



Lisburn hymn writer Keith Getty honoured at Westminster

A pair of award-winning hymn writers from Northern Ireland have been honoured at an event in the Houses of Parliament. Co Antrim couple Keith and Kristyn Getty were centre focus at an event in Westminster organised by Christians in Parliament, after Keith was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours List earlier this year, the News Letter reports.

Some 200 guests attended the celebration in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft.

Keith was awarded an OBE for his services and contribution to Music and Modern Hymn Writing.

It is the first time such an award has been given to someone in contemporary church music.

The Lisburn man is known throughout the world for revolutionising and modernising the classic hymn genre.

Keith and his wife Kristyn, who is originally from Glengormley, are passionate advocates of hymn-singing in church and are about to launch a worldwide campaign over the next two years to promote congregational singing.

The Getty's inaugural Sing! Conference will take place in Nashville on September 18-20, where 4,000 will attend from around the world. A 5,000-person hymn sing will also take place at the world-famous Grand Ole Opry House.

The conference marks the beginning of the Sing! Campaign, which will tour a number of arenas and will include a concert in Belfast in 2018.

Keith's famous hymn 'In Christ Alone' was the number one most-frequently-sung hymn in UK churches for a record-setting nine consecutive years.

It was also voted number two best-loved hymn of all time in the UK in a BBC Songs of Praise survey and among the top five hymns of all time by the UK Hymns Society.

Performing with Kristyn, the couple have spent the last decade as ambassadors for the genre, re-popularising and energising the singing of hymns around the world, leading the world-wide revival of congregational singing.

Keith said: "This beautiful event in the Houses of Parliament is yet another incredible honour and recognition of our work by the Christians in Parliament group. We are really privileged to be able to perform in this beautiful and magnificent setting."

World Meeting of Families Icon to be hosted in C of I cathedral

The World Meeting of Families (WMOF) is scheduled to take place in Dublin in August 2018. Organised by the Roman Catholic Church



and held every three years, this major international event brings together families from across the world to celebrate, pray and reflect upon the central importance of the family as the cornerstone of our lives, of society and of the Church. The theme of WMOF2018 is “The Joy of Love”. The Church of Ireland United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough is pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in this event.

A specially commissioned WMOF2018 icon of the Holy Family was unveiled on the 21 August 2017 during the launch of the one-year programme of preparation in Knock, Co Mayo. The icon was written by the Redemptoristine Contemplative Community in Drumcondra as part of their ongoing prayer for families. The icon is meant to encourage both reflection and prayer

as part of the journey of preparations to World Meeting of Families 2018.

The WMOF2018 icon will be travelling to each diocese in Ireland. Christ Church Cathedral is delighted to host it from September 20 to 25. It will complement the icon exhibition which has been running there from June and will continue until the end of September.

Icons are one way of encountering the living God. They have been described as “prayers in paintings”, as “windows to heaven” and “theology in colour”. They are not meant to stand alone as autonomous works of art but are intended to be experienced as part of a concrete, religious practice. Do take the time to come and contemplate the WMOF2018 icon in Christ Church Cathedral.

Derry bishops visit flood victims

Two bishops from Derry – one Roman Catholic and the other Church of Ireland – paid a symbolic visit to a flood-damaged bridge in County Londonderry on Thursday morning as they prepared to embark on a joint pilgrimage from Claudy to Strabane. The fifteen-mile walk was the penultimate in a series of pilgrimages Bishop Ken Good and Bishop Donal McKeown



have been undertaking this year to highlight their shared Christian witness and heritage.

Their latest walk began with prayers in St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Claudy and then at Cumber Upper Church of Ireland, which has a stained glass window commemorating the young Claudy bomb victim, Kathryn Eakin. Before setting off on their walk, the two leaders visited a nearby bridge which had been wrecked in the recent flooding and spoke to workmen who are repairing it. Bishop McKeown said the gesture was symbolic of their determination to build bridges in the community.

