

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Rathlin Island trip

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Rathlin Island trip

Ballymena Parish's Sunday school family trip to Rathlin Island

“Wow what a day on our Sunday school Family trip to Rathlin Island with Connor Diocese. Great weather, great scenery, great food, great company,



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great connections and everyone safe home. Thanks so much to Victoria Jackson Children's Ministry Development Officer for Connor Diocese for facilitating us."

News

Smartie tubes raised £1700 for Northern Ireland Children's Hospice

Big congratulations to the Sunday School at St Clements Parish Church Belfast who raised £1700 for



Northern Ireland Children's Hospice by filling Smartie tubes with coins.

Pictured is Siobhan from Children's Hospice receiving the cheque last Sunday. Thanks to Sunday School Leader Elizabeth McKittrick for making this happen as part of the parish Lent Appeal.

Ballyclare and Antrim youth team for Spain with Exodus

A youth team from The United Parish of Christ Church & St John's, Ballyclare, and All Saints Parish Church, Antrim, is preparing to travel to Tarragona in Spain with Exodus in July.

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A number of fundraising events have taken place including a coffee morning, a talent show, and a sponsored zip-line. Find out more at <https://rb.gy/qilt0s>

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Family Fun Night at St John's Moira for Fields of Life

The organisers say - A huge thank you to everyone who came along to our Family Fun Night at St John's Moira, on Friday night,

“A special shoutout to all the amazing volunteers





who helped make this event possible – we couldn't have done it without you!

“We're thrilled to announce that we raised over £1000 for Fields of Life to support St Peter's School in Ibba, South Sudan”.

The Jigsaw Sunday School at St Mark's



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“Last Sunday we had our end of term Prize Giving for members of the Jigsaw Sunday School at St Marks Newtownards. A big well done to the kids!

A massive thank you to the leaders for all their hard work in the year gone by!”

Connor Streetreach 2024 Commissioning Service



A Commissioning Service for the young people taking part in Connor Streetreach 2024 was held in St Andrew’s, Ballysally, on Sunday June 23.

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Streetreach, which for a second consecutive year is partnering with the Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane & Killdollah, the Grouped Parishes of Ballintoy & Dunseverick with Rathlin Island and St Patrick's, Coleraine, & St Andrew's, Ballysally, gets underway on Tuesday July 3.

Ice creams following the commissioning service.

Those who are taking part in the full programme will be staying in the White Park Bay Youth Hostel, arriving on Tuesday afternoon, with dinner, devotions and some down time that evening.

Over the next three days they will take part in morning devotions, worship, team discussion, and practical activities including running a kid's club and outreach work in the area.

Evening activities include outreach in Ballybogey and Ballysally, and each day finishes with a debrief held in a different participating church. The young people will head home around 9pm on Friday July 5.

The Streetreach team was commissioned by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, who also prayed over the opening of the outdoor space at the back of St Andrew's Church.

Derry Catechetical Centre advisor retires

A very significant day for the Catechetical Centre came as its Post Primary Advisor Mary O'Boyle retired after 8 years of dedicated service and commitment.



“Mary has done an incredible job supporting post primary schools throughout the Diocese of Derry and indeed has had a lasting impact, professionally and pastorally, not only here but also nationally. She has also brought her expertise to so many other areas of the work of the Catechetical Centre. Mary has always put Jesus at the centre of her work and is a tireless advocate for Catholic Education. She has brought great joy and enthusiasm to the role. We have been truly blessed to have her as a

colleague and friend. We wish her every blessing in her retirement and thank her for all that she has done. And Mary, as you know, you never really retire from the Catechetical Centre!”

Connor Diocesan Readers meet

A meeting of Diocesan Readers was held in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Mossley, on Monday June 24.



Seventeen Readers from across the diocese met with the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and the Rev Peter Jones, Warden of Readers.

The evening began with a Service of the Word which was based on the theme 'Knowing Jesus and Making Jesus Known.' After the service, everyone enjoyed a light supper in Mossley Parish Centre and this was good opportunity for Readers to catch up with one another.

