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**CNI**  
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IRELAND



**Nine men, including two prominent barristers, were ordained as Catholic deacons in Belfast on Sunday. See report this issue.**

## **Evangelical bishops issue blunt warning to Church of England on sexuality**

Anglican evangelical bishops have warned of 'major problems' and the danger of division if the Church of England changes its stance on sexuality.

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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Eleven leading evangelical bishops have issued a joint letter in which they say that the traditional Christian view of sex as being for heterosexual marriage alone 'is the teaching of Scripture' and 'therefore expresses the character and will of God'.

They warn any changes in that stance 'will create major problems for many of us, both here and in the wider [Anglican] Communion', declaring that 'recent history tragically demonstrates that introducing changes in teaching and liturgy has consistently divided Anglicans globally and within provinces'.

The letter has been signed by the Bishops of Carlisle, Durham, Ludlow, Birkenhead, Willesden, Peterborough, Plymouth, Blackburn, Maidstone and Lancaster, and by the former bishop of Shrewsbury. It is understood other evangelical bishops are also in agreement with its contents. It has been sent to Bishop Christopher Cocksworth, who is chairing the Church of England's 'Living in Love and Faith' (LLF) project. This is aiming to tackle the 'tough questions and the divisions among Christians' over gender, marriage and sexuality. The project is due to report back in early 2020.

The eleven bishops pointedly comment that the Church of England's current discussions are 'taking place after the gathering of nearly 2,000 Anglicans from 50 countries at Gafcon' – the international Anglican grouping emerging as a potential future alternative to the Anglican Communion. They also highlight how the US Episcopal Church has 'struggled to enable the flourishing of those within it who

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**Gay rights campaigners protest in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral in Canterbury during the Anglican Primates meeting in 2016. Controversy over human sexuality has brought the Anglican Communion to breaking point.**

remain committed to traditional biblical teaching'. Thus, they say, there is 'importance for our unity of how we teach and learn on these contested matters'.

The letter states that while modern day questioning of traditional Christian views on sex and marriage cannot be dismissed out of hand, 'neither can we simply abandon what we have received in order to appear relevant and avoid feeling uncomfortable'.

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The bishops point to 'the traditional teaching of the Anglican Communion' as set out at various points including 1920, 1987 and 1998. The letter states: 'We believe that this vision of (1) sexual intercourse as "an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent married relationship" (2) marriage as a union of a man and woman in a covenant of love marked by exclusivity and life-long commitment, and (3) faithful, sexually abstinent love in singleness and non-marital friendships is the teaching of Scripture. It therefore expresses the character and will of God which is our guide in ordering our lives and in addressing public global ethical issues'.

They continue: 'We also believe that reaffirming this teaching offers us the best way of maintaining our unity-in-truth.' The bishops therefore say they hope that LLF 'will clearly articulate' this teaching and indeed 'commend it, explaining why [their italics] it has been, and remains, a deeply-held conviction for most Christians'.

The letter goes on: 'The House of Bishops' conviction' – set out in a report which ran into trouble at General Synod in 2017 – 'that we should reaffirm our current teaching, liturgy and discipline and consider the limits of legitimate pastoral practice within these, will be very difficult for many to accept. It is also clear, however, that any change in teaching or liturgy will also create major problems for many of us both here and in the wider Communion.'

It may be necessary 'to consider how our structures may need to adapt' in order to enable continued fellowship 'while honestly recognising the impact of our disagreements on the shape and degrees of communion



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truly present among us'. A recent Church of England Evangelical Council paper exploring possible 'visible differentiation' in the future between those of conservative and liberal views in the C of E is described as 'helpful'.

The bishops call for Scripture to be given a 'central place' in the Living in Love and Faith project. And addressing the contemporary idea that people can adopt whatever identity they wish, they say that 'fundamental identity is not something we define for ourselves: rather,... we are made in God's image, have fallen captive to sin, are redeemed by Christ, and are being sanctified by the Spirit'. This ethic, they say, 'has been repeatedly affirmed' by the Lambeth Conferences of global Anglican bishops over the decades.

They describe the Church of England's witness and mission as being to 'share the good news of salvation in Christ and call people to turn, believe, and follow Him'.

