

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Peace dove for Christian Aid

Image for today - Peace dove for Christian Aid

News -

Teddy evangelism at Carryduff

Salvation Army's 'unforgettable' Chorus of Hope event

Anglican bishops 'losing moral authority' to sit in Lords after abuse scandal

Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief appointed

Pope Francis receives new all-electric popemobile

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Coat of Many Colours - Racial Justice Sunday – 9 Feb 2025

Resources from WCC

Portrush Christmas Tree Festival - video

Perspective -

'Something has been lost': Bishop warns streaming is replacing family TV time

In the media -

Israel accuses Ireland of 'crossing every red line' as it moves to close embassy - The Independent

Speaking to the Soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day - Peace dove for Christian Aid

Lismore clergyman hangs peace dove for those devastated by war

The Very Rev Paul Draper, Church of Ireland Rector of Lismore and Dean of St Carthage's Cathedral, is

hanging a dove of peace on his Christmas tree this festive season in solidarity with all those whose lives have been devastated by war.

The Lismore clergyman hopes by hanging a 'dove of peace' on his Christmas tree this festive season it will draw attention to the humanitarian crises caused by conflicts around the world including people in Gaza and those who have fled civil war in Sudan. and the efforts of Christian Aid to support those most in need.

Dean Paul supports Christian Aid through his ministry by organising fundraising events and encouraging his congregation to donate to the charity. He also serves on the charity's board of trustees.



News

Teddy evangelism at Carryduff

The teddies at St Ignatius' Carryduff proved to be a big attraction.



December 17, 2024

Folk came at 10am for morning prayer followed by Teddy viewing and refreshments from 12 until 5. The event ended with the parish Carol Service at 6.30. Teddy viewers were welcomed throughout the day.



Salvation Army's 'unforgettable' Chorus of Hope event

It's the most wonderful time of the year – and The Salvation Army in Dublin sang their hearts out to celebrate it.

Hundreds gathered at the Pepper Canister Church on Mount Street for a special Christmas carol service organised by the Christian church and charity.

The attendance at the 'Chorus of Hope' event on Tuesday included Church members and homeless service residents accommodated at the organisation's six lifehouses across the capital.

"The carol service was an unforgettable celebration of festive joy," said Erene Williamson, Homeless Services Ireland Lead.

"A heartfelt thank you to the talented performers from The Salvation Army's six Dublin Lifehouses, the Church Choir, the Salvation Army Brass Band and the Irish Life Choir.

"We are deeply grateful to our Creative Director, Kieran Gallagher, for bringing the entire evening together and for his incredible dedication during pre-work and rehearsals with the hubs and centres.

"Special thanks go to our amazing staff across all centres for organising residents to attend and for their enthusiastic participation.

“They came in large numbers, joined the singalongs, and brought their brilliant Christmas spirits with them.”

The Salvation Army has six residential centres in Dublin, providing 250,000 bed nights per year.

Anglican bishops ‘losing moral authority’ to sit in Lords after abuse scandal

The Church of England is “losing moral authority”, a former BBC boss said as he called for the 26 bishops in the House of Lords to be expelled along with hereditary peers.

Former director-general of the BBC Lord Birt argued that “recent events” had “powerfully and emphatically” demonstrated this loss of moral authority.

His comments came after a historic abuse scandal led the Archbishop of Canterbury to resign from his position last month.

Justin Welby stepped down after the Makin review found he “could and should” have reported child abuser John Smyth to the police in 2013 and criticised the Church for not doing enough to prevent further abuse until he died.

As peers in Westminster debated the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill during an extended second reading, Lord Birt called for the Lords Spiritual to be removed alongside bloodline members of the House.



Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief appointed

David Smith, the Labour MP for North Northumberland, has been appointed as the UK's new special envoy for freedom of religion or belief.

In a statement, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office said Smith will “champion FoRB for all overseas, promoting tolerance and mutual respect through and alongside the UK’s global diplomatic network and engagements in multilateral forums”.

Minister for Human Rights, Lord Collins of Highbury said: "David's appointment is a clear signal of the value placed by the UK on championing freedom of religion or belief for all around the world. No one should live in fear because of what they do, or do not, believe in."

There had been concerns that Labour might not appoint anyone to the role, as it is at the discretion of each government. It took five months to make the appointment, with no confirmation or denial regarding whether the post would be maintained.

Smith's predecessor, Fiona Bruce, the former MP for Congleton, was widely recognised across parties for her excellent work in promoting FoRB worldwide and bringing it to the forefront of British politics.

Speaking about his appointment, Smith expressed his "delight" in taking on the role.

He said: "From sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East and Asia, I have personally worked with those of different faiths who face religious persecution, and so these are issues that I care passionately about. I look forward to taking forward the Government's commitment to supporting freedom of religion or belief for all."