Half way through their walk, the church leaders stopped at Donaghedy Parish's church hall, in

Donemana, for lunch. They were entertained by a choir comprised of children from four local primary schools. The schools are taking part in a shared education project and Thursday's performance was the first public demonstration of their shared learning.

Despite a dismal weather forecast, the two bishops avoided rainfall until they reached Artigarvan, where a heavy cloudburst forced them to don wet-weather gear. They were met on the outskirts of Strabane by Fr Declan Boland from Strabane (Camus) Parish and by the Curate of Camus-Juxta-Mourne Parish, Rev Mark Lennox. The Strabane clergymen had organised brief joint services in Christ Church Church of Ireland and the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

Bishop Good said during the walk he had been overwhelmed by the messages of support and sympathy he had received from right across the community following the desecration of Christ Church Londonderry during a break-in earlier in the week. He said the messages of solidarity would be a great comfort for the parishioners at Christ Church.

The bishops will complete the last leg of their pilgrimage series on Saturday when they walk

from Limavady to Garvagh. Last April they completed a three-day walk from St Columba's birthplace at Gartan, in Donegal, to St Augustine's Church in Derry-Londonderry (a distance of 34 miles), and in June they made a joint visit to the island of Iona, where St Columba settled, founded a monastery and eventually died.

"We are eager to heighten the profile of faith traditions in our dioceses," the church leaders said in a joint statement, "and hope our shared witness to the Gospel will encourage reconciliation in our community. We want to raise awareness of the long ecclesiastical history of our community, its shared Columban narrative and rich Christian heritage."

Dunmurry church rededicated after fire

St Colman's Parish Church, Dunmurry, was packed on Sunday September 10 for a service of rededication and thanksgiving following a fire which caused major damage in January 2016.

The rector, the Rev Adrian McLaughlin, was alerted to the fire by the rectory cat Tilly, who is

now commemorated in a new stained glass window in the refurbished church.

Representatives of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service who were at the scene on the night of the fire attended the service. The preacher was Mr John Williams, Diocesan Lay Reader and Hon Secretary of Dunmurry Parish, and the church was rededicated by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

The fire, which was accidental, caused major damage to the roof, the zinc pipes in the organ melted, the stonework and the arches were burned, and the organs and a chandelier were destroyed along with the furniture in the choir stalls and the lectern. Anything that wasn't damaged by fire was smoke, tar and water damaged.

On September 10 the congregation was able to return to a transformed building.

There is a new meet-and-greet area leading into the church through a glass partition. The tiled floor is decorated with the St Colman's cross. Other changes include a new gallery above the organ pipes, the chancel has been brought forward, the font has been moved, and a new side chapel has been created, housing the

stained glass window commemorating the fire with images of flame, water and Tilly the cat.

There is a new side entrance for disabled access, and a lift to the chancel. A temporary organ was in use for the service of rededication and thanksgiving – a new organ and pipes are currently being built.

Ireland's oldest Mercy nun dies aged 104

There was great sadness in Co. Limerick this week when Ireland's oldest Mercy nun passed away aged 104. Wicklow native Sr Eileen Doyle lived at Mount St Vincent on O'Connell Avenue in Limerick City for a number of years. A member of the Mercy Order, she was a cousin of the Irish patriot Kevin Barry.

Sr Eileen was born on 22 July 1913 in Wicklow; she was only seven years old when her famous cousin Kevin Barry was the first Republican to be executed by the British since the leaders of the Easter Rising. He was 18. Barry, a medical student from Co. Carlow, was sentenced to death for his part in an Irish Volunteers' operation which resulted in the deaths of three British soldiers.



Sr Eileen Doyle

Sr Eileen attributed her long life to always trying to be healthy. All her life, she said, she was always a “healthy little devil” and never had a serious illness. The second youngest in a family of nine, she outlived all her siblings. While Sr Eileen lived in Limerick for most of her life, she also lived in America for 11 years, teaching in Florida and in Mobile, Alabama in the 1970s. She was also the first principal of Ballynanty Primary school in Co. Limerick, and believed that hard work, prayer and eating lightly helped her live a long and healthy life.