The full text of the letter is being posted on the website of the [Church of England Evangelical Council](#). Christian Today understands that there are many other evangelical bishops who support the letter, but who for a variety of reasons have not been part of this current group of signatories.

## **Church services to remember Shankill bombing**

Pupils from schools that victims of the Shankill bomb went to will lay flowers at the site of the massacre as part of a series of commemoration events.

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**The West Kirk  
which is just a  
few yards from  
the site of the  
bomb blast**



A bell will also toll nine times on Tuesday, October 23, to mark the 25th anniversary of the IRA bomb attack at

Frizzell's fish

shop. Nine people, as well as one of the IRA bombers, died in the 1993 blast.

The school children, from Harmony Primary School, where Michelle Baird was a pupil, when it was known as Fernhill Primary School, and from the Girls Model where Leanne Murray was a pupil, will walk from a service at West Kirk Presbyterian Church to the site of the bomb. The two girls were just seven and 13 when they died.

At 1.06pm, the moment the device exploded, they will leave flowers at the spot where so many died. The West Kirk service, starting at 12.15pm will see local people remember those who died before moving to the memorial plaque at the site of the bomb and to the Memorial Lamp in the **Shankill** Memorial Garden and then to the Court Credit Union which now stands at the bomb site.

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The service will mark the culmination of a number of events remembering the attack that claimed the lives of the shop owner John Frizzell, his daughter Sharon McBride, Michael Morrison along with his partner Evelyn Baird and her seven-year-old daughter Michelle, married couple George and Gillian Williamson, and Wilma McKee and Leanne Murray.

A gallery exhibition, a play and a walk of remembrance have been planned throughout the week by the greater Shankill community and families of those who died in the attack.

On October 20, a parade of football teams from Highfield to the Shankill Bomb memorials will lay wreathes at 1.06pm, before taking part in a match the next day.

What If, a play in the Spectrum Centre based on bomb victim Gina Murray's life experiences from 1993 until the present day, will be performed on October 20. From October 21-23, there will be an exhibition of artefacts, memorabilia, cards, and photographs relating to the Shankill Bomb.

On October 22nd, A Walk to Remember will visit the sites of some of the worst bombing atrocities in the city.

Commencing from the site of the Balmoral Showrooms bombing, the tour will see families and the public walk along the Shankill Road, stopping off at the Bayardo Memorial, the Shankill Bomb site, the site of the Four Step Inn (NISC) and finishing at the Mountainview Tavern.

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At each stop, there will be a short Act of Remembrance read by local church representatives for victims.

On the anniversary, October 23, a service will be led by Reverend David Clawson at West Kirk Presbyterian Church.

The service will include several readings by a member of the bereaved families, and a performance by a united school's choir from the local primary schools.

Churches across the Greater Shankill area have also been asked to use a common prayer in their Sunday services.

One of the bombers, Thomas Begley, also died in the blast in the packed shop after the device exploded prematurely. Some 57 people were injured, including a 79-year-old woman and two two-year-old boys.

Two IRA members, Begley and Sean Kelly, wearing white coats and posing as delivery drivers, carried the bomb into the shop.

The IRA said the intended targets were UDA members who they thought were meeting in an office above the shop, but the office was empty.

## **High-profile barristers ordained as Catholic deacons in Belfast**

Nine men, including two prominent barristers, were ordained as Catholic deacons in Belfast on Sunday.



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Brett Lockhart QC, who [chairs the Independent Inquiry into the recall of neurology patients](#), was among two high-profile barristers who were ordained.



Mr Lockhart, born into a Presbyterian family, came to prominence when he represented the Omagh bombing families.

Gregory McGuigan QC was also ordained in the ceremony at St Peter's Cathedral.

The nine men are the first deacons to be ordained in the Down and Connor diocese since the diaconate was re-introduced by Vatican II.

They include Brendan Dowd, a religious education teacher at St Malachy's College in Belfast and Martin Whyte, principal of St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School in Toomebridge, County Londonderry.

The other deacons are Patrick McNeill, Joseph Baxter, Terence Butcher, James McAllister and Kevin Webb.

### **'Red letter day'**

The men can celebrate weddings and funerals but are not permitted to say Mass, hear Confession or administer the Sacrament of the Sick.

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Following their ordination, the deacons will take up pastoral work.

Mr Lockhart, a married father-of-four, has been appointed by Bishop Noel Treanor to serve in St Brigid's Parish.

