

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – MU working for world change**

## Image of the day

### Mothers' Union working for world change

Last weekend Mothers Union members from Ireland, Great Britain and overseas met in Belfast to review their world changing agenda and related activities. Included in this issue is a report of last weekends activities (below) and on page 8 the Worldwide President's review of the MU's current programmes.

## News reports

### Mothers Union reviews worldwide goals at major Belfast gathering

**More than 750 Mothers' Union members and friends from across Ireland and Great Britain attended the Annual Gathering held in Belfast over the weekend of September 23 and 24.**

Events began with two Services of Celebration held in St Anne's Cathedral on the Friday at 4.30pm and 7pm.

The Services of Celebration were led by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and the preacher was the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.

Music at the services was from the Kerygma Choir under Musical Director Lorna Palmer, and the organist was Neale Angew.

October 1, 2022

The annual review of the Mothers Union's worldwide was held the following day in the Waterfront Hall where members were welcomed by June Butler, President of Mothers Union, Ireland. Opening prayers were led by the Bishop of Down and Dromore. Midday Worship was conducted by the Archbishop of Armagh, Most Reverend John McDowell.

In the afternoon there were three sessions. "Transformation Now!" looked at "Ourselves, Our Communities, Our local Churches and MU". This was followed by "Looking ahead" and "Call to action". Closing prayer was led by the Bishop of Connor.

On the Saturday evening a concert featuring the Clare Chorale from Ballyclare was held in the Waterfront Hall.

The Annual Gathering meets at venues throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

See Mothers Union Worldwide President's keynote address on page 8.

## **Edgehill House staff 'Step Up' for World Development**

**Staff in Edgehill House raised a brilliant total of £1,015 for the Irish Methodist World Development & Relief from their 'Step Up' sponsored cycle challenge!**

Funds will be used to support the church's WDR partners in their life-changing work around the world, through water and sanitation, education and so much more!



## Ordination in Waterville

Congratulations to Rev Barbara Irrgang-Buckley who was ordained as a Priest in the Church of God by Bishop Michael Burrows in St Michael and All Angels' Church, Waterville on 29th September, 2022.

Rev Barbara will serve as OLM with Kenmare Group of Parishes. We wish the Rev Barbara every blessing as she embarks on this next step of her ministry.



## **Fermanagh's Olive Rowe to be installed as President of Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI)**

**This weekend Olive Rowe from Boa Island, Fermanagh will be installed as the new President of Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI), an all-Ireland post which she will hold for two years, Jessica Campbell reports in the Impartial Reporter.**

The special installation service will take place in Darling Street Methodist Church in Enniskillen on Saturday, October 1 at 2.30pm and everyone is welcome to attend.

During the service, Olive will be inducted as President of MWI by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev. David Nixon, who is originally from Blacklion.

"We will also have Bishop David McClay, who is a personal friend of mine from our teenage years. He's going to be the speaker at the service.

"We will have representatives from the various denominations in Enniskillen; there will be special singing items and various people taking part in the service," said Olive, speaking to The Impartial Reporter.

Originally from Co. Donegal, Olive previously attended Ballintra Methodist Church.

"That's where I first got involved in Methodist woman's work," she told this newspaper.

Olive now lives on the Boa Island, between Kesh and Belleek, with Douglas, her husband of 40-odd years.

The couple have one son, Stephen, who is married to Claire.

Olive was a music teacher all of her working life and retired just before the Covid-19 pandemic. She enjoys gardening and is very interested in crafts.

Talking about her previous roles in the MWI, Olive said: "I have been Lakelands District President of MWI twice, from 2004 to 2006, and then also in 2018 to 2019.

"It was known as the Lakelands District, which was mainly Fermanagh. The Methodist Church in Ireland would have had eight districts but three years ago it was made into three districts; North Western, North Eastern and Southern," she explained, going on to note that following this change, the term of district president was changed to vice-president, with a vice-president overseeing each of the three districts.

"But really, you do the work of a president. So I was the vice-president of the North Western district for about three years there. That took in a lot of counties, and there were 37 branches of Methodist women's groups in the North," said Olive.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, Olive explained that her duties as vice-president changed.

