

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Playing it by Ear Nativity panto

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Playing it by Ear Nativity panto



Play It by Ear and a group of amazing volunteers at Holy Trinity Glenraig presented The Nativity Panto followed by wonderful Messy Crafts.





People and places

Festival Manager of the Charles Wood Festival

Louis Fields is the new Festival Manager of the Charles Wood Festival and Summer School.

Louis is currently director of St.

Columb's School of Music, Organist and Director of Music at Agherton, Portstewart and Musical Director of the Londonderry Musical Society Showstopper Concerts. As well as being a member of the award-winning choir, Codetta, Louis teaches in various schools and is the accompanist for numerous choirs in the North West area, Derry and Donegal.

Most recently, he was Musical Director for FAME The Musical in the Millenium Forum and is the founding manager of Eurovision Hub.

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As a former boy chorister of the Charles Wood Festival, he is delighted to be joining the team at the Charles Wood Festival and Summer School.



Welcome to Ardmore Parish

The Revd Andrew Baldock has been welcomed as Minister in charge of Ardmore Parish in Dromore Diocese.

Bishop David McClay introduced Andrew and also gave the address while Area Dean, Revd Paul McAdam, led the service on 7 December. It was also something of a return visit for Archdeacon Mark Harvey whose late father Maurice was rector of the parish from 1979–87.

Andrew, who is married to Gilly, studied theology at Northumbria Bible College and Durham University. He was ordained in the Church of England in 2000 and subsequently served in parishes in the North of England, Oxfordshire, and South Ayrshire.

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He has a particular passion for exegetical preaching and teaching and has also served in independent evangelical churches, most recently in Scotland and Northamptonshire.

Speaking of his appointment Andrew said:

‘I am grateful to Bishop David for appointing me to Ardmore and for the warm welcome that Gilly and I have received from the church. I’m very much looking forward to serving the people of Ardmore in the coming years ahead, trusting that we will bring Glory to God as we seek to faithfully live out our lives together for Him and Him alone.’

Happy Birthday Br David

The founder of Divine Healing Ministries Br David Jardine SSF has just celebrated his 81st Birthday.



DHM messaged, “The Lord has used this man of God to impact so many lives across this land and in other countries. The witness of his relationship with God, his prayer life, his simple and practical application of the Gospel and his ministry continues to touch many lives.

“When the Lord gave Br David the vision to begin an interdenominational healing ministry in Northern Ireland during the height of The Troubles, it was to be a prophetic sign of the blessing of unity and a catalyst in allowing many

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to encounter the healing of Jesus Christ and the power of forgiveness.

Happy Birthday Br David! The best is yet to be!”



Aghalee Parish Heritage Project

Aghalee Parish had - “A great night to celebrate the launch of our new website & heritage book.

“We're giving away 2000 copies of the book 'Soldiers, Sailors, Saints & Spinners', to share our heritage with others. Made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund; thanks to National Lottery Players”.

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Aghalee Parish celebrating good news and progress

ST PETER'S CATHEDRAL
PRESENTS

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sung by the Down & Connor Schola
Cantorum and the Cathedral Choir

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER
4PM

Everyone welcome

St Peter's
Catholic Cathedral, Belfast

ST. CANICE'S
CATHEDRAL
AND ROUND TOWER

THE DEAN & CHAPTER OF
ST CANICE'S CATHEDRAL
TOGETHER WITH THE CONGREGATIONS
OF THE KILKENNY UNION OF PARISHES
WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO

THE CIVIC CAROL SERVICE
IN
ST CANICE'S CATHEDRAL

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER AT 5PM



Frankfield Fir Fund-raising

Out and about in the Church of Ireland in Cork, Cloyne and Ross. In Douglas Union of Parishes with Frankfield they're fund-raising - they're selling Christmas Trees and hot chocolate with home made cookies. Witnessed and sampled by their bishop - see left.

DHM Communion Service with Br David & Rev John Cunningham

Divine Healing Ministries have two very special healing services at St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett before Christmas.

Rev John Cunningham will be speaking this Thursday evening and the service on 14th December will be a special

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Communion Service with prayer for healing, with Br David sharing a message the Lord has given for this time.

These two weeks also mark Rev. John's final services with DHM before he and his wife Linda leave St. Patrick's; so it will also be an opportunity to thank both John and Linda for the amazing welcome they have provided for DHM at St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett and to pray for them as they begin a new season.



Down & Dromore Confirmation sequence finishes for 2023

Having begun in Willowfield Church in early May, the confirmation sequence came to a close in Seagoe Parish on Sunday 26 November (Photo above).

At over 14 services across the diocese 32 adults and 94 young people were confirmed, bringing the total for 2023 to 126 candidates.

