



Congo highlighted in Presbyterian Church's 2017 World Development Appeal

'A Beautiful Idea: Women's Voices in Fragile States' is the title of the Presbyterian Church in

www.churchnewsireland.org

NEWS December 11

Ireland's (PCI) 2017 World Development Appeal (WDA), which aims to raise £500,000/€574,055 or more for projects in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one of the world's poorest and most fragile nations.

The World Development Appeal emphasises the long-term challenges for good sustainable development, with a particular focus on the need to put gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence at the heart of sustainable development in fragile states.

Launching the Appeal, Rev. Dr. Katherine Meyer, convener of the Church's World Development Committee, said, "Through the annual WDA, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland gives support to some of the best development work being done anywhere, and being done in the name of Christ.

"Over many years - in partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid, who support good development work in some of the world's poorest communities - the Appeal has raised millions of pounds through congregations across Ireland in support of sustainable development work.

"The 2017 Appeal will highlight partners who are working in the dangerous and difficult context of

the DRC. Here they are addressing issues of gender justice as an important foundation for the peacebuilding and community development initiatives needed at every level of their troubled and fragile society.

“One of these partners is Action Entraide, whose work enables those who have been most deeply scarred by poverty and violence to take new initiatives. It also helps them to participate fully in the building of a new and more safe and stable society,” Dr Meyer said.

The title of the Appeal, ‘A Beautiful Idea’, was first used by a Congolese woman whose story is featured in a special video that demonstrates what happens when women and men work together to create new hope in their community.

Filmed in the DRC this summer, the video tells the story of their ‘beautiful idea’, a simple travel fund started with a monthly contribution of \$1.00 each by the women of Zumbe in the north east of the country. This self-help initiative now enables pregnant women in the village who experience complications to access the local hospital by motorbike taxi. As a result, rates of both infant and maternal mortality have gone down. Up until recently three babies and two

mothers were dying each month because they could not get to hospital in time.

The success of the initiative has meant that as greater demands were made on the fund, Tearfund partner Action Entraide were invited in to assist the women in developing a market garden, whose profits now support the travel fund, ensuring sufficient funds to make it accessible to all.

Dr. Meyer, who is the minister of Christ Church, Sandymount (United Presbyterian and Methodist) in Dublin explained, “Started by the women, the fund is now supported by the men of the village. The women have now set their sights on a properly equipped health centre in Zumbe that will benefit the whole community. A wonderful example of sustainable development and of the kind of project supported by the PCI through the World Development Appeal.”

The 2017 Appeal also tells the story of a young Congolese woman called Hope, who speaks with courage about the sustained sexual violence that she endured and survived, her faith and continuing trust in God, and her ongoing, but often painful journey of healing. She was supported in this journey by another Tearfund partner, Congo Initiative. Hope is now working to

provide the same support to other women that she received.

Another project being supported by the 2017 Appeal is in Zimbabwe. Padare Enkundleni, a Christian Aid partner, is a faith-based men's forum for gender issues in the country. 'Delete GBV (gender-based violence)!' is one of their slogans. The project the Appeal is funding will increase the capacity of faith leaders to address issues of gender inequality and GBV through church policies and programmes. One of its aims is also to engage men in working to end the practice of GBV in their own communities. The project expects to reach 3,000 men and boys, and by extension, 7,000 women and girls.

Almost all proceeds from the WDA are channelled through PCI's aid agency partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund. Supporting this year's Appeal, Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely said, "As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ we are unable to pass by on the other side. For nearly 40 years, the World Development Appeal has been a special and effective way for us to demonstrate God's love to some of the world's poorest communities around and each year our Church has given wholeheartedly.

“Last year Presbyterians across Ireland gave £544,622/€625,281 for projects in South and Central America. It is my prayer that as we turn our focus to the fragile states of the DCR and Zimbabwe, and the issue of violence against women and gender justice, that same spirit of generosity and compassion will flow.”

“Watching the video to support this year’s Appeal, Ngalousi Felesi, one of the midwives in Zumbe says, ‘I hope that when people hear our story they will have a heart to help us and hold our hands.’ I believe Ngalousi can be assured of that,” Dr. McNeely said.

Looking ahead to the future of the Appeal, Dr. Meyer said that this year the World Development Committee decided to change its approach, “The reality of good sustainable development work, is that it is hard, it is long-term, and the forces ranged against you can seem overwhelming. And yet the wonder is not that the work is so hard, but that so many have the courage to embark upon it.

“It is in recognition of this reality, and its importance for the Appeal, that we are approaching it from a somewhat different perspective over the next four years. In our ongoing partnership with Tearfund and Christian

Aid, the four years will be linked together by a common overarching theme, the challenges of sustainable development in fragile states, with a particular focus on gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence.”

