

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – The art of farming

January 16, 2025

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News -

Gaza aid workers “hopeful” for ceasefire but fear intensified bombing before any deal

Tearfund CEO steps down

Anglican Secretary General’s visit to Iglesia Anglicana de Chile

Dublin's Lassus Scholars sing at major conference in Rome

Cathedral Calls -

Mayor shown the ropes at Westminster Abbey as bell ringers mark a royal birthday

Peterborough Cathedral is appealing for £300,000 by the end of March

Chorister opportunities at Westminster Cathedral

Enjoy Hymns of your choosing from St Paul’s Cathedral, San Diego - The Dean is from Northern Ireland

Clergy and ministry -

New Connor Diocesan Youth Officer

Lisburn Cathedral Is looking for a Full-Time Youth Ministry Co-Ordinator

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books -

Ross Scanlon soloist for Belfast Philharmonic’s Come and Sing

In the media -

Vatican approves document allowing gay men to become priests in Italy

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day – The art of farming

Some parishes will mark Plough Sunday when prayers are rightly offered for the work of the land and for the God-given processes which will yield the gifts of harvest.

This year your prayers may be in concern for those who feel their government does not adequately understand the pressures of farming in general and in particular the inter-generational commitments and justifiable expectations which maintain the stewardship of God's bounty for all of society.

News

Gaza aid workers “hopeful” for ceasefire but fear intensified bombing before any deal

Palestinian partners of aid agency Christian Aid have said they are “hopeful but also afraid,” as ceasefire talks between Hamas and Israel continue.

Katie Roxburgh, Christian Aid's Programme Manager for Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, spoke with colleagues who are delivering aid across the Gaza Strip. She reported: “Our partners are hopeful for a deal, and happy – of course – that the suffering families are having to endure may ease.

January 16, 2025

“But they told me they are also afraid, because the last moments before a ceasefire is agreed are brutal due to intensified bombing.

“A deal cannot come soon enough. It would offer Palestinians in Gaza respite from the relentless bombardment, displacement and deprivation they have endured for the last 15 months and an opportunity to release all hostages and illegally held detainees.

“However, sustainable peace is not possible until the illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) ends and Palestinians and Israelis are treated as equals.

Tearfund CEO steps down

The CEO of Christian global aid charity Tearfund is stepping down, after nine years in the role.

Nigel Harris has announced he will leave his role in June 2025.

Under Harris’ leadership, Tearfund say they have worked with 2.9 million people globally, and developed a plan to work with 250,000 churches.

Harris began his career in banking, before transitioning to work with non-governmental social impact organisations. He joined Tearfund in 2015.

January 16, 2025

He says his focus will now be helping smaller churches develop their responses to humanitarian crises.

Anna Laszlo, Chair of Tearfund's Board, said: "Nigel has been an extraordinary servant leader over the last nine years.

"With his faith, his passion for supporting those living in deepest poverty to define their own future, and his clear thinking, Nigel has led Tearfund into a place of focus and clarity. He will leave us with a vision that promises to transform the lives of millions around the world, through the work of the local church, supported by Tearfund."

Anglican Secretary General's visit to Iglesia Anglicana de Chile

This week, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Right Reverend Anthony Poggo, visited the Iglesia Anglicana de Chile, for a Consecration, Installation and Farewell Ceremony.

The event on 12 January included the consecration of the Right Reverend Juan Esteban Saravia Cortes as the new Bishop of Santiago, the installation of the Most Reverend Enrique Lago Zugadi as the new Primate Bishop of the Province of Chile and a farewell to The Most Reverend Hector Zavala Muñoz (also known as Archbishop Tito).

Speaking of the visit, Bishop Anthony said: "The Iglesia Anglicana de Chile is an important part of our global



Left to right: The Right Reverend Juan Esteban Saravia Cortes, new Bishop of the Diocese of Santiago; The Most Reverend Enrique Lago Zugadi, new Primate of the Anglican Church of Chile; The Right Reverend Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion and The Most Reverend Hector Zavala Muñoz (also known as Tito) - the former Primate of the Anglican Church of Chile. Photo credit: Iglesia Anglicana de Chile

Anglican family. As one of the newest Anglican Provinces, it has been a joy to visit my Anglican sisters and brothers and share in this important consecration, installation and farewell ceremony. On behalf of the Anglican Communion, we give thanks for the service of Archbishop Tito and the wisdom that he has shared with the wider Communion in church planting. We also pray for Bishop Juan and Archbishop Enrique, as they take up these important ministry roles. May

January 16, 2025



*The Right Reverend Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion is presented with a traditional bowl inscribed with "Iglesia Anglicana de Chile".
Photo credit: Iglesia Anglicana de Chile*

they know God's guidance as they build his Church and witness to Christ's salvation."