A new face in Parliament, Smith joined during the last general election. He is a committed Christian who has previously worked for the Christian homelessness charity Oasis Community Housing and the Bible Society.

December 17, 2024

DUP MP for Strangford, Jim Shannon, who is campaigning to make the position a legal requirement, said he is delighted with the decision.

"I'm incredibly pleased that David has been appointed as special envoy. He's a man of faith he's a Christian he believes in Almighty Providence over all. I feel his appointment is one that God has made happen."

Pope Francis receives new all-electric popemobile

Pope Francis received a new, emission-free, all-electric popemobile from representatives of Mercedes-Benz, the German car manufacturer that has been supplying vehicles for the popes for nearly 100 years.

"We are overjoyed to be able to fulfill the Holy Father's wish for an electric popemobile and are particularly proud to be able to build the vehicle according to his requirements," Britta Seeger, head of sales and marketing and member of the board of management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, said in a press release.

It is the first time the company has manufactured an all-electric popemobile and "this cooperation ... is a valuable symbol of sustainable change together," she said.

The pope met with the representatives, which included engineers who led the project, in a courtyard at the Vatican. Ola Källenius, Mercedes-Benz CEO, presented the pope



Pope Francis listens as Ola Källenius, CEO of Mercedes-Benz, presents a new all-electric popemobile during a meeting at the Vatican earlier this month. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

with the white and chrome key fob and showed him the vehicle's interior.

The new popemobile sends "a clear call for electromobility and decarbonization," Källenius said.

A team of specialists worked for a year to complete the handcrafted vehicle, which is based on the new G580 model. It is outfitted with "an electric drivetrain, which was adapted to the particularly low speeds required for public appearances," the press release said.

December 17, 2024

"The vehicle represents an incredible amount of manual labor and passion — but it's also full of state-of-the-art technology," said Klaus Millerferli, one of the development engineers. "The fact that Pope Francis has invited some of us to hand it over personally really tops everything off. It's an experience that you'll tell your grandchildren about."

Mercedes-Benz has been manufacturing and supplying vehicles for the popes for nearly 100 years, the company said, starting with a Nürburg 460 Pullman Saloon for Pope Pius XI in 1930.

The German company was awarded the contract, it said, in part because it was able to transfer to a motor-powered vehicle "an important characteristic" then only found in horse-drawn carriages: "the possibility of traveling with two dignitaries and other staff using folding seats."

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Coat of Many Colours - Racial Justice Sunday – 9 February 2025

RJS was established by the Methodist Church in 1995 following the tragic racist murder of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence in southeast London in April 1993.

The Lawrence family attended a local Methodist Church in that part of the capital, and the Methodist Church agreed to

support the family's justice campaign to find young Stephen's killers. A few years later, the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), a Churches Together in Britain and Ireland programme, agreed to mainstream the special Sunday so that all the churches could engage with it. We will discover more about this history from the Revd David Haslam, a former Methodist minister and head of the CCRJ during these times, who reflects on the anniversary and what it means for racial justice on these shores today.

Our theme this year has the title 'Coat of Many Colours', reflecting the increasing diversity that exists in the churches in Britain and Ireland. Both the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament are replete with references to diversity, in this world and the Kingdom to come. One only has to reflect on verses that speak of a 'house of prayer for all nations' (Isaiah 56:7), the events of Pentecost (Acts 2) or the 'multitude ... from every nation' (Revelation 7:9-17), which all include words meaning 'every tribe and nation', to see that ethnic diversity is part of God's divine plan. There is little doubt that British churches, especially in the larger cities, are a microcosm of the world in a congregation, which is indeed a blessing that must be celebrated. Equally, the fact that the diversity of believers has breathed some much-needed spiritual life into our churches reveals that this is a movement of God for which He must be praised. In our reflections and sermons, members of the RJSWG and others, who hail from many parts of the globe, describe their experiences of being part of the Coat of Many Colours.

Yet, despite this amazing reality, inequality still exists in the church and is still a factor that blights the experiences of too many people of Global Majority heritage or Black and Brown backgrounds. This leaves people not feeling as if they belong in the house of the Lord, or not being given the opportunity to use their God-given talents to further the Lord's Kingdom. Given the unwelcome decline in church attendance over the last several decades, British and Irish churches must wake up to the reality that God is doing a 'new thing' (Isaiah 43:19) among those Christians who now call these shores home. Again, our sermons and reflections in this resource address the importance of inclusion and the need for all Christians to engage in the righteous work for racial justice.

