

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Drumbeg mission team in Egypt

January 6, 2024

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Image of the day

Drumbeg mission team in Egypt

The CMSI team from Drumbeg Parish have arrived safely in Cairo, and begin their week-long visit with the Diocese and St Raphael School in Arba wa Nuss.

Pray for God to work through them and for positive engagement with the children and young people at the school.

News

SUNI North Coast Table Quiz and Chinese Night



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Scripture Union NI report they had a wonderful evening at their Table Quiz and Chinese Night last Saturday.

Over 140 people packed into the church hall at New Row Presbyterian where they had a great night together enjoying some Chinese food along with some competitive quizzing, raising over £1300.

“A big big thank you to everyone who came to support our event, we are so grateful for your encouragement and kindness and we pray that the money raised will be used to God’s glory in the district! A big thanks also to DST for all their amazing work in the lead up to and during the quiz”.



Cubs celebrate amazing Unihoc Tournament

What a day at Antrim Forum! Ten teams battled it out across 22 matches, with 1st Killymurriss narrowly



defeating Derryloran to become the 2024 NI Unihoc Champions!

-  **1st:** 1st Killymurriss Scouts
-  **2nd:** 1st Derryloran
-  **3rd:** 1st Cullybackey
-  **4th:** 1st Killyman

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A big shoutout to all the amazing teams who participated, the referees, leaders, and parents for making it unforgettable. Save the date - 29 Nov 2025-we're planning an even bigger event! Georgie Huston - NI Cub Team Lead



St Mark's Ballymacash Stirs up Sunday

“As is our tradition, a lot of people stayed behind to ‘stir up’ the Christmas pudding which we mixed during the service, and to reflect on stirring up our hearts to prepare for Advent and the coming of the Christ child”...

... and CNI hopes it hasn't stirred up the wrong photos with the wrong parish... we were playing all the right notes...



St Finnian's Confirmation support

“We enjoyed a wonderful evening on Thursday supporting Grace, Patrick, Conor, Lewis, Patrick, Katherine and Harry at their confirmation”, St Finnian's, Cregagh, posted...

Congratulations to all in taking this important next step in their faith journey. Rector, Canon Jono to RHS.

Paddington Praise Party in Newtownards

On Saturday 10 November, St Mark's Parish Centre in Newtownards was filled with fun and friendship as they

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celebrated the arrival of Paddington Bear to their town centre.

Kids and leaders from the three worshipping communities in St Mark's, Glen Community and West Winds Community Church planned an afternoon of crafts, games, food and fellowship while they thought about what it means to be part of the family of God.



Mayor of Ards and North Down Alistair Cathcart shares a jar of marmalade with Paddington Bear on his arrival in the town centre.

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fellowship while they thought about what it means to be part of the family of God.

The afternoon wouldn't have been complete without the arrival of their special guest Paddington Bear himself- and a surprise ice-cream van to complement the marmalade sandwiches and treats for all.

“We had so much fun we can't wait to plan our next venture together!”

Care for Every Moment of Life – a C of I response to proposals for laws permitting assisted suicide

The Church and Society Commission of the Church of Ireland has produced a new resource for members of the Church regarding the sensitive issues that arise in relation to the end of human life.

This is available for printing and sharing in parishes from the following page: www.churchofireland.org/careforeverymoment

Over recent months, members of both Dáil Éireann and the House of Commons have introduced proposals for legislation intended to legalise assisted suicide.

We understand the powerful emotions involved in any discussion of the issues involved and that the proposals are put forward in good faith, and with good intentions. We recognise that all involved in this discussion have a genuine



concern and compassion for those who are suffering, watching another suffer or who are living in fear of a lingering, painful death. We believe firmly that anyone coming to the end of their natural life should have the greatest possible care to help them live out their remaining time with dignity, minimising their pain or suffering. What we do not accept is that legislating for assisted suicide is the best way to help those suffering.

As Christians we believe that all life is created in the image of God, as a gift from Him, and has intrinsic value, regardless of who we are, our personal circumstances and our abilities and limitations. If we accept that, in some cases, there are those who by means of age, disability or illness would qualify for assisted suicide, have we not judged their life to have less value? How can they be expected to see meaning and value in their own life if we

accept that this value somehow depends on a person's health or their stage in life?

As the overall age of the population moves upwards, there are often understandable concerns and discussions around the economic consequences of caring for the elderly for the rest of the population. So common is this talking point that we can lose sight of how this framing devalues and depersonalises older people. No longer contributing to the workforce and so past their useful economic lifespan, they become, even if only in the abstract, perceived as a burden.

