

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – All Saints cruising**

## Image of the day



## All Saints Clooney parishioners go cruising

**The parishioners of All Saints Clooney ‘found their sea legs’ on Friday evening as they re-enacted a cruise onboard the ‘Saints of the Sea’ without ever leaving terra firma.**

Skippered by the local Rector Rev Canon David McBeth, the All Saints’ centre was transformed for the evening, with the cruise night offering everything one might expect on an ocean-going liner – without the risk of sea sickness.

On arrival, the parishioners were ‘piped onboard’ by Pipe Major Darren Milligan, and once the sailing got under way the guests were welcomed warmly by the captain, Canon





McBeth, who had a special ‘captain’s table’ for guests including his former curate, Rev Andrea Cotter (now Rector of Leckpatrick and Dunalong).

As he spoke, the Rector surveyed around a dozen tables representing port cities or cruise destinations around the world. He suggested there might be some turbulence on the voyage as the evening wore on. “There may be a few boys swaying when the waves get a little rough, and we don’t want anyone falling over the side.”

The parishioners entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, with many donning costumes representing their chosen port cities. These included Amsterdam, Barcelona, London, New York, Belfast, Cork, Hawaii, Venice, Australia, South Africa, France and Jamaica.

Canon McBeth - in his role as captain - even performed a ‘wedding blessing, as two parishioners, Billy and Jean Allen, ‘renewed’ their marriage vows.

The All Saints' Cruise Night was a fundraiser for the parish. The guests enjoyed supper together, and the evening concluded with entertainment by the talented duet, Bello Duo (Conor Taggart and Victoria McClements), who were making a welcome return to All Saints.

## News



## Bangor Abbey bounces for Christian Aid

Those lovely people at Bangor Abbey in County Down were blessed with warm sunshine for a barbeque on Pentecost Sunday that raised almost £2,200 to support the Christian Aid Week appeal.



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Look closely and you'll see that several of the parishioners are wearing red for Pentecost, which by chance is also Christian Aid's signature colour.

The barbeque was organised by the Rector, Rev Canon Ronnie Nesbitt with the support of the whole church. Bunting and a bouncy castle and spot prizes brought a fete-like feel to the fundraiser which was held in the church grounds after the Sunday service.

Christian Aid's representative Sam McWilliams made special mention of the delicious salads and trifles that were prepared by a group of parishioners called Soul Sisters who cater for lots of church events.

Christian Aid is grateful to them and to the vestry members and scouts and everyone who organised the event and supported it with their donations.

Finally, a special thank you to Sam McWilliams who's been supporting Christian Aid at Bangor Abbey since the late 1970s.

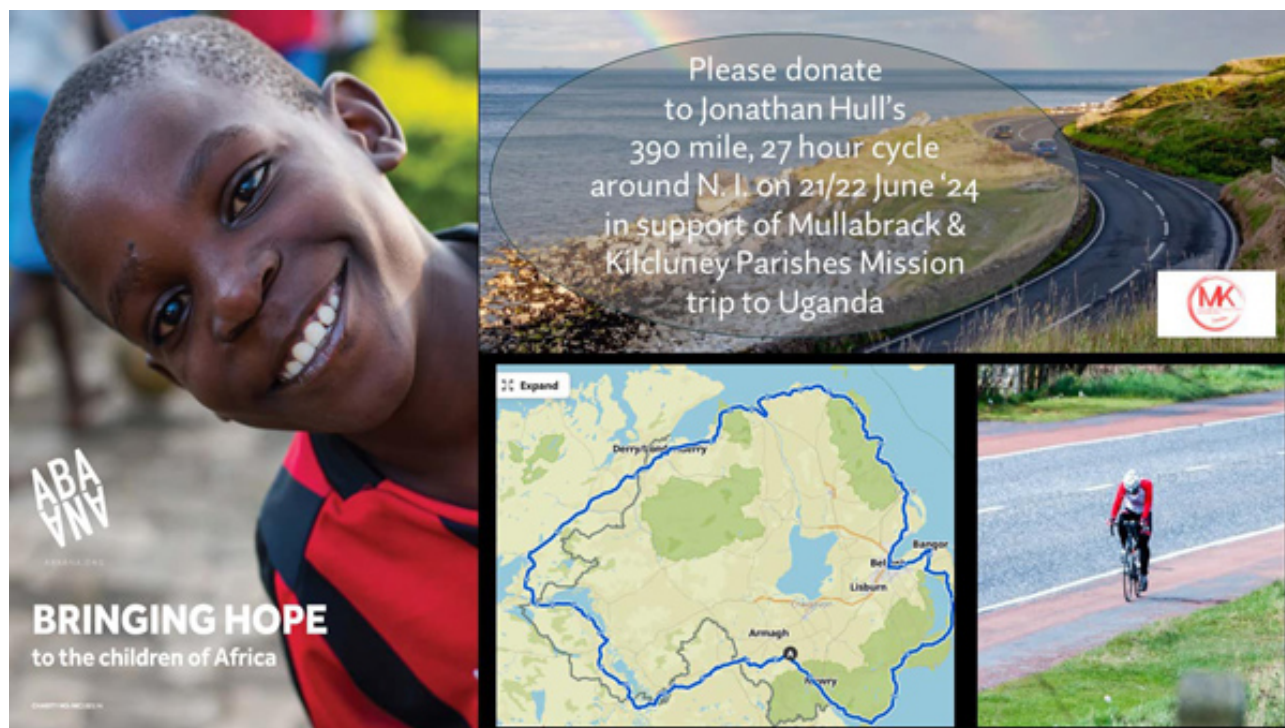
## **Scout pride in Beaver's 100 mile memorial walk for cancer charity**

