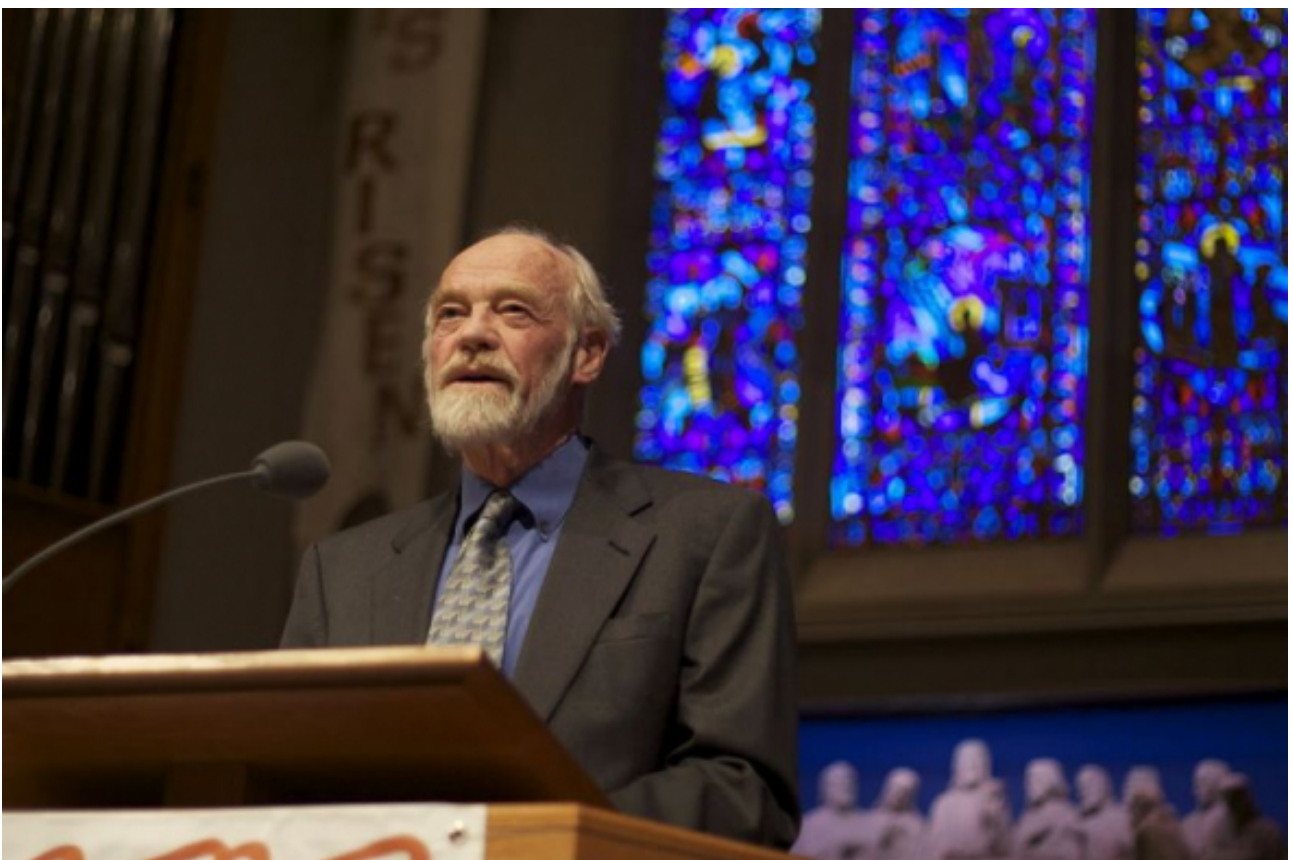


October 24, 2018



Author of The Message Bible dies at 85

Eugene Peterson, the man who penned The Message Bible, has died at the age of 85.

"It feels fitting that his death came on a Monday, the day of the week he always honored as a Sabbath during his years

October 24, 2018

as a pastor," Peterson's family said in a [statement](#) to NavPress, which published *The Message*.

