

**Ground-
breaking
resource
created by
Connor young
people for
young people**

Young people from the Church of Ireland Diocese of Connor have developed a ground-breaking resource written entirely by young people for young people.

Thirteen young authors from parishes across the diocese have come together as Connor Youth Forum to develop a

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discipleship resource which they envision being used by small groups of young people.

The resource is entitled *Journey* to convey that young people can use it to explore faith together as they grow in their discipleship.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christian Baillie has been working to facilitate the group of young people as they undertook this exciting initiative.

Christina said: "I have loved seeing the ambition of the young people involved to do something which we believe has never been done before, creating a small group discipleship resource entirely written by young people.

"Seeing our young people write from the perspective of what would benefit other young people like them has been hugely beneficial. They have grappled with themes which have been important in their own discipleship and we are so excited to share it with young people across the diocese and beyond."

The resource is written in six chapters which can be followed by groups of young people. The authors hope it will be easy to understand as it is written in a way that young people will connect well with.

Each chapter includes Bible passages, suggested songs, teaching, prayer points and a story from one of the young people.

Initially the resource will be available for free across Connor Diocese, with the aim of making it available for wider

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distribution across the UK. The resource has been funded by the Church of Ireland Orphans' and Children Society.

Journey is being launched on Friday November 23 at 7pm in Lisburn Cathedral. At the launch, the young people will speak about how they put the resource together and how they imagine it being used across the diocese.

One of the authors, Louise, writes in the introduction: "We don't know everything either, so can't answer all of your questions, but we hope that after reading this resource you will feel equipped with wisdom and be able to confidently

face whatever challenges you may encounter on your journey of faith."



Dublin Council of Churches 14th annual Walk of Light

The 14th annual Walk of Light takes place in Dublin's city centre this Sunday, November 25. Organised by Dublin Council of

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Churches, the theme of this year's pre-Advent inter-church pilgrimage is 'Encounter, Engage, Empower'.

The Walk of Light begins at St Ann's Church on Dawson Street at 4pm. Participants will walk the short distance to St Teresa's, Clarendon Street before departing on the final leg of the journey to Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church where the Walk of Light will conclude at 6.30 pm.

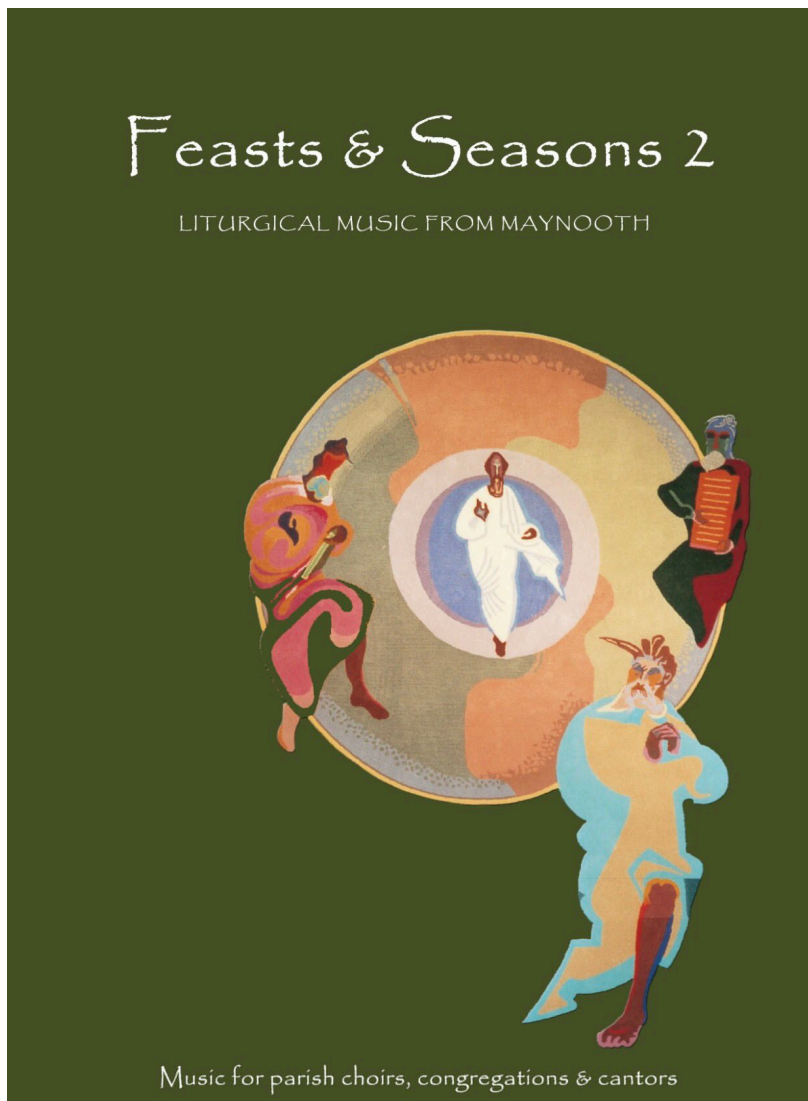
The Walk of Light draws together people from all walks of life who wish to express their hope and prayer for light in dark times. The theme of 'Encounter, Engage, Empower' will be explored in each of the three churches as the pilgrimage unfolds. All three stops combine to make one liturgy which has been prepared by local groups of lay people and clergy from the different Christian traditions in the area.

