

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Fort Guard at installation in St Patrick's**



## Image of the day

### Hillsborough Fort Guard at St Patrick's installation of Honorary Chaplain



**The Hillsborough Fort Guard write - “On Sunday we had the honour of attending the installation of our Honorary Chaplain Rev Stanley Gamble as Canon, in the historic surroundings of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin.**

“A monmentus day, which we were extremely proud to have played a part in. Another one for the long history book of the Hillsborough Fort Guard”.





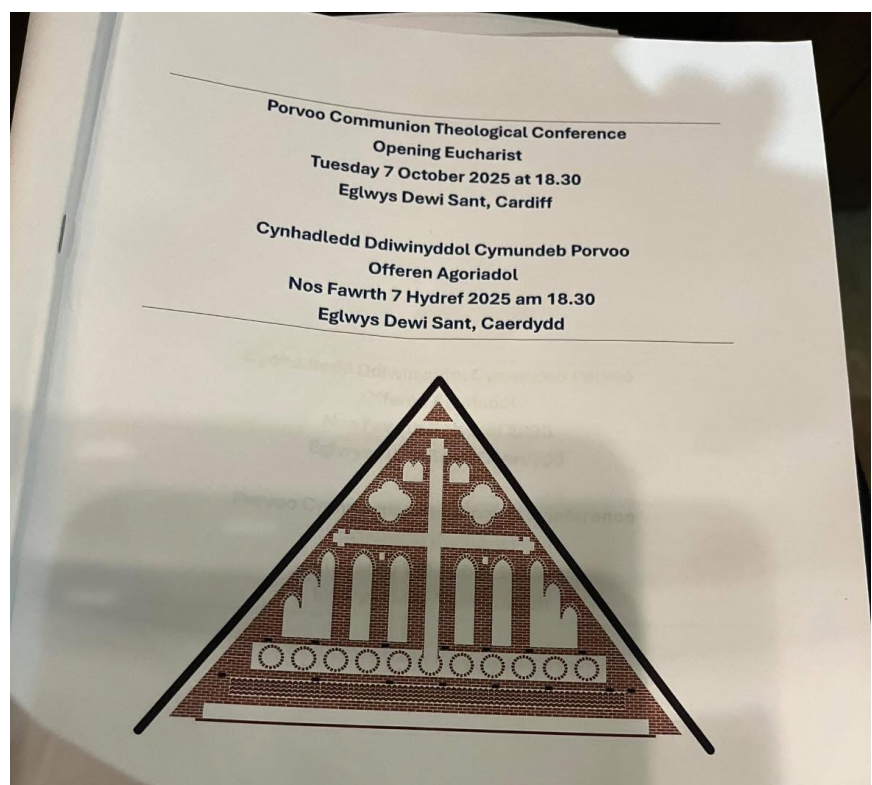
## News

### C of I reps at Porvoo Communion Contact Group

At the opening  
Eucharist of the  
Porvoo  
Communion  
Contact Group and  
theological  
conference the  
Evangelical

**Lutheran Church  
of the Faroe  
Islands became  
the latest church  
to join the  
Porvoo  
Communion of  
churches by  
signing the  
Porvoo  
Declaration.**

The Church of



October 9, 2025

Ireland was represented by the Porvoo contact **Canon Stephen Fielding** and **Archbishop Michael Jackson**, Anglican Co-chair. The conference marking 1700 years of the Nicene Creed, is taking place from 7-9 October in Cardiff and is being hosted by the Church in Wales.



## Order of Malta Bronze Medal of Merit for Ballinamallard doctor

**Dr Lisa Cunningham, following joining as a cadet Lisa developed a love of medicine and is now a prehospital physician and a consultant in Emergency Medicine.**

For the last number of years she has sat on the board of Order of Malta Ireland and is our chief medical officer, as well as being an active member of her own unit in Ballina and supporting both the regional and national teams.



October 9, 2025

For her dedication and service to Order of Malta Ireland and the Ambulance Corps Dr Lisa Cunningham is awarded the Bronze Medal of Merit.