The social pressure that this creates is not direct, but it is real, and it is insidious. Amid a housing crisis and times of economic uncertainty, the social pressure that this puts on older people is immense, as we subconsciously tell our elders that perhaps things would be better for their families if they simply moved on. Our faith requires us, as Christians, to protect the vulnerable, the poor, the orphan and the widow. If we allow our society to create pressure, albeit inadvertently, on anyone who is vulnerable to end their lives, we fail in that duty.

More at - [<https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2024/11/27/care-for-every-moment-of>]

Dinner and Discussion for internationals at St Nicholas', Belfast

St Nicholas' Parish Church, Lisburn Road, Belfast, is holding a Dinner and Discussion event for international members of the community on Saturday November 30 from 4 - 7 pm.



Organiser Johanne Martin said the event will be an opportunity for internationals to practice their English skills. Johanne will introduce the evening, and there will be discussions about traditional festivals in the home countries of the different nationalities present.

John Dyson, a parishioner of St Nicholas' and All Saints' Parish, will give a short talk on the real reason for Christmas celebrations, and the greatest gift we can receive at Christmas.

The event will finish with Middle Eastern food and a quiz for all the family.

Johanne said: “We hope that our international friends will understand the real meaning of Christmas beyond the commercialism and cultural celebrations – that we celebrate the Christ who came to earth to be our saviour.”

Cathedral Calls

Lay Canon installed in the Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick, Armagh

During a special Choral Evensong on Sunday November 24 2024, Geoffrey Perrin, a parishioner of Rathmichael in Dublin, was installed as a Lay Canon in the Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick, Armagh, in recognition of his particular and distinguished service to the Church of Ireland.

The Dean, the Very Revd Shane Forster, welcomed Geoffrey’s family and friends to the Cathedral together with many colleagues from the Representative Church Body with whom Geoffrey had served.

The Old Testament Lesson was read by the Dean of Ossory, the Very Revd Stephen Farrell, and the New Testament Lesson by Canon Gary McMurray, Prebendary of Ballymore in the Diocese of Armagh.



Canon Graham Richards, Archbishop John McDowell, Canon Geoffrey Perrin, Dean Shane Forster and Canon Kenneth Milne.

In his sermon Archbishop John McDowell referred to advice Geoffrey had received from his clergyman father Canon Donald Perrin, that the Church of Ireland needed good lay people. The Archbishop spoke also of how after the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the principle of extending the representation of the laity was accepted by the bishops. This led to the ratio of laity to clergy at General Synod being 2:1 and to the drafting of the Church of Ireland Constitution and the formation of the Representative Church Body in which Geoffrey has served so faithfully.

Turning to the Scripture Readings, Archbishop John highlighted from Daniel chapter 5 and the demise of King Belshazzar that those in positions of influence and power are still subject to the rule of God.

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The Sunday before Advent is also known as ‘The Kingship of Christ’. In the Gospel Reading from John chapter 6 and the account of the people wanting to take Jesus and make him King by force and he countering that by withdrawing to the mountain by himself, the Archbishop suggested that whatever our role or vocation within the church, we remain disciples of Jesus Christ, that is the foundation and our first vocation. Everything else must be judged and adjusted in relationship to that.

San Francisco’s Grace Cathedral builds community with arts membership programme

One year ago, Patricia Lee, a longtime San Francisco, California, resident, had no relationship with nearby Grace Cathedral until she went to an organ recital and subscribed to the cathedral’s email list.

After reading an advertisement for a weekly yoga program for senior citizens at Grace, Lee, 74, tried it in January 2024. Now, she not only does yoga at Grace every week, but she’s also an active member of the cathedral’s growing GraceArts program.

“I think that for seniors, offering programs like senior yoga is particularly important, especially in the city, because there are so many seniors – in many cases widowed or single like myself – who feel isolated,” Lee told Episcopal News Service. “Grace Cathedral has really created a sense of community in the Nob Hill area, and it has really amazed me.”



Lee Mingwei, the 2022 artist-in-residence at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, California, offered a special performance of “Our Labyrinth for Grace,” where dancers used a broom to sweep a mound of rice along a labyrinthian path. Lee met with GraceArts members in an exclusive meet-and-greet session after the performance.

In 2022, Grace Cathedral – the seat of the Diocese of California – founded GraceArts, a cultural museum-like paid membership program that offers discounted and early access to visual and performing arts events. The program also offers reduced rates on classes, including yoga, and guided tours are discounted or free for GraceArts members. The program was an instant hit, and membership continues to grow. Today, Grace Cathedral has more GraceArts members than parishioners, and that’s perfectly OK by the Very Rev. Malcolm Clemens Young, the cathedral’s dean.

“People tend to think that a cathedral just serves the people who show up on Sunday mornings, but a cathedral really is committed to the well-being of the entire community that we find ourselves in,” Young told ENS. “The cathedral serves everyone, whether they’re Jewish or Muslim or evangelical Christian or agnostic or atheist –whatever it is they believe in.”

