

Church News Ireland

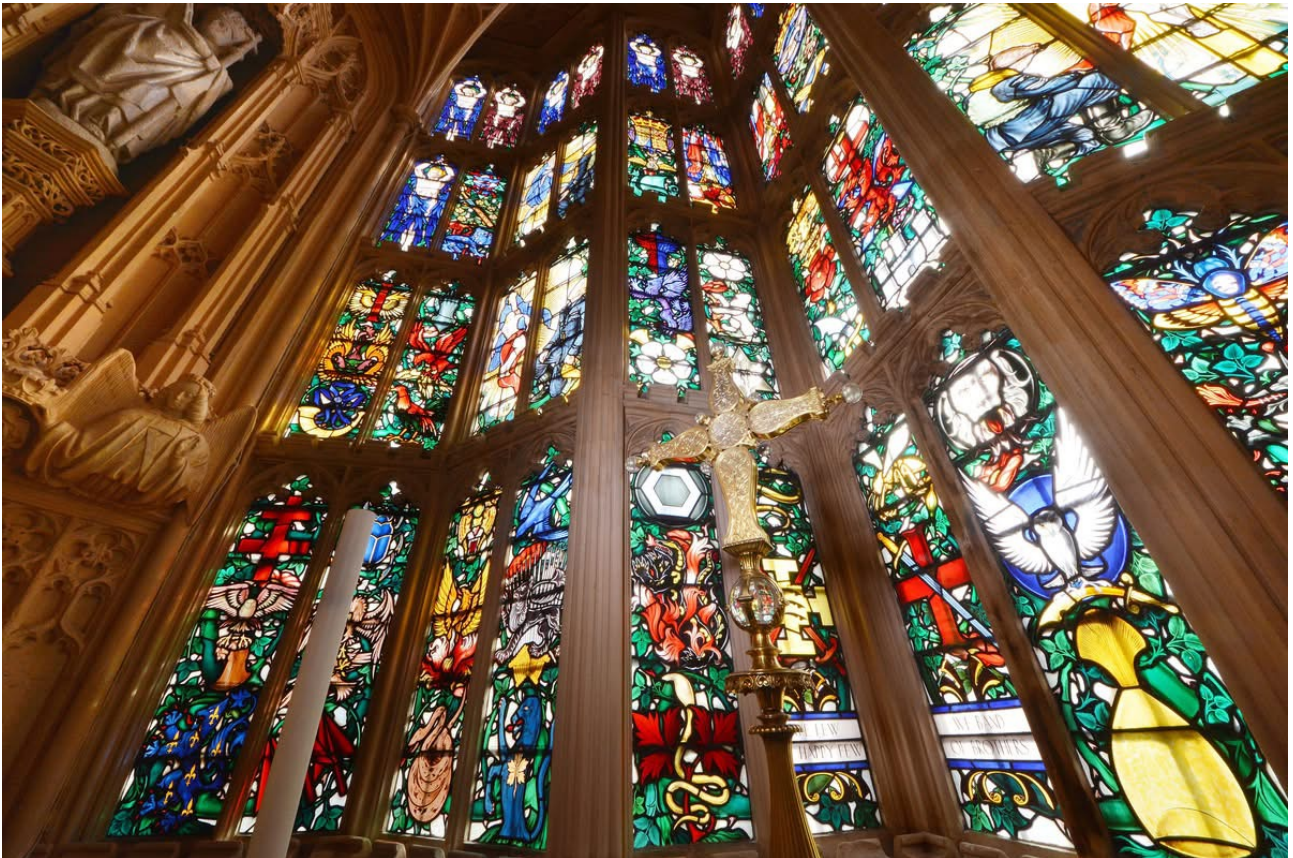


Image of the day – Chapel to The Few

Image of the day



Chapel to The Few

**'Never was so much owed by so many to so few'
- Sir Winston Churchill**

Westminster Abbey's RAF Chapel is dedicated to 'The Few' - the airmen of the Battle of Britain who fought against extraordinary odds to defend the country from invasion in 1940. The chapel was dedicated in July 1947 at a service attended by George VI and members of the Royal Family. The magnificent stained glass window was designed by Hugh Easton and includes the badges of 70 squadrons who fought in the Battle.

News

Phantom of the Opera entertainment for Organists and Choirmasters

The Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters was delighted to host Leeds City Organist, and Organist of Leeds Town Hall - Darius Battiwalla - on Friday night, at Holywood Parish Church. Darius improvised for 90 minutes solidly to the film “Phantom of the Opera”. It was a thrilling evening.

