

NI Jews using Israeli contacts in search for missing Co Down man Oliver McAfee



The Jewish community in Northern Ireland has launched a campaign to raise awareness in Israel about a Co Down tourist who has gone missing there, the News Letter reports.

Oliver McAfee, a gardener from Dromore, was last seen on November 21 when cycling on the Israel National Trail.

Steven Jaffe, co-chair of Northern Ireland Friends of Israel (NIFI), said his group has initiated Facebook adverts to raise awareness.

“The belief of the police and search teams is there is every likelihood Ollie is still alive,” he said.

“If Ollie has come back from the desert where he went missing it is likely he may have sought out Christian organisations or individuals. So Northern Ireland people who have friends in Israel, should send them Ollie’s details.”

He asked people to show support by liking the site set up by Oliver’s friends:
www.facebook.com/helpusfindollie.

Paula Tabakin, a veteran of 27 years in the Israeli army and now living in Belfast, said NIFI are using contacts in Israel to raise awareness, including the area where he went missing.

“In my experience this is a rather unusual case,” she said. “I have not heard of very many people going missing in Israel, especially not tourists.”

Former British Ambassador to the Vatican to speak in Lurgan at Christian Unity service

Former British Ambassador to the Vatican, Professor Francis Campbell, will speak at a special service in Shankill Parish Lurgan to mark the Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The service, which is at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 24 January, has been organised by the Lurgan Community Outreach Group.

Prof Campbell will take as his theme, “Faith and Power in the World Today.”

Since entering the British diplomatic service just over 20 years ago, Prof Campbell has served in many countries, gaining first-hand experience of living and working among a great variety of cultures and faiths, often against a background of conflict and divisions. He served as British Ambassador to the Vatican from 2005–2011, becoming the first Catholic appointed to the role since the Reformation.



He is currently Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, Twickenham, London.

Prof Campbell is a native of Rathfriland and after attending St Joseph's Seminary in Belfast, part of the philosophy faculty at Queen's University Belfast, pursued his studies in theology, philosophy and international relations in Italy, Belgium, Poland and the USA.

Other posts held in his distinguished career include that of Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan, Service at the UN Security Council, the European Union, Amnesty International, Director of Innovation at UK Trade and Investment and

Membership of the Advisory Panel on Anti-Slavery.

Big Blue Bus begins outreach in Ballina



Emma Rodrigues (Church Army), Bishop Patrick Rooke, Bishop John Fleming, and Captain Isaac Hanna (Church Army).

On Sunday 21st January 2018, Ballina Churches Together in partnership with Church Army, commissioned its mobile outreach platform: The Big Blue Bus. This is an initiative which involves the four main Christian traditions in the town of Ballina and marks the beginning of an exciting Fresh Expression of Church in the West of Ireland.

Commemorate, celebrate, or ... theme of Credo seminar in Belfast

The 2018 Credo theological seminar will take place on Friday January 26 in St John the Evangelist, Malone, beginning at 6.30pm.

Credo is a grassroots network in the Church of Ireland, committed to celebrating and growing in the liturgical, sacramental, and contemplative traditions of Anglicanism.

This year's speaker will be the Rev Helene Steede, rector of St Mark's, Dundela, and the Church of Ireland representative on the Porvoo Communion contact group.

Entitled *Commemorate, celebrate, or ...?*, the seminar will focus on the call to Christian unity in light of the divisions of the Reformation era. In the first session of the seminar, the speaker will consider the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the various reformations, while the second session will address the Porvoo Communion and the implications of Anglican-Lutheran reconciliation.

The evening will open with the celebration of the Eucharist and close with the praying of Compline.



The speaker at the Credo seminar is the Rev Helene Steede.

Credo Co-Ordinator the Rev Kevin Graham, rector of St Bartholomew's, Stranmillis, said: "As the churches continue to live with the controversies and divisions of the Reformation era, and together respond to the call to unity, we hope that this Credo event will offer an opportunity to prayerfully reflect on how Irish Anglicans can work to heal those divisions and build Christian unity."

Those wanting to attend the seminar should reserve a place by contacting credoincofi@gmail.com.

Pope Francis apologises for demanding proof from victims of abuse allegations



Pope Francis has apologised for insisting victims of paedophile priests show "proof", saying he realises now it was a "slap in the face" to victims that he never intended.

But he continued to defend Chilean bishop Juan Barros, who is accused by victims of covering up for the country's most notorious paedophile priest.

He also repeated that anyone who makes such accusations without providing evidence is guilty of slander.

Francis said: "I can't condemn him because I don't have evidence. But I'm also convinced that he's innocent."

