



Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Revd Abigail Sines in the cathedral office with just some of the sheep which make up the Advent Sheep Trail.

Christ Church Cathedral's Advent Sheep Trail

All over Dublin & Glendalough teams of knitters have been working diligently in preparation for Christ Church Cathedral's Advent programme. Flocks of woolly sheep have been herded into the cathedral for its Advent Sheep Trail which began on Advent Sunday.

This Advent pilgrimage will run right up until Christmas Eve and the cathedral is looking forward to welcoming young and old who will make the Sheep Trail be part of their journey towards Christmas. They are inviting people to take time out of the busyness of the season and make space to breathe in the peace of the cathedral.

During Advent we try to make extra space to spend time with God. Take your time on the Sheep Trail. Find the sheep and record their names, while also taking note of some of the remarkable stained glass windows, art and architectural points that help us to remember the reason why we celebrate Christmas. This is an engaging way to connect with the story of the nativity and the miracle of Jesus coming into the world to be 'God With Us'.

Christ Church will welcome parish, school and community groups to take part in the Sheep Trail

free of charge. Advance booking for groups is essential. To book please email welcome@christchurch.ie or call 01 677 8099.

Holy See's press release on Pope's audience with Taoiseach

The Holy Father Francis today received in audience the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Enda Kenny, who subsequently met with His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, secretary for Relations with States.

The cordial discussions evoked the historic bond between the Holy See and Ireland, and underlined the constant contribution guaranteed by the Catholic Church in the social and educational fields. Attention was also paid to the importance of the role of Christians in the public sphere, especially in the promotion of respect for the dignity of every person, starting with the weakest and defenceless.

The conversation continued with an exchange of views on Europe, with particular reference to the

migratory phenomenon, youth employment and the main challenges that the continent is called to face from a political and institutional point of view.

Free Presbyterians to protest at Pope's visit

Rev Ian Brown of the Martyrs' Memorial Church on the Ravenhill Road in Belfast told NewsLetter.co.uk that because the current Pope is "no closer to proclaiming the one true biblical Gospel – that salvation is by faith alone through Christ alone" that "the only proper response to his high publicity visit is a solid protest."

The retired free Presbyterian minister who accompanied Rev Ian Paisley to Strasbourg in 1988 to protest St John Paul II's visit, also pledged to protest if Pope Francis visits Ireland.

Rev McIlveen said that while he respected the rights of Northern Irish Catholics to have a "pastoral visit" by their Church leader he said he also had an obligation to hold a "peaceful protest."

Papal visit welcomed by mainstream Irish churches

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland and Church of Ireland welcomed the news and the Evangelical Alliance's David Smyth supported the visit on the grounds of "religious freedom".

The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, reiterated their previous welcomes, and that of the bishops of the Church of Ireland, to a visit by Pope Francis to the island of Ireland. They said, "They are glad that it looks more certain that this will take place in 2018, following the gathering of the World Meeting of Families."

Rev. Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said: "While the Vatican have yet to confirm the visit, should Pope Francis come to Ireland, as with any visitor to these shores, he would be most welcome.

“I am sure that many, many Roman Catholics both south and north of the border will be very excited and encouraged by the news that Pope Francis is likely to attend the 2018 gathering of the World Meeting of Families. If this materialises, I would hope that all other people on this island will want to join with our fellow citizens in welcoming the leader of their church to Ireland.

“Should any visit include an appropriate opportunity to travel north and visit Northern Ireland, I would trust that all in our community would take the opportunity to show due respect to such a visit. That will indeed be a sign that as a society we are continuing to develop into the kind of country that we all want Northern Ireland to be.”

US student wins Church of Ireland Historical Society’s Neely Prize 2016

The Church of Ireland Historical Society recently announced that the 2016 W.G. Neely Postgraduate Prize Winner is Kathryn Sawyer. Her paper was entitled “‘A disorderly tumultuous way of serving God’: Prayer and social order in Ireland, 1660-1689’. Kathryn receives €150 and churchnewsireland@gmail.com

her essay will now be considered for publication in Ireland's premier historical journal: *Irish Historical Studies*.

