

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – History making at King's



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History making at King's

It was history in the making when Dr Gillian Tett became the first Provost of King's College to marry in their 500-year-

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old chapel, in a service led by the Dean of Chapel Revd, Dr Stephen Cherry.

Many congratulations to Gillian and her husband Henrik.

Photos courtesy Lina & Tom - UK and Italy Wedding Photography



Dancers who entertained visitors at St Columb's Cathedral Derry exhibition of cloaks



cmsireland
equipping the church **in mission**

Ahoghill/Portglenone in South Sudan

Pray for Rev Dennis Christie, along with Niall and Stephen, from Ahoghill/Portglenone Parish are in South Sudan to spend 10 days with CMSI partners in Ibba Diocese. Pray for

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health, safety and that good relationships will be built with the church family in Ibba.



Bellringers and buses - three in a row

Two reports of bell ringers yesterday in CNI, and another one today - From St Mark's Dundela who welcomed bell ringers from England who joined the local team at midday for a special hour of ringing.

Sharing the gospel is 'inherently political', says Bishop of Chelmsford

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Guli Francis-Dehqani, has strongly advocated for the Christian duty to speak "steadfast, prophetic words" into the nation's political life.

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In her speech at the Catholic-based National Justice and Peace Network conference in Swanwick, she emphasised that the church's mission-seeking justice, peace, and spreading the good news of Christ is inherently political.

"Christ came to free the captive and bring good news to the poor, that was a political act," she stated.

Bishop Guli has been a leading voice in advocating against the Rwanda bill and participating in housing provision discussions.

In her speech, she also asserted that Christians have a responsibility to amplify the voices of the voiceless and vulnerable.



Dunseverick Parish Church, north Connor, Courtesy of Pictureskew

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Citing Bishop George Bell, who opposed bombing during the Second World War, she noted the importance of the church and politics remaining distinct and independent, acknowledging the moral convictions of MPs as being as strong as those of the bishops.

She also addressed the low voter turnout in the general election, challenging the audience to transform disengagement and apathy into a quest for "truly just" politics, aiming to heal division, pursue peace, and seek justice.

Majority of Scottish Christians feel unsupported by government, says new poll

A recent poll by the think tank Logos Scotland revealed that the vast majority of Scottish Christians feel unsupported by the Scottish Government.

The survey highlighted significant concerns among Christians about abuse, negative comments, and attitudes directed towards Christian politicians in the media.

The polling data indicated that more than 70 per cent of Scot Christians believe the government does not support their faith.

Logos Scotland, established last year, conducted the survey to gauge the sentiments of the Christian community in Scotland.

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CEO Shona Haslam said in a statement: "These findings expose a palpable feeling of exclusion amongst Scotland's vibrant Christian community. One in three Scots hold a Christian faith, yet it's clear that there is much work to be done to increase tolerance towards this faith group. Swinney has promised a more inclusive, unified government and country under his new leadership. We hope the data can help guide leaders to listen to the views of all Scots in the decision-making processes of our country - including Christians."

The think tank aims to influence public discourse by encouraging deeper consideration of issues from a Christian perspective. Their mission is to challenge the accepted worldview and foster a culture grounded in Christian faith that empowers public figures to seek truth and engage in meaningful debate on societal issues.

Key findings from the survey of over 1,000 Scots showed that almost three-quarters of Christian respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that "the Scottish Government has been supportive of Christian principles in its recent legislative programme." It also highlighted how two-thirds of Scots believe Christians face opposition in Scotland, including negative social attitudes, incidents of prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination and around 75 per cent are concerned about the abuse Christian politicians receive in the media.

In contrast, non-Christian respondents largely do not share these views, with the majority believing Christians do not face discrimination and are not concerned by the criticism of Christian politicians. However, over half of non-Christians

surveyed either did not know or also thought that the Scottish Government was not supportive of Christians.

Shona Haslam told Premier Christian News: " We were surprised that none-Christians also think that Christians aren't supported by the government.

"So, it wasn't just Christians, it was none-Christians as well. That was a really fascinating finding what we had in the poll."

