

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day –
World Methodist Council leaders at Rome Centre**

News reports

World Methodist Council leaders visit church's Rome centre

The President and Vice President of the World Methodist Council, J C Park and Gillian Kingston (Ireland) are visiting the Methodist Centre in Rome this week.

WM Council President JC Park and VP Gillian Kingston met H.Em. Cardinal Kurt Koch, head of the Vatican's ecumenical department, to discuss Methodist-Catholic relations. Director Matthew Laferty and Fr Martin Browne OSB participated in the meeting.

Also present in Rome this week is The Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck (above), research fellow at Wesley House, Cambridge, and former principal of Edgehill



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theological College in Belfast. He was delivering a presentation on Geoffrey Wainwright as a theologian at the Wainwright symposium co-hosted with Centro Pro Unione.



Armagh Diocesan Synod meets in person again

The Armagh Diocesan Synod returned to meeting in person this week (Wednesday, 19th October 2022) for the first time since November 2019.

Members of Synod gathered in the Alexander Synod Hall, in Church House, following a Service of Holy Communion celebrated in St Patrick's Cathedral.

Reports were received from the Diocesan Council, the Board of Communications, the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, and the Board of Ministry, and

Archbishop John McDowell made his first in–person Presidential Address to the diocesan synod (the previous two annual meetings having taken place online).

In the course of his address, Archbishop McDowell noted the historical significance of the pandemic, and reflected on the recent passing of Her Majesty the Queen, the return to near–normality in parish and diocesan life, nurturing vocations and encouraging people to consider entering the fulfilling life of ordained ministry, and the proposed diocesan creation care initiative – Flourish.

The Archbishop's Presidential Address can be read in full at link here -

[\[https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/11548/armagh-diocesan-synod-meets-in\]](https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/11548/armagh-diocesan-synod-meets-in)

Christians Against Poverty Stories: Freedom in Christ

Christians Against Poverty has been partnering with the local church in Northern Ireland since 2009. Hundreds have been helped to go debt free and many clients have received the message of Christian hope.

There is now a network of over 40 CAP services across the province providing free Debt Help, Job Clubs, Release Groups and Life Skills.

Killicomaine church plant leader Revd Jim Fleming (pictured above) is CAP's NI Area Manager and recounts a story from the Lurgan Debt Centre. The centre is supported by



Magheralin Parish, Emmanuel Lurgan, Shankill Parish, Church of the Nazarene and Killicomaine Community Church. It is led by Ruth Waddell.

“A probation officer contacted CAP on behalf of a client who had spent the last four years in and out of prison. Could we help with his debt situation? ‘Yes’ was the answer!

“The client ended up living in a Simon Community hostel in Portadown and that’s where Ruth and I met him and conducted the appointments. He was not in good shape and had pretty bad mental health issues. We discovered that the client had some Christian influence in his background – his dad was saved before he died – but it was fairly strict. He was, however, open to hearing about a relationship with God and open for us to pray with him. As his befriender I maintained contact with him, and he came to Alpha at our Community Church plus the odd Sunday evening.

“Early this year his Debt Relief Order went through, and we chatted again about his relationship with God. He informed me that he had ‘repented and believed’ and was now following Jesus! He has also attended Alpha at Portadown

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Elim and on Easter Sunday was baptised at Emmanuel, Portadown where he is now attending.”

Get debt help from Christians Against Poverty. Visit capuk.org



**Healing service to be held at
Craigyhill Methodist Church
Sunday 23rd Oct 2022
Commencing at 3.00 pm**

God wants us to be well and to enjoy good health in body, mind and spirit. If you need prayer or want to pray for others then come along.



**Rhonda Humphrey will be speaking on the text
Matthew 28:20 'I am with you always, to the very ends of the age'**

Any concerns you may have for yourself or anyone else you know. This includes loneliness, past hurts, anxiety, stress, and recovery from sickness, physical healing, broken relationships, your relationship with God, temptation or guidance over a decision. You can receive prayer for any need in your life.

**Divine Healing is
Jesus Christ meeting you
at your point of need.**

(Craigyhill Methodist - Located at 1 Brustin Brae Rd, Larne. BT40 2HS.)

Vacancy – Ministry Leader – Church's Ministry for Healing: Ireland

The Church's Ministry of Healing: Ireland is seeking to recruit an experienced Ministry Leader to assist in growing a healing ministry for parishes.

