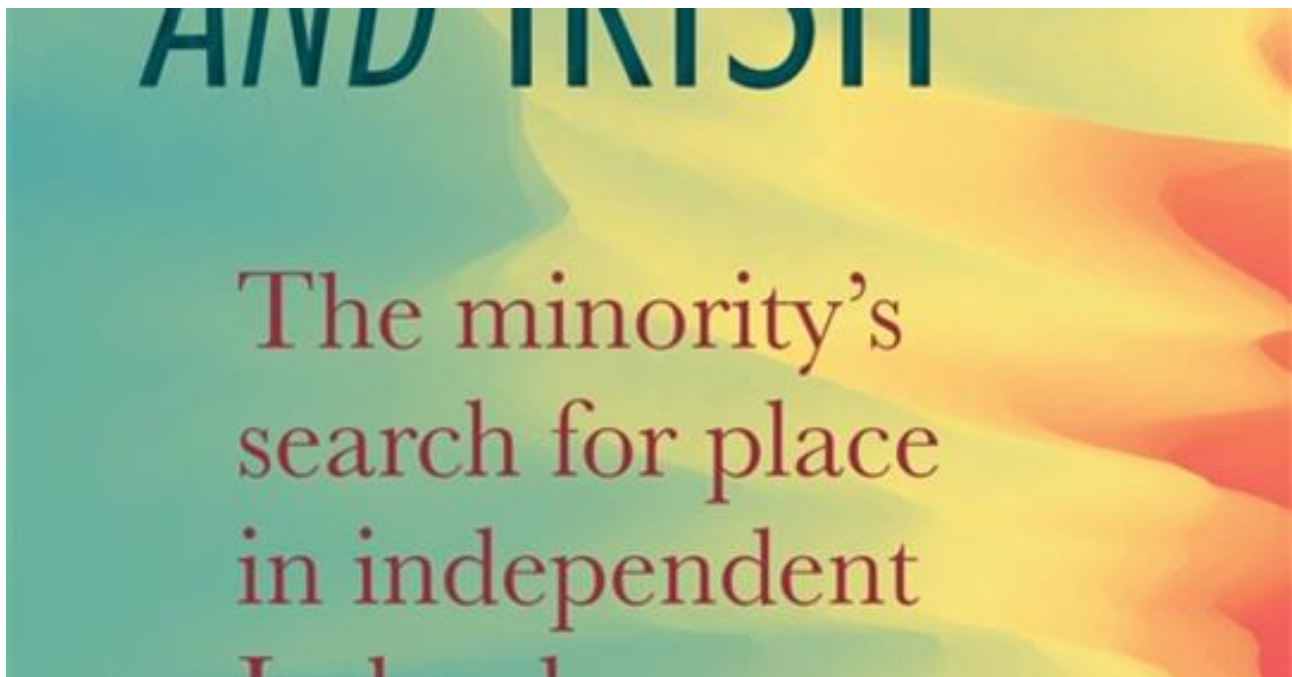
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006ttc5>

Protestant AND Irish book launch in Carlow

"Protestant AND Irish the minority's search for place in Independent Ireland, an essay collection, will be launched by Martin Mansergh in Carlow College on 12 March at 6.30 p.m.

The book is edited by Dr Ida Milne and Dr Ian d'Alton.

The foreword is by Professor Roy Foster, the conclusion by Professor Joe Ruane and there are 16 essays in total. They illustrate the various ways Protestants found (a sense of) place in a country many of their families had lived for hundreds of years.



Four of the chapters particularly relate to Ferns, Ossory and Leighlin. Dr Milne's chapter is about Protestants and their relationship with the GAA – a stronger relationship than people might think, she says.

It is published by Cork University Press, see <https://www.corkuniversitypress.com/Protestant-and-Irish-p/9781782052982.htm>

All are welcome but organizers would appreciate if people filled out the Eventbrite form on the college website, so that numbers will be known. <http://www.carlowcollege.ie/>

Longford Prayer Service for young people and youth ministry

To mark the 5th annual Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry, instigated by the Church of Ireland Youth Department, and set for the Sunday before Lent by the

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House of Bishops, a gathering for prayer was held on Sunday 3rd March in St John's Church, Longford. Attended by people of all ages from local parishes, as well as others from across the Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, an encouraging time was had.