Resources

This year's resources have been compiled by the Racial Justice Sunday Writers' Group (RJSWG) and produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Download or read online at link below:

[<https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-9-february-2025/>]

Resources from WCC

WCC Living Planet Monitor Webinar – Launch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b6H0HLhPos>

For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025

<https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity>

December 17, 2024

Faith in Land, Faith in our Children's Future

<https://oikoumene.org/resources/publications/faith-in-land-faith-in-our-childrens-future>

Portrush Christmas Tree Festival - video

Christmas Tree Festival supported Womens' Aid and a youth club

Video by Northern Ireland World on Portrush parish's festival. Scroll down for video and text report.

[<https://www.northernirelandworld.com/news/people/video-visit-portrush-christmas-tree-festival-and-support-womens-aid-and-portrush-youth-club-4901393>]

Perspective

'Something has been lost': Bishop warns streaming is replacing family TV time

The Bishop of London, Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullally, believes streaming services are taking away the “moments of togetherness” that TV once brought to families.

Writing in the Radio Times, she highlighted that with so many choices, watching TV has become a “more solitary and insular” activity.



She wrote: “Our lives have become more and more dominated by the instant gratification available through our mobile phones and social media. Streaming sites have sought to displace traditional channels, allowing us to watch whatever we want whenever we want it. With that, the act of watching TV has become more solitary and insular. A far cry from the years many of us remember of three channels and one set per household.”

For her, streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime have made it easier to watch on different devices and binge entire series, which means fewer people gather to watch shows at the same time. This has led to the end of “event” TV, where everyone would talk about the same show the next day.

December 17, 2024

Bishop Sarah urged people to prioritise shared experiences, especially at Christmas.

"This is one of the few times we can truly be present with loved ones," she said. "Laughing, crying, and being together around the TV makes those moments all the more special."

Bishop Sarah plans to watch Call the Midwife, The Great British Bake Off, and the King's Christmas message, adding: "Despite changing technology, British TV's role in bringing us together will endure."

It's time for a new narrative!

In the media

Israel accuses Ireland of 'crossing every red line' as it moves to close embassy - The Independent

Israel has said it will close its Dublin embassy, accusing Ireland of "crossing every red line", Jonathan McCambridge writes.

Foreign minister Gideon Saar announced the closure in a statement due to the "extreme anti-Israel policies of the Irish Government".

Irish premier Simon Harris said he was "deeply disappointed" by the move, with deputy premier Micheal Martin stating there are no plans to close the Irish embassy in Israel.



Israel closes Dublin embassy and accuses government of 'crossing every red line' - The Irish News

Mr Harris also said he “utterly rejected” the assertion that Ireland is anti-Israel.

Earlier this year, the Irish Government officially recognised the Palestinian state and, this week, it emerged that Ireland will formally intervene in South Africa’s genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Israel’s ambassador to Dublin was recalled in May following the Palestinian state recognition.

Mr Saar said: “The actions and antisemitic rhetoric used by Ireland against Israel are rooted in the de-legitimisation and demonisation of the Jewish state, along with double standards.

December 17, 2024

“Ireland has crossed every red line in its relations with Israel.

Ireland has crossed every red line in its relations with Israel Gideon Saar, Israeli foreign minister

“Israel will invest its resources in advancing bilateral relations with countries worldwide according to priorities that also take into account the attitudes and actions of these states towards Israel.”

Mr Harris responded: “I am deeply disappointed by the Israeli government’s decision to close its embassy in Dublin.

“Ireland’s foreign policy is founded on our deep commitment to dialogue and to the peaceful resolution of disputes.

“Resident embassies play a very important role in that regard.

“Keeping channels open has never been more important so that we can better understand each other’s positions, even when we disagree.”

He continued: “I utterly reject the assertion that Ireland is anti-Israel.

“Ireland is pro-peace, pro-human rights and pro-international law.

“Ireland wants a two-state solution and for Israel and Palestine to live in peace and security.

December 17, 2024

“Ireland will always speak up for human rights and international law. Nothing will distract from that.”

Tánaiste Mr Martin said he believed in the importance of maintaining diplomatic channels of communication. He said: “Ireland’s position on the conflict in the Middle East has always been guided by the principles of international law and the obligation on all states to adhere to international humanitarian law.

“This has been the case with regard to our response to the terrorist attack by Hamas in Israel on October 7 2023, and to the conduct by Israel of its military operations since then.

“The continuation of the war in Gaza and the loss of innocent lives is simply unacceptable and contravenes international law.

“It represents the collective punishment of the Palestinian people in Gaza. We need an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and a surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza.”

Mr Martin said Ireland and Israel will continue to maintain diplomatic relations, adding: “Inherent in that is the right to agree and disagree on fundamental points.

“There are no plans to close Ireland’s embassy in Israel, which is carrying out important work.”

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

Please recommend to your friends
