

Image of the day

St Petersburg

November 26, 2021

News Reports

Connor MU supports Women's Aid



Connor Diocesan Mother's Union's Autumn Council meeting in St Patrick's Parish Church, Ballymena, this week was attended by representatives from Women's Aid ABCLN who gave a talk about their work.

Women's Aid ABCLN covers the Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey area.

On its website, Connor MU writes: "As supporters of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign, it is vitally important that our members hear first-hand about the work of Women's Aid within our communities.

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“During the Covid-19 pandemic, the instances of domestic abuse have risen sharply. Many branches within our diocese already help their local Women’s Aid refuge with donations of toilet bags, bedding and clothes.

“When it became evident that due to the pandemic the diocese could not operate their AFIA (Away From It All) project the Diocesan Trustees and Executive committee decided to reimagine AFIA and the outcome was to support Women’s Aid ABCLN with fuel vouchers.”

The reports states that Connor diocesan MU has provided two generous donations of fuel vouchers for local families at this critical time.

“Sadly, with rising fuel costs and the colder weather, many families are going to find it difficult to heat their homes this winter. It is hoped that our practical support to Women’s Aid ABCLN will help ease that burden for some of them,” the report concludes.

Kilternan hosts ‘Souls of our Shoes’ exhibition on domestic abuse

An exhibition which walks viewers through the reality of domestic abuse takes place in Kilternan Parish next week.

‘Souls of our Shoes – A journey into and out of Domestic Abuse’ will be on display in the Gathering Grounds in Kilternan from November 29 to December 4.



KILTERNAN PARISH

'SOULS OF OUR SHOES' Exhibition

... shoes that seek to tell stories of victims of domestic violence.

29th November-4th December

Monday - Friday 8:30am-2:30pm

Saturday 10am-2pm

**BORROWED FROM THE
MOTHER'S UNION AND ON
DISPLAY IN THE GATHERING
GROUNDS, KILTERNAN PARISH
CENTRE. TEA AND COFFEE
ALSO AVAILABLE.**



This incredibly powerful and compelling exhibition coincides

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with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign. It is an initiative of Mothers' Union and its main purpose is to raise awareness of domestic violence.

Souls of Our Shoes is an exhibition of physical shoes accompanied by comments from those who have walked away from abuse.

The exhibition is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm, and on Saturday December 4 from 10am till 2pm. Individuals and groups are welcome to drop in during this time to view the exhibition and stand in solidarity with all who experience domestic abuse.

Scots Church group is training local congregations on gender-based violence

The 25 November has been designated as the United Nation's Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Churches around the world are central to this international effort to end gender-based violence.

The UN estimates that around the world 137 women are killed by a partner or family member every day, and across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women will experience some of physical or sexual violence from a partner.

In Scotland too, we have plenty of work to do. Last year's lockdown saw a drop in violent crime, but it later became clear that domestic violence had soared. And during October 2021 Scottish Government figures show that police

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recorded 207 rapes or attempted rapes, more than six a day.

As places of trust, relationship and spiritual encouragement, church communities can be a source of comfort and support for women and other vulnerable people.

The Church of Scotland has been working on this issue for over 20 years and formed Integrity, its violence against women task group, to raise awareness about violence against women and to support churches working within their own local communities.

Over the last year, the group has been delivering a training that takes an in-depth look at gender-based violence, and the role of churches in recognising, preventing and responding to this form of violence. It includes practical ways to support people and crucial safeguarding information to consider.

"Violence against women can happen anywhere and comes in many different forms," says Rev Karen Hendry, the group's convener.

"One important way we can end it is by breaking the silence. If we can open conversations within Church communities, we can join together to end rape, child abuse and domestic violence.

"The more we know about how violence affects women and children, the less likely we are to do further harm. With more knowledge we can helpfully and quickly signpost people to professional support."



"Violence isn't always physical, and can include: sexual harassment at work, controlling behaviour in a relationship, stalking, online abuse, spiritual, emotional and psychological abuse, and street harassment.

"Both women and men are more likely to experience violence at the hands of men and all of this violence is unacceptable.

"As Christians we know this is not part of God's plan for us. Gender-based violence is not inevitable and if we work together we can end it."
New work is underway

In Falkirk, Brightons Parish Church has formed a gender-based violence task group to help increase awareness and support women and girls dealing with this form of violence.

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Rev Scott Burton says the group is learning about gender-based violence as it plans how best to contribute to ending it.

"Last year our country was profoundly impacted by the injustice and murder of Sarah Everard, and speaking the Sunday afterwards, I reflected on the male privilege I've experienced and how we as a church need to get involved in tackling violence against women," he says.

"That led to a conversation with one of our members who works in this area, and from there the creation of our new team.

"We're still in the early stages of learning about the issue ourselves, before seeking to take this forward more widely with our congregation and parish, but we're firmly committed – and compelled by the Bible – to do more than simply give lip service to this injustice being tackled."

Watch the video to see Brightons Parish Church's online discussion about gender-based violence.

This year Scotland became one of the first countries in the world to target its violence-prevention efforts towards men.

