

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – C of I Appeal to ‘Shine a Light for
Diocese of Jerusalem’**

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C of I Bishops Appeal to ‘Shine a Light for Diocese of Jerusalem’

C of I Bishops’ Appeal has announced that it will partner with Dublin and Glendalough’s ‘Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem’ appeal, along with Tearfund, for its Advent and Christmas Appeal 2023.

Announcing details of the 2023 appeal, Bishops’ Appeal said it focused on supporting those in great need in the Middle East.

“Our focus on the desperate needs in the Middle East enables us to partner with the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough who are running the ‘Shine A Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem’ campaign, and also to help with the overwhelming needs of displaced people who are now living in Lebanon as well,” Bishops’ Appeal stated.

Their statement continued: “Our intention is to channel the funds raised through our trusted partners on the ground – the Diocese of Jerusalem (with whom the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough has been in relationship for a number of years) in their outreach to those impacted by war, and also to Tearfund partners working in Lebanon and in some of the areas and countries bordering Gaza and Israel where already things are precarious and extremely tense. Where there is the danger of further tension, violence and devastation erupting at any time”.

The Dublin and Glendalough diocesan “Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem” appeal has already raised over €25,000 and in a statement the diocese said, “We are grateful to everyone who has donated so far. All the funds raised will go directly to our partners in the Diocese of Jerusalem to be used in their outreach to all affected by this war. We are currently working with our partners in the Diocese of Jerusalem to ascertain what the areas of greatest need are.

“The diocese owns and runs Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City which hit the headlines around the world following the deadly explosion in its compound on October 17. It also was the last hospital functioning in the city before the doctors fled south when they ran out of medical supplies. The diocese also has other hospitals in the West Bank and Israel as well as schools and education centres.

“These centres include the Princess Basma Centre on the Mount of Olives which is an inclusive facility for children with disabilities. The centre had been due to open an outreach facility in Al Ahli this month to support children who had to travel from Gaza for treatment. The diocese has said that the work of the centre will be all the more important as they help newly maimed children and those suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of the current war”.

Welcoming the support of Bishops’ Appeal, Archbishop Michael Jackson said: “Bishops’ Appeal responds to crises all over the world, finding trusted partners on the ground each time. We are pleased that through our diocesan link with the Diocese of Jerusalem, people of the wider Church

of Ireland will have an opportunity to make a difference to people's lives which have been torn apart by this war. Over almost a decade we have seen the work of the Diocese of Jerusalem as they serve all who call out to them, no matter what their faith or background. They see this as their Christian service and we are humbled by it".

Bishops' Appeal observed that this part of the Middle East is where Jesus lived, worked and worshipped and where he demonstrated God's love, compassionate kindness and saving grace through his sacrificial death on the Cross for all mankind. "Where today the 'little town of Bethlehem' that we will sing about in our Carol Services is only a short distance from the devastation being experienced in Gaza, and from the kibbutz area where Hamas carried out their deadly massacre on October 7th," their statement reads adding, "There is no doubt of the level of suffering that this conflict has caused, with men, women and children killed, injured, made homeless, and lives utterly devastated by the violence".

Bishops' Appeal is urging people, if they can, to give something to help those most affected. Bishops' Appeal envelopes are available in each diocese, or donations can be made directly at this link: <https://store.ireland.anglican.org/donations/the-bishops-appeal>

