

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Advent Alaska

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News -

[Carols on the Steps at Armagh](#)

[First ever Christmas Tree Festival in Ballyshannon](#)

[Church, school and Rotary unite for Ballymena Christmas hamper appeal](#)

[Lights of Love, Carnmoney Parish Church](#)

[Methodist Church President visits Gurteen College](#)

[McCracken Christmas](#)

Cathedral Calls -

[It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... at Christ Church, Dublin and there's still more to come](#)

[Christmas at St Canice's Cathedral](#)

Clergy and ministry -

[Priest-in-charge of Ballynahinch](#)

[C of I Theological Institution MTh Class of 2024 Graduation](#)

In the media -

[NI churches tell of sadness as MPs back assisted dying -](#)

[Concern for local Church leaders over possible merger of Raphoe and Derry Diocese by Vatican - Donegal Live.ie](#)

Speaking to the soul -

[Short reading and a prayer daily on this site](#)

December 7, 2024

Image of the day – Advent Alaska



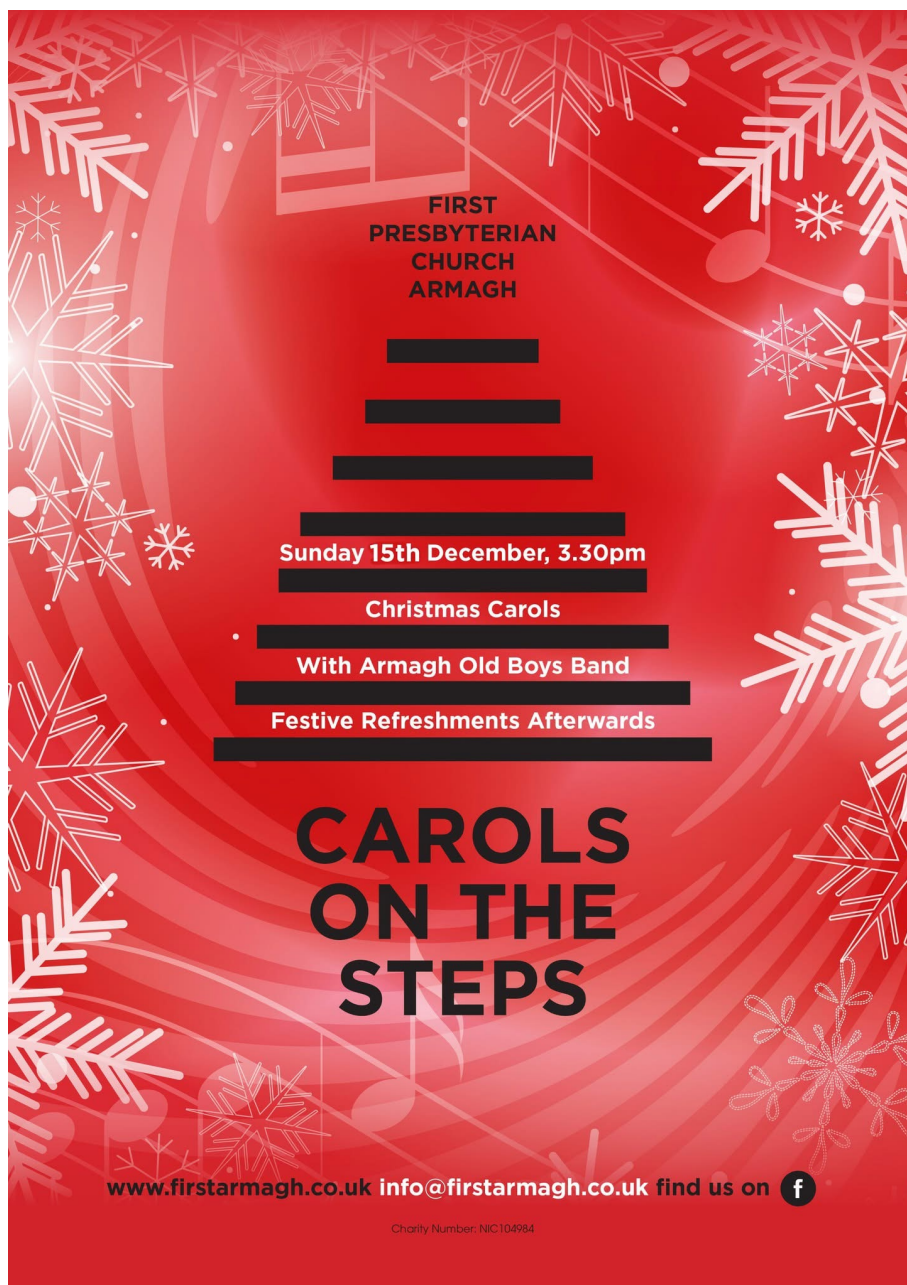
Two visitors from Anchorage in Alaska were enchanted by the festival exhibition in St Columba's Cathedral, Derry thanks to their guide from Derry Danders. The city centre also withstood the weather

