



Presbyterian Church same sex row woman says next goal is to support others



Lesley Macaulay and her daughter Beth

A high-profile businesswoman who quit the Presbyterian Church last week over its decision not to accept people in same-sex relationships as full members has said the

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messages of support she's received have brought a tear to her eye, the Belfast Telegraph reported yesterday.

Lesley Macaulay said the past week had been heartbreaking for her and her family, but that a groundswell of support is behind her family's decision to quit the church.

"The next step is to co-ordinate support for families who have been left hurt and isolated by the Church," she said.

"There are many families struggling with what's been going on and we need to be there to support them in what they need to do. This issue is simply not going to go away."

Ms Macaulay, a consultant and charity fundraiser for Guide Dogs NI who stood for the Ulster Unionist and Conservative Party in the 2010 general election, and her husband, management consultant Tony, went public with their decision to leave the Presbyterian Church last week.

Their daughter Beth (24) has been in a same-sex relationship with her fiancée for three years.

The family live in Portstewart and had been attending their local church, but will now be seeking a new church in Belfast where they will feel welcomed.

The Presbyterian Church's decision, made by its ruling body, the General Assembly, also prevents children of same-sex relationships from being baptised.

"Over the past week I have been inundated with messages of support from across the community," said Lesley. It's clear there is a silent majority out there who are not

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comfortable with the church position and who haven't been comfortable for some time.

"The last week has brought all those feelings to the fore and I'd encourage people who are struggling with the Church stance on this not to be frightened.

"We will make sure there is support out there for them, no matter how hurt they are feeling.

"I've seen that groundswell of opinion for myself in the past few days. There is no need for people to suffer in silence as they wrestle with their conscience.

"I've found support from church members and clergy across the country, the Christian LGBT community and the LGBT community in general.

"I've been heartened by that support and many of the messages have brought a tear to my eye. It's heartbreaking to see the church I've been part of all of my life in this position. It has to accept it's now at a crossroads and there's a real need to help Presbyterian families.

"I urge people not to be frightened, look at your conscience and ask yourself, 'Can I fully support the Presbyterian Church on this policy?'

"Some might say yes they can, but many more are saying no they can't.

"This decision is not a reflection of God's universal love which I have been brought up to believe in, I want my church to be seen as all inclusive.

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"Like me, my daughter Beth grew up in the Presbyterian Church. She went to Sunday School, to the Girls' Brigade and to Bible class.

"As a teenager she professed faith and became a communicant member of the Church and I was delighted when, as a young woman, she lived out her faith by volunteering in Church summer schemes, children's clubs, Christian conferences and camps. Now she has been excommunicated from her Church because of her God-given sexual orientation and I know my family is not alone in suffering like this.

"The Presbyterian Church need to realise the hurt they have caused families.

"And when you see people like Lord Alderdice, whose father was a Presbyterian Minister, feeling they must also resign from the church, surely there must be a reconsideration of the decision?

"In the meantime I'm aiming to make sure, with others, that there is support there for families who need it."

Bishops of Cork welcome appointment of Bishop of Meath

Pope Francis has appointed Canon Tom Deenihan, diocesan secretary of the Diocese of Cork & Ross, as the new Bishop of Meath. The announcement was made following Mass yesterday morning in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar, by His Excellency, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Papal Nuncio to Ireland, who was joined for the celebration by Bishop Michael Smith of Meath, and Bishop-elect Tom Deenihan. They were joined by an



Canon Tom Deenihan

estimated 40 priests from across the Diocese of Meath for the occasion.

Welcoming the appointment,

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and president of the Irish Bishops' Conference said, 'I warmly welcome the appointment today by Pope Francis of Canon Thomas Deenihan (Cork & Ross) as Bishop of the historic diocese of Meath, which is situated in the metropolitan province of Armagh. I offer my sincere congratulations and prayerful support to Bishop-elect Deenihan on what is a joyous day for him, his family and friends, and for the faithful of the 69 parishes of Meath.

