

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Downpatrick's celebrations

March 19, 2025

Image for today - Downpatrick's celebrations

News -

Record turn-out at Christian Aid conference

Armagh Stained Glass Sunday - St Patrick's Weekend 2025

King's visit to Pope will be 'healing' moment for Anglicans and Catholics

Staunch Trump critic installed as Archbishop of Washington

MP scraps key 'safeguard' from Assisted suicide Bill

Education -

The Leaders Award Competition

STEM Competition run by Primary Engineer

Cathedral Calls -

RAF Music at Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey

Archbishop McDowell's visit to Washington National Cathedral

Clergy and ministry -

Women in ministry meet under the banner of 'Arise'

Resources

Lenten reflection from parish outreach centre

Transformation Stories from Methodist Church

CTBI Spring 2025 Magazine available online

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day



Downpatrick's celebrations

The church at Saul is the customary beginning of the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the Downpatrick area. The preacher at the service was Canon Maurice Harvey, Principal of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.



The Dean of Down and the Bishop of Down & Dromore led the procession from Saul to Down Cathedral. The customary laying of wreaths took place at St Patrick's grave.

March 19, 2025



March 19, 2025



The Cathedral was also a welcome venue for refreshment.



News

Record turn-out at Christian Aid conference



CAI writes : There was a record turn-out at Saturdays conference at Carnmoney Church in Newtownabbey, County Antrim when around 120 of our most dedicated supporters joined us, either in person or online, to plan their Christian Aid Week fundraising.

The guest speaker was Gerardo Tobar (pictured), our Programme Officer for Guatemala who told us about Amelia

March 19, 2025

and Aurelia, two Indigenous women living in the country's Alta Verapaz region - the focus story of this year's Christian Aid Week appeal. Amelia and Aurelia live on the frontline of the climate crisis, with intense heatwaves and devastating droughts making it difficult to grow enough food to feed their families.

Supporters Gillian Porter and Ian Mullen also described Christian Aid's work in Zimbabwe, following their visit last July. There too, as in Guatemala, the climate crisis is bringing hunger and hardship.

Huge thanks to everyone who came along to help create a more just world. We are grateful to Carnmoney Church for the use of their fabulous venue - and special thanks to Neil and Joan for looking after us so well.

Armagh Stained Glass Sunday - St Patrick's Weekend 2025

The sun shone brightly over the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland illuminating the National Churches Trust - Northern Ireland exploration of Armagh's rich artistic and architectural heritage.

The Trust writes - A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined our leisurely three-hour guided walk, exploring six remarkable places of worship and uncovering the artistry of stained glass, beautifully intertwined with the legacy of Saint Patrick.



Led by Dr. David Caron, our journey began at St. Patrick's Anglican Cathedral and took us through St. Mark's Parish Church, First Presbyterian Church Armagh, The Mall Presbyterian Church, Armagh Methodist Church, and concluded at the historic St. Patrick's Cathedral (Roman Catholic).

A huge thank you to all the churches that opened their doors and welcomed us so warmly. A special note of gratitude to the Dean of Armagh for his kind welcome. First Presbyterian Armagh and The Mall Presbyterian Church, your hospitality was truly appreciated.

A particularly poignant moment came as we stood in Armagh Methodist Church, reflecting on the tragic Armagh Railway Disaster, a sombre reminder of the city's history and resilience.

March 19, 2025

A special shoutout to Jack O'Hare from St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, whose insights illuminated the cathedral's long and distinguished history.

Grateful thanks to Jayne Currie from Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council for collaborating and support with



marshalling and to June Butler for her invaluable assistance!

It was a truly memorable day filled with history, beauty, and connectivity.

As a token of our appreciation, each church received a copy of the Gazetteer of Irish Stained Glass, a gift to celebrate their warm welcome and celebrate the rich artistry

and history of stained glass. Photography courtesy of N McNeary

King's visit to Pope will be 'healing' moment for Anglicans and Catholics

Historic show of friendship across the Christian faith aims to restore ties that date back to the 700s

The King and Queen will attend an audience with the Pope next month, in a landmark show of friendship between the Anglican and Catholic churches described as a "historic first".

The King will become the first monarch, and Supreme Governor of the Church of England, to visit the Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls since the Reformation, finally restoring ties which date back to the 700s.

The basilica is seen as a place of reconciliation across the Christian faiths, with the King and Queen also attending a "special service" in the Sistine Chapel to build bridges between the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church.

