

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Royal riding Armagh

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Royal riding Armagh

Another fantastic week for Royal School Armagh showjumpers in the Interschools League.

Our 1m team – Molly McConnell, Eva McConnell, Ellie Coalter, and Amy Clarke – claimed 2nd place for the second week in a row. A superb achievement in a highly competitive class.

Individually, Amy also took 2nd in the Premier class, and Eva placed 5th in the Open class. Amazing results all round!



Our 75cm team – Kristin Knipe, Emma-Jayne Crawford, Jessica Clarke, and Katie Morton – also performed brilliantly, securing 6th place in another competitive class.

The 85cm team of Annie Flanagan, Sienna Doherty, Amber Henderson, and Lydia Flanagan jumped fantastically, narrowly missing out on a placing this week. Individually, Faith Davison and Kristin Knipe competed in the 85cm class, while Molly McConnell took part in the Premier individual.

Well done to all our riders! We wish you the best of luck as you take on the next challenge next week.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes Middle East ceasefire, urges continued prayer

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has welcomed the ceasefire in the Middle East, describing it as a source of hope for an end to the war in Gaza. The Church has also encouraged its members to continue praying for peace and for those affected by the conflict.

Reflecting on recent events, Rev Richard Kerr, Convener of PCI's Council for Global Mission's Global Development Committee, said in a statement: "Fragile as it is, and while there is much to be worked out and thought through, we welcome the ceasefire and give thanks to God for it.

"Tens of thousands of lives have been lost as a result of this conflict, and it has not been easy to sift through the propaganda from both Israeli and Hamas sources to ascertain and understand what was happening. However, we are deeply grateful for the present ceasefire and pray that it will not only hold, but become the start of a long-lasting and enduring peace in the region:"

The statement released on Monday came a day after the IDF claimed Hamas fired at troops in areas of Rafah city that are Israeli-controlled under the terms of the truce. At least 36 Palestinians were killed in retaliatory airstrikes.

Following the events, the Israeli military resumed the ceasefire in Gaza. US President Donald Trump, who brokered the peace deal, also confirmed the ceasefire was still "in effect".

Encouraging PCI members to remain steadfast in prayer, Rev Kerr concluded: "In the midst of all the rhetoric, we must remember the great human cost of this war: the lives of people massacred on 7 October, the hostages taken, the impact on their families and the huge death toll in Gaza over the past two years.

"We need to continue to bring all who have been affected to God. As we pray for them, we should also remember those in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East who have also been affected by the conflict, including our partner churches and organisations in the region".

Gaza: Badly bombed hospital continues life-saving work

Rev Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem, wrote on Friday:

Today marks the second anniversary of the devastating bombing of the Anglican Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza. It remains amongst the single most devastating attacks and largest numbers of deaths in one incident. It has never been possible to confirm the actual number because of the nature of the destruction but it was many hundreds. We honour the memory of all those children, women and men who died.

But the story didn't end with death. Al Ahli hospital regenerated itself and continued its life-saving work. Despite nine further missile or drone attacks by Israel and summary arrests and subsequent release of our medical staff, the vital medical care has continued almost unbroken. One day the miraculous story will be fully told.

We stand in awe of all the hospital staff including the Princess Basma Centre rehab team who all show extraordinary courage and indefatigable determination to continue the healing ministry which has been entrusted to us all by Jesus Christ.

Our commemoration of this day looks ever forwards in hope and not backwards in anger.

Gafcon - Statement by the Episcopal Church of Guatemala

In response to the communiqué from the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)

By October 3rd, the Anglican Communion and the whole christian world were pleasantly surprised by the announcement of the election of Bishop Sarah Elisabeth Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

In response to this announcement, we have witnessed numerous opinions, comments and greetings expressing joy, gratitude and hope for this election. Likewise, there have been expressions of recognition because we could see

in this election a clear expression of the openness and inclusiveness that characterize our anglican tradition in relation to the ministry and position of women in the church.

However, we have also witnessed positions of rejection, positions against to this election from provinces or dioceses, some of them gathered in the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) or the Global South Fellowship Anglican (GSFA). In this context, we have witnessed statements in which, in addition to expressing their opposition, they express their refusal to recognize the now-elected Archbishop of Canterbury as Primus inter pares in the Anglican Communion.