**The Scout Association says it is incredibly proud of Lewis Rennie from the 1st Carnfunnock Beaver Colony, who has been honoured with a Commissioner's Commendation presented by District Lead Volunteer for South East Antrim, Stephen Bell.**



Lewis walked 100 miles last summer, raising over £16,000 for children with cancer in memory of his brother, Callum. A portion of the funds supported the Big C Foundation NI, providing wheelchairs, play therapy equipment, and trips to Lapland for children battling cancer. His journey is a source of inspiration for us all.

Read more about Lewis' amazing journey on the Scouts website: <https://shorturl.at/5d27n>



## Archdeacon rides 100 miles in Abaana fundraising cycle challenge

**To help raise funds for an Abaana project in Uganda, Armagh Diocesan Communications Officer Jonathan Hull aimed to cycle non-stop around Northern Ireland - and the Archdeacon of Belfast joined him for the first 110 miles.**

Jonathan Hull aims to cycle non-stop a full 390 miles around Northern Ireland in approximately 27 hours.

The Ven Barry Forde will be helping Jonathan raise funds in support of Mullabrack and Kilcluney Parish Churches Team's visit to Uganda from July 15-29.

Jonathan's challenge started in Markethill, Co Armagh, on Friday June 21 – the longest day of the year – at 5pm, and he planned to cycle non-stop (except for short food breaks)

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through the night and all through Saturday in an anti-clockwise direction around the coast of Northern Ireland, cycling through all nine Ulster counties.

The Archdeacon of Belfast himself completed a two-wheeled marathon challenge back in 2019, cycling the 450 miles from Mizen to Malin Malin Head with a team from the Hub in aid of Abaana and Waakisi, another Ugandan charity. Barry will be among a number of Jonathan's cycling friends joining him on the route.

To support the project see just giving here -

<https://donate.justgiving.com/charity/mullabrackparishchurch/donation-amount>

## King's Birthday Awards

### Professor Noel Purdy OBE

**Colleagues within the Church of Ireland have congratulated Professor Noel Purdy OBE on the acknowledgement of his services to education in the King's Birthday Honours List.**

Professor Purdy is Director of Research and Scholarship at Stranmillis University College, and a member of the Board of Education (Northern Ireland), the Advisory Council to the Church of Ireland Centre at Dublin City University's Institute of Education, and the Governing Council of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI).





Dr Peter Hamill, Secretary to the Board of Education (Northern Ireland), said, “We are privileged to have the wisdom and knowledge of Professor Noel Purdy OBE on the Board of Education. This is a thoroughly deserved award.”

The Revd Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI, commented “We have been delighted to learn of this very significant honour for our Council member, Professor Noel Purdy. In his capacity as Educational Adviser, Professor Purdy brings a genuine depth of insight, experience and

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wisdom to his role on our behalf. His professionalism is matched by his commitment to pastoral care towards both staff and students. Many sincere congratulations!”

The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John McDowell, as Chair of the Board of Education and the Advisory Council, commented: “Noel is a consummate scholar who has also an understanding of the needs of the whole person – teachers and pupils – and who brings deep humanity as well as deep learning to his many vocations in education.



## **Mrs Laura Barnett BEM**

Warmest congratulations have been made to Mrs Laura Barnett who has been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to music and the people of Craigavon in the King’s Birthday Honours List.

Laura has served as the worship leader at St Saviour’s Church for 52 years, ever since the church opened in 1972. One comment was thus expressed, “It is because of this faithfulness and longevity that she has been rightly honoured in this way.”