USOC thanks the Organist of Holywood Parish Church, Edwin Gray, and the Rector for allowing us to host the evening, which was hugely enjoyed by a large audience.

Pictured, on the right is Darius, with USOC President, Matthew Owens, on the left.



Uplifting Songs of Praise give thanks for Athy Church redecoration



The roof of the newly redecorated St Michael's Church in Athy almost lifted off with the joyful singing at a special Songs of Praise Service to celebrate its official reopening on Sunday September 14.

The Stedfast Band (Photo next page) and organist Carol Coyle provided enthusiastic musical accompaniment to the many carefully chosen and uplifting hymns. Each hymn was introduced by the Rector, the Revd Conor O'Reilly, who gave fascinating information, placing them in historical context.



Parishioners of Athy, Kilberry and Fontstown with Kilkea were joined for the occasion by Archbishop Michael Jackson who praised all in the parish who had worked together to

take on the beautiful restoration of the church's interior. He spoke of the importance of community both in the parish and the wider community of Athy.

Fr Liam Rigney, PP of Athy, was also in attendance. He said he was delighted to be invited and marvelled at the transformation of the interior of the church. He commended all who had worked so hard to secure the historic building for generations to come and said he felt the prayers of generations past in the walls of St Michael's. The Stedfast Band in St Michael's Church. Athy.

Drawing the service to a close, the Rector thanked everyone who had made the service special, particularly the Stedfast Band and Ms Coyle.

He also thanked all who had put so much time and effort into the refurbishment of the church, reserving particular mention for Ron Condell, the church wardens, the building and finance committees and the Select Vestry. The congregation adjourned.

The Songs of Praise Service was held as a celebration to mark the repainting of St Michael's Church which closed for the work after Easter Sunday Service and reopened three months later. During the period that the church was closed, services were held in the Main Hall of the adjacent Parish Centre.

Speaking after the service Revd Conor said: "During my Institution as Rector of the Athy Union of Parishes in December 2022, I stated that 'churches must be places

where a living faith is celebrated'. They should never be seen as relics of a bygone age, no matter how renowned they may be for their aesthetic beauty or historical significance. This renovation makes it a setting suitable for the worship of God in the 21st Century, whilst at the same time preserving intact its historical significance in the life of the town of Athy".



New church hall puts "a smile on the face of God" - Bishop of Derry & Raphoe

The congregation of Carrick Parish Church were told by Bishop Andrew that the opening of their new hall put "a smile on the face of God".

The broad smiles on peoples faces belied the rather damp conditions as the parishioners were joined by friends from their sister churches in the Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and

Tamlaghtard Group and guests from elsewhere to celebrate what the Rector, Rev Rhys Jones, called the most significant day in Carrick's history.

The tiny church enjoys a stunning location, in the heart of the Roe Valley, beside the famous Country Park and overlooking a scenic stretch of the River Roe. And the parish team showed extraordinary resourcefulness, as they rose to the logistical challenge of hosting such a large-scale event. A minibus service was laid on to ferry visitors to the church, and a large marquee was erected in the grounds to accommodate the overspill from the much larger than usual congregation.

The Rector began by extending a "heartfelt welcome" to everyone in the church - and in the marquee – on a "really prestigious day" in the 180-year history of Carrick Church. "Carrick was built some 179 or 180 years ago," Rev Rhys said, "and without question this is the most significant day in the life and witness of this church and its people. I want to thank you all with sincerity for being here as we join in celebration, thanking the God of providence and grace for giving us the strength and the wherewithal to complete the task that was set before us some five or six years ago." The Rector thanked everyone who had "contributed financially, or in terms of time or prayerfully, or who gave of yourselves in any way to make this hall a reality for its people and the wider locality. So, God bless you and thank you on behalf of the Select Vestry of this parish.

In his sermon, Bishop Andrew said it was wonderful to be there on such a special day, to see this hall - which had been a pipedream for so long – being opened. "And now we

have this wonderful, wonderful example of what can happen when the children of God come together," he said, "His people gather together, as they work together to see this new hall open, and to say, 'Well done, congratulations'. This is wonderful, this is a dream come true for this parish that we are so thankful to God for, today."

