

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ecumenical witness in Jerusalem

November 28, 2024

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Image of the day



Ecumenical witness in Jerusalem

Don Binder writes about the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to the Holy Land

Having begun our pilgrimage in Bethlehem at Christ's place of birth, we fittingly concluded it in Jerusalem, the city of his crucifixion and resurrection—as well as the birthplace of the Church.

There we joined Archbishops Justin and Hosam in an ecumenical service with Patriarch Theophilos III and his clergy in the Chapel of Calvary nestled within the Church of



the Holy Sepulchre.

Afterwards, we each spent some quiet moments of adoration at the Empty Tomb before gathering with other Heads of the local Christian communities around the Old City.



We give thanks for our time in the Holy Land with Archbishop Justin before he concludes the twelve years he

has spent as our 'first among equals' leader within the Anglican Communion.

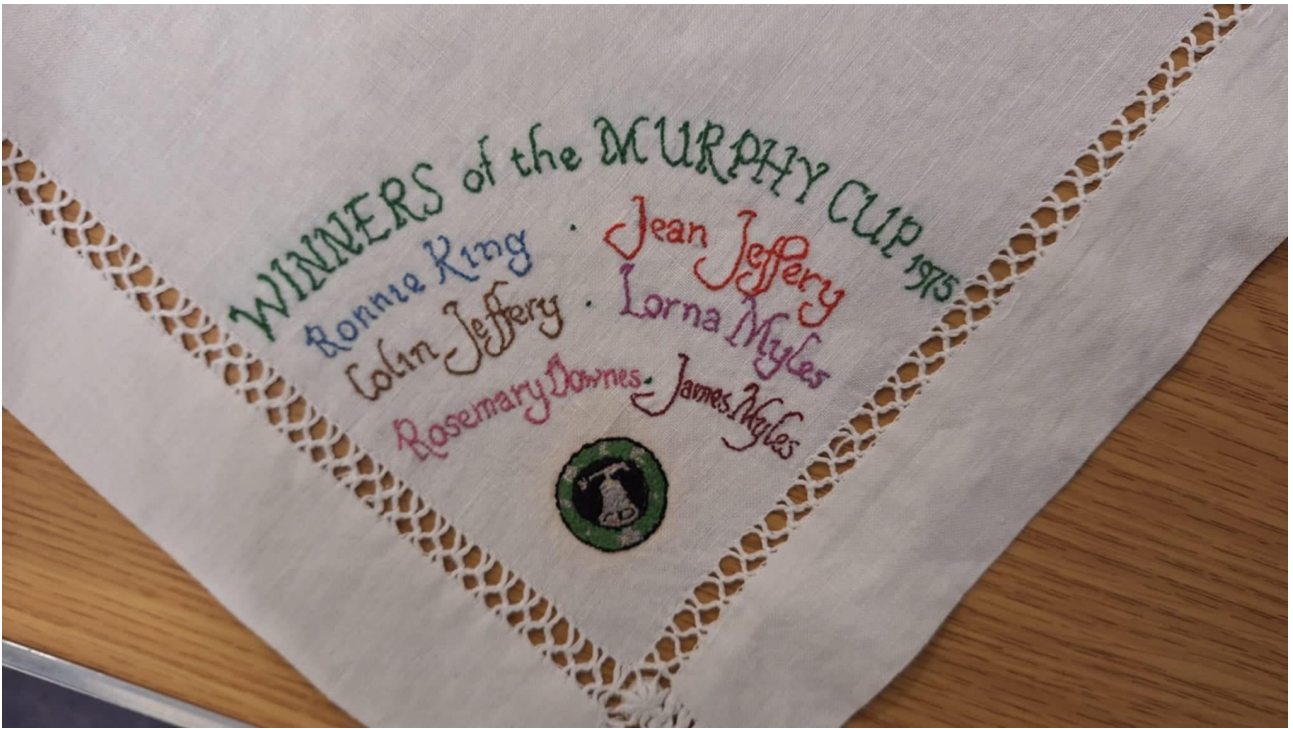
May God bless him and his family, as well as all those with whom we met and worshiped over the four days of our pilgrimage together in the midst of a devastating war that we all pray will soon end.

News

Thanksgiving for 75 years of Bellringing in St Donards

On Sunday evening there was a service of Thanksgiving for 75 years of Bellringing in St Donards Church, followed by supper. We remembered with thanks all those who have faithfully rung the bells every Sunday, at weddings, funerals





and other special occasions.