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Curate in Charge of St Saviour's, Rev. Stu Armstrong, said, "We are so incredibly proud of Laura. She has an amazing heart for Jesus and His people, and this is a wonderful way to honour that heart and the faithfulness with which she serves."

## **Drumreagh minister installed as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church**

**Ballyreagh minister Rev Dr Richard Murray was installed as the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on Friday (June 21).**

In a significant change to the installation of his predecessors, his formal election and installation took place on the second day of the General Assembly, with business paused for the special service.



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In his last official act, the outgoing Moderator, Dublin minister Dr Sam Mawhinney, led the service in front of many former moderators, ministers and elders from PCI's 500-plus congregations from across Ireland, civic guests and members of the public.

Accompanied by his wife Lynn, their son and daughter-in-law, who attended the service of worship, were members of Dr Murray's congregation, Drumreagh Presbyterian, where he has served for the last seven of his 33 years of parish ministry.

Also present was His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, for Belfast, Professor Alastair Adair, the city's Lord Mayor, Councillor Micky Murray. Representatives from the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Education Authority and Controlled School's Support Council, attended.

In a touching tribute to his late father-in-law, Dr Murray wore the silk robes of the Very Reverend Dr David McGaughey, who wore them at his installation as Moderator in 1994, 30 years ago this month, when Dr Murray was studying for the ministry at Union Theological College.

Dr Murray opened with a bold statement at the start of a robust evangelical message. "Let me start today with what I believe is one of the major problems of the Christian church here in our modern day and age," he said.

"It's not what many people suppose, the contraction of the church, a phenomena faced by all the main denominations, rather what I believe is a major problem the modern



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Christian church faces is not contraction, but connection. How to connect the Good News of what God has done for us in the person and work of Jesus Christ with a world that is at best uninterested, and at worst hostile?”

Following a reception for guests who attended the installation, which Dr Murray hosted in Assembly Buildings, the Assembly continued its business into the evening.

See - <https://tinyurl.com/5drema3m>

## **Assembly told of verbal and written abuse of female candidate for Moderator**

**Ahead of new moderator, Rt Rev Dr Richard Murray, being officially installed, Rev Mairisine Stanfield spoke publicly for the first time about the ordeal she endured after first putting her name forward for the top post in 2019.**

The First Bangor Presbyterian minister described the abuse, both verbal and written, as “outrageous”.

Addressing the hundreds of ministers and church elders in attendance as they debated a ‘conscience clause’, Rev Stanfield said she fears for the future unity of the PCI.

“What I do not want to see is the division of this denomination. It concerns me greatly that we are on such a trajectory,” she said.



“This is the first time that I have been able to publicly say, that when I allowed my name to go forward for moderator for the very first time, the amount of abuse, both verbally and by letter, that I received from members of this house was outrageous.

“So these words ‘grace’ and ‘humility’ are vitally important. We are God’s people, we are brothers and sisters in Christ, are we not?”

Rev Stanfield said she respected those who do not hold a “similar Biblical position” on the ordination of female ministers, and added: “But I expect respect. I do not expect to be called the ‘Whore of Babylon’. I do not.”

Rev Stanfield also said that females being ordained or licensed have a feeling of being “second or third class citizens in the life of this denomination”.



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There was a warm round of applause following her emotive contribution, and also for the supportive response from the assembly clerk, Rev Trevor Gribben, who said: “Mairisine’s speech does not simply pass into the ether. I think I probably speak for this whole house when I say, that if any member of this house referred to Mairisine in that way, or abused her, then that was simply wrong.”

[See also In the media - on page 20 below](#)

**Presbyterian General Assembly warns of dangers in euthanasia and hate crime legislation - News Letter**

## Cathedral Calls



## **US Tapestry Singers at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin**

St Patrick’s Cathedral was delighted to host the Tapestry Singers from the bay area, San Francisco USA for their Lunchtime Recital.

## 42 Church of England cathedrals

**Did you know there are 42 Church of England cathedrals and that they are visited by more than 10 million people every year?**

Find out more at [cofe.io/OurCathedrals](https://cofe.io/OurCathedrals).

## Clergy congratulations



**Congratulations and every blessing to Bishop Alan of Down and Connor who celebrates his Ruby Jubilee, forty years since he was ordained Priest. Ad multos annos!**



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## **New Reader licensed to serve in Cork, Cloyne and Ross**



**On Sunday, 16th June  
2024, during Evensong  
in St Fin Barre's**

**Cathedral, Cork, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross,  
Dr Paul Colton, licensed Joanna Griffin as Readers to  
serve in the diocese.**

Joanna has completed one of the courses approved by the House of Bishops and was presented to the Bishop by the Rev. Terry Mitchell, Chaplain to the Guild of Lay Ministry. Joanna was joined for the occasion by her husband, the Rev. Eugene Griffin, and clergy and lay people from across the Diocese.