Police Scotland's "Don't be that guy" social media campaign video has been viewed almost 3 million times to date. The video is starting conversations across the country and helping build support among men on how to end violence against women and girls.

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It is an innovative campaign but we still have more work to do to end gender-based violence. And congregations have an important role to play.

U Tube videos at -

[[] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/articles/church-group-is-training-local-congregations-on-gender-based-violence>]

People and places

Great lift for Blessington School as Ireland Prop opens new pitch

Ireland and Leinster Prop Andrew Porter made a special appearance at Blessington No 1

The player, who featured prominently in the recent Autumn Rugby Internationals, traded the hallowed turf of the Aviva Stadium for the Blessington primary school's brand new all-weather pitch.

Fresh from Ireland's encounters with Japan, New Zealand and Argentina, he cut the ribbon at the official opening of the school's fantastic state of the art facility. The new pitch is the result of extensive fundraising by the school community and the pupils were keen to emphasise the benefits of having a clean, dry pitch to play all their sports on all year round.

Rector of Blessington Union of Parishes, Canon Leonard Ruddock, invited Andrew to perform the official opening after

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a conversation with pupil Olly Cains about the new pitch. “I said, you never know maybe some of our students will go on to achieve great sporting success and then I thought of Andrew, who I knew as a 5th and 6th class pupil, who has achieved great sporting success for Leinster and Ireland,” he recalled.

Canon Ruddock was a Curate in Stillorgan and got to know Andrew and his family when he was a pupil in St Brigid’s National School in the south Dublin parish. He said Andrew was a fantastic role model. He is an ambassador for the Irish Cancer Society and the school community is holding a collection for the charity which will include a donation from the board of management.


Andrew addressed 5th and 6th class pupils who gathered in the hall while the rest of the classes were able to watch as proceedings were live streamed to their classrooms. He said it was wonderful to have such a great pitch at their school. “It’s not called the number one school in Blessington for nothing. You’re incredibly lucky to have such a great pitch. That’s where it all started for me – playing rugby and football

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with my friends in school – and now I’m playing for Leinster and Ireland,” he said.

He answered a huge range of thought provoking questions from the pupils who were keen to find out what his favourite food is (steak), what he eats before a game (mashed potatoes and beans) and if he was intimidated by the Haka (not really – it’s an honour to face the Haka). There were many other topics covered. Some members of Blessington RFC’s minis will be playing at half time during the Leinster game at the weekend and he wished them well and said they would love it.

School principal Lillian Murphy thanked Andrew for coming before bringing him and the entire school out to the yard to witness the ribbon cutting after Canon Ruddock led the school community in prayer.



Merciful God,
You know too well,
that we worry and have fears,
that sometimes doubts and apprehensions
seem to overwhelm us.
Often, our faith is little or there is none,
yet you call us to come to You,
Your ears are open to our prayers.
Hear us now, O Lord.

I wear black on Thursdays

My name is
Roberta
Macartney and I
am the Diocesan
President for
Down and
Dromore. I wear
black on
Thursdays to
support those who

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suffer from Gender Based Violence. 1 in 3 women globally will suffer. Sadly, our news items all too often are about women being raped, murdered, or abused in some way. This has to stop. Keeping quiet about this can end in tragedy. #ThursdaysInBlack



Vacancy for Family Ministry Pastor

Hillsborough Parish Church is seeking to appoint a Family Ministry Pastor.

This is an exciting new post to help deliver an integrated ministry to children, young people and parents which enables them to grow in their relationship with Christ.

Salary: £28,000 to £35,000

For further details please contact Andrea Forbes at admin@hillsboroughparish.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Friday 10 December 2021.

Former See House listed for sale at €900K

The former bishop's palace at Kilmore Lower, near Cavan Town, has been listed for sale for €900,000, less than half the price believed paid for the historic country property at the height of the Celtic Tiger.

It is owned by a syndicate of investors known as White Beach Investments, established in 2007. The company is currently listed as having 19 shareholders. It's understood that they purchased the See House for around €2.2 million just before the crash.

Built circa 1835 as the Bishop's Palace of the Church of Ireland in Kilmore, the 16-bedroom, Georgian, three-bay, three-storey over basement property is being sold along with approximately 16.5 acres (6.67ha) of mature demesne landscape.

Connected to the building are inner and outer courtyards, and Colliers, who brought the property to market, inform potential buyers that upgrading has been carried out as required that over the years.

This includes a completely new roof and considerable window refurbishment.

The property agent, which is one of the world's largest real estate firms, suggests the See House boasts significant investment potential.

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"The main property has not been lived in in many years but remains in remarkably good condition," say Colliers, who add: "The property boasts huge potential as a manageable country house, boutique hotel, private retreat, or a wedding venue subject to planning."

They say the outbuildings, meanwhile, which surround two cut-stone courtyards, have been totally reroofed but otherwise require "considerable" internal refurbishment.

The former See House was among a number of historic local properties to be awarded State-aided grant support for repairs last year.

In more recent years the property has been used in support of the arts.