A simple Service of the Word provided the structure for the evening, led by Mr Damian Shorten (Diocesan Youth and Children's Coordinator for Elphin and Ardagh), with music led by Mrs Yvonne McHugh on the keyboard, along with a visiting band from Longford Methodist Church, made up of some teenagers singing and playing the violin, organised by the Revd Christiaan Snell and Mrs Dianne Clendenning (who also sang and played guitar). Bishop Ferran Glenfield preached from Luke 9.28–36, unpacking what we can learn about prayer from this account of our Lord's Transfiguration. We reminded that prayer brings us in touch with an unseen world – the world of the Spirit; in prayer we enter the timeless realm of eternity – God is the God of the past, the present, and the future; and prayer is a conversation – speaking to the God who speaks to us today through his Word, and who in the Transfiguration said: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9.35)

Having been 'energised' by the Word read and preached, we then set time aside for what we gathered for: prayer! There was opportunity for people to pray for young people and youth ministry in different ways: silent prayer, prayer with others, or by engaging with different prayer stations set up around the church (many of them inspired by CIYD's recent prayer booklet for the Day of Prayer). Having engaged with prayer individually and personally, the congregation were led in liturgical prayer by some young

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people from Church Street Youth (CSY), the youth club in Longford Parish. As we concluded, Bishop Ferran encouraged and challenged those present to continue in, or to take the first step into, the adventure that is prayer and following Christ, an adventure which requires courage and fellowship in our world today.

Following the time in the church, the congregation moved down the street to Church Street Hall to share in pizza as well as other refreshments provided by parishioners, and enjoyed a time of connecting and reconnecting with others. Thank you to all those who played any part in making this new event such a success; success seen most clearly in the highlighting of and engagement with prayer which was exhibited throughout the evening.

Inspiration from Derry for Connor clergy

The Rt Rev Ken Good, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, was the speaker at a Connor Clergy Quiet Morning in Christ Church, Lisburn, on March 7.

Bishop Good spoke on the theme of leadership, and, with reference to the story of Moses and the burning bush, put it to clergy that they could at times feel 'isolated, in a wilderness, or stuck.'

During the first of two sessions, he encouraged clergy to write a prayer to God, asking them to respond to the Lord's request that they, like Moses, turn aside.

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The Rt Rev Ken Good, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, at the Quiet Morning with Archdeacon George Davison, left, and Archdeacon Paul Dundas.

Almost forty clergy from the diocese attended the Quiet Morning, which began with a short service led by the rector of Christ Church and Archdeacon of Dalriada, the Ven Paul Dundas.

A lesson was read by Mr Richard Cotter, Diocesan Finance and Administration Manager, and prayers were led by the Rev Derek Harrington, curate of Christ Church Parish.

The Rev Dr Ian Mills, curate at Larne was the organist.

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Welcoming Bishop Good Archdeacon Dundas said: “We are delighted you are with us today and are conscious of the changes coming up in your life.”

Addressing his fellow clergy, Archdeacon Dundas said: “I pray that today will be a time you spend with Jesus and also those you share ministry with. I pray this is a time to go deeper into our worship with God, a time of peace, a time to listen, to grow and to flourish.”

Bishop Ken remembered the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, who is currently receiving treatment for prostate cancer, adding that he thought of and prayed for Bishop Alan regularly. He paid tribute to Archdeacons Paul Dundas, George Davison and Dr Stephen McBride for doing an ‘excellent’ job as commissaries to the Bishop, and he also commended Christ Church as a church with a ‘healthy feel, which was clearly well cared for.’

Referencing the earlier reading from Luke on the Transfiguration, Bishop Ken said the Quiet Morning was ‘a gift from the Lord.’ “It may not be a mountain top experience, but the Lord may wish us to receive today as a gift from him,” the Bishop said.

His second session found Moses after the Exodus, stuck with ‘too much management and not enough leadership.’ Bishop Ken said all clergy were trained to be managers, but in a time of change, leadership was very important.

“The ability of a leader under God is to rally people to see where you are going, and have them go with you,” he said.

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Outlining the qualities of leadership, Bishop Ken told clergy: “I hope this provokes you to ask, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do in leadership in my parish?’” The second session ended with a period of contemplation.

