

Summer jazz in church's sensory celebration at Aaron House



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Residents and day care users at Aaron House in Dundonald, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) residential home for people with profound learning and physical disability, enjoyed a summer jazz party at the weekend (22 June), as part of the celebrations to mark the opening of their new sensory garden. The event was part of this year's Learning Disability Week.

The official opening was performed by Lee-Ann Nesbitt, who attends the day care centre and Aaron House resident Niall Campbell, both of whom cut the ribbon with Presbyterian Moderator, Right Rev Dr William Henry and BBC Radio Ulster's *Gardener's Corner* presenter, David Maxwell.

The patio garden, which is adjacent to the day care centre, has been transformed and now includes an open air wooden classroom, greenhouse for seeds, gazebo and decking around a mature tree with a water feature.

Four rectangle sensory beds stimulate different senses: sense of touch with different textured plants, the sense of smell with highly aromatic flowers, taste through edible plants and flowers and one that has been planted for visual stimulation with colourful flowers. There are also bird feeders and nesting boxes to encourage birds to visit the garden.

Head of day care at Aaron House, Francis Mooney, said that there is also a multi-textured pathway linking the beds with the open air classroom. The pathway includes 10 different well defined sections that stimulate those walking over the windy path, or residents and service users in wheelchairs.

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Everyone can also enjoy the purpose built BBQ (weather permitting) and a larger outdoor classroom.

"Today has been a fantastic day and has been a tribute to everyone who has played their part in making this dream become a reality. From the fundraisers to the builders, the diggers and to the planters, everyone who has supported the project deserves a huge thank you," Mr Mooney said.

"In its various phases, it has taken around 10 years to complete and has been a labour of love, not only for our

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residents, service users and their families, but for staff and the local support group and committee. Together we have raised some £25,000 over the last 5 years alone.”

The Dundonald home in the Ballybeen estate opened in 1995 and accommodates 14 residents on a permanent basis and two residents each week for respite care. It also includes a day care centre that supports the needs of up to 9 people. Originally managed by the Currie Community, PCI took over its management 10 years ago in partnership with Choice Housing Association, who are responsible for the maintenance of the building.

Aaron House ‘head gardener’ Lee-Ann Nesbitt – who helped the Moderator officially open the sensory garden – has been coming to the day care centre four days a week for three years. Her favourite flower is the purple hydrangea that she planted herself and the part of the garden she likes the best is the water feature.

“They call me the head gardener because I am hard working. I do digging, brushing up, planting and watering and I put the bunting up. I help in the garden most days and I am very good at tidying up. Today was a lovely day,” she said.

Learning Disability Week 2019 focussed on physical activity and inclusion. Dr Henry said that there had been a carnival atmosphere to the day. Thanking everyone involved for creating such a special place, he said, “In the three short weeks that I have been Moderator I have learnt a lot about our denomination. It is a privilege to hold this office, but an even greater privilege to be able to see first-hand the amazing



The new PCI Moderator and Irish Methodist President visited Armagh last week.

help and support that the Church is able to provide, and to be a part of moments like this.

“Aaron House is a vital and invaluable service for residents and their families and for those who use the independent day care and respite care here as well. Many within society recognise these needs but the purpose of such special awareness weeks, such as this week’s Learning Disability Week, is to further raise the profile. I want to say that the Bible speaks and encourages us to be the ones who will do good deeds and care for others.

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My theme this year is Enjoying God, part of that is that we want all people to enjoy God and to encounter him, but another aspect is that when we are enjoying God it will demonstrate itself in caring for others. I know that the new sensory garden, with all its different features, will be enjoyed by many people for years to come and will be very well cared for. It was an honour to be able to dedicate this special place to the glory of God and to pray for everyone who will use and enjoy it,” Dr Henry said.

Day-to-day management of Aaron House is undertaken by PCI’s Council for Social Witness which also manages the denomination’s nursing and residential care homes, along with supported housing schemes for people with a learning disability and those with addictions and former offenders across 16 locations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Lindsay Conway, Secretary of the Council for Social Witness, explained that the Church recognises the importance of the three strands of residential, respite and day care in the overall care of individuals and support for families.

