

£126,000 given to 212 charities from Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Sit out



**Lesley Hammond, Fishermans' Mission;
Grace Koch, SOS Bus; and Ingrid Perry,
Fishermans' Mission. Front, from left: Actor
and Comedian Tim McGarry, who was special
guest at the service; Penny Stanley,**

Assistance Dogs NI with Gracie; and the Dean of Belfast, the Ven Stephen Forde.

Grants totalling more than £126,000 were presented to representatives of 212 charities from across Northern Ireland who gathered at Belfast Cathedral for the annual Good Samaritans Service on Sunday March 4.

The funds were raised by the 41st annual Black Santa Sit-out last December. The cheques were handed out with a smile and an encouraging word by special guest, actor and comedian Tim McGarry, whose unique humour raised a few smiles during this very happy service.

Tim distributed grants ranging from £300 to £550, with a donation of £20,000 to Christian Aid for projects overseas. A member of the *Hole in the Wall Gang*, Tim is a familiar face on our television screens. A former lawyer, he is an experienced actor, writer, stand-up comedian and broadcaster who has worked extensively on TV, radio and stage. He plays Da in the popular sitcom *Give My Head Peace* and was the host on the Radio Ulster and BBC NI television comedy panel show, *The Blame Game*.

He said the gathering of charities and community organisations, and the great public

support for the annual Black Santa Sit-out, were ‘testament to the spirit of the people of Northern Ireland.’

And he revealed that that he remembers Belfast’s original Black Santa, Dean Sammy Crooks, and said he and his sons visit St Anne’s every Christmas Eve to make a donation to the appeal. “It is one of those things that makes Belfast great,” he said.

Welcoming everyone at the start of the service, Dean Forde paid tribute to all the charities represented. “In so many ways each of you acts as a Good Samaritan in your own context. You care for those who are hurt or in need. You provide guidance and the blessing of your presence.

“We give thanks for to you for giving your time, your talents and your expertise to help those in need.”

Worship was led by the Cathedral Choir under Master of the Choristers David Stephens with Assistant Organist Dr Ed Jones at the organ. A particularly poignant item was the choir’s singing of the 23rd Psalm set to music by Howard Goodall, in appreciation, Dean Forde told the congregation, of the life and talent of Emma

Chambers who played Alice Tinker in the BBC programme *The Vicar of Dibley*, and who passed away on February 21.

The 41st Black Santa Sit-out took place on the steps of St Anne's from December 18–23, and was unique in the history of this charitable tradition as for the first time there was no Dean in place at Christmas.

But Dean Forde, who was installed in the Cathedral on February 4, helped to launch the 2017 Sit-out and spent several hours on the steps as 'Black Santa in training!' He had his L plates with him at the Good Samaritans Service to remind people he was 'still learning the ropes!' he joked.

Dean Forde said: "We expected giving to be down a little as there was no single 'Black Santa,' but with the help of our Bishops, the Cathedral Chapter, our Ecumenical, Lay and Minor Canons and our own clergy, a team of Black Santas had a constant presence on the steps of St Anne's.

"We are very grateful for the support of individuals, groups and businesses who pledged funds both on the steps and through postal or online giving."

Ballyclare Service to raise awareness of domestic violence



St John's Parish Church, Ballyclare, is partnering with Women's Aid to host a service to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

St John's has been designated a 'Safe Church,' which rector, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, says signposts the church as a safe place where anyone with issues relating to domestic violence can come and chat and be referred for further support if required.

The parish also has two trained ‘domestic violence champions.’

Jonny said: “One in four Northern Ireland women have gone through domestic violence, which is really shocking. It means that in a congregation of 100 male and female, 25 will have experienced domestic violence.”

A number of churches in the Antrim Rural Deanery are exploring the Safe Church initiative.

Worship at the service which takes place in Ballyclare from 6pm-7pm on Sunday March 11 will be led by Steve Johnston.