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

## **Launch of the 31st Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School**

**The Festival programme was launched at the  
Archbishop's Palace in Armagh. The organisers state,  
"From 11th to 18th August, we're offering a vibrant mix**

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**of events across the city, celebrating distinctiveness, musical excellence and community spirit.**

“From a full Community Day to a Prom on the Mall; a Prosecco-accompanied Concert in the Palace; and Festival Favourites like Bach at Twilight, a Come and Sing Concert, and our Gala Concert, there is something for everyone this August.

“Our programme is now available online and tickets for all of our events can be purchased through our website. For more information and to join us for a series of inspiring and entertaining events, please visit:

[www.charleswoodsummerschool.org/events](http://www.charleswoodsummerschool.org/events)

## **Focus on outreach in Londonderry in first Mission Matters podcast**

**In the first of its Mission Matters podcast series, the Church of Ireland Council for Mission is today sharing an interview with Joanne Miller, a Church Army diocesan evangelist in Glendermott parish, in Londonderry’s Waterside.**

Interviewed by the Revd Johnny McFarland, Joanne describes the outreach projects that the parish is involved with, including the Another Chance charity shop, café and community hub, the Lighthouse for children’s ministry, the Christianity Explored course, craft classes, support for a local women’s refuge centre, and mental health training sessions. Joanne also talks about the importance of spending time in God’s presence and looking at the needs

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in the communities around us to discern his will, and the potential of Pioneer Ministry.

Stephen Fletcher, Diocesan Communications Officer for Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe, produced and edited the content for this project.

Listen in at <https://tinyurl.com/3hvwxy2e>



## Sam Henry Weekend at Portrush

**The Sam Henry Weekend is an annual festival of music, dance, food and song held in Portrush in commemoration of Coleraine man, Sam Henry. This year it is on from Thursday 26 to**

**Sunday 29, September.**

Sam Henry was an Irish customs officer, pension officer, antiquarian, lecturer, writer, photographer, folklorist, folk-song collector and musician. 🎻

He is best known for his collection of ballads and songs in 'Songs of the People', the largest and most comprehensive collection of just under 690 folk-songs from Northern Ireland assembled between the wars (1923–1939), when he was



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song editor for the Northern Constitution, a weekly newspaper in Coleraine.

More information at <https://samhenryweekend.com/>

## In the media

### Presbyterian General Assembly warns of dangers in euthanasia and hate crime legislation - News Letter

**The “dignity and value of human life” should be valued, rather than society moving towards the legalisation of assisted suicide, the Presbyterian Church (PCI) has said, Mark Rainey reports.**

In a motion passed unanimously at the church’s general assembly in Belfast, the church ministers and elders also warned of “the danger and historical and cultural significance” of other jurisdictions in the British Isles developing euthanasia legislation.

Concern was also expressed about support among MLAs for the introduction of ‘hate crime’ legislation at Stormont, with one minister saying: “We fear there is a grave risk of such future legislation straying into the freedoms we have of proclaiming the uniqueness of Christ and freedom to practice our faith.”



**Rev Daniel Kane, Convener of the Council for Public Affairs,** brought what he described as a “significant and strategic report” to the general assembly for approval, and said the council wanted to express its deep desire to engage both the whole Christian Church, and all of society, “in affirming the importance and innate dignity of every human life from conception to

death as a precious gift from God”.

Rev Kane, the minister at West Church in Ballymena, said the “current situation in other places within these islands helps set the disturbing backdrop to this debate.”

He was referring to recent developments when the **Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying** recommended a change in the law in the Republic of Ireland for both euthanasia and assisted suicide, while the Scottish



Parliament is set to debate the McArthur Bill this autumn.

In the **Isle of Man**, members of its Tynwald legislature have voted in favour of the basic principle, with legislation for

both euthanasia and assisted suicide due at a later date.

Another **UK Crown Dependency, Jersey**, voted in favour last month for legislation to be enacted in 18 months' time in relation to terminal illness.

Rev Kane continued: "We believe that any change to the law which permits assisted suicide and euthanasia, no matter how minimal in its initial form, raises the most fundamental of questions about the value we place on human life as a society."

He concluded by saying: "For people of faith, and indeed no faith, human life, its preservation, its dignity, and its protection, are moral and precious values, which we believe society casts off at its peril".

