

# Church News Ireland



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March 12, 2025

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

## Image of the day



## Commonwealth Day theme Together We Thrive

**On Monday afternoon, The King and Queen, joined by The Prince and Princess of Wales, The Princess Royal and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, attended today's Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration at Westminster Abbey.**

The service drew on this year's Commonwealth Day theme 'Together We Thrive', celebrating the enduring spirit of the Commonwealth family and the importance of fostering strong and connected communities.



<https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2025-03-10/commonwealth-day-2025>

## News

### Belfast YMCA wants to hear your story

**“Belfast YMCA is celebrating 175 years of serving our community, and we want to hear your stories!”**

The organisers ask - Have you been part of Belfast YMCA’s journey? Maybe you joined a youth programme, took part in an event, or made lifelong friends there?

Share your Belfast YMCA story with them for a chance to win a Day Spa pass for 4 people at the luxurious Culloden Estate & Spa!

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How to enter: Send them your Belfast YMCA story – big or small, they would love to hear it!

Submit your story by Friday, 21st March 2025

All stories will be entered into a prize draw!

Submit your story here: [belfastymca.org/175](http://belfastymca.org/175)

## **Music man to run 200 miles round Connor**

**Stephen McLoughlin, musical director at Lisburn Cathedral, plans to run 200 miles around the perimeter of Connor Diocese to raise funds for the repair of the Cathedral Hall.**

Stephen McLoughlin, musical director at Lisburn Cathedral, took up running when a visual impairment meant he could no longer drive. Now Stephen plans to run 200 miles around the perimeter of Connor Diocese to raise funds for the repair of the Cathedral Hall.

Although he has only been running for three years, Stephen will undertake this huge challenge over four days from April 12 to 15 and is hoping runners from parishes around the diocese will join him at various stages along the way.

In addition to his role as musical director at Lisburn Cathedral, Stephen is a self-employed music teacher, based in Harmony Hill Primary School for more than 20 years and also teaching privately. He used to own a music shop in the city.



He is involved in a Community Orchestra made up of 50 musicians which rehearses in the Cathedral Hall. “Music is just what I do,” he says.

Aged 52, he is married to Judith, and they have three children – Zoe, 23, Gemma, 20, and Lillie, 13.

It was a minor car accident three years ago that made Stephen take up running. “It was not a major accident, but as I was only sighted in one eye, I was told to have my other eye checked. They found I have blind spots and as a result I was told not to drive,” he says.

“But I wanted to keep my independence. I was going to get an electric scooter, but with my eyesight this would be no safer to drive than a car, so I just started running.”



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Now Stephen literally runs everywhere – to work, to church, to the Community Orchestra, even to interviews with Diocesan Communications Officers!

“I started with the Couch to 5k programme. The first 5k I did was after I just missed a bus home from the station and rather than wait an hour for the next one, I decided to run it – even though I was wearing jeans, Converse shoes and my coat etc. It was uphill, but I found I was running so well, I even ran past the house.”

That was the start of it. At one point, Stephen weighed 19.5 stone – since taking up running he has lost 5.5 stone. But he said the physical changes are only part of the benefits of running and that as well as raising funds for the Cathedral, he hopes this run will also raise awareness of the mental health benefits of running.

“I have had sore knees and sore hips, but I just keep running and it all goes away. There were times I had to go up the stairs sideways because of my knees, and I know that if I went to a doctor they would probably have told me to stop running.”

But Stephen hasn't stopped. He has run both the Belfast and Dublin Marathons twice, the London Marathon in 2023, and virtually in 2024. “When I did the Virtual London Marathon, I started at 5am so I was finished, showered and dressed in time for work!” he reveals.



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Stephen's best time for a marathon to date is three hours 49 minutes, but he modestly says he is not trying to break speed records when he runs.

"I will be aiming for 11-minute miles. I would rather do 10 miles slowly than two miles fast," he says.

Stephen's route around Connor Diocese – please note this may be subject to change.