Mullingar rector to be Canon of Kildare

The Rev Alastair Graham, The rector of Mullingar Union, has been appointed a Canon of Kildare Cathedral and Trim Cathedral. He has been rector in Mullingar since 2009. He succeeds Canon David Hutton Bury, who retired on Christmas Day 2017 due to ill health.

Ordained in the 1970s, Rev Graham is one of a family of two girls and four boys. All four brothers became members of the Church of

Ireland clergy, following in the footsteps of their father, who spent a lifetime in ministry.

It was while his father was based in Belfast that Rev Graham was born, but the family then moved to Dublin, where he grew up, although he was educated in Northern Ireland. He served a curacy in Dublin and then worked in the UK as an assistant prison chaplain for a number of years before returning to Dublin to work in a parish. He also held a role in pastoral care within the Eastern Regional Health Authority. A date has not yet been named for the service of installation.

Installation of Archdeacon of Dalriada in Lisburn service

The Ven Paul Dundas, rector of Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, was installed as Archdeacon of Dalriada at a service in Lisburn Cathedral on Sunday March 4.

Dalriada is the most northerly of Connor Diocese's three archdeaconries, covering the Rural Deaneries of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Coleraine. Paul succeeds the Very Rev Stephen Forde, now Dean of Belfast.



At the service of installation of the Archdeacon of Dalriada in Lisburn Cathedral are members of the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor. From left: The Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor; the Rev Canon William Taggart, Registrar; the Rev Canon John Budd; The Very Rev Sam Wright, Dean of Connor; the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada; the Rev Canon James Carson; the Rev Dr Pat Mollan, the Church's Ministry of Healing: The Mount, who was guest speaker; and the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor.

The preacher at the service was the Rev Dr Pat Mollan of the Church's Ministry of Healing: The Mount. Paul was installed in the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor, by the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright.

The new Archdeacon was educated at Kilbarron National School, Ballyshannon, and Donemana Primary School and later Strabane Grammar School and Portadown College. He studied Environmental Science at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, and his Bachelor of Theology is from Trinity College, Dublin.

He was ordained in 1991 for the curacy of St Mark's, Portadown, and was instituted as the rector of Ardrea and Desertcreat in March 1995. He moved to St Aidan's, Belfast, in June 2000 and became rector of Christ Church, Lisburn, in January 2005.

Brought up in a rectory family, Paul enjoyed being part of the Boys' Brigade in Artigarvan, Strabane, and the Scripture Union in Portadown College. He was awarded the Queen's Badge in the BB whilst a member of the company in St Mark's, Portadown.

He has held various roles within the wider church, including Chairperson of Armagh Diocesan Youth Council, Chair of the Northern



Members of the praise band who led the worship at the service of installation of the Ven Paul Dundas as Archdeacon of Dalriada.

Regional Youth Council, Chair of Connor Diocesan Training Council, and is a member of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland and Connor Diocesan Council.

Paul presently serves on the Council of Reference for the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and led their work in Ireland for a couple of years on a voluntary basis until 2016.

In 2016, he chaired the group of church leaders in Lisburn that organised 40 days of “ReLENTless” prayer for Lisburn city.

Paul has a deep interest in Global Mission and was on teams with Crosslinks and Youth for Christ while in his teens and twenties. In 2000 he was part of a team from Armagh Diocese to visit Arua, northern Uganda, working in the Bishop Alison College with theological students from southern Sudan.

Since he has been rector of Christ Church, the parish has embarked on a mission partnership with Fields of Life, building a school at St Apollo, Kisizi, in Luwero Diocese, Uganda. In 2010 Paul spent nine weeks of a sabbatical in Asia with the Anglican Church in Singapore as well as travelling to Indonesia to visit churches.

Paul is married to Nola, presently Professor and Head of Queen’s Management School, and they have three children, Curtis, Joel and Anna.

