

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Armagh youth celebrate 150th

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Armagh youth celebrate 150th



Young people from every parish in the diocese marked the 150th anniversary of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on a Thursday last.

An Icon of St Patrick was dedicated (left).

Speaking to the BBC before Thursday's service, Archbishop Martin said: "We are very unique in Armagh, we have two Saint Patrick's Cathedrals on two hills looking across at each other."

"And thanks be to God, we've great friendship and relationships nowadays."

People and places



Moravian Settlement of Gracehill a confirmed opener for European Heritage

Visit the 18th century Moravian Settlement of Gracehill and experience the unique atmosphere and heritage of this recent addition to the UK World Heritage tentative list.

Gracehill is Northern Ireland's first designated Conservation Area and the only complete Moravian Settlement in Ireland. Special activities for EHOD include: • The Old School.

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This historic building is home to a Visitor centre and a period schoolroom depicting life in Gracehill in the 1800's. Guided Walking Tours around the village take place hourly. Tea, refreshments and craft stalls in the Cennick Hall (behind the Church).

Gracehill Village, Gracehill, Ballymena, BT42 2NN

Saturday 9th September 12.30 - 17.00

Gracehill Moravian Church

For booking information and a full list of EHOD events visit:

EHOD Digital Brochure: <https://bit.ly/4794JX3>

EHOD Web App: <https://bit.ly/EHOD2023>

Discover N.I: <https://bit.ly/3DGW28Q>

Armagh's Cathedrals have great friendship and relationships nowadays, Archbishop Eamon Martin

Addressing churchgoers at an evening prayer on Thursday night, the Primate of All Ireland – Archbishop Eamon Martin – unveiled a specially commissioned icon of Saint Patrick, written by the Redemptoristine Sisters in Drumcondra, Dublin, Allan Preston writes in The Irish News.

The image shows St Patrick cradling the Cathedral in his arm in a gesture of protection, symbolising his vocational role for the people of Ireland.



After the foundation stone of the Cathedral was laid in 1840, Archbishop Martin said it would have been a “joyful moment for the Catholics of Ireland.”

“That was like a renaissance moment after Catholic Emancipation - to have our own Cathedral here in Armagh, the see of Saint Patrick, after centuries of discrimination and exclusion. No wonder 20 to 30,000 people turned up for the occasion.”

Thanking the “countless people in Ireland” that had sacrificed to construct the Cathedral, he said there was also “huge generosity” from the Irish diaspora in America and Canada as well as from many Protestant neighbours.

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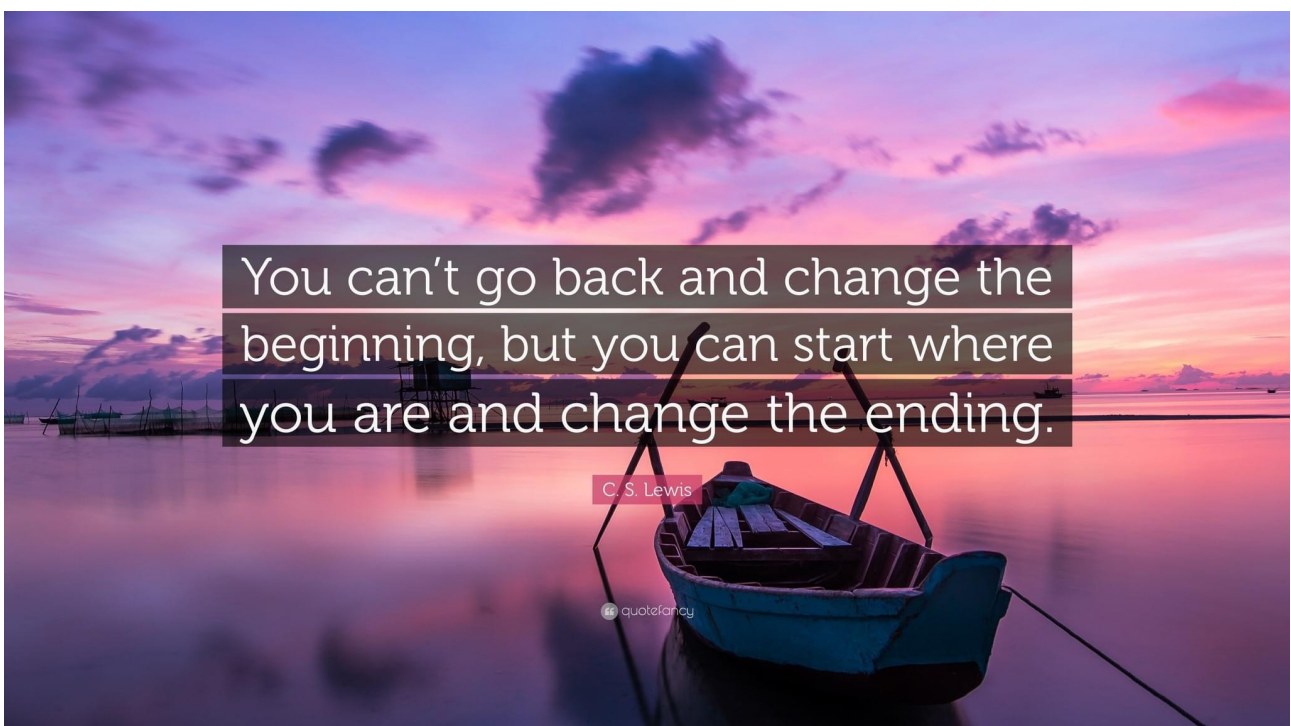
Looking towards the next 150 years, he urged churchgoers to follow in the example of St Patrick.

