

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Perth welcomes Archbishop of Canterbury at start of his tour of Australia

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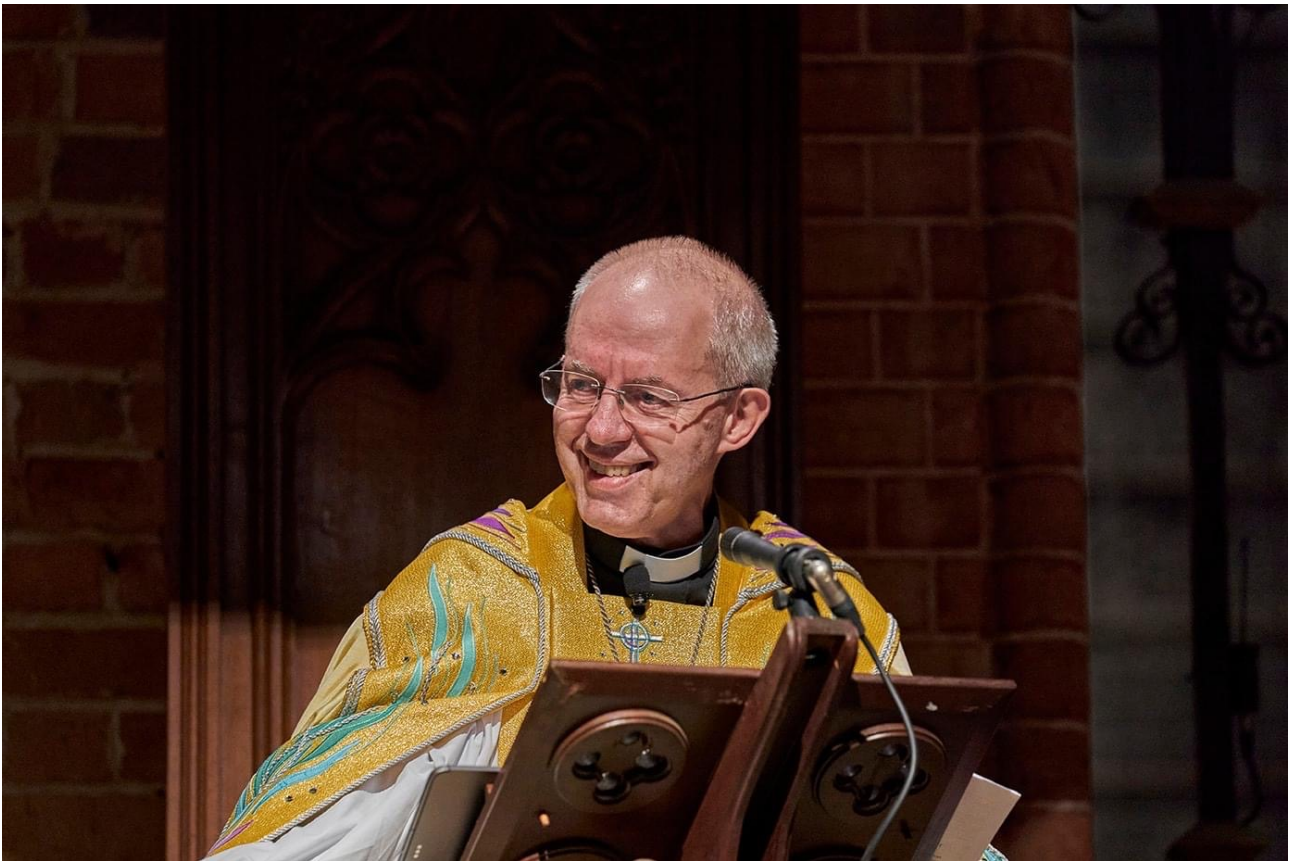
On Thursday night at St George's Cathedral in Perth we celebrated the Eucharist and heard the Scriptures in many languages - English, Nyoongar, Chinese and Sudanese. Praise God who gathers us together as the body of Christ and sends us out into the world He loves - a correspondent writes

News reports

Archbishop of Canterbury's tour of Australia starts in packed Perth Cathedral

We bade farewell to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his wife, Caroline early yesterday morning (Friday 7) as they headed to Adelaide for the next stage of their Australian tour, a correspondent reports.

