

Image of the day - St Finn Barre's, Cork

Reports

C of I Mental health project moves forward

Call for mental health champions marks World Mental Health Day: Sunday (10th October)

Prayer and faith help to support good mental health but stigma around the issues involved still remains a major challenge, research carried out by the Church of Ireland has revealed. These are some of the key findings that have emerged from research undertaken by the MindMattersCOI project earlier this year, and the Church is now preparing to take practical steps to improve and support mental health literacy.

Over the past 12 months, MindMattersCOI has been listening to both clergy and lay members of the Church of Ireland to understand the Church's attitudes and awareness towards mental health. Over 1,200 members and more than half of all clergy participated in this research.

On World Mental Health Day (Sunday, 10th October), the Church of Ireland is putting the call out for mental health champions to promote mental health literacy and help break down barriers created by stigma.

The Chairperson of the MindMattersCOI advisory group, Bishop Pat Storey, is urging people with an interest in



mental health, whether personal or professional, to become involved in the project. She commented: “Improving mental health literacy is so important for us all. We need to understand how to maintain and support positive mental health amongst our friends, community and, in particular, our younger people. Recognising issues and talking about mental health helps to decrease stigma and remove barriers to seeking help.”

The MindMattersCOI project is supported by Allchurches Trust. Jeremy Noles, Head of Grants and Relationships for Allchurches Trust, said: “As we continue to emerge from the Covid–19 pandemic, there’s a renewed focus across the UK and Ireland on mental health and well–being, and the increased needs and issues in this area. We’re delighted that our funding can help bring greater awareness and hope, by extending the reach of MindMattersCOI. This will help many more people struggling with mental health issues to access support which could change their lives for the better.”

The research, the results of which will be available on the MindMattersCOI website in the coming weeks, also found that:

- both members and clergy agreed that the Church of Ireland has a role to play in promoting positive mental health;

- bishops note that they can provide the strong leadership required to effect positive and lasting change in relation to mental health attitudes and awareness;

- 96% of respondents felt that Covid–19 had had a significant impact on people’s mental health;

- family, friends and other connections were identified as key contributors to positive mental health;

- respondents reported that, although they have positive attitudes towards mental health issues, these still carry a significant level of stigma within the community;

- in contrast to other studies among churches and other communities of faith, respondents did not identify clergy as a primary source of help in dealing with mental health issues; and

- a significant number of clergy feel that the Church currently does not provide sufficient support for their mental health.

Based on the findings of the research, the next phase of the project will focus on improving mental health literacy. This is defined as:

- understanding how to obtain and maintain positive mental health;

- understanding mental health problems and their treatments;

decreasing stigma related to mental health problems; and assisting people to seek help effectively.

The project is now calling for additional volunteers to get involved and become ambassadors for mental health in their parishes and wider communities. Thanks to the generous support of Allchurches Trust, there will be a wide variety of training on offer as well as funding available for local projects that support mental health literacy. Announcing Phase 2 of the project, Bishop Storey said: “We have listened to what you told us in the research and now we want you to get involved. We want you to join our movement for mental health literacy. There are opportunities for training and there is also seed funding for projects in parishes and dioceses.”

Although the MindMattersCOI project was conceived before the Covid pandemic, it is recognised that young people were among those most affected during successive lockdowns. The project is therefore carrying out an additional sub–study focusing exclusively on younger members of the Church of Ireland.

You Tube video by Bishop Storey. Link at - <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/10985/mental-health-project-moves-forward>

For more information and to sign up as a champion, please visit the MindMattersCOI website at [<https://mindmatters.ireland.anglican.org>]

Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to Egypt



The Archbishop of Canterbury writes - “It’s wonderful to be in Egypt for the next few days where we’re gathering to celebrate the new Anglican Province of Alexandria, which was inaugurated last year.

“We started the trip yesterday with a visit to St Macarius Monastery in Wadi Natrun, which was founded in 360 AD. It was very moving to pray in this ancient place, which has also now reclaimed thousands of acres from the desert through innovative agriculture! I also had an excellent spiritual conversation with the wonderful monks.