Buckingham Palace has confirmed plans for a one-day state visit to the Holy See on April 8, which will be held in conjunction with a second state visit to Italy.

A palace source shared "hopes and prayers that Pope Francis's health will enable the visit to go ahead", and confirmed that the King has written privately to the Pope during his recent illness.

March 19, 2025

The visit, a spokesman said, would “mark a significant step forward in the relationship between the Catholic Church and Church of England”.

Healing the relationships between faiths is one of the King’s key aims. The trip’s itinerary, created for the Papal Jubilee, will build on his five previous Papal audiences as Prince of Wales to be a metaphorical “joining hands” between the Catholic Church and Church of England.

The details of the trip will be subject to the Pope’s health.

On Monday, the Vatican released the first image of Pope Francis since he was admitted to hospital with pneumonia a month ago, showing him sitting in a wheelchair in front of an altar in Rome’s Gemelli Hospital.

The state visit to Italy, which begins on April 7 and continues on April 9 – their 20th wedding anniversary – and April 10, will see the King and Queen visit Rome and Ravenna.

Staunch Trump critic installed as Archbishop of Washington

Cardinal Robert McElroy has officially become archbishop of the Archdiocese of Washington.

It means an outspoken liberal within the Church and a vocal critic of Donald Trump will now lead the diocese that houses the US seat of government that has taken a significant conservative turn since President Trump returned to power.

[March 19, 2025](#)

During a nearly two-hour liturgy in which he was installed as the eighth archbishop of Washington, Cardinal McElroy encouraged the faithful of his new archdiocese to be “pilgrims of hope in a wounded world”, reports OSV News.

Referencing the Jubilee Year and its theme “Pilgrims of Hope”, in his homily, the cardinal said it was “vital for our local Church” to embrace “the hope that comes from seeing the world as God sees it”.

“What hope we could bring to our world as the Church of Washington if we could truly help our society to see others more as God sees them – beloved children, sisters and brothers,” Cardinal McElroy said during the Solemn Mass of Installation at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, located not much more than 5 kilometres to the northeast of the White House in the US capital.

“It is all too easy for every one of us to let the limits of earthly worries and perspectives erect prisons in our souls that shut us off from the expansive presence of the Resurrection in its fullness,” he said. “We must refuse to be overpowered by these prisons, and instead journey together as a local Church, companions in faith and in fragility to embrace the same risen Lord that Mary of Magdala encountered in the garden so many centuries ago.”

Cardinal McElroy, the former bishop of San Diego, was named by Pope Francis on 6 January to replace the retiring Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the first African American cardinal, who served as the archbishop of Washington from 2019 until this year – after offering his resignation to the Pope

March 19, 2025

upon turning 75, as required by canon law, on 7 December 2022 – and who now becomes archbishop emeritus.

Known as a close ally of the Pope, McElroy is viewed as a liberal and aligns closely with many priorities of Pope Francis's pontificate, particularly regarding the plight of migrants and refugees. In 2017, during Trump's first term, McElroy gave a speech in Modesto, California, explicitly criticising Trump and urging Catholics to become "disruptors" of the anti-immigrant agenda.

McElroy is also known for his liberal views regarding sexual morality and has advocated for greater inclusion of LGBTQ Catholics while criticising elements of the Church that exclude them.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_W._McElroy

MP scraps key 'safeguard' from Assisted suicide Bill

Kim Leadbeater has removed a key safeguard from the UK assisted suicide Bill that she is backing, having previously touted the safeguard as a fundamental feature in the proposed legislation.

Despite facing a backlash against proposals to remove the High Court safeguard from her Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, on the afternoon of 12 March, the Labour MP joined other MPs in voting to successfully remove the Court approval Clause (12) from the Bill.

[March 19, 2025](#)

Previously, Leadbeater had offered reassurances that she would not scrap the High Court judge safeguard in her Bill when media first reported that the provision might be in danger of being removed.

Furthermore, in the lead-up to the controversial vote in November 2024 that saw Leadbeater's proposed Bill pass its Second Reading in the UK Parliament, the MP repeatedly highlighted that her Bill has "the strictest safeguards anywhere in the world", noting that the High Court judge-related safeguard was evidence for this. Its provision in the Bill, along with other proposed "safeguards", was repeatedly positioned by Leadbeater and her allies as a key component of the Bill that should assuage the concerns of its critics.

