

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Sunset at Broomhedge

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Sunset at Broomhedge

Our friends at Northern Skies Drone Photography share their gifted art throughout the year. CNI was delighted to receive this aerial portrait from Broomhedge Parish.

A gifted pilot photographer wrote - “Early this morning, Parker and I caught a breathtaking sunrise over St. Matthew’s Church Hall, Broomhedge. The sky lit up in waves of orange, pink, and purple, casting a glow across the church and surrounding countryside. ✨

“There’s something truly peaceful about watching a new day begin in a place so full of history and community. From the stillness of the fields to the quiet resting place beside the church, the view was simply magical”.

Broomhedge church is in Connor Diocese and it is upstream from Lisburn. It is situated on one of the plains which the Lagan river has created at different altitudes and still flows through as it makes its way from source in the foothills of the Mournes to estuary which it carves through Belfast city before discharging in to Belfast Lough. Thanks again Northern Skies.

News



Coleraine charity's shop aids Open Schools Worldwide

Earlier this month, the Methodist Church's WDR Team Leader Tim Dunwoody visited A Drop in the Ocean charity shop in Coleraine, to thank the volunteers for their Step Up fundraising.



They have generously donated £2,000 from sales in the shop to support the work of WDR partner Open Schools Worldwide. If you're in the area, be sure to pop in and have a browse! Open Fridays 11am- 4pm.

Remembrance exhibition in Ahoghill

St Colmanell's Parish Church, Ahoghill, is hosting a special Remembrance Exhibition over six days in November.



Remembrance Exhibition

St Colmanell's Church Ahoghill
6 - 11 November 2025

A tribute to those who served their country in wartime with hundreds of poppies, wall hangings, floral displays, stories of local people and unsung heroes, secret trench diaries, wartime items and more.

Church Open Times
Thu 6, Fri 7, Sat 8 Nov:
10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm
Sun 9 Nov: 2-6pm
Mon 10 Nov: 10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm
Tue 11 Nov: 10am-12noon

Light refreshments available in the Parish Hall.
Donations Welcome.
Proceeds towards the Parish Centre Project, with a donation to the Royal British Legion

WE WILL
REMEMBER
THEM

The church will be open from Thursday November 6 daily until Tuesday November 11, exhibiting a variety of poppy displays, wall hangings and floral displays.

There will also be the stories of local people and unsung heroes told in imaginative ways, including secret trench diaries, various wartime items and much more.

St Colmanell's is located at Church Street, Ahoghill (postcode BT42 2PA), and a warm welcome is extended to visitors wishing to view this poignant exhibition.

Conway host Donegal Hospice Service of Remembrance

The Chaplaincy team states, “It was a great privilege to for us to play host to the Donegal Hospice Service of Remembrance on the afternoon of Sunday 28th September”.

They continued, “It was particularly special to have this service in Conwal during



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our Harvest Thanksgiving Weekend. The beautifully decorated church served as a reminder of the many blessings of God”.

The Chaplaincy team (pictured here with the Rector) along with staff, supporters and the Hospital Choir produced a liturgy that was dignified, reflective and uplifting.



Order of Malta annual retreat

Last Saturday many of the Knights, Dames, Priests and Aspirants of the Irish Association of the Sovereign

Military Order of Malta attended the national retreat in Waterford. A weekend of spiritual reflection and renewal for all.

Meath and Kildare new project – Building Hope Brick By Brick

Meath and Kildare diocese has announced the beginning of a new diocesan project, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Ireland.

This project will draw us together even more to do something good, that is practical and that everyone can take part in. “Building Hope Brick by Brick” aims to raise funds for bricks that will build

Irishtown parishioners celebrate refurbished organ and new side-chapel

The people of Irishtown and Donnybrook celebrated two parish milestones during their Harvest Thanksgiving service on Sunday past.

St Matthew’s newly restored church organ was rededicated by Archbishop Michael Jackson who also dedicated the St Mary’s, Donnybrook Side Chapel in the church.

St Matthew’s organ sounded fantastic following the restoration work carried out by Derek Verso of the Fine Tuning Company. The restoration, which is part of the extensive refurbishment of the church building, involved a



comprehensive tonal revision that included the addition of 284 new pipes. It now has a total of 22 speaking stops, seven couplers and 1,046 pipes.

Following its rededication, which included a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of music and hope that it would lead parishioners in songs of praise through every season of the Church's life, organist John Shera played a short piece to mark the occasion.