“One day this beautiful Cathedral will eventually fall into ruin or be replaced. What is really important is we keep alive the faith and hope that this place represents and hand on the faith to our children and grandchildren.

“Wouldn’t it be a shame if this beautiful Cathedral ceased to be a living house of prayer and ended up as simply another interesting tourist stop for visitors to Armagh.”

Armagh is also home to the Church of Ireland Cathedral of the same name. Speaking to the BBC before Thursday's service, Archbishop Martin said: “We are very unique in Armagh, we have two Saint Patrick’s Cathedrals on two hills looking across at each other.

“And thanks be to God, we’ve great friendship and relationships nowadays.”





The Church's One Foundation flower festival in Gortin

The interior of St Patrick's Church of Ireland, in Gortin, offered a colourful riposte to the mizzly, grey evening outside, last Friday evening (25th August, 2023) as the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, performed the official opening of the Parish of Lower Badoney with Greenan's eagerly anticipated festival of flowers, 'The Church's One Foundation'.

Parishioners and friends from neighbouring parishes attended the opening ceremony, which was led by the rector, Rev Ivan Dinsmore, and Rev Sean McClafferty - one of the Diocese's new Ordained Local Ministers.

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"Flowers are not forever," Bishop Andrew reminded those present, "and even the hardiest of blooms only lasts a short while. As well as the beauty of creation, and the beauty of the Creator, flowers remind us of the transience of life." The Bishop said we needed to look somewhere - and to someone beyond ourselves - for permanence and life that lasts forever.



"For me," Bishop Andrew said in his address, "a flower festival becomes like a looking glass into the beauty, creativity and life of God, and also the beauty, creativity and life of God's people. And I hope as we spend some time this evening looking at these beautiful displays, and we spend some time in the beauty of each other's company with a cup of tea afterwards, that our minds will be drawn to the one

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who is the way, the truth and the life, and the one who comes to bless us today and every day.”

Today, Monday 28th August 2023 is the last day of The Church's One Foundation festival. Refreshments will be available throughout, in the nearby Church Hall, and proceeds will go towards the New Church Hall Fund.

Belfast minister highlights impact of increased drug addiction among city's homeless population

"The churchyard is now being regularly used as a toilet while graves have been desecrated along with the church building itself"

A Belfast church minister has expressed concern over the escalating drug problem amongst the city's homeless population, Belfast Live reports.

Rev Brian Stewart from St George's Church of Ireland in the city centre says anti-social behaviour in the grounds of the historic building has increased over recent months and it has become "a drinking den".

He says parishioners are also having to clean up after people urinating and defecating in the churchyard on an almost daily basis, alongside drug usage, drinking, littering associated with rough sleeping, graffiti, fly tipping and most recently grave desecration.

