

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Royal College of Organists award**

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Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Church of Ireland Gazette for March now out

Man awarded 115k pounds in damages following clerical sex abuse

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### **Speaking to the soul -**

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

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## Image of the day

### Royal College of Organists award

**Many congratulations to Neale Agnew - Director of Music at Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, Belfast - on his conferment of Associate of the Royal College of Organists (ARCO) at a ceremony on Saturday at Southwark Cathedral.**

Neill is also a Board Member of the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition.

On International Women's Day, how good it was to see **Sarah MacDonald, President of the Royal College of Organists**, presenting RCO diplomas in Southwark Cathedral.

Sarah is a conductor, organist, pianist, and composer. She holds the positions of Fellow



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and Director of Music at Selwyn College, Cambridge, Director of Ely Cathedral's Girl Choristers, and Organist to the University of Cambridge.

Canadian-born, Sarah came to the UK in 1992 as Organ Scholar of Robinson College, Cambridge after studying piano, organ, and conducting at The Royal Conservatory of Music's Glenn Gould School in Toronto. At Cambridge she read for a degree in music, and studied the organ with David Sanger.

## News

### **Don't cut aid budget for budget for Ukraine defence Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Presbyterian Church in Ireland urges Keir Starmer not to cut £6 billion from UK's overseas aid budget for Ukraine defence, Philip Bradfield reports in the News Letter**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has called on the UK government not to slash £6bn from its overseas aid budget to beef up defence spending in light of the war in Ukraine.

The church called on Prime Minister Keir Starmer to reconsider his decision after the Government's

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announcement that it will cut around £6bn from its aid budget by 2027, in light of global developments and threats.

Following a meeting of PCI's Council for Global Mission Global Development Committee, convener Rev Richard Kerr said that the cuts will affect those least able to absorb them.

“The value and support that the UK's overseas aid brings, and the difference that it makes to the daily lives of millions of people across the world, is undeniable,” he said.

## **Church of Ireland Gazette for March now out**

**Our March 2025 issue is out now, and full of great news and features from across the island.**

As Lent begins, the March issue of the Gazette is a perfect companion for seasonal reflection. Paul Arbuthnot explores the nature of Lent as what he calls ‘a feast for the soul’, while Conor O'Reilly considers the way we pray, and thinks about prayer as enhancing individual spirituality and fostering connection.

We report on positive news from the Representative Body, with a comprehensive breakdown of new projects and increased allocations in areas such as the training of ordinands, Pioneer Ministry, and Children and Families Ministry, among others.

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In our Mission report, we highlight the work of SAFE (Support for Afghan Further Education), an Irish charity focusing on supporting education for women and young people in Afghanistan.

In local news, we report on the sentencing of the arsonist who apologised for 'jeopardising a national relic' after he set fire

to the crypt of St Michan's (Diocese of Dublin), in what Archdeacon David Pierpoint described as 'an act of desecration and sacrilege'. And we tell the story of Isabel Scott from Ballynure in the Diocese of Connor – Isabel has been singing in her church choir for an incredible 75 years.

Continuing our series of interviews with influential figures in the Church of Ireland, Scott Hayes of Ecclesiastical Insurance sits down with Geoff Scargill of Protestant Aid to discuss the charity's work, and to get Geoff's take on



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managing the challenges of his role, and the future of faith and giving across the island.

As always, we have a broad range of opinions from our regular contributors. Christopher West considers the theme of maternal sacrifice – very apt for the month in which we celebrate Mothering Sunday, International Women’s Day, and the Annunciation. John Deane-O’Keeffe reflects on the nature of evil and the global political climate. Maithrie White-Dundas interrogates the meaning of Jesus’ command to ‘love your neighbour’. And Stephen Farrell puts forward the case for Sunday evening services as a means of getting busy families back in the pews.