On Thursday night, St George's Cathedral in Perth was full of joy and celebration – and full to capacity – for the Choral Eucharist – ‘A service of thanksgiving on the occasion of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury’. It was a wonderful reflection of our multicultural community – from the Welcome to Country, and Six Seasons Dance by the



Guildford Grammar School Boodjar Bidi Dance Group at the start, to the Mothers' Union Shona Choir who had the entire congregation clapping in beat to 'Fambai Makristu' (Onward, Christian Soldier).

Archbishop Justin delivered a sermon that was, as always, thoughtful, challenging, encouraging and very relevant.

If you missed the live-stream, you can see the service on this link from St George's Cathedral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ3lsy9D4fU>

I look forward to sharing more highlights of Archbishop Justin's visit to Perth soon.

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Student Readers commissioned at C of I Theological Institute



Seven first year students at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in Dublin have been commissioned by Archbishop Michael Jackson as Student Readers during the community eucharist.

Among the seven is Scott Elliott from Enniskillen, representing Clogher Diocese. The other Student Readers are; Matthew Gaw (Down and Dromore), Ryan Hawk (Down and Dromore), Michael Kenning (Cork, Cloyne and Ross), Sean Murphy (Cashel, Ferns and Ossory), James Sheils (Armagh) and Siobhan Wheeler (Limerick, Killaloe and Ardfert).

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Archbishop Jackson told ordinands; “We are all together in this apostolic tradition.”

The Archbishop’s sermon was based on the Gospel reading [Luke 10: 17–24]. It speaks of the 72 disciples returning to Jesus from what he suggested those in CITI might call a placement. He described it as a positive tale of achievement by the 72 disciples and a cause of jubilation.

“They had been sent out to do the work of healing that Jesus did.”



Black Santa applications for 2022 invited

The 'Black Santa' tradition at Belfast Cathedral was started in 1976 by Dean Sammy Crooks. For our 46th

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Annual Appeal we are pleased to announce the release of the Black Santa Applications for 2022.

This year to increase the impact of our support for local charities, we invite applications from those registered charities whose annual income was £150,000 or less in 2021.

At this time of a “cost of living crisis” the Dean especially welcomes applications from registered charities supporting the most disadvantaged families and individuals in our communities and charities working directly directly with refugee communities settling in Northern Ireland.

You can download the Application Form from the cathedral's website www.belfastcathedral.org/news.

Please return your completed application before the closing date on Friday 25th November 2022.

Or return by post to The Dean of Belfast, Sitout Applications, c/o Ms Cate Cox, Belfast Cathedral, Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2HB or email directly to admin@belfastcathedral.org

Moderator hears of help in hard times

On his weeklong tour of one of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s (PCI) regional presbyteries, which concludes this Sunday, PCI Moderator, Right Reverend, Dr John Kirkpatrick, heard from two local charities how

the current cost of living and energy crisis is impacting people dramatically.

With increasing numbers of those most affected and seeking help, he also heard the stories behind the numbers.

In a busy week that takes in 20 engagements in the Presbytery of Dromore, which covers the central belt of County Down, Dr Kirkpatrick acknowledged and encouraged the work of congregations as they make a difference in their local communities, while visiting a number of organisations supported by local churches. These included Via Wings in Dromore and Christians Against Poverty in Lisburn.

Founded in 2009 in the aftermath of the previous year's financial crash by Gail Redmond, Via Wings began supporting single mums. It has now grown into an organisation of 18 staff and over 80 volunteers whose sole aim is to break the cycle of poverty for the next generation, meeting needs and changing lives in the town and the surrounding area.

