



Church leaders recently attended the launch of the Open Doors Campaign at Stormont.

Stormont launch for Open Doors’ Hope on the Middle East global campaign

The First Minister the Rt. Hon Arlene Foster has paid tribute to the plight of Christians throughout
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the Middle East who have chosen to stay in areas of conflict to play their part in building peace, stability and harmony.

The First Minister was launching *Hope for the Middle East* – a global campaign spearheaded by Open Doors, an anti-persecution charity supporting persecuted Christians in Iraq, Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Launching the report the First Minister, Arlene Foster said: “I very much welcome the opportunity to launch this timely report. None of us can fail to be moved by the appalling images coming out of Syria and Iraq and by the plight of the refugees who are fleeing the most desperate and horrific of circumstances. Many have stayed as long as they possibly can before fleeing for their own safety and that of their family. Christians and other minorities in Syria and Iraq have a key role to play in one day helping to shape a new society where all religions are respected. I commend Open Doors for this initiative, which marks the beginning of a seven year campaign aimed at giving Christians and other minorities the support they need to stay in the Middle East and to play their part in creating a more tolerant and inclusive society.”

For the first time in the charity's 60-year history it is mobilising people from across the globe to give and speak out, as well as taking the campaign to Christians who are themselves victims of persecution in other parts of the world. Open Doors UK&I President, Eddie Lyle, and Head of Advocacy at Open Doors UK&I, Zoe Smith, also spoke at the event, providing insight and analysis regarding the plight of Christians in the Middle East.

Open Doors CEO Lisa Pearce said, "Anyone who has listened to the news coverage and heard the terrible stories told by refugees and those internally displaced but still living in Syria and Iraq will know that there is a common thread: they want to return home and rebuild their lives and their country. Many have stayed as long as they possibly could before leaving. Those who are still there want a future for themselves and their children. People tell us that they want minorities to be recognised, valued and empowered for the role they want to play in shaping a tolerant, secular society for the future.

"Many are hopeful this will happen, but they need help to achieve this goal. Open Doors is there on the ground working through churches and local

partners to provide vital aid as well as education for children and micro-loans to set up businesses enabling people to carve out a livelihood and a sustainable future for themselves. But Open Doors can only do this with the help of others – we need people to sign the campaign petition to make the UN act and we need them to give so we can expand our work and help people rebuild their lives and their country.

Lisa Pearce said that the report, which was released in Westminster on 12 October, highlighted that “Christians in Syria and Iraq have clearly stated that they do not want to be seen as victims, and that they believe they have a vital role to play in the rebuilding of their countries and in the future of the Middle East just as they played a vital role in the culture, history and economies of their countries in the past. Open Doors is asking everyone to sign a global petition asking for equal rights for Christians and other minorities that will be presented to the UN in June 2017.”

The petition was created after eight months of consultation with Christians and church leaders in Syria and Iraq, and asks the UN to ensure:

- Christians' and other minorities' right to equal citizenship
- Dignified living conditions
- A role in reconciliation and rebuilding society.

Open Doors is aiming for a million people to sign the petition globally, and it has already been signed by 33,000 people from 54 countries around the world.

Open Doors is also asking supporters to give generously and aims to raise £2 million this year to support Christians in Syria and Iraq. Open Doors partners are supporting thousands of families each month in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon with vital aid such as food, medicines, trauma care and schooling, as well as through long-term projects such as loans for small businesses.

Sr Stan urges Taoiseach to take lead on Calais children

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy has called on the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, to give leadership on the migrant crisis and visit some of the camps in Europe.



“What I would be saying to the Taoiseach is you must go to the camps, you must give symbolic leadership, you must speak to the people there and hear their stories. If Irish people heard their stories they would jump up out of their chairs and say we’ve got to do something about it,” she said.

“I think we need a new start. I am not taking at all from what has been done or is being done, but it isn’t sufficient and it isn’t urgent,” she explained.

In an interview on RTE Radio 1, Sr Stan has likened the escalation of Irish homelessness to the growing European migrant crisis, stating that

she would never have imagined that homelessness in Ireland could have become so critical.

“I would say the same about the migrant crisis that we see on the shores of Europe. Unless we are doing something about it now it will get totally out of hand because we cannot stem that tide,” she said.

She spoke of the thousands of unaccompanied children at the Calais camp in France which is now being demolished. She called on the Government to make a commitment to take 200 children.

“We need to do it properly. We need to make sure that we have the standards and procedures there to receive them. I think the government, and particularly the Taoiseach, must lead this. We have had so far a number of government departments and agencies who have had people in the camps who have been looking at it. But that sense of urgency about it has diminished over the past year.”

She admitted that Ireland has not done well in caring for unaccompanied minors but said the country could care for the 200 if the political will

is there and the department of the Taoiseach took on the responsibility and appointed a manager with sole responsibility.

