

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – St Catherine's College, Armagh**

## Image of the day



### St Catherine's College, Armagh

Archbishop Eamon joined the students and staff of St Catherine's College for their annual Opening of the Year Mass in the Cathedral.



“Such a beautiful atmosphere of prayer and reflection as we joined praying for the school community and our wider faith community during this Jubilee Year”.



## One World Week festival launched

**The One World Week festival was launched on the steps of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast and Christian Aid was among the agencies sharing the key message that 'aid matters'.**

One World Week is organised by the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies (CADA) of which Christian Aid Ireland is a member. This year's event celebrates Northern Ireland's role in the global justice movement and opposes cuts in the UK aid budget.

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We hope you will join one of the events this week as we make the case for overseas aid.

To see the full programme of events, please visit:  
[www.cada-ni.org/one-world-week](http://www.cada-ni.org/one-world-week)

## **Women of Clifton House**

**St Moluas Ladies Guild was very pleased to welcome Dr Lauren Smyth (pictured centre below) from Clifton House, to give us a talk and presentation on the "Women of Clifton House".**

The Woman's Charitable Society was set up in the 18th century to deal with poverty in Belfast, distinct from the workhouse, and although the most renowned woman was Mary Jane McCracken we heard of many more - both benefactors and inmates.

A most interesting and informative afternoon, which may possibly lead to a visit in the near future.

## **Newest congregation welcomed into PCI family**

**Central Belfast, which began life as a team of just nine people who came together to pray in 2016 and now attracts well over 300 people, was been welcomed into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) as its newest**

**congregation, during a special service of thanksgiving in the church on Sunday (12 October).**

Located in what was the old May Street Presbyterian Church building in Belfast's city centre, this is the first time that PCI has welcomed a new congregation into the Church



***Rev Stuart Hawthorne, minister of Carnmoney Presbyterian which started Central as a church plant in 2016, speaking during the Service of Thanksgiving to welcome Central Belfast into the PCI family. Also pictured (left to right) are David Dickinson, who leads Central, Rick Hill, Secretary of PCI's Council for Mission in Ireland, which has responsibility for strategic mission and supporting new church development, and the Moderator of the Presbytery of South Belfast, Rev Andy Galbraith.***

since Donabate Presbyterian, in County Dublin, was admitted in 2010. 'Central Belfast' now joins over 500 congregations that make up the all-Ireland denomination.

Speaking after the service, David Dickinson, who leads Central, and is training for PCI's ordained ministry, explained that the Church's General Assembly in June authorised the Presbytery of South Belfast, to 'establish 'Central Belfast' as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church'. "In the way PCI works, all congregations are part of one of its 19 regional presbyteries across Ireland. We fall within the bounds and oversight of the Presbytery of South Belfast, which formally agreed to establish Central as a PCI congregation at its



***David Dickinson, who leads Central Belfast and is training for PCI's ordained ministry, preaching at the special Service of Thanksgiving at Central Belfast on Sunday.***

meeting last month.”

Mr Dickinson continued, “Today has been another significant milestone in what has been the most astonishing journey of God’s faithfulness, goodness and grace. It is also evidence of God’s heart for the city of Belfast to see the church renewed and to see the city changed. Central has flourished and stands today as a congregation full of life, so it is important that we give thanks for where we are, and for what God has done over these last nine years. Through all the twists and turns to get to this point, it has also been a time of hope-filled expectancy for all that God is yet to do in us and through us,” he said.

Established in Belfast’s Cathedral Quarter in October 2016, Central began life as a ‘church plant’ of Carnmoney Presbyterian Church, meeting on Wednesday nights in various spaces in The MAC theatre. Originally a fellowship of nine people, numbers began to grow as a result of five years of outreach in the city, which included running the well-known evangelistic resource called the Alpha Course.

The community grew and in February 2018 services moved to a Sunday afternoon in Assembly Buildings where numbers grew to around 40. By Easter of 2019, with around 70 attending the services, they moved to Sunday morning services, which were now taking place in Central’s new home, the old May Street Presbyterian Church. Having gone online during the Pandemic, when doors opened again in 2022, numbers had swelled to over 120.

With nearly 400 attending each Sunday, for the first time they now need to open the church’s gallery. Speaking of the

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future, Mr Dickinson continued, “My hope for the future is that congregational status within PCI is not a destination, but merely another marker on the journey, as we continue to follow the Spirit’s lead on the Mission of God. My prayer is that Central would continue to be a living-giving source in the heart of the city, from which followers of Jesus would be scattered to every sphere of city life, as agents of change and the increase of God’s Kingdom.”