News

Carols on the Steps at Armagh

First Armagh are continuing their seasonal singing series with 'Carols on the Steps' on Sunday 15th December at 3.30pm.

The praise will be led by Armagh Old Boys Band and all are cordially invited to come along and join in with the singing.



December 7, 2024

Festive refreshments, as well as hot chocolate and marshmallows, will be served afterwards in the cosy surroundings of the Temple Lundie Room.



First ever Christmas Tree Festival in Ballyshannon

The heady smell of fresh pine filled the air in St Anne's Church in Ballyshannon on Thursday evening as visitors arrived for the opening of the town's first ever Christmas Tree Festival.

Kilbarron parish had been planning the festival for almost a year and the effort showed, with almost 100 fir trees erected for display over the remaining four days of the festival before being returned to their donors.

The trees have been arranged around the aisles of the church at ground level and in the gallery. Donations



received over the five days of the festival will be used to renew St Anne's Church's distinctive bell mechanism and to improve access to the bell tower.

At Thursday evening's opening of the festival, the Rector of the Drumholm, Kilbarron and Rossnowlagh Group of Parishes, Rev Canon Brian Russell, paid tribute to the principal organisers, florist Paul Dunleavy and Ann Barrett from the White's Hotel Group, through whose vision the event was imagined. The Rector acknowledged the work of two members of the parish team, Elizabeth Anderson and Maeve Fenton.

Canon Russell thanked the many shops and businesses, schools, cultural and sports clubs, music and arts societies, crafters, households and individuals who had come onboard so enthusiastically and generously given financial support to the work of the church. He said all of the groups had beautified the church with their decorative skills. "When at the end of this festival weekend, you take your tree back to



your own premises or society," Canon Russell said, "may it continue to carry a blessing from here and from Our Lord to the comfort and joy of your friends and your family this Christmas."

Those present were treated next to a brief history of the church by local historian Anthony Begley and then listened to a number of hymns performed by vocalist Farrah Bogle.

The exhibits at the festival include a memory tree which visitors are invited to sign to remember a lost loved one. There's also a large wreath, made specially for the occasion, which the Rector dedicated to the emergency services – the Fire Brigade, An Garda, the Ambulance Service and the RNLI.

The Christmas Tree Festival will be open from 11.00am-8.00pm on Saturday 7th December; 11.00am-7.00pm on Sunday 8th December; and 11.00am-3.00pm on Monday 9th December.



Church, school and Rotary unite for Ballymena Christmas hamper appeal

Five members of the Ballymena Academy Charity Committee travelled over to St Patrick's Church on a morning this week to volunteer with



December 7, 2024

the Rotary Club Christmas hamper appeal.

They spent the morning sorting the donations and helping to make hampers for various different charities in our local community. Thank you to everyone who donated items to this very worthwhile cause.

