

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Clonmacnoise open air service 73

73 years of open air service of Evening Prayer at Clonmacnoise

There are some wonderful ancient sites of Christian worship around the dioceses



of Meath and Kildare. One of these is the monastic site of Clonmacnoise, on the banks of the Shannon.

For the last 73 years, since 1952, a special open air service of Evening Prayer has taken place each year at Clonmacnoise, on the sixth Sunday after Trinity. The service draws people from far afield, some

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of whom have been attending for many years.

On Sunday afternoon the service, organised and led by Canon William Steacy, rector of Athlone Union of parishes, took place. He was assisted by Mrs Roberta Steacy who played the keyboard, as well as a choir from Athlone Union. A number of people from the Union also read the Scripture readings. Bishop Pat



Storey was the guest speaker, looking at the theme of the service which was the place of scripture in our lives.

Clonmacnoise is one of Ireland's most significant early Christian sites, founded by St Ciarán in the mid-6th century at a strategic crossroads along the River Shannon. It quickly grew into a major centre of religion, learning, craftsmanship, and trade, attracting scholars and pilgrims from across Ireland and beyond.

Renowned for its round towers and high crosses Clonmacnoise stands today as a powerful symbol of Ireland's spiritual heritage and a testament to centuries of continuous Christian worship and witness.

Canon William captured the tone of the event in his welcome and introduction. Reflecting on the fact that we

were gathering in a place of prayer over many centuries he talked of looking back and celebrating our rich Christian heritage. But also looking forward to new forms of ministry and outreach with a new pioneer ministry project that will begin in Athlone and Clonmacnoise this coming September.

The offering will go towards the repair of the roof of the church on this ancient monastic site.

The weather largely held. After the service everyone took the opportunity to picnic together.

News

The Christian Aid Ould Lammas Fair team

Please give it up for Dibbie McCaughan and all the members of the Ballycastle Christian Aid Committee who have raised over £5,500 for our Christian Aid Week appeal.

The Committee raised this magnificent sum in a variety of different ways:

- A special Christian Aid Week (CAW) service at which Kaye Steele spoke about our work.
- Placing red CAW envelopes in a number of local churches.
- A bucket collection in four local supermarkets.
- A house-to-house collection.
- A '70k in May' sponsored walk.



L-R, Susan McMaster, Dibbie McCaughan, Doreen Girvan, Moyna McCullough, Olive McMullan, Hazel Henry, Betty Wilkinson, Kathleen McCaughan and Phyllis Hargie.

- A coffee morning, cake sale and plant sale, which was held on Saturday 14 June in the Ballycastle Church of Ireland, Parishes of Ramoan and Culfeightrin hall.
- A local musician very kindly donated the money he collected while busking on the street.

Please join us in thanking Dibbie and all the committee members for the hard work that produced this amazing result. We're also grateful to everyone who donated so generously.

Special Down & Dromore collection for Middle East raises £10,000



A special collection for the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal for World Aid and Development by parishes in Down and Dromore to support people caught up in the violence in Gaza and the wider Middle East, has raised over £10,000.

Bishop David McClay encouraged every parish to give people the opportunity in June to support a special collection – which will be channelled by the Bishops' Appeal to two trusted partners working on the ground in the Middle East, Tearfund and the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem (who both work across the region).

The money raised will support emergency aid to those most in need, through healthcare, food and shelter, and whatever support can be provided to those in such great need. The

Diocese of Jerusalem runs one of the main hospitals in Gaza (Al-Ahli Arab Hospital) which cares for people from all communities. Tearfund is working in Gaza, the West Bank and around the Middle East to provide support and vital supplies to people impacted by the conflict, including displaced communities.

Parishes and individuals still have the opportunity to contribute to the total, by sending donations to Diocese of Down & Dromore, Unit 1, 21 Old Channel Road, Belfast, BT3 9DE – marked for Gaza and Middle East Appeal.

Poll: Anglicans now back Reform as much as Tories

New polling indicates that Reform UK is making significant gains among Britain's Christian voters, particularly Anglicans and Catholics.