"After a lifetime of faithful service to the church — running the race with gusto — it is reassuring to know that Eugene has now entered into the fullness of the Kingdom of God and has been embraced by eternal Sabbath."

Peterson was the author of 35 books.

His latest, *Every Step an Arrival: A 90-Day Devotional for Exploring God's Word*, was released earlier this month.

Peterson's most famous work, however, is without a doubt *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, in which he paraphrased the Scriptures into modern parlance with the goal of giving those distant from the Bible a more accessible take.

He retired from pastoring in 1991 and became a professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He retired from there in 2006.

Peterson's last years were spent studying and writing at his home in Montana, where he and his wife, Jan, lived in a home Peterson's father built.

"Among his final words were, 'Let's go.' And his joy: my, oh my; the man remained joyful right up to his blessed end, smiling frequently," his family added.

"In such moments, it's best for all mortal flesh to keep silence. But if you have to say something say this: 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'"

October 24, 2018

Earlier this month, his son, Eric, **revealed that Peterson was hospitalized** due to heart failure and dementia and was in his last months of life.

Last **July**, the Presbyterian pastor stirred controversy when he said he knows many gays and lesbians who "seem to have as good a spiritual life as I do," and noted that he would not have said that 20 years ago.

He added that he thinks the whole debate about gays and lesbians is likely "over" and responded affirmatively when asked if he would officiate a same-sex couple's wedding ceremony in his church.

He almost immediately **retracted** that statement.

"To clarify, I affirm a biblical view of marriage: one man to one woman. I affirm a biblical view of everything," Peterson explained in a lengthy subsequent statement.

"When put on the spot by this particular interviewer, I said yes in the moment."

He was also critical of the megachurch model.

"My feeling is that when you're a pastor, you know the people's names. When 5,000 people come into the church, you don't know anybody's name. I don't think you can be a pastor with just a bunch of anonymous people out there. In the megachurch, well, there's no relationship with anybody. I think the nature of the church is relational," Peterson said last year.

October 24, 2018

Already gratitude for his life has begun to pour in.

"Grateful to God for a long obedience in the same direction. Thank you Eugene Peterson," [tweeted](#) Russell Moore, who heads the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Brian Houston, pastor of Hillsong Church in Australia [tweeted](#) a heartfelt dedication to the author.

"God has used your exceptional writing skills to deepen and revitalize the spiritual lives of many. And God has used the fruit of your pen to deeply influence me...Well done good and faithful servant."

Full church as Shankill remembers 25th anniversary of atrocity

DUP leader Arlene Foster, North Belfast MP Nigel Dodds and Alliance leader Naomi Long were among the politicians in attendance.

Joe Hendron, who was the SDLP MP for West Belfast at the time of the bomb, was also at the service, along with SDLP councillor Tim Attwood.

West Kirk Presbyterian church was filled to capacity. A number of others who lost people in the Troubles also attended in a show of solidarity with the Shankill bomb families.

October 24, 2018

The Spire of Hope, Belfast Cathedral



The normally busy Shankill Road was silent, with

police cordons closing it to traffic. Lines of people gathered outside the church to hear the service which was relayed outside by speakers.

Rev David Clawson welcomed everyone both in and outside the church. During the service, a combined choir from local primary schools sang King of Kings.

Zoe McBride, who was just two when her mother Sharon was killed in the Shankill bomb, gave a reading. The exact time that the Shankill bomb exploded - 1.05pm - was marked midway through the service.

October 23, 1993 was a busy Saturday afternoon on the Shankill Road when the bomb exploded.

Twenty-five years later, the road was silent and many shops closed during the service in tribute to those who died.

School children laid floral tributes at the site where Frizzell's fish shop once stood, a short distance from the church. Flowers were also laid at a nearby memorial garden.

October 24, 2018

DUP leader Arlene Foster paused for a chat with Gina Murray, whose 13-year-old daughter Leanne was killed in the Shankill bomb.

Mrs Foster paid tribute to the memorial events which have taken place over the last week.