Archive of the Month returns with a celebration of two inspiring women in the history of the Church of Ireland – Rosamond Stephen and Cecil Frances Alexander. We consider the Church as an intergenerational activity, and suggest bright ideas from the Board for Ministry with Children and Families to nurture a living faith in children. And our new Devotional contributor, Scott Evans, extols the



10:30pm on Wednesday 5th March - Penitential Service (Ash Wednesday)  
7:15pm on Thursday 6th March - Compline

10:30am on Sunday 9th March - Family Service  
3:30pm on Sunday 9th March - Choral Evensong  
10:30am on Wednesday 12th March - Holy Communion  
7:15pm on Thursday 13th March - Compline

10:30am on Sunday 16th March - Choral Eucharist (St Patrick's Day, transferred)  
10:30am on Wednesday 19th March - Holy Communion (St Joseph's Day)  
7:15pm on Thursday 20th March - Compline

10:30am on Sunday 23rd March - Choral Matins  
10:30am on Wednesday 26th March - Holy Communion  
7:15pm on Thursday 27th March - Compline

10:30am on Sunday 30th March - Service of the Word (Mothering Sunday)

**St Peter's Church**  
**Antrim Road, Belfast**

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value of breaking bread together as a means for fostering a strong and thriving ministry.

Our Diocesan Focus comes from the Diocese of Clogher, and we have all our usual great features such as Mothers' Union, Gardening, Food, and Liturgical Notes.

All this and more in your March 2025 Gazette!

(Shared on behalf of the Church of Ireland Gazette. Subscriptions to the Gazette – in print or electronic editions – can be taken out at <https://gazette.ireland.anglican.org/subscribe> )

## **Man awarded 115k pounds in damages following clerical sex abuse**

**A man is set to receive £115,000 in damages after claiming to have suffered sexual abuse at the hands of a priest in the high school he attended in Newry, Co. Down during the 1980s.**

His legal costs were also awarded as part of a settlement, the Irish Post reports.

The man's case, which was heard before the High Court in Belfast, alleges an attack from the late Father Malachy Finegan, who was headmaster at St. Colman's College in Newry at the time when the incident is meant to have taken place.



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Fr. Finegan passed away over twenty years ago in 2002, and despite a number of allegations having come to light, the cleric was never prosecuted or questioned by police during his lifetime.

Though no admission of liability was made by the defence, this case marks the latest in a series of settlements regarding the alleged abuse perpetrated by Finegan during his time as teacher and headmaster at the Newry school.

The priest has also been accused separately of abusing young boys at his local parish of Clonduff in Hilltown, Co. Down, close to the school where he taught.

The first such settlement was reached in 2018, during which time the board of governors at St. Colman's College condemned the alleged abuse perpetrated by Finegan during his tenure there.

In this latest case, the plaintiff's legal team claimed that the priest groomed the man as a young boy by conducting a subtle campaign of isolating him from other children at the school. This, they allege, ultimately culminated in a series of severe sexual assaults.

Owen Winters of KRW Law, told the BBC that the man can now begin the 'healing process'.

He said: "Sadly for many victims and survivors of historical sexual abuse generally, closure remains as elusive as ever. The memories of abuse perpetrated upon them never ever fade away.

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“More specifically for many, the horrendous legacy left by Finegan looms as large as it did all those years ago when he was abusing children on a weekly basis. A damages cheque, welcome as it is, will never erase that legacy.”

## **St. George’s College, Jerusalem launches ‘Let Light Shine Out of Darkness’ campaign**

**St. George’s College, Jerusalem has endured through times of relative stability and political crisis since its founding in 1920 as a theological college for Palestinian seminarians through its redevelopment in the 1960s as a center for formation and reconciliation for clergy and laity from the across the Anglican Communion.**

Unlike tour companies that often only swoop in and out of Christian holy sites in the Holy Land, St. George’s College courses break bread with Palestinian Christians in the West Bank, meet with Muslim leaders on Haram al-Sharif, meet with Muslim women in a refugee camp in Bethlehem, visit the Israeli Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem, and sometimes even visit Israeli settlers in the West Bank. Through second-tier courses such as “Sharing Perspectives,” Jews, Christians and Muslims live and journey together as an interfaith community at St. George’s College, encountering the land and its people in the past and present, exploring historical, geographical, religious and political complexities, and considering how the Holy One is revealed uniquely in each of the Abrahamic faiths.



Modern Diplomacy estimates that up to 47% of all global conflict is rooted in religion. The great twentieth century theologian Hans Kung said, “There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions and no peace among the religions without dialogue.” St. George’s College is the Anglican Communion’s essential and primary center for religious dialogue and understanding through pilgrimage, formation, education, encounter, and reconciliation.