The ideal candidate will be someone who has an understanding of and sympathy for the ethos, purpose, and witness of the Church's Ministry of Healing: Ireland. The role involves identifying suitable persons to assist with delivery and to enable and work with teams of volunteers who will assist and support the ministry. The candidate needs to be innovative, and will be given flexibility to develop and initiate the healing ministry using their own personal skills and experience.

For further information and a full job description, see link at - [\[https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2022/10/21/vacancy-ministry-leader-churchs-ministry\]](https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2022/10/21/vacancy-ministry-leader-churchs-ministry)

Colleagues mark Canon Graham's retirement

The Rev Canon George Graham, rector of Dunluce, retires at the end of October.

The Rev Canon George Graham will retire after 17 years as rector of Dunluce Parish at the end of October.



He is pictured prior to celebrating Holy Communion with his colleagues in Coleraine Rural Deanery at a service held in Dunluce Parish Church specially to mark his retirement.

Afterwards, George's colleagues enjoyed coffee and refreshments and his words wisdom and reflection.

George was ordained in 1978 as deacon and 1979 as priest, and served his first curacy in Christ Church

Cathedral, Lisburn, from 1978-1981, and a second in Mossley from 1981-1983.

His first incumbency was in St Matthew's, Broomhedge, from 1983-1991 before he moved to Derriaghy until 1996, then Ballywillan from 1996-2005. He has been rector of Dunluce since 2005.

George also served as Rural Dean of Coleraine Deanery from March 2016 until December 2019.

Archbishop John McDowell pays tribute to Baroness May Blood

The Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, has issued the following statement on the announcement of the death of Baroness May Blood:

‘Although I did not know her half as well as I would have liked to, I know that the death of Baroness May Blood leaves Northern Ireland and particularly her home city of Belfast a poorer place. Baroness Blood (or May as she preferred) was at the heart of progressive movements for community development and reform in Belfast from a very early age. Her concern sprang from seeing and experiencing the very poor living conditions in post-war Belfast and led to an early involvement in the Trade Union Movement and into wider social and political activism; all deeply informed by the influence of the teachings and person of Jesus Christ. And she could be found where women so often have been in the unfinished work of peace

in Ireland – front and centre, where more timid spirits were wary to tread, outstandingly exemplified in her work with the Women’s Coalition.

‘May Blood was a formidable presence in any gathering, a quintessential Belfast woman who spoke directly and constructively from the depth of a kind heart, which had been nurtured in a loving home. I once heard her describe the knowledge of the love of her parents as the greatest riches she ever had. And so May enriched the lives of all who came into contact with her, although that Belfast directness and the slightly disbelieving look which said, “Do you think so?” meant that she could be a challenging dialogue partner.

‘I know that May has been an inspiration and an encouragement to many people, especially to women, and in that sense her influence lives on in the lives of others. My prayers are with all those who were closest to May and who she loved most. God bless her memory to all of us.’

Moderator reflects on his visit to Hungary & Ukraine

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, has spoken of the ‘absolute privilege’ of being able to come alongside ‘and stand in solidarity and in faith’ with those supporting refugees in Hungary and Internally Displaced People in western Ukraine, on a visit to both countries this week.



On a visit to the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia' Diaconal Centre, the Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick met Joseph, one the bakers who earlier in the conflict helped to bake 1,000 loaves a day. Bread was sent out in buses which returned with children escaping the conflict. He still bakes

hundreds of loaves each morning.

Dr Kirkpatrick and his wife Joan were in central Europe this week to see the ongoing work of PCI's partner church, the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), as it supports Ukrainian refugees in Hungary following Russia's invasion of its neighbour in February.

Since the war began Irish Presbyterians have responded to the humanitarian emergency by giving £1.3 million to the relief effort. The Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick saw how that

support was being used through visits to various RCH agencies in Hungary. They also crossed the border into Transcarpathia, a region of western Ukraine and the city of Berehove, spending time with the leadership of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (RCT) and members on the ground, who continue to care for the thousands of Internally Displaced People fleeing the conflict further east.

Speaking on his return home Dr Kirkpatrick, said, “It has been an absolute privilege to be able to come alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ and stand in solidarity with them, and in faith, at this time. To experience the resilience and seeing the reality of faith in action, especially in Transcarpathia in such difficult circumstances, has been an amazing and humbling experience.”

