

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – The Hub celebrates at Methodist Conference**

June 13, 2024

## Image of the day



## The Hub celebrates at Methodist Conference

**Last week leaders and members of The Hub were at the Methodist Conference giving away free chocolate and pens, and sharing about life at The Hub! We loved meeting everyone!**

“It was a very special privilege to be at the Installation of the new President, Rev John Alderdice, who is a former Chaplain of The Hub. Huge congratulations John”.

June 13, 2024

## News

### Ballymacash's Beaver Barnaby

**As part of their World Award, 1st Ballymacash Beavers were asked to choose an activity to help their local community.**

This year one of the beaver leaders, Gillian offered to crochet a beaver - who sadly

would have no name 🙄 - but beavers could guess his name while raising money for the St Marks church community - and so an idea was born.

As always beavers rose to the challenge and raised an amazing amount of £140. On Friday night, Gillian announced that the beaver's name was Barnaby. With two beavers guessing the same name it all came down to the toss of a coin. Congratulations to beaver Ben, who took Barnaby home!

“A huge thank to the very talented Gillian, to all the beaver parents for supporting this task and for the very kind donation to church funds”.





## **New Chief Volunteer of Scouts Northern Ireland**

**Following a successful search process across Northern Ireland, UK Chief Volunteer Carl Hankinson, has announced the appointment of Stephen Bell as the new Chief Volunteer of Northern Ireland.**

The UK Chief Volunteer said, “We welcome Stephen to our UK Leadership Team as he takes up this important leadership role for UK Scouts and Scouts NI.



Stephen Bell, Chief Volunteer of Northern Ireland (designate) pictured (from left to right) with Jonathan Gracey, Chief Executive of Scouts NI, Kayleigh Finlay, Northern Ireland Youth Lead, Stephen Donaldson, outgoing Chief Volunteer of Northern Ireland and Henry Brown, Chair of Scouts NI

“As Chief Volunteer, Stephen will provide leadership and support to our Northern Ireland Team, comprised of our County and District Lead Volunteers and wider Northern Ireland support team, working in partnership with Scouts NI HQ staff colleagues and Trustees to ensure that our 7 Northern Irish Counties are well led and empowered to deliver our Skills For Life Strategy, and in particular as we transition the Districts to our four new Northern Ireland Regions”.

June 13, 2024

Stephen will spend the next few months working with Stephen Donaldson, Kayleigh Finlay (NI Youth Lead), Henry Brown (Chair of Scouts NI) and Jonathan Gracey (Chief Executive of Scouts NI) preparing to take on the role and completing various induction and transitional activities ahead of a formal handover with Stephen Donaldson at the Scouts NI AGM on 25 September.

## **Stephen's Scouts journey**

Stephen has been involved as a volunteer in Scouts for over 12 years. He has held a variety of roles, most recently Chair of Northern Ireland's Strategy & Delivery Committee and District Lead Volunteer of South East Antrim, whilst holding various roles behind the scenes championing youth-led Scouting.

Stephen has had various sectional roles across Cubs, Scouts, Explorer Scouts and Scout Network, which have given him an understanding of the hard work and dedication it takes to run Scouts locally. Above all, he is a local Scout and Explorer Scout Leader in 1st Cloughfern and enjoys getting outdoors and seeing young people maximise their opportunities on a weekly basis.

Throughout his Scouting journey he has achieved the Queen's Scout Award and successfully took part in an Explorer Belt expedition to the Netherlands. Through obtaining these awards Stephen has become an advocate for engagement, top awards and international experiences. Outside of Scouts

June 13, 2024

In his professional life, Stephen is the Head of Operations of a Scientific Research Organisation, based in Northern Ireland.



## Donegal rain and clergy retirements dampen St Columba Celebration

**The Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, RT Rev Andrew Foster paid tribute to the Rev David and Rev Heather Houlton who retired recently after six and a half years ministry in the Parish of Conwal Union with Gartan.**

Rev David has served as Rector throughout that period, while Rev Heather has served as Chaplain of Letterkenny University Hospital and Associate Minister of Conwal Union and Gartan.

June 13, 2024

The couple's last service was an important one for the local Church of Ireland community, the Annual Diocesan St Columba Celebration which usually takes place outdoors at Gartan Abbey – not far from where Columba is reputed to have been born – but which was forced indoors instead this year, to Gartan Parish Church in Churchhill, because of driving rain.

Bishop Andrew said it was an auspicious day – the actual Feast Day of St Columba – but that there was a sadness to the day, as well, as they bade a very fond farewell to Rev Heather and to Rev David from the parishes and from the diocese. “I want to thank Heather and David personally for their ministry in Conwal and Gartan over the last six and a half years. You very quickly endeared yourselves to your parishioners and your ministry has been marked by real love of your people and a love in sharing the goodness of God with them.

“Heather, I want to thank you, in particular,” the Bishop said, “for your ministry in the hospital in Letterkenny as a chaplain. I know from around the diocese that that has been deeply appreciated by so many. Thank you for all you have done.”