She had resided at Mount St Vincent on O'Connell Street at the time of her 100th birthday in 2013 and was one of 19 nuns living there.

The Mercy order was established in Limerick in 1838, and the convent was built in 1861. However, in 2008 the dwindling numbers of sisters found that the convent was “too big and expensive to maintain” and Sr Eileen, along with the other sisters, offered the premises to projects they had a keen interest in, while a new modern living premises was built adjacent to the convent. Among those to benefit was Doras Luimní, a support group for all migrants living throughout the mid-west.

Speaking about her time as a nun, Sr Eileen told the *Limerick Leader* newspaper last month: “I worked hard. I think that kept me going. I eat lightly, but still I eat enough. I was 21 when I joined the Sisters of Mercy, after training in Mary Immaculate as a teacher and I entered the convent then. I think this is a good place to be now,” she said.

Looking back, she says that joining the nuns was the right decision for her. “I’m happier that I chose this way of life. I don’t know would I have

been able to face all those problems that married people have.”

Sr Eileen was interred at St Mary's Convent Cemetery in Limerick City on Saturday 16 September.

Fry up for Derry flood victims

Glendermott Parish's outreach centre, Another Chance, is holding a 'Big Breakfast' event in the local parish hall on Saturday morning to raise money for victims of the recent flooding in the area.

The centre was one of numerous local premises inundated last month when a heavy thunderstorm led to widespread flooding throughout the North West.

Two local neighbourhoods – Drumahoe and Tullyally – were among the areas worst affected and the village of Eglinton was also badly hit.

The Another Chance centre was badly affected by the flooding so Saturday morning's breakfast will be served in the Parish Hall on Church Brae, opposite Glendermott Church, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon. A minimum donation of £5 is suggested.

All the food has been donated or bought with vouchers, so it is coming free to the parish and will be cooked by volunteers.

On the last weekend in the month – Saturday September the 30th – Another Chance will also be holding a ‘Coffee Morning’ to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Methodist/Church of Ireland minister for Maghaberry

Revd Clare Kakuru will be introduced as the new minister of the Church on the Hill, Maghaberry (Joint Methodist/Church of Ireland), on Saturday, 16 September at 4.00 pm.

The preacher at the service will be the Revd Dr Heather Morris. Heather is the General Secretary for Home Mission in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Derry church vandals may have been caught on nearby CCTV

An appeal has been made to those responsible for breaking into and desecrating a Protestant church in Derry to return a stolen item which has great sentimental value to parishioners.



There has been widespread condemnation of the incident, where vandals broke into Christ Church on Infirmary Road in the city before embarking on a wrecking spree during which they defecated and urinated inside the building, knocked over vases, and tore pages from a Bible.

Those responsible for the crime smashed their way through a grille, then storm glazing before breaking a stained glass window at the church before entering the premises, sometime between sometime between mid-afternoon on Sunday, (September 10) and 4.15pm on Tuesday, (September 12). A broken bottle was also used to the church's organ at the church, which was installed in 2000 after a serious fire.

In addition, a crystal decanter, which was used in Holy Communion services, was been stolen during the break-in.

The tear-shaped, glass decanter had been presented to the church by former parishioners.

The damage was discovered by a woman who entered the church on Tuesday.

Speaking to the Derry News yesterday, The Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller, who is Rector of the Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and Saint Peter's Group of Parishes,

"I was up at the Model School when I got a phone call from someone who had come in here to do some work," he said.

"They kicked their way into the organ, then cut their way into it more and cut components out with a broken bottle.

"We don't know what the eventual cost of the damage is going to be, but the organ is going to be out of action for some time, more than likely

He added that parishioners had been left 'distraught and traumatised' by the incident, and were particularly upset by the theft of the decanter, which they had donated.

“It will be a real trauma for parishioners who worship here and for our neighbours across the road at St Eugene’s, with whom we have the most wonderful relationship,” he continued.