It was used to facilitate an art school and artist retreat for a time, and later played a central role in staging award-winning playwright Philip Doherty's macabre movable music and theatre experience, 'Ship of Fools', at Halloween 2015.

Courtesy The Anglo Celt



Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

New Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Cycle of Prayer begins this Sunday

This Sunday, November 28, is the First Sunday of Advent which marks the beginning of the new Church year. Accordingly, the new Diocesan Cycle of Prayer is now available on the diocesan website here.

The Diocesan Cycle of Prayer is produced each year by Canon Mark Gardner. Each week you are invited to pray for a different parish and its clergy. Diocesan and central Church organisations are also included as are parishes in our companion Diocese of Jerusalem.

Commending the Cycle of Prayer, Archbishop Michael Jackson noted that it is a rich invitation to belong to God, to one another, to those whom we know and those we don't know.

As we continue through the phases of the pandemic he said: "We have in some ways more opportunities for prayer than ever before as a new horizon beckons. The Diocesan Cycle of Prayer enables us to use these opportunities daily at home and weekly in church. We have the confidence that other people and parishes are praying for us and for our parish as we are praying for them. And, as we do this, we remember with gratitude the communities within which our

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parishes are set and the communities to whom they belong. Old needs and fresh needs come to the surface and God is always present to answer our prayer and the prayer of other people”.

He added: “The Diocesan Cycle of Prayer has also kept us in close touch with members of our companion diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Every part of the world is in the grip of the coronavirus. Each part of the world is touched and singed by it. To know that we have the prayers and the blessing of those who are close every day to the locations that we associate from childhood with the Bible and with Biblical life now as then is a great comfort to us. We pray for the new archbishop of The Diocese of Jerusalem and The Middle East, Archbishop Hosam Naoum, his clergy and his people in their daily life and witness and in their many hardships and trials”.

Perspective

The Church and climate justice by Rev Dr Israel Oluwole Olofinjana

Global leaders, politicians, activists, scientists and members of many faith organisations gathered at the climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow earlier this month. As decisions were made about the fate of humanity and our planet, what is the prophetic role of the global Church when it comes to our environment? What could God be saying to the Church about its involvement in bringing about climate justice?

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If the Church is going to play an active prophetic role in the climate conversations, we must seek to conscientise and mobilise the whole Church. This is because it will require the collective wisdom of the whole Church to tackle the climate crisis. Some parts of the church are currently more involved in engaging the climate conversation more than the others, but if we understand climate justice as a missional imperative that requires whole life disciples, then we need ecumenical collaboration around climate justice.

To secure this ecumenical collaboration, we should firstly develop a biblical framework on climate justice. This will help some parts of the body of Christ, who think that climate justice is a political issue, realise that it is actually a biblical concern. The jubilee concept in the Old Testament is a helpful theological framework. In the Old Testament, God instituted among the Israelites a sabbatical rest for the community and the land. Israelites were supposed to cultivate the land for six years and then allow the land to rest in the seventh year by not cultivating at all (see Leviticus 25). This sabbath principle allowed for an ecological recovery to the land and their agricultural system.

Secondly we need to share the missional imperative of climate justice. The final one of the Church of England's five marks of mission spells this out. It is "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." Charismatics understand this missional imperative through a kingdom theology that engages in wholistic mission. It was this notion of understanding climate justice as mission that led Pope Francis and more than 40 faith leaders to make an urgent appeal for action to COP26 organisers.

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Lastly, we must ensure our ecumenical collaborations around climate justice are rooted in whole life discipleship. This is important so that climate justice is not seen as an add on to our faith but integral to what it means to follow Jesus. This will mean educating church members through sermons, Bible study series, Sunday School materials, worship songs and liturgy. The whole Church must begin to begin to shape its practices in the light of caring for God's creation.

The global Church does have a prophetic role to play when it comes to climate justice. We must do this in unity with an approach that is biblical, missional and rooted in whole life discipleship.

Rev Dr Olofinjana co-hosted a recent online conference by the Evangelical Alliance, Tearfund and Christian Aid exploring the themes of climate and racial justice concerns from a biblical/theological perspective.

Rev Dr Olofinjana is the Director of the Evangelical Alliance's One People Commission, Director, Centre For Missionaries from the Majority World, an Honorary Research Fellow at the Queens Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education and the Editor of World Christianity in Western Europe: Diasporic Identity, Narratives and Missiology (2020).



Poem for today

Beaver Moon – The Suicide of a Friend - by Mary Oliver

When somewhere life
breaks like a pane of glass,
and from every direction casual
voices are bringing you the news,
you say: I should have known.
You say: I should have been aware.
That last Friday he looked
so ill, like an old mountain-climber
lost on the white trails, listening
to the ice breaking upward, under
his worn-out shoes. You say:
I heard rumors of trouble, but after all
we all have that. You say:
what could I have done? and you go
with the rest, to bury him.

That night, you turn in your bed
to watch the moon rise, and once more
see what a small coin it is
against the darkness, and how everything else
is a mystery, and you know
nothing at all except
the moonlight is beautiful –
white rivers running together
along the bare boughs of the trees –

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and somewhere, for someone, life
is becoming moment by moment
unbearable

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