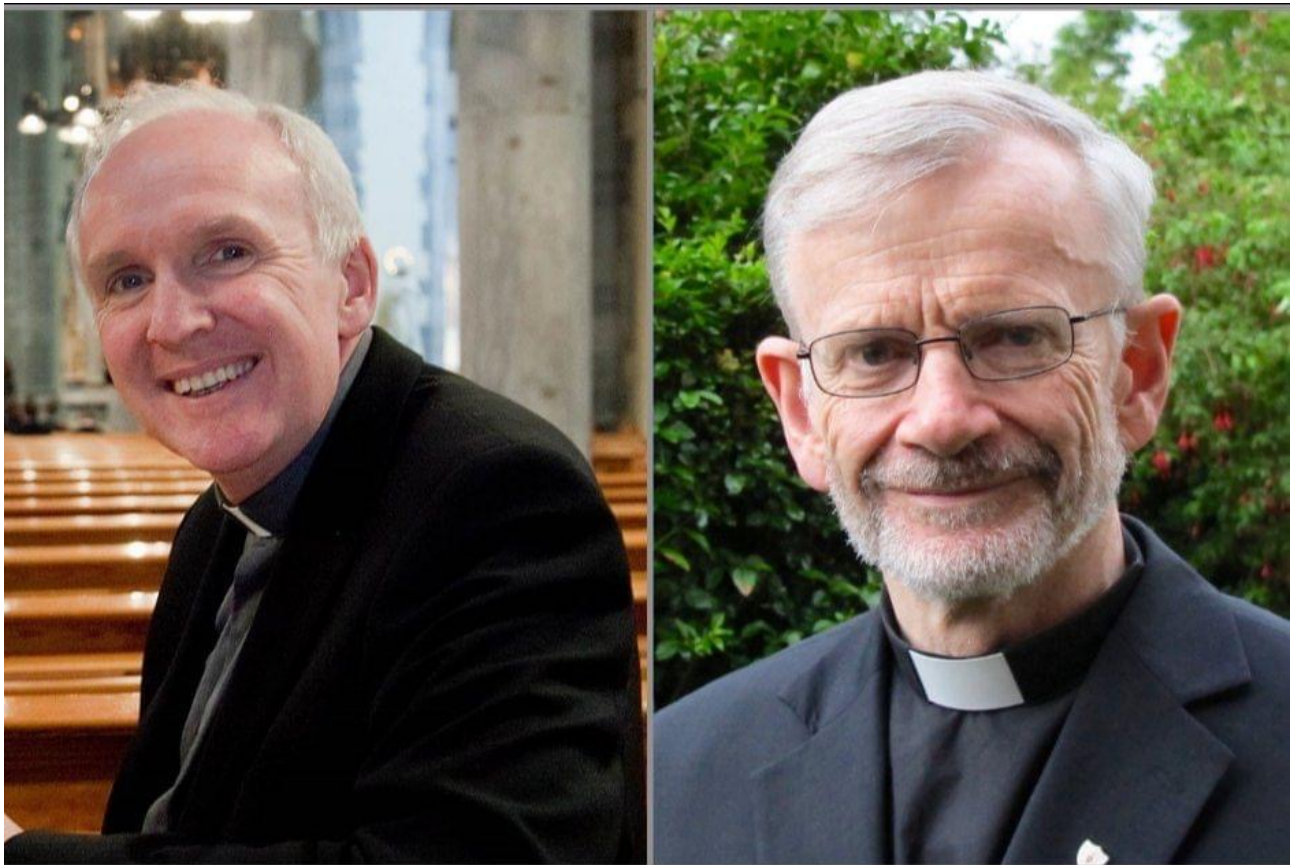
You can donate directly to the Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem appeal by bank transfer to Diocesan Funds of Dublin and Glendalough No 1 A/C Current Account, Bank of Ireland, 2 COLLEGE GREEN DUBLIN 2 IBAN: IE50 BOFI 9000 1769 3548 78, BIC: BOFIIIE2D. Cheques may be sent to Diocesan Offices of Dublin and Glendalough, Church of

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Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, D06 CF67. All funds will go directly to our partner Diocese of Jerusalem.

“The Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem Appeal” will be officially launched in St Ann’s Church, Dawson Street, on Monday December 4 at 6.30pm. All are welcome but please RSVP for catering purposes to caoimhe.Leppard@rcbcoi.org

People and places



Rome synod - Women decision making

“Women involved in decision-making is an area for exploration and action” – Bishops of Raphoe and Limerick

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Read Bishops Alan McGuckian and Brendan Leahy's report on their attendance at the Synodal Assembly in Rome -

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2023/11/28/women-involved-in-decision-making-is-an-area-for-exploration-and-action-bishops/>



FORGE Leaders in Training is underway

FORGE Leaders in Training, a new discipleship and leadership formation programme for young people aged 17–21, is underway in Down & Dromore diocese with five participants and the opportunity for more to join.