"I think the message today that we were given during the service of hope is one that will resonate very well with the families and I know it's been a great comfort to them," Mrs Foster said.

She added: "I think it was wonderful to have a cross-community presence here today, people showing solidarity with victims, innocent people who were out shopping on a Saturday afternoon and whose lives were snuffed out, for no reason.

"It's been very humbling to be here today with the families to stand in solidarity with them." Mrs Foster visited an exhibition about the Shankill bomb following the service.

Within six days of the 1993 Shankill Road bomb blast, six innocent Catholics were murdered in four separate revenge attacks. The loyalist killing spree culminated a week later with the massacre of seven more people at a bar in Greysteel, Co Londonderry on October 30.

However, within two months of the carnage both the UK and Irish prime ministers would pave the way for progress with the Downing Street Declaration – accepting the principle that a united Ireland could only come about by democratic means.

October 24, 2018

Greysteel massacre: Priest recalls ‘cruelty and barbarity’ of trick or treat killings

A Catholic priest who comforted the bereaved after the Greysteel massacre 25 years ago has described how the revulsion felt after the savage mass-murder helped move Northern Ireland towards peace.

“It was very true of Greysteel that those who suffered the most were quickest to forgive, to look for peace,” Fr Stephen Kearney said as he reflected on the horrors of the shooting ahead of the 25th anniversary.

On October 30, 1993, loyalist gunmen entered a pub in the quiet, rural village in Co Londonderry during a Halloween party and, with the words ‘trick or treat’, opened fire.

The shootings at the Rising Sun Bar claimed the lives of seven people, and another who died from his injuries six months later. Six of the deceased were Catholics, while two were Protestant.

The attack was claimed by a group styling itself ‘Ulster Freedom Fighters’ as revenge for the IRA attack on the Shankhill Road in Belfast days before.

‘Extreme’ abortion bill passes first stage in UK parliament

A proposal that would radically change abortion law in England and Wales, as well as imposing abortion on Northern Ireland, has passed its first stage in the House of Commons yesterday afternoon.

October 24, 2018

MPs voted by 208 to 123 to approve the Ten Minute Rule Motion proposed by Labour MP Diana Johnson. The motion would remove most legal restrictions on abortion in England and Wales, and impose a similar regime on Northern Ireland, which currently maintains strong right-to-life laws.

Writing for the Catholic Herald before the debate, Baroness O’Loan said the proposal would have “staggering” consequences.

“This Bill would have the effect of introducing radical changes to abortion practice in England and Wales, and would impose abortion on Northern Ireland,” Baroness O’Loan wrote.

“If these proposals were successful, we would see one the most extreme abortion regimes in the world introduced right across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.”

Speaking during the debate Conservative MP Fiona Bruce said the proposal would “set a dangerous constitutional precedent of interference”.

“It is not only unconstitutional, it is untimely. At such a sensitive time in relations between the Westminster government and the Northern Ireland administration, it would completely undermine the substance and spirit of the Good Friday Agreement.”

Ten Minute Rule motions rarely become law, but there are fears the abortion lobby could use it to build momentum for a serious attempt to change the law later this year.

October 24, 2018

Clare McCarthy, a spokesperson for Right To Life, said: “Though this was only a Ten Minute Rule Bill and saw less than half of MPs voting, the vote today will be used by Johnson and her peers to gain momentum for the abortion lobby’s extreme proposals for radical abortion change in the UK.”

“Recent polling also shows that this move is wildly out of step with public opinion who would actually support more restrictions on the current abortion law in the UK,” she added.

“In fact, 70 per cent of women polled believe that the current 24-week gestational limit for abortion should be reduced. In Britain, abortions can be performed until the 24th week, far beyond the European median of 12 weeks.

“Diana Johnson’s Bill is very unlikely to become law but should these extreme proposals ever reach the stages of legislative debate in the house, we are hopeful that politicians in Westminster would unite against them in respect of public opinion and of democracy in Northern Ireland.”