Kathryn is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. She is currently based in Geneva where she held a Fulbright Fellowship between 2015 and 2016 and is now a visiting researcher at the Institut de l'histoire de la Réformation until February 2017. Her dissertation, 'True Church, National Church, Minority Church: The Church of Ireland in a Restored Empire, 1660-1689', examines the ways in which the theology of the Church of Ireland both influenced and was shaped by the social and political realities of Restoration Ireland.

The committee of the Historical Society would like to put on record that the papers submitted were of a high quality and that choosing a winner was a difficult decision. Details for the Neely Prize next year will be announced in Spring 2017. Those who submitted a paper will not be excluded from the competition in 2017. However, his/her paper must be a different paper and he/she must still be pursuing a major research degree at the time of submission.

The W.G. Neely Prize, named in honour of the Society's founder, provides an excellent opportunity for postgraduate students to promote their work that considers aspects of the Church of Ireland.

Coming release of CD recording of major choral work, One Hundred Years a Nation

Carrick-on-Shannon's Millennium Choir (Association of Irish Choirs) will feature on a brand new RTÉ CD release of One Hundred Years a Nation, a major piece of choral music specially commissioned by RTÉ from composer Shaun Davey with text by writer Paul Muldoon and recorded with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and conductor David Brophy, the Leitrim Observer reports.

The CD, issued on the RTÉ lyric fm label, will be included free of charge in next week's edition of the RTÉ Guide (issue dated 28 November 2016). It will stand as a legacy recording capturing the full force of the memorable open-air, world premiere performance that featured 31 choirs from 19 different counties together with the RTÉ

National Symphony Orchestra, narrator Paul Muldoon and conductor David Brophy. One



Hundred Years a Nation was presented as part of 'A Nation's Voice' on Easter Sunday, 27 March 2016 at the National Museum, Collins Barracks.

'A Nation's Voice' was presented by the Arts Council and RTÉ, in association with the National Museum of Ireland, the Association of Irish Choirs and Music Generation, as part of Ireland 2016. The CD recording of One Hundred Years a Nation, featuring the voices of the Millennium Choir, has been produced with combined support

from the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, the Arts Council, RTÉ lyric fm, and the RTÉ Guide.

Hosted by Miriam O'Callaghan the world premiere performance of One Hundred Years a Nation was presented as part of the official State programme of events on Easter Sunday. Despite driving wind and rain, the performance struck a chord with all present as well as with viewers watching the performance live on RTÉ One, and it was an easy decision to make a studio quality recording for posterity. The challenge was how and where to record 800 singers, the 80 plus members of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, conductor David Brophy and New York-based poet Paul Muldoon, whose stirring narration is a hallmark of the piece. The Helix, Dublin was the chosen venue and so, on October 1st, buses from the four corners of the country converged on The Helix and the Millennium Choir reunited with their fellow choral singers, ranging in age from 8 to 85, to record this powerful new work.

The recording was one of the largest scale recordings ever undertaken by RTÉ involving over 200 microphones and hundreds of meters of cabling leading to the mobile recording unit

where composer Shaun Davey sat side by side with the engineers in his role as Producer. At the centre of it all conductor David Brophy cajoled and encouraged the best performance ever from these singers from all over Ireland.

They were all more than ready for this day. In the lead up to October 1st the Millennium Choir regrouped for further rehearsals under the direction of their choral leader Alla Crosbie, who also worked with them in preparation for the Easter Sunday concert performance. The Choir was founded at the end of 1998. An SATB group with 50 members, assisted by Siobhán Talbot, the Millennium Choir performs locally, regionally and internationally, singing a mix of sacred, operatic, stage musical and popular music. Based in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, singers of various ages and backgrounds come from a wide area from Longford to Sligo.