The armed conflict that began on October 7, 2023, in Israel and Gaza forced the temporary closure of St. George’s College for in-person pilgrimage. To date, the College remains closed. Never before has a crisis so existentially challenged St. George’s. The College’s \$2 million annual budget is comprised of earned revenue streams (pilgrim fees, gift shop sales, non-pilgrim lodging fees, etc.) and



### *The Most Reverend Hosam Naoum*

through the generous contributions of its alumni. In the current crisis, the College's earned revenue streams have been totally disrupted.

In response, in October of 2024, the North American Committee for St. George's College, which functions as an incorporated board of support for St. George's, initiated a \$1.19 million capital campaign to support the college's ministry. The goal of the campaign is twofold: first, to provide funds to sustain the college's operational costs during a time when the college is unable to host pilgrims due to the ongoing war in Gaza and, secondly, to build the endowment, which is the college's primary source of funding beyond the income generated from pilgrim fees, for future financial resilience.

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The North American Committee (NAC) is delighted to announce that as of the start of the Lenten season, it has raised just over \$1.2 million in gifts and pledges to the campaign. NAC president the Reverend Barkley Thompson comments, “The outpouring of love and support for St. George’s College is an incredible testament of faith. Through this campaign, we insist that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.”

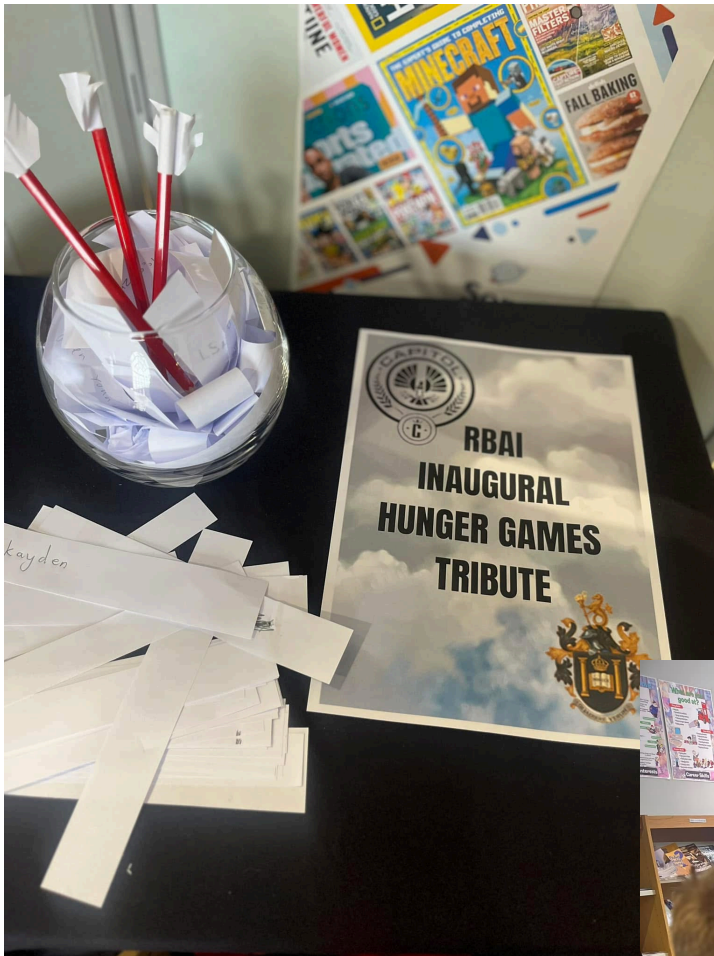
The Anglican Church of Canada, which is also represented on the North American Committee, is running a concurrent Canadian campaign, which hopes to raise additional funds. NAC is further pleased to announce that committees of support in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand are initiating campaigns. There has been a groundswell of support throughout the Anglican Communion in recognition of the cherished role that St. George’s College plays in our common life as the official pilgrimage center of the Anglican Communion and a gateway to the Land of the Holy One and the Diocese of Jerusalem. Due to this generous and robust international support, we have raised our goal to \$1.5 million as our campaign continues through the Lenten season.

The Most Reverend Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, says of the campaign, “We are asking all our friends around the world to come together to help St. George’s College and to walk with us during the dark times of war and distress, so that we can continue to celebrate St. George’s as a beacon of life and love in Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.”