## **Celebrating David McKee: A lifetime of global service to Scouting**

**World Scouting is proud to announce that David McKee from the United Kingdom has been awarded the Bronze Wolf, the highest**

**honour granted by the World Scout Committee, in recognition of his more than four decades of extraordinary and wide-ranging service to Scouting at the global, regional, and national levels.**

From his beginnings as a Wolf Cub in Northern Ireland in 1966 to his impactful leadership as Regional Director of the European Scout Region from 2004 to 2019, David's

Scouting journey has been defined by his commitment to international cooperation, unity, and youth leadership.

During his tenure, he oversaw five European Scout Conferences and five Guide and Scout Conferences, led initiatives that strengthened cooperation with WAGGGS, and built meaningful partnerships with organisations such as the European Union, Council of Europe, UNICEF, and European Youth Forum.

David also pioneered tailored support to National Scout Organizations, laying the foundations for WOSM Services and contributing to the development of Scouting in Southeastern Europe and the former Yugoslavia. His leadership was instrumental in fostering dialogue across regions, including the historic 1994 Marrakech Symposium, which led to the adoption of the Marrakech Charter for peace and intercultural understanding.

Even after his retirement, David continues to give back as a volunteer leader in Bangor, through his work with the European Scout Foundation and as Chair of the Eric Frank Trust, helping expand international opportunities for young people.

David's decades of dedication, vision, and leadership exemplify the spirit of Scouting and the values of service to others. Congratulations, David, on receiving the Bronze Wolf Award — a truly well-deserved honour!



## Youth reps meet with Archbishop and Armagh Board

**Representatives from the Girls' Brigade, Scouts NI, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade, the Boys' Brigade and Girl Guiding Ulster met with Archbishop John and members of the Diocesan Youth and Children's Board on the evening of Monday 6th October.**

The "meet and greet" occasion provided an opportunity for the organisations and the Diocese of Armagh, space to learn more about each others' work regarding the support of children, young people and families.

Alongside a bit of a "bun fight" there was much sharing and learning. There was appreciation of the Archbishop and the Diocesan Youth and Children's Board for their kind support and input.





## Pilgrimage to St Brigid's Shrine

**On Tuesday 30 September parishioners of St Matthew's, Belfast, made a pilgrimage to St Brigid's Shrine, Faught, Co. Louth which dates back to the 6th century.**

Fr Peter celebrated Mass and blessed the St Matthew's pilgrims with the relic of St Brigid. Before and after the visit parishioners enjoyed refreshment at Mc Kevitt's hotel, Carlingford.





## **C of I response to Irish Budget**

### **The Church and Society Commission of the C of I Responded to Budget 2026**

Yesterday's Budget 2026 announcements from the Government provide both reasons for cautious optimism, and serious questions for our collective conscience.

Budgetary numbers, however well intentioned, must be reinforced by compassion and moral duty in their implementation.

The common good always need to be served by fiscal and budgetary provision. Such common good is formed by values outside of the numbers that must give expression to such budgetary provision.

At a time of increasing economic unpredictability and as more and more people live alone on the margin of belonging, and on the knife-edge of survival, we welcome the Government's increase in social welfare payments alongside an increase in the National Minimum Wage. Ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society are not left behind, is one of the cornerstones of our faith, and also of our citizenship.

The announcement of a record level of total funding to the tune of €27.4 billion for the Department of Health is encouraging, but the issue of hospital waiting lists, overcrowding, and struggling services persists; and while it persists, it escalates.

**The scourge of homelessness** is one of the great issues of our time.



**Archbishop of Dublin and Chairperson of the Church and Society Committee**

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on homelessness prevention, as a key issue in this acute expression of a housing crisis. While it is encouraging to see an increase in investment in this area, the scale of need is vast. We, like many others, fear that in practice, the additional resources announced in this area may still fall short of what is required.

Looking to our **children and young people**, the increase in school capitation allowances, and a reduction in the third level student contribution are to be welcomed. However, demand on our educational institutions remains high and is continually growing. Increased and sustained investment in this sector is vital to ensuring that future generations are provided with the necessary skills to thrive. Plans to establish a DEIS+ scheme are to be welcomed, as this



initiative provides valuable additional supports to schools in our least resourced communities.

