



Presbyterian Kid's Big Day Out plays it by ear...

Last weekend (Saturday 13th May) saw 500 primary school children arrive at Wellington Presbyterian Church in Ballymena for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) Kids Big Day Out – only this year it was a little different..

Every year children, leaders and volunteers from all over PCI come together to take part in the denomination's chief annual event for children 'God's Big Story' was the theme for this year,

with the children looking at the whole story of God's plan of rescue through the Bible. The aim and hope was that they would see that although the Bible is made up of many stories and lots of different characters, there is one big story holding it all together – the story of God's plan of rescue for His people.

Ruth Bromley, PCI Children's Development Officer, explained the importance of the day, "It not only allows us to put on a big celebration event for children and leaders to come to, it also allows us to support congregations, both big and small, in doing something that they may not be able to do for themselves.

"Each group leader went home with a pack containing a children's ministry follow-up lesson on the theme explored at the event, a drama script for an all-age service based on the drama, ideas for an all-age service and information on where to find all the songs we sang."

This year the event was also a little different, as members of the drama company 'Play it by ear' did the story telling. Through actors playing various parts and different biblical characters, they told the entire story of the Bible in just three acts – from the Old Testament, to Jesus' birth and the calling of the first disciples, through to

the triumphal entry and then the resurrection. Using the drama, the children were able to think about the life of Jesus before His resurrection, through a series of activities and music.

“In all that we do, our aim is to support the work of the whole Church through children’s ministry. It is our prayer that as the children from across the Church come together on this day each year, an event especially for them, that they will feel part of a wider Church family and community. Moreover, we trust that through the play and activities they will be urged and encouraged to consider their own relationship with God,” Ruth said.

In their pack, each child received an individual timeline of the Bible to take home to remind them of the big story and where all the characters fit in. They also took home a prayer bag – a small bag containing five ideas for creative prayer that they could do at home.

Costs, funding and targets of extended Willowfield Parish Halls

The renovation and extension of Willowfield’s Church Hall had a number of funding sources. (See CNI news yesterday)

Parishioners of Willowfield contributed approximately £300,000 through their regular giving and fund-raising efforts.

A combination of the Department of Education, the Garfield Weston Foundation and Belfast City Council provided further funding.

Moving forward, the funders have set a number of targets, most of them relating to the delivery of youth and children's programmes over the next five years.

This is really helpful as it acknowledges Willowfield's commitment to be 'In the Community, for the Community.'

Priority will be given to running programmes which will impact for good and for God the lives of hundreds of children and young people as well as others.

These targets include:

1. Having three times as many people between the ages of five and 25 involved in activities in the church halls over the next five years.

2. Having 100 young men and 100 young women involved in developmental work each week by November 2020.
3. Having 200 people of all ages involved in structured physical activity on a weekly basis, leading to improved health and well-being.
4. Having 80 parents – plus their children – involved in parenting support work
5. Having 70 senior citizens involved in social activities on a weekly basis.
6. Dealing with issues of local crisis and exceptional need by using the church halls for these purposes.

The Rector, the Venerable David McClay, said: “We look forward to serving our local community in these and lots of other ways.

“We believe that Jesus Christ brings hope, freedom, forgiveness and a whole new life to those who encounter him and who trust in Him with their hearts and lives.

And in a direct appeal to those living in the parish, he added: “As we move forward we invite you to be part of the programmes that we run.

“We invite you, if you consider Willowfield your church, to contribute financially in a regular way to all the work of our Church, both locally as well as further afield through our missionary partners overseas.”

St Mary's Church in Crumlin, Dublin, celebrates 75 years

St Mary's Church in Crumlin was filled with current parishioners and old friends on Sunday evening for a special service to mark its 75th anniversary. During the service the congregation renewed their baptism vows and some of the very first people to be baptised in the church gathered around the font with some of those who were most recently baptised.

The preacher was the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, the Rt Revd Michael Burrows, whose father Canon Walter Burrows was appointed to Crumlin Parish in 1937 and presided over the planning and building of the new St Mary's Church which was consecrated in 1942.

People travelled from far and wide to attend the service and many more who could not be present sent messages of congratulations.



Some of the first people to be baptised in St Mary's, Crumlin, with some of the most recent children to be baptised renew their vows on the 75th anniversary of the church.

Clergy who robed for the service included Canon Adrienne Galligan, Canon Leslie Crampton and the Revd Willie Black and Shona Rusk diocesan reader from St Laurence's in Chapelizod also assisted. More clergy, who grew up and had their vocations nurtured in the parish were in the congregation and were remembered during the service. Past choir members joined the current choir and many who had celebrated special days in the church returned.