Stephen decided to include all of Connor Diocese in this fundraising challenge, explaining that a Cathedral Church is for everyone in the diocese. "In my mind, I am doing this for Connor Diocese, so I thought I would run around the perimeter of the diocese. The section along the coast will be fabulous, and various runners from the Cathedral are going to join me along the way. Greg McClure from the Community Orchestra will run the whole way with me."

They have been offered a motorhome as a support vehicle, and plan to sleep in rented accommodation en route.

"At one stage I was going to get my daughter to put a mattress in the back of her car, but now the project is a bit more structured," Stephen laughs.

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# Education



*Sing along*  
with the choristers of  
Saint Patrick's Cathedral

Is your child in 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> class?  
Do they enjoy singing?

If yes, then they should come and join us for an afternoon of fun music making led by our fantastic team of musicians finishing with a concert in the Cathedral singing as part of our famous Choir

**TUES 1 APRIL | 3.30-6.00pm**  
*to register just visit our website*  
[www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/sing](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/sing)  
PLACES ARE LIMITED, REGISTRATION REQUIRED



## Sing along with the St Patrick's Cathedral Cathedral Choristers

[March 12, 2025](#)

**Come and join in on Tuesday 1st April (no fools!) for a sing along with the Cathedral Choristers. Perfect for children who enjoy singing and are currently in 1st - 3rd class.**

They can enjoy some fun singing workshops before joining with the Cathedral Choir for a short concert in the Cathedral to which everyone is invited!!

Event is free however spaces are limited so get your child registered asap.... Visit the Cathedral website

## **Wallace Online Safety Fortnight**

**As part of our Wallace High School Online Safety Fortnight, which coincided with Safer Internet Day, Year 9 attended a workshop on digital footprints.**

This reinforced and built upon our school's e-safety and digital literacy education within the PD curriculum. It was led by the Made for More organisation, who delivered a fun, engaging, and successful session with excellent advice and key takeaways. Parents, check out our latest ICT update for advice on scams and a reminder of our mobile devices policy.

## **Ulster Consort Easter Singing Course for children aged 5-1**

**Don't forget to book your child's place/children's places on The Ulster Consort Foundation's fun and fabulous Easter Singing Course for children aged 5-15.**



**THE ULSTER CONSORT Foundation**

## Easter Singing Course

14–16 April, 2025

# JONAH-MAN JAZZ

Michael Hurd  
and other songs of the sea including Eric Whitacre's *Seal Lullaby*

**Ages 5–8 Songbirds Course | Ages 9–15 Junior Course**

This three-day singing course will give children the opportunity to work with some of the country's top professional musicians with daily expert vocal tuition from directors Matthew Owens and India Chapman Webb. Children will work on general musicianship, gain confidence, make friends, and perform to a live audience.

**St Mary's Church, Chapel Lane, Belfast, BT1 1HH**  
**9.00am–4.00pm daily | Concert Finale Wednesday 16 April, 7.00pm**

Cost: **£150**, which includes a cooked lunch each day, all music, a branded top, music folders and stationery, all snacks, all group tuition, all group activities and any individual tuition (if required).

To book now, visit [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)  
For further information please email [hello@ulsterconsort.org](mailto:hello@ulsterconsort.org)

[www.ulsterconsort.org](https://www.ulsterconsort.org)

It is taking place from Monday 14 - Wednesday 16 April, 9am - 4pm in central Belfast. India Chapman Webb and Matthew Owens will guide the children through wonderful music, including Jonah-Man Jazz.

Full details by emailing [hello@ulsterconsort.org](mailto:hello@ulsterconsort.org)



## Dalriada medal wins at British Schools

### Judo Championships



**Year 9 pupil Ebony McCahon and Year 11 pupil Timothy Oland travelled to The British Institute of Sport in Sheffield at the weekend to compete in the British Schools Judo Championships 2025**

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## representing Dalriada.