The St Mary's, Donnybrook Side Chapel ensures that the presence of St Mary's Church in Donnybrook, which closed in July 2020, lives on in its sister church. In dedicating it,

Archbishop Jackson said a prayer of thanksgiving for St Mary's expressing gratitude for the faith that was nurtured, friendships formed and blessings shared in the church. The side chapel features a stunning painting of St Mary's by parishioner and artist Marie Stamp.

The service was attended by local Councillor David Coffey, representing the Lord Mayor of Dublin. St Matthew's has had a special chair reserved for the Lord Mayor of Dublin dating back to 1712. The church was built in 1704 when it was at the water's edge. In 1712 Dublin Corporation approached the parish requesting that the church tower be raised to 80 feet to act as a navigation aid for ships. The corporation paid for it, a total of 286 pounds, 175 shillings and four pence, on condition that a seat be kept in the church for the Lord Mayor. The tradition continues today, parishioner Trevor James explained, and Councillor Coffey occupied the chair.

The Archbishop began his sermon by commending the Rector, Canon Leonard Ruddock, for his service and noting the silver jubilee of his ordination which was celebrated in the summer. He described Leonard as meticulous, imaginative and faithful and observed the work he had carried out in the parish which had come to fruition.

He said the service of Harvest Thanksgiving was an opportunity to give thanks to God and to show our reliance on God in every aspect of life. He added that the harvest of hopefulness was also a harvest of confidence and community.

Archbishop Jackson said that the parish was a civil community and at its heart was the care of all its people. “The parish is a living, local expression of what we want society to be. It is a place where we hear the voices of others as much as we express our own voices,” he said adding that the newly rededicated organ and the dedicated side chapel are there for all to enjoy and to welcome the whole community.

Archbishop Michael Jackson, Cllr David Coffey and Canon Leonard Ruddock in the new St Mary's, Donnybrook Side Chapel in St Matthew's Church.

https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2025/09/29/irishtown-parishioners-celebrate-refurbished-organ?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

Black Clergy and Christians grapple with Charlie Kirk's legacy

Many Black pastors and Christians in the USA are contesting the fond memorialization of conservative activist Charlie Kirk within the political right and pockets of evangelicalism, saying they denounce Kirk's assassination but can't honour the legacy of a man who used harmful racial rhetoric.

The divide mirrors a national rift over how to remember the influential 31-year-old, who was fatally shot this month while speaking at a college in Utah. Kirk's death sparked renewed fears about the rise of political violence in America and

ushered in heated debates about the activist, a close ally of President Donald Trump who organized young conservatives across the country.

Supporters of Kirk, including some who spoke at his memorial service have lionized the activist as a martyr who died defending Christian values. But in pulpits, media interviews, and social media posts, many Black leaders and Christians are highlighting a litany of Kirk's past statements they consider insulting, racist, and out of line with Scripture. That, they say, should also colour how the country recounts and remembers his legacy.

"I agree (we need to) lament over his unfortunate, senseless and I'll go so far as saying demonic murder," said Dwight McKissic, senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas. "We can all identify with a wife losing her husband and children losing their father." But, McKissic added, "we cannot overlook the fact that his remarks about race are unfortunate and reprehensible."

Ireland to give asylum seekers up to €10,000 to return home

Ireland will offer asylum-seeking families up to €10,000 to drop their claims and return home.

The government plans to increase the amount given per person from €1,200 (£1,046) to €2,500 (£2,179) and to a maximum of €10,000 (£8,722) per family. The British version of the scheme offers up to £3,000 to migrants without permission to stay in the UK.

Opponents accused Taoiseach Micheál Martin's change to the voluntary returns scheme as a "Right-wing dog whistle dressed up as efficiency".

But he dismissed the criticism from the Social Democrats as "excessive, extreme language" and "misplaced".

The Taoiseach said it "made sense" to set up a system for people to be sent home if their asylum claim was going to be unsuccessful. The Irish Times reported that processing an asylum claim costs the government about €122,000 per person, including accommodation and other costs. In 2024, there were a record 18,560 asylum claims in Ireland, which has a population of about 5.3 million. About 30 per cent of those were granted.

Education

Building new student accommodation at University College Dublin (UCD)

Construction firm Sisk has been named as the main contractor for a project to build new student accommodation at University College Dublin (UCD).

The global firm, which is headquartered in Dublin, will deliver 493 new student accommodation beds at the university's Belfield campus.

Ireland's Minister for Further and Higher Education, James Lawless has confirmed the allocation of €67m in state

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funding to support the project, which was announced this week.