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To learn more about and to make a tax-deductible gift to the campaign, please visit [www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemnac.org](http://www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemnac.org).

## Education



## Happy Hunger Games at RBAI

To celebrate World Book Day, our very own President Scott, Leader of the Library, staged the inaugural RBAI Hunger Games, during which tributes

from Year 8 competed in a series of games to develop their skills and find a victor.

These games were much more popular than those for which Katniss Everdeen volunteered as tribute, and,

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mercifully,  
much less  
blood was  
spilled.

Thank you so  
much to Mrs  
Scott and her  
team of  
helpers for a  
wonderfully  
enjoyable  
celebration of  
World Book  
Day.



**Are you ready for an unforgettable  
experience? Apply now for the  
Beaverbrook Vimy Prize!**

This 10-day fully paid program is your chance to explore the First and Second World Wars like never before. Join students aged 15 to 17 from Canada, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, and Germany as you visit historic

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battlefields, museums, cemeteries, and memorials in Belgium and France.

Applications are open until March 12, 2025—don't miss out! Learn more: <https://vimyfoundation.ca/programs/beaverbrook-vimy-prize>

## St Dominics sont Les Misérables



**Last week a team of staff showed their support to the fabulous Miss Tweed, who was performing alongside our recent past pupil Cara Magennis, in Les Misérables at The Grand Opera House.**





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A phenomenal performance by a phenomenal crew! Well done Miss Tweed, St Dominic's is very proud of you. Best wishes to all for your remaining shows.

## Cathedral Calls

### York Minster Evensong service starts Archbishop's Lord's Prayer Tour of the North

**'The Lord's Prayer Tour', in which Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell will teach about the Lord's Prayer across the Northern Province of the Church of England, began in York Minster on Friday 7th March 2025 at a service of Evensong.**

Archbishop Stephen wants to share the importance and relevance of The Lord's Prayer to our world today, encouraging people to pray and live by this as part of their missionary discipleship, using it as a pattern for living.

**The Lord's Prayer tour is part of the Faith in the North initiative.**

Working alongside others Archbishop Stephen is encouraging prayer, storytelling and church planting inspired by the Northern Saints such as Hild, Cuthbert, Bede and Paulinus. The aim is to foster deeper connections with the Christian faith across the north and renew the Church's missionary purpose to share God's love with all.

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The focus for Faith in the North in 2025 is The Lord's Prayer, in 2026 it will be pilgrimage, and in 2027, baptism.

**Lucy Walker, a young composer** who has previously written music for the Choir of York Minster, was commissioned by Faith in the North to create a new choral music piece inspired by The Lord's Prayer. Specifically written for cathedral services and for choirs, the composition features two arrangements: one for choir and organ, and a simplified version for choir and piano. This versatility makes it accessible for a wide range of worship settings. The piece will have its debut performance during the service on 7 March, sung by the Choir of York Minster.

**The Revd Canon Maggie McLean, Canon Missioner** said: "York Minster is delighted to be playing a prominent part in the Archbishop's initiative. The Lord's Prayer tour across the Northern Province connects with the deep Christian roots of our heritage. Lucy Walker's new composition reflects the power of The Lord's Prayer to invite fresh creativity and inspire new, and deepening, faith."

Reflecting on the project, Lucy said: "This project allowed me to reflect deeply on the profound meaning of The Lord's Prayer. It is a constant and familiar part of worship for so many, and it was rewarding to consider how a musical setting could amplify the many-faceted message of the prayer. I hope it resonates with singers and worshippers alike and offers a moving experience for all who hear it."

Following the 5.30pm Evensong Service, to which all were welcome to attend, light refreshments were served and there was an opportunity to hear more about the vision for

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Faith in the North, as well as a time of Q & A with Archbishop Stephen focussed on the Lord's Prayer.

Faith in the North looks to encourage a movement of prayer, storytelling and church planting inspired by the Northern Saints. Visit the website to learn more and to access free resources: [www.faithinthenorth.org](http://www.faithinthenorth.org)

On 10 October 2025 there will be an invitation for all churches, schools and individuals from across the North of England to come together to say the Lord's Prayer as one.