Then in February 2025, at 10 p.m. the night before the first day of line-by-line scrutiny of the Bill by committee was to begin, and after MPs had returned to their constituencies for the February recess, Leadbeater announced that she would be tabling an amendment to scrap the "safeguard" in the Bill that required a High Court judge to approve assisted suicide applications, reports Right to Life UK.

"Only a few months ago, Kim Leadbeater touted her Bill as having the 'strictest safeguards in the world', with the centrepiece safeguard in the Bill being the High Court provision," says Catherine Robinson, spokesperson for Right To Life UK.

"Despite a major backlash, Leadbeater has now astonishingly gone ahead and scrapped this centrepiece safeguard in her Bill. She has removed the very provision

March 19, 2025

that 60 MPs identified as a key reason for their support at Second Reading.”

Right to Life UK notes that Leadbeater “attempted to position the replacement [for the High Court judge provision] as ‘Judge Plus’ and was resoundingly criticised for using what many saw as a deeply misleading term”.

Education

The Leaders Award Competition

This is an opportunity for pupils in Northern Ireland to showcase their ingenuity and creativity.

Encourage your students, aged three through nineteen, to take part in this competition by submitting a proposal that addresses real-world problems or provides innovative solutions. Every submission will be evaluated and receive recognition with a named certificate. This event aligns with the curriculum requirements of schools in Northern Ireland. Don't pass up on this chance to help young minds grow – register today at <https://leadersaward.com/the-competition/>.

STEM Competition run by Primary Engineer

This is a national STEM Competition, run by Primary Engineer, that asks the question “If you were an engineer, what would you do?”. Pupils from the ages of 3-19 are

March 19, 2025

tasked with interviewing an engineer, before identifying a problem in the world around them they want to solve.

They create an annotated drawing of their engineering idea and write a letter to an engineer persuading them to pick their idea as a winner. Every single entry is read by an engineering professional, and each pupil receives a named and graded certificate.

This competition is completely FREE for teachers, and we provide FREEPOST for schools so there is no cost to submit pupils' entries.

<https://thestemhub.org.uk/news/news-article/primary-engineers-annual-stem-competition>

Cathedral Calls



March 19, 2025

RAF Music at Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey



The Fanfare Team of the Central Band of the RAF had the honour of performing at the annual Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey.

Broadcast live on BBC One, the team performed Gordon Jacob's arrangement of God Save the King, with Their Majesties King Charles III & Queen Camilla both in

March 19, 2025

attendance. Photos courtesy Dean & Chapter of Westminster Abbey

Archbishop McDowell's visit to Washington National Cathedral



Most Reverend John McDowell preached at the National Cathedral on St Patrick's Day. See page 3





in yesterday's issue of CNI for an outline of his address.

Clergy and ministry

Women in ministry meet under the banner of 'Arise'

On Saturday morning the Roe Valley Arts & Culture Centre hosted a conference by the Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and Tamlaghtard Parish, which brought together women in ministry under the banner of 'Arise'.

The Rector, Rev Rhys Jones, welcomed women from across the country to the conference and spoke how important they all are in the family of the church.

March 19, 2025

The event was led by Rev Eleanor Craig, who reflected on Ruth's life from the Book of the same name in the Bible.

Guest speaker Rev Alison Calvin spoke on the theme of "Arise", based on the Song of Solomon in the Bible.

Those present were treated to fantastic music and song from Wired Worship as well as brunch, and the conference closed with some quiet and personal reflection and prayer. Photo credit - Nigel McFarland.

Resources

Lenten reflection from parish outreach centre

Bishop Andrew of Derry & Raphoe visited the Parish of Glendermott's outreach centre, Another Chance, for the second in his series of online services of prayer and reflection for the season of Lent, 2025.

The series is inspired by the diocese's 'Building Hope, Charting the Future' prayer resource. This week, the Bishop urges us not to be shy about sharing our faith. He explains why, as members of God's family, we all have a role to play in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

<https://www.facebook.com/528414856142420/videos/676228534926549>

March 19, 2025

Transformation Stories from Methodist Church

The new Bible study series takes five of our Transformation Stories videos and invites us to think about what it means to be transformed in Christ.

These can be adapted for any group (including youth groups) and used as a five-week series or can be stand-alone sessions for thought and discussion.

Learn more and download now at:

→ bit.ly/lw2425

CTBI Spring 2025 Magazine available online

Find out about the work of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) in their Spring 2025 magazine.

You can read the magazine online or download as a PDF.
<https://ctbi.org.uk/publications/ctbi-spring-2025-magazine/>

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

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

Please recommend to your friends
