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Derry inter-church service marks centenary of the Ulster Farmers' Union



The address at the service was given by a former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev Dr Laurence Graham, whose grandfather was a former President of the UFU.

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The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council joined local church leaders at a cross-community service on Saturday afternoon to mark the centenary of the Ulster Farmers' Union.

The service, in Londonderry's Guildhall, celebrated 'faith in farming' in the UFU's 100th year, and featured readings from scripture, prayers for the farming community, communal hymn-singing and performances by Codetta choir.

Senior figures from the farming industry took part in the service, along with the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, the Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, the Rev Paul Linkens from Ebrington Presbyterian Church and the Rev Richard Johnston from Clooney Hall Methodist Church.

The address at today's service was given by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev Dr Laurence Graham, whose grandfather was a former President of the UFU.

Dr Graham described farming as a partnership with God – "a partnership that God has ordained to provide food for all". God drenches the furrows, Dr Graham said, but it's not God that ploughs the furrows in the first place.

Dr Graham asked those present – in the midst of all they were celebrating – whether they were partnering with God. "As we celebrate this wonderful centenary, and as we celebrate the importance of agriculture and the crucial role of farmers in feeding the world, as we celebrate the fact that farmers are partners of God in their work, so I ask you:

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are you partnering with God in your life? And if not, why not, because he only wants what is best for you?”

During the service, soil from all six counties in Northern Ireland was blessed; it will be used to plant a commemorative tree in the grounds of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise’s Greenmount campus.

The collection during the Service was taken up for the UFU’s chosen charity this year, Air Ambulance NI. The Union’s President, Ivor Ferris, told the congregation that – with three months still to go – the UFU had already exceeded its £100,000 fundraising target.

Church outreach to young people in rural areas

Ballinderry Parish hosted its fourth annual teenage event, *#Explore*, over the summer, reaching out to young people in isolated rural areas.

Andrew Tuft, a member of the organising team, said: “The aim of this event was to provide innovative ministry and teaching in the rurally isolated areas in Ballinderry and its surrounding areas – Aghalee, Maghaberry, Glenavy and Crumlin – and to share the gospel within a cross-community setting.

“More practically, we also hoped to build relationships with the teenagers who would attend the event with the hope of introducing teenagers, their family and friends to a local church family and to attend upcoming meetings within our Youth Fellowship programme.”

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The programme ran over a three-day period and included fun-filled activities such as NERF Wars, inflatable assault course, archery and a roller disco. At each meeting one of the leaders shared their testimony and opportunities were given for the teenagers to ask questions.

On the final night the young people and youth leaders heard a closing message from Joel Hutchinson, E3 Schools Worker for the local area within Scripture Union.

Andrew said: “The success of this outreach has encouraged us as a leadership team to prayerfully consider the possibility of hosting a regular Youth Fellowship programme in these rurally isolated areas, having seen the potential that has been evident the last four years.

“Youth work in rurally isolated areas continues to be a challenge for all of us and after seeing teenagers come from far and wide to attend this event we are left with huge excitement and hope about what could be.” He said young people were not only actively involved in each session but left feeling more empowered and connected to Christ.

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“Each session was uplifting and we wanted our young people to understand that they play an important role not only in today’s church but in the future of the church,” Andrew added. Building on *#Explore*, the parish hopes to further enhance its teaching programme by using innovative ministry to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus within the local community and to run events that are not only fun but that encourage and equip the teenagers in their relationship with Jesus.

Service of institution of the Rev David Lockhart as rector of the Grouped Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo in St Cedma’s Parish Church.



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Swedish link at Larne institution

The Rev David Lockhart was instituted as rector of the Grouped Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo at a service in St Cedma's Parish Church, Larne, on Thursday August 30.

David, who was previously rector of Cloughfern Parish for 15 years, was instituted by the Ven George Davison, Commissary to the Bishop of Connor. The preacher at the service was the Rev William Henry, Maze Presbyterian Church.