Bishop George expressed his sincere thanks to all the Diocesan Readers for their ministry throughout the diocese

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and he highlighted the important role that Readers have in the ongoing mission and ministry of the Church.

The Warden of Readers spoke about the current training course for Diocesan Readers and then interviewed Keith Gardiner and William McCandless, two recently commissioned Diocesan Readers, about their journey to Diocesan Readership and their experience of the training course.

Peter said: "It was really encouraging to be able to gather together and we look forward to more meetings following the summer."

Bishop Gavin - "the whole Irish Church needs to grow - not just young adults"

More than 160 young adults from across Ireland gathered on Saturday for the inaugural 'Intentional Young Adult Ministry' in Clongowes Wood College, Clane Co Kildare. Hosted by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, the event comprised participant-led activities, reflections and a special Mass.

In his address after welcoming those present, Bishop Fintan Gavin said: "Intentional Outreach is our first critical focus. Jesus' command to Peter to cast his nets into deeper waters is our inspiration.

"Each young person needs to be befriended, trust built up, invited into an encounter with Christ and followed up afterwards.

"We are called to go beyond our traditional boundaries and meet young adults where they are - both physically and spiritually. We are called to go to new shores and to connect with people one on one.

"We need to find ways of presenting Christ as a person alive, that gives us our joy and our hope, as good news in a culture where so often Christ, faith and the Church are presented as a burden rather than something that gives life and meaning in a challenging and difficult world. Growth must also be intentional. Growth enables young adults to mature in their faith, empowering them to become active participants in the Church's mission. Remember that!

"Peter had to grow before he became a 'Fisher of men.'

"The whole Irish Church needs to grow - not just Young Adults. We need a rigorous intellectual formation that challenges us and provides formation in Catholic tradition which is broad and deep, and not frozen in any one historical expression. If we are intentional about our growth, we will find that we build disciples for our time.

"But what is this growth for? It is to prepare us for service within what Pope Francis calls 'God's holy faithful people.' Our relationship with Christ, our growing as intentional disciples is so that we are the Mission of the Church to a hurting and broken world for the rest of our lives, bringing hope and healing - bring Christ.

"We need young adults as protagonists who are formed for the very mission of animating our local parishes - bringing

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their commitment, talent, and love of Christ to the local community where they choose to settle down and build their careers and families.

"As we reflect together on Intentional Youth Ministry we must remember that it is into this time each of us was born and through our baptism called to respond to this time. God has a plan for our time when young people have never been more in need of hearing the hope filled message of Jesus Christ.

"We must remember - the most important protagonist in all our endeavours today is the Holy Spirit. If we listen together to the Holy Spirit, we trust that out of today we will see what the next step forward should be.

"Today, we might well be starting a new chapter in young adult ministry in Ireland. Our Irish poet, Patrick Kavanagh reminds us that 'To be dead is to stop believing in the masterpieces we will begin tomorrow.'

"Christ is alive! And He wants us to be alive. Like Peter - it will mean having the nerve to do things in a new and different way. Let us trust the Holy Spirit is guiding us and prompting us to put out into the deep to commit ourselves as a Church to intentionally drawing many more young adults into a life-changing relationship with Christ."

Father Stephen Wang said: "I am hugely excited to be involved in the 'Intentional Young Adult Ministry' event organised by the Irish Bishops and that brings together young people from all over the island of Ireland this weekend. There seems to be a great deal of energy and

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enthusiasm in the Irish Church at the moment, and a desire to discover new ways of connecting with young people today. I pray that the meeting will be a catalyst for renewal in the Church, and will allow the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts of all those who will be present."

Cathedral Calls



Baptism in St Andrews Cathedral, Sydney

“We were so pleased to witness The Ministration of Baptism of one “such as are of Riper Years and able to answer for themselves”, according to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (BCP) service, around the traditional font adjacent the western doors at 8:10am today.