Read more about this inspiring occasion and the Secretary General's visit to Chile on ACNS:

[#Anglicans">https://bit.ly/4fWyMEC\#Anglicans](https://bit.ly/4fWyMEC)

And on Facebook from the church in Chile
[<https://www.facebook.com/iglesia.anglicana.chile/>]

Dublin's Lassus Scholars sing at major conference in Rome

The Lassus Scholars directed by Dr Ite O'Donovan, an adult chamber choir of Dublin Choral Foundation CLG, are in Rome this week providing all the sacred music for the Third International Conference of English-speaking Catholic Clergy , between Monday 13 January and Friday 17 January.

The invitation to sing at the conference came from the Australian Confraternity, the organisers of the week-long event. Representatives of the Irish Embassy to the Holy See will attend some of the performances.

Named after the great Renaissance composer Orlande de Lassus, the Lassus Scholars seek to achieve excellence in expression and interpretation in all musical styles from the 16th century to the present day. Since its establishment in 1996 by Dublin Choral Foundation, under the direction of Ite O'Donovan, the choir has performed many large-scale works at the National Concert Hall as well as rarely performed masterpieces. A scholarship scheme introduced in 2008 facilitates 16 singers in pursuing vocal training

The Lassus Scholars present regular liturgical performances of sacred polyphony by Renaissance composers, including such masterpieces as Palestrina's Missa Papae Marcelli, at various churches in Dublin and nationally. In particular they sing at St Kevin's Church, Harrington Street where the liturgy of the Tridentine Rite allows scope for complete performances of Mass settings.



The choir has deputized for the resident choir at London's Westminster Cathedral on many occasions and has provided all the sacred music at the Fota International Liturgical Conference held annually in Cork from 2008 to 2019.

Viennese Mass compositions feature in their repertoire and every November the Lassus Scholars give liturgical performances of one of the great Requiems including those by Victoria, Faure, Mozart and Durufle. The choir has performed in many Irish cities, including Cork, Belfast, Limerick and Galway.

The Lassus Scholars has, since its inception, been much in demand for concerts and has performed at the National Gallery, the National Museum, the RDS, City Hall, the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre (now sadly defunct) and at venues outside of Dublin. In October 2014 the singers were invited

January 16, 2025

to participate in a production of The Events during the Dublin Theatre Festival on opening night at the Peacock Theatre. Since April 2015 the Lassus Scholars have participated in the many of the MusicTown Festivals organized by Dublin City Arts Office. The Lassus Scholars has also travelled abroad to perform in many European capitals, Boston & New York.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/51499>

Cathedral Calls

Mayor shown the ropes at Westminster Abbey as bell ringers mark a royal birthday

The Catholic Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Robert Rigby, was special guest in the belfry of Westminster Abbey when bell ringers marked the 43rd birthday of HRH Catherine the Princess of Wales, with a chime for every year of her birth.

A team of ten rang the 20-minute birthday sequence at 1pm in the historic tower 160 steps above ground level. The mighty bells, installed in 1971, have pealed on every significant national occasion, from royal deaths to weddings and the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. The heaviest of the ten bells in the tower weights 1.5 tonnes and



Mayor Rigby at the Abbey.

collectively they can be heard more than a quarter of a mile away.

The Lord Mayor was talked through the complex choreography of bell ringing and tried his hands in the correct position for sounding the chimes .

Cllr Rigby said: "Thank you to the bell ringers for this unique ringside seat for their performance - you can certainly say I was shown the ropes!"

January 16, 2025

"The bells of the Abbey have been the soundtrack to so many massive moments in British history, so it was great to see the dedicated men and women who perform the ringing sequence so expertly.

"As well as being Lord Mayor, I am also Deputy High Steward of Westminster Abbey, a wonderful and privileged position, so feel a particular attachment to this famous venue. The Abbey was also established by the Benedictine Order and as an Ampleforth graduate myself, that also is a nice historical link.

