

Church News Ireland



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December 14, 2024

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Speaking to the Soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day – Santa's Grotto in the Tower at St Mark's



Santa's Grotto in the Tower at St Mark's Portadown is open again today Saturday and every evening next week 16th - 20th and closes on Saturday 21st after the final session that evening.

There are still some time slots available. Follow the link to book

eventbrite.com/o/st-marks-parish-church-portadown-36121058783

News

Ballymoney service support for RNLI



A very well done to the Ballymoney RNLI Fundraising team who handed over a Cheque for £3291 as a result of their service of thanksgiving for 200 years of Saving Lives at Sea.

Thank you to Pat Crossley, chair and her team for their continued support



Ballymena Academy Chamber Choir delights Radio Cracker

Ballymena Academy Chamber Choir brought festive cheer to the Tower Centre performing beautiful Christmas choral pieces for Radio Cracker.

And a very well done to Bliss cafe for providing refreshments for the choir.

Glenavy Parish Pops up 2K for People's Kitchen

Presentation of cheque for £2000, to Paul McCusker of People's Kitchen, raised at the recent Glenavy Parish Pop up Sal



Archbishop of York at Auction Mart carol service



Archbishop Stephen joined a carol service at Leyburn Auction Mart on Tuesday evening.

Organised annually by the RABI, the short service included poetry, readings from the Bible and a host of traditional Christmas carols performed by the Leyburn Band.

You can read more about the service here 🖱️

<https://www.archbishopofyork.org/news/latest-news/archbishop-stephen-celebrates-christmas-farming-community-north-yorkshire-auction>

Cathedral Calls



Belfast Ecumenical Canon's Black Santa baptism

The Rev Dr Colin McCure, minister of First Larne Presbyterian church is to be the new Presbyterian Ecumenical Canon at St Anne's Cathedral.

Colin will be joining the Dean and others for his first Black Santa Sitout between 16th and 24th December.

Elected by the Canons of the cathedral, Dr McClure's appointment follows the retirement of Dr Ruth Patterson from the Chapter. Dr Patterson, of Restoration Ministries, has been Presbyterian Ecumenical Canon since 2012.

Colin McClure was brought up a member of Belvoir Park Presbyterian Church. However, growing up, Colin had close

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ties and friendships with members of the Church of Ireland Parish at Belvoir. After primary school, Colin attended Royal Belfast Academical Institution ("Inst"). This was followed by studies at Belfast Tech and then at Queen's University of Belfast.

Colin first studied medicine, but he then took a change of direction into policing. Ultimately, Colin's call was to the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and he commenced his studies at Union College in Belfast. As



ST POLYCARP'S CHURCH

Christmas CAROL

SERVICES

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER 2024
10.30am Choristers Carol Service
7.00pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols



The Boy Choristers of St Columb's Derry were working hard at evening time as they travelled around the Cathedral Quarter to sing some Festive tunes. It's great to have a Christmassy feel around the Cathedral Quarter thanks to the Cathedral Quarter Derry/L'Derry Christmas Festival.

part of his theological training and preparation for ministry, Colin served as an Assistant Minister at Webster Memorial United Church in Kingston, Jamaica whilst studying at the United Theological College of the West Indies.

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In 1990, Colin was ordained as Assistant Minister in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, Belfast. He then served in the joint charge of Loughbrickland and Scarva, near Banbridge in County Down. He has been minister of First Larne since 2003.

Throughout his ministry, Colin has worked ecumenically with members of other Christian traditions. In this regard, Colin and the Dean worked closely during the Dean's 18 years as Rector of St Cedma's Parish in Larne.

