

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Limavady launch

Image of the day



Helen Mark (Deputy Lieutenant for County Londonderry) with the LL Cadet Corporal Moon (Royal Irish Regiment) received the 1st Poppy of the 2025 Poppy Appeal from Richard Wilson (RBL - Limavady Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser)

Limavady Launch of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Members of the RBL - Limavady Branch held their launch event in 2nd Limavady Presbyterian Church, which was attended by the Deputy Lieutenant for



County Londonderry and the Lord-Lieutenant for County Londonderry's Cadet.

Alistair Harper from the RBL - Limavady Branch gave a detailed talk on the men and women from 2nd Limavady Presbyterian Church who were killed, injured or played a role during both World Wars, and spoke about the Memorial Plaque and Memorial Pipe Organ within the church.

The Deputy Lieutenant spoke about the importance of remembering those who were killed and injured in war and to support the important work that the Royal British Legion continues to play in supporting veterans to this day.

This year the Poppy Shop will open on Main Street beside the former Alexander Arms Hotel, with the kind permission of Mr. Donald Morgan, from Saturday 25th October until Saturday 8th November, Poppy wreaths and other remembrance are available.

Tesco have once again given permission for a poppy stall in their premises from 31st October to 8th November (excluding Sunday 2nd November).

Street collections will take place on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th November and you are encouraged to place a poppy on the town wreath outside Marshall Howe's shop on Market Street.

Organisations who have ordered poppy wreaths can collect these ahead of time from the Poppy Shop.

The annual Poppy Appeal Quiz will be held on Monday 3rd November at 8.00 p.m. in the United Services Club. Get a team together and come along. Always a good night!

Front page photo - Some of the Limavady Branch members of the Royal British Legion and guests who attended the 2025 Poppy Appeal Launch in 2nd Limavady Presbyterian Church.

Rear L-R Brian Hassan (Limavady RBL Vice Chairperson), Rev Geoffrey Jones (Minister 2nd Limavady Presbyterian Church), Richard Nicholl (RBL Limavady), John Pudney (RBL Limavady), George Henderson (RBL Limavady), Jennifer Tait (RBL Limavady Secretary), Lester Martin (RBL Limavady)

Front row L-R Alistair Harper (Limavady RBL Poppy Appeal Organiser), Cadet Corporal Moon (Royal Irish Regiment), Helen Mark (Deputy Lieutenant), Ernie Norris (Limavady RBL President), Steven Callaghan (Limavady RBL Chairperson), Richard Wilson (Limavady RBL Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser)



News

Mothers' Union 'Souls Of Our Shoes' exhibition at the Diocesan Synod

Members of Derry and Raphoe Mothers' Union brought the 'Souls Of Our Shoes' exhibition to the Diocesan

Synod today highlighting the plight of all those impacted by the scourge of domestic abuse.

We all have a role to play in raising awareness of this in our churches and communities. A range of literature and other goods was also available to purchase from the MU stall.





School Harvest Thanksgiving in Bunclody

Thanks to everyone who came to St Mary's for the regular 10.15am midweek service, which this Wednesday was a special School Harvest Thanksgiving.

Pupils read, led prayers and sang, while Michael Briggs (pictured) of Christian Aid challenged us to distinguish between our NEEDS and our WANTS, before outlining the work of #ChristianAid to meet people's NEEDS in #Gaza and in #Malawi. Also pictured are Carolyn Good, Principal of

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Carrigduff national school, Valerie Power Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Diocesan Reader and Canon Trevor Sargent.



Bishop of Derry and Raphoe sees signs of hope all across the diocese

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, has told clergy and lay members of the Church that “God is stirring hearts again” and that he sees signs of hope all across our diocese.

In his Presidential Address to the 2025 Diocesan Synod, Bishop Andrew said God was “calling people to rediscover faith, meaning and hope”, and that we mustn’t be left behind in this. “This is a wave of the Spirit,” he told the Synod, “and this is a call for us to be open, to be welcoming, to be vocal about our faith – to see our churches as places of faith and

hope and love, to realise we have a message to offer that is transformative.

“Too often,” the Bishop said, “we lament our falling numbers or the challenges of maintaining historic buildings. But what if we changed the narrative? What if we saw ourselves not as caretakers of decline but as people of hope?”

Bishop Andrew said he didn’t make his remarks lightly, but against a backdrop of a world in deep pain. “We have observed, with horror, the immense suffering caused by the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza, the continuing war in Ukraine, and the largely forgotten conflicts in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sadly, that is not an exhaustive list.