"History says that the Queen Mother asked for the Abbey Bells to be made clearer so she could hear them from Clarence House - I am not sure if Her Royal Highness the Princess could hear them on her 43rd birthday, but it sounded like a wonderful greeting."

Peterborough Cathedral is appealing for £300,000 by the end of March

The Dean, the Very Revd Christopher Dalliston, says that this sum would see the cathedral through 2025, would help to meet the annual £2-million running costs, and build relationships that would be the platform for a sustainable future.

Without fund-raising, there was a real fear that the cathedral could not continue to keep its doors open seven days a week, Dean Dalliston told a gathering of civic, business, and community leaders on Monday. Also present were representatives from the voluntary sector, the university, and

other educational establishments across the city. The Muslim Council of Peterborough made an immediate gift of £1000.

The cathedral, which is at the heart of the city, was one of the most significant medieval abbeys, and a church has stood on the site since 654. Mary, Queen of Scots, and Catherine of Aragon are buried there. The cathedral authorities describe the cathedral as “a cherished piece of the city’s identity . . . a place that belongs to all of us, that has served as a cornerstone of community life for generations”.

The cathedral had faced many financial challenges over the years , the Dean told the Church Times on Monday. “We have no reserves here, really — a particular challenge we have inherited from the past; so there’s very little to enable us to weather any storms that come. We’re a grand cathedral in an ambitious and diverse city, but one which has a lot of issues, and we don’t have the great and good here that tend to support cathedrals in the way they do.

“So, we’re reaching out to a new constituency to try and build these kind of relationships, and to create a more sustainable platform. We’re not a honeypot tourist destination on people’s immediate visitor list in the way that the Yorks and the Elys are, perhaps. Even though we have great treasures to offer, and people are surprised and delighted to discover us, we don’t have that reputation at the moment.”

Peterborough city centre was emerging from a challenging period and showing signs of revival, although it felt a bit

fragile, the Dean said. The cathedral had had a record-breaking year of events, including the hugely popular “Monsters of the Sea” exhibition, but those efforts could not keep pace with escalating costs.

“There’s a lot of good will in the city towards the cathedral, but also a certain degree of complacency, because of the success we are seen to be in the number of activities and events and concerts and exhibitions. We’re seen as a vibrant institution,” he said.

“We have done a huge amount to bring people in, and to make contact with new demographic constituencies, and so on — all of which has been wonderful and marvellous — but the underlying challenge is to build a properly funded, sustainable, and ongoing future. There’s a limit to to what you can do both in terms of the staff we have, and maintaining our core purpose as a place of worship.”

The £300,000 sought would help to maintain worship and musical programmes that “uplift and inspire”, continue educational initiatives nurturing the next generation, and enable essential repairs to be carried out. “It’s not something you can keep asking for,” the Dean said. “We don’t want to have to return to this situation, going forward. There’s only so many times you can do that.”

Cathedral buildings have recently been re-purposed, on a small budget, to create conference space, which, it is hoped, will increase revenue.

The Dean concluded: “We’re very heartened by today, and positive about the future, but this is a challenge we share

January 16, 2025

with others, in that the cathedral model is not an easy one to work with. Everything is interconnected and organic. We can't redeploy our fixed assets, or downsize, and things are not easy to disentangle.

“But I am optimistic by nature, and I'm hopeful, in that I hear from the people who are our stakeholders a real desire for the place to flourish and do well.”

Owing to the forthcoming C of E spending review, cathedrals were putting their markers down, he said.

“Many of our cathedrals are facing critical situations, and there is, of course, the national-government dimension about treasurehouses of national heritage and culture. . . . We're committed to doing what we can at the local level, but there are others who have some influence to support cathedrals in their national role.”

Chorister opportunities at Westminster Cathedral

Join the Head, Master of Music and other members of WCCS team to learn about chorister opportunities for boys in Years 3 and 4.

This year the Choir is performing in the USA, Hungary and Italy, as well as here in central London, and we offer a world-class academic education for boys age 8 -13, with up to 100% off fees.

Want to discover more? Register direct here for a link.



 **WCCS**
Westminster Cathedral Choir School

Join a world class choir and a top academic school

zoom in to explore chorister opportunities for boys now in Years 3 & 4
on **Wednesday 29th January at 6.30 pm**

Contact Lucy Freeman for a link
Email lfreeman@choirschool.com Tel 020 7798 9081

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1saGitevLHgFFMfYDsrC2Now3vLw4t2ocSTaAL3D17T8/viewform?ts=650d9d39&edit_requested=true

Enjoy Hymns of your choosing from St Paul's Cathedral, San Diego

Enjoy Hymns of your choosing THIS SUNDAY Jan. 19, 5pm (nb US western time).