On Wednesday 21 December at 11.20pm, RTÉ One Television will broadcast One Hundred Years a Nation, featuring the Millennium Choir performing as part of 'A Nation's Voice' on Easter Sunday at the National Museum, Collins Barracks.

News briefs

+++ Christmas Tree Festival in Knock, Belfast

- After a successful launch event the St Columba's Parish Christmas Tree Festival is now underway. The event runs from Thursday 24th – Sunday 27th November and was recently featured in a video and article by the Irish News. To view the video and article click [here](#). More information about the festival can also be found [here](#).

+++ Kilmore MU Gender violence vigil - On Saturday 26th November, the Mothers' Union in Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh held a prayer vigil at St George's Church, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, as part of the Mothers' Union All-Ireland '16 Days of Activism against gender based violence'. Mothers' Union is one of over 130 local groups across Ireland that have taken part in the 16 Days of Action campaign. This campaign aims to stand in solidarity with women at home and across the world who are suffering at the hand of gender based violence. Worship at the Prayer Vigil to End Violence against women was led by Bishop Ferran Glenfield, Trudi Williams (Mothers' Union KEA Social Policy Rep) and Dean Arfon Williams. The speakers on the day were Mary

McSharry from Invisible Traffick and Patricia O'Reilly from Roscommon SAFE Link (Domestic Violence Advocacy Service). Both speakers reminded us how hidden gender based violence can be despite the fact that it is so widespread. They encouraged those present to stand prayerfully against gender based violence and as friends, neighbours and family members to say that violence against women is not alright.

+++ Baillieborough institution - On the evening of Sunday 27th November family, friends, parishioners and members of the community gathered to celebrate the institution of the Revd Ian Horner as Incumbent of the Baillieborough Group of parishes (Baillieborough, Knockbride, Mullagh and Shercock). The service, which took place in Baillieborough church, was led by Bishop Ferran Glenfield assisted by Archdeacon Craig McCauley. A combined choir with singers from all four churches led the congregation in worship and were accompanied by Janet McGuigan and Anita West on the organ. Danielle Kinnear, Millie Kinnear and Maia Finane sang a solo during the anthem, 'From the Breaking of the Dawn'. Ruth Waller read a passage from Psalm 119 and Victor Scott read from Matthew 13, the Parable of the Sower. The address was given by the Revd

Robert McMullan from New Row Presbyterian Church in Coleraine. Revd Rob, who was, at one time, the Director of Scripture Union in the Republic of Ireland, has had a great influence on Ian's faith and leadership development throughout his life. Rob spoke on the Scripture Union verse 'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path' (Psalm 119 v 105). He encouraged the congregation to love, care for and support Ian and his family as they minister in the group of churches. He also encouraged Ian to love the people in these churches and to be faithful in the preaching of God's word. The Act of Institution was then carried out by Bishop Ferran Glenfield, after which words of welcome were given to Revd Ian by Father Michael Router, Parish Priest of Killann, the Revd Christiaan Snell on behalf of the Diocese of Kilmore and Russell Waller on behalf of the Bailieborough Group of Parishes.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Church's backlash blocks change in religion classes

Irish Independent

Church opposition is underpinned by the legal rights enjoyed by ... Among those who made submissions backing ERBE were the **Irish National** ...
<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/churches-backlash-blocks-change-in-religion-classes-35249798.html>

School bill criticised for religious preference

[RTE.ie](http://www.rte.ie)

The **Irish** Human Rights and Equality Commission has criticised proposed legislation on school admissions for failing to prevent schools from giving ...
<http://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2016/1116/832248-school-admissions/>

Religious rift over plans to reform school admissions policies

Irish Times

A recommendation by the **Irish** Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) that equality laws be changed to prevent children being given ...
<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/religious-rift-over-plans-to-reform-school-admissions-policies-1.2872450>

NI Teachers' strike: Three unions to ballot members for strike action

BBC News

Three main teaching unions in Northern Ireland are to ballot their members for strike action.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-38128296>

Pro-Life petition to NI Assembly the largest yet

News Letter

Possibly the largest petition ever presented at the NI Assembly was delivered by DUP MLA Jim Wells yesterday, bearing the names of 300,000 people opposed to abortion.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/pro-life-petition-biggest-ever-1-7702749>

Citizens' Assembly chair urges Irish abroad and youth to 'make your voices heard'

Irish Independent

To date, the assembly has received almost 600 public submissions, including one from the standing committee of the Church of Ireland.