“People matter to God, so they matter to us. We are called to demonstrate his love for people, which means putting of our faith into practical action and simple Christian caring, which is a powerful social witness of the gospel and can be seen here in action at Aaron House. It is also a very special kind of witness, one that can be seen each and every day through the work of our congregations across Ireland.” he said.

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New Diocesan President of Mothers' Union for Cork, Cloyne and Ross



Hilary, Richard, Simon and Christina Dring with Bishop Paul Colton.

On Ascension Day, 30th May, Hilary Dring, only the sixteenth Diocesan President of Mothers' Union in Cork in almost 125 years, was commissioned by Bishop Paul Colton.

It was a wonderful evening at St. Mary's Church in Carrigaline when many Mothers' Union members from around the Diocese gathered, along with Hilary's family, friends, parishioners and clergy for this special Festival Service to celebrate and give thanks together.

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It was very special to have former Diocesan Presidents, Joan Hale, Hazel Rhys-Thomas, Avril Jennings and Patsy Devoy present, as well as Irene Whitley, a former enrolling member of Carrigaline and Monkstown branch. The music was enhanced greatly by the Monkstown Chamber Choir who were directed by the organist on the night, Roger Ellis.

Bishop Paul preached on the readings of the day which were very fitting – Ephesians 1:15-23 was his focus; he spoke of how many of those present know of Hilary's 'faith in the Lord Jesus and (her) love toward all the saints'. He went on to say that this is a gift, not to be taken for granted, and referred to St. Paul's prayer for 'a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him...that you may know the hope to which he has called you...''.

The role of President is for three years, with the option of another three, and carries with it responsibility for Mothers' Union across the county of Cork, as well as being part of the All Ireland trustees. Hilary is looking forward to both exciting and challenging times ahead and knows that with God's help the organisation can continue to reach out and contribute to making a difference to families and communities, in Cork, in Ireland and around the world in over 84 countries.

Hilary's mother, Marjorie Bond, was a long serving Mothers' Union member and served as Diocesan Secretary for many years. Bishop Paul remarked that Marjorie would be very proud of Hilary, as would her father, Victor, who was principal of Ashton School for almost 25 years.

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This year is also the 90th anniversary of Carrigaline and Monkstown Mothers' Union, an occasion well worth celebrating. There were birthday balloons and cake-cutting by branch members (including former enrolling members) at the supper in the Canon McCrea Hall afterwards. The friendship and fellowship in Mothers' Union are wonderful gifts that members offer each other, as well as the opportunity 'to reach out in love and service'.

New Director of Music at Belfast Cathedral

Matthew Owens has been appointed as Director of Music at Belfast Cathedral in succession to Mr David Stevens. He has a long association with Northern Ireland through his wife, Ali, whose family is from Whitehead in County Antrim.

Matthew was educated at Chetham's School of Music; The Queen's College, Oxford; the Royal Northern College of Music; and the Amsterdam Conservatorium. He won all the major prizes in the diplomas of the Royal College of Organists, as well as the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. His career appointments include Tutor in Organ Studies at the RNCM and Chetham's, and working for BBC Religious Broadcasting (1994-99); Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral (1996-99), and Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh (1999-2004). He also served as President of the Cathedral Organists' Association (2010-13).

Since 2005 Matthew has been Organist and Master of the Choristers at Wells Cathedral where, in addition to being responsible for daily sung worship, he has toured,

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Pray for Gary and Mary Reid, PCI global mission workers in Kenya, as they continue with the various mission outreaches amongst the

community, for God's glory. Pray for Gary as he teaches the Family Bible Synopsis on the book of Joel.

broadcast, and recorded extensively with the cathedral choir. In 2011, the choir was named by an international jury for *Gramophone* as the best choir in the world with children, and the sixth greatest overall. Since 2005 he has also been Conductor of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, a chorus of over 150 singers. Matthew is the Founder Artistic Director of three initiatives at Wells: Cathedral Commissions, a scheme which commissions new works from pre-eminent British composers; the cathedral's innovative festival, *new music wells*; and its counterpart, Early Music Wells.