Dr. Meyer added that in years three and four, “we will return to the partners highlighted in years one and two, in order to receive from them a longer-term sense of how their work has developed, but also a realistic appraisal of the difficulties they have encountered.”



One of the motorbike taxis taking a mother from the village of Zumbé in north eastern DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) to the local hospital. This initiative is highlighted in this year’s Presbyterian World Development Appeal, as it emphasises on the long-term challenges for good sustainable development, with a particular focus on the

need to put gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence at the heart of sustainable development in fragile states.

This simple travel fund was started with a monthly contribution of \$1.00 each by the women of Zumbe. This self-help initiative is supported by Tearfund partner Action Entraide and now enables pregnant women in the village who experience complications to access the local hospital by motorbike taxi. As a result, rates of both infant and maternal mortality have gone down. Up until recently three babies and two mothers were dying each month because they could not get to hospital in time.

The success of the initiative has meant that as greater demands were made on the fund, Action Entraide were invited in to assist the women in developing a market garden, whose profits now support the travel fund, ensuring sufficient funds to make it accessible to all. Working in partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid, and their partners on the ground, the World Development Appeal will support similar projects in the DRC and Zimbabwe.



Dublin Black Santa Appeal gets underway on Wednesday

The 2017 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin, will be launched this Wednesday, December 13, at 12.45 pm by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson. They will be joined by the Choir of Kildare Place National School.

The appeal raises in the region of €40,000 for a range of charities every year, including charities which serve homeless people. This year the Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie, is looking forward to an increased footfall on

Dawson Street with the opening of the Luas Cross City service and says all the volunteers and choirs who will be singing are looking forward to bringing Christmas cheer to a much wider audience.

“The launch of this year’s appeal almost coincides with the official launch of the Luas Cross City service which will be passing by our doors. This will increase our exposure considerably and we look forward to many more people stopping by to donate but also to sharing the joy of the approaching Christmas season with even more people than before,” Canon Gillespie commented.

“Last year, our funds were hit badly by the work associated with the Luas project, and so we look forward this time round to a bumper year. We will have an increased number of choirs singing outside St Ann’s for us this year and even more collectors as we seek to capitalize on the increased footfall,” he added.

All the charities supported by Black Santa do invaluable work and every cent donated to the appeal is divided among them. There are no administration charges and all the collectors are volunteers. The choirs which join Black Santa

every lunchtime provide their festive cheer free of charge.

The annual sit out will continue right up until Christmas Eve. Canon Gillespie, joined by clerical colleagues from around the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough and teams of volunteers, will remain outside the city centre church from 10.00 am until 6.00 pm each day collecting donations.

This year they will be joined by a huge number of choirs who will sing festive songs and carols each lunchtime. These include Castleknock National School, St James Primary School, Francis Street CBS, St Stephens Church Choir, Catholic University School, Taney Parish Junior School, Alexandra College, Kildare Place National School, Cornucopia Brass Group, Irish Life Choir, Revenue Choir, AIB Choral Society, Permanent TSB Staff Choir, John Scottus School, Loretto College, Seafield Singers, Dublin Male Voice Choir, the Line Up Choir, Steadfast Band and the Brook Singers.

The Black Santa sit out is modeled on a similar appeal, which has been run by successive Deans of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast for many years. It became known as the Black Santa appeal because of the long heavy black cloaks

worn by the clergy to keep out the cold. This is the 17th year that the appeal has been held in Dublin and in that time well over €500,000 has been raised for local good causes.

Among the charities to benefit from the appeal are Trust, The Salvation Army, The Simon Community and the Peter McVerry Trust all of which work with the homeless. Other charities supported include Protestant Aid, Barnardos, St Vincent De Paul, the Laura Lynn Foundation and Solas Project.

The Vicar thanked those in St Ann's who will help organise what is a massive undertaking in terms of extending hospitality to the choirs who will sing outside the church.

“There is a small but very faithful team of people working behind the scenes in St Ann's preparing food, counting money, and liaising with the many choirs who participate and to them I want to express my sincere thanks. We are all busy at this time of the year and the fact that parishioners from St Ann's are willing to set that time aside and help is very gratifying indeed.”

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Generosity at Christmas memorial service in Belfast

Mount Merrion Church held its annual Memorial Service on Tuesday evening last week. This is a quieter, more contemplative service with some music, readings and periods of silence to allow everyone to reflect on loved ones no longer with them.

Their names may also placed on the memorial Christmas tree which is on display throughout the festive season.