The survey also examined how equipped Christians feel to speak out on public issues and which denominations discuss public policy matters the most. It showed how Free Church of Scotland attendees feel most equipped to speak on public issues, Catholics and independents are most likely to discuss and encourage involvement in public policy and The Church of Scotland is the least likely to discuss public issues and how to get involved.

With a new minority government in place, Logos Scotland supports a reset in how the Scottish Government engages with faith groups to address the feelings of exclusion within the wider Christian community. They welcome comments from First Minister John Swinney, who has emphasised the need for unity and inclusion in his administration.

Reflecting on the data, Shona Haslam said: "These findings expose a palpable feeling of exclusion amongst Scotland's vibrant Christian community. One in three Scots hold a Christian faith, yet it's clear that there is much work to be done to increase tolerance towards this faith group.

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"Swinney has promised a more inclusive, unified government and country under his new leadership. We hope this data can help guide leaders to listen to the views of all Scots in the decision-making processes of our country - including Christians."

She added: "There is an opportunity now for the First Minister to set a new tone for Scotland - one that doesn't attempt to silence or 'cancel' Christian views, but rather, includes all perspectives in the public conversation. We hope that John Swinney and his Cabinet do all they can to create a more inclusive, free, and fair Scotland for us all."

Christian climate protests urge National Trust to ditch Barclays at 40 sites this week

As school holidays are underway, National Trust locations will be visited by Christian climate protestors this week, calling for the charity to stop banking with Barclays.

The coordinated week of action at more than 40 National Trust sites will take place from Monday July 29 to Sunday August 4. Trust properties being targeted include Ham House in West London, Corfe Castle in Bournemouth, Grey's Court in Henley-on-Thames and Wentworth Castle in South Yorkshire as well as the spot where the Magna Carta was signed and Chartwell in Kent, the family home and garden of Sir Winston Churchill. A map showing the full list of sites being targeted is available [here](#).

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The protest at each site will look different. While one group is doing a protest parade through the National Trust site, another group is doing a punting protest through Bathampton Meadows in Bath. While some groups are creating music, with drummers and singers, other groups are holding a protest picnic.

The campaign urges the National Trust to stop banking with Barclays - the biggest funder of fossil fuels in Europe. Last year Barclays provided over £17.5 billion to fossil fuel companies driving up emissions and pollution, a 10% increase on the year before, and a total of £182 billion since 2016. A petition has been set up, calling on the National Trust to "Bank Better - Drop Barclays".

Many of the actions held over the week are being held by Christians, including members of the clergy, from the group Christian Climate Action. They will be taking action alongside other groups, including concerned National Trust members, volunteers and staff.

A number of faith organisations have already announced they are dropping the bank due to its climate change record, such as Christian Aid charity, Greenbelt Festival and Sheffield Cathedral. At the time of switching banks, Martin Birch, Christian Aid's chief operating officer, said: "Whilst Barclays was able to provide banking services to fragile contexts, their record on fossil fuel finance, and their weak commitment to future improvements in this area meant that we had to seek a more suitable provider." A number of secular organisations have also moved away from Barclays, including Oxfam charity, Leeds University and Manchester Metropolitan University.

This isn't the first time The National Trust has been under fire from Christians for its choice of bank. In 1944, Richard Acland, a Christian socialist presented the family's 17,000-acre ancestral estate to The National Trust. Last year, his grandson, Dominic Acland told, the Financial Times that his grandfather would be "horrified that the National Trust is banking with Barclays", due to its links to fossil fuels.

Cathedral Calls

Rippon on tour

Rippon Cathedral Choir on July 28 received a standing ovation from the audience of 600 for their performance of Handel's Zadok the Priest at Basilika Waldsassen.

On July 29 they shared a sung eucharist at Munich Cathedral and then moved on to Nuremberg.

Southern Cathedral Singers at Salisbury Cathedral

Choral evensong today Thursday 1st August at Salisbury Cathedral will be sung by past members of the Southern Cathedral Singers, a group started by the late Martin How MBE.

In amongst the singers will be choir directors and cathedral musicians who were trained by Martin. "Please join us for a 5.30pm service of Music by How, Stanford and Campbell.