Among the guests was the Rev Mikael Leckström from Larne's link parish of Väderstad in the Swedish Diocese of Linköping, who had travelled especially to welcome the new rector.

2018 Diocesan Camino de Glendalough

The Camino will take place on Sunday, 9 September. The Camino follows the 30km route along St Kevin's Way from Hollywood in West Wicklow to Glendalough and participants are welcome to undertake the full walk, which takes around six hours, or join the route along the way for shorter pilgrimages.

The Camino de Glendalough is one of Celtic Camino routes which can be counted towards the completion of the Camino de Santiago. Those intending to walk the Camino de Santiago who have Camino passports can get them

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stamped in St Kevin's church in Hollywood and at the end of the walk in Glendalough.

The day will start with a pilgrims' blessing in St Kevin's, Hollywood, at 9am and pilgrims undertaking the full route will be sent out from the ancient pilgrim church. There will also be a service of Holy Communion at St John's, Laragh.

Pilgrims planning to walk from the Wicklow Gap or around Glendalough may depart from St John's Church in Laragh. Parking will be available locally and there will be a bus to bring people to the Wicklow Gap or the Monastic City at regular intervals throughout the day.

The day will conclude with a short service of thanksgiving and prayer at the Upper Lake in Glendalough at 5pm. After this the bus will bring pilgrims back to Hollywood or Laragh. The full timetable for the day will be available on the Dublin & Glendalough website at dublin.anglican.org/about-us/camino-de-glendalough or the Dublin & Glendalough Facebook page.

Irish government minister criticises Greystones Church of Ireland school enrolment policy

A Government Minister has said a controversial enrolment policy at a Church of Ireland school in Co Wicklow goes against the spirit of recent legislation aimed at protecting minority faith schools, the Irish Times reports.

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The long-serving principal of St Patrick's National School in Greystones announced her resignation during the summer in protest over a policy which prioritises the enrolment of children who regularly attend church services.

On Friday, Minister for Health [Simon Harris](#), who lives in Greystones, expressed his concern at developments.

“An incredible school principal has tendered her resignation and many parents in the town have contacted me who are very upset about this and about changes to admissions policies at St Patrick's,” he said.

Mr Harris said he intends to write to the Department of Education as he “does not believe these changes are in line with, at the very least, the spirit and intention of recent legislation”.

Under the new School Admissions Act - due to come into force in the coming academic year - priority enrolment will no longer be given on the basis of religion in Catholic schools.

However, minority faiths - such as the Church of Ireland - will be allowed to continue use religion as a factor in their enrolment policies.

Protect ethos

Minister for Education Richard Bruton said this exclusion was to ensure the ethos of such schools could be protected.

This week, the school's parent-teacher association overwhelmingly backed a no confidence vote in its board of management and chair by a margin of about 80 per cent.

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St Patrick's National School, Greystones.

They also overwhelmingly backed a confidence vote in the principal by a margin of 90 per cent.

A number of parents say they want either mediation in the row or a dissolution of the board.

A spokeswoman for school's patron, the united diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, did not comment when contacted by *The Irish Times*.

The chair of the school board of management, Canon David Mungavin, also declined to comment.

Active parish member

The controversy began during the summer when principal Eileen Jackson wrote to parents to say she was resigning on foot of the school's "new direction" in making admission to State-funded education a "collateral benefit of parochial engagement".

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These priority admissions require the signature of the rector, who signs off whether the child is an active member of the parish.

Board of management sources, however, say there is “no change in direction” and its policy has been in place for several years.

Another source of controversy at the school has involved a decision by the board of management to turn down an extra teacher the school was entitled to for the coming academic year.

Some parents claim the move was to prevent school numbers growing and potentially diluting its Church of Ireland ethos.

However, sources on board of management say the move was due to concerns around whether the school had the space to cope with extra pupil numbers.

Mediation

Mr Harris has called for some kind of mediation to ensure that the row can be resolved.

He said the school has an excellent reputation with a “brilliant school community, excellent teachers, committed and involved parents and a superb principal whose dedication, ability and enthusiasm is infectious and beyond reproach.