In 1985, before he was married, he joined an ecumenical celibate brotherhood, The Servants of the Word, and began a three-year novitiate in Ann Arbor, Michigan, however he did not take his final vows.

He later returned to Belfast and married his wife Aine, a trained GP who is a distant relative of former bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Daniel Mageean.

He was a member of the Presbyterian church for many years and served as an elder.

Mr Lockhart became a Catholic in 2002. In May, he was appointed as the chairman of an independent inquiry into how the Belfast trust handled complaints about neurology consultant Dr Michael Watt.

It is understood he will remain as a full-time barrister following his ordination.

### **'Life of parishes'**

Religious affairs journalist Martin O'Brien said: "This was undoubtedly a red-letter day in the history of the diocese of Down and Connor, a moment of great joy for the new deacons, their families and the diocese generally.

"However, it will be interesting to see how the diocese responds to what Bishop Noel Treanor referred in his homily to both the possibilities and the challenges the permanent diaconate presents.

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"However warmly welcomed the deacons will be, those challenges will centre on integrating and embedding the ministry of the permanent deacon into the life of parishes and pastoral areas."

He said that given the increasing pressure on priests owing to the steep drop in vocations to the priesthood it is "likely that the ministry of the diaconate will come more to the fore". Report courtesy BBC NI news.

## **SWOT analysis at Kilmore synod**

Church history was probably made at the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Synod of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh when Bishop Glenfield who is recovering after a medical procedure appeared by video link.

The Synod took place on Saturday 3rd October in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. The day's proceedings began with a celebration of Holy Communion in St George's Church. The preacher Archdeacon Isaac Hanna spoke of Christ's prayer for unity among believers. He challenged synod members to pull together as a team with the common purpose of the Gospel. The business session of the Synod was held in the Bush Hotel.

Bishop's Commissary, Archdeacon Craig McCauley acted as chairman. Bishop Glenfield in his address drew attention to a Motion to allow the Ballisodare Group of Parishes in Co. Sligo to transfer from the Tuam, Kilalla and Achonry Diocese to Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. The Motion had been passed at the recent TKA Diocesan Synod and

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Bishop Glenfield appealed for members of the Synod to back the proposed change.

At the 2017 Diocesan Synod, Bishop Glenfield had informed the members of his intention to conduct a parish visitation in the following year. During his address he gave a progress report on these visits. Some 80% of parishes have been visited so far. During these visits the Bishop had visited national schools, secondary and third level

institutes,  
hospitals  
and nursing  
homes,  
businesses  
and  
commercial  
premises  
and those  
who were



house-bound. He attended worship services in each group and chaired a joint vestry meeting undertaking a SWOT analysis as people discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats their parishes faced. After a short while Bishop Ferran shared his findings with the Rector, who in turn used it as a springboard for discussion in the parish group.

The Bishop summarised his findings.

**Strengths:** Words such as small, resilient, committed, alive and energized and phrases such as ‘we work well together’, ‘capable people’, ‘well-maintained buildings’ and ‘inspirational leaders’ were repeated across the Diocese.



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It is clear that the 20/20 Vision focused on the local church being resourced for ministry and mission and local people being empowered is taking shape on the ground. Perhaps one indicator of this strength is that the Diocese has a full complement of clergy, which is a remarkable achievement and reflects the hard and unseen work going on to commend rural ministry in a Border, Midland West context. Moreover, the Diocese continues to encourage people to go forward to ordained ministry, five this year; alongside preparing and training people for lay ministry, youth ministry and evangelism.

**Weaknesses:** People were candid in identifying perceived weaknesses – small numbers, ageing congregations, lost generation groups, competition on Sundays, rural depopulation and fatigue. In particular there was a deep sense of unease that small parishes were being squeezed by government agencies with regard to Charity Regulation, Data Protection and Adult Safeguarding. People thought it unreasonable to expect small volunteer trustee bodies like Select Vestries to comply in the same way as large companies and charities who have the resources to process compliance.

**Opportunities:** Most if not all parish groups highlighted two key areas of opportunities.

*Connecting with the wider community:* Great strides have been made by our parishes to be visible and active in their local communities through a variety of ways. In using the Harvest and Christmas seasons to invite people to worship. In promoting community events, in engaging in local heritage and environmental projects. In being active in

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farming circles, in working with men, children and adults with special needs and being creative in outreach to tourists. One has only to browse through *The Scribe*, the monthly Diocesan Magazine, to see the spectrum of connections parishes are making in the community.