Bishop Ken was thanked for his time and for his words by the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven George Davison, and clergy enjoyed fellowship over lunch, provided by the ladies of Christ Church, before returning to their parishes.

£8m hotel, restaurant and bar to open in former derelict church

A former derelict church on Belfast’s Ormeau Road is to come to life as a new boutique hotel, bar and restaurant early next year following £8million investment.

Plans to develop a new £8 million hotel, bar and restaurant for Belfast which will create around 100 additional jobs have been recommended for approval by planning officials at Belfast City Council.

If approved the new development will open early next year as part of a significant new investment by the owners of the award-winning Galgorm Spa & Golf Resort.

The proposals for Belfast’s newest hospitality venue will regenerate the former derelict Holy Rosary Church and an adjacent Parochial House building at 348-350 Ormeau Road.

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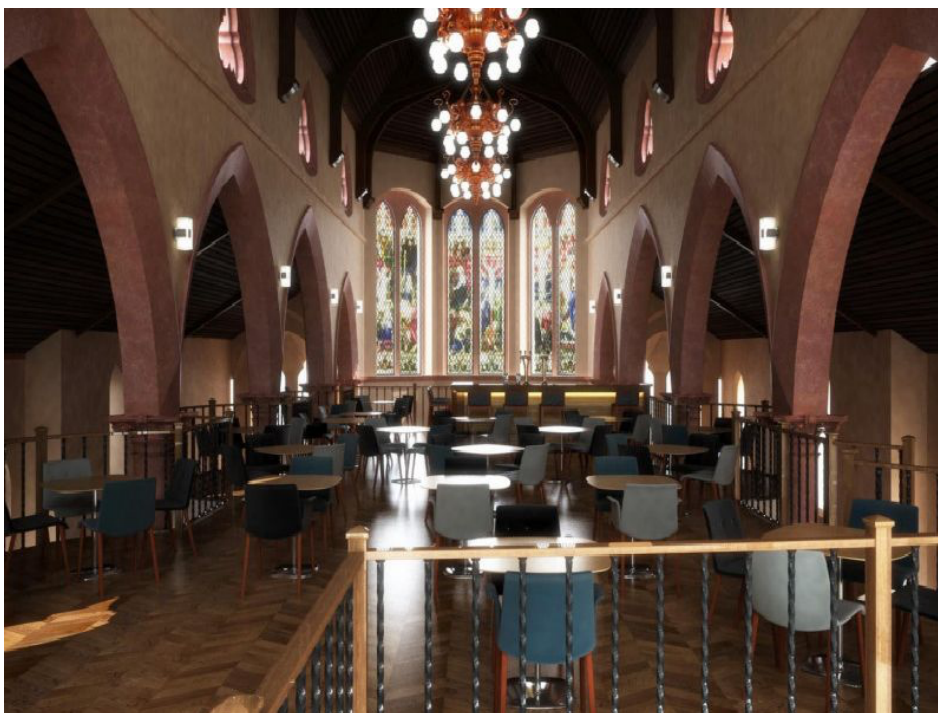
The site is currently being carefully restored and preserved in advance of its opening in Spring 2020 to accommodate 18 bedrooms, a stunning new bar and signature



restaurant which forms part of the group's newly-named 'Galgorm Collection' of hotels, restaurants and bars.

The 19th century grade B1 listed building, which has lain derelict for almost 40 years since its closure in 1980, was acquired in February 2017 for this major hospitality redevelopment project. The site has also been on the

building risk register for over 35 years.



An additional 30 jobs are also being created during construction, design and fit-out to provide for the 18 uniquely-

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styled bedrooms and an open-access bar and restaurant.

Galgorm Collection Managing Director, Colin Johnston, said: "We warmly welcome that our planning proposal to create a new hotel and restaurant experience on Ormeau Road has been recommended for approval and we look forward to the next stage in the planning process.

Bronze Jesus statue stolen and £40,000 damage caused to North Belfast church

A church in **North Belfast** has suffered £40,000 worth of damage after being targeted in a break-in.

Bronze doors worth £40,000, specially commissioned for inside the Church of the Resurrection on the Cavehill Road, were taken off at the hinges and cut up. They have been irreparably damaged.

An 8ft tall bronze statute of Jesus was also stolen.