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Bishop David McClay's theme this year was "How much more", and explored how if we ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our lives God will honour that request. It is the Holy Spirit that helps us to grow in faith, to understand the bible and to share the gospel with others.

Please continue to pray for these adults and young people as they seek to grow in their faith and encourage them to remain part of the life of the church.



Big thank you to Christian Aid Organisers

There was a big thank you to all Christian Aid Organisers who came from across Northern Ireland to join CEO Rosamond Bennett last Monday for tea at Ballyclare

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Presbyterian Church. Rosamond spoke about Christian Aid Ireland's work in 2023 as well as future plans. There was a special thank you to Rev Jonny Moxen, Pamela Gray and Heather Knox for all their help on the day!

News reports

More than 5,000 people are set to sing a new Christmas carol released by the Church of England

A new version of the well-known carol The First Nowell, written by the composer Bob Chilcott, will be sung in churches and cathedrals across the country.

Performances are planned at Cathedrals including Chichester, Lincoln and Winchester. In addition a **live** performance will be broadcast on BBC One and iPlayer on Christmas Eve from Portsmouth Cathedral, featuring musicians from the Royal Marines.

A recording of the new carol, performed by St Martin's Voices, is being shared across digital platforms including Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music and YouTube.

The single was released earlier this month as part of a campaign encouraging people to come to church, sing carols, and celebrate the real meaning of Christmas.



At the heart of the campaign is an invitation to everyone to attend a service near them – with thousands of local services listed on AChurchNearYou.com, the church finding website. This allows users to locate services in their area, with tags to help users find carols, mince pies, children’s services and more.

AChurchNearYou.com has shown 19,000 Christmas services registered so far by churches across the country, including more than 5,000 so far set to sing the carol.

Sheet music of the carol is also freely available for choirs wishing to perform it, together with learning tracks and individual parts.

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The Bishop of Stockport, Sam Corley, said: “I am heartened to see so many churches and cathedrals signing up to sing the carol across the country. I know many thousands more will do so before Christmas Day. Singing carols is one of the great traditions at Christmas that so many people love. It helps us to find our place in the Christmas story and the message of hope that is the Christian faith.”

Proceeds from the single will be donated to the St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity, a UK-wide homelessness charity.

It is the second time the Church has released a Christmas single, with a previous carol composed by Rebecca Dale topping the Classical Charts during December 2021.

The theme for 2023 highlights how singing can help draw people closer to God and one another through the journey from Advent to Epiphany, with a wealth of free resources available for churches, schools and any context.

The campaign makes available a range of resources including daily reflections booklets, prayer cards and – for the first time – a printed Advent calendar, featuring the nativity. Much of the content is also available free via the recently update Follow the Star app

More information

Listen to The First Nowell (YouTube) Link on next page - hopefully!

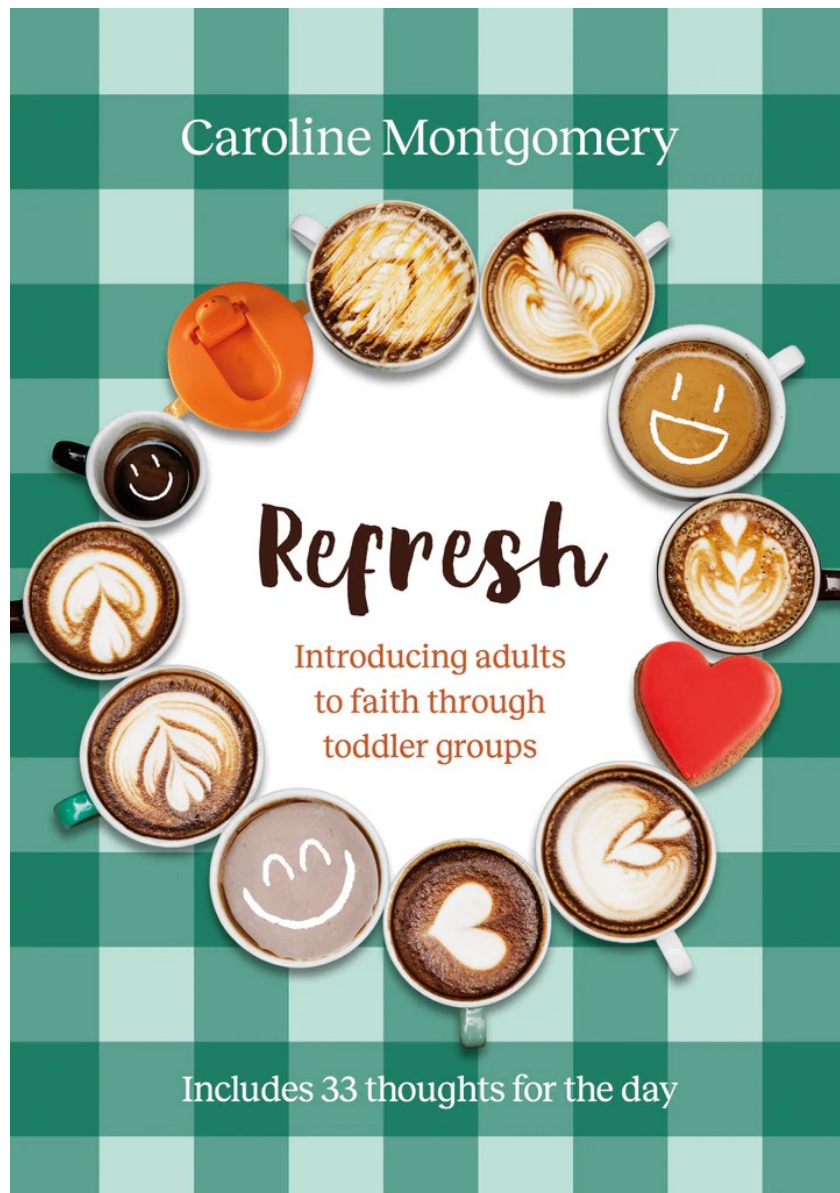
The sheet music is free to download from the Church Resources Hub (free login required)