***A view from the gallery of Central Belfast, PCI’s newest congregation, during the special Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday to welcome the church into the PCI family.***

During the service the Moderator of the Presbytery of South Belfast, Rev Andy Galbraith, the minister of Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, welcomed Central into the Presbytery

and constituted the congregation in prayer. The minister of Carnmoney Presbyterian, Rev Stuart Hawthorne, also spoke.

Rick Hill, the Secretary of PCI's Council for Mission in Ireland, also took part in the service. Speaking at Central he said, "Today, we give thanks to God for His goodness, faithfulness and sustaining power, as He been at the heart of this whole process. As we welcome Central into the PCI church family, I also want to honour everyone who has been involved in this journey for their faith, dedication and vision. As the PCI Council which has responsibility for strategic mission and supporting new church development, we will support and work with Central as they move forward."

Mr Hill continued, "While we hear too often a narrative of decline, there is another narrative that we are also seeing within our work through the Council for Mission in Ireland. As a denomination, we are carrying a vision to see 10 newly constituted congregations plus 10 new church planting projects in the next 10 years. We have been seeing growth and development in other church planting projects in Balbriggan and Wexford, among others. It is an exciting time, and I hope that we will have many more services like this in the future."

## **Bishops pray Gaza ceasefire deal brings immediate relief and comfort**

**A group of bishops with a close interest in the Holy Land have welcomed the Gaza peace deal, praying that it will "bring immediate relief and comfort".**

The Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, the Church of England's lead bishop for the Middle East, together with the Bishops of Chelmsford, Gloucester and Norwich, said there now needs to be a "fundamental shift in attitudes and behaviour" to secure longterm peace.

They said that what had happened in Israel and Gaza "must never be allowed to happen again, anywhere" and pledged to continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land.

They said: "We hope and pray that today's agreement will bring immediate relief and comfort to those imprisoned and held hostage, to those who are hungry and homeless and to those fearful for their lives and the lives of their loved ones. After two years of unimaginable death and destruction now is the time for all parties to turn away from war and commit to peace.

"A credible peace must start with a ceasefire, but it will not last without a fundamental shift in the attitudes and behaviours that, for too long, have maintained Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and thwarted Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The settler violence in the West Bank must cease and the settlement-expansion programme must be reversed.

"We call on our own Government and the wider international community to now work tirelessly in order for Hamas, and for other Palestinian factions, to fully commit to decommissioning their arms and dismantling their military capabilities, while at the same time securing the necessary

commitments from Israel to end the occupation in accordance with the International Court of Justice's ruling of July 19, 2024.

"All wars, even this war in Gaza, are subject to international law. Where those laws have been broken, those responsible must be held accountable, even after the war's end.

"To do otherwise would be to undermine respect for the rules of war and to encourage a culture of impunity in future conflicts. What we have seen in Gaza these last two years must never be allowed to happen again, anywhere. Similarly, the attack on Southern Israel on October 7, 2023 and the killings and taking of hostages must never be repeated anywhere.

"We continue to hold that the only path to a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians, is a two-state solution that provides for a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

"To that end, we will continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land in ensuring that their people's voices, including their hopes and their anxieties as to the future, are not ignored in the weeks and months ahead.

"A lasting peace is not one that is imposed by outside powers, but one that is built and owned by the affected communities themselves. Palestinian Christians have an important part to play in that process and we will support them in their efforts to be peacemakers."

The Rt Rev Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford

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The Rt Rev Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester  
The Rt Rev Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich  
The Rt Rev Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark

## Education

### Lisbellaw Parish shares harvest gifts with local schools

**At Tattygar, the Rector of Lisbellaw handed over Harvest Gifts of £400 each to Joanne and Jason, the principals of Tattygar and Lisbellaw Primary Schools - the proceeds of the recent Harvest Concert which realised £1,200. £400 also went towards Parish Funds.**



Huge thanks were expressed to all who contributed to and supported, in any way, the Parish Annual Harvest Concert,

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now in its third year. It was a special evening when the participating children and their teachers excelled.



## **St Louise's KC at UK wide Covid inquiry**

**Clair Dobbin, the internationally renowned lawyer at the helm of the Northern Ireland module of the UK wide Covid inquiry, was educated in west Belfast.**

A former pupil of St Louise's Comprehensive College on the Falls Road in Belfast, Clair Dobbin KC left the north to study law at the prestigious Clare College at Cambridge University.

She has since been based in London having joined Three Raymond Buildings, a leading set of barristers with a national and international reputation, as a barrister in 1999.

Practicing in the fields of public law, human rights, inquests and inquiries she has appeared alone before the Supreme Court, the Privy Council and in the European Court of Human Rights.

One of Ms Dobbin's main areas of practice is public inquiries and inquests. She was part of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry and acted as counsel to the inquiry into Children's Homes in Lambeth, as part of her role as counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

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## **Ballymena Academy public speakers**

**The Edgar Graham Memorial Public Speaking Competition was held in The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Stormont on Tuesday 7th October.**

29 participants from across the province spoke on a wide range of interesting topics.