On Tuesday evening a Quarter Peal was rung from approx. 6.30 - 7.30pm to mark the exact date of the anniversary.

Everyone was welcome to drop in to the coffee bar to listen to the bells and have a cuppa.



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Derry City & Strabane District Council White Ribbon Day reception for churches



Leading members of the four main churches in the North West joined campaigners against gender-based violence at a Mayoral reception in Londonderry's Guildhall to mark White Ribbon Day.

A Civic Reception by the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District, Cllr Lilian Seanoi-Barr was attended by leaders of the four main churches, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Foyle Women's Aid and artist Talia Sena.

White Ribbon Day (25th November) is a time to remember, reflect, listen and act for change to stop violence against women and girls before it starts.



The North West Methodist Mission Director said, "It is encouraging to see key agencies and civic leaders come together to support the White Ribbon campaign by signing the Charter. The Charter is a personal pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women."

The Mayor, along with the two local bishops, then attended the White Ribbon prayer service held in Clooney Hall Methodist Church, led by Deacon Marlene Skuce.

The Methodist Church in Ireland is committed to every church being a safe place. "As a Church we have a part to play by listening, believing, loving and supporting victims, we don't need to be experts but through the Safe Place initiative we can direct victims to where the experts are".



A related art exhibition featuring the work of Talia Sena was open to all on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week in the Guildhall.

Methodist Church views on the Irish General Election

Statement - As we enter these last few days before the Irish General Election on Friday 29th November, we as the Methodist Church encourage people to exercise their democratic right and responsibility to vote.

We urge all to reflect carefully and prayerfully on the important issues at the heart of this election.

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We believe the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to have particular concern for people who are the most marginalised and vulnerable. Therefore, issues such as housing, health care, cost of living, and how we welcome newcomers to Ireland from other countries, are vitally important.

We also recognise the debate going on in many European countries regarding assisted dying. We have previously voiced our opposition to such legislation being introduced in Ireland. We reiterate our call for the Irish government to increase the funding for palliative and end of life care.

We live in a world blighted by war and therefore we call on those elected to govern in Ireland to do all they can on the international stage to work for peace especially in Europe and the Middle East.

Finally, we encourage the Methodist people to pray –

- For all candidates in the final days of electioneering.



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- For those responsible for the election and counting processes, that it may go smoothly and without controversy.
- For all who will be elected as TDs to Dáil Éireann, that they may have the strength to serve all their constituents with diligence and integrity.

A poster for a Christmas concert. The background is dark with many out-of-focus, colorful bokeh lights in shades of yellow, orange, red, green, and blue. At the top center is the logo for Omagh Music Society (OMS), which consists of a crown icon above the lowercase letters 'oms'. Below the logo, the text 'Omagh Music Society' is written in a white, elegant cursive font. The main title 'A CHRISTMAS PRELUDE' is in large, bold, white, serif capital letters. Below the title, the director and accompanist are listed: 'Director: Derick Weir' and 'Accompanist: Beth Boyle'. In the bottom left corner, the date and time are listed: 'Thursday, 12 December at 7:30pm'. Below that, the location is given: 'St Columba's Church, Omagh'. In the bottom right corner, there is a vertical line followed by the text: 'Omagh Music Society present their annual Christmas Concert. A selection of Christmas music old and new. Retiring Collection Supporting the Stroke Association'.

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- For whichever parties will form the Government and whoever will become the Taoiseach.



FERMANAGH CHORAL SOCIETY
PRESENTS

Christmas Concert

ST. MACARTIN'S CATHEDRAL

14TH DECEMBER 2024 8:00PM
SUBSCRIPTION: £10

FEATURING
MURLEY SILVER BAND
MUSICAL DIRECTOR: KEITH ACHESON
ACCOMPANIST: GARETH KNOX

 @fermanaghchoralsociety 



Clergy and ministry

Sixty wonderful years of religious life as a Sister of Mercy

Rev Kieran McAteer, PP, Stranorlor and Sr Susan

A large gathering of the faithful, both laity and clergy, filled the Church of Mary Immaculate, Stranorlar of an afternoon recently.

They had gathered to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Sr Susan Evangelist, RSM. Sr Susan is a remarkable sister, who is known and loved throughout the diocese. Her tireless work has been a great witness to her vocation.

