

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Kyiv's Anglicans**

February 28, 2025

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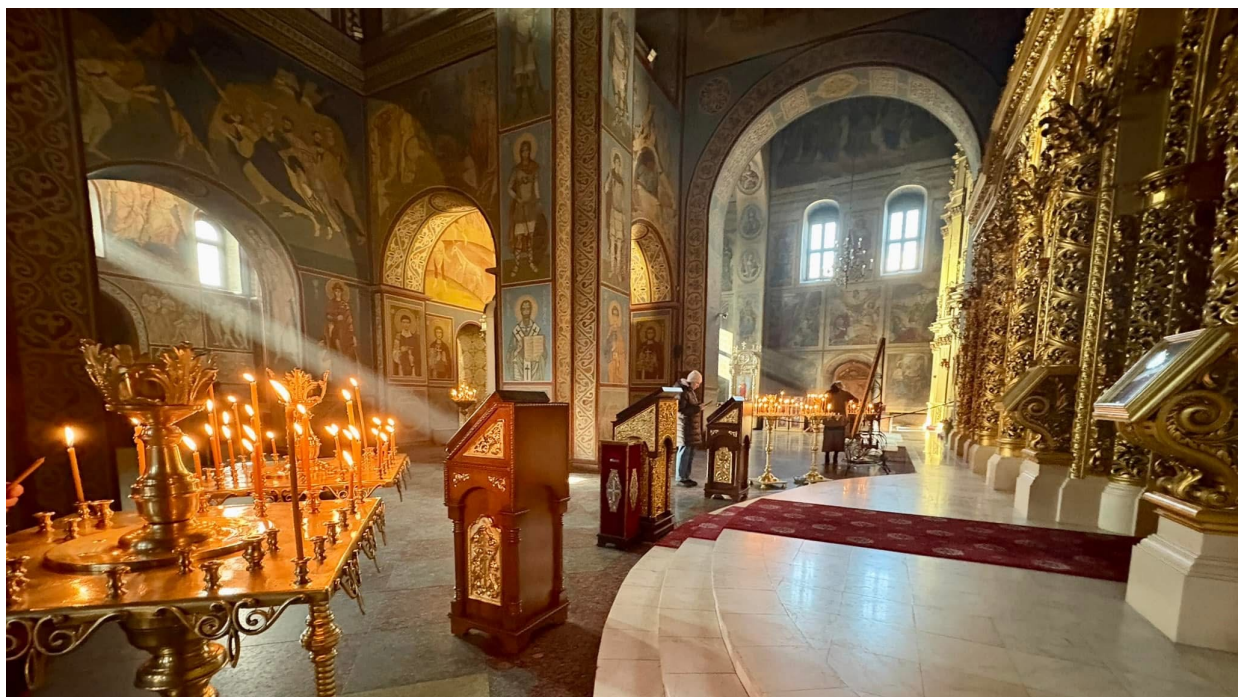
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## Image of the day



## Kyiv's Anglicans

**Ukraine's only Anglican community, Christ Church, meets every Sunday at 3:00PM at St. Catherine's German Lutheran Church, 22 Luteranska Street, Kyiv**





“On Feb 23, 2025, on the eve of the third anniversary of full-scale invasion, we had a commemorative prayers during our Eucharist Sunday Service with Rev.Kasta Dip.

“Three years ago the Lord has saved us from total occupation and surrender, having made a miracle. And we continue to pray for one more God's miracle: a miracle of just peace and reconstruction. We hope this will happen because 'with God all things are possible' (Matt.19:26)”

The Church is part of the Church of England Diocese in Europe

**Cold Kyiv - Johnny Mercer**



This week parliamentarian (*above*) Johnny Mercer's again in Kyiv. He commented - "Another beautiful day in cold Kyiv, with another long night of drone attacks last night. These people have an unbreakable spirit. I understand 'war fatigue', but our values do not align with abandoning them. If we stand for anything these days, we will stand with them."

## News

### **Abuse survivors to be remembered in prayer across Ireland on 7 March**

**This year, the annual Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Abuse will fall on 7 March, the first Friday of Lent. The Day of Prayer is an initiative of Pope Francis and was first marked in Irish dioceses in 2017.**

# 2025 Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse

First Friday of Lent, 7 March 2025



Blessed candles will be lit in parishes across the country as a reminder to the faithful of the need for atonement and to symbolise repentance; light in the darkness and hope. These ‘Candles of Atonement’ will be lit in diocesan cathedrals and parish churches on the Day of Prayer, and thereafter during the celebration of Mass and other liturgies.

The lighting of the ‘Candle of Atonement’, and the following prayer, are based on the very moving Penitential Rite composed and prayed by Pope Francis at the final Mass of the 9th World Meeting of Families on 26 August 2018 at Phoenix Park, Dublin, when the Holy Father implored the Lord’s mercy for the crimes of abuse and asked for forgiveness.

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Lord's mercy for the crimes of abuse and asked for forgiveness:

“

The 'Candle of Atonement' and accompanying prayer are offered as a reminder to all of the need for us to atone, to ask forgiveness as a Church for the suffering caused by abuse. My hope is that these candles will be lit in Cathedrals and parishes across the country as a reminder of the need for atonement and that they will symbolise repentance, light in the darkness and hope.