“We live in uncertain, unpredictable, indeed, volatile times. The political and social order that has shaped the world since the end of the Second World War seems to be crumbling before our eyes.” Many people had felt powerless





in the face of what has been happening in the world in recent years, Bishop Andrew said, and yet we could imagine how different and how much better our world would be if we lived up to the commands and to the call of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Andrew said there was “a growing spiritual hunger – a restlessness with the emptiness of secularism”, and that churches were beginning to see new faces. “Dare I say, this is what we have been praying for, for years? People are searching once again for truth, for meaning, for something deeper than the soulless babble of modern life. This is particularly noticeable in young people whose parents – my generation – walked away from church, and their children are now perhaps seeing that the secularism their parents embraced simply doesn't work.”

This year's Synod heard an interim report from the diocese's two Archdeacons which shared the results of an extensive consultation exercise undertaken as part of the ongoing Diocesan Review. Almost 1,200 people responded to an

invitation to share their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities facing the diocese, as well as on diocesan values and identity, and on future church structures.

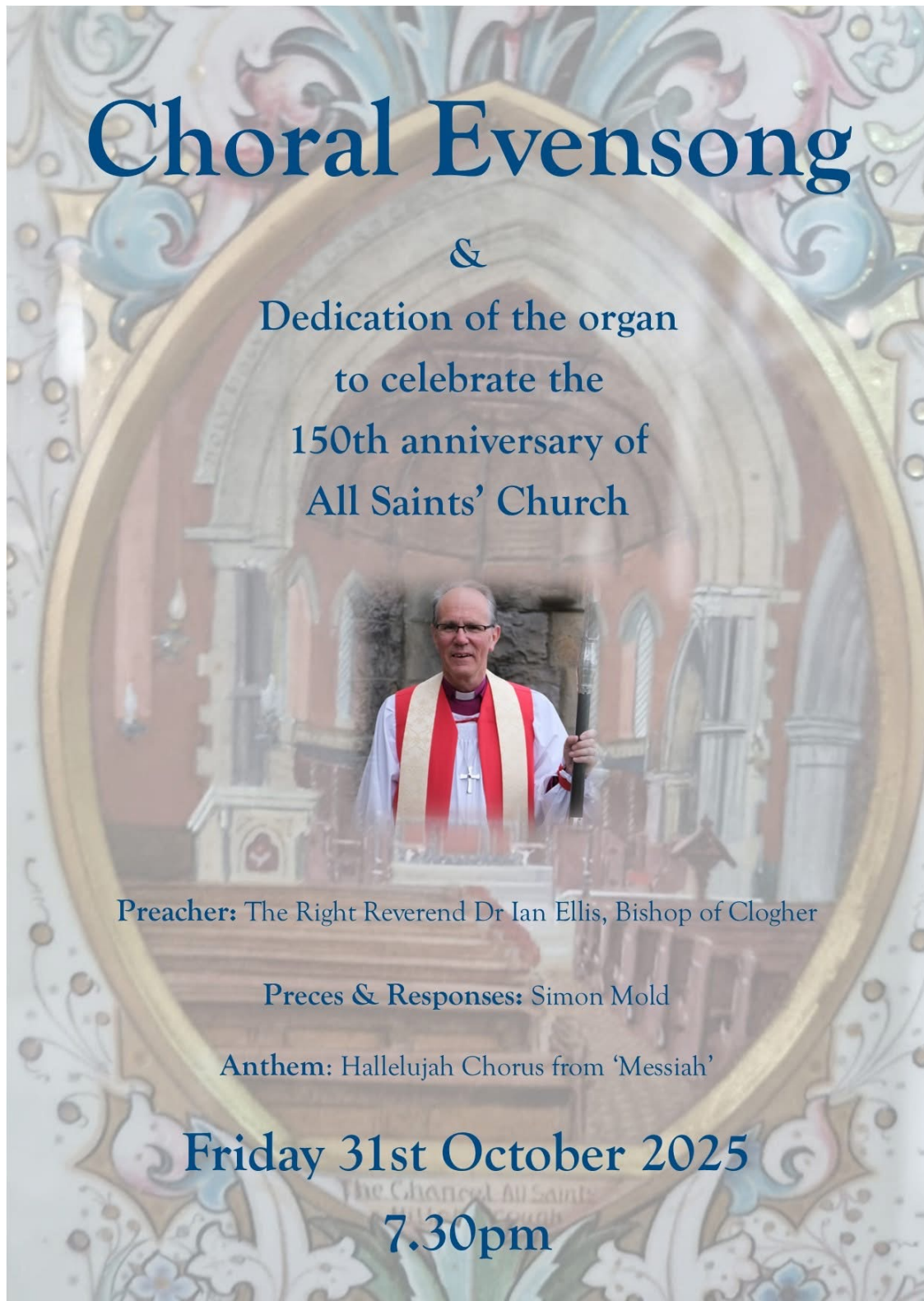
Synod delegates were updated, too, about the companion link with the Diocese of Kondoa in Tanzania, which was inaugurated at last year's Diocesan Synod and is being facilitated by CMS Ireland. The diocese has agreed to support the building of a new diocesan centre in Kondoa to strengthen mission and ministry there, and a £30,000 fundraising target has been set. Bishop Andrew said he was delighted that several parishes and individuals had already begun to contribute through donations, coffee mornings, and breakfasts. "I would encourage every parish to consider getting involved – together we can make a real and lasting difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ. So, let's get generous, let's get giving, and thanks everyone for your support for that."