“Sr Susan we congratulate you. We have gathered to thank you sincerely for your well over 40 years as a very important member of Cursillo. What continues to amaze me is your



In a homily rich with insight, thanks and encouragement, Kieran McAteer, PP, Stranorlor, remarked:

enthusiasm, your perseverance and your energy. Susan, if you were an athlete, the marathon would certainly be your distance; all 26 miles of it, and not missing the 385 yards either!

Over the years you have always been ready and willing to give your input and so many here, and in other places, got involved because you encourage them to do so.

The Cursillo movement in Raphoe and Derry owe you a great deal of gratitude.

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Susan, when you commit to something, you commit for the long haul and you call others to do the same. I'm delighted, just delighted, that so many have come here this afternoon to support you, to pray with you, to pray for you and to pray for the continued success of the Cursillo movement".

[Sr Susan and young friends](#)

Maura O'Reilly, President of Cursillo, Raphoe, speaking on behalf of the whole Cursillo family, said:



LISBURN CATHEDRAL

CHRISTMAS

CRAFT FAIR

SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

10AM - 2.30PM

in the Cathedral

FREE ENTRY

Breakfast baps, tea, coffee,
scones and tray bakes can be
purchased in the Church Hall
from 9am til 2pm



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“I want to extend a really warm welcome to you all here today to the special celebration of Holy Mass in honour of Sr Susan on the occasion of her diamond Jubilee. Cursillo planned this mass to thank God for her and all the work she has done in Cursillo over the years. Sr Susan has filled the hearts of so many people with her love and enthusiasm for God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and we believe that’s something worth celebrating. For those of you who don’t know a lot about Cursillo, I will give a very brief overview of what Cursillo is all about. The work Cursillo is a



DUNGANNON CHORAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

‘CAROLS OLD AND NEW’

Sunday 1st December 2024

**Dungannon Presbyterian Church,
Scotch Street**

7.30 PM

Facebook: [dungannonchoralsociety](https://www.facebook.com/dungannonchoralsociety)

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Spanish word meaning 'a short course'. In this case it means 'a short course in Christianity'.

We are a Lay Catholic movement, we work closely with our priests and religious. Cursillo is fully approved by success of popes and bishops and Fr Laurence Kettle, OFM from Ards is our spiritual advisor and we thank God for all the wonderful priests that we have here on the altar today and all the priest throughout the diocese who support us in every way. The purpose of the Cursillo movement is to bring Christ

A festive poster for the Christmas Tree Festival. The background is a teal color with a subtle pattern of pine needles. In the center, there is a white outline of a Christmas tree with a bright star on top. The text is arranged in a central column, with the title 'Christmas Tree FESTIVAL' in a mix of yellow and white fonts. Below the title, the dates '12TH-15TH DECEMBER 2024' are listed. The schedule for each day is provided: Thursday 6-9PM, Friday 6-9PM, Saturday 10AM-4:30PM, and Sunday Carol Service 6:30PM. It also mentions 'REFRESHMENTS IN THE CHURCH HALLS'. The poster highlights that it supports local charities, specifically the Lough Neagh Rescue & Friends of Cancer Centre. It notes that over 30 trees will be decorated by local schools, businesses, and church organizations. Music and song will be provided by local choirs and bands. At the bottom, the logo for 'first ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH' is displayed, along with the website 'www.firstantrim.org'.

Christmas Tree
FESTIVAL
12TH-15TH DECEMBER 2024
THURSDAY 6-9PM
FRIDAY 6-9PM
SATURDAY 10AM-4:30PM
SUNDAY CAROL SERVICE 6:30PM
REFRESHMENTS IN THE CHURCH HALLS
SUPPORTING LOCAL CHARITIES:
LOUGH NEAGH RESCUE & FRIENDS OF CANCER CENTRE
OVER 30 TREES DECORATED BY LOCAL SCHOOLS
BUSINESSES AND CHURCH ORGANISATIONS
MUSIC AND SONG PROVIDED BY LOCAL CHOIRS AND BANDS
 **first ANTRIM**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
www.firstantrim.org

into our families, our communities and into the world. It helps ordinary people like me and you, make a real difference to the world in which we live. We benefit from the support of other Cursillo people to live out our faith in our families and in our communities. Cursillo supports the church, we meet regularly to pray together and to encourage one another, to live out our Catholic faith. In Cursillo we become brothers and sisters in Christ who love others for their value and worth. Cursillo is open to everyone!”

Followed the ceremony there was a lovely get-together in the Parish Centre, where everyone met, chatted and enjoyed the abundance of lovely refreshments.

