

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ringing in the New Year

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Image of the day

Ringling in the New Year

St Canices Cathedral, Kilkenny, ringing out 2023 and in to 2024

People and places

Eco Committee making an impact in Carnmoney



Carnmoney Eco Committee members George Baird and Robert Campbell.

Replacing lightbulbs with LEDs, putting up bird boxes, sowing wildflowers and recycling scrap metal are just

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some of the initiatives set up by Carnmoney Parish's Eco Committee.

The projects are not only having a positive impact on the environment in and around the church, but are literally saving the parish hundreds of pounds.

The Eco Committee is made up entirely of lay members of the parish, and paying tribute to the great work already achieved since it was set up at the beginning of the year, the vicar of Carnmoney, the Rev Andy Heber, said: "It's been wonderful to see the group surging ahead with such enthusiasm and making great contacts within the community too."

A full report on the achievements of the Carnmoney Eco Committee will appear in the February issue of the diocesan magazine Connor Connections.

CMSI Focus Evening in Portglenone

Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) is planning a special focus event on January 18 at 7.30pm at Portglenone Parish Centre.

The evening will focus on Ibbā Diocese in South Sudan, with updates from Bishop Wilson, and an introduction to Rev Andrew and Joanne Quill who will soon begin life in Ibbā as CMSI Mission Partners.

Ibba focus evening



HEAR

...updates from
Bishop Wilson



MEET

...the Quills as they
prepare for life in
Ibba



PRAY

...for members of
Ahoghill & Portglenone
Parishes who will visit
Ibba in 2024



JOIN

...the dots of
mission from South
Sudan to Belfast

Thursday 18th January 2024 @ 7.30pm

Church of Ireland Parish Centre Portglenone

24 Main St, Portglenone, Ballymena BT44 8AB

A team from Ahoghill and Portglenone Parishes will visit Ibba in 2024.

Connor Diocese's partnership with Yei Diocese in South Sudan formally ended in 2023, but strong friendships and connections remain, and this CMSI event is open to those with an interest in South Sudan and Ibba in particular.

Lisburn minister retires

Sunday past marked Rev Brackenridge's retirement after 21 years at First Lisburn Presbyterian Church.

“John and his family have been such a blessing to our congregation. We simply want to say Thank you John, and



may God bless you, Jacquie and the family as you enjoy this new chapter together”.

Community Fridge project in St Patrick’s, Ballymoney

On Friday mornings, St Patrick’s, Ballymoney, invites the local community in for tea, coffee, chat and to avail of the contents of the ‘Community Fridge.’

This is an initiative aimed at stopping food waste by sharing donated food that is close to its sell-by date; offering a safe, warm environment for people to meet and a place to encourage skills such as cooking, gardening and crafts.

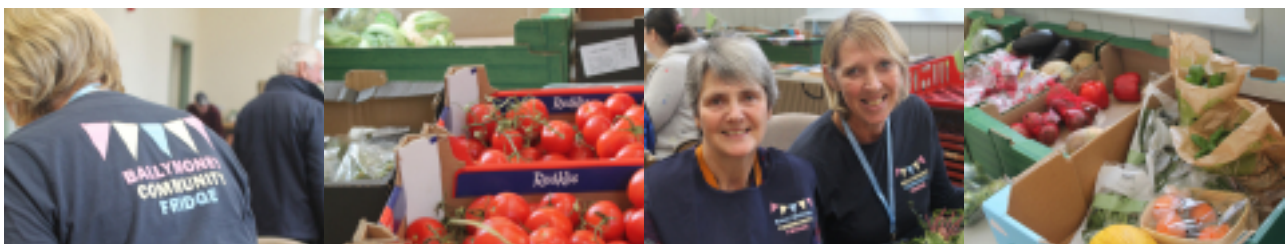
We called into the Community Friday in its former base in the Old Schoolhouse at St Patrick’s on a Friday at the end of November to learn more about the project – which has



The Community Fridge team in St Patrick's, Ballymoney.

expanded to the extent it has since moved into the larger parish centre.

Thanks to co-ordinator Zara Hutchinson and her team for their welcome, and you will be able to read all about Ballymoney's Community Fridge in the next issue of our diocesan magazine Connor Connections, which will be available in February.





Brigid 1500 Service to be celebrated by Churches Together

On Thursday 1st February, 2024, churches across Kildare and beyond will come together to participate in a special ecumenical service at 11.00am in St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare entitled, 'Celebrating St Brigid. Brigid 1500: A Service of Thanksgiving'.

This service, dedicated to commemorating the Feast Day of St Brigid and the 1500th anniversary of her death, promises an uplifting experience through music, prayer, and worship.