“After that I had the privilege of visiting Harpur Memorial Hospital in Sadat City. Along with Archbishop of Alexandria Samy Shehata and Archbishop Emeritus Mouneer, we spent some time talking with staff and praying with them. The Diocese of Egypt runs this excellent hospital and it’s an example of the role that Anglicans play in healthcare in many counties. It is truly Christ’s love in action.

“Please join me in praying for our Anglican brothers and sisters in Egypt and across the Province of Alexandria”.

Transferor Representatives' Council thanks NI schools for continued commitment

The Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) – representing the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Methodist Church in Ireland in educational matters in Northern Ireland – has again expressed its thanks and deep appreciation to school principals, staff and governors for their commitment to management, teaching and learning, pastoral oversight, and financial control in these unprecedented times.

Speaking on behalf of the TRC, its Chairperson, Miss Rosemary Rainey OBE, said: “Schools have experienced enormous pressures since the pandemic began. We, as a society, owe a great debt to principals, teachers, support staff and school governors who have had increased workloads, and had to change methodology, including adapting to remote and blended learning and teaching, prior to the re-opening of schools to all pupils, a return to face-to-face classroom experience and children spending time together again with peers.

“The TRC recognises and applauds the tremendous contribution of school governors, who work tirelessly on a purely voluntary basis in the interests of schools, children and young people. They deal with – alongside other

commitments – finance, staffing issues, appointments, complaints, inspections, and school policies, and attend functions in schools on a regular basis. During the pandemic, more responsibility fell to chairpersons who dealt almost daily with their respective principals to ensure that schools continued to deliver teaching and pupils continued to learn. Their service to schools and to our society is vastly undervalued. The TRC commends them and all school



Chairperson, Miss Rosemary Rainey OBE

governors who faced particular challenges but continued to serve the local community faithfully and well.

“Governors’ tenure has now been extended for a further additional year so it is both fitting and appropriate that we pay tribute to their service at this time. Schools cannot

operate without governors yet their sterling service often seems to go unnoticed and unappreciated by society in general. The TRC gratefully acknowledges the variety and wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience that governors bring to schools. Principals value their support and guidance, often relying on them to be critical friends.

“The TRC thanks all school governors for their service and assures them of the prayerful support of the three Churches, their respective Boards of Education, and their membership as a whole.

‘Move forward with vision and vigour’ – Dublin & Glendalough Synod

The events of the last 18 months have given us a unique opportunity to examine how we do things and how we may wish to do things in the future, the Revd Rob Clements (Kilternan) told members of Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Synods on Wednesday evening (October 6). Proposing the Report of Diocesan Councils during the online Synod, Mr Clements said we are “only beginning to scratch the surface of what faith and flourishing might look like post Covid” and stated there is an opportunity to reimagine and reinvigorate ministry and mission.

He acknowledged that living with Covid had been tedious, trying and for many people traumatic. “Our communities have been exhausted and bruised at local and diocesan levels, and it may take us some time to reconnect meaningfully with one another. It is difficult to cultivate

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relationships when we are but little boxes on a screen,” he said.

For the sake of our wellbeing people needed to give each other space, grace and time but recognise that the church is in a unique missional moment.



The Revd Rob Clements speaking during the online Diocesan Synod.

Referring to a webinar which took place in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute on Online Church in a Post-lockdown World (see more here) by the Ven Bob Jackson, Mr Clements said that he was struck by the challenge to move from responding to planning.

Highlighting the suggestions from the webinar, Mr Clements pointed to the ways in which the church in Dublin and Glendalough was meeting the new challenges.

The first suggestion is that the post covid church needs to be a church with wider doors – churches need to think about welcoming back those who were there before but also reaching out to those looking anew at faith and belonging. In this area he pointed to the work with children and young people and the efforts made to pioneer creative engagement with families and teenagers. Included in this are events like Muddy Church. He paid tribute to Susie Keegan who has moved on from her role as Diocesan Youthwork Coordinator and welcomed Emma Fawcett to the role. He also thanked all involved in communications who helped many evolve from luddites to vloggers and YouTube influencers thus extending outreach to new spaces.

The second area is that the church must have deeper wells. Covid has raised existential questions about death, human limitation and flourishing, he said and people are looking anew at what the spiritual life might mean for them. In seeking to deepen prayer and conversation, he drew attention to the ministries to young adults and third level students and the profound work of care of hospital chaplains.