Wave of evangelism kicks off in Liverpool

Four days of events encouraging Christians in Lancashire to share their faith have been officially launched at Liverpool Cathedral.

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A commissioning service at the Anglican landmark marked the start of 'Tell, Serve, Give' - the latest in a series of evangelistic initiatives taking place across the North of England.

The Bishop of Whitby, Rt Rev Paul Ferguson said: "We got all sorts of things happening.

"Some of them are quite church-based...but also we've got some things which are happening in perhaps rather less usual circumstances".

Launched by the Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu in 2015, the first Northern Bishops' Mission was held in Sheffield Diocese. Similar events have since been held in various other northern dioceses.

Bishops from across the region taking part include Rt Rev Julian Henderson, the Bishop of Blackburn; Rt Rev Philip North, the Bishop of Burnley and Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff, the Bishop of Lancaster.

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Bishop Julian said:
"Preparations for 'Tell, Serve, Give' have been taking place for many months now and it is exciting now to be approaching the start of the mission.



"Everyone, including the Archbishop himself, will have packed schedules over the four days, with multiple opportunities to share the Gospel."

A prison visit, Zumba party, Prosecco and pizza evening, The Greatest Showman sing-a-long, street healing ministry and laser tag are among the hundreds of events planned.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu said: "It is wonderful that the churches across the Diocese of Liverpool have committed to 'Tell, Serve, Give'.

"Churches are engaging in a huge variety of events as they seek to serve others and to show God's love in their local community.

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"This will be a great weekend. I am looking forward to meeting many people across the Diocese and hope to see you at one of these fantastic events."

Moderator invites churches to 'open their doors' and reflect on Brexit

As the UK's political leaders continue to wrestle with divisions over Brexit and our changing position within Europe and beyond, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Susan Brown, has written an open letter calling for congregations and communities to "come together" in prayer and reflection.

Dear Friends,

It will not have escaped your attention that we are currently living through a time of tumultuous change in the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union.

Across the country this change is having, and will continue to have, a profound impact on individual lives within our congregations and our communities.

As the 29th of March approaches, I am increasingly struck by the need within our communities for space to come together, to listen, to reflect and pray, to learn from and celebrate one another.

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Rt Rev Susan Brown is inviting churches to open their doors, in partnership with other local churches and congregations, to provide spaces of welcome, and reflection.

This period has the potential to create division and distress amidst the uncertainty of what happens next. I believe that there is a place for the Church to work for hope, unity and peace. That is why this month, as the UK's planned departure from the European Union approaches, I am inviting congregations to open their doors, in partnership with other local churches and congregations, to provide spaces of welcome, and reflection: spaces in which our communities might come together and demonstrate hope in the face of uncertainty, belonging instead of rejection, and a joy in one another that surpasses our disagreements or political differences.

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What this invitation might look like in practice will differ according to the unique character and context of each of the communities who choose to take it up.

However, some of the suggestions that have been shared with me during my time as Moderator include:

- Inviting local nationals from other EU countries to speak about the joy and challenges of living in the UK, and their experience of living in the UK at this time of uncertainty
- Hosting a Europe night to share and celebrate food and culture from across Europe
- Creating a Charter of welcome, pledging to continue to welcome brothers and sisters in Christ from across Europe
- Inviting local employers to talk about any challenges their business might be facing at this time, particularly in terms of personnel, and their hopes for the future
- Taking the opportunity to link with congregations in Europe through the International Presbytery, to hear about the experience of being a UK citizen living beyond the UK at this time
- Opening up your church for an hour a day as a place of prayer and reflection for the UK's future relationship with Europe and beyond

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- Hosting a vigil style service with stations where people are encouraged to give thanks for the past, to offer into God's hands the present and to acknowledge any worries or fears about the future

This list is not exhaustive. I know too that there will be prayers posted weekly on the Church's website, but hopefully these things together show some of the small but significant ways in which we the Church can offer spaces of welcome, spaces of hope, spaces of joy and spaces of belonging in this time of uncertainty.

As the body of Christ, the Church exists beyond human borders; our calling to live out the generous love of God in our communities, in our country, in Europe and beyond remains, steadfast and unchanged. May I invite you to be particularly mindful of this over the coming, and significant, days and weeks in the life of the country.