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/citizens-assembly-chair-urges-irish-abroad-and-youth-to-make-your-voices-heard-35246808.html>

Religious faith is no obstacle to support for marriage equality

The Guardian

Ireland is a religious country and has the second highest regular church attendance in Europe after Poland. It has found a way to marry dynamism and ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/nov/19/religious-faith-is-no-obstacle-to-support-for-marriage-equality>

Ashers may have new route of appeal to UK's highest court

the Irish News

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Christian bakers found to have unlawfully refused to make a cake with a pro-gay marriage slogan may have a new route of appeal to the UK's ...

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2016/11/23/news/ashers-may-have-a-new-route-of-appeal-to-the-uk-s-highest-court-796527/>

FT

Reports that tougher rules for payday lenders have not caused a rise in illegal loans, as measured by the caseload of Citizens Advice Bureau. Last year, the Financial Conduct Authority introduced new rules for the sector, including a cap on the amount of interest that payday lenders can charge. Critics said this could drive legal lenders out of business and people would be forced to use unscrupulous unregulated lenders instead. But CAB has reported a fall in the number of illegal loan cases in the past year. The article notes the Archbishop of Canterbury's criticism of payday lenders followed the 2008 financial crisis.

Christian Today

Report that nearly £5.5 million will be awarded to cathedrals across the UK for urgent repair work as the Government announced the final phase of a two year programme (see above). A total of 24 CofE and Catholic cathedrals will benefit from

the grants with Ely, Manchester, Southwark and Truro cathedrals awarded £500,000 each as part of the First World War Centenary Repairs Fund.

Lancs Even Tel

Reports that the new Dean of Blackburn is to be Canon Peter Howell-Jones, the current Vice-Dean of Chester Cathedral. The Revd Howell-Jones said, "It is an honour and a privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility for the wonderful Cathedral in Blackburn. I have a real sense of expectation for what will be an exciting new challenge and I am looking forward to starting work." He succeeds Christopher Armstrong and will be installed on March 25.

BBC

Report that church leaders in Lincoln have said a ban on so-called legal highs has compounded the problem in other parts of the city. Last April, Lincoln became the first place in the UK to introduce a ban on new psychoactive substances (NPS) and alcohol consumption in the city centre. Incidents involving legal highs have dropped from 402 to 259 in a year. The Revd Jeremy Cullimore, vicar of St Mary le Wigford church is quoted.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-38128150>

Tel/Mail

Reports that the Pope is set to visit Northern Ireland in a gesture of reconciliation. Leaders from across the Province's political and religious divide issued strong signals that Pope Francis is planning to cross the border into Northern Ireland during a visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2018. The Province's First Minister Arlene Foster has pledged to meet Pope Francis in his capacity as a head of state, if the visit goes ahead.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/28/pope-course-historic-visit-northern-ireland/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3979298/Pope-confirms-2018-visit-Ireland-prime-minister-says.html>

Times/Even Stand/Mail/Tel

Reports the Memorial service of the Duke of Westminster held at Chester Cathedral.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/register/the-duke-of-westminster-nh3729p32>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/prince-william-and-kate-join-mourners-to-pay-respects-to-duke-of-westminster-gerald-cavendish-a3407001.html>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3978556/
Hundreds-gather-pay-tribute-sixth-Duke-
Westminster-memorial-service.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3978556/Hundreds-gather-pay-tribute-sixth-Duke-Westminster-memorial-service.html)

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/28/
royals-celebrities-attend-memorial-service-
celebrate-life-sixth/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/28/royals-celebrities-attend-memorial-service-celebrate-life-sixth/)