”

*-Archbishop Eamon Martin*



Lord, forgive us our many sins.

We grieve and repent with all our hearts for having offended you, for our great failings and neglect of the young and vulnerable.

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We place all of those who have been hurt by the Church in any way into your loving hands and under the protection of Our Blessed Mother.

Lord, bring peace to their broken lives and show us all the way out of darkness and into the light of your Word.

May we as the people of God be more fully human, more fully Christ-like and more fully your people, that we may see the errors of the past and go forward with renewed hope and faith in Christ and in our Church.

Amen.

To avail of the prayer content and resources for the Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse please click here

[\(https://www.catholicbishops.ie/day-of-prayer-for-survivors-and-victims-of-abuse-2025/\)](https://www.catholicbishops.ie/day-of-prayer-for-survivors-and-victims-of-abuse-2025/)

## **C of E 'protecting serving bishops' over Smyth says victims' advocate**

**An advocate for victims of the late Christian barrister John Smyth has accused the Church of England of protecting current serving bishops after it published a list of ten clergy who will face disciplinary proceedings over their handling of abuse disclosures in the John Smyth case.**

Earlier today the Church of England said former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, the former Bishop of Durham



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Paul Butler and eight other clergy would face disciplinary measures over their handling of abuse allegations against Smyth. But only one is still a serving member of the clergy.

Speaking to Premier, Andrew Graystone who has supported Smyth's victims for decades, said it was "an example of how broken the Church of England's internal safeguarding processes are.

"What's really notable is that none of the currently serving bishops, those who are still in post who were strongly criticized in the report, appear on this list of people who are going to be subject to the disciplinary process. So there seems to be a sort of immunity for bishops who are still in place and still at work.

"If you look at this list of people who've been criticized, it seems that the wagons have been circled to protect those who are currently working in the church, and particularly those who are currently senior leaders in the church, some of whom are named and criticized in the Makin review, but they're not on this list. And of course, because everything is done quietly and undercover, we're not going to know why. We're not going to have any justification or be able to question for any of these decisions."

Smyth, who died in 2018, was found to be the Church of England's most prolific abuser attacking boys and young men he met at Christian summer camps during the 1970s and 1980s.

In November, a report by Keith Makin found serious failings in the way the Church of England handled allegations

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against Smyth and the following month the Church began a process looking at whether those named present any immediate risk and consider whether there is a case for disciplinary proceedings under the Clergy Discipline Measure.

In a statement to mark the conclusion of the process, the NST said it would now seek to bring disciplinary proceedings against Bishop Paul Butler, Bishop George Carey, Rev Roger Combes, Rev Sue Colman, Rev Andrew Cornes, Rev Tim Hastie-Smith, Rev Hugh Palmer, Rev Paul Perkin, Rev Nick Stott and Rev John Woolmer.

Rev Cornes is also a member of the Crown Nominations Commission which is in the process of selecting the next Archbishop of Canterbury.

Andrew Graystone added:

“It's no help in making the church any safer, and it's no help to those victims and survivors of John Smythe who have seen no justice over all these years.”

## **Church leaders lament UK government cuts to international aid budget**

**Leaders from the Baptist, Methodist, Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church have responded to the Prime Minister's announcement concerning further cuts to the international development budget.**



In the statement, the leaders said:

“We deeply lament the government’s stated intention to make further cuts to the UK’s international development budget. This would break a manifesto promise made to people in the world’s poorest communities, and have a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods across the globe. While there is a case to be made for increasing defence spending to support Ukraine in resisting Russian aggression, that shouldn’t come at the cost of vital humanitarian and development programmes, which play a crucial role in promoting human security around the world.

“UK aid programmes protect women and girls from violence, provide cost-effective vaccines to babies and young children and support human rights defenders who work to prevent

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future conflict. Such programmes will be under threat if UK aid is further slashed by 40%.

“Our Churches have strongly encouraged and supported the UK in its commitment to international development, not only as a way of showing care to our global neighbours, but in recognition of the UK’s historic and ongoing responsibilities to address the causes of global injustice, poverty, forced migration, climate change and conflict. It is a source of deep regret to see a backing away from that responsibility. A



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massively reduced UK aid budget would be experienced as a bitter blow by partners and communities in the global south, especially coming so soon after the devastating USAID cuts. We urge the government to rethink its decision immediately.”

### **Signed by:**

The Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, The Baptist Union of Great Britain

Emma Jackson, Convener of the Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group, The Church of Scotland

The Revd Helen Cameron and Carolyn Godfrey, President and Vice-President, The Methodist Church in Britain

Tim Dunwoody, Team Leader for Irish Methodist World Development and Relief, The Methodist Church in Ireland

The Revd Philip Brooks, Deputy General Secretary (Mission), The United Reformed Church

## **Tearfund condemns UK government's decision**

**Tearfund's Chief Executive, Nigel Harris, has condemned the UK government's decision to slash the nation's already strained aid budget to fund defence, calling the move "appalling".**

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Harris warned that the cuts would have devastating consequences for vulnerable communities worldwide, potentially leading to more hunger, fewer educational opportunities for children, and setbacks for women's rights.