Scotland Demands Better

Scotland Demands Better, a campaign group supported by the Scottish Episcopal Church and co-ordinated by the Poverty Alliance, a national network of organisations who want a future beyond poverty, is inviting faith groups and community organisations to join a march to encourage politicians to work for a society where every household can thrive and prosper.

Their group's website explains: "We want people to take hope, comfort, and inspiration from marching alongside thousands of others who want a better Scotland. We are not

alone – and when we work together, we can make real change. That's why people across Scotland will be demanding better from all politicians in both parliaments and all councils when we march on 25 October."



Choral Evensong

&

Dedication of the organ
to celebrate the
150th anniversary of
All Saints' Church

Preacher: The Right Reverend Dr Ian Ellis, Bishop of Clogher

Preces & Responses: Simon Mold

Anthem: Hallelujah Chorus from 'Messiah'

Friday 31st October 2025
7.30pm

The march, which is being attended by the Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, will begin at the Scottish Parliament, heading up the Royal Mile and along George IV Bridge to The Meadows where there will be a family-friendly rally, including music, speeches, and entertainment.

If you have any questions or want to be involved in the event, please refer to the Scotland Demands Better website at <https://www.scotland-demands-better.com/march-and-rally> or contact Olivia Apopei, Church Relations Assistant at olivia.apopei@scotland.anglican.org for more information.

Education

18% of children in Northern Ireland are growing up in poverty

A new report by our experts has found that despite economic progress and low unemployment rates in recent years, 18% of children in Northern Ireland are growing up in poverty.

“Poverty is persistent and endemic in Northern Ireland. Living in poverty brings poorer health outcomes, poorer educational outcomes, issues with keeping warm and fed in the winter and a shorter life expectancy.

"It is now essential that politicians act decisively to reduce poverty in Northern Ireland. One way the Assembly can do this is by developing a coherent Anti-Poverty Strategy with

clear targets that is resourced to lift our population out of poverty.” (Professor Allen Thurston, Director of Centre for Effective Education)

You can find out more and read the full report here:
ow.ly/crE550Xcy8y

£800k funding boost for Stranmillis and St Mary's

Department for the Economy NI Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald announced a £800k funding boost for Stranmillis University College, Belfast and St Mary's University College, Queen's University Belfast

Read more <https://lnkd.in/ewNpGrRi>

Ballymena Academy's new Bass Clarinet



The Music Department were honoured to be presented with a new Yamaha Bass Clarinet by Brass Tutor Mr Graham Murray and his daughter Rowan (who is a pupil and musician at our school) in memory of Lower Brass Tutor Mrs Beverley Murray, who sadly passed away in February of this year.

The Bass Clarinet was bought

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from the very generous donation of the proceeds of the sale of Mrs Murray's professional trombone. The Murrays felt this would be a fitting, living legacy and tribute to Beverley (Right). We are most grateful to receive such a fitting and meaningful tribute.



Pictured left to right are: Rowan Murray Year 14, Paul Millar Year 12 (who will be playing the Bass Clarinet in Senior Wind Band) and Mr Graham Murray - Brass Tutor and Senior Wind Band Director.