The Archdeacon continued that while police had yet to establish a motive for the incident, it did not seem that the purpose of the break-in was theft.

“It would seem that this was an act of wanton vandalism carrying out by a disturbed individual or individuals.”

He added that the perpetrators may have been caught on CCTV mounted on a nearby building.

Despite the heartbreak, Archdeacon Miller said he had been ‘heartened’ by the support they had received in the wake of the incident.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, described the incident as ‘very disturbing’.

“It is sacrilege and I feel deeply for the parishioners of Christ Church who will be dismayed when they learn of the break-in,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, said that there had been a ‘long-

standing relationship between the congregations in Christchurch and St Eugene's Cathedral' and he was both 'disappointed and saddened at the news'

"I know from talking to parishioners in the Cathedral that they are terribly shocked by this wanton act," he said.

"We will do what we can to help the Church of Ireland congregation get their beautiful church back to its original state so that their regular worship of our common Lord can be resumed."

The independent councillors Sean Carr and Gary Donnelley visited the scene yesterday morning, where they spoke to the Archdeacon.

Commenting afterwards, Cllr Carr said appealed to whoever responsible for stealing the decanter to now return it, adding that they can approach them or a local community centre.

"If they wish to come to us and hand it over, we can then give this back to the parishioners who have been left heartbroken by this," he said.

The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Maolíosa McHugh also visited the church to offer his support , while the Sinn Féin Foyle MP, Elisha McCallion added: "I know that

this city will rally round and support them in any way we can at this difficult time.”“I would also encourage anyone with information on this attack to bring it forward to the PSNI.”

The Deputy Mayor, John Boyle, described the incident as ‘repugnant behaviour’.

PSNI Inspector Jonathan Hunter appealed to anyone who noticed any suspicious activity in the area of the church or anyone who has information which could help with our enquiries, to contact police at Strand Road on the non-emergency number 101, quoting reference 949 12/09/17.

Alternatively, if someone would prefer to provide information without giving their details they can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers and speak to them anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Connor takes the Castle weekend success

More than 100 young people and leaders took part in the annual Connor takes the Castle weekend at Castlewellan Castle from September 8–10.

Play It By Ear, the Christian drama group, led sessions guiding the young people through what it means to encounter God, encouraging them to think about personal prayer, exploring the Bible and living in community with other believers as young Anglicans.

Chris Neilands and Ross Jonas of Play It By Ear performed dramas and taught God's truth from their own experiences. The young people had opportunities to discuss issues and ask questions.

Praise was led by the band Wildfire for most of the weekend and Lee Boal and friends for the Friday night, with great opportunities to sing praise to God.

Many of the young people were involved aspects of the weekend, including Matthew who ran all visuals and audio, and Sara, Giselle and Sophie who hosted an hour as a Connor Youth Forum takeover!

On the Saturday afternoon the young people took part in a massive maze challenge at Castlewellan Peace Maze, and earlier in the day they prepared their own dramas for a 'Connor's Got Talent' event. Saturday ended with a rave in the cellar with DJ Billy Fyffe.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: 'To all the young people, thank you! To all the leaders, thank you! To all the vestries and clergy who supported the groups coming, thank you!'

Abducted Indian priest rescued in Yemen after 18 months

An Indian Catholic priest who was kidnapped by militants from a home for senior citizens in Yemen has been rescued after 18 months, an Indian official said Tuesday (Sept. 12).

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Twitter that the Rev. Tom Uzhunnalil had been rescued, saying later Tuesday that he had reached Vatican City. He is expected to meet Pope Francis. Swaraj gave no other details.

Uzhunnalil had worked for more than four years as a chaplain at the home in Aden in southern Yemen established by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

He was abducted by militants in March 2016 when they attacked the home, killing 16 people, including four nuns. The militants also destroyed the chapel and the center.



Salesian Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil received a personal blessing from Pope Francis on September 13, 2017. He was freed September 12, 2017, after 18 months in captivity, after having been kidnapped in March 2016 in Yemen.