He described the decision as a "betrayal" of the UK's own interests and said it would worsen the suffering of those already facing humanitarian crises.

"The decision to drastically reduce overseas aid is indefensible and short-sighted," Harris said in a statement.

"It undermines hard-won gains and signals a retreat from efforts to tackle extreme poverty, conflict, and global health crises."

The UK government's announcement comes amid unprecedented global challenges, with humanitarian needs at an all-time high.

Harris called on the UK to uphold its global responsibilities, accusing the government of breaking manifesto commitments and undermining the country's credibility as a leader in development and climate change efforts.

"The aid budget saves lives around the world," he added. "Cutting it will result in more deaths, more disease, and more conflict."

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said that cutting aid funding to bolster the defence budget was "not a decision I wanted to make" but argued there was "no driver of migration and poverty like conflict".

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# Education

## BRA History trip to Carrickfergus

Over the past few weeks, Form 1 History classes at Belfast Royal Academy have been visiting Carrickfergus Castle as part of their topic on Norman castles.

Pupils were given a guided tour of the Castle and then



participated in an interactive workshop on medieval weapons and the feudal system.



## **Belfast High Christian Union weekend**

**Belfast High School Christian Union had their annual weekend trip at Castlewellan Castle.**

Seventy pupils from Years 10-14 enjoyed bible teaching and had plenty of fun together. Special thanks to speaker, former pupil Aaron Anderson, for taking the time to come along and speak.

## **St Matthew's School choir inspires**

**We congratulate our Children's Choir under the leadership of P7 teacher Miss Emma Colton for their**



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**brilliant performance at the 12 noon Sunday Mass in St Matthew's .**

We look forward to further performances going forward. Next Sunday we look forward to hearing some traditional favourites such as Ave Maria and Amazing grace sung by Mr Alan Coccia, a professionally trained performer.



## **Belfast Philharmonic at Belfast Boys' Model School**

**Our next concert will be Carl Orff's masterpiece Carmina Burana with our Youth and Chamber Choirs plus special guests the North Belfast Youth Choir!**

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On Saturday April 5 we are looking forward to performing with them and their conductor Dónal Doherty in The Belfast Boys' Model School where the choir rehearse - for more details and tickets visit our website.

<https://www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk/>

## Leaders Award - Meet a rocket Scientist

**On March 12th, Daniel Innes will be joining us for a live virtual interview to share their journey in engineering and answer YOUR questions.**

Daniel works for the Civil Aviation Authority who look after our skies, and he is a Launch Systems Engineer so he will be talking about all things ROCKETS 🚀

💬 This live session is perfect for students who love to ask “how” and “why” and want to explore the world of engineering.

Want your school to take part in this one-of-a-kind event? Register now for the Leaders Award Competition and unlock exclusive access to this inspiring session with Daniel.

Programme begins March 7.

Register now: <https://leadersaward.com/meet-an-engineer/>

## Clergy and ministry

### Presentation made for outstanding service to local church



*Canon Joe Feeney, AP Kiltullagh, presents the Bene Merenti medal to Josie Costello in recognition of her outstanding service as sacristan of St Patrick's Church, Cloonfad.*

**Cloonfad woman Josie Costello was presented with the Vatican's Bene Merenti medal recently in recognition of her outstanding service as sacristan of St Patrick's Church, Cloonfad.**

The medal, which recognises exceptional service to the Catholic Church, was presented on February 17th by Canon Joe Feeney.

The Bene Merenti medal was first established by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832 and is typically given to clergy, religious, and laypeople who have made significant contributions to the Church, often for long-standing service or extraordinary acts of faith and charity.

The medal features an image of Christ or the Pope on one side and the Latin inscription Bene Merenti ('Well Deserving') on the other. It is often awarded on special occasions, such as jubilees or retirements, and serves as a mark of distinction for those who have devoted themselves to the Church's mission.  
Courtesy Western People.

## Events

### VE Day 80: The Party



**Musicians of the Royal Air Force Squadronaires enjoyed performing live on BBC Breakfast for the launch of VE Day 80 outside the Royal Albert Hall with full-scale replica Spitfire as a backdrop.**

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They were joined by wartime evacuee Doreen Simpson, former Wren Ruth Barnwell, Normandy RN veteran Henry Rice, Kate Ashby from The D-Day Darlings and Traitors TV show winner Harry Clark.

Tickets for the main event on Thursday 8th May 2025; 'VE Day 80: The Party' are now available to purchase at: <https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2025/ve-day-80-the-party>

## Resources

### **New PCI podcast: Present for one another in God's intergenerational family, the church**

**In this latest episode of the PCI podcast, David Thompson (PCI Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness) explores what it looks like for church to be an all-in, all-age, family experience.**

<https://audioboom.com/posts/8644164-088-intergenerational-church-family>

Present is a denomination wide initiative inviting and encouraging congregations and their members to make themselves fully present to God who is ever present to us.

Find out more and watch a video about the Present initiative here [www.presbyterianireland.org/present](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/present)

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# Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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