“The number of people seeking our help has risen dramatically and we are seeing that week, by week, especially amongst those who are working, but struggling to keep their heads above water,” Mrs Redmond said.

“The support that we are able to provide is what we call a ‘wrap around service’ with the provision of food at its heart. This enables us to gently reach into the home to provide additional support where needed. We now have nearly 220 families on our books, but have seen a staggering 40% increase in those looking for help since the end of August,



just five weeks ago. For the first time in 13 years, we are also getting calls from the elderly in need of help with their energy bills.”

During his visit to the cross-denominational Christian charity, Dr Kirkpatrick was briefed on the services that Via Wings provides, especially those targeted at food poverty, social isolation and mental health.

Mrs Redmond continued, “Poverty isn’t just about having little or no money, or food. Poverty is also about loneliness, isolation, deprivation, brokenness and so much more. Our aim is to show God’s love in a caring, practical and non-judgemental way through the work we do. To do that we work with the support of our partners, including Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, along with local churches, schools, social workers and healthcare workers, but that need has increased dramatically in recent months.”

Each week Via Wings cooks and delivers 120 meals for its elderly clients and distributes surplus food from its partners Tesco, Lidl and Marks & Spencer. Last year that support

weighed in at 58 tonnes of excess food. At the same time it has a number of social enterprises, makes calls as part of its 'Good Morning Dromore' project and runs its 'Recycled Teenagers' initiative for the over 65s, which also lessens the effects of isolation. Dr Kirkpatrick also heard about a number of other projects, including a children's afterschool's scheme and the new Wellbeing Centre, which launches in November.

“Dromore and the surrounding area has really been blessed by the compassionate grace-filled carers I met, people who are on the front line of this economic crisis. What really struck me is that Via Wings is doing something that no church could do on its own, yet through co-operation and co-ordination, many are supported and helped as a result,” Dr Kirkpatrick said.

The Moderator concluded by saying, “It was not lost on me that their name 'Via Wings' is taken from Isaiah 40. To paraphrase, it says that our God gives strength to the weary so that they will renew their strength and will soar on wings like eagles. It is my prayer that those it supports, and those called to help those in need will not only be blessed in their work, but will also 'soar on wings like eagles.'”

Taking in and the towns of Dromara, Drumbo, Moira, and Royal Hillsborough, the Presbytery also includes Lisburn, where Dr Kirkpatrick also visited staff and volunteers at Christians Against Poverty (CAP) that provides free debt help. Locally CAP in Lisburn is supported by 15 churches who provide financial and prayer support, along with 'befrienders' who come alongside those being supported.

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Since 2014 the Lisburn Debt Centre has helped are a mixture of households, from single people to large families in the greater Lisburn area. “A recent CAP / YouGov survey, found that 19% of adults in the UK are already struggling because of the cost of living, with a further 35% just about coping, but at risk if costs rise further. As CAP said at the time, the crisis that we are in now is not new, but is reaching new heights,” Dr Kirkpatrick explained.

“Numbers are ramping up and in the first half of this year, in the UK as a whole, those seeking CAP’s help increased by over 30%. Another thing that struck me was that those seeking help to manage their finances, and their debt in particular, are people who are working and not necessarily on benefits. It was great to see the holistic approach of this well-grounded ministry that does amazing work with people who are in debt.”

Dr Kirkpatrick concluded by saying, “The work of CAP and Via Wings is impressive and meets different, but complimentary and increasing local needs. While the quiet work of these Christian charities is a huge blessing to those in need, it is incumbent on those in government to find ways to mitigate this developing crisis, but also prioritise the development of anti-poverty strategies to tackle the root causes of the endemic poverty that we see.”

'Singing' goat at Worcester Cathedral goes viral on social media

A two year-old goat called Pablo has gone viral on social media after showing off his vocal ability skills.

As the organ was being played at Worcester Cathedral, Pablo started to join in "singing" with choir members.