Congratulations to Kirk Wilson (Year 14) who was placed 3rd and to Isabella Gregg (Year 13) who was Highly Commended. A most enjoyable evening was had by all.

## **New student accommodation at University College Dublin**

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

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

## **Belfast High School Year 12 Careers**

**Our Year 12 pupils had the opportunity to attend School Summit NI at the Eikon Exhibition Centre.**

The summit brought together pupils and employers for a day of exploration, motivation, and future planning. With live talks, interactive zones, and creative workshops, it was a fantastic opportunity to connect with real-world experiences and spark ideas for the future.

## Victoria CB Community initiative

**At the start of this academic year, we were proud to launch the 'VCB Community' initiative — a programme designed to give our Year 13 students the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to College life.**

Through this initiative, students support staff with various tasks, including assisting in the running of extra-curricular clubs and refreshing display boards around the school.



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We are delighted to recognise Jay, Aoife and Charmi as some of the first recipients of the VCB Community badges, having each completed twelve hours of volunteering within the College. Their commitment exemplifies outstanding leadership and teamwork, serving as an inspiring example to our younger pupils and reinforcing that VCB is a place where everyone belongs and feels valued.

## Cathedral Calls

### Come and Sing Fauré's Requiem in Belfast Cathedral

Belfast  
Cathedral - our  
second Come  
and Sing event  
of 2025 will be  
Gabriel  
Fauré's  
Requiem Op.  
48, an  
immensely  
moving and  
poetic setting  
of the requiem

COME AND SING!



FAURÉ  
REQUIEM

Refreshments and Scores Provided

 BELFAST CATHEDRAL   
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2025

Jack Wilson *Conductor*  
Derek Collins *Organ*

4.30-7 P.M. REHEARSAL  
7.30 P.M. PERFORMANCE

Register via  
[jack@belfastcathedral.org](mailto:jack@belfastcathedral.org)

Suggested Donation of £5 Per Singer

## **mass text.**

Singers of all vocal parts are welcome to register, singing alongside members of our own Cathedral Choir as we rehearse together, culminating in a devotional performance directed by our Organist and Master of Music Jack Wilson.

We are thrilled to be joined by the wonderful Dr Derek Collins as our organist for the evening.

Please come along, and bring your friends!

To express your interest, or if you have any queries, please contact [jack@belfastcathedral.org](mailto:jack@belfastcathedral.org)

## **Events**

### **Mid day music at St Ann's Dawson Street Dublin**

**Outstanding musicianship in the heart of Dublin. Join in an inspiring series of performances by some of Ireland's and the world's most accomplished artists. ---**

**Thursday, October 16th** Ailbhe McDonagh (cello) & Arunesh Nadgir (piano) Programme: Debussy – Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor McDonagh – Skellig Barber – Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 6 Internationally acclaimed cellist Ailbhe McDonagh, praised for her “flawless technique and meltingly sweet tone” (Fanfare Magazine), joins

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American pianist Arunesh Nadgir for a programme of lyrical and powerful works for cello and piano. ---

**Thursday, October 23rd** Marianna Prjevalskaya – Piano  
Programme: J.S. Bach – Overture in the French Style in B minor, BWV 831 Praised as “a grand pianist” (Il Cittadino, Italy) and “a master of piano” (Auditorium, Korea), Marianna



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**NEW IRISH ARTS**

PART OF LAGAN VALLEY & SOUTH DOWN CIRCUIT

**New Irish Arts  
in concert at  
Donard Methodist**

An evening with musicians from  
New Irish Choir and Orchestra

**37 Central Promenade, Newcastle**  
**Saturday 8th November, 7:30pm**  
Supper included

Suggested donation £20 at the door.

Tickets reserved by  
contacting Richard on  
[richard.wright@irishmethodist.org](mailto:richard.wright@irishmethodist.org)  
or by text at 07702 090 486

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Prjevalskaya brings her acclaimed artistry and vibrant interpretation to this virtuosic Baroque masterpiece. ---

**Thursday, November 13th** Westland Trio Baroque Ensemble & Lanyin Minyue A rare cross-cultural collaboration between Ireland's first all-Chinese Baroque



ensemble and Ireland's first Chinese traditional music group, uniting the sound worlds of Europe and China in a concert that bridges centuries and cultures. ---

# THE ULSTER CONSORT

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# Messiah

## HANDEL'S THRILLING MASTERPIECE

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**THE ULSTER CONSORT & PLAYERS**  
(on period instruments)

**CHARLOTTE O'HARE** soprano  
**LAURA LAMPH** mezzo soprano  
**MICHAEL BELL** tenor  
**BEN McATEER** bass  
**MATTHEW OWENS** conductor

Come and experience this most beloved of works with a soundscape very close to what Handel would have known back in 1742 – with some of Europe's finest period instrument specialists, alongside the intimate but powerful vocal forces of the Ulster Consort and soloists.