Recently, on October 16, in a statement from the Archbishop of Rwanda, Laurent Mbanda, President of the GAFCON Council of Primates, declared that the Anglican Communion will be reset by GAFCON, that the Instruments of Communion (Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting, and Anglican Consultative Council) are not recognized, the impossibility of continuing in communion with other provinces, particularly those that do not adhere to the 2008 Jerusalem Declaration, and announced that it would not participate in the 19th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2026. It also announced that GAFCON would meet in March 2026 to proclaim the Global Anglican Communion. It should be noted that GAFCON, in its 2008 Jerusalem Declaration, unilaterally and arbitrarily takes the right to point out and judge the alleged abandonment of Scripture by other provinces and their leaders.

On October 17, a statement was also released by Bishop Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, expressing his desire to continue dialogue on issues in pursuit of unity within the communion, especially in view of the Anglican Consultative Council meeting to be held in 2026 in Belfast, Ireland. In this regard, he also invites consideration and response to the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals, a document prepared by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order.

As Diocesan Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Guatemala, I express our commitment to the Anglican Communion, of which we are members through our province of the Anglican Church of the Central America Region, reaffirming our full and open participation in the various committees and commissions, in which we can continue to build a broad and inclusive communion that privileges human dignity. We trust in dialogue and mutual participation, discerning issues that lead to fraternity, reconciliation, and unity in the Church.

I also express my rejection to arguments that seek to delegitimize, disregard, and render invisible the ministry of women within the church, which have become evident in the demonstrations against the election of Bishop Sara Elisabeth Mullaly as Archbishop of Canterbury. In this regard, we express our solidarity with Bishop Mullaly, with all women ordained as deacons, priests, and bishops, as well as with women in general in their place and vocation within the Church.

Finally, we pray with the certainty and commitment of the words of St. Paul:

October 23, 2025

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Ramón Ovalle, Diocesan Bishop. Episcopal Church of Guatemala.

October 19, 2025



Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Diocesan Synod 2025

Clergy and members of Synod gathered in the Riverside Park Hotel, Enniscorthy, on Wednesday, 15th October 2025, for this year's meeting of the Diocesan Synod. The day began with a service of Holy Communion.

The Bishop offered a warm welcome to all present, including ecumenical guests the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ferns, the Most Reverend Ger Nash; Margaret Anew, representing The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); the Revd Fadzi Jongoro, Methodist Minister in Gorey; and Councillor



Barbara-Anne Murphy, Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District.

The Bishop also welcomed the following exhibitors

Bishops' Appeal: Gillian Purser

Christian Aid: Michael Briggs

Christian Media Trust: Valerie Power

Church Mission Society Ireland: Roger Thompson

Church of Ireland Gazette / Search: Clark Brydon



Church of Ireland
Liturgical Advisory
Committee: Revd Alan
Rufli

Church of Ireland Youth
Department (CIYD): Luke
Hawkins

Church of Ireland Board
for Ministry with Children
and Families: Rachel
Murphy and Carolyn Good

Diocesan Magazine:
Margaret Hawkins and
Denise Hughes

Ecclesiastical Insurance:
Scott Hayes

Girls' Friendly Society (GFS): Hilda Bailey

Ministry of Healing: Lydia Monds and Catherine Smyth

Mothers' Union: Elizabeth Johnston and Linda Ward

Pioneer Ministry: Revd Rob Jones and Ross Barrett

Priorities Fund: Hazel Corrigan

Protestant Aid and Kirwan House: Geoff Scariff



Tearfund Ireland: Emma Lynch

Throughout the day, members engaged in thoughtful discussion and debate on the life and ministry of the diocese. Additional reports from the Book of Reports were considered, with the Bishop guiding the proceedings.

Motions were passed concerning Diocesan Rules and Regulations, including adjustments to the size of the Diocesan Council and Finance Committee, with a slight reduction in the numbers of clergy and lay members to ensure effective governance. A further motion was passed to create a Diocesan Register of Parishes willing to plant trees on glebe land, enabling parishes without land to contribute to environmental and biodiversity initiatives.

At 8:30 p.m., the Synod concluded with the final hymn and a blessing by the Bishop.

Looking ahead, it was announced that next year's Diocesan Synod will take place on Saturday, 17th October 2026, at the Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny.

Photos & Report by Shane Reynolds, Diocesan Communications Officer

US Army criticised for cutting Catholic chapel support contracts

The head of US Catholic bishops has written to Catholic soldiers expressing concern over the US Army's decision to cancel all religious support contracts for army chapels.

In a pastoral letter addressed to members of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, Archbishop Timothy P Broglio said the change has already left chapel offices "dark" and music "absent during Mass".