The third and fourth challenges posed by Archdeacon Jackson were that the church must have wiser programmes and smarter structures. In these areas Mr Clements drew Synod's attention to the financial challenge experienced by churches. He said churches had exercised creativity and judgement in fundraising and managing these challenges and paid tribute to all who prepared and managed the diocesan accounts so immaculately. He said the diocese was committed to good governance and thanked the staff of



the diocesan office, Sylvia and Vicki and welcomed Caroline.

“Perhaps to some extent this has been a year whereby we have had to focus on steadying the ship in light of surrounding storms. But we need to move forward with vision and vigour in the days ahead,” he concluded.

United Gospel Giveaway in Ballyholme

After much planning and prayer, a combined team from the four local Churches in Ballyholme recently delivered the Gospel of John plus an explanatory letter to 1,700 homes in the area.

They had many positive responses, not least to the fact that the four denominations were working together.

Three teams got to work: a prayer team that interceded as the deliveries went out, a team that put the gospels through the letterboxes and a team that followed up, knocking on doors and offering support to those who wanted it.

“We went out on Saturday morning 18 Sept and on the following Wednesday evening, praying for every home we delivered to,” says Revd Jan Stevenson, Community Pastor in Ballyholme Parish.

“The combined teams numbered 40 plus on both days and we were delighted by the positive responses we got from the people we spoke to. We had folk wanting to bring their children to church organisations like Sunday school, Cubs, Parents & Toddlers etc and two teams even had garden tours and went home with cuttings and cut flowers!

“We met people we knew who had lost contact with their church over lockdown and many told us how pleased they were that we came from the four local churches – Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist.

“We would love you to join us in praying that people read these gospels and discover how much Jesus has done for them and connect with the church.”

On the Muddy Church trail in Ballintoy

Ballintoy Rectory on the north coast, with its breathtaking scenery, was the perfect setting for a Muddy Church trail which celebrated the God of creation!

Organised by All Aboard – Connor Children’s Ministry and the grouped Parishes of Ballintoy and Dunseverick, the diocesan Muddy Church event took place on September 26.



A team of volunteers from Ballintoy and Dunseverick worked hard alongside the Rev Patrick Barton and Connor Children's Ministry Development Officer Victoria Jackson in the run up to the event, planning and promoting!

Throughout the rectory grounds and walled garden, various stations were set up where families could reflect on questions about creation and enjoy activities which helped them to explore these questions further.

Families had the opportunity to take part in various craft activities, pond fishing, and touch and smell of vegetables and plants. There was also a petting farm and a puppet show!

Volunteers from Ballintoy and Dunseverick manned the car park and were on hand at each of the stations to guide

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families through the activities. More than 60 people attended, some from the local area and others who had travelled from as far away as Belfast.

On arrival, everyone received a goody bag which included an all-important ticket for a free ice-cream on the completion of the trail!

Victoria said: “The atmosphere was fantastic, with families being delighted to connect with one another and for some to be at a church event for the first time since March 2020.

“The weather forecast for the afternoon was very ominous and the marquees we tried to erect were doing their very best to make their way into the sea with the strong winds, but we were so thankful that the afternoon stayed dry just long enough for everyone to enjoy each of the activities!”

Victoria expressed a huge thank you to the Muddy Church and The Children’s Ministry Network for providing the resources for the event and to Ballintoy and Dunseverick Parishes for hosting. “A special thank you to all of the families who came along and made the day so special,” she added.



News briefs



Day trip to Cape Clear for CDYC Youth Leaders

On Saturday, 25th September, the Cork Diocesan Youth Council and Diocesan Youth Officer Hilda Connolly took a group of youth leaders on a day trip to Cape Clear, an island near Baltimore.

Hilda said:

The CDYC Cape Clear weekend away has always been a huge hit, but unfortunately, a residential event was not an option this year. We still wanted to say “thank you” to our young leaders for all their help and support over the past 18 months, so we went on a day trip instead. We went

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kayaking for a few hours and lunch was served at the local café before everyone had some free time to wander around and see a bit of the island.