Francis issued the partial mea culpa in an airborne press conference as he returned home from South America, where the scandal plunged the Chilean church into renewed crisis and revived questions about whether Francis "gets it" about abuse.

Trump vows to push anti-abortion agenda

President Donald Trump has promised to continue pushing an anti-abortion agenda in the rest of his time in office.

Speaking via video feed to pro-life supporters in Washington for the March for Life rally, he said: "Under my administration, we will always defend the very first right in the Declaration of Independence and that is the right to life.

"Every unborn child is a precious gift from God."

He praised the thousands of anti-abortion activists gathered on the National Mall for having "such big hearts and tireless devotion to make



'Every unborn child is a precious gift from God', US President Trump addressing world's largest pro-life rally

sure parents have the support they need to choose life".

"You're living witnesses of this year's March for Life theme, 'Love Saves Lives,'" he added.

Trump also criticised the controversial later term abortion procedure, calling them "wrong" and a practice that "has to change."

"That is why we march, that is why we pray, that is why we declare that America's future will be filled with goodness, peace, joy, dignity and life for every child of God," he said.

US Vice President Mike Pence, who addressed last year's March for Life in person, introduced

the president as the "most pro-life president in American history".

Meanwhile, dozens of celebrities have joined hundreds of thousands of people for women's marches across America in protest against President Trump and sexual assault.

Adele, Mila Kunis, Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Lawrence were among those who took part.

Putin takes subzero dip in icy lake to mark Orthodox Christian feast

Russian president Vladimir Putin has taken a dip in icy lake waters to celebrate Epiphany, a major holiday in Orthodox Christianity marking the baptism of Jesus.

Russian television stations showed the 65-year-old Mr Putin approaching a hole cut in the ice on Lake Seliger in north-western Russia before dunking himself in and crossing himself.

Mr Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the president had dipped in icy waters on the Epiphany before, but Friday marks the first time he has publicly done so.



In Orthodox tradition, water blessed by a priest during Epiphany week is considered holy and pure, and believers attribute healing powers to it.

Authorities set up bathing sites for believers all over Russia, including some areas in Siberia where temperatures dipped below minus 30C.

Threat of nuclear war “is a sin”, World Council of Churches’ chief tells economic leaders

The general secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, will take an anti-nuclear message with him when he



The general secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, takes part in a peace march in Oslo, Norway, in December 2017.

travels to Davos, Switzerland, today for a meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Writing in advance of the meeting, Dr Tveit says that he “can think of no greater antithesis to this vision of shared life and responsibility, no greater obscenity against it, than the continued existence of and political and social support for nuclear weapons. . . It is time to say together that this is wrong. It is time to call it a sin, both using and having nuclear weapons.”

He said: “There is absolutely no moral justification whatsoever for using them. The time has come to say together that for the sake of the one humanity there is no moral ground on which we can keep them and threaten one another with them.”

The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, which begins tomorrow (Tuesday) in its usual home of Davos in Switzerland, brings together heads of state and government, bankers, financiers and business people. This year’s theme is “Creating a shared future in a fractured world.” This year, at its 48th meeting, participants are being challenged to find ways to reaffirm international cooperation on crucial shared interests, such as international security, the environment and the global economy in the context of rising geostrategic competition between states.

In [a 2,000 word article](#) in advance of the meeting, Tveit says: “Nuclear weapons are designed to destroy entire cities, with every man, woman, child and every living creature in them. Moreover, they destroy the natural environment itself, their deadly radioactive legacy lingering and poisoning the very earth for millennia. They are the ‘dumbest,’ most evil weapons. They destroy what is built up for the common good

through politics, through the economy, through civil society. Everything.

“Yet they were the only category of weapons of mass destruction that had not been banned by international treaty. Until now. The adoption last year of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations gives the nations of the world a salutary and long overdue opportunity to create a new normative, ethical and moral standard against nuclear weapons – against any development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons – and for environmental remediation and assistance to the victims of nuclear weapons use and testing.

“Unfortunately, churches and Christians have also been among those providing tacit or explicit support for the maintenance of nuclear arsenals. We have ourselves taken shelter under the dark umbrella of “nuclear deterrence.” But nuclear deterrence depends upon the willingness to actually use these weapons. I reject as incompatible with the most basic understandings of Christian responsibility in the world any willingness to contemplate the use of even a single nuclear weapon, under any circumstances.”

Founded in 1948, the World Council of Churches is an ecumenical fellowship of churches which brings together 348 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches, representing more than 560 million Christians in over 110 countries. Its member churches include many Anglican provinces. It has been a vocal advocate for a world free of nuclear weapons.

CNI

Help CNI grow...

... Please commend

**CNI daily news to your
friends**

www.churchnewsireland.org

CNI