In his sermon, Bishop Burrows said he was proud to attend the service. Thinking back to events of 1942 he said he could never hope to achieve or rival what had happened in the parish

in the 1940s in an atmosphere of poverty and in the middle of a war. "A faithful community built this church and out of it grew an amazing worshipping community," he stated adding that it was a new community on a fresh journey and this all took place in living memory.

The Bishop said he was never a resident in the parish. By the time he was born his parents had moved to Dundrum. "But I was brought up on the wholesome humour of this place," he stated before recalling many stories from his father's ministry in the parish and his visits to people in the parish when he was a child.

When his father crafted the church, Bishop Burrows said, he wanted a place where the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper could be celebrated with dignity so the sanctuary in St Mary's is huge. "The sanctuary of this church is very dear and special to me. I think of it as a place of Eucharistic focus," he commented.

Through the Eucharist the Church continues to remember Jesus as if they were actually in the Upper Room, he said. In St Mary's the events of 1942 are still remembered by people who were there but at the 100th anniversary there will not be people who remember the beginning, he suggested.

The Bishop said that the Eucharist also offered a foretaste of the future, a taste of heaven. "As we anticipate the future in heaven we should also learn to live comfortably on earth with whatever God's future will be," he said. He explained that his father had an ability to live ahead of himself and say: "Won't it be great. When it happens it will be of God". He cited the east wall of St Mary's which remained blank until 1982 when a cross, which would have been unthinkable in 1942, was placed on it. "Don't be afraid of the future. The future is already God's and the message of Easter is that Christ is always going ahead to a future which is God's," he said.

He concluded by revealing that the consecration was an extraordinary event with all the bishops in the Church of Ireland in attendance and the Archbishop of Armagh, John Gregg, presiding. In his sermon Archbishop Gregg could not bring himself to say that the church was beautiful. "Seventy-five years on let us lay that to rest – this is a supremely beautiful place in terms of what it has been. It is a place of great spiritual energy... It is a place of sublime beauty mostly because of its people," he stated.

Closing the service the Revd Willie Black thanked the Rector for all she had done in making the evening a reality. The congregation

adjourned to the parish hall where a cake was cut by long standing organist Joy Elliott.

New community of the Servant Sisters starts in Roscommon

Bishop Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin, welcomed a new community of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother on Saturday 13 May last during the Vigil Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Roscommon. The four sisters – Sr Ruth Maria, Sr Bernadette Maria, Sr Michelle Maria and Sr Karen Maria – will be based in Roscommon Town but their ministry will also serve the wider diocesan community.

Bishop Doran began his homily by welcoming Mother Ana Maria Campo, superior general of the Servants of the Home of the Mother, and Don Rafael Alonso Reymundo, founder of the Home of the Mother Association, in their native Spanish.

Bishop Doran went on to say, “Down through the ages, the Church has always tried to remain faithful to the vision and the teaching of Jesus, but has also had to adapt her practice to the circumstances and the needs of each time and place. It is what the Second Vatican Council



calls, reading the signs of the times. As the Brazilian fishermen say: ‘you can’t catch yesterday’s fish today’”.

He continued, “The Second Vatican Council, which took place just over fifty years ago was another time of great renewal and, if we were to be honest, we would have to say that even now, we have scarcely begun to discover the insights of the Council. One thing that grew from the Council was the idea that there could be new forms of Apostolate and new forms of consecrated life, with different structures from those we had grown used to. These new forms would respond to the needs of our time.

“The message is clear, I think. The Church, in order to be faithful to her mission, has to be always looking for new ways of working. As Pope John Paul liked to say, ‘Every generation is a new continent to be won for Christ.’ As Pope Francis says, we are called to be ‘missionary disciples’”.

Bishop Doran continued, saying, “It is especially appropriate that today, on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, we formally establish this new community here in the Diocese of Elphin and I warmly welcome Sr Ruth Maria, Sr Bernadette Maria, Sr Michelle Maria and Sr Karen Maria.”

He continued, “Many of you will be aware of the death of Sr Clare Crockett in April 2016. Just two months before her death, I had begun to explore with the Servant Sisters the possibility of their establishing a community in our Diocese and I know that this idea was already in the heart of Mother Ana and many of the sisters for some years previously. I know that the sisters themselves believe that Sr Clare has guided us during the past year, as we prepared for the establishment of their new community today. I pray that their new mission will be another moment of growth and renewal in our Diocese and I feel sure that their faith, their joy and the

energy will be a source of encouragement to many.

“I want to be very clear about one thing. The arrival of the Servant Sisters is not about going back to ‘the way it was’. It is about going forward in faithfulness to Jesus who, as the Gospel this evening reminds us is ‘The Way’ – the only way.”

Bishop Doran concluded his homily saying, “I want to take this opportunity to say a particular word of thanks to the Sisters of Mercy of the Western Province, who with typical generosity, have made a lovely house available for the sisters. I welcome you here this evening, both the sisters from our local community and the members of the Provincial Council. We are deeply grateful to you, not only for the beautiful gift of a Home for the Home of the Mother, but for all that you have been and continue to be in our Diocese down through many years.”