CNI

Police consider investigation into former archbishop as CofE braced for more revelations of abuse cover-up

The Church of England is bracing itself for more revelations of how senior figures covered up child sex abuse with police considering whether to press charges against the former archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey.

Anglican leaders will come under the most intense scrutiny they have faced over their handling of abuse allegations as the Church goes before the independent inquiry into child sex abuse for the next three weeks.

Police are considering whether to launch an investigation against the former archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, after he was forced to step down as an honorary bishop last year. Carey was found to have 'colluded' with a convicted sex abuser Peter Ball, the former bishop of Gloucester and Lewes.

When Ball was finally jailed in 2015 he was sentenced to 15 months for indecent assaults against a string of young men and also 32 months for misconduct in public office, opening



Lord Carey of Clifton, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, was heavily criticised in a report last year into how the Church handled allegations of abuse against Peter Ball.

up the possibility that other senior clergy could be jailed for their role in abuse.

A report by Dame Moira Gibb was highly critical of Carey's conduct while in office, finding that he received seven letters warning of Ball's abuse in 1992 but failed to pass six of them onto the police.

A Metropolitan Police spokesperson told Christian Today: 'The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) continues to consider the report by Dame Moira Gibb into the Church of England's handling of the Bishop Peter Ball case to identify if there are any criminal matters that the MPS should investigate.'

Carey is expected to be called to give evidence to the independent inquiry which began three weeks of public hearings into the Church of England yesterday.

The current archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is also set to give evidence as is another former archbishop, Rowan Williams.

The CofE's lead bishop on safeguarding, Peter Hancock, warned the ruling general synod the Church faces a painful two years as it goes before a number of public hearings, examining how it handled past cases of child sex abuse.

'This will not be an easy couple of years – we will hear deeply painful accounts of abuse, of poor response, of "cover up",' he said, adding the Church will 'feel a deep sense of shame'.

But the issue is not just a historic one for the Church. Bishops insist the culture of the CofE has changed and point to a fivefold increase in



Prof Alexis Jay chairs the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

spending on safeguarding since 2014 to demonstrate it is now considered a priority.

However in 2016 alone it was dealing with 2,700 abuse allegations and concerns, more than 700 of which relate to clergy and church officials.

The Church also admitted it was expecting new cases of abuse to emerge as a result of the inquiry.

The hearings, which begin in London today, will focus on the diocese of Chichester, where they have been multiple allegations of sexual abuse, as a case study for the wider church.

Victims and their lawyers are expected to call for the Church's national safeguarding team to be made independent.

Richard Scorer, a specialist abuse lawyer at Slater & Gordon, who represents victims of Church of England abuse in IICSA, said the inquiry needed to enforce changes because the Church was guilty of a 'head-in-sand approach'.

He told Christian Today: 'I predict that the hearings will be very damaging for the Church. They will expose the mistreatment and denigration of victims which happened over many years, and the culture of abuse which was prevalent in the Chichester diocese and the church generally. They will expose the culture of cover up of abuse allegations, in relation to Peter Ball and many other cases – a culture that went right to the top of the church.'

'The fundamental problem in the Church of England is that bishops are not accountable. A bishop is king in his diocese. If a bishop is resistant to safeguarding there is no real way to overcome this. There is also a competence problem – diocesan staff are trained in theology and canon law, not in safeguarding.'

GAFCON conservative Anglicans face tensions over women bishops ahead of June meeting

The GAFCON conservative Anglican grouping, set up to resist what it perceives as a liberal drift in the Anglican Communion, is facing internal pressures over its position on female bishops following the consecration of a woman bishop in one of its constituent provinces.

A GAFCON 'Task Force on Women in the Episcopate' reported last September and concluded that 'the provinces of GAFCON should retain the historic practice of the consecration only of men as bishops until and unless a strong consensus to change emerges after prayer, consultation and continued study of Scripture among the GAFCON fellowship'.