**Early booking is advised!**



**Friday 28 November, 7pm – 9.30pm**  
**St Patrick's Church, Ballymena, BT43 7BT**

**Saturday 29 November, 7pm – 9.30pm**  
**Holywood Parish Church, Holywood, BT18 9BX**

Tickets: **£10 (under 18s), £20, £30, £40**, available in advance via [eventbrite.co.uk](https://eventbrite.co.uk), and on the evening at the door

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**Thursday, November 20th** Niall Kinsella – Piano A celebrated Irish pianist known for his artistry and sensitivity, presenting a programme of lyrical and expressive piano works. --- **Thursday, November 27th** Adam Collins (violin) & JiSun Min (piano) Final Lunchtime Recital of 2025 Join us for the concluding recital of the season, celebrating another vibrant year of music at St Ann's. ---

**All recitals begin at 1:20 PM** Admission: €10 at the door; Children free. St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin 2 We look forward to welcoming you to these performances — a perfect musical interlude in the middle of your week.

## **Armagh Georgian Festival 27–30 November ✨**

**Immerse yourself in the elegance of Georgian Armagh with guided tours, literary talks, artisan market stalls, and an enchanting evening at the opera.**

Make a weekend of it with exclusive accommodation offers and start your festive season in style

See the full list of events & book now  
[VisitArmagh.com/georgian](https://VisitArmagh.com/georgian)

## **QUB Religious Studies Research Forum Climate Change Seminars**

**The Religious Studies Research Forum at Queen's University Belfast exists to bring together academics at**

**Queen's and elsewhere with an interest in theology and religious studies.**

It organises an annual series of research seminars open to the public and the annual McCosh Lecture, featuring a leading scholar of religion, again aimed at a public audience.



**FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE**

A MUSICAL EVENING WITH

**ROUGHAN SILVER BAND**

**& 1ST OLD BOYS BRASS BAND**

Honouring the Fallen Through Music -  
A Brass Tribute of Remembrance

 **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

 **Ballygawley Presbyterian Church Hall**

 **8pm**  **Free Admission**  
Donations will go towards both brass bands



This year their theme is religion and climate change. The series will include the following. For more information contact Dr Diarmid A Finnegan, [d.finnegan@qub.ac.uk](mailto:d.finnegan@qub.ac.uk).

Thursday 4 December 2025 at 4.15pm, Geography Building/0G/033, QUB, Elmwood Avenue. **Apocalyptic Conspiracism in the Time of Climate Crisis**, Dr Tristan Sturm, QUB.

Thursday 22 January 2026 at 4.15pm, 27 University Square, Room 01/003. **Sacred Worldviews and Climate Security in Africa: Case Studies from Mozambique and Zimbabwe**, Dr Joram Tarusarira, University of Groningen.

Thursday 16 April 2026 at 4.15pm, 27 University Square, Room 01/003. **A Theology of Climate Failure**. Dr Bethany Sollereder, University of Oxford.

**The McCosh Lecture.** Wednesday 6 May 2026 at 2.30pm, Canada Room and Council Chamber, QUB. Professor Katharine Hayhoe, Chief Scientist, The Nature Conservancy.

## Resources

### Sing to the Lord! 30 Hymn Meditations

**A hymn is like a friend. We have friends from childhood and ones we have made along life's journey – and many of us also like to make new friends.**

# Sing to the Lord!

30 Hymn Meditations

Gordon Giles



*The wide experience of Gordon Giles, both as cleric and musician/hymnologist, comes to the fore in his ability, in an enlightening and engaging way, to relate the sentiments expressed by the words of many texts to the musical form of the tunes to which they are set.*

JOHN CROWTHERS  
Hymn Society Bulletin

So it is natural to want to know something of a hymn's story: who wrote the words, and why; who the composer is and what prompted them to write the music. Sing to the Lord!



*What seems sure is that each item will enable the reader not only to 'sing to the Lord' with understanding (part of the RSCM's original motto) but also to pray more knowledgeably and specifically.*

JOHN CROWTHERS  
Hymn Society Bulletin

considers the stories behind the words and the tunes, which are as interesting and exciting as each other. For they are all human stories.

A warm and detailed review of '**Sing to the Lord**' by **Canon Gordon Giles** in the Hymn Society Bulletin (see post below for full review)

<https://www.rscmshop.com/books/9780854023547/sing-to-the-lord>

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# Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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# Church News Ireland

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Link in Monday through Saturday from  
early morning

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