And turning to her husband, Bishop Andrew said, “I suppose a Yorkshire man has to go back to Yorkshire, doesn't he, to retire? We'd much prefer you to stay in Donegal, but we do wish you every blessing for the future. We've great thankfulness for all that you've done and, you know, you'll always have a welcome in the homes of Donegal; you know that.”



June 13, 2024



## **Christ Church, Lisburn, to host Connor Synod 2024**

**Connor Diocesan Synod 2024 takes place in Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, on Thursday June 13.**

The Business of Synod will take place from 11.30am until around 5pm, with breaks for lunch and afternoon coffee/tea.

The business meeting will be preceded by a Service of Holy Communion in Christ Church at 10am.

June 13, 2024

## **Institution of Rector of Magheracross Parish**

**Thursday 20th June – The Institution of Revd Lorraine Capper as Rector of Magheracross Parish, Ballinamallard by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis is at 7.30pm and afterwards to tea in the Archdale Hall.**

The preacher is Most Revd Dr. Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough, Primate of Ireland and Metropolitan.



## **Diocesan readers for Down & Dromore commissioned**

**Two Diocesan readers for Down & Dromore were commissioned by Bishop David McClay at a service in St John's, Newcastle on Sunday 9 June.**

June 13, 2024

Jillian Aulds was commissioned in her home church whilst Robert MacBride is a parishioner of St Mark's Dundela. Both successfully completed the 2-year training course and are now licensed to serve both in their parishes and across the diocese.

Jillian and Robert have shared their experiences of being and called, trained, and sent. See links on diocesan web site -

[\[https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2024/06/two-diocesan-readers-commissioned\]](https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2024/06/two-diocesan-readers-commissioned)

## **Bishops tell Sunak and Starmer 'taxes are a blessing'**

**Over 20 prominent Christian leaders including former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the current Bishops of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Stepney and Barking as well as several charity leaders, academics and theologians have signed an open letter to the leaders of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour parties urging them to 'seek the welfare of the nation' through fairer taxation.**

The letter, authored by the **JustMoney Movement**, urges the leaders, if elected to form a Government in the upcoming General Election to help shift the narrative on tax, so it is seen as a blessing and not a burden, a vital tool for shaping a better society. They also call for the reform of the tax system so everyone contributes a fair share.

June 13, 2024

They write: "The wealthiest in society often don't contribute their fair share towards the common good, for example: the richest 10 per cent pay just 34 per cent of their income in taxes, but the poorest 10 per cent pay 42 per cent; council tax is regressive with the poorest 10 per cent of the population paying 8 per cent of their income in council tax, while the richest 40 per cent pay 2-3 per cent; and often the wealthiest are able to avoid paying the taxes they should by using 'tax havens', passing on assets through family trusts, or using various exemptions built into the system."

**Sarah Edwards, Director of the JustMoney Movement said:**

"We can actually see tax as a blessing. It's a way in which we can fund things which enable everyone in society to flourish.

"It's more important than ever to talk about tax. Taxes are part of everyday life: they are a tool of government in seeking a society where everyone can flourish. A fairer tax system could address inequality and raise revenue towards strengthening our public services and tackling the breakdown in our climate and nature. That's why we are calling for fairer taxes – to get us closer to the kind of just, compassionate society we see in the biblical Jubilee and in Jesus's kingdom values."

**Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams said:**

"It's time to challenge the narrative about taxation as some sort of irrational imposition by a distant and greedy

June 13, 2024

government and connect it again with our basic responsibility for one another in society. But this can't happen unless people trust the system to be both fair and effective. What we are seeking is a grown-up discussion of all this - not uncritical, but not unrealistic or resentful, grounded in the biblical vision of our call to serve and protect one another as the foundation of a durable and dependable social order.”

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

### Summer Praise: Favourite Hymns of the Church Year

**Sunday 23rd June – Summer Praise: Favourite Hymns of the Church Year in Derryvullen North Parish Church, Irvinestown at 7.00pm.**

As well as congregational singing, there will be special singing by the choir as well as soloists, duets and groups. A collection will be taken on the evening in aid of and divided equally between CMSI (for the Rev Andrew and Joanne Quill in South Sudan) and the Air Ambulance NI. Everyone will be welcome at this occasion of celebration.

### Broadcast Service from St. Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen

June 13, 2024

## **Sunday 23rd June – BBC Radio Ulster Broadcast Service at 10am**

St. Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen, on The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

# Perspective

## **St Columba a model for the modern church to follow - Bishop Andrew Forster**

**In his sermon to the Annual Diocesan St Columba Celebration Bishop Andrew held St Columba up as a model for the modern church to follow and as an inspiration for God's people nowadays. He said -**

The saint was born “up the road” in the year 521, the Bishop said, and he was born into a noble family, an aristocratic, princely family. He could've held onto that chieftain lifestyle; he could've stayed a favourite son of a favourite prince, and lived with all the benefits and prestige that that would have brought him. “But not so for Columba, because Columba was a follower. He was a wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ.