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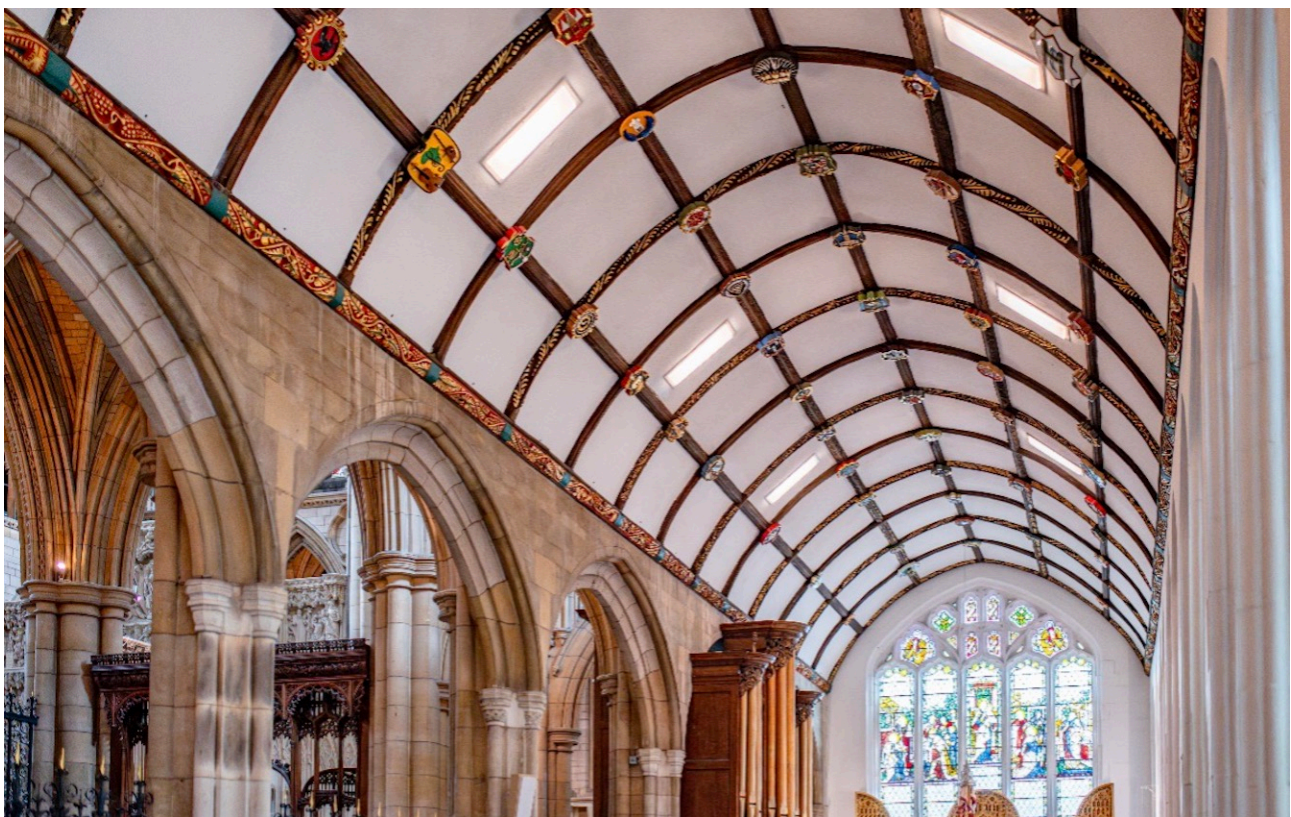
Director for the day Jeremy Jackman and Organist, Sachin Gunga from Portsmouth Cathedral. It will be fun!”

Chester at Beverley Minster

Chester Cathedral Nave Choir will be on their way to Beverley Minster for their Summer residency.

They will be singing Evensong on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday as well as the Sunday morning Eucharist.

“If you’re going to be in the area, come and say hello !”



St Mary’s Aisle – Truro Cathedral

A cherished reminder of Truro Cathedral’s past has been brought back into use for prayer and worship after a 12-month project of renewal.

The newly renovated St Mary's Aisle has finally been unveiled and re-opened with a rededication service and a celebration.