She said she has not spoken to the Taoiseach or to his department about this, but has been in touch with other departments with responsibility in this area. She said Ireland is a moderate country in an ever increasing right wing Europe and we could take the lead.

The very strong community spirit across Ireland, seen in groups like the GAA, convinces her that Ireland is ready to take in refugees. But there is also need for a public education programme to help diminish some of the misconceptions out there.

Sr Stan was speaking to Keelin Shanley on the *Today with Seán O' Rourke* programme on Tuesday (25 October). She also wrote an article in the Irish Times on the issue.

Separately, the Immigration Council of Ireland, which Sr Stan founded, commented on what it called “the mass exodus of refugees and migrants” from the Calais camp.

Chief Executive Brian Killoran said “We are calling on the Irish and European governments to remember that we are talking about children who are alone, having survived traumatic experiences and being left in inhumane conditions without access to formal education.”

The Council said that people in the queues there said they had no idea where they were going, but that most seemed resigned to leaving.

Frock Around The Clock at Belfast cathedral

Frock Around The Clock, a fantastic fair featuring vintage and handmade goods, will be coming to St Anne's Cathedral on Saturday November 19.

This will be Frock Around the Clock's first event in the heart of Belfast's Cathedral Quarter, and the fair, taking place in the Cathedral Nave, will feature more than 70 sellers of beautiful and original vintage and handmade treasures.

This will be Frock Around The Clock's largest event to date. The creative folks at Frock Fairs NI have been busy sourcing the very best in crafty talent and vintage collectors, working hard to take the stress out of finding beautiful and unique

Christmas gifts, and this spectacular event is sure to brighten up your festive shopping season, with an amazing array of vintage and handmade treasures awaiting you - all under one very impressive roof!

A glittering, sparkling affair, this event will showcase a cornucopia of vintage and handcrafted loveliness including fashion accessories and jewellery, furniture and homewares, textiles and décor, Christmas decorations and artisan food, collectables and curiosities, arts and crafts, toys and children's wear, and much more besides. With such an extravaganza of unique gifts and beautiful items for you, your family and your home there will be everything you need to complete your Christmas shopping in style!

The exhibitor list includes Norma Jean Vintage, offering a fabulous selection of vintage collectables and fine jewellery, The Natural Room Emporium, connoisseurs of authentic antique furniture and homewares, Fiddlesticks Fabrics, purveyor of textiles, haberdashery and crafting supplies, Crafts By Inga, showcasing beautiful handmade merino felt scarves, hats and children's accessories, The Beagle & The

Blackbird, creators of a treasure trove of delightful needle felted dolls and woodland animals, Rebecca Denley Textile Artist, designer of home décor and fashion accessories inspired by Ireland, and Emily Loves Vintage offering beautiful, limited-edition eclectic jewellery and quirky prints.

In addition to all the fabulous stalls, there will also be a fun opportunity to participate in the NI Big Sock record breaking attempt to create the world's largest patchwork Christmas stocking right here in Northern Ireland. Co-ordinated by Pamela Emerson (aka The Crafty Historian) this year-long community project aims to get as many Northern Ireland people as possible involved in creating the world's largest hand sewn Christmas stocking - and you don't even have to be able to sew to take part!

This is an ideal opportunity to get some gifts in time for Christmas... or maybe just treat yourself!

Admission to the Cathedral normally costs £5 but this will be reduced to £3 on the day of the event and will include access to the fair and all parts of the Cathedral open to the public. All proceeds from the admission fee will go to Belfast Cathedral.

Parking will also be available at Belfast Cathedral - priced at just £4 for the day.

The Frock Around The Clock Vintage and Handmade Fair runs in St Anne's from 12pm-5pm on Saturday November 19.

www.frockfairsni.com

Cork clergy up to speed

In addition to all the routine contacts and annual visits around the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, conducts a formal and traditional Episcopal Visitation every five years. The 2016 Visitation is well under way and on Monday, 24th October the Bishop met the clergy of two rural deaneries – West Cork and Mid West Cork – in Skibbereen.

Nothing unusual there, except that the venue for the meeting was the recently opened Ludgate Hub in what is now Ireland's first 1gb town.

Developed in a former Bakery owned by Field's of Skibbereen, the Ludgate Hub provides meeting rooms, breakout spaces, hot desks, meeting pods, a shared kitchen, a Google

hangouts room, training space, and much more, all supported by a 1000mb fibre optic connection and 24/7 access. The Hub is named after Skibbereen native, Percy Ludgate (1883 – 1922) who, in 1907, designed an ‘analytical machine’ – one of the world’s first computers.

After their meeting yesterday with the Bishop, and following lunch, the clergy of the two rural deaneries were shown around the Ludgate Hub by Bandon Grammar School past pupil, Callum Donnelly, who works there and is heading up Ireland’s National Digital Week based there between 10 and 12 November.