Archbishop Martin also paid tribute to Bishop Michael Smith saying, 'On this day I also wish to express my deep gratitude to Bishop Michael Smith, Bishop Emeritus of Meath, the longest serving bishop in Ireland. For almost fifty years, Bishop Smith has made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference ... He is highly respected by his brother bishops, and, as a relative newcomer to the Conference myself, I have valued highly his contributions and his warm personal encouragement.'

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The announcement was also welcomed by Bishop John Buckley, Bishop of Cork & Ross who said, ‘Over the past 27 years of his priesthood, Canon Tom Deenihan has held a variety of appointments that have prepared him well for his new duties as Bishop of the historic Diocese of Meath. He is a man of strong faith, good judgement, very committed to his priestly duties and fully realising that our lives as priests can only be sustained by prayer.’”

The Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork

“Canon Tom Deenihan has worked closely with the Church of Ireland in Cork, Cloyne and Ross in a variety of ways, and with the ecumenical work that Bishop John Buckley and I are engaged in together day by day in Cork. His work, ecumenically and practically, with me and with the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, in his capacity as Diocesan Secretary of Cork and Ross, and as Diocesan Education Secretary of Cork and Ross, has been particularly important. I have always been grateful for his friendship, good humour and practical help, and, of course, for the arrangements he made when I met Pope Francis in Rome in 2017.

“It is, therefore, with the greatest of delight that I send him my own personal good wishes, together with those of the members of the Church of Ireland in Cork, on the occasion of his appointment as Bishop of Meath. On behalf of us all in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross I congratulate him and assure him of our prayers as he prepares for his episcopal ordination and consecration.”

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Belvoir parishioners build bridges with Sudanese community



Over the past year, Belvoir parishioners have had the opportunity to actively engage with the Sudanese Community Association NI (SCANI) living in Belfast. They are seeking to become a bridging point between Muslims and Christians with the purpose of reaching out, building mutual understanding and developing trust.

As part of this mutual exchange, Belvoir parishioners Helen Livingston, Revd Colin–Hall Thompson, David Maganda and members of All Nations Ministries (Hana Aziz, Hudson and Rabia Kaunda), were invited to attend the Sudanese Community’s Iftar (*Breakfast – breaking the fast*) event on Sunday 10 June 2018 at The Chinese Resource Centre, Belfast.

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They had the privilege of being joined by Revd Angelos Elsouriany, originally from Alexandria in Egypt, and leader of the Coptic Church in Belfast. The Muslim community worldwide is currently observing their holy month of Ramadan. In that context, Father Angelos was asked to share from the Bible regarding the true meaning of prayer and fasting from a Christian perspective.

Meeting and interacting with one another is helping to alleviate many misconceptions, and enables members of both the Christian and Muslim community, to see each other as fellow human beings created in the image of God, and loved by Him. David Maganda writes, "As Christians, we are called to show love where there is hate and be salt and light in our communities. Pray that these interactions between Muslims and Christians will bear fruit for the Kingdom of God".

Carnmoney church defiant in wake of burglary bid

Members of Carnmoney Parish Church have been left "shocked and saddened" after damage was caused in a break-in.

Robert Campbell, a glebewarden at Newtownabbey based Church of the Holy Evangelists, praised parishioners for getting the building ready for worship as usual yesterday morning.

"It seems like someone has broken into the boiler house under the church and removed a powder fire extinguisher," he said.

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"It appears they've tried to use that to break the lock on the door to the vestry, but it exploded.



"That caused a large burst of dust around the door and the steps, but the force was so powerful it filled the vestry by going under the door and through the lock. The whole of the vestry room was coated in dust."

"We can only assume those involved in trying to get in were also covered in the dust from the extinguisher. They left a lot of footprints and police now have all the details."

Mr Campbell said nothing was taken and described it as "an annoyance more than anything".

He added: "There would have been nothing there to take anyway, as we don't keep any valuables or cash in the safe."

"We hope none of those involved have been hurt as the force of the dust can cause difficulties.

"And we have to thank the parishioners who came out to clean up and replace the locks after they heard about the incident.

"Had it happened on Saturday, there's no way we would have been able to clear up in time for the Sunday services.