Timothy won Gold to become the British Schools Champion and Ebony won Silver. Both pupils are members of Kyokan Judo in Coleraine, which is currently accepting new members

## Cathedral Calls



## Irish celebrity chef highlights St Patrick's Way in two-part television feature



**St Patrick’s Church of Ireland Cathedral, on the Hill of Armagh, Armagh Robinson Library, Saul Church and Down Cathedral will feature in a two-part series with Irish celebrity chef Catherine Fulvio on St Patrick’s Way.**

Catherine Fulvio’s St Patrick’s Way is being funded by Tourism NI and will encourage more visitors to come and enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of Counties Armagh and Down.

The first programme, taking in various places of interest in County Armagh, will air on Thursday, 13th March, at 8.00pm on RTÉ1, and be followed by a counterpart programme on County Down at the same time on Friday, 14th March, which will include a visit to Saul Church and St Patrick’s Grave at Down Cathedral.

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The Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Shane Forster (above), said: “We were delighted that Catherine visited the Hill of Armagh giving us the opportunity to share some of the history and treasures of this place with her and ultimately with those who will watch the programme on RTÉ1. Every year we welcome thousands of pilgrims and visitors from around the world and yet we often find that people living within driving distance have never visited the ecclesiastical capital. We hope this programme will whet their appetite!”

The Dean of Down, the Very Revd Henry Blair, said: “We’re thrilled that Catherine’s programme will highlight Saul Church and St Patrick’s Grave, both such special places of pilgrimage for thousands of people each year. Indeed, the site at Saul is known as the Cradle of Christianity in Ireland. We look forward to welcoming many more visitors to this beautiful part of County Down and sharing Patrick’s powerful story with them.”

A word from the presenter!

Catherine is a TV chef, food writer, and owner of Ballyknocken House & Cookery School. Working with Discover Northern Ireland, Catherine said: “It was an absolute delight and during this two-part series I had the privilege of exploring the breath-taking scenery of Armagh and Down while delving into the rich history of St Patrick along the pilgrim way.

“Not surprisingly, I also got to indulge in some of the most delectable local cuisine while meeting interesting characters along the route who were able to show me some of the best of Northern Ireland. It was a truly memorable experience



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that ignited my passion for Irish heritage and am delighted to share some incredible experiences with viewers that can be found right here on our doorstep.”

The series concludes with Catherine reflecting over her journey in Armagh and Down as she highlights how the route supports not only personal growth but also the social and economic vitality of the communities along its way.

## Join the St Paul's team

**We are now recruiting for the role of Succentor, which is a key role within our Liturgical department.**


We're looking for an Anglican priest with liturgical expertise and a deep love of sacred music.

This role leads and supports worship, plans and delivers special services, oversees liturgical administration, provides pastoral care, and supports the work of our music outreach programme, as well as to visiting choirs.

This is a full time post, 42 hours per week, with a stipend of an incumbent in the Diocese of London, and accommodation provided rent and rates free.


Closing date for applications: 16th March 2025. Find out more and apply: <https://bit.ly/3XBvSi3>

## Come and Sing Stainer's Crucifixion in Belfast



# Come and Sing!

with Belfast Cathedral Choir alongside  
Mark Tilley (Tenor) and Cameron Mack (Bass)



HE THAT LOSETH HIS LIFE SHALL SAVE IT


## THE CRUCIFIXION

### SIR JOHN STAINER

Jack Wilson *Conductor*     Stephen Hamill *Organist*

Palm Sunday | 13th April 2025  
**Rehearsal 4.30-7pm**  
**Performance 7.30pm**

Refreshments and scores will be provided  
Suggested donation of £5  
Please register your interest via  
[jackwilson@belfastcathedral.org](mailto:jackwilson@belfastcathedral.org)



**Belfast Cathedral's Musical Director has announced that their first Come and Sing event of 2025 will be Sir John Stainer's The Crucifixion, an immensely moving and dramatic setting of the passion narrative.**

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Singers of all vocal parts are welcome to register, singing alongside our Cathedral Choir for what promises to be an afternoon of fun and passionate music making together, led by our Organist and Master of Music Jack Wilson.