All are welcome to join in this ecumenical journey. You can walk the entire route or join for just part of it.

Church music series Feasts and Seasons launched

The eagerly-awaited second volume of the Church music series *Feasts and Seasons* was launched in Maynooth College on Wednesday by the Rector of the National Seminary, Rev. Tomás Surlis.

Feasts and Seasons 2 is edited by John O'Keeffe and James Murphy. John O'Keeffe is Director of Sacred Music at Maynooth College and Director of Choral Groups at Maynooth University. He directed the music for the Papal



Mass in the Phoenix Park in August of this year. James Murphy is a former College Organist of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Holder of a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from Maynooth University, he is currently pursuing postgraduate studies in music education at the University of Ulster, Coleraine.

The launch, which was attended by Church musicians and parish representatives from across the country, featured a short performance of some of the pieces from the collection.

Featuring music by a range of Irish composers, including Peadar Ó Riada, Ronan McDonagh and Fr Liam Lawton, as well as liturgical compositions from England and America, the collection is intended primarily for use in an Irish parish context. It contains new settings for Advent, Christmastide, St Patrick's Day, Lent, Eastertide, Pentecost and Trinity, and includes an alternative setting of the Song of Farewell from the Funeral Rite together with Peadar Ó Riada's setting of the Hail Mary, 'Go mbeannaithear duit, a Mhuire'.

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A series of regional presentations of the collection will follow on from this initial launch.

Feasts and Seasons 2 is now available in book and CD format, and is priced at €20. Further information is available from www.maynoothcollege.ie.

Church leaders appeal on Brexit

The leaders of the main churches in Ireland have issued the following joint statement in relation to Brexit -

As the final stages of the initial part of the negotiations for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union draw to a close, we as Church Leaders here on the island of Ireland are inspired by the challenge of Jesus to love our neighbour.

Relationships between the people of this island, both North and South, and between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, have improved and deepened immeasurably over the past 30 or so years. This atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and growing friendship has been the positive background against which many significant developments have taken place – ceasefires, political accommodation, increased connectedness and rising prosperity for many.

It is important that we acknowledge the legitimate aspirations of those who voted to leave the European Union and those who voted to remain. We also pray at this time that the inevitable tensions, which the Brexit negotiations and their outworking will entail, will not be allowed to undermine the quality of relationships and mutual

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understanding which are both so important in enabling all of us to work together for the common good.