## Events

### **Webinar Invitation: Anti-Racist Work in Church of Ireland Dioceses and Parishes**

**As part of Ireland's Anti-Racism Month, the Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice invites you to join them for a webinar discussion on using the Irish Council of Churches' toolkit for anti-racist work in our dioceses and parishes.**

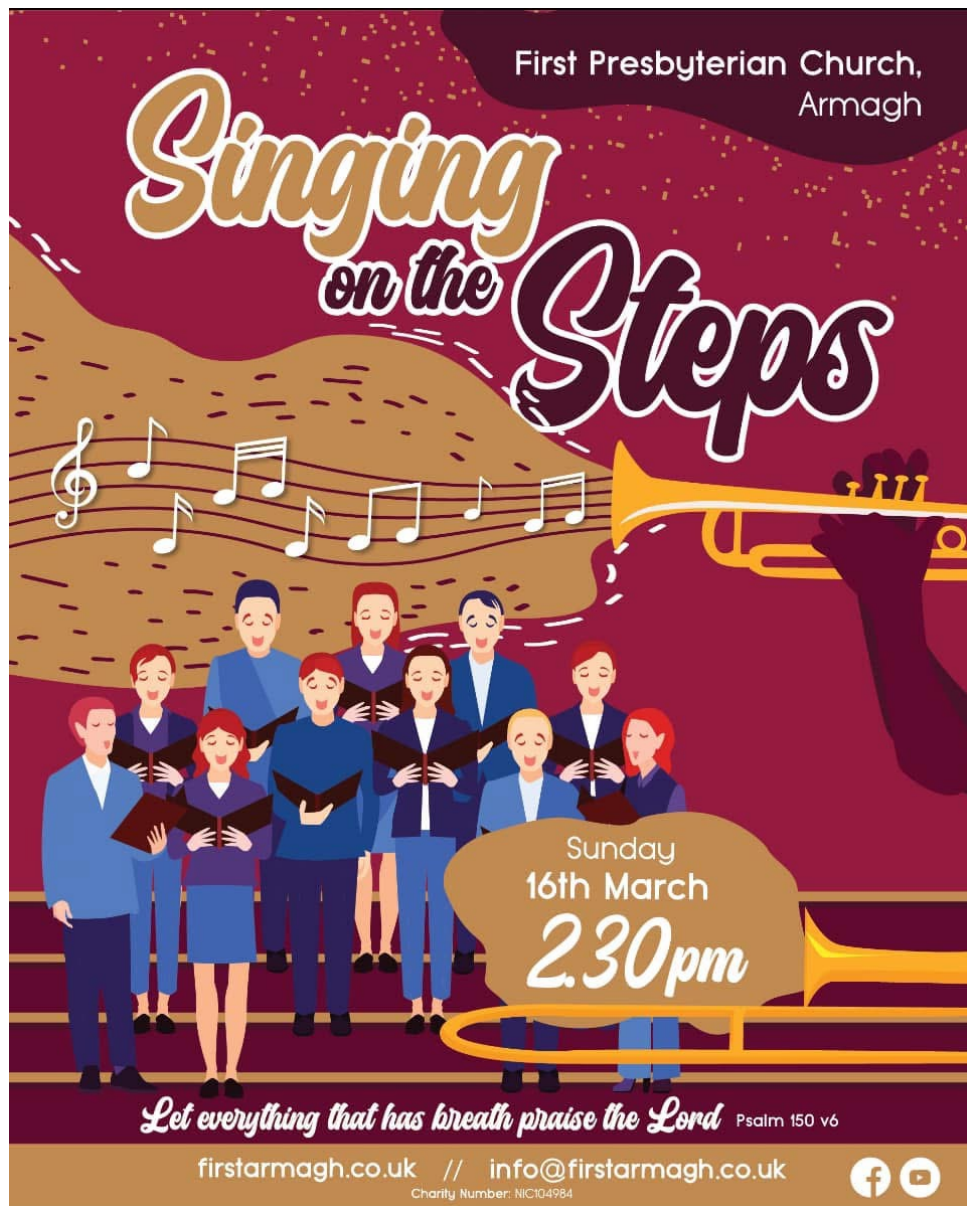
**All are welcome** – clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners alike.