Sr Susan was presented with a special cake and numerous gifts and well wishes. There was also an excellent photographic slide-show and everyone got to see a glimpse of the comedic side of Sr Susan, as her jokes took the house down!

“Thanks to the members of the Cursillo movement, Raphoe, and everyone who helped in any way to make this such a special night in the life of our diocese. Go raibh míle maith agat”.

Methodist Junior Ministers Retreat

Some of the Methodist Church’s Junior Ministers spent the beginning of this week together at Dromantine Retreat & Conference Centre on the Junior Ministers Retreat.



Led by the Rev David Nixon they spent time reflecting on their calling to serve God as ministers in MCI.

“Together, we give thanks for how God calls and uses us all in his service, and invite you to join us in praying for all those who serve and lead across our Connexion”.

**Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts,
and books**

**Faith Responses to Gender - Based
Violence hosted by Corrymeela**

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Corrymeela says, “We’re hosting an event to mark the 16 days of Activism, and we’d love to see you there. Join us for 'Faith Responses to Gender- Based Violence' “

It is on Tuesday, 10 December 2024 at 18:30
'Faith Responses to Gender- Based Violence' hosted by Corrymeela

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-responses-to-gender-based-violence-hosted-by-corrymeela-tickets-1090963092979?>

For further information contact
denisebradley@corrymeela.org

Divine Healing Ministry Advent Quiet Day & Christmas Lunch

Saturday 7th December 2024 9:30-2pm
Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne

We would be delighted if you could join us for our annual Christmas retreat.

Prayer

Community Word for 2025 brought by Valerie Murray

Worship

Time aside

Christmas Lunch

Cost will be £30 and can be paid on the day

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or bank transfer (details can be requested via email)
or click the link below to our website and purchase directly
Registration reply by contacting
office@divinehealingministries.org

Perspective



It is just a building... BUT it is so much more than a building - Steve Stockman

Steve writes in his blog Soul Surmise about the Fitzroy community on the day that they celebrated 150 years of their own particular building

A church is not a building. It is people. A community of faith. It is the body of Christ. Yet, we have traditionally gathered in a church building.

We don't believe that this building is any more holy than anywhere else. God is in our homes, up mountains, on beaches, in parks as much as he is in a church building. The earth is the Lord's and all of it is therefore sacred.

Church buildings however become the places for an intensity of the sacred.

As I looked out at the Fitzroy community on the day that we celebrated 150 years of our own particular building I was aware of the human emotions going off.

This is where our parents worshipped. This is where I was baptised. This is where we got married. This is where we baptised our children. This is where my father or mother's funeral took place.

This is where a psalm, a hymn or modern spiritual song touched my soul. This is where a prayer someone prayed one morning expressed my prayers that I was struggling to pray. This is where a line from Scripture or an illustration in a sermon led me deeper into a Father's love. This is where I felt the presence of Jesus gathered around his table. This is where sitting in these old pews I sensed the Spirit rushing through to refresh and warm my soul.

This building is the place where when we were broken someone let us cry and wept with us. This is the place where we were allowed to flounder in our faith. This is the

place where we hung on to a thread that was fraying. This is where we knew a Father's arms always open to the prodigal. Where we were lost but by amazing grace got found.

In Fitzroy, for so many, this was the last chance saloon before we fell off the edge of church. This is where sneaking in, damaged by other church experiences and not looking anyone in the eye, someone looked me in the eye. My eyes eventually lifted from the ground to seeing others... and then my eyes lifted higher and realigned me with God.

This is the place from where we were sent, particles of light across the city. From here we went to the neighbourhood, to the homeless, the abused and the refugee. From here we went across the world to Uganda and India and South Africa and Jordan and Argentina and Chad. In this place we prayed for those who went, we gave generously to build and sponsor and support and we celebrated the stories on their return. This is the place from where seeds were sown.

This is the place where we found within community fellow followers, whose friendship has encouraged and inspired us. This is the place where we heard that invitation to life in all its fulness and in spite of all that brokenness in our way we reached for it.

This is the place of all life's fulness, the failures and God gifted successes, the grief and the joy, the hurt and the reconciliation, our lostness and being found.

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This building is therefore only a building but more than a building because it holds the intensity of all these sacred experiences together in one precious place.

Fitzroy, as we know it, moved to our present building from Alfred Street proving indeed that we are indeed not a building. yesterday we celebrated 150 years in this building. We sang hymns and psalms and more modern songs. Our young people prayed for us. I preached on 1874 and now and who Jesus always is. There was an amazing Exhibition. We had a picnic together and cut cake. At night we heard stories.