He wrote: "These changes were not due to the government shutdown, but rather, due to a memorandum issued in March of this year by US Army Installation Management Command which directed the cancellation of all chapel contracts for Coordinators of Religious Education (CRE), Catholic Pastoral Life Coordinators (CPLC), and musician contracts, across the U.S. Army."

The archbishop thanked those who have served Catholic communities through these contracts, saying: "Week after week, you prepared lessons for the faithful of this Archdiocese, arrived at the chapel early, and offered your knowledge, charisms, and creativity to help others encounter Jesus Christ, His Church, and His sacraments."

Archbishop Timothy also expressed "deep lament that the army's actions have proven so injurious to the practice of the Catholic faith on Army installations".

Addressing the challenges faced by Catholic chaplains, he wrote: "Catholic priests who serve as U.S. Army chaplains offer spiritual and pastoral care to soldiers of any, or even no faith. At the same time, they also serve, within their Catholic faith, six times the number of soldiers served by Protestant chaplains."

He continued: "In canceling these contracts, the Army overburdens Catholic chaplains, harms chapel communities, and impedes the constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion especially for Catholics."

The archbishop added that he would "pursue all legal options to address this grave misstep".

Concluding his letter, he encouraged Catholics in the military to continue their service and faith formation: "Because of this reality, I implore the faithful of this Archdiocese to continue to worship at military chapels and offer your gifts and talents for the building up of the Church, especially in sacramental preparation and religious education."

Education

The Big Conversation - BRA Politics Society



We were delighted to recently welcome SDLP leader Claire Hanna MP to speak with our F5–M6 pupils. She shared insights into political life, leadership, and the importance of engaging in the democratic process.

Pupils asked thoughtful questions and gained a real sense of how politics connects to their own lives and futures.

A huge thank you to Claire Hanna for joining us and making this such a great discussion with the pupils! 🙌

We're looking forward to more in this series of Big Conversations with local politicians over the next few weeks and months.

Cathedral Calls

Limerick & Killaloe Primary Schools Service

Saint Mary's Cathedral was delighted to welcome The Rev'd Canon Nicola Halford to the cathedral for the Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Primary Schools Service.



Canon Halford delivered a thoughtful and inspiring address on the importance of friendship and understanding our feelings.

We give thanks for everyone who joined us for this special service and for the joy and energy the pupils brought to the cathedral.

An organist's honour

An organist who played at Queen Elizabeth II's funeral and King Charles III's coronation described the honour as "an extraordinary honour".

Read Peter Holder's story here: <https://bbc.in/3KOXwog>

Clergy and ministry



North Connor Commissioning service

At a special Commissioning service on Sunday 19th October 2025, Jacqueline Heaney & Sharon Walker were installed as Parish Readers for the Grouped Parishes of Ballintoy, Dunseverick & Rathlin Island by Rev. Patrick Barton and Canon Amanda Adams. Pic McAuley Multimedia Ltd

Canon Edwy Kille

The death has taken place in Belfast of Canon Edwy Kille, who served as Rector of Aghadrumsee, Clogh and Drumsnatt parishes in Clogher Diocese for 31 years and also served as a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter.

Born in 1930, he trained in Bristol and was ordained a Deacon in 1962 and a Priest in 1963 firstly serving as an Assistant Chaplain in Townend Street in Dublin between 1962 to 1966 before being appointed Rector of Killoran Union in Achonry where he served for the next eight years.

In 1974, he was appointed Rector of Aghadrumsee, Clogher and Drumnatt on the Fermanagh/Monaghan border where he was to remain for the next 31 years until his retirement ministering to his Church of Ireland parishioners during the many difficult years of the Troubles. He was widely respected.

During his ministry , he wrote several publications.

A Service of Thanksgiving was held in Killeevan Parish Church, Newbliss, Co. Monaghan yesterday at 11.30am followed by burial in the adjoining churchyard.

He is survived by two sons, Peter and Jonathan, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wives, Sally and Angela.

Events



Join the choir for Home for Christmas with Keith and Kristyn Getty

If you enjoy singing, especially at Christmas, New Irish Arts is delighted to offer you an exciting opportunity to join the choir for the Home for Christmas event, with Keith and Kristyn Getty.

Taking place on Monday 22 December in the SSE Arena, the choir will have a number of featured moments in the event, as well as leading the congregation in carols, alongside special guests and world-class musicians.

To find out more about rehearsals and other details, and to register for the choir, follow the link below.