He has guest conducted, among others, the London Mozart Players, English Symphony Orchestra, Southern Sinfonia, Scottish Ensemble, Nash Ensemble, Brook Street Band, and the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra. He has directed choral workshops and summer schools throughout the UK and abroad – including Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the USA. As a conductor he has made over 30 CDs with major labels. As

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an organist, Matthew has given recitals in Australia, France, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, the USA, and throughout the UK.

Matthew Owens has championed new music, particularly of British composers, conducting over 200 world premieres, including works by leading composers ranging from Jools Holland to Sir James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. He is Director of the Cranmer Anthem Book (launched in October 2017); a project that will set all 92 Collects from the Book of Common Prayer to music, by some of the world's finest composers. As a composer himself, Matthew is published by Oxford University Press, Novello, and the Royal School of Church Music. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians in November 2012, and a Prebendary (Canon) of Wells Cathedral – “for outstanding service” to the Diocese and the Cathedral – in October 2017.

He has contributed academic papers and publications on choristers and on contemporary sacred music (OUP; Journal of Voice; Open Book Publishers).

“The Lambeth We Hope For”

A group of bishops from across the Anglican Communion, led by Bishop George Sumner of Dallas, on Saturday published a [letter](#) in which they express their hopes for next year's Lambeth Conference. This letter is but the latest development in the run-up to the conference, which has already been marked by the Archbishop of Canterbury's proposed exclusion of same-sex spouses and threats of boycotts.



An excerpt
from the
letter:

*At
Lambeth,
though a
fractious
family, we
ought still
to think of
our fellow
Anglicans
in the best
light
possible.
For
example,
there have
been many
important*

*movements
of mission and renewal in our Anglican tradition (e.g. the
Oxford Movement and the East African Revival), and we can
likewise see GAFCON in this way. We can also appreciate
the role Global South Anglicans have played in
strengthening the mission of Christ in their provinces. We
commend the Primates' view that only Churches aligned
with Communion teaching should represent it in 'doctrine
and polity.' But we are also willing to listen to our
colleagues who hold in conscience dissenting views. More*

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generally, we all need in our hearts to lay aside old recriminations.

... We hope for a Lambeth that is ordered to prayer and the Bible, that nourishes our humility, that opens us to God's conversion in the Spirit, and that encourages us to renewed forms of teaching and witness which will inspire and attract younger generations in our nations and our churches. It is also crucial that we reject all forms of cultural and racial pride, while listening and deliberating with one another with full respect.

... United in faith, hope, and love, we can at Lambeth confront together the urgent problems in our Communion and in our world. We all share a worry about what may lie ahead in our common future, for as a divided Church we will struggle to witness to a divided, broken world. We hold in prayer those among us who face persecution and danger. We need to be stewards of creation. We hope for a conference which encourages us all to stand on the side of the poor and those who are maltreated, to call sinners to repentance and to offer forgiveness in the Lord's name, to walk His way of love, and to seek reconciliation among ourselves and with our neighbors.

The *Church Times*, in its [summary of the letter](#) (it's behind a paywall), notes that:

Dr Sumner is one of a small number of bishops in the Episcopal Church who, having initially prohibited the use of same-sex marriage rites in his diocese, has delegated pastoral oversight of parishes that have requested it to an episcopal colleague.



St Patrick's Cathedral Pastoral Area have Corpus Christi celebration in Armagh.

On Thursday, he suggested that the letter had secured support from “more traditional bishops throughout the Anglican Communion, in the centre”.