“For him, being a follower would lead him on pilgrimage, pilgrimage to do the work of God in different places. And for us, if we follow the example of Columba, we're to be followers, followers whose pilgrimage might keep us in our own locality but yet it is still a pilgrimage that should lead us deeper into the love of God, as his children. The problem is, at times, that we end up following the wrong things, whereas Columba, this prince, decides ‘I will be a follower of Jesus

June 13, 2024

Christ' and following Christ for Columba becomes this absolute passion in his life. And what he did as a result of that, I think, is a wonderful model for the church today."

Bishop Andrew said the monastery that Columba founded in Derry became much more than the walls of a building in which the worship of God happened. It became a place of education, of rudimentary healthcare, a place of commerce and trade, and a place where people learned skills. And Columba replicated that in Ireland and Scotland. "He was this passionate follower of Jesus Christ and his passion for being a follower meant that he couldn't keep it to himself," Bishop Andrew said. "He has this amazing model of planting churches and out of the planting of a church bless[ing](#) the wider community.

"And I think it's a beautiful picture for us if we're to be truly Columban followers that we see the church not simply as the monastery where we worship God and [which we](#) then disappear from, but that the family of God and we as individual followers of Jesus Christ are people who share that in every aspect of our lives.

"Following him means whether it's in education, or in our workplace or wherever we are, that we are followers of Jesus, carrying his love and his grace with us.

Unfortunately, in society today, we've got too reticent, too nervous to do that, whereas you and I believe it's the most wonderful thing in the world to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

"Columba knew it was the most wonderful thing in the world. That's why he planted monasteries all over the place, and I think it's a wonderful picture for us, in a secularising world.

June 13, 2024

He started off in a pagan world, sharing the light of Christ; we live in a secularising world and we can follow his example in sharing the light of Christ in every aspect of life. That's what it means to be a follower. It's not simply locked up in the walls of a monastery or the walls of a church.”

## In the media

### **Methodist Church in Ireland passes a new resolution on sexuality - Belfast Telegraph**

**Methodist Church in Ireland passes a new resolution on sexuality. It appears to bar those in same-sex marriage from leadership roles, Gareth Hanna writes.**

The Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI) has passed a new resolution on human sexuality, including a contentious amendment that split the vote 54% to 46%.

The MCI conference, taking place in the Assembly Buildings in Belfast, included the presentation of a report which was the result of a 10-year process initiated at the 2014 conference.

The much-anticipated report said there was never any change considered to the church's understanding of marriage as being “between one man and one woman” or its understanding that such marriage is seen as “the only appropriate relationship within which sexual intercourse may take place”.



June 13, 2024

It appeared that an accepted amendment — branded by one speaker in the debate as “sneaky” — to the resulting resolution barred those in same-sex relationships from taking on roles on leadership within the church.

Same-sex marriages have been permitted in the Methodist Church in Great Britain since a vote passed by a landslide in 2021.

While the MCI report did not come close to such a move, it included an “unreserved apology for failures in pastoral support and care” for members of the LGBTQI+ community.

As a result of the accepted amendment, the usefulness of that apology was called into question during the discussion.

The passed resolution declares that “all are welcome” in Methodist communities and at the communion table. It also passes responsibility for decisions on how individuals may “serve the life of the local church” on to individual church councils.

However, the controversial amendment — accepted by 105 votes to 91 — said that “faithfulness in marriage and celibacy outside of it” is “a standard for spiritual leadership and teaching roles”.

It was said that the purpose of the amendment was to provide clarity for individual congregations and consistency of the application of the church's teaching.

It was also suggested, during the course of the debate, that the amendment introduced “an element of contradiction”, as

June 13, 2024

the resulting resolution then appeared to both introduce and withdraw the ability of individual church councils to place those in same-sex marriages into positions of leadership.

One passionate contribution to the discussion, which “respectfully” called the wording of the amendment “a little bit sneaky”, said: “If we accept this, we can forget it all, throw the report in the bin, carry on doing nothing and causing hurt.”

Others welcomed the “clarity” provided by the amendment, amid concern that individual church councils may “do what is right in their own eyes”.

It was also said that the phrase referencing “faithfulness in marriage and celibacy outside of it” as “a goal of discipleship and a standard for spiritual leadership” was “an inclusive phrase, and a phrase that enables all to be a part of” MCI.

A separate amendment was defeated by an even closer margin — 100 votes to 99. It had sought to remove an element of the resolution that asserts that passages of the Bible relating to sexuality are read and understood in different ways, and that views on the validity of those readings differ within the church.

The overall resolution was passed by 160 votes to 27, with one voter wishing to abstain.

## Poem for today

## Crossing the bar by Lord Tennyson

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

ST ANN'S CHURCH LUNCHTIME RECITALS



**MIRIAM ROYCROFT  
& LANCE COBURN**  
*CELLO & PIANO*

**16** SUNDAY  
12:45PM  
JUN Tickets 10 euro

An Opportunity to Treasure

Rachmaninoff and De Falla  
in the beautiful setting of  
St. Ann's Church.



**ST ANN'S CHURCH**  
Dawson street Dublin  
<https://www.stannsrecitals.com/>



## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