Lunchtime Recitals are back at Methody for the new term



These informal concerts take place every Friday in the Chapel at 1pm - all pupils and staff are welcome to attend.

Our first recital of the year was led by members of the A2 Music class: Ruben on harp, Jenna and Sienna on piano duet and Hannah on voice. Congratulations to all our performers!

"This significant investment reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to making higher education more accessible," Minister Lawless said.

Finvoy YFC support for Ballymoney High School Agriculture Club

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A huge thank you to Finvoy YFC for their generous donation of £500 towards our Agriculture Club and subject at GCSE and A level.

This funding will help support educational trips, subsidise Agri Club activities, and enhance hands-on learning experiences with new equipment.

We're incredibly grateful for Finvoy YFC's support in investing in the future of agriculture at our school.

Logan from Rainey Endowed takes top LAMDA award for Speech and Drama

Congratulations to Logan in Year 12 on his incredible achievement! Logan has been awarded a Distinction for his PCertLAM from LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art).

This is the highest level in Speech and Drama, and a testament to his hard work and dedication.

For this qualification,



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Logan completed a one-hour oral exam and submitted a 6,000-word portfolio, earning a Distinction in both. This prestigious certification now allows him to teach his own Speech and Drama classes should he so wish.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Rainey Endowed past pupil Victoria Dempsey for her excellent teaching and guidance throughout Logan's journey, which began in Primary 1.

Congratulations, Logan, on this outstanding success!

Cathedral Calls



Dean of Canterbury Guest Preacher at St Canice's Service of Thanksgiving



A Service of Thanksgiving will take place in St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, on Sunday, October 5th, at 3.30pm. The guest preacher will be The Very Reverend Dr David Monteith, Dean of Canterbury.

All are warmly invited to attend this special service of celebration and thanksgiving. Clergy and diocesan readers are encouraged to robe, with clergy wearing choir dress.

Dean Monteith was born and raised in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. He became the 40th Dean of Canterbury in 2022, leading the mother church of the Anglican Communion. Previously Dean of Leicester, he oversaw the re-interment of King Richard III and major cathedral redevelopment in one of Britain's most diverse cities. He has also served at St Martin-in-the-Fields,

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London, and as Area Dean in Wimbledon. His ministry focuses on faith in the public realm, culture, and the arts.



Three Canons for Derry

It was a day for the ages at St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry where the three newest members of the Cathedral Chapter – Rev Canon Carmen Hayes, Rev Canon Donard Collins and Rev Canon Peter Ferguson – were formally installed at a service.

"It's the first time in a long time," the Dean, Very Rev Raymond Stewart told the congregation, "that three Canons have all been installed at the one service."

The Canons' families were joined by members of the ministers' parishes (Errigal and Desertoghill, Killowen, and

Derg and Termonamongan, respectively) and regular worshippers from the Cathedral for what Bishop Andrew described as "a family occasion" not just for the relatives but for the Canons' parishioners and for the Diocese as a whole. "Today, what we do is honour your discipleship," he told the new Chapter members, "and honour your commitment to ministry."

The Installation was a colourful affair, befitting such a significant occasion in the Cathedral's ancient history. Other members of the Cathedral Chapter, fellow clergy and lay readers from throughout the Diocese took part in the service.

Bishop Andrew used his sermon to explore what church should "really be about". Historically, he said, Canons were responsible for preaching, teaching and praying for pilgrims who came to cathedrals. "It's a beautiful thing to think about and I hope, as a Chapter, we see the importance of one of the roles of a Canon – to pray constantly for the life of the Diocese, and to pray constantly for those who come to this place."

"Down through the years, Bishops have appointed Canons because their lives as pastors have incarnated what it actually means to be a pastor – to pray, to preach, to teach and to care for God's people – and that's what I see in Donard, in Carmen and in Peter, people who know the call to pray, to preach, to teach and to care for God's people. And those who know them well will know that that is all too true in their parishes and in their daily lives.



"So," the Bishop said, "what the Canons in history were called to live out, and what we're called to live out, is actually the real purpose of the Church, and the Scriptures very clearly and simply tell us what that purpose is...the Bible tells us that the purpose of the Church can be summed up in three things – ministry to God, ministry to believers and ministry to the world."

Bishop Andrew said it was a joy for him to minister with the three new Canons and a joy to see them installed.

The Old Testament reading was delivered by Rev Canon Katie McAteer, while Rev Canon Derek Quinn read from the Gospel according to St John. Music was provided by the Cathedral choirs, directed by Mr Louis Fields and accompanied by Mr Nicky Morton on the organ.