The Living Church’s [article](#) on the letter, while it highlights the charity the letter’s authors show to GAFCON, also quotes Bishop Sumner in noting that,

... [Bishop Sumner] and his fellow authors were concerned that publicity about the event has been dominated by “the [TEC](#) side of things and GAFCON.” He said, “It seemed like a good time to have this other voice added to the conversation,” and added that he hopes, “as many bishops as possible will attend so they can be part of the conversation and the fellowship.” The letter’s vision of a hopeful but honest time for engagement could prove persuasive to some who are still undecided.

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Sumner said that there are no immediate plans to open up the letter as a statement of common goals for a wider group of bishops, though the group could be open to this development. "If it were to generate people who were to say, 'yes, me too,' that's great. But it stands alone as a statement from this group of people."

June 24/25 - Today in Christian history

June 25, 1115: St. Bernard founds a monastery at Clairvaux, France, that would soon become the center of the Cistercian religious order. The order had been established 17 years earlier to restore Benedictine monasticism to a more primitive and austere state, but it is Bernard who is most closely associated with it. He founded 70 Cistercian monasteries, which in turn founded another 100 in his lifetime.

June 25, 1530: Lutherans present their summary of faith, known as Confession of Augsburg, to Emperor Charles V. Philipp Melanchthon did most of the work preparing it, but it was not presented until it received Martin Luther's approval.

June 25, 1580: On the fiftieth anniversary of the Confession of Augsburg, Lutherans publish the Book of Concord, which contains all the official confessions of the Lutheran Church, in German.

June 25, 1744: The first Methodist conference convenes in London. Leaders set standards for doctrine, liturgy, and discipline, giving an organizational framework to the "Evangelical Revival" touched off by John Wesley and George Whitfield in 1739.

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June 25, 1865: English missionary J. Hudson Taylor forms the China Inland Mission. Its missionaries would have no guaranteed salaries, nor could they appeal for funds; they would simply trust God to supply their needs. Furthermore, its missionaries would adopt Chinese dress and press the gospel into the China interior.

June 24, 64: Roman Emperor Nero begins persecuting Christians (see issue 27: Persecution in the Early Church).

June 24, 1178: Five Canterbury monks report something exploding on the moon, the only recorded time an asteroidal impact has been observed with the naked eye.

June 24, 1519: Theodore Beza, one of the great statesmen of the Reformation and John Calvin's successor at Geneva, is born in Vezelay, France.

June 24, 1542: Roman Catholic reformer, mystic, and poet John of the Cross is born in Spain. A student of Teresa of Avila, he attained fame for his poems "The Dark Night [of the Soul]" and "Spiritual Canticle.

June 24, 1813: Henry Ward Beecher, abolitionist and Congregational clergyman, is born in Litchfield, Connecticut.

June 25 - News briefs

+++ New Messy Church Coordinator for Leinster and Connaught Appointed - Alistair Doyle has been appointed the new Messy Church regional coordinator for Leinster and Connaught.

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Alistair is an ordinand in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and has been instrumental in running Messy Church in his home parish of St Matthias', Killiney–Ballybrack.

His overall aim is to promote, encourage and support the development of Messy Churches of all Christian denominations within Leinster and Connacht.

He will positively promote Messy church within the region and share stories and encourage Messy Churches to register, sign up for newsletters and social media sites.

Alistair will also act as a point of contact to guide, encourage and support newly established Messy churches and will organise an annual Messy Meet Up for all Messy Church Leaders in the region.

“We started our Messy Church in St Matthias' Church four years ago and it has been a blessing to our parish, building community and growing faith. I pray for other churches across Ireland to see the missional opportunity that Messy Church provides, and I look forward to providing guidance and encouragement across Leinster and Connacht, as the Messy network flourishes,” he said.

Alistair is available to chat to anyone who is interested in starting or further developing Messy Church in their parish. Contact him at:

alistair.doyle@messychurch.com or 086 6081223.