Grace Cathedral’s arts programming is a diverse mix of tradition, pop culture, spirituality and modern technology – where old meets new. Drag queens and trapeze artists have performed inside the cathedral. Musical events range from religious choral and orchestral concerts to chamber ensemble recitals featuring melodic arrangements of music from the Pokémon video game series and Studio Ghibli films. At sound bath events, participants lie down and intently listen to live meditative music while changing colors light up the cathedral. The sounds from the instruments vibrate throughout the cathedral, which may help participants relax and improve their mood. Performance art exhibitions and dance shows are also popular.

Lee said her two favourite events so far are “Grace Window,” an installation where lasers shining from the roof of nearby Fairmont Hotel through Grace Cathedral’s Rose Window moved to music in real-time, and “Grace Light,” a large-scale, immersive light show where participants lay on the cathedral’s large indoor Chartres-style labyrinth while watching colorful lights overhead move to an original score composed for the installation.

“Those shows were the two most impressive, awe-inspiring experiences that I’ve had with GraceArts,” Lee said.

In the media

C of E did refer Smyth abuse concerns to retired senior police officers say

John Smyth's abuse was properly referred to the police by the Church of England in 2013, retired senior police officers have told the Church Times.

Their comments challenge the Makin review's conclusion about the responses of the diocese of Ely, and of Lambeth Palace, in that year, Francis Martin writes.

In a "summary of failures", the Makin report says: "There was never a formal referral to Cambridgeshire Police." But three retired detectives with extensive safeguarding experience have told the Church Times that, on the evidence presented in the report, a referral had properly been made by church authorities in 2013.

Analysing the steps taken by the Bishop of Ely's safeguarding adviser, Yvonne Quirk, in 2013 after learning of the abuse, one retired police detective, who has worked in safeguarding for more than 20 years, told the Church Times: "I don't know how much more of a referral you can get."

None of the three former officers were willing to put their name to their concerns, owing to their holding independent

safeguarding positions, and will be referred to as former officers A, B, and C.

In his report, released on 7 November, the independent reviewer Keith Makin wrote: “John Smyth could and should have been formally reported to the police in the UK and to authorities in South Africa . . . by Church officers, including a diocesan Bishop and Justin Welby in 2013.”

Former officer B told the Church Times: “Nobody can say this isn’t a hideous, horrific case, but to say that, in 2013, no one did anything, and that it wasn’t a police referral, leading to where we are now with the Archbishop resigning, it’s just wrong.”

The Makin report records that the police detective who received information from Ms Quirk understood the conversation to be about giving advice. The report says that the police officer, Lisa Pearson, “did not consider this to be a formal referral to the Police”.

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But this, the former detectives claim, is contradicted by the fact that there followed a meeting between Ms Quirk and two of Ms Pearson’s senior colleagues.

An in-person meeting with senior officers to discuss the case was not an informal process, former officer C said: “That’s reporting to police.” Officer C said that it was unclear to them what Mr Makin meant by a “formal referral”.

When this was put to Mr Makin, his spokesperson said: “Any detail on police involvement beyond what is contained in the report is a question for the police.”

Former officer A also said that the production of an “intelligence report” by Cambridgeshire Police, to be sent to Hampshire Police, about Smyth’s actions was further evidence that Ms Quirk was justified in thinking that the disclosures had been treated seriously by police.

Officer A emphasised that this was not a criticism of Ms Pearson, who, they said, had acted correctly by bringing in senior colleagues.

The Makin report says that “no other record” of the intelligence report had been found, and a spokesperson for Hampshire Constabulary told the Church Times: “No intelligence report was received by us from the force mentioned within the report.”

Ms Pearson, who is now assistant diocesan safeguarding adviser in Ely, declined to comment. The Church Times was unable to contact Ms Quirk.

The Makin report says that Archbishop Welby was “ill-advised about the actions taken in the Ely diocese”, where Smyth’s abuse was first reported to a church safeguarding adviser. “He was told that a referral had been made to the police. This was not correct.”

All three of the retired detectives who spoke to the Church Times suggested that, on the basis of the information

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presented in the report, Archbishop Welby was justified in thinking in 2013 that proper processes had been followed.

The Church, officer B said, had “trusted the professional judgement of the police, and discharged its obligation in terms of referral”.

In the statement announcing his decision to resign, Archbishop Welby said: “When I was informed in 2013 and told that police had been notified, I believed wrongly that an appropriate resolution would follow” (News, 12 November).

In a statement on the same day as Archbishop Welby announced his resignation, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Revd Stephen Conway, who was Bishop of Ely in 2013, said: “It was my understanding that this matter was reported to the Police in Cambridgeshire and duly passed on to the Police in Hampshire where the abuse had occurred.”
Courtesy The Church Times 27/11/2024

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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