The Offertory Hymn was 'Come to Us, Creative Spirit' and Dean Stewart said he looked forward over the new few weeks and months to finding out "which of our Canons is the

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poet, which is the painter, which is the music-maker, which is the craftsman, which is the actor and which is the graceful dancer. They all have gifts and talents and I know that they'll

be used

extensively in the work of this Cathedral".

Martin Neary organist and choral director

**Celebrated
organist and
choral director
Martin Neary has
died from
complications of
Parkinson's
disease, at the
age of 85.**



As a chorister of the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace, he sang at the christening of Charles III in 1948 and the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953.

Neary served as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey for ten years from 1988, and led the music for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. He also

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performed several times at the BBC Proms, most notably as part of the First Night of the Proms in 2004.

BBC Radio 3 paid tribute to Martin Neary's music-making on In Tune.

In the media

Church rebels call for Presbyterian clerk's removal

Group say they are speaking out as Presbyterian membership in Belfast area plummets by 40%. Angela Davison writes in Sunday Life, 28 September

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) should not return to his clerk position after his term ends, a group of church rebels have said.

The group, who call themselves Troubled Presbyterians, told Sunday Life that for the sake of the church's future, Rev Dr Trevor Gribben should not take up the post in June next year.

The anonymous group, which is concerned by what it says is a 40 per cent drop in membership in Belfast, said: "We are very clear that, for the sake of the PCI's future, Rev Trevor Gribben should not return to the position of clerk of the General Assembly."

The rebels admitted sending anonymous emails was "quite unorthodox" but explained that "authoritarianism" within the denomination had to be addressed.

It said: “There is now little to be gained in trying to stimulate debate openly within our church's courts, because every aspect of governance is controlled from the clerk of assembly's office.”

Rev Dr Trevor Gribben has held the clerk's position for 11 years but, since taking up the moderatorship in June, an acting clerk has been appointed.

Dr Gribben is due to take up the position again after his year as moderator ends next June.

The rebels claimed the PCI had moved away from being a “body broad enough to embrace a variety of theological perspectives”, and had “become narrow, fundamentalist and exclusionary”, with members too frightened to speak out.

They continued: “Over the course of the past two years, measures have been pushed through the General Assembly to formally curtail any form of dissent.

“Those of us who disagree have been tied up in knots with stifling rules.

“We're learning the hard way to keep our mouths shut if there's a danger we can be identified.”

The group also took aim at the Church Code, describing it as no longer fit for purpose. It said: “It mandates processes which are unbalanced, unfair and, more troublingly, open to manipulation by those in authority.”

The group added: “We need an end to the sort of atmosphere that has led to embarrassing, damaging facts being hidden behind non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).”

The rebels said NDAs were “financed from the offerings given each Sunday by ordinary Presbyterians, yet they know virtually nothing about these decisions being made and funded on their behalf”.

The group continued: “What is needed is a new leadership, one embracing all views within our denomination, one which will create a church whose mission will halt and reverse the sharp decline in membership we have experienced under the current leadership.

“In Belfast alone, in the past few years, we have seen our membership decline by 40 per cent, but no such change will ever come to pass under the current (leadership).”

Bullying

The mysterious group also referenced Lord Alderdice's 150-page submission to the Charity Commission on claims of bullying and harassment in the church.

The report remains with the commission. In response to the email, a spokesperson for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland hit out at “anonymous and unsubstantiated” claims.

They said: “No responsible organisation would respond to allegations that are anonymous and unsubstantiated. So, the Church will not be making any response or comment in

relation to emails purporting to come from the anonymous group who call themselves 'Troubled Presbyterians'.

“Having said that, PCI would make clear, that its policies and procedures are subject to the approval of the General Assembly of the Church, which is made up of ministers and elders, men and women, from its 500-plus congregations across Ireland.”

“As an example of the Church's governance and transparency,” it continued, “its constitution, known as The Code, has been under revision for the past six years. This process has involved listening and consultation at all levels of the Church, with all 19 regional presbyteries speaking into the process on at least two occasions, and discussion and debate by two General Assemblies.

“Only after these stages was the final draft debated and overwhelmingly agreed upon at this year's General Assembly. This revised code will be in place from January 2026. This is only one example of many.

“Therefore, we maintain that the procedures and policies of the Church are subject to thorough consultation, scrutiny and challenge, as those within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would be aware.”

Speaking to the soul

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Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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