“Clearly relations between many parents and the school authority have significantly deteriorated. I believe meaningful dialogue is urgently required and I would respectfully suggest that mediation which has been sought

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by many parents between all stakeholders would be beneficial," he said.

"Greystones is a wonderful community and one which is inclusive. I want to see this continue where children of different faiths grow up together and learn together."

Bishop of Limerick calls on victims and clergy to report abuse caused by Catholic Church

The Bishop of Limerick has called on members of the Catholic Church who are "hiding some dark secret" to report abuse to State and Church authorities, the Limerick Leader reports, September 1, 2018

Speaking at the annual retreat of the Syro-Malabar community from India at the Limerick Racecourse this Saturday, Bishop Brendan Leahy also called on members of public and victims to report abuse.

This is the fourth time in a number of weeks the Limerick bishop has acknowledged the abuse caused by the Catholic Church. He delivered two speeches in the lead up to Pope Francis' visit, and this is now the second statement he has released this week, reflecting on the pontiff's historic visit.

In his speech this Saturday morning, Bishop Leahy said that the Church has an obligation "to those who feel alienated, hurt and disavowed by the grave crimes committed by clergy and religious".

"We must do more to encourage those who have been abused in any way but have not already come forward, to

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**Bishop Brendan
Leahy of Limerick**

report their abuse. We must do this to support them, help with healing if possible, identify those responsible and bring justice."

He said that the Church can "never accept that we are doing enough".

"As for those who have abused in the Church, we need to continue our pursuit of truth, justice and healing. Most episodes of abuse stretch back into decades but if anyone has any information regarding anything relating to any member of clergy or religious, we need to know and, moreover, the authorities need to know.

"If there remains any member of the clergy or religious who is hiding some dark secret or intention in the area of abuse of minors I plead with them to come forward immediately and own up to this, again to state and church authorities. Do not put yourself in a situation where the poison within can infect others," he stated this weekend.

The Bishop discussed the Catholic Church of today versus the Catholic Church of 1979, when Pope John Paul II visited Ireland and Limerick.

He said Pope Francis' visit was "36 hours that reflected all about the Church in Ireland today".

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"It was not, of course, 1979 in terms of the numbers that celebrated. But this is not Ireland of 1979, nor is it the Church of 1979. Today it's a Church that has gone through humiliation and purification. There was a blindness in the Church then as to what was lurking within but today our eyes are open."

However, he said the Church is now celebrating a new beginning.

"I take all expressions, positive and negative, from this special time as an invitation; a collective voice that we must listen and respond to. The Pope has given us, as bishops in Ireland, a clear mandate to do this listening.

"We have begun the process here in Limerick through our Synod of two years ago but we must now, renewed by the energy and honesty of last weekend, go forward with great hope. The words spoken over the past week and more have brought us closer. We now commit to action."

Bishop Leahy said, one week on from the Pope's visit, he makes a "humble plea to all who want to begin with us again in a new way, what the Taoiseach called a new covenant; let's rebuild a Church at the service of Irish society."

Replica of ancient St Patrick's Cross erected at Downpatrick

A replica of an ancient St Patrick's Cross has been erected close to the patron saint's grave in Co Down. The sculpture was unveiled during a short service at Down Cathedral in Downpatrick on Friday.

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The original cross was one of the oldest of its kind on the island of Ireland and is thought to have been about four metres high. It was most likely erected in the late 8th/early 9th century.



Drawings from the early 19th century place part of the cross at the traditional site of

St Patrick's grave prior to a large granite stone being placed there.



Catholic Bishop Noel Treanor (left) and Church of Ireland Bishop Harold Miller after the new cross was installed at Down Cathedral

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The replica cross, made by worked by McConnell's of Killeel, is carved out of granite from the same location as the original cross.

Three fragments of the original cross remain at the entrance porch of the cathedral.

The new sculpture will stand opposite the main door of the cathedral at the edge of the graveyard. Plans to dedicate the cross had to be postponed earlier this year after medieval human remains were discovered at the site.