Historically, Anglicans leaned Conservative while Catholics and free-church Protestants often supported Labour, but YouGov polling from the University of Exeter now shows that among Anglicans, 38 per cent are likely to vote Reform, equal to those who strongly oppose the party.

Among Catholics, Reform now edges ahead of the Conservatives and rivals Labour.

“Only 17 per cent of Anglicans are strong supporters of the Conservatives,” the research notes, “compared with 21 per cent who back Reform.”

For Catholics, 17 per cent are now firmly in Reform's camp, more than either Labour or the Tories.

Researchers suggest that the shift may stem from shared concerns about immigration and national identity.

"The Christian vote has become more fragmented," the study concludes. "If any party is attracting consistent Christian backing today, it's Reform."

Education

Handover of brand-new Ballymena Campus of Northern Regional College

Northern Regional College has reached a significant milestone with the official handover of its brand-new Ballymena Campus from contractor Heron Bros.

Principal & Chief Executive, Mel Higgins, and Chief Operating Officer, Sean Lavery from Northern Regional College met with Karl Mc Killop Deputy Managing Director from Heron Bros. onsite to mark the occasion.

Fully funded by the Department for the Economy NI, the £55 million campus forms part of a wider £101 million capital investment in Northern Regional College's estate, which also includes the recently completed Causeway Campus in Coleraine. With Ballymena Campus set to open for the 2025/26 academic year this September, the College's new

accommodation will significantly enhance further and higher education provision in the town and beyond.

Read more 🖱️ <https://loom.ly/7C364dk>

Stranmillis student wins inter-church religious education award

Congratulations to Lewis Getty, who received the Transferor Representatives' Council Award for excellence in religious education on his B.Ed. graduation this summer from Stranmillis University College.

The award is presented each year to a Stranmillis student who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to creativity and innovation in this subject area.

The award was presented by Dr Peter Hamill, Secretary of the Transferor Representatives' Council. Congratulations to Lewis and to all teachers who are starting out on what we trust will be a rewarding career.

The TRC oversees the appointment of over 1,500 governors to controlled schools; these transferor governors are nominated by representatives of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, and noted by the Education Authority.

Inst Scouts Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award Success



28 Scouts successfully completed their two day Qualifying Expeditions in the Mourne Mountains recently.

Congratulations to all the boys involved.

Thanks to Bronze Award Leader Mrs Rogers; assessor Mr Ashley Parks; and to supervisors Mr Titterington and Mrs Parks.

A vision and passion for ice cream

On World Ice Cream Day 2025 we're spotlighting a CAFRE Food Graduate - Bethany Boyd.



The Boyd family, Trevor, Barbara, and Bethany have transformed their former sheep farm in Pomeroy into something extraordinary: Betty's Ice Cream NI

With a shared vision and a passion for flavour, armed with a pasteuriser, Bethany's food business expertise from Loughry Campus, Barbara's retail know-how, and Trevor's farm management skills, the family launched a brand that's now making waves in the local food scene.

Their secret?



- 🍦 Innovative flavour development
- 🍦 Creative marketing strategies
- 🍦 Fresh approaches to service and delivery

Through the Invest NI Innovation Voucher Programme, and with CAFRE technical knowledge and practical support the business idea grew.

Thinking about starting your own farm-based food venture? Get in touch with **Food Technologists at Loughry Campus**, visit www.cafre.ac.uk to explore how you can turn your idea into reality.

Here's to celebrating local innovation, family entrepreneurship, and of course ice cream!

Cathedral Calls

Belfast in Blackburn



On Sunday Belfast Cathedral Choir sang for Blackburn Cathedral's Choral Eucharist and the Choral Evensong services.

A wonderful building and acoustic with a truly incredible organ, put through its paces by the Belfast organists and organ scholars in music by three great contemporary English composers Neil Cox (Missa Brevis) Bryan Kelly



(Evening Canticles in C) and Sir John Rutter (O Clap Your Hands).

Comment, "Huge thanks to the clergy and staff of the Cathedral, and organist in residence John Hosking in particular, for making us feel so welcome. A great time was had by all."