“Join us for a good old fashioned Hymn Sing, accompanied by Martin Green on our landmark organ and the cathedral choir, cathedral choristers, and the cathedral schola.”
Click the link below to vote for your hymn”

<https://stpaulcathedral.org/cathedral-hymn-sing/>

The Dean is from Northern Ireland

The Very Rev. Penny Bridges answered the call to serve as the fourth Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral in 2014.

A native of Northern Ireland and lifelong Anglican, Penny received her education at Wells Cathedral School and Clare College, Cambridge. She pursued a career in data processing, which took her and her husband from England to New Hampshire in 1985. There her two sons were born and she experienced a call to ordination in the Episcopal Church. In 1997 she graduated from Berkeley at Yale

January 16, 2025

Divinity School with a Master of Divinity, summa cum laude and moved to Virginia.

Penny served six years as Associate Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, and eleven years as the third Rector of St. Francis Episcopal Church, Great Falls. St. Paul's magnificent music program is a good fit for Penny, who is herself an accomplished violist and singer. Since her arrival at St. Paul's, Penny has focused on leading the church into the 21st century (the "emerging church" model), updating the administrative systems, overseeing the creation of the digital "Faith to Go" curriculum, installing exterior lighting to give the cathedral more visibility, and developing strong relationships with leaders of other faith communities and of city government.

Penny provides leadership in the Diocese too, currently serving on the diocesan Standing Committee. In her free time Penny enjoys studying Spanish, playing viola in chamber groups and orchestras, and all the benefits of living by the ocean.

Clergy and ministry

New Connor Diocesan Youth Officer

Connor Diocese has announced the appointment of Dave Armstrong, formerly a staff worker with mission agency Crosslinks, as Diocesan Youth Officer.



Newly appointed Connor Youth Officer Dave Armstrong and his wife Amber.

Dave, 35, grew up in Donacloney, Co Down, where he now lives with his wife Amber and three young children. A former pupil of Banbridge High School, he worked in retail for 10 years before taking up a post with Crosslinks, initially as a short-term mission and young adult worker, and later working in church partnerships and running summer camps.

Growing up in a Christian family, Dave came to faith at the age of eight. He became involved in youth summer camps from the age of 16 and was also a Sunday School teacher. In his early 20s, he took over running the youth fellowship in Donacloney Church – a role he maintained for seven years.

January 16, 2025

“As I was doing this, I was being mentored to really look at how I could help with teaching ministry in churches, and my rector at the time, the Rev Bryan Martin, was a big influence on me,” Dave said.

“That gave me a heart for God’s Word, teaching God’s Word and helping people understand God’s Word.”

Soon after he began working with Crosslinks, Dave trained as a Diocesan Lay Reader in Down and Dromore.

Reflecting on his appointment as Connor Youth Officer, Dave said: “We prayed about it, and it felt that this was where God was calling me.

“I am looking forward to meeting people across the diocese who have a heart and passion to help young people to get to know Jesus and God’s Word, and to help them grow young disciples of Jesus. I want to help churches develop and resource a vision for youth ministry in their own context, and I am looking forward to supporting the diocese on a wider basis.

“My real heart is to see young people across the diocese grow deep roots that will stand them strong for years to come that they will continue to walk with Jesus beyond their teens and beyond youth events.”

Outside of work and his family, Dave enjoys taking his son to football matches, and is a Leeds United fan. He also enjoys board games.

January 16, 2025

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, said he was delighted that Dave would be joining the diocese as Diocesan Youth Officer. “His previous experience of youth work and his passion for encouraging young people to know and follow Jesus will be a real asset to all of us as we seek to grow our work amongst young people across the parishes of the diocese,” Bishop George said.

“I know that many will join me in welcoming Dave and praying for him as he takes up his new responsibilities later this month.”



JOIN OUR TEAM 

FULL-TIME YOUTH
MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR

 


Lisburn Cathedral

For more information :

 www.lisburncathedral.org/apply

January 16, 2025

Lisburn Cathedral Is looking for a Full-Time Youth Ministry Co-Ordinator

Are you passionate about discipling young people in their faith journey and inspiring them to discover their potential in Christ? We are seeking an enthusiastic and dedicated Youth Ministry Co-Ordinator to lead and grow our youth ministry at Lisburn Cathedral and South Lisburn Community Church.