Yours,

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Susan Brown

US envoy for religious freedom slams China's 'war with faith' during Hong Kong visit

The US ambassador for religious freedom, Sam Brownback, on Friday called on Beijing to end religious persecution in China, while requesting a visit to the country's mass internment camps in the western region of Xinjiang.

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US ambassador for religious freedom Sam Brownback has said China is waging a 'war with faith'.

In a strongly worded speech during a visit to Hong Kong, Brownback said Beijing was waging a 'war with faith' and that it needed to respect the fundamental and 'sacred right' of people to worship.

'It is a war they will not win,' he told an audience at the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club.

'The Chinese Communist Party must hear the cries of its own people for religious freedom and act to correct its wrongs.'

Addressing the subject of China's vast internment camps for Muslims in Xinjiang, Brownback spoke of rights violations including torture, political indoctrination and forced labour.

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The camps reportedly hold more than a million ethnic Uighurs and people from other Muslim minorities, 'The Trump administration is deeply concerned and considers this oppression a deliberate attempt by Beijing to redefine and control members of these Muslim minority groups' identity, culture and faith.'

He declined to say whether the United States is currently weighing up any fresh policies or sanctions against China over the crackdown in Xinjiang, including human rights-related sanctions against the region's Communist Party chief Chen Quanguo.

'We don't discuss internal matters about what's being discussed about possible actions in any place around the world, the same for Xinjiang.'

But he reiterated a request for an open visit to such camps.

'I would like to have the opportunity to go, but not to just to be given a show. I want to get into the actual camps themselves and talk to people and interview them freely.'

Turning to the issue of Catholics in China, where there exists an underground church loyal to the pope and a state-sanctioned church, Brownback said a reported landmark deal for China to allow the Vatican a say over the appointment of new bishops in the mainland hadn't led to improved freedoms.

'Since this provisional deal was announced last year the Chinese government's abuse of members of the Catholic community has continued. We see no signs that will change in the near future.'

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He noted that Hong Kong, a former British colony that returned to Chinese rule in 1997, with its strong rule of law and religious diversity, could serve as an example for China to follow in future.

'The gates of religious freedom will fly open in China and the iron curtain of religious persecution will come down. The Chinese government is currently on the wrong side of history,' said the former senator.

March 9 in Christian history

March 9, 320 (traditional date): Roman soldiers leave Christian soldiers naked on the ice of a frozen pond in Sebaste, Armenia. They placed baths of hot water around them to tempt them to renounce their faith. When one did so, a pagan guard—inspired by the fortitude of the remaining Christians—converted and joined the freezing Christians. They were all killed and made famous by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa.

March 9, 395 (traditional date): Gregory of Nyssa, Cappadocian father and bishop, dies. An outstanding thinker, theologian, orator, and ascetical author, he was very influential in developing the theology of the Trinity.

March 9, 1831: Evangelist Charles Finney concludes a six-month series of meetings in Rochester, New York. The meetings, which have been called "the world's greatest single revival campaign," led to the closing of the town's theater and taverns, a two-thirds drop in crime, and a reported 100,000 conversions.

News briefs

+++International Women's Day - The International Anglican Women's Network Steering Group issued a statement in advance of International Women's Day on March 8, welcoming its theme of gender balance. "Gender balance is essential for all communities to thrive," the statement says. "The Anglican Communion is no exception." The subtitle for this year's celebration is BalanceforBetter, and it has been designed to promote gender balance across all of life, including boardrooms, government, media, employment, wealth distribution and sports coverage. You may read the [full article here](#).

+++ Obit Lurgan and Northern Ireland cricket stalwart - The funeral of William Robert (Billy) Boyd will be tomorrow Sunday. He passed away yesterday (Friday, March 8) just days after celebrating his 80th birthday. He was the former president of the Northern Cricket Union and a long time member of Lurgan Rugby and Cricket Club, having served as Club President. He was also most lately the Chairman of Lurgan Rugby Football and Cricket Club. The Funeral Service will take place in Holy Trinity Parish Church, Waringstown, on Sunday, March 10, at 3pm followed by interment in the adjoining Churchyard.

+++Civic Reception for Moderator - hosted by Councillor David Maxwell, Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Co Council. The Moderator said, " I received warmest greetings from the Mayor and local community representatives, which I found very moving. It was fertile ground to mention my theme of Building Relationships."

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