"The normal pattern of work changed; you would normally go out and visit these branches and talk at MWI services but because of Covid-19, we had to rethink and we started doing Zoom online meetings every month.

"We were able to connect with the large district in a way that we hadn't thought of, and at some of those meetings we would have had up to 100 ladies Zooming in, from Donegal up to Limavady across to Newry."

In her new post of President of MWI across the island of Ireland, Olive will be attending MWI branches in the three districts. She will also represent Methodist women on various committees.

During her two-year post, Olive will oversee two charitable projects which she has chosen.

"The President picks a project that the branches can support and raise funds for and my project for this next coming year is entitled 'I Am Girl'.

"It is sponsored by Fields of Life where we will be helping young girls in Uganda to educate them on their monthly cycles [and to help tackle period poverty]," said Olive, adding: "For my second year, I'm going to ask branches to support mental health in Ireland."

**CNI**

## **Mothers Union Worldwide President's overview**

**Guyana-based Sheran Harper, Worldwide President, presented this overview earlier this year. Her theme was “Working together - Stories of Transformation”.**

In her review the 2021 the Worldwide President stated it was, “in many ways, a pivotal time for the MU, like many charitable organisations. In one way we settled into new ways of being, supporting others or working together more closely as we embraced the virtual world, but for many the slow vaccine roll out has meant that daily life remained far from normal whilst the ‘shadow pandemic’ of a reported rise in domestic abuse continued and continues to cast a cloud over women’s daily lives.”

### **New lens**

Mrs Harper said - Women have lost their livelihoods, their children are hungry, they are anxious and fearful and some have lost homes or livelihoods as a result of ongoing environmental challenges or social unrest.

Many are seeing a dramatic downward spiral in their living conditions which, if global instability continues, is likely to be exacerbated.

To address this, the MU believes that building bridges and networking are of paramount importance to the advancement of an inclusive and just world where all



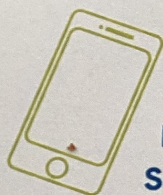
women and girls are respected in society. We call on global leaders, NGOs and other organisation to work in partnership

## Mothers' Union Facts

The MU indirectly supported nearly  
**1.5 million**  
people last year

**3,000 members**

participated in our Global Day of Activism in November



Our virtual Thy Kingdom Come Service in May was viewed by over

**7,000 members**

Projects led by our membership movement and centrally funded global programmes directly supported

**440k**  
people in 2021

Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB  
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**#NoMore1in3**  
End abuse and violence now

1 in 3 women worldwide are affected by domestic violence or abuse – and MU is engaging with partners around the world to address this scourge

The MU made a difference to the lives of over  
**1.94 million**  
people worldwide



An average over **1000** watch our midday prayers, every day, on Facebook

Our membership movement provides strong connections through fellowship and worship and friends online and in person – around the corner and around the world



**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

with us – and other faith-based organisations - to help overturn culturally embedded gender injustices and facilitate transformation, so that women, children and their communities thrive.

There is much to rejoice in. We can take pride that we have made great inroads in helping redress the gender imbalance in sub-Saharan Africa, that our literacy and financial programmes are lifting women and their families out of poverty and, that MU has been effective in the heart of communities in continuing to counter Covid misinformation and building trust with those in greatest need.

We continue to break down global barriers and unite women in causes that matter to them like mental health, parenting, gender inequality, disaster risk reduction and the environment, tackling them together. For example, our flagship project addressing mental health in Kenya is being well received.

Women and girls have a central role to play in caring for our beautiful world and those who live in it and, thanks to our vast network of volunteers across five continents, MU members can help bring about positive change in the hardest- to-reach communities like no other organisation can.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to serve Mothers' Union for the next three years as Worldwide President adhering to Mary Sumner's vision of women supporting each other fuelled by Christian values. Together, we are empowered to face the future with renewed vigour and optimism.



October 1, 2022

An overview and links to Information files on the various areas highlighted at the gathering are available at - [\[https://www.mothersunion.org/\]](https://www.mothersunion.org/)

## Archdeacon of Dublin installed as Canon Treasurer of St Patrick's Cathedral



The newly installed Canon Treasurer, Archdeacon David Pierpoint, with the Dean some Chapter members and clergy.