Pablo's "bah-rilliant" performance stole the show during the animal blessing service.

His vocals led to fits of giggles by staff from Atwell Farm Park near Redditch and cathedral choir members.

The Dean of Worcester Cathedral, Very Rev Peter Atkinson said that the singing was quite unexpected: "I wasn't quite expecting such a very vocal participation and when I first heard it, I wondered what was going on.

"But when I realised it was just a happy goat that was joining in, that was lovely.

"We're delighted that he felt so at home in the cathedral that he wanted to join in the singing."

The video of Pablo and his alpaca friends Minstrel and Barnaby has racked over a million views on TikTok where the video was originally posted.

The Dean mentioned that the video has been viewed all over the world.

The service was filmed by the BBC's Songs of Praise programme, but it is not clear whether Pablo's performance will make the final edit.

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The episode will be broadcast by the BBC on 20th November.

Dean Peter mentioned it was the first time a goat had ever received a blessing within the Cathedral, so it was a humorous surprise to hear the goat sing and stated "we're delighted to have made friends with him."

"We have a pet blessing service every year and we've done that for a number of years and it's often dogs or small animals that we carried around in cages, hamsters, and gerbils, and so on, which is all lovely. But it's the first time we've had a goat."

To view the goat singing click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/jso8d-Wk2W0>

Cathedral choirs facing sustainability crisis, report warns

A new report is warning cathedral choirs are facing a serious long-term sustainability crisis.

Commissioned by the Cathedral Music Trust, 'A future for cathedral music' found choirs are becoming more expensive to run and are in need of more diversity and involvement from young people.

The reduction of footfall as a consequence of the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, have led to a reduction of budgets for the cathedrals' music departments.

The report said: "Supporting choristers, and in particular, the practice of linking a cathedral choir with a fee-paying choir school (as half of Anglican cathedrals do) is especially challenging financially.

"Cathedrals will need to grapple with this issue when formulating their future strategy, seeking to balance cost, quality, and inclusivity of their choirs."

Widening participation is another area of concern. The report found efforts towards gender equality, socio-economic and ethnic diversity should continue in order to keep choirs running in the country.

While progress has been made towards gender equality, there's less evidence that cathedral choirs are reflecting the communities they serve by being ethnically diverse, the report found.

"The lack of diversity in cathedral music is tightly bound with the dwindling presence of music in schools. This report should serve as a rallying cry; for cathedral music to survive, we all must work to make this world and its traditions accessible to everyone and appealing to the young people of today.

"Elite sport is a point of pride for our nation, steeped in history with roots running deep in schools across the country. Elite music should be just the same; not something to be feared, but something to celebrate, enhancing the lives of all involved," Anna Lapwood, Ambassador for the Cathedral Music Trust said in a statement.

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According to the report, access for young people should also improve. At least 81 per cent of those who took part in the research said getting younger generations involved is critical for the future of cathedral choirs.

For Peter Allwood, chair of the Cathedral Music Trust, the problem is not that young people aren't interested but that opportunities are not being properly advertised.

He said "What we find is that young people are hugely interested in it. When they have the opportunity of being involved in it, they absolutely adore it.

"And if you see our choruses at work, you find that they just so love what they're doing. They love the discipline of it, they love the team spirit of it, they love the fact that they're working alongside professional adults as well. But just not enough people know that it's happening."

The report recommended cathedrals to develop partnerships across the sector "to equip church leadership with the necessary expertise to address these critical challenges", to "focus financial and educational resources" and "encourage learning and sharing of best practice, especially from choirs which have successfully recruited young and adult musicians from a wider population than has historically been the case".

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In the media

Thank the Bible for our most popular names, not silly wokery by Catherine Pepinster

Writing in the Daily Telegraph -

When Vanity Fair put Meghan Markle on the cover of its October 2017 issue, its punning coverline was “She’s Just Wild About Harry”. Yet it now transpires that the public holds the opposite sentiment – for the name Harry, that is. It’s only the seventh most popular name for boys. Instead, new parents are wild about Noah, which is now the favourite name for baby boys. According to the Office for National Statistics, Noah has knocked Oliver off the top spot, where he triumphed for the past eight years.