The co-leaders of this thanksgiving service are the Most Rev Denis Nulty, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and

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Leighlin, and the Most Rev Patricia Storey, Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Kildare. Canon Dr. Alison Joyce, the Rector of St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street in the heart of London, will deliver the sermon.

At the end of the service, a Pause for Peace will be observed in the cathedral at 12 noon. Aligning with a broader initiative whereby the people of Kildare are extending a global invitation, urging individuals worldwide to pause for a minute's silence at midday (local time) on St Brigid's Day, the 1st of February 2024.

Livestreaming of the service will also be available worldwide.

The service will take place in St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare which marks the ancient hilltop site where she founded her double monastery, for men and for women, in the year 480 AD.

Commenting on the service, Bishop Pat Storey said: "We are delighted to be a part of the Brigid 1500 celebrations which highlight the Christian heritage and living faith of many in this land. We are partners in the gospel alongside every believer as we remember the wonderful legacy of Brigid".

Bishop Denis Nulty added: "Celebrating anniversaries help to ground us and root us in the reality of the present day. The 1500th Anniversary of the death of St Brigid is one such anniversary. I am so looking forward to gathering with Bishop Pat and the people of Kildare in the Cathedral on

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February 1st as we celebrate and give thanks for the witness of Brigid and the faith she brought”.

Kildare County Council extends a warm invitation to the community and visitors alike to participate in the Brigid 1500 Programme and celebrate the extraordinary life and legacy of St Brigid throughout 2024, marking the 1500th anniversary of the death of St Brigid.

For more information and updates on the programme, please visit www.brigid1500.ie and all Brigid 1500 social media channels.

News reports

Welby’s peace plea: ‘Wars seem to be everywhere just now’

Cap - The Most Rev Justin Welby delivered his New Year Message at RAF Brize Norton

The Archbishop of Canterbury has said that “wars seem everywhere at the moment” in his New Year plea for peace.

The Most Rev Justin Welby made the statement as he delivered his annual start-of-the year address.

Speaking at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire, he prayed for a peaceful 2024 in his New Year Message, noting: “Wars seem everywhere at the moment.

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“Wars we know about, wars forgotten. I’ve seen for myself the ongoing human cost of war. In Ukraine I went to Bucha where evidence of atrocities was found.



“I’ve met Ukrainian refugees, most recently in Georgia and Romania: families having to start again in a new country. I’ve met refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh (a territory disputed by Azerbaijan and Armenia) after they left their homes because of conflict.

“And in Jerusalem last October I sat and listened to some of those traumatised by war, Palestinian and Israeli. Jesus Christ tells us to stand with those suffering because of war, and to seek to make peace.”

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His comments came after Russia launched a fresh drone assault on Ukraine on Saturday night, hitting the capital, Kyiv, and Kharkiv after promising that strikes on the Russian border city of Belgorod hours earlier that killed 24 people, would “not go unpunished”.

Meanwhile, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said on Saturday that 165 people had been killed in the previous 24 hours.

The Archbishop also praised the Armed Forces, saying that soldiers were at the centre of the celebrations not “just because the world marvelled at their displays of pageantry” but because they, “like many, many others in the country”, embodied service.

He added: “Here at RAF Brize Norton, almost 6,000 service personnel are living out that oath every day, working to keep us safe and the country secure, delivering humanitarian aid following natural disasters, like the earthquake in Turkey last year, or supporting civilians in the midst of conflict in places like the Middle East.

“We’re learning more and more how the horrors and traumas of war impact service personnel, sometimes long after. But there are also traumas for their loved ones.

“Families across the country feel the absence of relatives and those they love who are serving their country abroad.

“We fear for those of our fellow citizens who risk their lives defending and protecting the vulnerable and ensuring security.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message was broadcast on BBC1 and iPlayer at 12.55pm yesterday.

He has previously drawn criticism for intervening on issues such as illegal migration, the Rwanda policy, tax and social care, the protection of minority students and visa changes aimed at curbing migration.

Legalising assisted dying 'would stop Catholics working in NHS'

THE legalisation of assisted dying would make medicine a "no-go" profession for Catholics, MPs have been warned. The Catholic Union of Great Britain, which represents laypeople, said any new law that made it easier for people to end their lives would risk exacerbating NHS staffing shortages.

And they raised fears that disabled people and others could be left in fear for their lives because they are "expendable".

A poll of members carried out by the group found that 88 per cent wanted the laws against assisted suicide retained or tightened, while just 5 per cent wanted it to be made legal.

Earlier this year, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, called on the Government to set aside time for debate on a law to allow assisted dying.