Everyone was back on the mainland again by 5pm, relaxed and ready to take on the youth events over the next few months!

New Bishop of Portsmouth

The new Bishop of Portsmouth will be the Rt Rev Dr Jonathan Frost, who is currently the Dean of York. Downing Street announced yesterday morning that HM the Queen had nominated Bishop Jonathan to be the tenth Bishop of Portsmouth <https://bit.ly/3FljWGq>

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Jesus the Storyteller: the parables then and now

Premiers online from St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday 19 October, 7-8pm

Playful, thought-provoking and disruptive, Jesus' parables reveal him as a storyteller who evokes mysterious worlds, and a conjurer for the imagination who both asks more questions than he makes statements and weaves more stories than he gives commandments.

His parables range from quickfire images to long allegorical narratives with lots of characters, and use the stuff of



everyday life – weeds, money, parties, family relationships - to disrupt what we, as much as his first listeners, think we know about God, the world and ourselves.

St Paul's Cathedral's Canon Chancellor Dr Paula Gooder will be in conversation with the Revd Richard Coles about the parables and their enduring power to shock and surprise, and how they challenge us to live our faith in the 21st century.

The event is free, but if you are able to make a donation to the continuing learning programme at St Paul's Cathedral when you register for the event we would be very grateful. [\[\[\] https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jesus-the-storyteller-the-parables-then-and-now-tickets-176915457897 \]](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jesus-the-storyteller-the-parables-then-and-now-tickets-176915457897)

Need a wee bit of inspiration and encouragement?

Take five minutes to watch one of the global video updates that CMSI produced for its recent Ignite conference. God is at work across our world...

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8814014>

Latest Church Army blog

CA's latest blog is out now. How your church can share faith

"The church grew and grew, drawing to it all sorts of people from many different parts of society to form new communities..."

[churcharmy.org/general/sharefaith]

Online Decade of Centenaries event

Louth Library Service invite you to its next Decade of Centenaries event they we ask their panel of experts to discuss the various sources that are available for the study of the Irish revolutionary period.

Register at -

[<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/SourcesfortheIrishRevolution/register>]

Hypostasis - Brendan McCarthy's psycho-spiritual drama

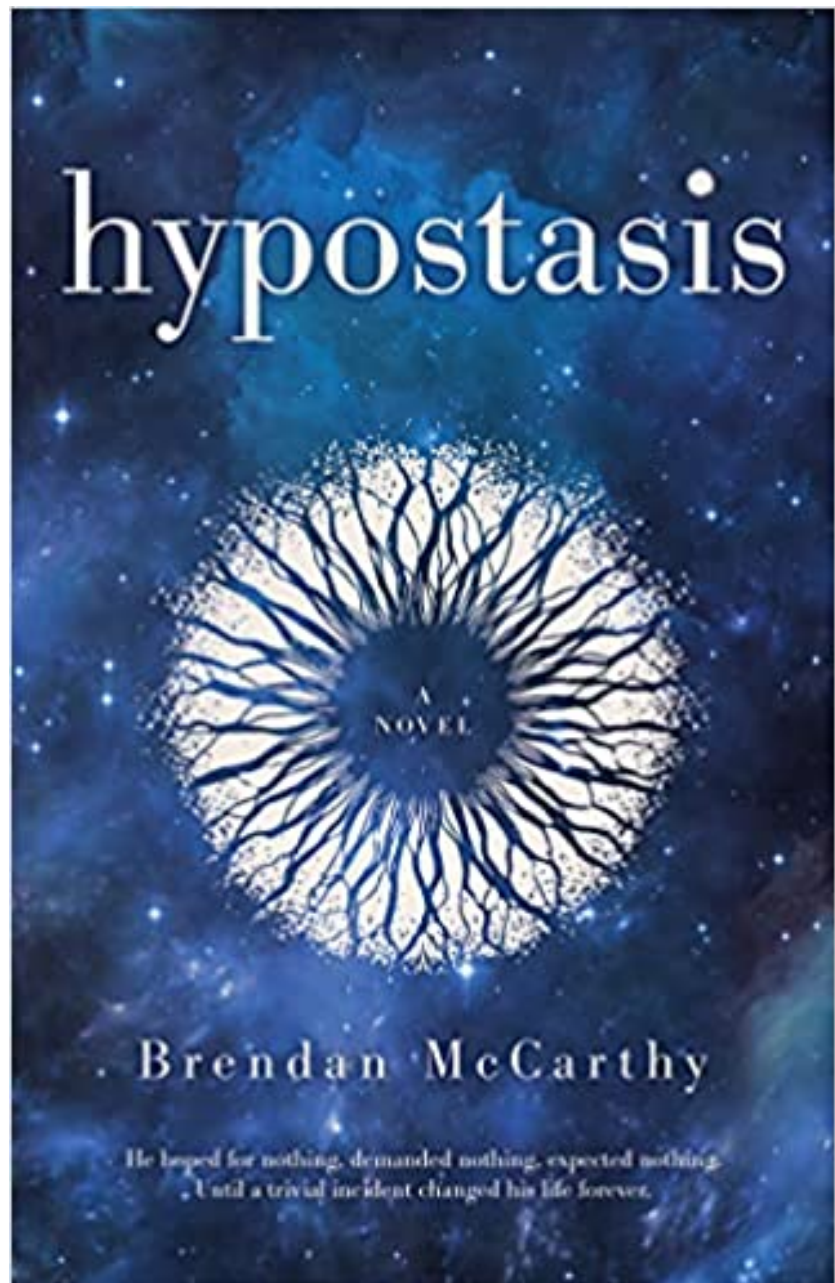
Brendan McCarthy's psycho-spiritual drama explores the margins of consciousness and the nature of reality