C of I Men's Society to visit Bellaghy Bawn

On Saturday, June 3, the Church of Ireland Men's Society will be visiting Bellaghy Bawn and

the Seamus Heaney Homeplace to learn about the history of the area.

The coach will depart from Belfast and stop at pick-up points in Sprucefield, Portadown and Armagh.

After morning coffee in Moy they will travel to Kilcronaghan Parish, Tobermore, for Holy Communion. This will be followed by a light lunch.

On the return journey from Bellaghy the homeward-bound party will stop in Cookstown for an evening meal.

Anyone interested in going can access further details and a booking form on the website [www.cims.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cims ireland.anglican.org)

Prince Charles warns social media is stoking religious divisions during Oxford visit

Prince Charles has warned that social media is being used to encourage and spread fears between different religious groups.



On a visit to Oxford on Tuesday, the heir to the throne said there is an "urgent" need for reflection dialogue between those of all faiths.

In a speech to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS), he said: "There has perhaps never been a greater need for cultural connectivity.

"In the world in which we now live, with fears about 'The Other' - whether that be Sunni, Shia, Jew, Christian, Yazidi, Hindu or Buddhist - stoked and spread through social media, and amplified by those who would seek to suppress understanding, rather than promote it, there is an

urgent need for calm reflection and a genuinely sustained, empathetic and open dialogue across boundaries of faith, ethnicity and culture."

The Prince of Wales was opening a new building at the OCIS - next to Magdalen College - of which he has been the patron since 1993. He and the Duchess of Cornwall later met with local vendors at Oxford's historic covered market.

He went on to say: "We need to rediscover and explore what unites rather than what divides us. And that involves a recognition that we have all learned from each other and should continue to do so. No one culture contains the complete truth."

An independent centre of the University of Oxford, the OCIS aims to offer a space where the Islamic and Western worlds of learning meet.

Kirk to host politicians at hustings event

The Church of Scotland will hold a public hustings event during its annual General



Assembly with representatives from the five main political parties.

People's Politics: GE 2017 will be open to the 900 commissioners attending the annual gathering in Edinburgh as well as to the general public. The Moderator Designate Rev Dr Derek Browning will chair the discussion.

The five political parties at People's Politics: GE 2017 will be represented by:

Ian Blackford (Scottish National Party)

Iain Gray (Scottish Labour)

Patrick Harvie (Scottish Green Party)

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Scottish Liberal Democrat)

Jeremy Balfour (Scottish Conservative)

The event, which will take place from 4:30pm-6pm on Wednesday 24 May in the General Assembly Hall, will present the politicians with three personal stories via short videos.

Each of the 90-second clips will end with a question for the panel, followed by an opportunity for audience members to ask their own questions.

The videos will feature: Rev Anita Stutter talking about the impact of Brexit on EU nationals; Deborah Leddie, from the non-profit WEvolution, discussing her experience of the welfare system; and Rev Tamu Ina Maramba from Sumba, Indonesia talking about climate change.

Rev Dr Richard Frazer said:

“So much has changed in the political world over recent years that people are left uncertain and frequently anxious and divided about what the future might hold.

“As the General Election approaches it is more important than ever that we model a different type of politics, a politics that listens to the voices of those whose voice often goes unheard.

“This People’s Politics event is an opportunity for our politicians and for all of us to hear these voices and collectively consider how we can work towards a society in which all may flourish and encounter life in all its fullness.”

The Kirk and three other UK churches, working together as the Joint Public Issues Team, last week published a new election briefing on Faith in Politics, which looks at some key issues in a nonpartisan way, through the lens of faith. [You can download Faith in Politics \(as a pdf file\) here.](#)

'I will say what I think' says Pope ahead of Trump meeting

Pope Francis told journalists that he will speak his mind when he meets Donald Trump later this month.

“I don’t make a judgement of a person without listening [to them first],” the pope said, refusing to give an opinion of Trump in advance of their meeting, the first between the two leaders.

“I will say what I think, he will say what he thinks,” he said. “I’ve never, never wanted to



make a judgement of a person without listening to them.”

Asked about any hopes of Trump softening his policies after their meeting, the pope said that was a political calculus he wouldn't get into: “Even from the religious point of view, I am not a proselytizer,” he said.

The pope also said that there are always doors that “aren't closed”, and that he'll work on finding things the two have in common, as a way to move forward.

“Step by step,” he said. “Peace is . . . done day by day.”

Journalists also asked the pontiff about Trump, specifically about what he hopes the outcome of the meeting will be. He answered by saying that

from now on, everyone he speaks with should expect him to talk about peace.

Pope Francis is due to meet with Donald Trump on 24th May.

See this week's events diary on CNI

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