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Rev Brian told Belfast Live: "It's a two-fold issue of homelessness and people using St George's as a place to gather, take drugs and drink to excess and then leaving a mess behind for us to clear up.

"This has been an ongoing issue for the last five years at least but it has got much worse recently because of the growing volume of drug paraphernalia, particularly needles, left lying around and the increasing aggression of some of the individuals concerned.

"The churchyard is now being regularly used as a toilet while graves have been desecrated along with the church building itself. We have around 60 graves within the grounds and this desecration causes great distress to the families of those whose ashes are buried there.

"And now just in recent weeks, we have found needles and human excrement both outside and occasionally inside the building when the church is open during the day.

"We're having to clean up after them most days of the week and while we've had assistance from the City Council's needle teams, who patrol the grounds and lift most of the needles, we still find quite a few that are discarded between their visits.

"The churchyard is now being regularly used as a toilet while graves have been desecrated along with the church building itself." Courtesy of Belfast Live

In the media

Royal Black leader slams 'EU Tyranny'

Sunday Life - Northern Ireland must be freed from the tyranny of European Union rules, the head of the Royal Black Preceptory has said, Rebecca Black writes.

Sovereign grand master Rev William Anderson made the call as he addressed thousands gathered in Loughgall for the institution's annual Last Saturday demonstration.

Around 17,000 members of the loyal order were involved, with major parades also taking place in Artigarvan, Dromore, Larne, Lisburn, and Moneymore.

Dromore hosted the largest demonstration of the day. An estimated 6,000 participants, including 90 bands, were on parade.

Rev Anderson's remarks come as the Stormont Assembly remains collapsed amid a DUP boycott over post-Brexit trading arrangements.

Unionists object to a trade border in the Irish Sea between Northern Ireland and Britain.

While the UK Government and the European Union re-entered negotiations to agree the Windsor Framework earlier this year, DUP leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said he wants to see legislation to ensure Northern Ireland's place within the UK is protected.



Sovereign Grand Master Rev William Anderson said Northern Ireland must be freed from the tyranny of European Union rules

Rev Anderson said the Royal Black Preceptory's constitutional resolution called for the removal of the “continuing controls being exercised over citizens in Northern Ireland”, and for the restoration of “full equal citizenship of the United Kingdom to all its citizens as set out in the Act of Union”.

He called for Northern Ireland citizens to be freed “from the tyranny of persecution” being exercised by the European Union.

The resolution also referenced Northern Ireland's troubled past.

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It sets out “there never was any justification for murder and violence” and refers to a “narrative that sets about the rewriting of such history”.

Rev Anderson told the gathering: “Our hurt is being increased by those who are trying to rewrite their evil deeds of the past.

“Today, we need to remain resolute in our stand for those who are victims of violence of the past and ensure their stories are told accurately.”



News Letter - Unionist parties have asked the Assembly to financially support the installation of a sculpture at Stormont which marks 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland.

Victims' group slams decision to invite US cardinal to Armagh Cathedral

Belfast Telegraph - A group representing victims of clerical abuse has criticised the decision to invite a prominent US cardinal to Northern Ireland.

Timothy Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, is visiting Armagh on Sunday.

He will celebrate Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral to mark 150 years since its dedication in August 1873.

However, abuse victims have expressed dismay at the invite.

Previously Cardinal Dolan has been criticised for authorising payments to abuser priests in exchange for their departure.

In the US, survivors of clerical sexual abuse have also raised concerns over Cardinal Timothy Dolan's cover up of sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy.

The Dromore Group said it was "appalled" at the decision.

It comprises survivors of Ireland's most predatory paedophile priest, Fr Malachy Finegan, and their families.

The group has written to Archbishop Eamon Martin criticising the invite.

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Its letter states: “The Dromore Group sees Dolan’s participation and role in the mass, and your part in that process, as grossly insensitive and disrespectful of clerical abuse victims and survivors.”

It said members wanted Cardinal Dolan, who also previously completed a three-year term as president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, to be withdrawn from the mass.

Abuse survivor Anthony Gribben said: “Dolan’s officiating at the Armagh mass triggers grisly memories of Fr Malachy Finegan’s active participation in a celebratory mass in Hilltown despite requests from Finegan survivors to have him removed from the ceremony.