Rector, Revd Adrian Green said: “It is always a privilege to conduct our Christmas Memorial Service each year and speak hope into the lives of individuals and families coming to terms with the loss of a loved one.

“The generosity of those that attend never ceases to amaze and £869 was raised for NSPCC Northern Ireland. Thank you!

“Thanks again to Willowfield Private Funeral Home for co-hosting the evening.”

New history of Strabane Parish launched

A Tyrone father and son have written a comprehensive new history of the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Mourne. It's called 'Upon this Rock' and its authors, Gordon and Trevor Smyth, are both parishioners of Christ Church Strabane.

The book takes readers back to the foundation of the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Mourne on a Franciscan monastic site at 'the bend of the river' in Camus, three miles south of Strabane, through the building of the old church at Patrick

Street, and up to the opening of the current church on the Bowling Green.

The authors say that since the laying of the foundation stone on 17th November 1874 by the Duchess of Abercorn, Christ Church Strabane has been at the heart of the local community. They say it has enjoyed the support of all denominations and that it is important to record its place in history. “What started out as a simple idea – to compile an inventory of gifts and presentations made to the church – was to become a most interesting journey into the history of the parish and its people”, the writers say.

“Over the years, families have grown up and, while many have stayed, some have perhaps moved away. It is hoped that this book will rekindle their interest and strengthen their association with the church. We hope this book will also inspire the younger generation, just as we have been inspired by our predecessors.”

The authors have thanked all those who shared their memories, provided photographs, supplied information or contributed in others ways to the production of ‘Upon This Rock’. It is a full colour publication, priced at £20, with all profits going to church funds.

The Bishop's Curate in Christ Church Strabane, Rev Mark Lennox, has congratulated his two parishioners on producing their new history. "This book captures wonderfully the history and stories of the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Mourne," Rev Lennox says, "and in particular the life of Christ Church, the current church building. It is intertwined with personal accounts of what life is like as a member of the Parish.

"From the very first page, the reader is introduced to how the parish and the ministry is grounded in Jesus Christ, and how everything which takes place is placed firmly 'on the solid rock'.

"I wish to acknowledge the hours of work and dedication – and the many miles travelled – by Gordon and Trevor in penning this book. I trust that readers will be enriched, as I have been, on reading this book".

Rival Anglican church in UK ordains nine new clergy in controversial service

An Anglican splinter group in the UK ordained its own clergy for the first time on Thursday night at a service in east London.

Nine men were ordained by Andy Lines, a 'missionary bishop' consecrated in the wake of the Scottish Episcopal Church's decision to permit gay marriage. A number of senior conservative Church of England figures played prominent roles in the service.

The move will be seen as provocative as it sets up Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) as a rival Anglican Church to the Church of England.

Several retired bishops attended the ceremony at East London Tabernacle Baptist Church and a number of active CofE clergy were also present. Before the service a CofE spokesman said any clergy who 'participate actively' in AMiE's services would be breaking canon law.

Rev David Banting, a well known evangelical in the Church of England and vicar of St Peter's Harold Wood in the Diocese of Chelmsford, joined in the laying on of hands of the new ordinands – a key part in the process of ordination.

It is not clear whether this amounted to breaking the Church's canon laws.

In a move that is likely to increase tensions with Lambeth Palace, two senior conservative Anglican leaders, the Archbishop of Nigeria and

the Archbishop of Uganda, sent a video message welcoming the move. Both figures boycotted a meeting of global Anglican leaders called by the Archbishop of Canterbury in October over deeply entrenched disagreements on gay marriage.

Rev Rico Tice, senior minister at All Souls' Langham Place, a large evangelical church in central London, preached the sermon.

Jane Patterson, a senior conservative member of the Church of England's general synod, gave a reading and Susie Leafe, director of the evangelical grouping Reform and a member of the General Synod, said prayers.

Before the service a Church of England spokesman said: 'It has come to our attention that Bishop Andy Lines, a Bishop in the Anglican Church in North America, will be carrying out some ordinations this week in a denomination calling itself the Anglican Mission in England.

'For clarity, this group is not part of, nor affiliated with, the Church of England, nor is Bishop Lines's parent denomination part of the Anglican Communion. 'Under our canon law, Church of England clergy are unable to participate actively in the group's services.

'Our prayers are, of course, with all those seeking to proclaim Christ.'

The eight ordained as deacons were Jon Cawsey, Alistair Harper, Christopher Houghton, Kenny Larsen, Martin Soole, Robert Tearle, Matthew Thompson and Christopher Youngs. Peter Jackson was ordained a presbyter.

Pope Francis prays for 'world without nuclear weapons'

Pope Francis on Sunday called on world leaders to work in favour of nuclear disarmament to protect human rights, particularly those of weaker and underprivileged people.