Replying to the same House of Commons' inquiry as the Catholic Union, Lord Carey said it is "profoundly Christian"

to ensure no one suffers against their will. His approach differs from that of the Church of England, which told MPs it would be “foolish” to believe that some of the half a million elderly people abused every year would not be put under pressure to end their lives.

MPs on the health select committee are looking again at the issue of assisted suicide and assisted dying, and are considering whether any protections would be needed against coercion, and what capabilities a person would need to be able to consent to the end of their life.

Assisted dying legislation has been introduced in Canada, Belgium, Holland and the US state of Oregon – and there are plans in the Scottish Parliament for legislation to be introduced there.

The Catholic Union is an association of Roman Catholic laypeople from all walks of life, including doctors and nurses. In their submission, they referred to an online survey of members, which found concerns that changing the law could make it harder for Catholics to enter the medical profession.

One responder said: “It is already difficult for Catholics to enter the medical or nursing profession.

“Any move to make assisted suicide easier would make it much harder, and some areas of medicine impossible to work in. Furthermore it would be a barrier to accessing care for those millions of patients who care about this issue and would be concerned about their medical professionals’

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commitment to their care knowing that assisted suicide were possible.”

The submission from MPs goes on: “A number of responders to our survey pointed to the pressures faced by medical professionals in Canada, which recently introduced assisted suicide.

“The Catholic Union believes that it would be extremely hard to create robust and effective conscientious objection provision for healthcare professionals if assisted suicide were to be legalised in England and Wales.”

Church of Scotland launches Gaelic children’s audio Bible



The Church of Scotland has supported a new Gaelic Bible story collection for kids, creating a new a free audio book version of the Lion Tell A Story Bible.

The audio version features the well-known Gaelic broadcaster Angus MacDonald from Point on Lewis, who waived his recording fee. A QR code in the book allows children and families to listen to Angus's narration while reading serving as a valuable resource for language learners of all ages.

"The completion of the audio book has been transformative," Rev Hugh M. Stewart, minister of Lochs-in-Bernera and Uig, commented.

"The child, if they wish, can hear the text being read as they read it for themselves. The audio version also, helps parents, grandparents and guardians of children in Gaelic Medium Education who do not have any Gaelic themselves but have begun learning the language.

"You are supplementing the written page and it is very good for parents, grandparents and guardians who are learning Gaelic along with their children. It allows them to both enjoy what the book teaches, in terms of the story, but they are also learning the language at the same time."

Around 1,500 free copies of the Tell A Story Bible, translated into Gaelic by Maletta Macphail for the Gaelic Committee, are being offered to children upon request. Already, 550 copies have been distributed, with requests coming in from across Scotland, as well as from Canada and Spain.

In the media

Parliament without Christian prayers 'would be worse off' - Daily Telegraph

Parliament would lose something if it did not open each day with Christian prayers, the chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons has said.

The Venerable Tricia Hillas starts daily Commons sessions with a set of Christian prayers.

The Church of England clergywoman and Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle kneel together as she leads MPs in three prayers, including a prayer for Parliament that asks for political leaders to “never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals”.

The public and journalists are not permitted into the chamber while the prayers are in progress.

Opponents have argued against the tradition, which is thought to have roots stretching back almost 500 years, with the likes of the National Secular Society and Humanists UK calling for it to be ditched or replaced with a “time for reflection”. But Mrs Hillas said MPs have told her how much they appreciate the day starting with a prayerful moment.

Asked if she thought Parliament would lose anything if the traditional start was abolished, she said: “I think we would, and people tell me that we would.

“When there is so much demand on people and so little time for pause, that in itself, no matter what faith someone is, having that moment is significant, before the hustle and bustle.

“As I come out (of the chamber), often people will say ‘Thank you for that’ or ‘Thank you for that piece of scripture’.”

MPs have been known to attend prayers as it allows them to reserve a seat on the green benches by laying a prayer card down.

Mrs Hillas insisted it was not the only reason they attend, adding: “It is a good way to not only hope you might get a ticket for the pearly gates, but you might get in for Prime Minister’s Questions.”

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

A festive contact

The NI Opera Chorus performed 'O Holy Night' at The MAC before their Christmas Sing-Along with soprano Mary McCabe and tenor Aaron O'Hare.

You can find out all about NI Opera Chorus artist development programmes here:

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<https://niopera.com/developing-talent/>



Volunteers sought for 4 Corners Festival new printed programme

4 Corners Festival are looking for volunteers to help distribute them - PM the page or email them at info@4cornersfestival.com for more information and collection!

Ruthless Media completed the content and design and Media Design and Print the printing.



The 4 Corners Festival is supported by The Northern Ireland Executive, Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) and Good Relations programme, The Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund and Belfast City Council Good Relations Fund.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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