There were about 80 residents at the home at the time of the attack. Missionaries of Charity nuns also came under attack in Yemen in 1998, when gunmen killed three nuns in the Red Sea port city of Hodeida.

The Hindustan Times newspaper said the priest was flown from Yemen to Muscat, the capital of Oman, after his release.

“Our prayers were finally heard. We thank all who stood with us in trying times,” the newspaper quoted the priest’s older brother, Mathew, as saying.

Earlier, Oman’s official news agency ONA said Oman, in coordination with Yemeni parties, had managed to find Uzhunnalil and that he had been moved to Muscat, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

Uzhunnalil comes from Ramapuram in the southern Indian state of Kerala.

Christchurch New Zealand Synod votes to reinstate cathedral

Christchurch Cathedral will be reinstated, the Christchurch Diocesan Synod has decided.

“This was not an easy or quick decision for the more than 220 members of Synod,” said Bishop Victoria Matthews.

From the evening Eucharist of September 7th, and over September 8th and 9th the clergy and laity of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Christchurch listened to the Holy Spirit in prayer.



They also listened to one another, to political leaders and to a panel of experts in the fields of engineering, quantity surveying, law and recovery work from both within and outside the church prior to making their decision. The debate was both robust and respectful.

Calls came in from many churches and individuals across the country and beyond promising prayer to support Synod.

“Option A was chosen knowing we could not please everyone, but the overwhelming message Christchurch people told us was to ‘just get on with it’ and make a decision,” Bishop Matthews said.

“Many Synod members and observers addressed the Synod with passion and conviction, discussing the history of Canterbury and the defining role of the Anglican Cathedral in the creation of New Zealand’s first city. Other speeches spoke of a vision for the future and the need for change as the church seeks to grow.

“In the end the Synod prayed and made its decision (Acts 15: 28a says ‘it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us’) which was a 54.9 per cent majority to reinstate.

“No one can say the decision was made lightly. It was also made with those in attendance being aware of an 8.1 earthquake near Mexico and a 4.3 earthquake in Canterbury happening during the Synod,” Bishop Victoria Matthews said.

“We have made history today and we can move on.

“I was pleased that the Minister Supporting Greater Christchurch Regeneration, Nicky Wagner MP and Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel, had the opportunity to address the Synod and I admired the passion in which they put forward their views. I am impressed that both came back to hear the decision.”

This decision now directs Church Property Trustees (CPT), the body that administers the property and investments of the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch, to work with the Government to 'enter into such contracts and arrangements and take whatever steps it deems necessary' to bring about the reinstatement of the Cathedral.

A late amendment to the motion supported by Synod members included that the financial contribution of CPT and the Diocese will be limited to the Cathedral material damage insurance proceeds plus investment returns in hand. This ensures that CPT and the Diocese are not liable for any cost overruns.

The next stages include:

- CPT and the Government working together to finalise the arrangements including establishing the fundraising trust and Unincorporated Joint Venture and confirming the funding from the Christchurch City Council and the Great Christchurch Buildings Trust funding.
- The CPT and the established *Unincorporated Joint Venture* setting up a project budget to include construction costs (estimated

\$104,000,000), fundraising costs (estimated \$4,000,000), plus sufficient further funds for any other costs associated with reinstatement. This will include an endowment to fund the future on-going costs of insurance and maintenance (estimated \$10,000,000);

As the decision stipulates, the Cathedral reinstatement project will be completed in three parts:

- reinstatement of the main building, which must proceed first;
- reinstatement of the tower; and
- reinstatement of the ancillary buildings.

No significant work will begin on each part until ‘funding sufficient to cover the total cost of each part has been guaranteed inclusive of endowments needed to cover future on-going costs of insurance and maintenance for that part; and any other terms CPT considers reasonable that are not inconsistent with this resolution of the Synod including the particulars in the Cathedral Working Group report of November 2016’, the decision concludes.

“Synod has voted, decided and confirmed reinstatement of the ChristChurch Cathedral in

the square. To God be the glory,” Bishop Victoria Matthews said.

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