Bishop Michael Curry shares his worries about Christian leaders

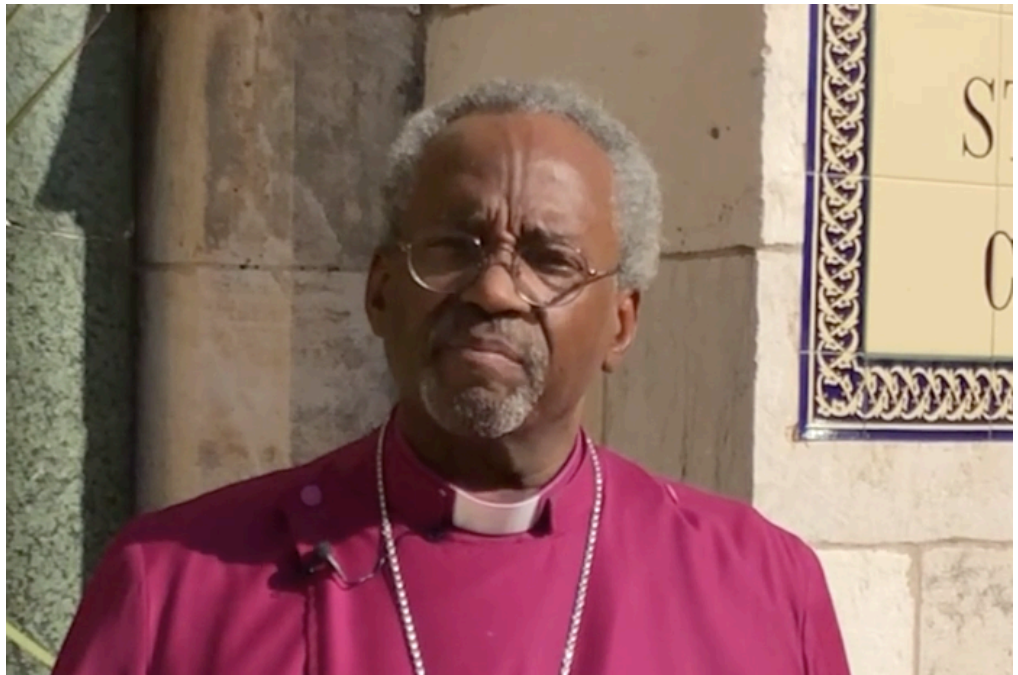
The preacher from the royal wedding says moderate religious voices are being left out of the public sphere.

In an interview with the Guardian, Bishop Michael Curry said many leaders of Christianity are "buying into political agendas that very often do not reflect the teaching of Jesus

October 24, 2018

of
Nazareth".

"We as
Christian
leaders
must
speak up
and bear
witness to
the values
that we



hold based on the teachings of Jesus. And when we fail to do so, we've failed to represent the Christian faith in the public sphere".

Bishop Michael is the current presiding bishop and primate of The Episcopal Church, a member of the global Anglican Communion.

The Bishop, whose sermon at the royal wedding received mixed reviews from Christians, received a global platform he did not have before, which he is now using to expand more on his sermon and book, *The Power of Love*.

He said that Christians who claim to follow Jesus but do not obey the commands to love and serve the poor should assess their faith.

He said: "I'm concerned when I don't hear other religious leaders standing up for immigrants in our country being treated with justice and decency. I'm concerned when I

October 24, 2018

don't hear Christian leaders advocating vociferously for the re-unification of parents and children at our borders.

"I'm concerned when I don't hear religious leaders advocating for children to be number one on the social agenda of this country. I'm concerned when I hear silence from religious leaders after the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis marched through the streets of Charlottesville. I'm not hearing Jesus of Nazareth when I hear that silence.

"We as Christian leaders must speak up and bear witness to the values that we hold based on the teachings of Jesus. And when we fail to do so, we've failed to represent the Christian faith in the public sphere."

Christian and Jewish leaders reaffirm commitment

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) has re-affirmed its commitment to its core mission after completing its 75th year of existence.

It was founded in 1942 amid the turmoil of the Second World War and has become the leading nationwide forum for Jewish-Christian engagement.