JOIN US FOR A

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

30
NOVEMBER

10AM-
3PM

*Tea/coffee &
Christmas scones*

*Soup lunch
from noon*

CRAFTS, BOOKS,
PRELOVED CLOTHES AND
JEWELLERY, CAKES, GIFTS

ST MARK'S, DUNDELA
HEYN HALL, 2 SYDENHAM AVE
BELFAST BT4 2DR

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It was emotionally charged. It was cathartic. It was celebratory. It was joyous and so spiritually positive. It was like all the energy that we would need for the next 150 years detonated right there in our midst, recycled by all that has gone before. It was a reminder as to why as the writer to the Hebrews says we should not stop meeting together. It was one of my best ever days at the office!

Thank you Fitzroy's building for 150 years of fulness and thank you God.

In the media

Bishops criticise rampant liberalisation on life issues ahead of Irish elections - Charles Collins in Crux

Republic of Ireland's bishops are calling on voters to remember the right to life – at every stage – as the country prepares for elections. They have framed this need within the requirement for better Church-State dialogue in the face of increasing “diminution” of respect for life, both at the start and end of the natural life span.

“The current structures for Church-State dialogue are not functioning for the greater good of society and are in need of review,” the Irish bishops say in a statement issued on 20 November.

“Any such structures must be made work so that the voice of Churches and other faith communities can be heard and contribute to a national reawakening based on the reality of people’s lives, and not ideology or special interests. As a Church, we are open to engaging with Government and with other Churches and faiths on this question.”

The bishops note that churches and faith communities have an important contribution to bring to this national and local conversation “by helping, with others, build and sustain an Ireland that protects and values the potential of every person.”

Elections will be held on 29 November, after the current coalition government comprising Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party is dissolved.

Although Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have traditionally been seen as centre-right parties, over recent years both have supported a more liberal social agenda: the country has seen abortion and gay marriage legalised, and is now considering legalising assisted suicide.

“We believe that an absolute commitment to dignity, value and right to life of every person – at every stage and in every condition of life – is vital for the sustaining of a vibrant, hope-filled cohesive, flourishing society,” the Irish bishops say.

“This commitment must be part of our political dialogue and the actions of those whom we elect. Over recent years, we have witnessed a diminution in the respect for human life in

our political discourse. The value of people's lives seems to be calculated as if it were simply part of a cost-benefit analysis," the bishops say.

"Where is the hope in this?"

The statement notes the country now has a "very liberal abortion law", and highlights that since the legislation of abortion in 2018, around 40,000 abortions have been carried out in Ireland.

It continues: "And some politicians want to make it even more liberal. Now we have efforts being made to make legislative provision for 'assisted dying' in Ireland. A recent report from an Oireachtas Committee has made recommendations to the incoming Government that assisted dying be allowed in certain, restricted circumstances.

"We totally reject that recommendation because a fundamental principle of civilised society is that no person can lawfully take the life of another," the bishops say.

RELATED: [Irish Parliament votes in favour of report recommending assisted suicide](#)

In their statement, the bishops also address the increase in conflicts occurring around the world.

"The war in Gaza and the Middle East must stop now. Enough is enough! The plight of the people of the region is horrendous. So too is the inability of the international community to act to bring about a ceasefire and a longer-term solution to the questions involved," the bishops say.

“Similarly, the international community has a role to play in bringing peace to Ukraine and to other areas of conflict in our world, including Sudan, Myanmar and Yemen. War, militarisation and the proliferation of arms, is a stain on our humanity,” the statement continues.

“Pope Francis reminds us that throughout the Bible, justice, peace and faith go together. He invites us to oppose a culture of cruelty and war and, instead, always promote a culture of peace and bear witness to human solidarity and love.”

Poem for today

Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland

by: William Butler Yeats

The old brown thorn-trees break in two high over Cummen Strand,
Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand;
Our courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind and dies,
But we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes
Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

The wind has bundled up the clouds high over Knocknarea,
And thrown the thunder on the stones for all that Maeve can say.
Angers that are like noisy clouds have set our hearts abeat;
But we have all bent low and low and kissed the quiet feet
Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

The yellow pool has overflowed high up on Clooth-na-Bare,
For the wet winds are blowing out of the clinging air;
Like heavy flooded waters our bodies and our blood;
But purer than a tall candle before the Holy Rood
Is Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

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

Please recommend to your friends