With a 1000MB connection the Ludgate Hub utilises the digital age for job creation and innovation. The initiative aims facilitate up to 75 people in a creative co-working environment with a long term objective to create 500 direct jobs and 1000 indirect jobs via a sustainable digital economy for Skibbereen and the wider West Cork area. As featured in the case study in the Action Plan for Jobs, South West (2015–2017) the Ludgate Hub is cited as an example of innovation occurring in rural Ireland and indeed a blueprint for other rural areas. Skibbereen has also been selected as a pilot town for SIRO, and

1GB of connectivity is now rolled out to the Ludgate Hub and town of Skibbereen creating a 1GB community.

News briefs

+++ Garda Siochana Band and Ladies' Choir - 'On the Beat' – a night of music and song by the Garda Siochana Band and Ladies' Choir, takes place in Christ Church Cathedral, on Tuesday November 15 at 7.30 pm. Ticket fees will go towards St Doulagh's Restoration Fund Appeal. The appeal was launched during May with the aim is of preserving the ancient St Doulagh's Church, Balgriffin, Dublin, for generations to come. The sum required to cover all the works to the Church and Holy Wells and the graveyard is €300,000. So far the fund is approaching €14,000. The concert will feature music from the '60s to the '00s. Tickets are now on sale at €20– please call 087 671 1547.

+++ Young Love in the pulpit - A former shop assistant is set to become the youngest Church of Scotland minister currently active today. Stuart Love, 25, will be ordained at Clincarthill Parish Church on the southside of Glasgow on Thursday evening. The former sales assistant at

WH Smiths in Hamilton said he was “excited and nervous” about his new role in equal measure. Mr Love, who worked in retail between 2007-2013, said his parents Lorna and Robin told him that he declared at the age of five that he wanted to be either a Church minister or the Prime Minister when he grew up. He added that his calling to Clincarthill Parish Church was a sign that “God is not finished” with the Church of Scotland.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Creationism is not on minister's agenda for new school curriculum

Belfast Telegraph

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/creationism-is-not-on-ministers-agenda-for-new-school-curriculum-35164921.html?utm_source=ipad_share&utm_medium=ipad_app&utm_campaign=clickbacks

Watch homeless choir perform moving tribute to Anthony Foley in Cork

Irish Mirror

This video captures an emotional tribute paid to the late former Munster rugby coach Anthony Foley by Ireland's first homeless choir. Branch members of the High Hopes choir from Waterford and Cork performed a beautiful

version of Ireland's Call during a charity fundraiser for charity Cork Penny Dinners, which offers aid and assistance to the homeless in Cork city.

<http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/watch-homeless-choir-perform-moving-9131190>

Foleys take solace from response to Facebook campaign

Irish Examiner

We've been delighted with the support coming from other faiths, including Buddhism, **Church of Ireland**, Islam, etc. "We've had people tell us of how ...

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/foleys-take-solace-from-response-to-facebook-campaign-427674.html>

FT

Report that the UK's Financial Conduct Authority, FCA, has pledged in a mission statement to drastically reduce the number of its rules and focus on better and clearer regulation as it tries to move on from a "very sorry history" of financial scandals and subsequent record-breaking fines. Article notes the statement comes in the same week that the Archbishop of Canterbury backed a think-tank report which warned that the "box-ticking" FCA and other regulators risked "sleepwalking into the next financial crisis" unless they overhauled their working cultures.

Christian Today

Report that the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker and Bishop of Stockport, Libby Lane will host a conference next month aimed at equipping individuals, churches and communities to respond practically to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The conference will be held at Salford University on Saturday 19 November.

Sun/Mail/Mirror

Reports on the evidence heard by a tribunal earlier this year following a complaint brought under the Clergy Discipline Measure against the Revd Prof James Day, a priest in the Diocese in Europe. Articles note that the tribunal found his conduct had been 'unbecoming and inappropriate'.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2057227/kinky-bisexual-church-of-england-vicar-is-sacked-over-orgies-and-hookers-after-wife-exposes-randy-antics/>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3876812/Vicar-defrocked-wife-exposed-double-life-prostitutes.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3876812/Vicar-defrocked-wife-exposed-double-life-prostitutes.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3876812/Vicar-defrocked-wife-exposed-double-life-prostitutes.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/vicar-who-led-double-life-9134590#ICID=ns>

Christian Today

Reports that more than 800 volunteers have signed up to help out on in night shelters in Manchester, Salford, Birmingham, Mansfield and Great Yarmouth. The joint venture between C of E dioceses and the Church Urban Fund shows that churches are doing more than ever before this winter to help alleviate the growing homelessness crisis. Canon Paul Hackwood of CUF is quoted.