The pontiff said that there was a need to 'work with determination to build a world without nuclear weapons', speaking from the window of the papal apartment overlooking St Peter's Square and citing his 2015 encyclical letter *Laudato Si* (Praised Be).

His remarks came on the day that the group which won this year's Nobel Peace Prize urged nuclear nations to adopt a UN treaty banning atomic weapons.



With rising tensions between the United States and North Korea, the pope has repeatedly warned against the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of nuclear devices and has called for a third country to mediate the dispute.

At his weekly Angelus prayer, Pope Francis added that men and women in the world had 'the liberty, the intelligence and the capacity to guide technology, limit their power, at the service of peace and true progress'.

Speaking aboard the plane back from his trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, the pope suggested

that some world leaders had an 'irrational' attitude towards nuclear weapons.

Last month he appeared to harden the Catholic Church's teaching against nuclear weapons, saying countries should not stockpile them, even for the purpose of deterrence.

Pope Francis, a strong defender of environmental protection, also hoped that an upcoming Paris summit would adopt 'efficient decisions' to contrast climate change.

Evangelists and Zionists praise President Trump at White House Hanukkah party

Evangelists and Zionists attending the White House Hanukkah party have welcomed US President Donald Trump's decision to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

President Trump promised the 250 guests on Thursday evening that the evening would be "all about Jerusalem".

He added: "Well I know for a fact there are a lot of happy people in this room."



"I think this one will go down as especially special."

Christian vice-president Mike Pence, Sheldon Adelson, the hotel magnate and Zionist donor, and Jewish Republican legislators were among those who attended and ate kosher lamb chops, just as in past years, for White House Hanukkah parties.

However no Democratic congress people were invited to the event, despite the fact that 28 of the 30 Jewish House members are Democrats.

Representatives from Jewish groups, who disagree with Mr Trump recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital, were also omitted from the guest-list.



Bishop Munib Younan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land told Premier that Mr Trump's decision "added fuel to the fire".

He was **one of 13 Christian leaders in Israel who wrote an open letter** to the President asking him to promote peace instead of destruction.

Meanwhile, Two Hamas members have been killed in Israeli air strikes following a rocket attack on Israel, Gaza officials said.

The Israeli military said it targeted four Hamas facilities early Saturday in response to rockets fired the previous day, including one that landed

in the town of Sderot without causing casualties or major damage.

Israel considers Hamas responsible for all rocket fire emanating from Gaza, which is home to other armed groups.

Palestinians also clashed with Israeli troops in dozens of West Bank hotspots on Friday and along the Gaza border.

Events this week

A Christmas Tree Festival hosted by **Billy Parish Church** has proved so popular it is to be continued for another three Saturdays. The Conifer Canticle Festival took place from December 1-3. On Sunday evening the church was full for a carol service with Harmony & Co, Ballymoney ladies community choir, leading the praise. The rector, the Rev John Anderson said: "It has been so emotional and atmospheric that many of our visitors have asked for the church to be opened for them to come back and to get the chance to tell their friends. "We are therefore going to open the church on the next three Saturdays (December 9, 15 and 23) from 1pm to 5pm."

Greenisland Parish Church is transformed into a forest of Christmas trees for the 'Joy To The World' Christmas Tree Festival & Craft Fair from December 7-12. Fifty Christmas trees are beautifully displayed, each tree reflecting a theme retelling part of the Christian story. The trees are individually decorated by families and groups from the church and local community. There are a wide range of Christmas crafts for sale, and refreshments will be available throughout the festival.

In **Nenagh** the Christmas Tree Festival begins in St Mary's church on Wednesday and concludes with a Choral Service next Sunday.

This evening (Monday) at 5.30pm in the Music Room of Christ Church cathedral, **Dublin**, the Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe, Dr Kenneth Kearon, will launch *Journeying in Faith: A Walk with Christ*, by Canon Cecil Hyland, which has been published by Church of Ireland Publishing, and on Tuesday in Christ Church the annual Peata Therapy Dogs Carol Service will take place at 1.15pm.

On Wednesday at 2.45pm the Archbishop of Dublin will attend the launch of the Black Santa Charity Appeal at St Ann's church, Dublin, and on Thursday he will preside at the institution of

the Rev Jack Kinhead as Rector of **Wicklow & Killiskey**.

In St Anne's church, **Killanne, Co. Wexford**, on Friday evening the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory will institute the Revd Ian Cruickshank as Rector of the Killanne union of parishes. Mr Cruickshank has been Priest-in-Charge of St Brendan's, Sydenham, in the Diocese of Down since 2015.

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