The amount raised from congregations from across Ireland has been distributed equally between PCI's relief and development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund, and the RCH through its relief and development wing, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid. In Transcarpathia much of the everyday social care, welfare and education is provided by the Church, which has, since the Russian invasion in February, been severely stretched having faced what Dr Kirkpatrick described as ‘a double exodus’.

“In Berehove, in western Ukraine where we stayed, even though it is 800 kilometres east of Kyiv, the community has witnessed a double exodus that the Church had to deal with overnight. Firstly an exodus of their own community with people being called up to fight, while others crossed the border into Hungary leaving only the elderly, young mothers and their children and fewer staff in schools and hospitals.



Left to right, Mrs Kirkpatrick and the Moderator with a family who had escaped from the east of the country, returned home only to escape a second time and were traumatised in the process. Also pictured at the RCT's Diaconal Co-ordination

Centre in Berehove is its Director and Lay President of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, Mr Béla Nagy.

“While ministers and their families have stayed to help, in some cases congregations lost over a third of their members. Transcarpathia then experienced a second exodus of 500,000 people coming from the rest of Ukraine to escape the conflict, with fewer people and little resources to look after them.”

Dr Kirkpatrick continued, “The reality of that is there are empty houses as you go through the villages. You are also very conscious of the distinct lack of men. The air raid sirens are a regular reminder of the war, with the children we met in the schools having to go down to their shelter. While the city wasn’t under attack the sirens sounded as missiles, drones, or shells fell on other towns and cities, perhaps hundreds of kilometres away. It was a very sobering experience and created a constant sense of anxiety for the children. As one soldier told me at a checkpoint, it is a constant reminder for him that people are dying in other parts of the country.”

In the midst of this is the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia. “It is incredible to think that in January the Church decided to declare 2022 as ‘A Year of Thanksgiving’ and they continue to give thanks as an expression of their faith, even in the face of such difficulty. Joan and I found no sense of desperation, just a realistic concern for the world around them and what I can only describe as this Gospel expression of kindness, which was so evident. On Tuesday evening they thanked us, and the support PCI has shown, by taking us out for a meal.”

During their stay, the Moderator – who is also Minister of Portrush Presbyterian - and Mrs Kirkpatrick visited congregations, educational and other social welfare institutions run by the RCT. They also had the opportunity to discuss the impact of the war, and the Church’s response to it, with Bishop Sándor Zán-Fábián, the Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia and its Lay President Béla Nagy, the Director of the RCT’s Diaconal Co-ordination Centre in Berehove.



Life goes on in Transcarpathia.

“During our time together we had an opportunity to talk and pray. Bishop Sándor and Mr Nagy continually reaffirmed how much they deeply appreciated the kindness and generosity of Irish Presbyterians and wanted the Church to know how thankful they were for the support PCI had shown, which has made a massive difference. While aiding the humanitarian effort, that provision has also made a real difference in the provision of practical support for local ministry, which we saw, enabling ministers and their parishes to look after those who have not been able to leave and those who have fled the war,” Dr Kirkpatrick said.

Mrs Kirkpatrick said that while the kindness and warmth of the welcome shown to those fleeing the war, especially by

the women who were also so resilient, the pain etched on the faces of those who had fled was plain to see. “We met a lady and her young grandson who had travelled all the way from Donetsk in the east of the country. They had returned home and then escaped again. They couldn’t speak, the pain was literally unspeakable as they couldn’t communicate. We just held each other.”

On a visit to the RCT’s Diaconal Centre, the Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick met the bakers who earlier in the conflict baked 1,000 loaves a day. The bread was put in buses and sent to Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine returning with children escaping the worst of the war, to be looked after by the Church. Hundreds of loaves are still baked each day and distributed to refugees who have found shelter in the various educational and social welfare organisations run by the Church. The Diaconal Centre also sends out weekly humanitarian shipments with in-kind donations to the interior parts of the country, with the church looking after around 5,000 people in its various institutions.

While the Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick were in Transcarpathia for a day and a night, the majority of the five day visit took place in and around the Hungarian capital, Budapest. Here they visited Hungarian Reformed Church Aid headquarters and met its CEO along with the head of its Refugee Ministry, and others, who co-ordinate the humanitarian response. They also visited the RCH’s Mission Service and its theological college.

“In Ukraine and in Hungary we have been shown such kindness and hospitality, even in the midst of such suffering and human tragedy. We listened and tried to encourage,

while getting a sense of how the Church has responded and continues to respond to this war,” Dr Kirkpatrick said.