Friday's dedication service was attended by Dean of Down, the Very Rev Henry Hull, Church of Ireland Bishop Harold Miller, and Catholic Bishop Noel Treanor.

Galway Hospitals to hold annual Ecumenical Memorial Service

Galway University Hospitals will be holding their annual Ecumenical Memorial Service at UHG in September to give grieving families a shared space to mourn.

Anne McKeown, Bereavement Liaison Officer at UHG said, "The aim of the service is to provide a spiritual space to support families in the grief they are experiencing in a supportive and empathetic environment.

"It is also an opportunity to meet other families and staff members who have shared the same journey."

This is the ninth annual memorial service for families of those who've lost a loved one organised by GUH's End of Life Care Committee.

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This year's memorial service will be held in the staff canteen of the Nurses Home at University Hospital Galway on Thursday, September 13 at 7pm.

It will be led by hospital staff with representatives from the Church of Ireland, Islamic, Catholic, and Methodist faiths.

Dr. Helen Greally, Director of Psychology and Support Services at Cancer Care West, will also be a guest at the memorial and will speak about 'hope following loss'.

The eight services before this year have been well received by the families of those who've passed Ms McKeown said.

"The response from those who have attended previous services has been very positive. Families have spoken of the comfort they feel knowing that staff who cared for their deceased relatives have not forgotten them."

For more information on the memorial service or to confirm attendance please contact one of the following members of the Committee:

Angela O' Grady, Social Work Department 091 544089

Anne McKeown, Bereavement Liaison Officer 091 524222

or direct line 091 544823

Ger Kilkelly/James Geoghegan PAL's 091 543210

C of E drops age limit for clergy

Church of England dioceses are abandoning an upper age limit for clergy training as they hope to boost numbers by encouraging second careers.

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It aims to allow more older people to train to become ordained ministers in their late 50s and early 60s, with dioceses lifting previously-enforced age limits.

“Sixty is the new 40,” said the Right Rev Tim Dakin, Bishop of Winchester.

“We’re living longer, we’ve got a lot of energy – I look at some of my episcopal colleagues and they’re still going like a bomb. They’re really hard-working, energetic people,” he said.

A new programme in his diocese allows trainees to stay in the local area to do their training part-time instead of having to travel to a college to train full-time.

The number of people recommended for training in the diocese has risen from 14 two years ago to 21 this year. Nationally, numbers have risen from 476 in 2016 to 580 this year.

New guidelines mean dioceses can now choose in consultation with the candidate what form of training they should do, rather than being governed by nationally set requirements.

Bishop Dakin said the change was introduced following a shift in policy to give individual bishops more control over the criteria for their local candidates.

“The emphasis is now on local decision-making,” he said. “If you’re in your late 50s or early 60s, the thought of going off to a college is just a bit too much, I think. You can stay in the diocese, in your local context, and we want to draw on your experience and your understanding, because we

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think you're going to be a pretty effective person with all that background," he added.

Local age limits for new trainees, which vary from 56 to 62, have been based on the premise that new priests needed to be able to work for enough years before their retirement, which is normally between 65 and 70.

580 - The number of people being trained for clergy this year, up from 476 in 2016

News briefs

+++ Irish College of Preachers - The annual conference of the will begin in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute next Wednesday and continue until Friday. It is designed to be a practical help and resource to preachers, either ordained or lay. The Venerable Andrew Forster, Archdeacon of Ardboe in the Diocese of Armagh and Rector of Drumglass & Moygashel, will lead the conference this year.

+++Church's Ministry of Healing retreat - Next Saturday, 8 September, the Church's Ministry of Healing will host another 'Wellspring. A day retreat of silence, peace, nurture, healing'. The retreat will be held in St Patrick's church, Dalkey, from 9.30am until 4pm. Dr Iva Beranek and Carol Casey will be glad to welcome participants. No experience is needed and all are welcome. Places should be booked in advance at 087-4392669 or at hello@ministryofhealing.ie. The suggested donation for the day is 25 euro.