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+++ Irish Methodist Connexional Structures are

changing - come July 1st 8 districts will become 3 - North Eastern, North Western and Southern Districts. A Methodist spokesperson commented, "However, structural change in isolation, isn't 'the answer' to the challenges and many opportunities we face as a denomination. It is the breath of God's Spirit which brings life and throughout this period of change our challenge, indeed the invitation before us, is to keep our eyes on God, our Creator, Saviour and Sustainer. These structures are to further facilitate the call we have as Church to join in God's mission with Warm Hearts, Tough Hands and Wet Feet. "

+++Please pray for Ballina, Ballymote and Killala

Presbyterian Churches – and their minister, Rev Molly Deatherage. Pray for the family outing in July. Molly writes, "Hiking, playing games and picnicking are all ways to build the friendships that are foundational to community." Pray for the congregations' annual outreach: serving tea, coffee and homemade goodies to benefit local charities, during the town's festival in mid-July. For many of the 400+ people who attend, this is their contact only with the congregations.

+++Food for thought -

"We are always falling in love or quarreling, looking for jobs or fearing to lose them, getting ill and recovering, following public affairs. If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work." CS Lewis

June 25 News Links

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[Pooh and friends stars of charity exhibit in Randalstown](#)

Belfast Telegraph

Because today's the day a **Church of Ireland** rector and his hundreds of ... on display at Drummahaire Church Hall in the Co Antrim village until Sunday.

[Carnew primary school children amazed by trip to Italy](#)

Gorey Guardian

The two teacher school is under the patronage of the **Church of Ireland** Bishop of Cashel and Ossory. The students had their song go through a round ...

[Diocesan celebration to mark Bishop Leo O'Reilly's golden jubilee](#)

Leitrim Observer

Also present were Canon Mark and Mrs. Barbara Lidwell, representing Bishop Ferran and Mrs Glenfield of the **Church of Ireland**. Gavin Brady from the ...

[Priest blaming autism on parents has retreat cancelled by Canadian dioceses](#)

Irish Times

In **Ireland** members of the **church** worship at Dublin centres in Tallaght, ... CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) **News** independently verified the ...

[Bishop appeals for unity in society at rain-soaked Eucharistic Procession](#)

Echo Live

"This indicated their support for this peace initiative from the **Church of Ireland** that had suffered considerably, especially in West Cork, during the ...

[Glengormley minister takes up top position](#)

Newtown Abbey Times

A Glengormley minister was installed as the new President of the Methodist **Church** in **Ireland** at the opening service of its 250th conference in Cork.

[Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra, Dublin](#)

The Journal of Music

Saturday, 27 July 2019, 5pm – St Ann's **Church**, Dawson Street, Dublin 2. Fifteen of **Ireland's** finest young string, wind, and harpsichord musicians ...

[Concert Planner: 24–30 June 2019](#)

The Journal of Music

27.6.19 – Shore to Shore, Newman University Church, Dublin 27.6.19 ... Regina Nathan Summer Concert 2019, St Columba's **Church of Ireland**, Ennis

[Over 50 events on offer at Boyle Arts Festival](#)

Leitrim Observer

The RTÉ Contempo Quartet will be joined by the Choir of St Joseph's Church for a unique concert in the **Church of Ireland**. Also look out for classical ...

[Church of England urged to offer haven from knife crime](#)

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The Guardian

Churches should open their doors to provide a safe haven for young people at risk of knife crime during after-school flashpoints, the **Church of** ...

Church of England to spend £63m on first central vicar training fund

Telegraph.co.uk

At next month's five-day synod session, members will hear plans to alleviate pressure on dioceses over the next three years as the **Church** pledges ...

Minister 'spiritually abused' the vulnerable

Telegraph.co.uk

The Rev Jonathan Fletcher, 76, was stripped of his **Church** powers by the Bishop of Southwark in 2017 following complaints made to the London ...

Archbishop of Canterbury highlights missional role of religious communities

Anglicannews

Dr Spencer described how the re-founding of religious communities in the **Church of England** in the 19th century had been “like a stone dropped into a ...

AN INVITATION
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the CNI home page

+ Please share CNI with your friends
www.churchnewsireland.org