**The Archdeacon of Dublin, the Venerable David Pierpoint, was installed as Canon Treasurer of the National Cathedral and Collegiate Church of Saint Patrick, Dublin, on Sunday last (September 23).**

The installation by the Dean, the Very Revd William Morton, took place in the context of Choral Evensong sung by the cathedral choir.

The new Canon Treasurer served in St Patrick's Cathedral as a boy chorister, a Sunday tenor singer and later as a vergier. He is a past pupil of Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir School and Saint Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School. He has been the Vicar of the Christ Church Cathedral Group of Parishes since 1995. Archdeacon Pierpoint succeeds Canon Horace McKinley, former Rector of Whitechurch.

## Perspective

### **There's a growing sense that tomorrow belongs to Sinn Fein - Jenny McCartney**

**Where can Ulster Unionism go now? If it were a person, it would be someone in the grip of a long depression, whose occasional bursts of anger mask the fact that they so often feel despondent and betrayed, Jenny McCartney writes in The Spectator, 1 October 2022**

The widespread reaction to the latest Northern Ireland census, in which Catholics narrowly outnumber Protestants for the first time, is unlikely to give it a reason to be cheerful.

A jubilant Michelle O'Neill, the Sinn Féin vice-leader, was quick to claim that 'historic change is happening across this island', while other party members called for a referendum on unity. The rallying cry of Sinn Féin has long been 'Tiocfaidh ár lá', which translates as 'our day will come'. In the zero-sum game of Northern Irish politics, to Unionist ears it also translates as 'your day is over'.

As with most things in Northern Ireland, of course, the census results are more complex than they seem: the fact that 45.7 per cent identify as Catholic or from a Catholic background, next to 43.5 per cent from Protestant and other Christian backgrounds, doesn't directly correlate to a majority for a United Ireland. The number of non-believers is growing, recalling that old joke: 'Are you a Catholic atheist or a Protestant atheist?' Nor do all Catholics necessarily want a united Ireland, particularly one in which a visit to the GP costs €60. National identities are becoming blurrier, too, with people variously identifying as British, Irish, Northern Irish or bespoke combinations of the above: for a sizeable number, their border preferences are anyone's guess.

Nonetheless there is a prevailing sense that – with a fragmented Unionism in the North, and rising fury at the establishment in the South – tomorrow belongs to Sinn Féin. In the last Assembly elections, it was returned as the largest party for the first time, meaning that O'Neill, its Northern leader, is now designated First Minister of Northern Ireland, with the Democratic Unionist party's Jeffrey Donaldson as Deputy First Minister. The Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly is also a Sinn Féin politician, Alex Maskey, as is the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Tina Black.



This was the set-up which greeted the new King Charles III on his flying visit to Northern Ireland in the aftermath of Queen's Elizabeth II's death, and even a royal visit held few of the usual consolations for Unionism. O'Neill and Maskey met the King with notable graciousness, expressing gratitude for the late Queen's peace-building in Northern Ireland. For those of us who still remember those terse paragraphs in *An Phoblacht* in the 1980s, reporting icily on the doings of 'Elizabeth Windsor', it was quite a 'vibe shift', as young people say. But it was also a sign of Sinn Féin confidently working the levers of Northern Ireland. No longer are we the disgruntled rebels, sniping at authority, it said: we are the authority, and we're fully capable of being the authority in Dublin as well.

Equally remarkable was King Charles's response. Approaching them with the royal charm on full beam, like the headlights on an Aston Martin, he thanked O'Neill for speaking so kindly about his mother, before publicly verifying what he already knew: 'You are now the biggest party, are you?' 'We are indeed,' confirmed O'Neill. 'Don't be telling Jeffrey that now!' added Maskey jovially – within earshot of Donaldson, who was standing stiffly in line. Everyone laughed, except the DUP leader. 'All this skill and ingenuity...' said Charles admiringly of Sinn Féin. Then he turned to Donaldson, the headlights dimming. 'I have seen you occasionally,' he said, with studied uncertainty. 'In the past.'