To find out more information please visit our website:

lisburncathedral.org/apply

Application Deadline: 28th February 2025

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Ross Scanlon soloist for Belfast Philharmonic's Come and Sing

Introducing the soloist for Belfast Philharmonic's upcoming 'Come and Sing' on January 25th, Ross Scanlon - Tenor!

Ross trained at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama where he was awarded the Michael McNamara Gold Medal of excellence in performance and at the Royal Academy of Music, London.



Belfast
Philharmonic
Choir

Come and Sing

Britten's Saint Nicolas

Celebrating 150 Years of
Song

24
25
Season

He is a member of the Vocal Faculty at The Lir Academy, Trinity College and more recently The Cork School of Music where he lectures on the Musical Theater Course. He is on the Board of Examiners for the Royal Irish Academy of Music and is currently Associate Teaching Artist for Dublin Youth Choir. Ross also recently worked as Sectional Leader and coach for the Irish Youth Training Choir in conjunction with Sing Ireland.

Ross was our soloist in 2020 when we performed Britten's piece in a virtual concert and we are delighted that he will



bring to life again the real story of 'Saint Nicolas' (Santa Claus) plus coach the young singers!

Don't miss your chance to work alongside Ross or attend the final performance at 4pm - tickets for singers and audience members are available to book through the website <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/belfastphil150/>

In the media

Vatican approves document allowing gay men to become priests in Italy

A provisional document published by the Italian Bishops' Conference on Jan. 10 and approved by the Vatican cautiously opens the door for the ordination of openly gay men to the priesthood, while maintaining the normal requirement of chastity.

“In the formative process, when referring to homosexual tendencies, it’s also appropriate not to reduce discernment only to this aspect, but, as for every candidate, to grasp its meaning in the global framework of the young person’s personality,” the document reads, adding that the goal is for the candidate to know himself and find harmony between his human and priestly vocation.

The Vatican department for clergy approved the document, which will be valid for three years. The document was signed by the head of the Italian bishops, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, who is considered a close collaborator to Pope Francis.

The objective of the preparation for a candidate who is seeking to become a priest when it comes to his sexuality, the document states, “is the ability to accept as a gift, to freely choose and to live chastity in celibacy in a responsible way.”

The document, titled “The Formation of Presbyters in Italian Churches. Guidelines and Rules for Seminaries,” was approved by the Italian bishops who met for their general assembly Nov. 13-16 in Assisi. The episcopacy in Italy, where vocations are at an all-time low, has been pushing the envelope in terms of making the Catholic Church more palatable to modern concerns by suggesting a greater role for women in the formation of priests, a commitment to combating sexual abuse and the acceptance of gay men to the priesthood.

According to the 2005 Vatican instruction by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, “while the church

January 16, 2025

deeply respects the people in question, it cannot admit to the seminary or to Holy Orders those who practice homosexuality, have deeply rooted homosexual tendencies or support the so-called gay culture.”

The Italian bishops’ document quotes directly from the Vatican instruction but also suggests that other aspects be taken into account when considering the acceptance of gay candidates to the priesthood. While being openly gay no longer automatically bars a candidate from becoming a priest, such candidates are still held to the same standard of chastity as heterosexual priests are.

In a statement published on Friday, New Ways Ministry, an advocacy group for LGBTQIA Catholics in the U.S., welcomed the document as “a big step forward” in combating discrimination in the church. “This new clarification treats gay candidates in the same way that heterosexual candidates are treated. That type of equal treatment is what the Church should be aiming for in regards to all LGBTQ+ issues,” the statement read.

The possibility of admitting gay men to the priesthood caused a stir in May of last year, when Pope Francis used an anti-gay slur to express his skepticism on the matter in a closed-door meeting with Italian bishops. The Vatican issued an apology, stating that the pope “never meant to offend or express himself with homophobic terms,” but Francis has been ambivalent in the past about gay priests and seminarians.

The pope has strongly criticized the “gay lobby” as a center of power in the Vatican and voiced doubts about gay priests’

January 16, 2025

adherence to a celibate lifestyle, but he also encouraged a young gay seminarian who asked for his advice in his priestly discernment last June.

Sources - Episcopal News Service post of report by Claire Giangravé of Religion News Service.

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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January 16, 2025

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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