Sunday 8th December, 6:30pm

Lights of Love

An evening of traditional carols and readings.
Join us in remembering those babies
and loved ones who are no longer with us.

Carnmoney Parish Church
More details: 028 90836337
andy.heber@googlemail.com

Sands
Stillbirth & neonatal death charity

sands.org.uk/lightsoflove

Charity registration number 299679. Company Limited by Guarantee Number 2232082. Scottish Charity Registration Number SC042789. We also operate in Northern Ireland.

Methodist Church President visits Gurteen College

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev Dr John Alderdice, recently visited Gurteen College, an agricultural college in the beautiful countryside of North Tipperary, which was founded in 1947 by a group of Methodist farmers and ministers.

Gurteen College provides a high-quality education to students from across Ireland from school leavers to adults, with the 386-hectare farm providing a superb outdoor classroom where students can hone their practical skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of farming and the wider aspects of countryside management.

The college mission statement of “working and learning together to create a better life in rural Ireland” harks back to the constant conviction of Methodism that the Christian Gospel should be good news for every aspect of a person’s life.

Call to prayer for the farming community

At this time, we recognise that life in rural Ireland, and particularly the farming community across the island, is facing ever growing pressures and difficulties whether due to floods and other extreme weather conditions, or uncertainty and anxiety caused by recent announcements in the UK budget.

The Methodist Church in Ireland is issuing a call to prayer across the Connexion:

For all those in the farming community for resilience and grace in the face of anxiety

For those in positions of influence to hear and understand the fears and concerns

For an end to flooding, and for better care to be taken to reduce our impact on our climate

We encourage all our ministers and lay people to be vocal about praying for the farming communities and families in our churches/societies and in our personal prayers.

Cathedral Calls

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... at Christ Church, Dublin and there's still more to come

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed so far to the stunning decoration of the cathedral for the Advent and Christmas period:

our electricians, Cathedral Manager John, Verger Andy, Head of Learning & Interpretation Ruth, Event Assistants Dener & Sam, Cathedral Assistants, and work placement students from Italy.



Additionally, a special thank you goes out to the following schools, and over 500 students for bringing each of our seven trees in the nave to life with colour and vibrancy through their decorations:

St Audoen's
NS
St
Catherine's
NS
Scoil Treasa

Naofa
Francis Street CBS
Presentation Primary School,
George's Hill
Presentation Primary School,
Warrenmount
St Brigid's, The Coombe

Visit our website to find out more about services, opening

December 7, 2024

hours, concerts and more in the cathedral this December:
<https://christchurchcathedral.ie/>

Christmas at St Canice's Cathedral



Sunday 22 December 5 pm

The Civic Carol Service

A candlelit Service of Nine Lessons and Carols,
recounting the foretelling and birth of the Saviour.
Music by Tavener, Howells, Carter, Chilcott and
Leighton.



Christmas Eve 11.30 pm

Midnight Eucharist for Christmas

Mozart Missa brevis in D (K. 194)

Christmas Day 11.30 am

Choral Eucharist for
Christmas Day

Victoria Missa O quam gloriosum



December 7, 2024

Clergy and ministry



Priest-in-charge of Ballynahinch

It was a joyful evening in a full and festive church as Revd Anna Williams was introduced as Priest-in-





charge of Magheradroll Parish Church of Ireland (Ballynahinch).

Revd Canon Follis, Rector of Hillsborough, Anna's home parish, gave the address and, as well as family and friends, there were many supporters from Banbridge Parish Church where Anna served her curacy.





C of I Theological Institution MTh Class of 2024 Graduation

CITI celebrated with its newest MTh graduates at the annual Commencements Ceremony in the Examination Hall of Trinity College, Dublin on Wednesday 27th November.