As an occasional walker in Roe Valley Country Park, Bishop Andrew is familiar with the area in which the church and the new hall are located, and he said he was always struck on his visits by the beauty of the area. "Your group of parishes must be the most picturesque parish churches in our diocese, with beautiful views, beautiful settings, beautiful buildings. We're here in Carrick and sometimes I come here myself and take a walk down across the little bridge and go for a nice walk around. It's just beautiful, such a picturesque place, and we're so thankful for the beauty of what surrounds us. But much, much more than that, this isn't just a place of beauty in the setting beside the river, in the valley beside us; what we know is the beauty of the family of God that meets here; the family of God that has been a blessing for 180 years for the parish here; and the family of God building a new hall to help continue to build the Kingdom of God here."

Bishop Andrew complimented the parish on the prudent stewardship and extraordinary generosity that had brought the new hall into being. "Not one penny is owed on this hall. It's all paid for. Isn't that remarkable? What a wonderful testament to the people of this parish; to the generosity, to the hard work, to the sacrificial giving; for the time that you have given, the work that you have given; and you have this beautiful hall that just sits so well in its landscape - this



beautiful church, this beautiful hall, this beautiful parish - this is wonderful, and God has done great things.

"You know, this puts a smile on the face not just of you, not just of every parishioner, not just on the face of everyone in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe. I believe this puts a smile on the face of God.

"For far too long we have talked about the Church declining, the Church in retrenchment, 'the Church isn't what it should be'. I want to tell you, God is at work. God is at work. The Church is growing. The Church is turning a new chapter, a new chapter of the Church reaching out, standing up, showing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and we want to witness to the vibrancy of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. God is at work.



"For so long, I think, we have looked back and thought that all the big days of the Church were in the past. We looked back and thought, you know, that's the way it used to be. We thought, 'Only, if only, we were the way we used to be'. But yet, I want to tell you that the best days are yet to come, that God is at work, that the secularism of our society - many people of my generation have walked away from Church – and now younger people are saying that secularism hasn't worked, and we see young people coming back to Church, young people wanting to know something about the reality of faith in Jesus Christ. That's what's happening across the world. And I think what you're doing in Carrick is saying you're ready, 'We're ready to reach out, we want to see the Church growing, that the best days are not just the days behind us, today the best is yet to come, that God is at work,' and what you're doing in this wonderful parish is saying God is alive. We're witnessing to the vibrancy of faith."



During the Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, Bishop Andrew first dedicated a newly-purchased church organ (which was played throughout today's worship by the parish organist Ann Gibson). Then the Bishop, the Rector and the church wardens – accompanied by the congregation – moved outside the church to plant an oak tree in the grounds (as a memorial to the parishioners' loved ones). Bishop Andrew dedicated the gateway to the new parish hall in memory of the late Louis McFarland (a warden and "stalwart" of the parish for many years).

At the new hall itself, William Purcell – who donated the site for the building – unveiled a plaque by the front doorway, before Bishop Andrew dedicated the hall, cut the ceremonial ribbon and declared the hall open. Inside the hall, members of the McGarrigle family looked on as the Bishop finally

dedicated an interactive whiteboard donated in memory of All Saints' Clooney parishioner Leanne McGarrigle.

After the formalities, the congregation and guests enjoyed hospitality and fellowship, with refreshments served in the hall and a BBQ laid on at the marquee, where entertainment was provided for the children present. Throughout the post-service festivities, the Roe Valley Stompers band entertained their audience with a lively performance of popular jazz and swing favourites.

Education

Campbell College's new Pipe Major

Congratulations to our new Pipe Major Shaun T for taking first place in the Under 18 Piping section of the Down Academy Solo competitions.

RBAI Tattooists

Henry Spencer, Year 9 , and Alan Waddell,





Year 11, were part of the 2025 Belfast International Tattoo at the SSE Arena last weekend, an event which showcases elements of the history, music and dance traditions of Ulster Scots.

Cathedral Calls

90th birthday of Arvo Pärt in Limerick Cathedral almost sold out

Quickstep your way to Saint Mary's Cathedral before seats are gone...

Join us as we celebrate the 90th birthday of Arvo Pärt, one of the most performed living composers in the world, with a beautiful lunchtime concert in the heart of Limerick.



Tuesday, 23rd September 2025



Starts at 1:15 PM



Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

👉 Reserve your spot here:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/celebrate-the-90th-birthday-of-estonian-composer-arvo-part-tickets-1425678024349?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&keep_tld=1

Enjoy a moving selection of chamber works by the iconic Estonian composer in the stunning surroundings of our 12th-century cathedral.

Supported by H.E. Kairi Künka (Estonian Ambassador to Ireland), Julie Long (Honorary Consul for Estonia in the Midwest), and the Arvo Pärt Centre, Laulasmaa.

