

## American youth join in Summer Madness festival



Summer Madness starts tomorrow and 14 groups of young people from Connor diocese are gathering up their sleeping bags and wellies in readiness for this year's Festival. The annual Christian Youth Festival takes place in the grounds of Glenarm Castle, Co Antrim, from June 30-July 4.

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This year the Connor young people will be joined by an American group called Christ In Youth. They have been partnering with Summer Madness and run extensive programmes for young people in USA.

Christ In Youth are based in Missouri and the main group of young people coming to Connor Diocese are from Arkansas. There will be 27 Americans including seven leaders and they will be camping alongside the Connor groups and eating with the Connor young people during Summer Madness.

The American visitors will then take part in Connor Streetreach in Glenavy from July 5-7 before flying home.

The Connor youth groups taking part in Summer Madness are:

St Colman's Gateway, Carrickfergus; St Stephen's, St Luke's & St Michael's, Belfast; Derryvolgie Parish; Lisburn Cathedral; Church of the Resurrection; St Patrick's, Coleraine; Lambeg Parish; Ballymena Parish; Broughshane Parish; Ballyclare Parish; St Pauls, Lisburn; Glenavy Parish; St Brigids, Glengormley; and St Nicholas', Carrickfergus.

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## **Presbyterian concern about The Courts and the government on abortion**

Commenting on yesterday's (29<sup>th</sup> June) developments which relate to abortion in Northern Ireland, a spokesperson for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said, "We are deeply saddened and puzzled that on the same day the Court of Appeal in Belfast concluded by a majority decision that it should "not intervene" on this highly sensitive issue and that abortion was "a matter for the [Northern Ireland] Assembly to decide", that the Minister for Women and Equalities in London should think it proper to intervene in this way with such a measure.

"As a strongly pro-life Church we believe that the lives of women and unborn children matter profoundly, as human life is incredibly precious and special to God - both lives matter. We also recognise the great pain involved in the extremely difficult circumstances faced by women and their families. As we have previously said, we emphasise the need for women, children and families in Northern Ireland to be provided with excellent perinatal care services,

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which includes practical, emotional and spiritual support.”

See also -

## [Northern Irish appeal court refuses limited lifting of abortion ban](#)

The Guardian

Northern **Irish** appeal court refuses limited lifting of abortion ban ... The 1967 Abortion Act does not extend to Northern **Ireland**, where abortions are ... type of highly controversial issue touching on social, moral and **religious** policies .... 2017 Guardian **News** and Media Limited or its affiliated companies.

[Northern Ireland abortion law should be left to Stormont Assembly. say judges - BT.com](#)

[Government U-turns on NHS abortions for Northern Ireland women - The Independent](#)

[Abortion law a matter for Stormont. Court of Appeal rules - the Irish News](#)

[Full Coverage](#)

## **C of I Board of Education welcomes Minister's comments on religion and schools admissions**

The General Synod Board of Education (RI) has welcomed comments by the Minister of Education and Skills concerning the role of religion in schools admissions policies.

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Minister Richard Bruton on Wednesday June 28, set out his preferred policy approach for amending primary school admissions legislation on the issue of the role that religion can play in the process.

Minister Bruton said that his preference was to remove the capacity for state-funded denominational primary schools, where they are oversubscribed, to use religion as a criteria in admissions process except, in three scenarios:

- i. where it would not otherwise be possible to maintain the ethos of the school;
- ii. where the school is established by a minority religion, in order to ensure that students of that religion can find a school place in a school of that ethos;
- iii. where the school is established by a minority religion, in order to admit a student of that religion who resides in a community consistently served by that school.

In a statement the General Synod Board of Education said:

“The Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education (RI) notes the Minister of Education and Skill’s statement on the role of religion in the school admissions processes and welcomes the recognition by Minister Bruton of specific

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concerns raised by minority faiths on the impact of new measures on minority faith schools. The Board of Education looks forward to the detail of the proposals and to engaging with the Minister and his officials in relation to the measures and proposed legislative changes.”

## **Irish Methodist President asks members to contact politicians about Sri Lanka attacks**

Addressing the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain currently being held in Birmingham, the President of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, Rev. Asiri Perera, spoke of the fact that 196 Christian Churches in Sri Lanka have been attacked. This in spite of promises made in 2015 by the newly elected government.