Longhorne lived alone and he understood that he would die alone. Only behind the walls of his isolation, could he attain the order and calm that he required; only there could he find

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the peace that made his existence bearable. Insulated also from his feelings and memories, he hoped for nothing, demanded nothing, expected nothing. Until his thirty-first birthday... A trivial incident initiates a cascade of experiences until control of his carefully regulated mind is wrested from him, changing the course of his life and the lives of others. In the space of a few days, every protective

barrier that he had painstakingly fashioned is breached until he is forced to confront the truth about his past: the truth about himself. Step by step, he realises that the mysterious and powerful forces that have taken control of him are not external; in ways that he cannot fully fathom, they are part of him, and he is part of them. In connecting with himself, has he stumbled upon something fundamental that lies at the heart of all human existence?



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Brendan McCarthy has been the National Adviser on Medical Ethics and Health and Social Care Policy for the Church of England since 2009. He has been a member of the Government's Places of Worship Taskforce as well as adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the House of Bishops. He's contributed to several national ethics discussions on radio, TV and in the press, including BBC Radio Four's 'The Moral Maze' and 'Sunday' programmes. He's authored books, articles and has lectured on medical ethics across the UK. In 2021, he was awarded the Canterbury Cross for Services to the Church of England during the Covid-19 pandemic. He lives in Omagh, County Tyrone.

Brendan says, "Oscar Wilde said that the great events of the world first take place in our brains. This book takes that idea seriously. The topics it touches on such as the nature of ultimate reality, our place in the universe, the bounds of individual and communal existence are discussed widely in philosophical and scientific circles; this book explores them in the context of one individual's drama. As in reality, no definitive answers are given, but intriguing routes for exploration are mapped out."

Release date - 28/10/2021. ISBN: 9781913913496 Price: £8.99



Poem for today

Autumn - by Charles Baudelaire

Soon we will plunge ourselves into cold shadows,
And all of summer's stunning afternoons will be gone.
I already hear the dead thuds of logs below
Falling on the cobblestones and the lawn.

All of winter will return to me:
derision, Hate, shuddering, horror, drudgery and vice,
And exiled, like the sun, to a polar prison,
My soul will harden into a block of red ice.

I shiver as I listen to each log crash and slam:
The echoes are as dull as executioners' drums.
My mind is like a tower that slowly succumbs
To the blows of a relentless battering ram.

It seems to me, swaying to these shocks, that someone
Is nailing down a coffin in a hurry somewhere.
For whom? -- It was summer yesterday; now it's autumn.
Echoes of departure keep resounding in the air.

Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