Don't miss out – spaces are almost gone!

Clergy and ministry

Ordained Local Minister comes home for vacancy

The Rev'd Brian Robinson has been appointed by Bishop Andrew to cover the vacancy in the Dungiven and Bovevagh Group of Parishes, where he will serve in his capacity as Ordained Local Minister.

It's a homecoming of sorts, for Rev'd Brian, whose mother hails from Dungiven, where he has "many cousins". Brian was one of the first two OLM ministers ordained in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

The vacancy in Dungiven arose following the former Rector, Rev'd Mark Loney's appointment, over the summer, as the new minister of Magheraculmoney Parish in the Diocese of Clogher.

'Through this ministry faith will flourish' – New Pioneer Minister Commissioned in Crinken

The people of Crinken set out on a journey to build a new community of worshippers in the living God on Saturday evening (September 13). Aaron Halliwell was

commissioned as a Pioneer Minister by Archbishop Michael Jackson.



His role will see him reach out to the rapidly growing community around Crinken Church and open up fresh pathways to exploring faith.

Aaron is the 10th commissioned Pioneer Minister in the Church of Ireland. He comes to Dublin from Carlisle via Scotland and Belfast and he is supported in ministry by his fiancée Lauren and both their families, who joined him in Crinken and online to wish him well.

Introducing Saturday evening's service, Crinken trustee Basil Good said they were thrilled that Aaron is going to be part of the Pioneer Ministry movement in their area.

The Revd Rob Jones, director of Pioneer Ministry nationally, gave the background to the Church of Ireland's programme



Aaron Halliwell making his declaration

which sets out to reach those with little or no connection to church. He noted that the church was in decline but said that in this season the Spirit comes. As part of the Church's vision to reach out to people, it is raising up new ministers. "God is doing a new thing to enable the Church of Ireland to reach out again and we are just a small part of this," he stated. Aaron Halliwell making his declaration.

Archbishop Jackson pointed to Crinken's east window and said the exuberance of light and colour was an inspiration. He also highlighted Crinken's connection to the Camino de Compostella as St James's Church Crinken is on the route to the pilgrim Church of St James in Dublin. In wishing every blessing to the new ministry, the Archbishop said he has



Registrar Robert Marshall, Canon Tom O'Brien, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Aaron Halliwell, Archdeacon Ross Styles, the Revd Scott Evans and the Revd Rob Jones.

every conviction that Aaron is the right person to lead it and that the community of Crinken will work hard to support it. He added that the strength and power of Pioneer Ministry is that it is overwhelmingly a lay ministry and is motivated by people's desire to serve. "Take the word and take its energy and bring it to those who need to hear it," he concluded.

The sermon was preached by Crinken's minister, Canon Tom O'Brien, who drew inspiration from Psalm 121 which he described as the pilgrim's song. The Psalmist's question – I lift my eyes onto the hills, where does my help come from? – was their question. "Where does our help come from as we launch this new pioneer congregation?"

We are setting out on a journey, seeking to build a community of worshippers in the living God,” he said.

“We know that that road is not going to be easy. We live in a culture where people believe faith is not relevant. They are sceptical and even wounded by religion.

For many unchurched individuals Jesus is just a historical character who holds no meaning. So the road is indeed daunting but like the Israelites heading to Jerusalem we are not to be phased because God goes ahead of us. And when we ask where does my help come from, the Psalmist answers with clarity: ‘My help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth’,” he added.

Canon O’Brien said that God stays with his people and is not distant. When Aaron was considering coming to Crinken he asked if this ministry was what God wanted of him. This is a common question for people entering ordained ministry and Tom said this was good news for him to hear. “When we are called into difficult terrain we will have wobbles. Wobbles are part of faith. When Aaron wobbled that is when God confirmed his call to you. This is the road walk it. The road will be steep but it is not hopeless because God is with us,” he stated.

He said Aaron was called to walk the road with sensitivity, compassion and love. He was called to listen deeply, to serve quietly, to embody the grace of Christ in such a way that people taste the living water that he offers. “Through this ministry rivers of living waters will flow in Crinken and beyond and faith will flourish in the emptiness of modern Ireland,” he said.

Registrar Robert Marshall, Canon Tom O'Brien, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Aaron Halliwell, Archdeacon Ross Styles, the Revd Scott Evans and the Revd Rob Jones.

Poem for today

September 1815

by William Wordsworth

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, 'Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields.'
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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