It is heartening to see the **commitment to overseas aid** and relief being maintained in Budget 2026, as Ireland contributes to global efforts to reduce the suffering of conflict and famine across many war–torn regions in our world.

Continued support for the **Shared Island initiative**, funding for which has doubled until 2035 is to be commended. The projects which come under this initiative are morally and practically important, fostering peace, creating a shared sense of belonging, and helping to build connections and understanding across and within very different communities.

While continued efforts to reduce our **carbon emissions** are welcome, climate change will not wait for humanity to catch up. This crisis must be addressed with extreme urgency to safeguard the futures of our children, and the health of our earthly home.

Economic measures alone cannot remedy the **divisions of inequality, prejudice and alienation** in our society. We are reminded by our Christian faith that “whatever you did to one of these, the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:30).

May this Budget be judged not only on its economics, but on how it responds to those in greatest need, especially those who struggle in silence, pain and humiliation.

# Education



## Omagh Academy tribute to Rev Dr William J Marshall

**“Saddle up with Omagh Academy and see how far you can go.” This was the wise advice of former pupil, WJ Marshall who certainly travelled far and achieved much in his lifetime.**

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Rev Dr William J Marshall in his 91st year. He played a pivotal role in our school's history and every day we walk past his name. WJ Marshall is the first entry on our Head Boy Honours Board - listed for 1951-52 & he fulfilled the role in 1952-53 as well!



October 9, 2025

A native of Beragh, Billy cycled to school every day. After completing A-Level studies at Omagh Academy in 1953 (the first cohort to do so) Billy moved to Trinity College Dublin to study Theology. From there, he travelled by boat to India to serve with the Anglican Church for 13 years, before returning to Ireland by plane. He then became Rector of several churches in the Dublin area before retiring from his role as lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin.

Billy had cherished the first-ever Omagh Academy 'Head Boy' badge; and it is now in the safekeeping of his family & great-nephew and current Physics teacher, Mr Patterson.

We send our condolences and sympathy to the entire Marshall family circle. God bless.

## **MCB pupil is a Finalist in BBC Young Chorister of the Year**



October 9, 2025

**Congratulations to MCB pupil Zoe, Form 2, who has been selected as one of the Finalists in the prestigious BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2025, which will be broadcast on BBC One & BBC iPlayer.**

The three episodes of the singing contest were recorded at Hallé St Peter's in Manchester and can be watched on the Songs of Praise BBC programme presented by Aled Jones and Rev. Kate Bottley.



## **BRA Geography students debate climate change at QUB**

**Five BRA  
Geography  
students took  
part in a  
debate on  
climate  
change on  
Friday 3rd  
October,  
organised by  
Queen's**

**University Belfast.**



The students looked at how the values of different faiths are linked to climate responsibility and got to ask some local politicians what is being done to protect Northern Ireland from the climate crisis. Thanks to QUB for the event - it was thought-provoking and informative!



## **Lisneal former pupil raising 3K for Cancer Research UK**

**Lineal says -  
We're incredibly  
proud of former  
pupil Josh Cooke  
from Drumahoe,  
who is taking on  
an extraordinary  
challenge to raise  
funds for Cancer  
Research UK.**

At just 19, Josh is running the entire perimeter of Northern Ireland to honour his great granny, Jean Nutt, who recently underwent surgery for brain tumour cancer.

Josh has already raised a quarter of his £3,000 goal and is determined to help fund vital research that could save lives.

October 9, 2025

His journey started at Derry's Peace Bridge and will take him through towns and cities across the country before returning to where it all began.

For anyone who wants to make a donation, Josh's Cancer Research UK giving page is at: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/joshs-giving-page-36205>

## Cathedral Calls

### Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge livestream



**Fourteen\* freshly-gowned new Choral Scholars sang with us for the first time last weekend at the traditional Freshers' Service.**





From this Sunday 12 October they'll be singing to an international congregation as our weekly YouTube livestreams resume, with Choral Evensong at 6.15pm preceded by Organ Music from 5.40pm. All are welcome to attend the service in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge / Trinity College, Cambridge or to join the livestream at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@TrinityCollegeChoir>

In the meantime, we've just updated our website with a fresh layout for our homepage, and a revised 'Join' section including a new welcome from Director of Music Steven Grahl, and clearer information about Choral Scholarships:

<https://trinitycollegechoir.com/>

<https://trinitycollegechoir.com/join-the-choir/>

October 9, 2025

<https://trinitycollegechoir.com/join-the-choir/choral-scholarships/>

\*Yes, attentive followers, we've gained a "quatorzien" - and a tenor one, too!