In this context, we particularly want to encourage public representatives, and all others who give leadership in our society, to weigh their words carefully, to respect the integrity of those who conscientiously differ from them and to speak with grace.

Regardless of the outcome of this process, as peoples and communities who share this island, we will remain closely related and will have to both get along together and work together in this changing and somewhat uncertain world that lies ahead.

This calling will be helped immensely as we all strive to listen and relate to one another in the context of mutual respect and even growing trust, rather in a divisive and unhealthy atmosphere of needlessly destructive debate and broken and fractured relationships.

The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland; the Rev William Davison, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; the Most Rev Eamon Martin, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland; the Right Rev Dr Charles McMullen, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; the Rev Brian Anderson, President of the Irish Council of Churches.

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Bishop's concern for Bombardier workforce

The Bishop of Down & Dromore, the Rt Revd Harold Miller commented upon the loss of jobs at the East Belfast plane maker.

Bishop Miller said, "The announcement that around 490 jobs will be lost at Bombardier is yet another challenge for the people of Northern Ireland. As our largest industrial employer, such losses will hit hard, especially at this time of uncertainty.

"My thoughts and prayers are with those whose lives may be profoundly changed by this news. I hope that Bombardier will do everything in its power to minimise compulsory redundancies and the inevitable impact upon individuals and their families."

NI schools to get guidance on transgender issues

Schools in Northern Ireland are to be given guidance about how to support transgender pupils, the Education Authority (EA) has revealed.

The guidance will cover a range of issues such as name changes, change of uniform and the use of toilets and changing facilities.

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According to the Department of Education, there are no official figures detailing the number of schoolchildren in Northern Ireland who identify as transgender. But a spokesperson for the EA said the guidance is being drawn up in response to an increasing number of queries from local schools seeking advice about how best to support transgender pupils and tackle issues such as transphobic bullying.

“Transgender young people face particular challenges at school. Research has highlighted a range of barriers to education and high levels of homophobic and transphobic bullying which can have a knock-on effect on young people’s mental health, attendance at school and attainment,” the spokesperson said.

“Over the last year, EA has received an increasing number of queries from schools on how to support transgender young people. To assist schools in meeting the needs of these pupils, we are developing practical guidance on what schools should do to support transgender children and young people in educational and youth settings.

“In developing the guidance the EA aims to increase the professional capacity and confidence of staff in supporting transgender children and young people and assist schools and youth services in promoting an inclusive environment where all children feel welcomed, safe and valued.

“The guidance will cover a range of issues (such as name changes, change of uniform and the use of toilets and changing facilities) and will help schools make justifiable decisions regarding the support of transgender pupils,

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including assessing the impact of those decisions on the wider school community.” To inform development of the guidance, the EA has set up a steering group which includes Northern Ireland’s main education stakeholders as well as clinical leads and voluntary sector organisations working in the area.

The Authority has also met with schools and parents of transgender children as well as other interest groups.

“As well as supporting schools through the development of the guidance, EA have signed up to a number of best practice standards to support and engage our staff, as we continue to transform how we deliver educational services,” the EA spokesperson continued.

“These include becoming a Stonewall Diversity Champion, which will help support our LGBT colleagues, signing the NI Mental Health Charter and training mental health first aiders across the organisation, signing up, with Trade Union colleagues, to the Joint Declaration of Protection and Inclusive Working Environments and developing a gender action plan, to deliver an inclusive working environment for all our staff.

“All this work forms part of our ambitious Equality Action Plan 2018-2022.”

Welcoming the EA’s move, TransgenderNI – a support organisation for trans people in Northern Ireland – tweeted: “We support the Education Authority move to produce guidance on supporting trans pupils for schools across

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Northern Ireland, and are excited to be involved in their development.”

Commenting on the make-up of the steering group that will help develop the guidance, Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute said: “It is important that the group should hear from a wide range of voices including feminists, psychologists and others who are anxious that children and young people are being rushed into adopting a trans identity by trans-affirming ideology.”