*Prioritizing children and young people:* Another opportunity recognized by people was the growing work among children and young people. Local churches were serious about passing on the faith to successive generations. Across the Diocese, Sunday Schools were active in most groups. Messy Church experiments were proliferating and seasonal Bible clubs were a feature in a lot of places. Uniformed organizations (GFS, GB, BB and Guides) were well-represented. In addition, up to 16 regular youth groups were up and running. The Diocese had a full complement of gifted and dedicated children's and youth co-ordinators based in Cavan, Longford and Sligo.

**Threats:** Concerns about the future fell into two categories – external and Internal threats.

*External threats* revolved around Brexit and the uncertainty it was bringing to Border areas. Also there was a sense of threat arising from a changing Ireland in which the church is unfairly seen not as a force for good, but a source of harm.

*Internal threats* were identified as indifference and unfaithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Both external and internal threats were seen as real and potentially damaging to the future of our churches and to the Church of Ireland as a whole. Nonetheless, Bishop Ferran detected a quiet confidence and resilience across the Diocese not simply to survive but to thrive. GK Chesterton once

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commented: “At least five times in history the faith has to all appearances gone to the dogs. In each case it was the dog that died!”

Bishop Ferran concluded that KEA is a small Diocese in a hidden and often neglected part of Ireland. It is often the way of God to begin his work in obscure places among small people. The Bishop asked people to see things for what they are. It is a time of declension for Christianity in Ireland and at such a time we need to hold our nerve. That requires conviction, courage and commitment. God is at work despite general appearances. His work is there for all who see with the eye of faith. And if God is with us, who can stand against us?

Following the Presidential address, the Synod heard greetings from Fr Turlough Baxter on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. The Motion to allow the transfer of the Ballisodare Group of Parishes was then proposed by Deborah Davitt who extended a warm welcome to the Ballisodare group. It was seconded by the Ven Isaac Hanna and passed by the KEA Synod. The Motion will now go before General Synod in 2019 before returning to both Synods next year. The Synod also had the opportunity to hear presentations from Bishop’s Appeal, *The Scribe* and the Mother’s Union. Damian Shorten and Hannah O’Neill, the Diocesan Youth and Children’s Co-ordinators, gave an inspiring and challenging report on the work of YKEA (the Diocesan Youth Council) over the past year.

The Reports presented to the Synod can be found [here](#).

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## Hollywood Parish launches 'Down to Earth' programme



### Canon Gareth Harron and organist, Edwin Gray with some of the Junior Choristers

Hollywood Parish celebrated Harvest and the launch of 'Down to Earth' with two special services and a parish lunch on Sunday 14 October.

The 'Down to Earth' programme is a multi-faceted way to inform, challenge and invite people into a deeper personal involvement in the life and mission of the church.

Parishioners were also encouraged to participate in 'Starter for Ten' – to take away £10 and make it grow so that it can



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be reinvested in the work of the Kingdom at home and abroad.

The 9.45 am and 11.00 am congregations joined together for the morning service which included the launch of a history of the parish building and a performance by the Junior Choristers, several of whom received their medals. [Click here to see a photo gallery.](#)

## **Led by Archbishop Rowan Williams, Anglicans attend the Canonisation of Oscar Romero and Pope Paul VI**

The Anglican Bishop in Europe, David Hamid writes - "Before a crowd of over 70,000 people, including Spain's former Queen Sophia, the Presidents of El Salvador, Panama, Chile and Italy, Pope Francis on 14 October, canonised seven saints.

"I was privileged to be present as part of the delegation of Anglicans attending the canonisation, headed by Archbishop Rowan Williams. After the mass in St Peter's Square the Pope expressed warm words of gratitude for our presence.

"In his homily, Pope Francis spoke of Jesus inviting us to return to him, the source of joy, a courageous choice to risk everything to follow him. He reminded us of how St Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, left the security of the world, even his own safety, in order to give his life according to the Gospel, close to the poor and to his people, with a heart drawn to Jesus and his brothers and

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**Archbishop  
Rowan  
Williamson is  
greeted by  
Secretary of the  
Pontifical Council  
for Promoting  
Christian Unity,  
Bishop Brian  
Farrell**

sisters. St Oscar Romero was shot and killed while celebrating mass on 24 March 1980, by a government sponsored death squad.