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"We just don't understand why someone would try to do this. We're a community church and have little of financial value in there."

Police are appealing for information about the incident, which was reported on Friday.

Sergeant Chris Tate said: "We believe that entry was gained to the premises sometime between 8pm on Thursday night (June 14) and 12.45pm on Friday. Damage was caused to both the inside and outside of the church when padlocks were either cut or removed. Doors to both the boiler house and vestry were kicked and damaged with some type of implement. A fire extinguisher was also let off in the building.

"At the moment, it would appear that nothing was taken from the church."

Nazareth Mar Thoma Church members celebrate with their Metropolitan in St Maelruain's Tallaght

St Maelruain's Church in Tallaght was the setting for a wonderful celebration on the part of The Nazareth Mar Thoma Church on Wednesday last (June 13). The Mar Thoma Church is an Eastern Reformed Church which is in communion with the Anglican Communion. Members of Nazareth Mar Thoma Church have long worshipped in St Maelruain's under the guidance and generosity of the rector, Canon William Deverell, and the Select Vestry.



Archbishop Michael Jackson with Mar Thoma Metropolitan, the Most Revd Dr Joseph Mar Thoma.

Wednesday was the 88th birthday of the Metropolitan of The Mar Thoma Church, the Most Reverend Dr Joseph Mar Thoma, and the diamond jubilee of his priestly ordination. The Metropolitan told the congregation that at his ordination he had taken the priestly name Irenaeus which means Person of Peace. He also spoke of the work he had done in peace building through the National Council of Churches of India (NCCI) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

His message was: accept the things you can accept, respect the things you can respect. He felt that he had been



The Nazareth Mar Thoma Dinner in St Maelruain's Parish Centre.

sustained in his ministry over so many years by the prayers of the people.

Canon Deverell spoke with joy of the integration of Mar Thoma members in the parish community of Tallaght and offered his congratulations to all concerned on this very happy day.

Archbishop Michael Jackson brought greetings and congratulations from the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Church of Ireland. He drew the attention of the packed church to the arches pointing

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heavenward and to the exposed stone inside the church, reminding all of us that we are living stones by God, appointed to serve and to work on earth as in heaven.

He tied this in with the motto of The Mar Thoma Church: Lighted to Lighten. He further thanked the Indian people for the many contributions of the whole community to the total community of contemporary Ireland.

The evening concluded with dinner for everyone in the Parish Centre.

Third Gafcon conference underway in Jerusalem

The third international conference organised by the Gafcon movement has begun in Jerusalem. Organisers say that 2,000 people are taking part – media reports suggest that 230 are from Uganda. The ecumenical gathering attracts a large number of Anglicans. Many in Jerusalem are now members of independent churches set up in opposition to official Anglican Churches and Provinces.

This week's conference began on Sunday night with an evensong and reception. It was originally billed as taking place in the Russian Orthodox Holy Trinity Cathedral; but was moved to St George's Anglican Cathedral.

The event includes Bible studies, group work and plenary sessions. The list of speakers includes a number of Anglican Primates: Archbishop Laurent Mbanda from Rwanda, Archbishop Stanley Ntagali from Uganda and Archbishop Nicholas Okoh from Nigeria as well as Bishop

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The third Gafcon conference is taking place in Jerusalem

Héctor Zavala
from the
Anglican
Church of
South

America's Diocese of Chile.



For many of the delegates, Gafcon is a renewal conference for Anglicans who seek to uphold conservative biblical conviction within the Anglican Communion. For others, it is a movement that seeks to supplant official Anglican structures. In an interview last week with the “Anglicans Unscripted” blog, a member of the group writing the Gafcon conference statement, Stephen Knoll, said that Gafcon was “the true continuation of the Lambeth Conferences” – even though the Lambeth Conferences are an invitation-only event for the bishops in the Anglican Communion. The next one will take place in Canterbury in July 2020. The Anglican Communion News Service applied for media accreditation to cover the Gafcon conference, but organisers declined.