So why Noah? If you believe academics, one reason for this parental pick is that it sounds “gender-neutral”. They point to a record number of girls being given the female equivalent of Noa as proof of this wokery. Yet in the same breath, the dons point to Leslie slipping down the chart of favourites – a name that, with a tweak, can easily be used for boys or girls, or those their parents think are in-between, or neither-nor. And how about Frances/Francis, or Hilary? They too would do the job for any anxious 21st-century, right-on parents.

No, there is something else going on with Noah. Maybe it's easy to spell. Or these parents are fans of TikTok star Noah Beck, which they could well be, given he has 33 million followers after becoming an influencer out of boredom during the pandemic lockdowns. I'm also wondering if these Noah fans are keen greens, with a notion that Noah, who dealt with floods by herding animals into his ark, is their kind of hero.

Which brings us to the Bible, especially the Old Testament, which is a fabulously rich catalogue of names – names which are classic, but also fun. It seems a perplexing trend that as the numbers of people actually reading the Bible declines, the popularity of the names to be found in it increases. Perhaps the children who like the fact that their parents called them Josh, or Zack, or Zeb, assume they are called after an Archers character, or a handsome gym bunny from EastEnders, or a character that went “boing” in The Magic Roundabout. No, it's the Bible we really have to thank for classy Joshua, Zachariah and Zebedee, just as Noah and his ark are to be found in the Book of Genesis.

There is a lingering bedrock of familiarity with these old Biblical names – the names you find inscribed on plaques in churches and on gravestones – and so they stand the test of time. That is the point about a name: you don't want it to date. It's why Thomas, Jacob, Isaac and even Elijah feature in the 2021 list of names for boys. And that same desire for continuity with previous generations and their values is evident in the choice of Muhammad, and its variations, for people of Muslim faith and heritage. It would be the most popular name in Britain almost every year if we added up the different spellings.

The same can be said for girls' names, with Phoebe becoming increasingly popular again, while the flower names loved by the Victorians – Rose and Lily – are favourites today too, thanks to their staying power and universality.

Today's mummies and daddies should learn from the mistakes of their own parents' generation: Darren and Wayne may come, and Darren and Wayne may go, but the likes of Noah go on forever.

Catherine Pepinster also writes in the Church Times

NI apparently has 1.5m Christians: what would happen if they voted like Jesus?

Clergy across the country will have been rubbing their hands last month when the census broke the news that there are over 1.5 million professing Christians in Northern Ireland. I can only imagine - Gareth Hanna writes in the Belfast Telegraph

Equality row over college's use of funds to back Christian group's Uganda work

The University and College Union has questioned whether the South Eastern Regional College has properly used public funds and fully complied with equality legislation after a Stormont investigation - Gareth Hargan writes in the Belfast Telegraph

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Public lecture Limerick Credible Christian Communication Today by John Sullivan

Followed by the launch of Lights for the Path
by John Sullivan (Veritas, 2022)

The book will be launched by Bishop Brendan Leahy

Wednesday, 12 October 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
G10, Foundation Building, Mary Immaculate College,
South Circular Road, Limerick V94 VN26

All welcome. To register please email ian.hickey@mic.ul.ie

Poem for today

October by Robert Frost

O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,
Should waste them all.
The crows above the forest call;
Tomorrow they may form and go.
O hushed October morning mild,
Begin the hours of this day slow.
Make the day seem to us less brief.
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,

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Beguile us in the way you know.
Release one leaf at break of day;
At noon release another leaf;
One from our trees, one far away.
Retard the sun with gentle mist;
Enchant the land with amethyst.
Slow, slow!
For the grapes' sake, if they were all,
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,
Whose clustered fruit must else be list
For the grapes' sake along the wall.
stood upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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