In our first session earlier this month the group explored biblical leadership, learning from the highs and lows of King David. They discovered more about their personal and unique approach to leadership as Ava Jordon–Cursai (Seapatrick Parish) steered the group through an in–depth look at their personality types and how that affects their management.

“We had a lot of fun as the young leaders put their learning into practice through team building activities, and, of course, shared a lot of delicious food! To end the day, the LITs joined with other young adults from across the diocese at Foundations for an evening of great teaching and worship”.

FORGE Leaders in Training is a new initiative made possible with the generous support of Benefact Trust. Forge LIT aims to encourage and support young leaders to grow in confidence in their leadership and faith.

Programmes like this are vital to engage with and champion the next generation of leaders in our Church. Without intentional and immediate investment into younger generations, the outlook for our parishes is bleak. You can support this ministry by identifying potential young leaders in your congregation and encouraging them to connect with FORGE programmes.

“Please join us in our commitment to pray for and develop younger generations – the future of our Church”.

Janine Armstrong, FORGE Coordinator
janine@downanddromore.org or phone 075 9252 9285

Find out more

FORGE Leaders in Training

[<https://www.downanddromore.org/training/forge-leaders-in-training>]

FORGE Ministry Apprenticeship Scheme -

[<https://www.downanddromore.org/training/forge-ministry-apprenticeship-scheme>]



Armagh MU Diocesan prayer breakfast

Armagh MU Diocesan Prayer Breakfast was held on Saturday 25th November in Armagh City Hotel, Guest Speaker was the Diocesan President Debbie Davidson. Also in attendance were the Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh, Rev Alan Cross, Diocesan Chaplain and other guests from Women's Aid, Nexus, Mother's Union All Ireland representatives. Claire Smyth, Unit Coordinator led the proceedings.



Sandford Christmas Market

Saturday, 2nd December 11am—1.30pm
in the grounds of
Sandford Parish Church

Christmas Crafts Deli Stall
Cakes Waffles Hot Dogs
Hot Chocolate
Santa Claus and more

All welcome
Luas Green Line Ranelagh or Beechwood
No. 11 Bus

RAFFLE!



Christmas Fayre

Saturday 2nd December
11am - 3pm

Admission:
Adults £5
OAP'S & Students £3
Children FREE

Come and shop for: Homemade crafts & gifts, candles, cakes & jams,
preloved clothes and much more!!!!

SEASONAL REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED

St. Bartholomew's Parish Church, 183 Stranmillis Road, Belfast

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St Paul's, Lisburn, hosts Thanksgiving Service for UDR Greenfinches



The women who served in the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) between 1973 and were honoured at a special thanksgiving service at St Paul's, Lisburn, on November 26.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first women joining the UDR, which had initially been set up as a men-only regiment.

Despite many working full-time jobs and raising families, these brave women, known as Greenfinches, took part in operations displaying uncommon courage and conviction to play a critical role in protecting society.



The Military Wives Choir

Earlier this year, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agreed a motion to recognise the Greenfinches' service on the 50th anniversary of their formation.

The Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Andrew Gowan, said: "I'd like to acknowledge the sacrifices that the Greenfinches made, putting their lives on the line to serve and protect against the evils of terrorism.

"It is an honour and privilege to host this reception in celebration of their 50th anniversary. It goes without saying that the Greenfinches played a critical role in the UDR.

"When we consider the circumstances back in the early '70s, those women who enlisted provide us with a great example of bravery and selflessness. They are an



Mayor, councillors, Rector (left), RBL Chaplain (right) and Greenfinch representative

inspiration to young women today who are thinking of joining the services and indeed helped shape the inclusive Armed Forces that exist today.

“The Greenfinches leave behind a legacy that will be difficult for anyone to follow. We are all indebted to them for their service and sacrifice.

“We remember too, with the deepest respect, the four Greenfinches who were killed by the IRA over the course of the Troubles between 1974 and 1984. Their names were Private Eva Martin, age 28, Lance Corporal Gillian Jean Leggett, age 33, Private Margaret Hearst, age 24 and Corporal Heather Kerrigan, age 20. They paid the ultimate sacrifice and will never be forgotten.”



Greenfinches with the Mayor and Councillors at St Paul's Parish Church, Lisburn

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's thanksgiving service forms part of wider observations by many organisations and groups in recognition of the Greenfinches 50th anniversary year.