The extensive renovation project started in May 2023 and spanned a year, during which the Aisle, which also serves as a parish church, had to be closed to the public.

The Rt Revd Graham James (honorary Assistant Bishop of Truro and former Bishop of Norwich) and the Dean of Truro, the Very Revd Simon Robinson (and Rector of St Mary's Parish, Truro) led the rededication service.

Cathedral volunteer Roselle Baker cut the ribbon at the celebration event that included music and family activities and was witnessed by the Mayor and Mayoress of Truro.

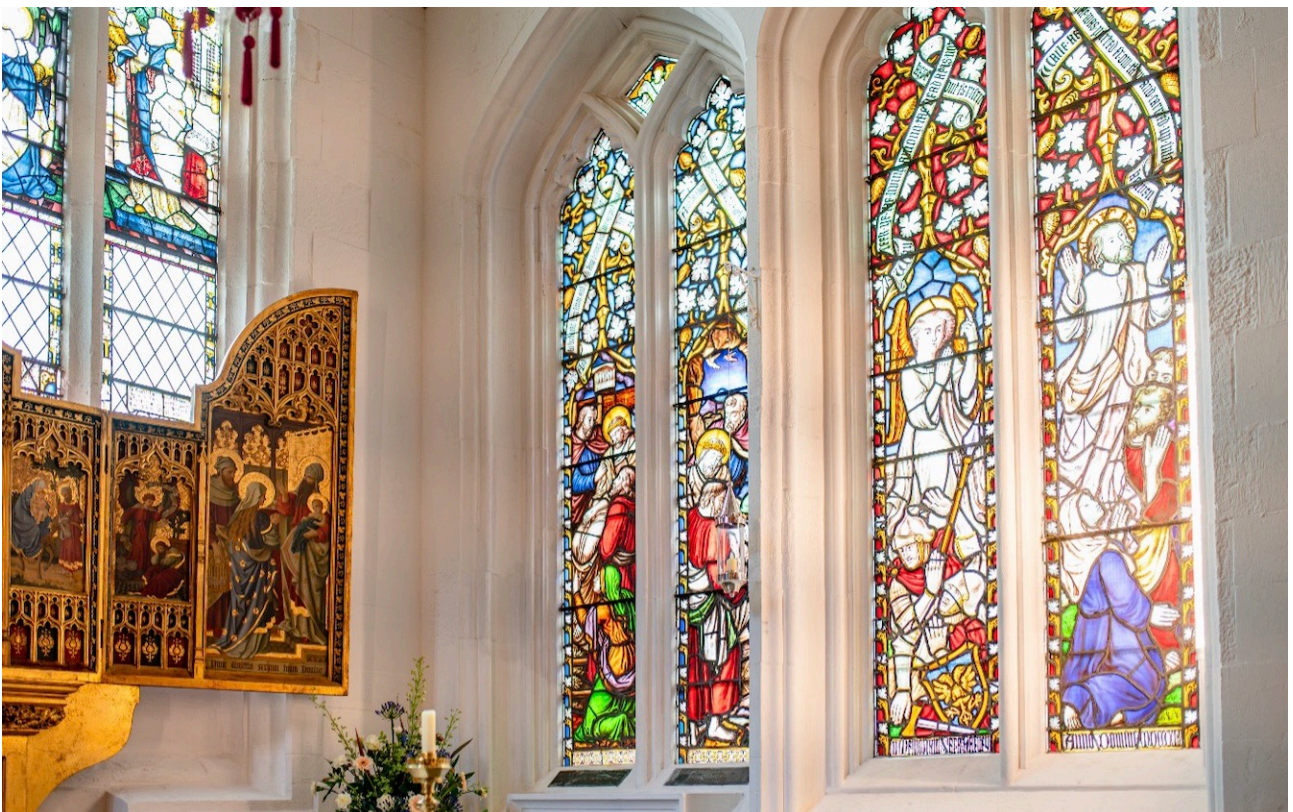
Dean Simon said:

“Both events were great fun and affirmed the significance and importance of St Mary's Aisle in the lives of so many Cornish families.