Belfast Telegraph - A Stormont department, working with British diplomats, paid US lobbyists the equivalent of more

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than \$2,000 a day to oppose Irish-American activists pushing the MacBride Principles on fair employment, declassified government files show - Sam McBride

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/declassified-files-stormont-department-paid-us-lobbyists-thousands-a-day-to-fight-guidelines-on-fair-employment/a25678479.html>

Northern Ireland International Organ Competition announces winner

The Northern Ireland International Organ Competition (NIIOC) has announced that British organist George Herbert has been awarded its first prize. Herbert receives a cash prize of £4,000 plus recitals in New York, Berlin and London, Florence Lockheart writes in Classical Music UK

The competition second prize of £1,000 and three UK recitals was awarded to German contestant Theresa Heidler, who also won the Bach Prize. Australian competitor Jonathan Lee took home the competition third prize of £500 and three recitals in the UK and Ireland. The Dame Gillian Weir Medal for an outstanding performance of one particular piece was won by Philipp Henning who also, along with Tingshuo Yang, received a commendation for his programme.

The jury was chaired by Canadian organist Isabelle Demers who said: 'We were treated to some striking performances during the 2023 Northern Ireland International Organ



Celebration for the girl's chorale

Competition, proving that the future of the profession is in very good hands... The high level of performance we heard made it rather difficult to choose the three prize winners, which is a very good problem to have!

Demers was accompanied on the jury by King's College Cambridge director of music Daniel Hyde, and Charles Wood Festival and Summer School artistic director and long-time NIIOC patron David Hill. The NIIOC 2023 competition also included intermediate and junior competitions won by Elisabeth Merschdodf and Darragh Magee respectively.

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Aimed to offer players aged 22 their first experience of the competition environment, the NIIOC took place in the Northern Irish town of Armagh earlier this week (21 to 23 August). The senior and intermediate rounds of the competition took place in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral while the junior competition was hosted by St Malachy's Roman Catholic Church.

Currently assistant director of music designate at His Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, Herbert has been organ scholar and assistant organist at St John's College Cambridge for the past four years. Now living in London, he is embarking on a freelance career as an organist, director and piano accompanist.

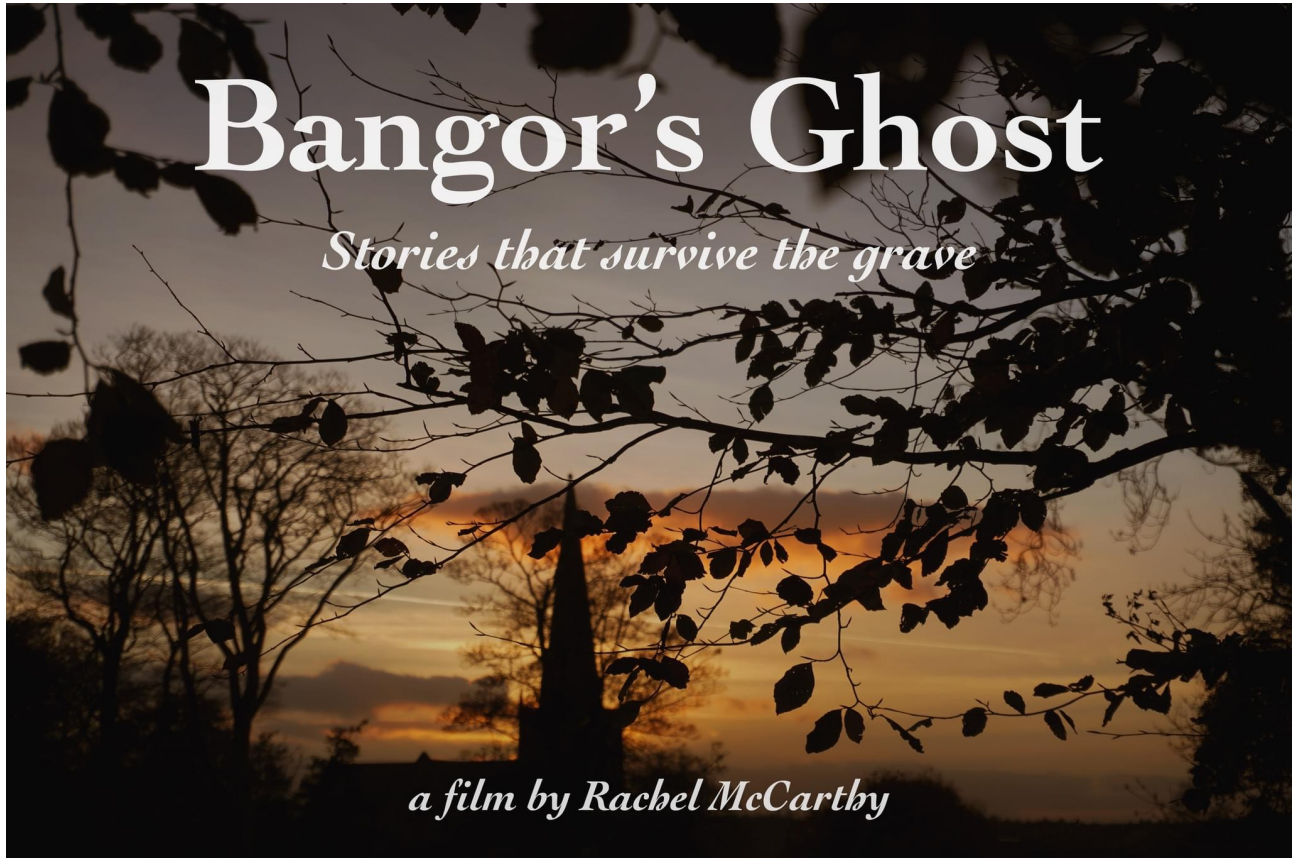
Herbert said: 'It was my unexpected and overwhelming pleasure to be awarded first prize in the senior category of this year's competition. It was a privilege (albeit a nerve-wracking one!) to share a stage with so many talented players. I'm sure that NIIOC must be one of the friendliest music competitions that exists – from the extremely warm, welcoming organising team and the encouraging jury to the delightful company of the other competitors.'