Places are limited, so sign up as soon as possible to secure a space!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/join-the-choir-for-home-for-christmas-in-the-sse-arena-tickets-1760732461189?aff=oddtcreator>

Resources

Inter Faith Week 2025

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 9 to Sunday 16 November. The theme for 2025 is Community: Together We Serve.

Inter Faith Week is a great opportunity to connect with local communities; understand how faith motivates people to social action; and explore how inter faith approaches can help bring people together in the face of division. All things that are needed in our communities at the current time.

Each year, Inter Faith Week begins on Remembrance Sunday, and runs until the following Sunday. It is planned in this way so that the week includes an additional Sunday and provides the opportunity for other weekend events to take place as well as those linked to Remembrance Sunday. Remembrance Sunday was chosen as a start day for Inter Faith Week to encourage people to remember together the contributions of all faiths, and to consider how best to create a just, peaceful, and harmonious world.

Hundreds of activities are held each year to mark the Week, organised by a wide range of bodies. Local inter faith organisations are central to Inter Faith Week, with many hosting week-long programmes. Through the week there are a diverse range of activities taking place including picnics, interfaith pilgrimages, social action events, dialogues, conferences, lectures, and sports matches.

If you are holding an event to support Inter Faith Week you can post the details on the Inter Faith Week website where you will also find information about events happening across the country this year.

Resourcing Inter Faith

New this year is a Inter Faith Week for Schools website where you will find resources such as assembly ideas and lesson plans.

At the recent Churches Together in England All Ecumenical Representatives Conference, Rev Dr Peter Colwell, CTBI's Deputy General Secretary, spoke on inter faith work. He also introduced a new resource designed by the Inter Faith Theology Advisory Group, the Inter Faith Toolkit. The Toolkit will be available through the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website in 2026.

Watch the presentation Journeying with those of other faiths: dialogue and practice

[<https://cte.org.uk/inter-faith-week-2025/>]

(<https://cte.org.uk/inter-faith-week-2025/>)

Perspective

Unionist viewpoint on the Irish presidential election

Peter Weir, barrister, former UUP and DUP MLA and Northern Ireland Education Minister, who now sits in the House of Lords as Lord Weir of Ballyholme in the County of Down as a DUP peer.

The more I observe of the Irish Presidential election, albeit casually from afar, the more I am relieved that we operate under a constitutional monarchy in the UK.

This isn't primarily because of the candidates, but rather the inherent contradiction and weaknesses of the system itself. My politics differ on a number of issues with Heather Humphreys, not least the fact that she is a Republican who advocates a United Ireland, albeit someone whose republicanism has always been non-violent and indeed opposed to violence.

Catherine Connolly is much further divergent from my politics, a far left activist, with numerous problematic foreign and domestic positions, with the added problem that her key backers are Sinn Féin.

However what the election has exposed, is a much more systematic problem.

This is not just the naked sectarianism directed by some towards Heather Humphreys. She is clear a convinced constitutional republican, with a long standing record of public service in the Republic, and clearly a decent woman.

However, none of this seems good enough to some in the Republic, who view any republican who is also a border Protestant with suspicion and hostility, a fifth column not to be entrusted with the role.

Even with the most perfect of candidates, the system is imbued with an ever widening flaw.

The Presidency, to the best of my understanding, is supposed to be a national figurehead, standing above and apart from partisan politics. They are supposed to be a unifying figure, acting as a national ambassador on the world stage, not challenging the democratic agenda or legitimacy of the elected government. This analysis is reinforced by the fact that in recent decades, when an Irish President has gone for a second term they have gone unchallenged.

Yet to get on the ballot paper in the first place a candidate is effectively the candidate of a party political system, either a member or surrogate, and cannot be accepted without their endorsement.

The prospect of a genuinely independent non political candidate has gradually been squeezed out of the reckoning, and now become effectively impossible. Once the election has started the candidates are dependant on party machines to campaign for them, and then judged largely by their political positioning,

How then can any successful candidate, who owes their election to a party partisan political position, suddenly transform into a unifying non political statesperson.

Either they abandon their political beliefs and effectively betray the mandate their supporters have hoped they will implement, or they become a controversial partisan figure, either challenging or at least embarrassing the democratic government, in effect over stepping the mark constitutionally.

To tread the line between these two positions seems increasingly difficult to do. It seems that the movement is increasingly towards the activist model, which will only be accelerated if Connolly wins, who seems less likely to be constrained. That way lies increasing problems for the Republic.

Thank goodness we can still say, God Save The King !”

Speaking to the soul

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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www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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