Clergy and ministry

Donegal happy birthday to the Rector



From the Rector: It was a great surprise to be greeted with birthday cakes and serenaded with singing after Sunday services, in recognition of my upcoming 50th birthday! I can't believe I am that old. The Lord has



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been very good to us, especially in bringing us to this group of parishes way back in 2011. You are our second family and we love you all. ❤️

PS I am still 49 for a couple more days!

David

Clerical changes in Diocese of Derry



Bishop McKeown has announced the following clerical changes for the Diocese of Derry, effective from Saturday, 30th August 2025.

Rev John McDevitt, PP Steelstown and Adm Culmore to be PP Clonmany and PP Culdaff

Rev Sean O'Donnell, CC Three Patrons, to be PP Melmount and PP Sion Mills

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Rev Declan McGeehan, CC Cappagh, to be PP Steelstown and Adm Culmore

Rev Malachy Gallagher, CC Melmount and CC Sion Mills, to be CC Cappagh

Rev Stephen Ward, CC Long Tower, to be CC Three Patrons

Rev Peter O'Kane, ceasing his diocesan role as Training in Evangelisation and Adult Faith Formator and becoming lecturer, St Patrick's College, Maynooth

Rev Michael Doherty, PP Melmount and PP Sion Mills, to retire

Rev Charles Logue, CC Clonca, to retire

Rev Kevin Doherty, on loan from the Archdiocese of Dublin, Adm Clonmany and Adm Culdaff, to return to ministry in the Archdiocese of Dublin

I thank the priests who so generously made themselves available for these appointments.

+ Donal (Photo above)

Please keep our priests and the people and parishes they serve in your prayers.

Corrymeela Community seeks Programme Manager – Youth Peacebuilding

The Corrymeela Community now wishes to recruit for the post of
Programme Manager – Youth Peacebuilding

Permanent 37.5hrs per week. Salary: £34,693. Location: Belfast and/or Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle. Sponsors: This post is supported by NI Community Relations Council Core Funding Programme and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Reconciliation Fund.

Overall Purpose: The 2025 – 2028 Corrymeela Community Strategy Understand Each Other Better, Trust Each Other More acknowledges that in an ever changing and complex world our contribution is ever more essential as we continue to contribute to the work of peace and reconciliation both here in Northern Ireland and in the wider world. Central to this is nurturing the next generation of emerging peace builders.

Closing date for applications is: Monday 18th August 2025 @ 12 noon. Interviews on: 25/26 August 2025.

<https://www.communityni.org/job/programme-manager-youth-peace-building-0>

To apply: Contact the Corrymeela Finance Office requesting an application pack.

Tel: 02820 762626 Email: finance@corrymeela.org



Events

Portaferry Sails and Sounds, Maritime Sea Shanty Fest 1-4 August 2025

Set sail for four unforgettable days of maritime celebration, live music, cultural traditions, and coastal fun at the Portaferry Sails and Sounds Festival 2025.

Come join us in Portaferry, on the shores of Strangford Lough, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and enjoy something for everyone: from families and day-trippers to music lovers, maritime enthusiasts, cultural explorers, and international visitors.



SAINT FIN BARRE'S
CATHEDRAL + CORK

ORGAN RECITALS AUGUST 2025

Friday 1st August
1.10pm

Joseph Ripka
*St Paul's Cathedral
Oklahoma, USA*

Friday 8th August
1.10pm

Christos Theel
*Frankfurt am Main
Germany*

Friday 15th August
1.10pm

Harry Meehan
*St Canice's Cathedral
Kilkenny*

Friday 22nd August
1.10pm

Oliver Waterer
*Selby Abbey
UK*

Friday 29th August
1.10pm

David Leigh
*St Patrick's Cathedral
Dublin*

Admission €10 on the door
or from stfinbarres.ie
Season ticket available

Festival hubs include the town centre, shoreline, Portaferry Sailing Club, and The Recreation Hub, with events and entertainment spread throughout the village.

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Some activities require advanced booking. Find out more -
<https://bit.ly/44iLwSc>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at
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www.churchnewsireland.org

Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning

Please recommend to your friends