[\[https://www.classical-music.uk/news/article/northern-ireland-international-organ-competition-announces-winner\]](https://www.classical-music.uk/news/article/northern-ireland-international-organ-competition-announces-winner)

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



The ghosts that haunt Bangor

Have you ever wondered about the ghosts that haunt Bangor? The ones who lived here before us, from the days of St. Columbanus to the 1798 Irish Rebellion? The ones who swam in Pickie in the 1920s, who were shipwrecked on the coast, or who simply lived and died in this town?

In **Bangor's Ghost: A Love Letter To The Town**, a film from director and artist, Rachel McCarthy, local artists come together to tell the stories of these ghosts. Through songs, stories, and poetry, they paint an intimate picture of Bangor's rich history.

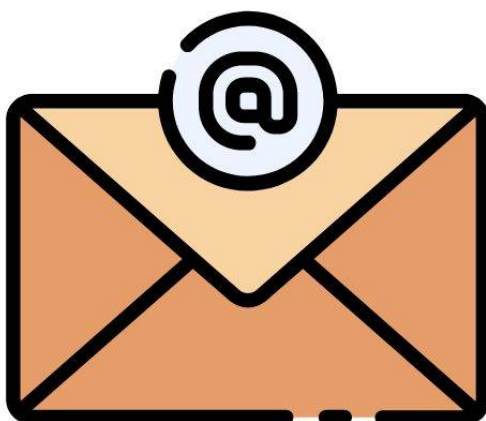
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This is a film that is full of heart. It tells stories of tragedy, darkness, light, mythology, hope, and despair. It is a celebration of Bangor, a town that is full of history and character.

This special screening of Bangor's Ghost will take place at Bangor Abbey as part of Aspects Festival.

Bangor Abbey - Friday 29 September 8pm. £15

Book at: <https://aspectsfestival.com/whats-on/bangors-ghost-love-letter-town>



Effective church Emails

Emails are still the most common way to communicate with large groups of people. But how can you make them more engaging? Find tips on how to effectively email your church congregation at <http://cofe.io/EngagingEmails>.

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Union Theological College applications are open

"It's not just about the knowledge our students will learn at Union, it's about the people they will become."

Dr. Olwyn Mark

Undergraduate Degree Programme Co-ordinator & Lecturer
in Practical Theology.

Applications for BA are still open

[<https://union.ac.uk/programmes/ba->]

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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