“It was timed to work prior to our regular early morning BCP service. So encouraging to know God is at work in the gospel of his Son!”

Belfast Cathedral’s Jack Wilson in new organ collection **Born in a Stable**



The book cover for 'Born in a Stable' features a central stained glass window depicting the Nativity scene. The title 'Born in a Stable' is printed in a serif font above the window. Below the window, it says 'ORGAN MUSIC FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS'. The publisher's logo 'ENCORE Publications' is in the top right corner.

New publication for Advent & Christmas: this collection contains 15 seasonal organ pieces by living composers.



A grid of 15 small portrait photographs of the composers featured in the collection, arranged in three rows of five.

Published this week - **Born in a Stable**, a collection of 15 seasonal organ pieces by living composers, the majority of whom are women. There are stimulating new commissions on familiar carol and hymn tunes, including contributions from Esther Bersweden, William Campbell, Edmund Connolly, Neil Cox, Sasha Johnson Manning, Bryan Kelly (tr. Tom Winpenny), Sarah MacDonald, Gail Randall, Miriam

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Reveley, John Scott Whiteley, Amy Summers, Janet Wheeler, Joy Williams, Alison Willis and Jack Wilson.
Preview the organ score: <https://bit.ly/4bLtZEH>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Morning Prayer from General Convention of The Episcopal Church

Episcopalians attending the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church gathered for Morning Prayer and "coffee hour" at the Kentucky International Convention Center.

Watch Morning Prayer here:

<https://media.episcopalchurch.org/video/revival-convention-worship/>

Summer recitals restart at First Belfast

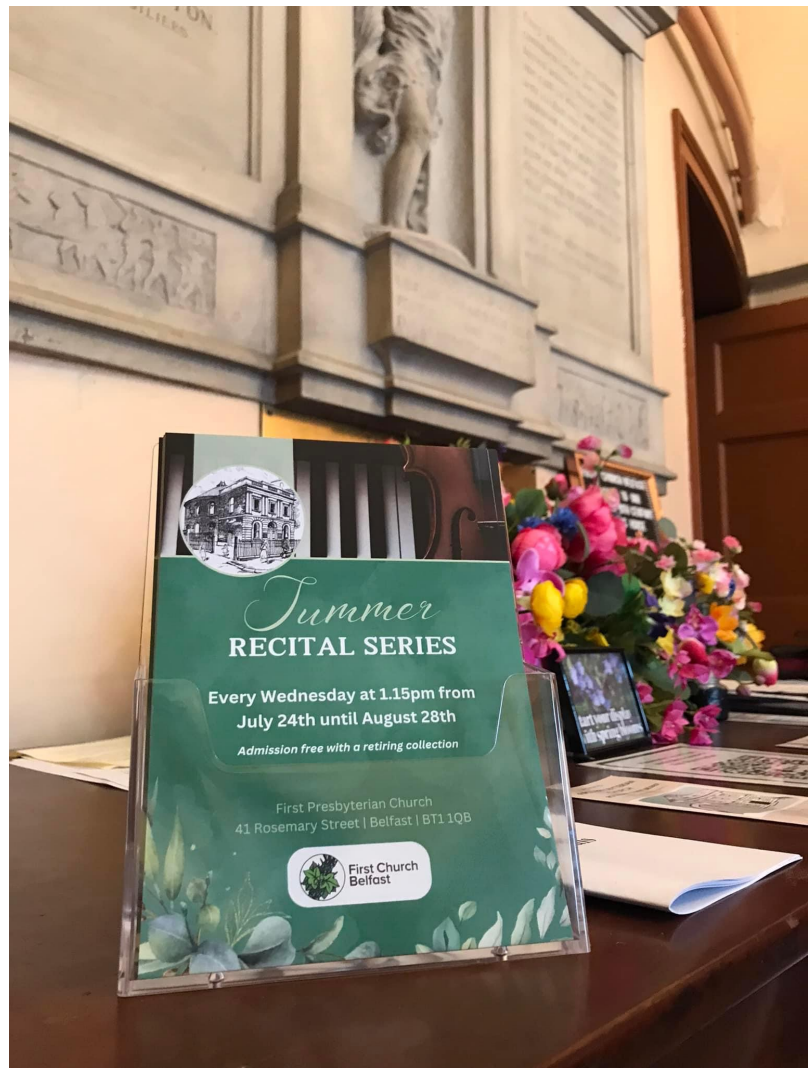
Starting on 24 July, these splendid recitals will take place every Wednesday at 1.15pm until 28 August.