It's a common quirk of the human psyche, and perhaps particularly of the English upper-class one, that it is more exciting to make friendly conversation with people who not so long ago wanted to kill you than with those who have

always revered you but with whom you may feel little in common. It may also have been a sign that Charles disapproves of the DUP's current obstruction of the power-sharing Assembly in protest at the Northern Ireland Protocol (although Sinn Féin also boycotted the devolved government for three years, from 2017 to 2020). But the Queen would not have made her preferences so plain, and Ulster Unionists – perhaps her biggest fans anywhere in the UK – find themselves genuinely bereft by her loss. She was a living link to the last time that London seemed to appreciate them, during the shared sacrifices of the second world war.

Since then, the British government has proved, at best, an unreliable ally. The first great modern blow to the Unionist psyche was struck in 1985 with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which granted the Irish government a consultative role in Northern Ireland's affairs. The full weight of Unionist fury fell on the unfortunate Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King, whose name was frequently expelled from the Reverend Ian Paisley's capacious lungs with an added flourish of derision: 'Tom Caaaat King!'

More than 100,000 Unionists of all shades protested publicly against the Agreement, to no avail. The Agreement was followed by the 1993 Downing Street Declaration, which openly stated that the British government had 'no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland'. In Unionist eyes, the Northern Ireland Protocol has shifted the grounds of the relationship once more, this time from tacit indifference to open humiliation. In Boris Johnson's rush to get Brexit done, he signed up to this act of economic

amputation which placed a hitherto unthinkable customs border in the Irish Sea.

The DUP's boycott of the devolved Assembly in response means that it has been suspended since February with no imminent prospect of return. The grim outcome is that Northern Ireland is now devoid of an executive, drifting into an autumn and winter defined by an escalating cost-of-living crisis, in step with a worsening health service exacerbated by a shrinking number of GPs. Meanwhile the Protocol is subject to an ongoing legal wrangle between the British government and the EU.

Political stagnation is allied to cultural poison. Both the orange and green manifestations of sectarianism have proved as stubborn as Japanese knotweed. Most people are rightly repelled by the orange variety, with its murderous sectarian slogans and celebration of loyalist killers, but it is mainly confined to those areas of Northern Ireland most influenced by the still-active loyalist paramilitaries. The green strain is spreading into more territory, however, and becoming respectable among middle-class nationalist youth across Ireland.

The slogan of 'Up The 'Ra' is often chanted at concerts and sporting events, mainly by young people who never experienced the Troubles. The electorally buoyant Sinn Fein regularly commemorates dead IRA volunteers in proudly romantic terms, regardless of what human destruction they unleashed. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Northern Irish nationalists also seem ready to grant the IRA campaign a legitimacy in retrospect which they denied it at the time: in a recent LucidTalk poll, nearly seven out of ten nationalist

voters agreed with O'Neill's statement that there was 'no alternative' to the IRA's campaign of violence. Yet during the Troubles, the majority of nationalists voted for the peaceable Social Democratic and Labour party, whose leader John Hume wrote in 1989 that 'there is not a single injustice in Northern Ireland today that justifies the taking of a single human life' and that 'if I were to lead a civil rights campaign today, the main target would be the IRA'.

Those of us who hoped for a future Ireland in which mutually inflicted pain could be more honestly acknowledged on all sides now see that prospect slipping further away. It's clear that if Unionist politicians wish to convince a broader electorate of the benefits of the union, they will have to make a more positive, secular case for it: the DUP's current woes have partly resulted from its own tribal thinking and political miscalculations. But if Irish nationalists really wish to persuade Unionists into a united Ireland, then their growing tendency to rewrite the past seems an illogical one. A narrow nationalist majority in any border poll – if combined with an internationally isolated, nervous Unionist community whose own suffering has been either dismissed or celebrated – would make for a volatile transition.

Many people in the Republic of Ireland instinctively understand that and are clearly worried by it. But they often tend to be the older folk, who can still remember what it meant to hear a news report of a man shot dead in front of his mute and terrified children; a bomb explosion at a cenotaph; or a young mother murdered for collecting census forms.

October 1, 2022

Courtesy The Spectator. From magazine issue: 1 October 2022.

Northern Ireland born, Jenny McCartney, is a Journalist, reviewer, and author of the children's book *The Stone Bird*

[<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/theres-a-growing-sense-that-tomorrow-belongs-to-sinn-fein>]

## Poem for today

### The Destruction of Sennacherib by Lord Byron

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!



And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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