“We have also learnt never to underestimate the power of simply being present. Even at home, when you visit a friend in hospital, or call in on a neighbour who is having a hard time, the fact that you have made the effort can be powerful. As we stood in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we certainly found that here.”

The Moderator concluded by saying, “While we saw how our Church had contributed to the humanitarian effort, we also saw how the Lord was keeping people at peace. The peace of God that the Apostle Paul writes about in Philippians, the peace that transcends understanding. Just as they were praying, we were asked to pray for a just peace, not victory, but a just peace, seen through Gospel eyes, a peace for everyone.”

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Podcast - Ask Me for a Blessing: (You Know You Need One)

In this episode, Presiding Bishop Curry talks with the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser, priest in charge at Church of the Incarnation in Manhattan and author of the new book, Ask Me for a Blessing: (You Know You Need One).

Every Tuesday, Rev. Dannhauser stands outside her church in New York City with a sign that says: “Ask me for a blessing (because God knows you need one). The incredible stories of how New Yorkers responded populate her both her book—and this conversation with Bishop Curry.

The two explore what giving and receiving blessings really means, and how curiosity is our best friend when we are doing the work of evangelism. They discuss how spiritual and religious practices draw us closer to God and to one another and the importance of proclaiming the Good News by going out into the streets like Jesus did.

Listen now: <https://flow.page/wayoflovepod>

Free download: Digital promo planner for your Christmas events

Advent and Christmas is a great time to host services and events that draw people from beyond your regular congregation.

However, knowing how to create an effective plan to promote an event digitally to new people can be tricky. This simple digital promotion planner produced by the Church of England is here to help!

If you're looking ahead to your Advent and Christmas services and events, try this simple digital promotion planner to help you get the invitation out.

Download for free at cofe.io/ChristmasPlanner.

Eccentric Lives: The Daily Telegraph Book of 21st Century Obituaries

It helps to operate in fields where oddity is tolerated. The lower rungs of the Church, say.

In 2020, we illustrated the obituary of High Church prankster, the Rev David Johnson, with a photo of the Rector accompanied by Doreen and Florence, goats who trimmed the grass. “He was keen of mind and sharp of wit,” the obit records, “but he was also possessed of an eccentricity which led some to revere him as an institution and others to opine that he ought to be confined to one.”

At the low Church end of the scale, we find the Rev Angus Smith, a minister in the extreme Calvinist “Wee Frees” on Skye. Nicknamed the “Ferry Reverend”, he lay down in the road to block cars arriving from the mainland, to protest against a Sunday ferry service (“desecration of the Sabbath”).

Smith and others were carted off (“seven constables to move one 20-stone crofter”) and were charged with breach of the peace. In a delicious twist, some of his even more austere Sabbatarians lambasted him for demonstrating on a Sunday, thus – also – breaking the Sabbath.

Which brings us to our 11th eccentric, the 13th Earl of Haddington – a keen quester into the paranormal, whose recreations included “cerealogy”, the study of crop circles. What’s more, “his healing powers, assisted by the use of

rock crystal, gave him a Merlin-like presence in the House [of Lords]. Many swore by his treatment.”

So, if we’re looking for a common thread running through Eccentric Lives, I offer this – that one thing they share is not caring what the rest of us think. In that there is a kind of vitality. All of these eccentrics jumped on to the spinning wheel of life with both feet, not caring that it might throw them off.

Andrew M Brown is The Telegraph’s obituaries editor.

‘Eccentric Lives: The Daily Telegraph Book of 21st Century Obituaries’ edited by Andrew M Brown, RRP £25. Buy for £19.99 at books.telegraph.co.uk or call 0844 871 1514

Poem for today

The Sea-Cliffs of Kilkee by Aubrey De Vere

Awfully beautiful art thou, O sea!
Viewed from the vantage of these giant rocks
That vast in air lift their primeval blocks,
Screening the sandy cove of lone Kilkee.
Cautious, with outstretched arm and bended knee,
I scan the dread abyss, till the depth mocks
My straining eyeballs, and the eternal shocks
Of billows rolling from infinity
Disturb my brain. Hark! the shrill sea-bird’s scream!
Cloud-like they sweep the long wave’s sapphire gleam,
Ere the poised osprey stoop in wrath from high.

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Here man, alone, is naught; Nature supreme,
Where all is simply great that meets the eye,—
The precipice, the ocean, and the sky.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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