Commenting on the hate crime legislation proposals, Rev Kane said: "We fear there is a grave risk of such future legislation straying into the freedoms we have of proclaiming



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the uniqueness of Christ and freedom to practice our faith. The term conversion therapy continues to be a wide, ill-defined, umbrella term, covering all kinds of abusive practices which are largely already illegal.

“As a church, we are on public record expressing our opposition to such practices. But some campaigners, however, want to go much further and criminalise repentance, as well as preaching, prayer, pastoral care and even parenting that fails to endorse the rights of gender self-determination.

“We are clear, that any future legislation shouldn’t criminalise ministers [of religion], church workers and parents as they walk beside those who struggle with their sexuality, pastorally and prayerfully.”

Courtesy News Letter - 20th June 2024 at 6:20 PM BST

## **Church minister blames £10,000 theft accusation on 'ex-wife and her lovers' - Belfast Telegraph**

**A Church of Ireland minister accused of defrauding more than £10,000 from his parish and congregation yesterday blamed his “ex-wife and her lovers... plural” for charges being laid against him, Paul Higgins reports**

The jury heard that Rev Adrian McLaughlin declared to detectives that anything he did and any money he spent, including thousands of pounds out of his own pocket, was

directed towards the “beautification and betterment” of St Colman's Parish Church in Dunmurry and was done with “a pure heart”.

Taking the witness box, where he gave often tearful evidence, the minister labelled the witness accounts of his ex-wife and former friends as “nefarious lies” and “nonsense”.

Prosecuting counsel Joseph Murphy put to him that “your explanation is this really is borne out of a conspiracy, orchestrated by your ex-wife because there was a messy break-up”.

The minister claimed: “She wanted to get me a [criminal] record so that I would lose the children. She has now tried nine times to get me a very severe criminal record including false gun offences.”

“So you are saying your wife is behind all this?” Mr Murphy continued, and the Rev McLaughlin replied: “Yes ex-wife and her lovers...plural.

“Clearly I have not been a good pastor and did not teach them the eighth commandment of thou shalt not bring false witness against thy neighbour.”

Rev McLaughlin, with an address at Church Avenue in Dunmurry, faces a total of six charges of committing fraud by abuse of position on dates between October 15, 2016, and October 1, 2018, with five of the offences relating to St Colman's Parish Church and the final charge relating to his

role as a “constructive trustee” with the RVH Liver Unit Group.

The particulars of the offences accuse Rev McLaughlin of writing out a £10,000 cheque to himself, taking a £1,000 donation for himself and taking £520 from two parishioners relating to funerals and one who paid to use the church hall for Slimming World. He is also accused of pocketing donations from a funeral held at the church but intended to go to RVH Liver Unit Group at a time when he was a “constructive trustee of the said monies for the benefit of the RVH Liver Unit Group”.

According to the Crown case, the offences do not have a potential explanation of bad bookkeeping but rather are “about downright dishonesty” where the central theme is that the defendant “abused his position as rector in order to serve his own personal interests”.

Earlier yesterday the defendant's ex-wife Dr Christine Burns gave evidence that while her husband did accuse her of having an affair, she said: “I have not.”

She told the jury that “from the day and hour we separated he has tried to alienate me from the children”, both of whom live with their father.

Having taken an oath on the Bible to tell the truth, Rev McLaughlin told defence KC Richard McConkey the couple split in October 2018 when three police officers ejected him from the rectory “without so much as a sock or anything” and he was then forced to see the children “under



supervision because of lies contained in a non-molestation order”.

He explained to the jury how he had been educated at Queen's University and served in Bangor parish before he was appointed as the reverend for St Colman's in 2014, but almost two years later, in January 2016, the church was “absolutely destroyed” in a fire.

He told Mr McConkey that in total the insurance policy paid out £1.9m, the entirety of which “went through my hands” as the church was redesigned, refurbished and rebuilt.

While the prosecution contend the defendant fraudulently made a £10,000 cheque out to himself, having duped a co-signee to sign it to buy a “great bargain” of an organ from a Glaswegian church, Rev McLaughlin claimed in evidence that he was owed much of that money.

“I was effectively running the church,” claimed Rev McLaughlin, adding that when it came to large purchases it was not realistic to gather together the 14-person select vestry to approve them so he approved them “and they were happy with that”.

The weekly £120 the church received from a Slimming World meeting, he told the jury, was put towards building and fitting out a temporary cafe which ran once a month and he also used money, including his own, to revitalise the outside spaces.

Rev McLaughlin declared to Mr McConkey “there was nothing malevolent or criminal in anything that I have done”.

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The trial continues.

Courtesy Belfast Telegraph - 21st June 2024

## Speaking to the soul

### Go

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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)

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