“It was very special to have a service of rededication and to learn of Bishop Graham James' deep connection with Cornwall and St Mary's Aisle, and it was very good to welcome funders and so many families to our second event. “I look forward to the continued use of St Mary's Aisle as a place of prayer, worship, activities and events for the very

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many people who love and visit Truro Cathedral.”



St Mary's Aisle is one aisle of the 16th-century parish church of St Mary that was incorporated into the much more recent Truro Cathedral – a cherished reminder of old Truro – and a

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testament to Victorian engineering prowess and the architectural ingenuity of John Loughborough Pearson.

Time had taken its toll on St Mary's Aisle. The weather-beaten roof and deteriorating stonework demanded urgent attention. Thanks to the meticulous efforts of all the specialists involved in the project, who re-slatted the roof, repaired the parquet floor and restored the stained-glass windows, St Mary's Aisle now stands rejuvenated for worship, family events and other activities.



The work was made possible by a funding package that included donations from local people, gifts in Wills and grants awarded by charitable trusts and foundations including the Wolfson Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Dulverton Trust, Bernard Sunley Foundation, Cornwall Historic Churches Trust, the Benefact Trust and the Friends of Truro Cathedral.

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The project also received £112,410 from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Good Growth Programme, which is managed by Cornwall Council and funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Judith Field, Fundraising Lead for Truro Cathedral, said:

“I have always felt that St Mary’s Aisle is a wonderful place. It has been much missed during the repair and refurbishment works, and my heartfelt thanks go to every individual and organisation whose generosity has made this restoration project possible.”

The newly renovated St Mary’s Aisle has finally been unveiled and re-opened with a rededication service and a celebration.

Clergy and ministry

Sadness and thankfulness as rector leaves

Rev Canon Barry Paine conducted his last service on Sunday as rector of Tamlaght, Ballinderry & Ardboe.





The parish expressed its great sadness and thankfulness “because he gave his all for 15 years to teach us the gospel, direct us, tolerate us and of course humour us all.

“We wish Rev Barry and Heather God's richest Blessings in their retirement adventure. You will be missed beyond words”.

Heritage

Father of Atomic Bomb Survivor buried in Londonderry City Cemetery

Architect and engineer, William Barker, is said to have come from an old Derry family, and was born on 12 August 1851.



He served an apprenticeship with the Derry builders George & Robert A. Ferguson and subsequently practised as an architect and engineer in Derry. While he was still young he was responsible for large undertakings in Omagh, Coleraine and other towns...had charge of the Corporation waterworks at Creggan and was associated with the layout of Foyle College grounds for building purposes.

Barker died on 30 May 1898 – according to family tradition, he had been unconscious for six months following a fall from a horse. He left a widow, Mary, née McCracken (1860-1943) and three children, Mary Violet (1884-1941), Thomas McCurdy (1885-1967), future Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and William Alexander (1897-1965). He was buried in Londonderry City Cemetery, later joined by his wife and his son William Alexander.

William's son, Thomas McCurdy, was a Presbyterian minister, a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, the first full-time secretary of the Irish Student Christian Movement, the convenor and organiser of the 1913 conference 'Ireland's Hope,' the proceedings of which he edited, and then later professor of New Testament Greek in Moukden, Manchuria, China, where he continued to teach with occasional furloughs until 1951 when Mao Zedong could no longer guarantee his safety.

He returned to Ireland and served as minister of the Presbyterian Church in Donegal town until his retirement. His church elected him moderator and Trinity College conferred on him an honorary degree. He remained in contact with Mao Zedong until shortly before his death. He is buried in Castlerock, County Londonderry.

He was a Japanese prisoner of war in Nagasaki with, among others, a community of Catholic nuns to whom, in the absence of a priest of their own church, he ministered on a daily basis, a ministry which was later recognised with gratitude by Pope Pius XII when he learned of it after the war. We believe that the nuns may have been Franciscan Missionary Sisters as there was a Franciscan presence in Nagasaki.

Thomas was in Nagasaki when the atomic bomb was exploded over the city on August 9, 1945.