The Council says Christian/Jewish relations have grown strong and flourished in the UK during the past 75 years.

However, it recognises that global society is living through a period of increased hatred, extremism, and polarisation and that, in the UK, antisemitism and antisemitic discourse has

October 24, 2018



become more noticeable in public life and within social media.

The Council members who are leaders of the Jewish and Christian communities in the UK state that antisemitism has no place in British society and call on those in positions of power and influence to listen to such concerns.

They also commit to speaking out on anti-Christian sentiment and persecution of Christians in many parts of the world today.

CCJ Chair, Bishop Michael Ipgrave said: "It has been very encouraging to see the renewed endorsement which our Christian and Jewish Presidents have given to CCJ as we complete our 75th anniversary year.

"We are grateful for their support, as we feel that our work is of ever increasing importance in our society at this time, with rising levels of antisemitism and increasing xenophobia and discrimination towards minority communities."

October 24, 2018

CCJ Director Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko said: "These are challenging times, nationally and globally.

"As faith communities, when we stand up for one another and demonstrate unity against hatred and division it has such a powerful impact.

"CCJ has been bringing faith communities together for 75 years; and that is why it has remained relevant.

"The work of CCJ is so essential at this time and in every generation.'

There is a branch of CCJ in Belfast.

Resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Rt Revd John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher and Chair, Church of Ireland Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, has highlighted the resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), which are now available to order for use in parishes. The theme for this year is Only Justice.

Bishop McDowell said: 'I hope that this annual commendation of the order of service and other materials relating to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, is not received simply as a formality. Although it has both its critics and its weaknesses, the WPCU provides all of us with a fixed point in the year to celebrate, initiate, or perhaps revive the

October 24, 2018

emphasis on solidarity in faith between believers in service of the Gospel and the World that is very opportune.



‘This year the material is inspired and derived from the Christian community in Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim–majority country, and is drawn from the great imperative of the Deuteronomist – “Justice and only justice you shall pursue...” (Deut. 16:20) – focusing on the depth of the biblical understanding of a word associated too easily with the iron certainty of the law but intended as a means of restoring right relationships. In an increasingly atomised world and an “individualised” Ireland, there is a great yearning for this call to restored relationships and the reality of mutual dependence.’ Resources are now available to order from Norwich Books and Music (tel. 01603 785925) or to download from www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

News briefs

+++Church of Ireland List of Special Events to mark the Centenary of the Armistice

The Historical Centenaries Working Group has compiled the following list from information supplied to it. Events are

October 24, 2018



listed in alphabetical order by location; for further details, please contact individual venue.

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/8364/church-of-ireland-list-of>

+++Methodist visit to South Africa land programme

Rev. Jools Hamilton co-led a team of young adults from the Methodist Church in Ireland to South Africa, to explore themes of justice and leadership. As part of their visit, the team spent some time with the Church Land Programme (WDR Partner). Here Jools shares some thoughts on their work and the uphill battle they face.

<http://methodistworlddevelopment.org/blog/2018/8/21/constantly-learning>

+++Connor canon returns to his roots

The Rev Mark McConnell, rector of Ballymena (Kilconriola) and Ballyclug, has been appointed a Canon of Lisburn

October 24, 2018

Cathedral. A date for his installation to the Chapter of St Saviour has yet to be set. Mark, who has been rector of



Ballymena since June 2016, said he was ‘really shocked’ when the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, contacted him.

“I am honoured that the Bishop thought of me,” Mark said. “It is recognition that I have been in ministry for more than 30 years, and is also a great encouragement for me. This is doubly special because Lisburn Cathedral is the parish church in which I was born and raised for the first 25 years of my life. That is quite something. Lisburn Cathedral is where the seeds of faith were sown and where I felt the first call to ordination.”