Larne Churches Together

Invite everyone to our

CHRISTMAS WALK OF LIGHTS
Monday 16th December

Starting at 7pm from:
Old Presbyterian Church (Meeting House Street)
& travelling to:

St Cedma's Church of Ireland
First Larne Presbyterian Church
Broadway Christmas Tree

Refreshments provided afterwards in
First Larne Presbyterian Church

Bring your own torch

Colin has been Clerk of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus since 2014. At a denominational level he has represented the Presbyterian Church on the Transferor Representatives Council and various educational bodies, including CCEA and the former Southern Education & Library Board. He has been a Director for Christian Aid and National Chair of Girls Brigade NI. In addition, Colin is an enthusiastic member of the RUC-GC Male Voice Choir. He has sung in the cathedral on a number of occasions with the choir. And in 2013, Colin shared with Dean John Mann, in leading a visit to the Holy Land with a number of members of the cathedral congregation.

On receiving news of his appointment as Ecumenical Canon, Dr McClure said “I am humbled to be offered this opportunity. Given the crucial role played in my life's journey by several Church of Ireland clergy, I regard this as part payment of a debt I owe. I look forward to sharing in, and perhaps even making a small contribution, to the unique life and witness of the Cathedral community.”

Speaking about Dr McClure's appointment, the Dean Stephen said “I am extremely pleased that Colin has been elected to be the next Presbyterian Ecumenical Canon, to follow Dr Ruth Patterson.

Over the years, Colin and I worked as neighbours and colleagues in Larne. I came to know Colin as an effective preacher and caring pastor, not just to his own congregation, but to the wider church community. His ministry has always been one of reaching beyond existing boundaries, and of ecumenical partnership. Through his involvement with Christian Aid, he demonstrates a deep

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care for the world wide church, especially where it serves those whose needs are greatest. In addition, Colin has a love for choral music, so I hope he is going to enjoy his involvement with us at Belfast Cathedral.

Most important of all, Colin enjoys the outdoors. So he will hardly notice the wind or rain in Donegall Street, when he takes his place on the cathedral steps for the 2024 Black Santa Sitout!”

Dr McClure’s installation as cathedral canon will take place early in 2025.

Clergy and ministry

Glendalough Clergy Day

Clergy from the Diocese of Glendalough gathered in Laragh in the Wicklow Mountains on Friday (December 6) for their annual Glendalough Clergy Day. The morning started with a Service of Holy Communion in St John’s Church celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson.

Prayers were said for the clergy and people of the diocese and for the clergy and people of our partners in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

They were joined by more of their colleagues in the nearby Wicklow Heather restaurant where they spent the morning discussing issues of interest and concern to the diocese.



The Revd Rob Clements, the Revd Caroline Brennan, Archdeacon Ross Styles, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Canon Tom O'Brien, the Revd Ken Rue and Canon David Mungavin in St John's Church, Laragh.

Pioneer Ministry Project around Celtic Christianity, pilgrimage and spiritual tourism

An exciting new Church of Ireland Pioneer Ministry Project from the Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe has been launched around Celtic Christianity, pilgrimage and spiritual tourism and will be led by Valerie Raitt, who is the newly appointed Pioneer Minister in the Diocese.

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In this video, alongside Valerie herself, you'll hear Bishop Michael Burrows and Archdeacons John Godfrey and Simon Lumby explain their vision for the project. They describe how they are joining in what God is already doing in the lives of those who live in the dioceses and in the lives those who are visiting and the unique opportunity it offers to reach those with little or no connection to church. Supported by the Pioneer Ministry Leadership Team, a key place of pilgrimage would become a new community of motivated people who would start a fresh base where there will be a rhythm of prayer, spirituality, and hospitality. In time, the plan for this new community is to begin to meet monthly, similar to how contemporary Christianity in a way re-planted Iona and made it a base for magnetic and distinctive worship.

Please like this video and subscribe to our YouTube channel which helps spread these exciting stories. You can find out more about download our Pioneer Ministry Guidebook at www.pioneerministry.org

Find out more about the United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe at www.tlk.ie/

Read about Valerie's licensing event:

<https://tlk.ie/pioneer-ministry/>

For more info, you can also email us at info@pioneerministry.org

Produced by Bring Hope Productions — www.bringhope.ie

<https://www.facebook.com/180317158485973/videos/932287428421664>

Chaplaincy in the Royal Navy

The Rev Tom Ebbens, Assistant Curate at St John's Cathedral Oban and St James' Ardbrecknish, in the Diocese of Argyll & The Isles, is also a Chaplain in the Royal Navy. Here, he gives a snapshot of his day-to-day life at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Being a Chaplain in the Royal Navy is a unique ministry experience. After completing initial military training at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, chaplains move straight into the fleet as a 'friend and advisor to all', regardless of rank, background or faith.