Divine Healing Ministries special events in Downpatrick and Belfast

Divine Healing Ministries is extending an open invitation to two events.

On Saturday November 24, there will be a Day of Prayer for God’s healing and peace in Downpatrick, County Down. Five Downpatrick churches of different denominations are involved and silent prayer and reflection will take place in each church, with everyone then walking to the next church behind a large wooden cross. Everyone will be encouraged to lay down burdens from the past and to seek God’s peace. DHM will be participating and will offer the opportunity for individual prayer for healing too. The Day of Prayer in Downpatrick follows other very successful days of prayer throughout the province and the unity in the churches in Downpatrick will add a special blessing.

On Monday November 26, at 8pm, Divine Healing Ministries (DHM) is working with Release International to support the

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Persecuted Church with a service at St Anne's. The speaker will be the Rt Rev Dr Ben Kwashi. Archbishop Ben is well-known for faithfully serving persecuted Christians in Plateau State, central Nigeria. A powerful speaker, he will be sharing his experience in Nigeria at various venues around the UK between November 20th and 27th.

A spokesperson for DHM said "We are tremendously excited to be working with Release International on the service for the Persecuted Church at St Anne's on November 26. We will be praying for a real outpouring of the Spirit. This is a great opportunity to hear from someone who is literally on God's front line in Nigeria!"

The Bishop of Salisbury joins faith groups to call for 'net zero' emissions

The Bishop of Salisbury joined UK faith representatives as they came together to support calls for a net zero target in law, amid fears that not enough is being done globally to prevent climate change.

The representatives were speaking ahead of an event later today to mark the tenth anniversary of the Climate Change Act, which will be attended by MPs from all parties.

Supporting the Climate Coalition's call for a net zero target, representatives from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Quaker, Hindu and Buddhist communities called on the UK Government to set an example for the rest of the world by strengthening its commitment to net-zero emissions before 2050.

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The Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, who is the Church of England's lead bishop on environmental affairs said:

“The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. Ours is the first generation to know that people are causing climate change and may be the last to be able to do anything meaningful about it. Climate Change affects the poorest the most. What we want is Climate Justice.”

Monday 26 November will mark 10 years since The Climate Change Act was transposed into law in the UK, legislation which is credited with reducing the UK's emissions by 40 per cent since the 1990s. However, [evidence published last month by the IPCC](#) concluded that the international risk level is critical at current levels of warming, and that the world needs to move to net zero emissions as soon as possible. In the UK, over 200 MPs and Peers have signed a cross-party letter calling for a net zero emissions target before 2050.

A net zero target would align the UK with its commitments under the Paris Agreement to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees, and ensure the country no longer contributes to climate change within a generation.

Other faith leaders echoed Bishop Nicholas's comments.

Rabbi Natan Levy, Fellow of Leo Baeck College, said “To echo the words of the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, we of different faiths may not share the same vision of heaven, but we must work to share the same earth. Sharing that earth implies leaving a beautiful and sustainable world for our children and our children's children.



"As a Jew and a Rabbi I feel that it is vital for all of us to stand together to honour our commitment to the Paris Agreement and demand a net-zero emissions target. One generation goes and another generation comes; but the earth remains forever (Ecclesiastes). The time has come to look to the next generation in all our choices today."

Gopal Patel of The Bhumi Project, a worldwide Hindu movement responding to environmental issues, said: "My spirituality and faith calls me to address climate change. Achieving net-zero emissions as soon as possible is a moral obligation we have to Mother Earth and all life on the planet."

Dr Fazlun Khalid of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) said: "The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming is timely in the sense that it should jolt us out of our complacency and warn us of our

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need to change, and change quickly at that, it is important that the UK retakes the lead on this”

Alongside faith leaders and MPs, the event, held at Portcullis House, was attended by representatives from business, farming, sports and the finance sector.

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