**Discussion panel** – The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John McDowell, with Rev Eileen Cremin, Rev Maithrie White, Rev Jenu John, Rev Philip McKinley and Dr Lucy Michael and other guests

**Date – Thursday 27 March.** Time: 8.00–9.00 pm. Location: Online (link to be provided upon registration). The 'From Every Nation' handbook provides practical guidance for faith communities committed to racial justice, inclusion, and diversity. This session will explore how we can use the toolkit to create welcoming, equitable, and actively anti-racist church spaces.

Download the handbook for free here –

<https://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/From-Every-Nation-.pdf>





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Register now to secure your place –  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-anti-racist-work-in-church-of-ireland-dioceses-and-parishes-tickets-1244905538979>

**CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**The Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick, Armagh**  
*Celebrating the life, faith and witness of*  
**Saint Patrick**  
Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
**7.30pm Vigil Service and Procession of lights**  
*After the short service, the route takes us from St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral to St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral for closing prayers, followed by refreshments.*  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 – St Patrick's Day  
**10.00am Eucharist (Rite 2) in Irish**  
*Celebrant: The Revd Canon David Hilliard*  
**11.00am Choral Eucharist (Rite 2)**  
*Choir: The Armagh Diocesan Singers*  
*Celebrant: The Dean of Armagh*  
*Preacher: The Very Revd Sarah Rowland Jones,*  
*Dean of St Davids, Wales*

*Clergy, parishioners, and friends are invited to join us in Armagh for these services, held on the site of St Patrick's 'Great Stone Church' of 445AD. Clergy are invited to robe.*



St Brigid's Cathedral Kildare


**St Patrick's Day**  
**Lá Fhéile Pádraig**

Monday 17th March, 10.30am

Service of Holy Communion




An evening with  
TV, RADIO PRESENTER &  
BROADCASTER, AND ENTERTAINER



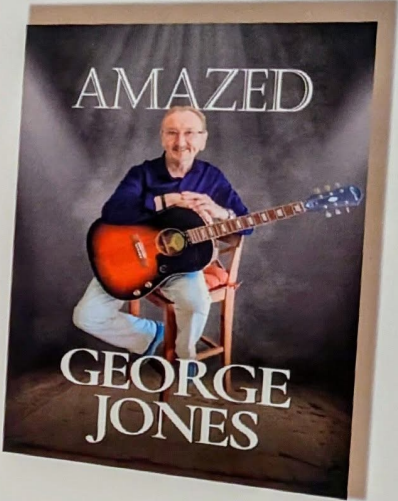
George Jones &  
Heart & Soul

Christ Church Derriaghy  
27th March 7.30

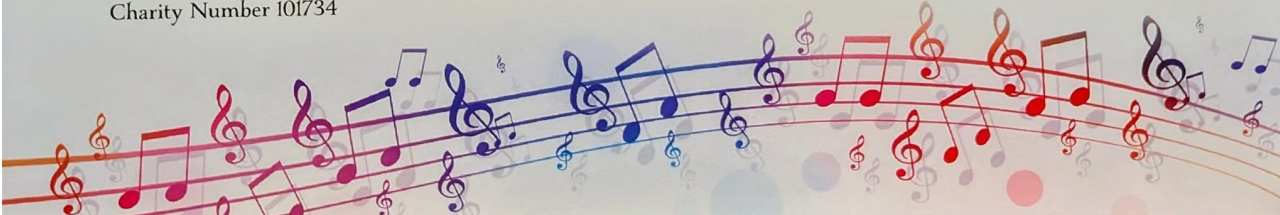


Marie Curie  
Cancer Care  
Devoted to Life

£15



GEORGE  
JONES



## George Jones at Derriaghy

**Tickets are still available for this event on the 27th March. It is an evening with George Jones and Heart & Soul.**

A night of song and story, when George will share with us his story of life, laughter, and faith. Proceeds to church funds and Marie Curie Cancer Care. For your ticket go to Eventbrite and search George Jones or contact Heather on 07837 461817. Tickets are £15.

## Organ recital All Saints' Clooney

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**Join All Saints' Clooney Director of Music, Stewart Smith, for an organ recital on Friday 28th March at 7.30pm.**

Enjoy an inspiring selection of music and a time of reflection in the beautiful surroundings of All Saints' Church. Friday 28th March, 7.30pm. Collection in aid of Scripture Union

## Speaking to the soul

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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# Church News Ireland

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)

**Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning. Please recommend to your friends**



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