“In my time as Mission Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Anglican Church of Canada during the years of the civil wars in El Salvador and other Central American countries, I made many visits to the region, most often in support of those seeking to defend the human rights of the poor and exploited, including many priests and pastors in El Salvador. I recall meeting so many who were inspired by Oscar Romero to continue the struggle for justice for the poor of the region. In the hearts of the people of Latin America Romero was already considered a saint; "San Oscar de las Américas" they acclaimed him, almost right after he was assassinated. On the occasion of his

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canonisation, for the poor of the Americas this is a moment of great joy to have his martyrdom officially recognised by the Church. I never imagined I would be present to witness this event.

“With regard to St Paul VI, Anglicans will know that it is thanks to this Pope that we entered into formal dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. Following the historic visit of Archbishop Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in 1966 (at which the Pope gave the Archbishop his own episcopal ring) ARCIC was established: "a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed". Today we recognise that ARCIC has produced ground-breaking agreed statements on the Eucharist and Ministry which have received the highest level of reception by the Churches of the Anglican Communion. ARCIC continues its work on theological issues, and now, because of the significant progress made, a complementary commission, IARCCUM, was established in 2001 "to translate our manifest agreement in faith into common life and mission". We have much for which to thank Pope St Paul VI.”

## **News briefs**

### **+++ C of I Bishop's sympathy on death of Bishop Laurence Forristal, Bishop Emeritus of Ossory**

The C of I Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, RT Rev Dr Michael Burrows recalled Bishop Forristal who died last week. Dr Burrows wrote, “After my arrival in this diocese in summer 2006. I shall never forget the prompt and warm

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welcome I received from Bishop Laurence Forristal, at the time the 'other' bishop of Ossory.

“He became a special friend, often encouraging and guiding through well – timed phone calls. In recent years as his health declined, I would often seek solace in his company through visits to the nursing home in Gowran where he lived. The end of those visits, and the delightful combination of spirituality and shrewdness I experienced during them, leaves a true gap in my life and I offer my sympathy to all in the Roman Catholic diocese of Ossory in the context of a bereavement that for them rather ends an epoch.”



### **+++Climate Change & Environment Seminar: Belfast**

Are you interested in how your parish can help the environment? The Church of Ireland's Church and Society Commission is holding a climate change and environment seminar on Wednesday, 14th November, at Church of



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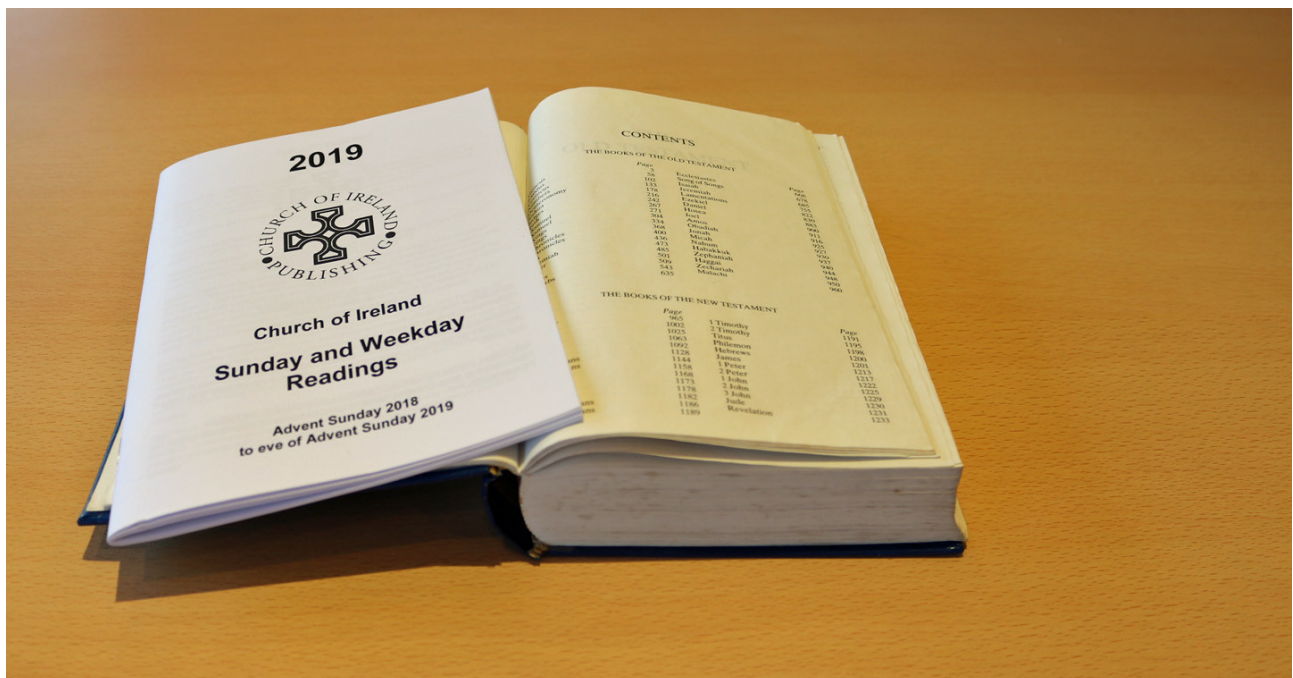
Ireland House, Donegall Street, Belfast. The event will start at 10am and conclude with a light lunch at 1pm.