Mark is a former pupil of Lisnagarvey School for Boys and Lisburn Technical College. After A Levels he joined the Northern Ireland Civil Service where he worked for more than seven years, ending up in IDB House where his job was to encourage exports from Northern Ireland overseas. In his mid-20s, Mark felt a strong calling to commit more to his faith. “I didn’t see ordination as the way forward but wanted to know more about faith and Christian service,” he said. This led him to Oakhill College in north London. “The structure allowed people to find their direction within the

October 24, 2018

studies,” Mark said. “This could have been anything from youth ministry to army chaplaincy or evangelism.”

It was during his three years at Oakhill Mark decided ordination was for him. Halfway through the course, he began contacting bishops.

“St Alban’s Diocese took me under their wing. They accepted me for ordination training in the Church of England. God opened doors for me,” he said. After graduation from Oakhill, Mark had the opportunity to do a familiarisation year on his way to ordination, and he did this at St James’ Parish, Muswell Hill, north London, where he had the opportunity to do ‘anything that needed doing!’

During that year he married Cherith, a native of Omagh and a primary school teacher. Mark was ordained in St Alban’s Diocese and served his first curacy in Christ Church, Bedford. He and Cherith felt called back to Northern Ireland, and Mark became accustomed to the ways of the Church of Ireland through a second curacy in Bangor Parish, Diocese of Down and Dromore. During this time he did a lot of work with the congregation of The Primacy, a small church on a large housing estate shared with the Methodist Church. Mark was later appointed rector of Killyleagh, and after seven years moved to Connor Diocese as rector of Ballyclare. He remained in Ballyclare for more than 18 years before the move to Ballymena. Mark and Cherith have three children, Daniel, Matthew and Erin.

+++Corrymeela leader inspires Cork clergy

The annual gathering of the clergy of the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross at Ballylickey, near Bantry,

October 24, 2018

County Cork, took place from Monday, 15th October to Wednesday, 17th October. The visiting speaker this year, the latest in a long line of distinguished speakers at



Ballylickey, was the Leader of the Corrymeela Community, Pádraig Ó Tuama. Originally from Carrigaline, County Cork, Pádraig Ó Tuama is a poet and theologian based in Belfast. Since 2014 he has been the leader of the Corrymeela Community, Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation witness dedicated to transforming conflict through human encounter. His interests encompass poetry, religion, conflict and storytelling. At Ballylickey this year, for the clergy of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, he took the theme of 'Borders and Belonging in the Biblical Witness.' His addresses were engaging, inspiring, thought-provoking and motivating. Rooted in familiar Bible characters, there was a strong contemporary feel to the four talks, which were:

- 'Ruth, the border crosser'
- 'Tamar, the tamer of the Lion of Judah'
- 'Jesus and Gentiles: an exploration of friendship'
- 'Jesus in the wilderness: loneliness and leadership'

+++75th anniversary of Council of Cristians and Jews

"To mark CCJ's 75th Anniversary we recommit ourselves to respond to the challenges of today. We call on people of faith to act together with us." CCJ's Presidents have

October 24, 2018

reaffirmed their commitment to CCJ's core mission. Read their full statement here: [http://www.ccj.org.uk/ccj-presidents-reaffirm-commitment-to-ccjs-core-mission/ ...](http://www.ccj.org.uk/ccj-presidents-reaffirm-commitment-to-ccjs-core-mission/)

+++Church of Ireland Ordination Newsletter

The 2018 edition of the Church of Ireland Ordination Newsletter is out now. The newsletter lists those currently studying in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and provides information for those considering God's call to ordination. The newsletter is edited by the Central Director of Ordinands, Canon David Gillespie, who flagged the Commission on Ministry's plans for a 'Vocations Sunday' next year. He also highlighted a proposed two day retreat for those exploring ministry which is due to take place in 2020.

[You can download the 2018 newsletter here.](#)

+++Vacancy Community and Family Worker

Sydenham Methodist Church (Methodist Church in Ireland): Sydenham Methodist Circuit, in East Belfast, is seeking to recruit a Community and Family Worker (15 hours per week). Salary: £8,814 – £9,292.

Application form. Job description. Person specification.

Application closing date: Friday, 9 November, 2018. For more information, please contact Robin Waugh:

robin.waugh@irishmethodist.org