The President informed the Conference that in spite of reports of such attacks having been made to the police, no action has been taken. The latest incident being that the lawyer representing the Christian Churches has fled Sri Lanka under threat.

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The Conference deplored this situation and encouraged Methodist members to contact the Government and their own local MP's in an effort to ensure that such persecution of Christians in that country comes to an end.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev. Laurence Graham, currently attending this Conference, encourages members of the Methodist Church in Ireland to pray for our Christian sisters and brothers in Sri Lanka and for those who oppose them.

*'I am asking our members to consider contacting their local TD's and MP's on this issue to encourage the Governments of the United Kingdom and The Republic of Ireland to make urgent representation to the Government of Sri Lanka on this urgent matter'*

## **Wine tasting and ducks feature in Antrim parishes fundraisers**

All Saints' Antrim parishioners had their fourth joint wine tasting evening with Father Sean Emerson and parishioners from St Comgall's in May.

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**Father Sean Emerson and Archdeacon Stephen McBride with representatives of Lough Neagh Rescue which benefited from funds raised at the wine tasting evening in All Saints' Antrim.**

Father Emerson and Archdeacon Stephen McBride, rector of All Saints', first worked together in 1990 when both were in Belfast parishes – Holy Family and St Peter's respectively.

On this occasion the wines were selected by the clergy and everyone seemed to enjoy their choices of prosecco, three whites and three reds



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**The sun shone at the fun evening and BBQ which followed the duck race.**

including a Holy Snail chardonnay sauvignon blanc.

In between the whites and reds, Drew Taggart, a volunteer with Lough Neagh Rescue gave a short presentation on the work of this brave team of volunteers who provide 24/7 rescue cover for anyone who gets into trouble, not only on the Lough but also in the rivers which flow into the Lough. As well as having a great evening, after expenses the parish raised almost £300 for Lough Neagh Rescue.

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### **The duck race underway**

Another fundraising event took place on Friday June 23 when parishioners gathered at the Shakey Bridge on the Six Mile Water for the annual duck race and barbecue.

One thousand yellow ducks made the 50m race quite a spectacle. This was followed by a sunny evening at Muckamore Cricket Club where bouncy castles were provided for the younger parishioners and the food was barbecued by Six or Stix. The evening raised £3,800 for parish funds.

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## **Rector of Shankill Parish, Lurgan, instituted**



### **Rev Mark Harvey (left) with Rev Scott McDonald**

Revd Mark Harvey who has moved from the Diocese of Down to Dromore Diocese and become the rector of Shankill Parish, Lurgan.

Bishop Harold Miller of Down & Dromore instituted Mark at the service on Wednesday 28 June 2017, and Mark's brother-in-law, Revd Scott McDonald, gave the address. Scott (right)

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is part of the Lecale Area Mission Partnership (LAMP) ministry team.

Mark, 52, grew up in a Rectory. His late father Maurice was Rector of Ardmore and Craigavon from 1979 to 1987, and Mark was a pupil at Lurgan College from 1979–83, so he is no stranger to the area.

Ordained in 1993, Mark served his curacy in St Columba's, Portadown, and from 1996–2001 was rector of Monaghan. He then spent four years on the staff of CMS Ireland and was instituted rector of St Mary's, Ballybeen, in May 2005.

Mark, a Canon of Down Cathedral, has served as Clerical Honorary Secretary of Down since 2014 and Area Dean of Loughview since 2015. He is married to Joanne, and they have a daughter, Lydia. Prior to ordination, he worked as a primary school teacher in Bangor.

Speaking of his new appointment, Mark said, "We have loved our time at St Mary's and forged many deep and lasting relationships during these past 12 years. God has been so gracious and we leave a vibrant church family in good heart. However, this call to Shankill has been so clear, and like Paul in Acts 20, we are 'compelled by the Spirit' to step out in faith.

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“We are excited about what the Lord is going to do in and through his people in this great parish. Joanne and I would simply ask for your prayers, that he will equip us for all the challenges that lie ahead.”

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