Ann Barker was Thomas Barker's second wife. She was a medical doctor and like her husband exercised her profession during her incarceration in Nagasaki and it was

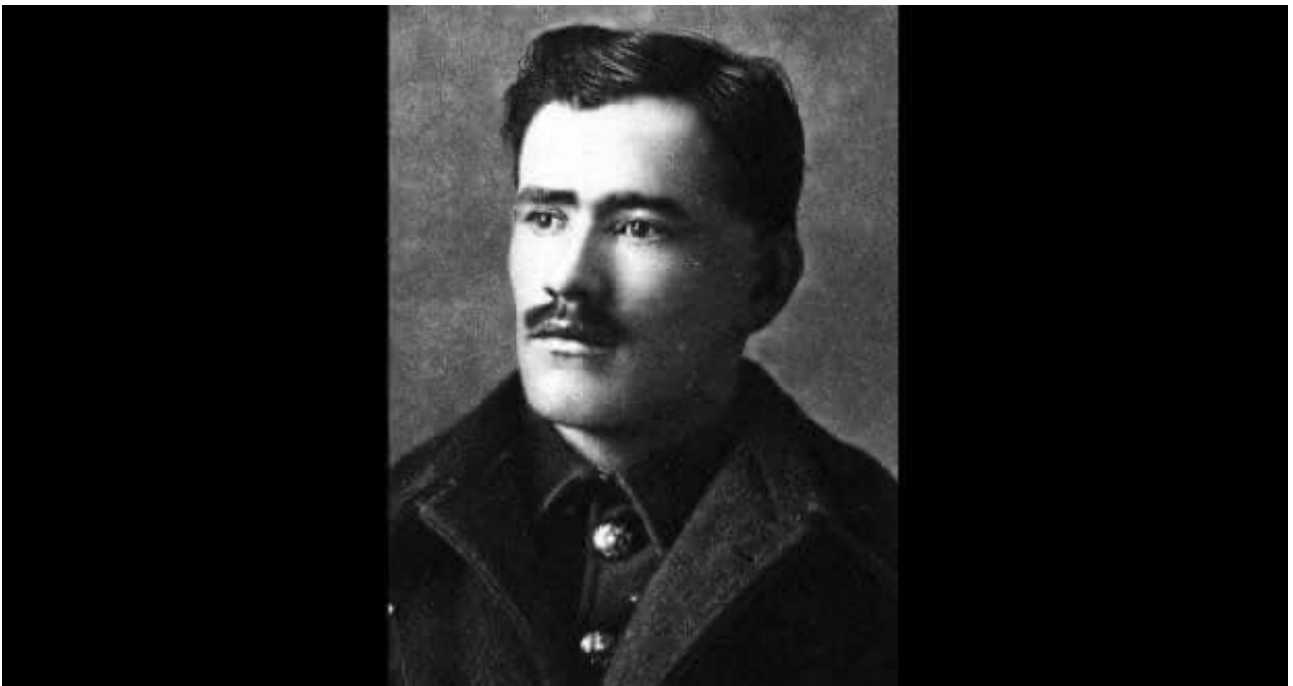
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her skill in later years that helped Thomas to continue living an immensely rich life well into retirement in spite of the distorting effects the bomb had had on his physique.

Poems for today

A Poet's Grave by Francis Ledwidge, and War by Hedd Wynn

Both young poets, one Irish and the other Welsh died 107 years ago yesterday at Passchendaele. They were buried a few yards from each other at Artillery Wood Cemetery in the village of Boezinge.



A Poet's Grave by Francis Ledwidge

When I leave down this pipe my friend
And sleep with flowers I loved, apart,

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My songs shall rise in wilding things
Whose roots are in my heart.

And here where that sweet poet sleeps
I hear the songs he left unsung,
When winds are fluttering the flowers
And summer-bells are rung.

War by Hedd Wynn

Woe that I live in bitter days,
As God is setting like a sun
And in his place, as lord and slave,
Man raises forth his heinous throne.

When he thought God was gone at
last
He put his brother to the sword.
Now death is roaring in our ears,
Shadowing the shanties of the poor.

The old and silenced harps are hung
On yonder willow trees again.
The bawl of boys is on the wind.
Their blood is blended in the rain.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site



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