## Events

### 30 years of Cappella Caeciliana

**Cappella Caeciliana writes - Join us as Cappella Caeciliana celebrates its 30th Anniversary Concert in the beautiful Good Shepherd Church, Belfast.**

Over the past three decades, Cappella Caeciliana has shared the beauty of classical choral music with audiences across Ireland and beyond. This anniversary concert will be a joyful celebration of our musical journey, bringing together much loved works from our repertoire alongside new pieces chosen for this milestone year.

Conducted by @matthewquinn, we will be joined by distinguished guests: the acclaimed pianist Ruth Mc Ginley and the renowned founders of the choir Fr. Eugene O'Hagan, Fr Martin O'Hagan and Fr David Delargy.

## In the media

**Eight in 10 believe emphasis on religion in defining identities in NI is 'too much'**



## **Survey by Christian group finds 36% say they have no faith, Liam Tunney writes in the Belfast Telegraph 08/10/2025**

Almost eight in 10 people in Northern Ireland believe too much emphasis is put on religion as a source of identity rather than a source of meaning or purpose, a survey has revealed.

The poll, commissioned by conservative Christian advocacy group the Iona Institute and carried out by Amárach Research, also revealed that more than half of Gen Z respondents indicated they were likely to engage in prayer.

More than a third (36%) of those surveyed indicated they were of no religion, while some 28% of respondents were Catholic, with Presbyterian (14%), Church of Ireland (11%), Other Christian (10%) and other non-Christian (1%) making up the rest.

Asked whether they agreed that there was too much emphasis on religion as a source of identity rather than a source of meaning or purpose, some 49% said they strongly agreed, with a further 30% slightly agreeing. Only 8% either strongly or slightly disagreed with the statement.

The survey also indicated that overall, people in NI were slightly more likely to pray than their counterparts in the Republic, with 51% indicating they did so.

Among Gen Z — those aged 18-24 — that figure was 53%, with some 41% of this age group also indicating they consumed religious content online and 38% of the

demographic stating they followed influencers who shared religious content online. Attitudes towards Christianity were also measured in the poll, with 49% in NI indicating a positive attitude, compared with 31% who had a negative attitude. Some 19% said they were neutral on the issue.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how favourably they viewed individual denominations, with some 49% viewing the Catholic Church unfavourably, compared to 23% seeing it favourably. Asked to indicate reasons for looking at the Catholic Church unfavourably, some 47% said it was due to child sexual abuse and scandals, with 19% citing control over education and social influence and 18% referring to the treatment of women at mother and baby homes.

In comparison, 38% of those surveyed viewed Protestant churches unfavourably, while 30% viewed them favourably.

Of those who gave an unfavourable opinion, more than a quarter (26%) cited sectarianism and division, with a further 18% stating social conservatism and discrimination and 11% citing political control and influence.

Poll results were also compared to those from a similar survey carried out in the Republic of Ireland, with a slightly lower figure (56%) in NI indicating they were 'any religious or spiritual' than that of ROI (61%). David Quinn of the Iona Institute said the results of the poll should give churches encouragement.



“Maybe a growing subset of young people are concluding that secularism isn't really giving satisfactory answers to life's big questions,” he said.

“In the future, there will probably be fewer 'cultural Christians' around, that is, people who say they are Christian but don't practice.

“Instead, society could be divided between those who believe in religion and those who don't believe, with little in between, that is between the religious and the 'nones'.

“This seems to be what is happening in both the North and the South. The overall conclusion, however, is that religion is not disappearing, contrary to past predictions.”

## 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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October 9, 2025

# Church News Ireland

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early morning**

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