The Right Rev Darren McCartney, rector of St Paul's, officiated at the service and blessing which included hymns sung by the Military Wives' Choir and the church choir. Photos courtesy of Norman Briggs

In the media

AI heads for pulpit as clergy under threat - Daily Telegraph

Vicars and priests said to be among jobs most at risk from artificial intelligence, says a government report, James Titcomb writes

Gentlemen of the cloth have endured for millennia, surviving the separation of Church and state, the industrial revolution and world wars – yet vicars and priests are now under threat from a very modern scourge: chatbots.

Jobs in the clergy are among the most exposed to the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), according to a government report.

A Department for Education study examining the impact of systems such as ChatGPT on the jobs market has concluded that clerics are in the top 20 professions most likely to be affected by AI.

Clergy members were ranked as the 13th most exposed to “large language model” systems out of the 365 categories of occupation studied.

They were deemed slightly less likely to be affected than local government administrators, but slightly more vulnerable than university lecturers.

The figures were based on what key skills are used in each profession, such as written comprehension and inductive reasoning, and how easily they could be replicated by AI.

The study may have missed unique aspects of individual professions and the research does not speculate how precisely the technology could influence each job.

However, there are already some real world examples of AI clergy in action.

In June, 300 people attended a church ceremony in Germany, with the sermon written by AI and delivered by computer-generated avatars on a screen.

Jonas Simmerlein, a theologian and philosopher at the University of Vienna who devised the service, said it was 98 per cent generated by machines.

Vicars and rabbis have already admitted to using ChatGPT to help them write sermons.

The former head of the Church of Scotland, the Very Rev Albert Bogle, has said that clergy should embrace AI but argued the technology cannot do what “humans do in an act of worship”. Other studies have found congregations are unlikely to accept robot preachers.

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Anthony Levandowski, a Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur, has launched an AI church called Way of the Future, saying he wants to build a spiritual connection between humans and AI.

The Department for Education (DfE) said its study was one of the first major attempts to assess how AI is likely to affect the job market in Britain.

Telephone salespeople were the most likely to have their jobs affected by the systems, with forklift drivers the least exposed. It is generally believed that between 10pc and 30pc of existing jobs will be affected by AI.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Guide booklet on C of I Pioneer Ministry

A new Pioneer Ministry guide booklet has been produced by The Church of Ireland Pioneer Ministry leadership team.

The booklet outlines how to apply for Pioneer Ministry funding and how to apply for the new Pioneer Ministry training programme.

In a foreword the Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev John McDowell, says -

“By definition “pioneering” is about the employment of new ideas and new methods in situations where older ideas and older methods no longer make an adequate impression. Pioneer ministers-lay or ordained, volunteer or stipendiary - will be people who have a vocation from God, tested and authorised by His Church, to bring these ideas and methods into the treasure house of Christ’s ministry. The gifts which a pioneer minister will bring to his or her area of service will be as varied as the situations in which they are deployed, but will have a common thread in proclaiming and living out the Gospel in those situations.

“In some instances pioneer ministry may be radically different from other more traditional ministries with which they will work. In other instances they will shade into one another more obviously. Whichever may be the case along the spectrum of ministry, all should be bound together within the meaning and promise of St Paul’s words:

“There are different types of gifts, but it is the same Spirit who allots them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but in all of them it is the same God who is at work.” (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one Faith and one baptism; one God and Father of all; who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6)”

Please watch this video for more and also click this website link to view the guide book itself. If you have any questions, please contact the team on info@pioneerministry.org. It’s wonderful news for the Church of Ireland as Pioneer

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Ministry continues to grow into the next exciting phase of the project.

Guide book download at -

[<https://www.pioneerministry.org/guide-book>]

Any questions, please contact the team on info@pioneerministry.org.

Poem for today

The Light of Stars

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The night is come, but not too soon;
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven
But the cold light of stars;
And the first watch of night is given
To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love?
The star of love and dreams?
O no! from that blue tent above,
A hero's armor gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,

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Suspended in the evening skies,
The shield of that red star.

O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light
But the cold light of stars;
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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