*Speakers:*

- Stephen Trew (environmental campaigner) – *A Biblical Perspective on the Environment*
- David Thomas (Christian Aid Belfast) – *Impact of Climate Change on the Developing World*
- David Ritchie (Chief Officer, Representative Church Body) – *Practical Action in Parish Life*

Attendance is **free** and bookings can be made by emailing [seminar@ireland.anglican.org](mailto:seminar@ireland.anglican.org) or by checking in on [Facebook](#).

**+++Sunday and Weekday Readings 2019 booklet now available**



The Season of Advent begins on Sunday 2nd December, and so starts a new liturgical year and a fresh cycle of daily Scripture readings. Church of Ireland Publishing has

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announced that *Sunday and Weekday Readings 2019* is now available.

This annual booklet is compiled by the Revd Ken Rue, who says: '*Sunday and Weekday Readings* is designed to help worship planners and lesson readers know the appointed readings for Sundays and weekdays. It is also beneficial for those who wish to follow a personal course of Scripture readings which is tied in with the Church calendar.'

It may be obtained from Richard Ryan at the Book Well, Belfast (email: [info@thebookwell.co.uk](mailto:info@thebookwell.co.uk); mobile: 07581 143596), or from Heather Jestin, Church House, Rathmines (email: [heather.jestin@rcbdub.org](mailto:heather.jestin@rcbdub.org); telephone: +353 (0)1 412 5665). The price is £3.50/€4 per booklet.

For further information on Church of Ireland Publishing, visit [www.cip.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cip.ireland.anglican.org)

*Sunday and Weekday Readings* is also available from the Church of Ireland's [online bookstore](#).

### **+++Youth worker vacancy**

Vacancy for an Apprentice Youth Worker/Outdoor Development Worker (funded by RANK foundation). "LOGIC is a Christian based drop in centre in Moira for age 12–18 year olds and we are seeking to employ a full-time Apprentice Youth Worker/Outdoor Development Worker to help run our programme and help design and deliver an outdoor pursuits enterprise. Salary: £15,500 per annum. *"Please note that this is a fixed term contract to 30th November 2019.*

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“We are looking for an enthusiastic, hard-working, positive individual who is self-motivated and able to work using their own initiative to start a new social enterprise project. The successful candidate will use their own experiences to help support young people in developing their social and life skills. They must also be willing to learn and to develop their own professional skill set.”

For an application pack please email:

[tracey@logiccafe.org](mailto:tracey@logiccafe.org) or send an A4 SAE to: Tracey McKinley, 51 Main Street, Moira, BT67 0LQ

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 12 midday on Friday 19 October 2018.

### **+++Out of the pews and into the pub**

A trip to the local pub has replaced Evensong at one Cardiff church once a month. But there are no half measures when it comes to discussing faith publicly at the ‘Ponder and Pint’ nights in Grangetown, says Priest-in-Charge Revd David Morris. Read his blog