However, the GAFCON-affiliated province of South Sudan consecrated Elizabeth Awut Ngor as assistant bishop of the Diocese of Rumbek on December 31, 2016.

GAFCON represents conservative evangelical Anglicans who are united in their opposition to homosexual practice. However, while most



The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby visited refugee camps in northern Uganda which hosts more than one million displaced South Sudanese people who have fled violence.

would also be opposed to women in pastoral leadership, there is less unanimity on this question – and it is now being faced with a split over what some believe is a core issue of biblical faithfulness.

GAFCON'S Primates Council said in response to the task force report that it, 'while recognising that there are differing views on the consecration of women to the episcopate, encourages the

provinces of GAFCON to continue to study the Scriptures, to consult with one another and to pray that God would lead us to a common mind on this issue'.

The South Sudan appointment pre-dates the task force report, though a 'voluntary moratorium' on the consecration of women as bishops was agreed in 2014. However, in an indication of the polarisation of views on the issue, one of those who consecrated Awut, Archbishop Daniel Deng, told Radio Good News before his retirement in January this year, 'It was in my dream to ordain a woman as bishop in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan before I leave.' Deng was not present when the moratorium was agreed.

However, in an apparent inconsistency, GAFCON's [statement](#) on Awut's consecration said Deng had told the Primate's Council that 'his personal decision to consecrate a female bishop was an extraordinary action taken in the midst of civil unrest in a part of his country where most of the men were engaged in armed conflict' – a statement appearing to contradict his stated enthusiasm for women bishops in general.

The GAFCON statement said the primates 'chose to not allow this anomaly to change the course followed since 2014' and that the 'voluntary moratorium' remained in place pending further discussion at the GAFCON meetings in Jerusalem in June.

In an indication of the tensions over the issue, GAFCON has also been accused of underplaying the significance of the consecration and even, in an Anglican Unscripted YouTube broadcast, of [attempting to conceal it](#). According to [Thinking Anglicans](#), the appointment was not made public through normal channels such as the Anglican Communion News Service and only became known when group photos taken at last month's meeting of the South Sudan House of Bishops showed one bishop in a skirt holding a handbag, as [reported by Anglican Ink](#).

The GAFCON-affiliated Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas [protested](#) the consecration of Awut on Friday, saying, 'we struggle to understand why it is that the consecration of Ms Awut has been seemingly kept as a secret within the GAFCON community for over a year. If it is the belief of the South Sudanese that women are rightly consecrated to the episcopacy, why was this not more openly celebrated from the start?' It says:

'We find the seemingly veiled nature of the consecration for over a year, along with the accompanying questions it raises, deeply disconcerting in the Diocese of Fort Worth.'

However, writing on the [Anglican Ink](#) website in response to the YouTube broadcast, GAFCON press officer Andrew Gross denied any 'conspiracy' to hide the news. 'GAFCON knew that South Sudan's news would become public knowledge, but it was South Sudan's news to break, not ours,' he said.

'In hindsight perhaps Gafcon could have encouraged the South Sudanese Provincial office to make a statement proactively, but, because the situation in South Sudan is so messy and the pressures so huge, we waited.'

Gross appealed for patience, saying: 'We love our brothers and sisters [in South Sudan] and are praying for them. I hope that the rest of the Anglican world shows them as much grace and patience as have the GAFCON Primates.'

GAFCON confirmed to Christian Today: 'We had no motivation to keep it secret, and didn't consider keeping it a secret was ever possible or desirable.'

The tensions over the Awut's appointment indicate, if nothing else, the difficulty of getting even conservative Anglicans united by their opposition to liberalism to march in step – a difficulty that mirrors, ironically, that faced by the archbishop of Canterbury, who also has to keep a fractious coalition of independent provinces together. While the consecration of women as bishops does not arouse the same level of visceral opposition as acceptance of same-sex marriage, it is still a major sticking-point for many conservatives. GAFCON's meeting in June will be a testing time for the movement's unity.

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