Next time you're passing the church, please drop in and pick up a flyer for our ever-popular Summer Recitals!

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More information on the program and the talented artists joining us this summer is coming soon.

It promises to be a fantastic series!



John Hewitt Summer School in Armagh

This year's John Hewitt Summer School - the 37th - runs from 22-27 July at the Market Place Theatre, and features a packed programme of literature, talks, debates, workshops, theatre and live music.

This year's theme is "To Live Among Strangers: Diversity and a Shared Future" and we'll also be marking the 50th Anniversary of John Hewitt's seminal "Rhyming Weavers" collection.

<https://johnhewittsociety.org/programme-unveiled-for-37th-john-hewitt-international-summer-school/>

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Gospel concert at Edenderry Methodist in memory of Bobby Jameson.

Amazing singing talents will perform on Saturday 29th June at 7.30pm in Edenderry Methodist Church Hall.

All proceeds will benefit Epworth Playgroup's New Building Fund. Everyone is welcome.

A blue poster for a gospel concert. At the top, it says 'EPWORTH PLAYGROUP PRESENTS BOBBY JAMESON MEMORIAL CONCERT SATURDAY 29TH JUNE 2024 7.30PM'. Below this is a photo of a group of people, with a smaller photo of a man (Gordon Quinn) on the left and a woman (Judith Beattie) on the right. The text 'with Gordon Quinn. The Hannah family & Friends Judith Beattie' is written in a cursive font. At the bottom, it says 'EDENDERRY METHODIST CHURCH HALL' and '£15 DONATION PAYABLE AT DOOR'. The poster is decorated with musical notes and a treble clef.

EPWORTH PLAYGROUP
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SATURDAY 29TH JUNE 2024
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with Gordon Quinn.
The Hannah family & Friends
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EDENDERRY METHODIST
CHURCH HALL

£15 DONATION
PAYABLE AT DOOR

In the media

Parish minister found guilty of defrauding £10k from NI church - Belfast Telegraph

A Church of Ireland rector is facing a possible jail sentence after he was found guilty of defrauding his church of £10,000, Paul Higgins reports.

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Standing in the dock of Craigavon Crown Court, Reverend Adrian McLaughlin looked stunned as the jury announced the 10-2 majority verdict that the 50-year-old was guilty of fraud by abuse of position.

The jury of 10 men and two women had deliberated for just over six hours over the course of two days before declaring the Church of Ireland minister guilty.

The particulars of the offence outline that while McLaughlin was occupying a position of trust at St Colman's Parish Church in Dunmurry, he "abused that position in that, without approval or authority from the treasurer or Church Vestry, you wrote a cheque for £10,000 from the church bank account", which he then made payable to himself.

The jury heard that while McLaughlin, from Church Avenue in Dunmurry, claimed the money was to reimburse him for money he spent on the "beautification and betterment" of St Colman's parish, he tried to cover up his fraud by filling in the cheque stub as payable to "NI Organs Ltd".

Describing how the convicted thief "may well have giveth but he also certainly taketh away", prosecuting counsel Joseph Murphy had highlighted to the jury that as rector, the defendant "knew full well" there was no treasurer in the church at the time and with "hundreds of thousands of pounds" going through a building fund to rebuild the church after it was decimated in a fire, "he thought, 'Sure who is going to notice a measly £10,000?'"