The soloists this year are Mark Tilley (Tenor) and their own Rev Cameron Mack (Bass), accompanied by their Assistant Organist Stephen Hamill.

This setting is well renowned for its stoic hymnody, rousing choruses, and intimate solos. Please come along, and bring your friends!

To express your interest, please contact [jackwilson@belfastcathedral.org](mailto:jackwilson@belfastcathedral.org)

## Clergy and ministry

### Connor canons installed

**Two new Canons were installed into the Chapter of St Saviour at a service in Lisburn Cathedral on Sunday March 9.**

The Rev Andrew Sweeney was installed as Prebendary of Rasharkin and the Rev David Ferguson was installed as Prebendary of Cairncastle. David is rector of Ramoan and Culfeightrin, and Andrew is rector of the United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin.

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The Canons were installed by the Chancellor of Connor, the Rev Canon James Carson, and the preacher was the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison.

At the same service, existing Canons Peter Gabraith and Christopher Easton were installed to different roles in the Chapter, Canon Galbraith as Precentor and



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Canon Easton, who was unfortunately unable to attend the service, as Treasurer.

## Farewell from Tuam Limerick & Killaloe

Bishop Michael writes, “On behalf of us all I’d like to offer thanks and warm wishes to Lucy Green who will shortly, for family reasons, be leaving us and moving to the diocese of Kilmore.

“Lucy’s generous offering of her skills and gifts in the context of non-stipendiary ministry has been appreciated by many, particularly in the Killaloe group where she will be sorely missed. We hope that in due course her ministry will flourish further in a new diocesan context, and she carries with her the appreciation and prayers of many in TLK”

## Creative Ministries Grants One week to go!

**Creative Ministries grants are available to lay people within the Methodist Church in Ireland, whether voluntary or employed, for exploring, starting or maintaining creative ministries within their local church/context.**

Closing date: Tuesday 18th March, 2025

→ To read the criteria and apply now visit:  
[irishmethodist.org/creative-ministries-grant](http://irishmethodist.org/creative-ministries-grant)



SUNG  
COMPLINE  
CHAPEL OF  
TRINITY  
COLLEGE DUBLIN

Wednesdays in Lent at 6.30pm  
12th, 19th, 26th March  
2nd, 9th, 16th April

*All welcome*

## Events

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## **Sung Compline in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin**

**There will be Sung Compline in the Chapel of Trinity College Dublin each Wednesday during Lent at 6.30pm.**

## **Suicide - Families Voices Forum**

**Join us on March 25th when we will bring together stories, resources, and support for those impacted by suicide.**

The importance of connection when bereaved by suicide cannot be understated, so come along to hear how Families Voices Forum and other organisations strive to make our communities suicide safer.

Book now through the link here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/families-voices-forum-building-hope-in-the-west-tickets-1261287969269?aff=social>

## **Epilepsy Action Family Support Service Wellbeing Retreat**

**Parents of children with epilepsy, take a break and join us for the Epilepsy Action Family Support Service Wellbeing Retreat on March 22, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Navigation House, Lisburn.**

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Enjoy gentle yoga, an aromatherapy workshop, and lunch. Connect with other parents and learn techniques to manage stress.

Free to attend, but booking is essential.

For more info, contact [familysupportni@epilepsy.org.uk](mailto:familysupportni@epilepsy.org.uk) or call 02890184016.

## Work Experience Programme NI

**The Work Experience Programme offers short work experience placements with local employers.**

If you're aged 16-65 years and unemployed, the Work Experience Programme can help you develop your employability skills and gain the experience you need to get a job or more closer to work. For information, contact your local Jobs & Benefits office, email [WorkExperience@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:WorkExperience@communities-ni.gov.uk) or visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/work-experience-programme](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/work-experience-programme)

## 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](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**