Major boost for Lambeth Conference 2020 with £750,000 bursary grant

The organisers of the 2020 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops have received a major boost with the

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announcement that Allchurches Trust – owners of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group – have made a £750,000 grant to help fund bursaries. Every active bishop in the Anglican Communion will be invited to the Lambeth Conference; but the costs of attending can be prohibitive for bishops from developing countries. The Chief Executive of the Lambeth Conference Company, Phil George, said he was “bowled over” on hearing the news.



“Our heart is in the Church, in the Christian religion, and in the Anglican Church in particular,” the Chairman of Allchurches Trust, Sir Philip Mawer, said in an interview with ACNS. “That is why we are deeply committed to making sure that the Christian voice is heard on the key issues of the day – we believe that the Conference in 2020 will enable that to be delivered; it is increasingly important in a secular society and world that that voice is heard. And within that it

is crucially important that the voice of the Global South and disadvantaged areas is heard too.

“And we really genuinely want to see the Conference achieve its objectives not only in terms of the voice of the Church be heard; but also ensuring that bishops are able to be developed in their leadership and can go back to their dioceses and provinces enthused and re-equipped to carry out the task of mission and their role in directing and leading the Church.”

Welcoming the Grant, the biggest so far received by the organisers of the Lambeth Conference, the event’s Chief Executive Phil George said: “It is really going to mean a huge difference to so many bishops and their spouses to be able to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2020 as a result of their generosity.

“The cost of running an 11-day conference in Canterbury is not a cheap project,” he said. “We are very aware that many people around the Communion, including the spouses of course, will not be able to afford to fly across to England or, of course, pay the Conference fee. So this grant is going to go a long way to helping those who are on very low incomes to be able to afford to come and attend the Conference.”

Sir Philip Mawer added: “The Anglican Communion is a vital international institution and the Lambeth Conference is central to its effectiveness. We particularly wanted to honour and recognise the part that bishops from the Global South will be playing at the Conference. And we wanted to ensure that those who, on their own, have limited resources

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themselves, and who live in very difficult circumstances, have the means to attend the conference.

“Bishops occupy such important roles within the Church that they need all the support and help that they can get in order to exercise their leadership and do so on the global level. This Conference in 2020 will be vital to the Communion in ensuring it addresses the issues and giving the Global South, as well as the North, a voice and say in policies and issues that affect us all.”

The Lambeth Conference 2020 will take place from 24 July to 3 August at the University of Kent in Canterbury. Invitations to bishops and their spouses will be sent out later this year.

News briefs

+++ Vacancy on C of I Church and Society Commission

The Church and Society Commission (CASC) wishes to fill a casual vacancy. The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod are inviting members of the Church of Ireland who have relevant experience and who are willing to be considered for membership to submit expressions of interest, accompanied by an outline of particular skills or experience. In particular, expressions of interest from women are welcome, to address imbalances of gender among the current membership. Applicants with an interest in gender issues, the new Irish, new forms of work and/or a legal background are particularly welcomed.

Members of CASC should be prepared to work proactively to produce comment, briefings, and statements, working in

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small teams, or to promote activity related to these headings within the life of the Church. CASC normally meets 4 times a year in either Belfast or Dublin; however, if there is significant legislative activity, a particular group may find that its time commitment may be considerably increased while the issue remains current. Please send expressions of interest to Ms Caoimhe Leppard, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, by 31st July 2018, or by email to Caoimhe caoimhe.leppard@rcbdub.org More information about CASC can be obtained from Caoimhe (+353 1 4125 608).

+++ Independence Day concert : Stars & Stripes Forever!

Concert at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Wednesday 4 July at 6.15pm. Admission free. Join in at St Patrick's Cathedral for its ever popular Independence Day concert performed by the organists of St Patrick's Cathedral with music from Star Wars, ET, Independence Day and Jurassic Park. Admission is free and the concert is suitable for all ages, and you can even watch the performers via a big screen in the crossing. To finish, there is a retiring collection for Clowns without Borders, a group of professional street and circus artists, who bring smiles and laughter to children and their communities who are in crisis in Ireland and around the world. Tickets are free but advance booking is advised via the Cathedral website:
www.stpatrickscathedral.ie



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