AS Geography Field Trip

Belfast Royal Academy say It was great to be back at Benone Beach again to study the unique ecosystem of the Umbra Sand Dunes.

Thankfully the weather picked up as





the day went on and students could collect data on ecosystem change and soil characteristics in the sunshine. Thanks to Magilligan Field Centre and Natalie for their experience and guidance.

Cathedral Calls

Boys of the Island: Commemorative Concert

Across the Western Front, young men from different traditions and faiths stood side by side, facing unimaginable challenges together.

Boys of the Island is a moving commemorative concert that honours their courage, sacrifice, and unity.

War & Peace
PRESENTS
BOYS OF THE ISLAND
BY TRACEY MCRORY AND RICHARD LAIRD

7:30PM
WED 5TH NOVEMBER
ST COLUMBS CATHEDRAL
WWW.NEWGATEARTS.COM

 **PEACEPLUS**
Northern Ireland - Ireland
Co-funded by the
 European Union  UK Government

 Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comraide:
Cluthair Oholre &
Cheantar an tSrátha Bala
Derry Cille & Strabane
Deiríne Council

 **RAPID**
Real-time Response & Intervention

 **cultural
partnership**

Join award-winning composers and musicians Tracey McCrory and Richard Laird, members of the Hamilton Flute Band, acclaimed piper Darren Milligan, Sollus Highland Dancers, and other talented performers from the Maiden City for an evening of music, reflection, and remembrance.

Set within the magnificent St Columb's Cathedral, a landmark steeped in history, the concert provides the perfect space to reflect on the past and celebrate the connections that continue to bind our community today.

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Presented as part of the War & Peace Project by the North West Cultural Partnership, this special event is a testament to courage, sacrifice, and the enduring power of unity.

Experience melody, movement, and memory in a night to remember.

War & Peace project is funded and supported by Special EU Programmes Body - SEUPB and Derry City & Strabane District Council through the PEACE PLUS project

Date & Time: Wed 5th November

| 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Location: St Columbs Cathedral

Tickets are free, (booking fee £2) available at <https://www.newgatearts.com/events/boys-of-the-island-concert>

In the media

Surge in growth of Catholics identifying as evangelical prompts call from Queen's University researchers

Practising Catholics who identify as evangelical are being sought for new research following an apparent surge in numbers.

The News Letter reports 22nd October 2025.

The research is being carried out by Queen's University Belfast after a recent survey indicated a dramatic rise in Catholics who term themselves evangelical.

According to a 2023 survey conducted by the polling organisation Savanta ComRes on behalf of the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland, 38% of practising Catholics would now describe themselves as evangelical.

This represents a dramatic increase from the figure of 6% which was recorded in 2004, the only time this question was asked in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, run by the ARK social policy hub at Queen's and Ulster universities.

Evangelicalism has traditionally been more associated with the Protestant tradition, and now social scientists want to talk to those Catholics who would call themselves evangelical to explore the extent of the rising trend.

Professor Gladys Ganiel, from the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's, said the 2023 survey results were highly unexpected.

"Given the historical association of evangelicalism in Northern Ireland with Protestantism and figures like the Rev Ian Paisley, this finding is certainly noteworthy," she said.

"Historically, there would even have been a belief, in some quarters, that evangelical rhetoric was anti-Catholic – so to find that evangelical Catholicism is a growing demographic is definitely of interest."

She suggested potential influence by both the late Pope Benedict and the late Pope Francis who promoted what is called the 'new evangelisation'.

"This aims to revitalise Catholicism in regions experiencing secularisation," she said.

"In some of his encyclicals, Pope Francis also used language and ideas more traditionally associated with evangelism, such as cultivating a 'personal relationship with Jesus Christ'.

"There may also have been some influence from the US, with Catholic bishops like Robert Barron who established the Word On Fire organisation, which explicitly uses the concept and language of evangelism to promote its message, including on social media.

"Even on the island of Ireland, there are organisations like the Iona Institute, which does not claim to be evangelical but which probably counts among its following Catholics who would describe themselves as so.

"These trends raise important questions about evolving religious identities and interdenominational dynamics, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic."

She added: "If you identify as both Catholic and evangelical, we want to hear your story. By taking part, you'll help us understand an important new trend, shaping future conversations around religion on the island of Ireland."

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Individuals who are over 18 and identify as both Catholic and evangelical are invited to participate in a short, anonymous online survey, sharing insights into what led them to adopt this identity and what it means to them. It is open to participants across the island of Ireland.

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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