On Monday, the jury had found him unanimously guilty of a similar offence of fraud by abuse of position by taking a

£1,000 donation from a grieving widow to line his own pockets. Similarly to the first count, he “failed to give or declare the said donation to the treasurer of Church Vestry and made the cheque payable to yourself personally”.

The minister was however found unanimously not guilty of four other fraud offences relating to other donations, funeral collections and money obtained through a weekly Slimming World class.

During the course of the six-day trial, the jury heard how McLaughlin was appointed as rector for St Colman’s Church of Ireland parish in Dunmurry in 2014, and that after the church was destroyed in a fire in January 2016, “much of the governance” of the parish and its rebuild was down to the rector and the “select vestry”.

The jury also heard as there was no treasurer in place for a few months from August 2016, cheques had to have two signatures.

John Williams, who was a member of the select vestry committee, gave evidence that the defendant approached him after a Sunday service and asked him to sign a £10,000 cheque but to leave the payee line blank.

According to Mr Williams, the defendant told him he needed the cheque to make sure the church did not miss out on a “great bargain” for an organ he had found. However, he claimed he was not 100% sure of the name, so asked for the payee line to be left blank and he would fill it in.

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Six days later however McLaughlin lodged that £10,000 cheque into his own account, filling in the cheque stub as paying NI Organs Ltd.

The fraud was only uncovered, the jury heard, towards the end of 2018 as the minister and his then-wife were going through an acrimonious marriage split. Concerns were raised about his conduct and the church treasurer asked the bank for a copy of the cheque.

Interviewed by police, McLaughlin initially claimed it had been agreed at a vestry meeting that he should be reimbursed for the money he had spent on such things as an organ, the gardens, the garage and a Sunday school hut.

But when it was put to him there was no such discussion recorded in the minutes, he claimed there had been an informal agreement with Mr Williams and his wife Lynn who would become church treasurer.

Giving evidence on his own behalf, the disgraced minister claimed the decision had been made at a dinner party at the Williams' house which turned into an "ad hoc vestry meeting".

Labelling all but one prosecution witness as liars, McLaughlin blamed his "ex-wife and her lovers... plural" for charges being laid against him.

Taking the witness box where he gave sometimes tearful evidence, the minister said their evidence was "nefarious lies" and "nonsense" in a campaign orchestrated by his ex and former friends in the church who had sided with her.

“She wanted to get me a [criminal] record so that I would lose the children,” the minister claimed.

"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 asked.

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,” lamented McLaughlin.

In relation to one charge, the jury had heard evidence from Mrs Elizabeth Fletcher. She said that following the death of her husband, she had attended church one Sunday morning and gave a cheque for £1,000 to McLaughlin with the payee line left blank.

She testified that the cheque was a donation for the church and as she did not know how the cheque would be used and where it should be lodged, she had left the payee line blank of her own volition.

The clergyman claimed he told Mrs Fletcher he would use the money to reimburse himself for two antique, ornate candle sticks he had purchased from a shop in Saintfield for £800, further claiming she was “more than happy with that”.

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He outlined to the jury how he had to withdraw extra cash from an ATM to pay for them and that his now ex-wife was with him at the time.

Mrs Fletcher told the jury however there had been “no such conversation” that Sunday morning and McLaughlin had told her he “had no idea what he was going to do with the money”.

His ex-wife, Dr Christine Burns, also gave evidence that she had no recollection of ever being in a Saintfield antique shop with her then-husband.

As Mr Murphy highlighted in his closing speech, Mrs Fletcher “was just a widow who wanted to make a donation but he sullied that gesture” to direct the £1,000 to himself to “use it as his own”.

Following the jury’s verdict, Judge Patrick Lynch KC thanked them for their “deep consideration” of the case and advised them that he would be passing sentence “at some further stage” once pre-sentence reports had been prepared.

While McLaughlin was freed on bail until September 6, Judge Lynch warned him his release “is no indication of what the ultimate sentence of the court will be”. - Belfast Telegraph June 25 2024 1:24 PM

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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