Rev Thomas Ebbens RNPastoral care is our primary function. To enable this, we must be purposefully proactive and reactive in our doings. Being proactive is about getting deliberately immersed in Navy life: fitness, fun, deployments, sharing the same experiences as our sailor colleagues. The trust and credibility we earn from being proactive boosts our ability to be reactive, with more sailors knocking on the office door asking: "Bish, can I have a chat?".

Within my first year, I've been thrashed day and night on Dartmoor, preached to hundreds, been to sea on an aircraft carrier, conducted multiple memorial services, led Christian workouts at 3am, served veteran families with committals of ashes at sea, scrapped at Muay Thai boxing, and discreetly supported scores of sailors through the rigours of service life.

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I'm currently based at HMNB Clyde, home of the Submarine Service, while finishing off my curacy in Argyll & The Isles at St John's Cathedral in Oban. Future assignments could be anywhere in the fleet, on ship, abroad, working with Royal Marines or foreign allies, or in other naval bases and establishments around the UK. Wherever sent, my home remains with my wife and three daughters rooted in beautiful Mid-Argyll, and in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

From the current issue of "Inspire" the news magazine of the Episcopal Church.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Damascus Street, a new musicians' collective, launches debut single today

Damascus Street, a new musicians' collective from All Saints' Church, Belfast, releases a debut single 'God came down,' today Saturday December 14.

Damascus Street formed to write contemporary Christian music with theologically rich lyrics. Each member is a recording artist in their own right and from within Belfast's UniChurch (a congregation of All Saints') formed in 2022.

Their parish, in the Holylands area of Belfast, comprises Damascus Street and this represents the area which the church seeks to serve. The collective's name also carries



further connotation with the saving gospel of Jesus, as known on the Damascus Road experience and the apostle Paul's conversion. This is at the heart of the band's ethos, expressing praise in their music.

The collective's artists, Eoin Maguire (children's worker, All Saints'), Stephanie Devlin (New Irish Arts) and Matty Burke (formerly ministry apprentice and youth worker, All Saints'), have sought to capture that 'all of history' (which is the first line of each verse), whether past, present or future, points to Christ.

The song covers Christ's descent to earth, his ascent and his promised return. It is stacked with excellent musicianship from sounds not often heard in Christian music: A saxophone is not the usual choice for a Christian song.

Going forward, the hope is to write more songs. Additionally, the band have expressed a desire to use Damascus Street as a way to encourage the musicians in their own congregation to write songs as well, under the Damascus Street banner. The collective hopes to aid congregations

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and individuals to worship Christ more deeply and more thoroughly through music.

The single releases on all platforms (eg Spotify, Apple Music, etc. search 'Damascus Street) today Saturday December 14.

International Mountain Day in the Mourne

The snow that blanketed the Mourne Mountains in recent weeks has melted, but the beauty remains. With icy rock formations, crisp air, and golden-hour light, the mountains still captivate with their rugged charm.



Winter is a time of quiet regeneration for nature, and while the views are stunning, conditions can be unpredictable. If you're planning to explore, stay safe with these tips:

- ✓ Check the weather forecast and plan your route in advance.
- ✓ Dress warmly and in layers, including waterproofs and sturdy boots.
- ✓ Carry a map, compass, and torch (with spare batteries).

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- ✓ Pack essentials like food, water, and a first-aid kit.
- ✓ Let someone know your plans and expected return time.

By preparing well, you can enjoy the beauty of the Mourne while respecting the environment and keeping safe. Let's work together to avoid unnecessary strain on the Mountain Rescue Team—your safety is the priority.

 Rad Szopinski @mourne_mountains_photography

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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