More information about Follow The Star: Join The Song
<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-calling/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/connect-years-call-join-song>

**Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts,
and books**

**Refresh: Introducing adults to faith
through toddler groups**



How to run a Refresh Café, introducing parents to faith within a play space for their children

Refresh Café is a fun and effective way to build fruitful relationships with parents and carers in your community. It's stay and play turned on its head: the children have fun, but we focus on refreshing the adults with time to talk, fresh coffee, pastries and most importantly our key ingredient: a five-minute 'thought for the day' where we share something of God in a gentle, relevant and accessible way. All this in a welcoming play space for the children. This book shows you

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how to run Refresh, and includes 33 'thoughts for the day' to use in your setting.

Author : Caroline Montgomery, £7.99

[<https://www.brfoonline.org.uk/products/refresh>]

Archbishop of York on BBC Radio 2 Pause for Thought

Archbishop Stephen joined Zoe Ball in the BBC Radio 2 studio to share a Pause for Thought. You can read it in full here -

A priest I know recently told me about a young couple who had been married in her church a few years earlier, and came to a Christingle service proudly carrying their newborn baby.

When the service finished and everyone else had piled into the hall for mince pies and a glass of something lovely, warming and mulled, the family lingered by the crib.

It was a large crib and after standing for a while gazing at the Christmas scene, they approached one of the churchwardens and tentatively asked whether it would be alright if they put their baby in the crib and took a photo of him.

Ok, so it may be that in our TikTok, Instagram-ready world nothing is real unless you get the photo – with the right filters, of course. Or it might be something else: that the Christmas story is so compelling, so beautiful, so 'other worldly' and yet, at the same time, astonishingly 'this-

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worldly', God come down to earth, that we want to get inside it. These parents, and their little child longing to be part of something bigger. To find values beyond themselves. To hope for something more than money or time.

Or did it spring from that very human instinct just to say thank you to God, whether you have much faith or not, for those things in life which are most precious, most deeply human, like a child, like a moment?

Well, I like to think so.

And I like this story, because it reminds me that the only way to understand the Christmas story is to get inside it. But the bigger and more sensible and more grown-up you get, the harder this is.

We may lose the sense of wonder that draws us to the crib.

We may lose the smallness, like the baby, that might mean we cannot be put there.

We may be beguiled and seduced by the world's bright lights. And, then we look the other way when God comes knocking.

But there are lots of opportunities to get inside the story. At a church near you. We need to choose to take them.

'Step into Christmas', as Sir Elton John put it.

You can listen to the programme on BBC Sounds [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001sw34>]



God of timeless grace,
you fill us with joyful expectation.
Make us ready for the message
that prepares the way,
so that with uprightness of heart
and holy joy we may eagerly await
the coming of Christ,
who reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, now and for ever.
Amen.

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002), 30 alt
The Anglican Church of Canada

Poem for today

To Autumn by William Blake

O Autumn, laden with fruit, and stain'd
With the blood of the grape, pass not, but sit
Beneath my shady roof; there thou may'st rest,
And tune thy jolly voice to my fresh pipe,
And all the daughters of the year shall dance!
Sing now the lusty song of fruits and flowers.

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“The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of Morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest Eve,
Till clust’ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather’d clouds strew flowers round her head.

“The spirits of the air live in the smells
Of fruit; and Joy, with pinions light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.”
Thus sang the jolly Autumn as he sat,
Then rose, girded himself, and o’er the bleak
Hills fled from our sight; but left his golden load.

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 houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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