Addressing all who were gathered, Professor Neville Cox spoke generously concerning the University's historic

relationship with the Church of Ireland, and he paid tribute to the calibre and resilience of those who had chosen to follow a vocation into ordained ministry. The Registrar described graduation as a new beginning for each individual, and he recognised both the importance of being in a community of



McCracken Christmas

1 DECEMBER	Advent Communion 11AM
8 DECEMBER	Gift Service 11Am Bring along a toy donation for Salvation Army
15 DECEMBER	Nativity 11AM
22 DECEMBER	Pancake Breakfast 10AM Christingle Service 11AM
22 DECEMBER	Candlelight Carol Service 7pm
25 DECEMBER	Christmas Day Service 10:30AM

more information:
mccrackenmemorial@gmail.com
facebook.com/mccrackenmemorial

December 7, 2024

shared learning, as well as the vital support provided by family and friends.

The ceremony was presided over by Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shane Allwright, and was attended by the Provost, Professor Linda Doyle. Afterwards those present paraded across Front Square, with the photo below being taken on the steps of the College Chapel.

Present were - Rev Dr Andrew Campbell, Dr Katie Heffelfinger, Rev Daniel Fleming, Rev Caroline Brennan, Rev Mike Buchanan, Rev Melanie Sloan, Rev Cameron Mack, Dr Bridget Nichols, Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (missing from photo Rev Mathew McCauley, Rev Shona Bell, Rev David Thomas. Concern for local Church leaders over possible merger of Raphoe and Derry Diocese by Vatican - Donegal Live.ie

In the media

Concern for local Church leaders over possible merger of Raphoe and Derry Diocese by Vatican - Donegal Live.ie

The Apostolic Nuncio of Ireland, Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, is keen to merge the dioceses, but there is concern locally among Roman Catholic leaders in Derry and Donegal over what an amalgamation would mean, Chris McNulty writes.

December 7, 2024

There is concern locally among Roman Catholic leaders that the Vatican could press on with merging the Raphoe Diocese and the Diocese of Derry.

It follows reports that the Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown travelled to Rome to meet with Bishops Bishop Robert Francis Prevost to put forward the case for the two dioceses to stay as stand-alone entities.

The Irish Catholic newspaper reports that Bishop McKeown also held talks with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, who works as the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States.

The Apostolic Nuncio of Ireland, Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, is keen to merge the diocese.

Earlier this year, Archbishop Montemayor told how the Church would be undergoing a reorganisation

“With pooled resources and combined endeavours, and trusting strongly in the grace of God, we can look to the future with hope and confidence,” he said following the announcement of other mergers in the west of the country.

The Raphoe Diocese has been without a bishop since the appointment this year of Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ as the 33rd Bishop of Down and Connor.

Next April, the Derry Diocese will also become vacant when Bishop McKeown retires.

Currently, the Raphoe Diocese is headed by Diocesan Administrator Monsignor Kevin Gillespie.

It is understood that, given its presence for the two Diocese to merge, the Vatican has been keen not to appoint a permanent successor to Bishop McGuckian.

There are fears, however, among the Church hierarchy locally about the possible workload given that there are only three Bishops in Northern Ireland and the mooted merger would see the Archbishop Eamonn Martin to administer the amalgamation while also taking care of the Armagh and Dromore dioceses.

Archbishop Martin is believed to be not entirely opposed to the suggestions of merging the diocese, but not at this time.

Of the 51 parishes in the Diocese of Derry, 11 are in County Donegal.

Already, some parishes have merged due to a dwindling number of clerics.

It was announced in the summer that while the parishes of Camus, Clonleigh and Leckpatrick will still have three priests, there will not now be a dedicated parish priest in each.

Fr Michael McCaughey, the PP at The Three Patrons parish in Derry, became the PP of Clonleigh, but is also the PP in Camus and in Leckpatrick, while Fr Edward Gallagher has been appointed as a curate for the three parishes and Fr Declan Boland was named as a Priest-in-Residence for the Camus, Clonleigh and Leckpatrick parishes.

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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Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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