

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Portrait of a peacemaker

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Silent Testimony, an exhibition of large-scale portrait paintings by Colin Davidson'

Colin Davidson's portrait of US Senator George Mitchell was unveiled at the Irish Arts Center in New York last week as part of the artist's Selected Paintings and Drawings exhibition.

IAC commissioned the portrait in commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in tribute to



Last night, I had the great honour of unveiling my new portrait of Senator George Mitchell at the Irish Arts Center in New York, in the presence of this quiet titan of peace. Thank you, Senator, for your central role in allowing my children to have a future - Colin Davidson

Senator Mitchell, who, as the US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, co-chaired the talks leading to the historic peace agreement.

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The portrait of Mitchell is a part of Davidson's Selected Paintings and Drawings exhibition at the IAC, which runs through December 17.

Also staged at the IAC was Silent Testimony, an exhibition of large-scale portrait paintings by Davidson that reveals the stories of 18 people connected by their individual experiences of loss through the Troubles, the turbulent 30-year period in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s onwards. Colin Davidson commented “Last night, I had the great honour of unveiling my new portrait of Senator George Mitchell at the Irish Arts Center in New York, in the presence of this quiet titan of peace. Thank you, Senator, for your central role in allowing my children to have a future.”

The exhibition which has concluded was curated by Kim Mawhinney, Senior Curator of Art at National Museums Northern Ireland.

People and places

‘Pause for Hope’ service in Armagh

The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Patrick, Armagh, will host an ecumenical prayer service on October 15th at 3.30pm for all those whose lives have been touched by cancer.

The service is organized by the UK-based charity, Pause for Hope (www.pauseforhope.org.uk).

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The aim of the charity is to help people affected by cancer through bringing together in prayer those who have - or have had - cancer, their loved ones, those who care for them, doctors, nurses and carers, those who have responsibility for providing resources, and scientists trying to find a cure.

Bishop Michael Router, Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, will lead the service, and the preacher will be Archbishop John McDowell, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh. During the service a person affected by cancer will speak about their experience.

The musical accompaniment will be provided by organist Colm Murphy and the Cathedral Choir.

Following the service, light refreshments will be provided in the Synod Hall, along with an opportunity to share stories and experiences with others in a similar situation. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Mothers' Union Big House meeting

The Mothers' Union branch at Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and Tamlaghtard Parish Churches in Derry diocese met recently at "The Big House " which is located just beside Balteagh Parish Church.

Rev Paul Gallucci (House Chaplain) welcomed the ladies and introduced the house to the ladies, explaining the ethos



Branch Leader Mrs Delma Cooper presenting Paul with a house plant as a token of thanks for his time.

behind the house and the work that they do in the wider community.

“The vision of The Big House has always been to have a home. A place where young people can come and feel they are entering someone’s home where they will be cared for and loved. A place where God is present, laughter is heard, and love is shared” and that was certainly evident last evening.

Rome Synod - Fr. Timothy Radcliffe

"So many people feel excluded or marginalized in our church because we have slapped abstract labels on them: divorced and remarried, gay people, polygamous people, refugees, Africans, Jesuits!"

Retired C of I Clergy visit Armagh

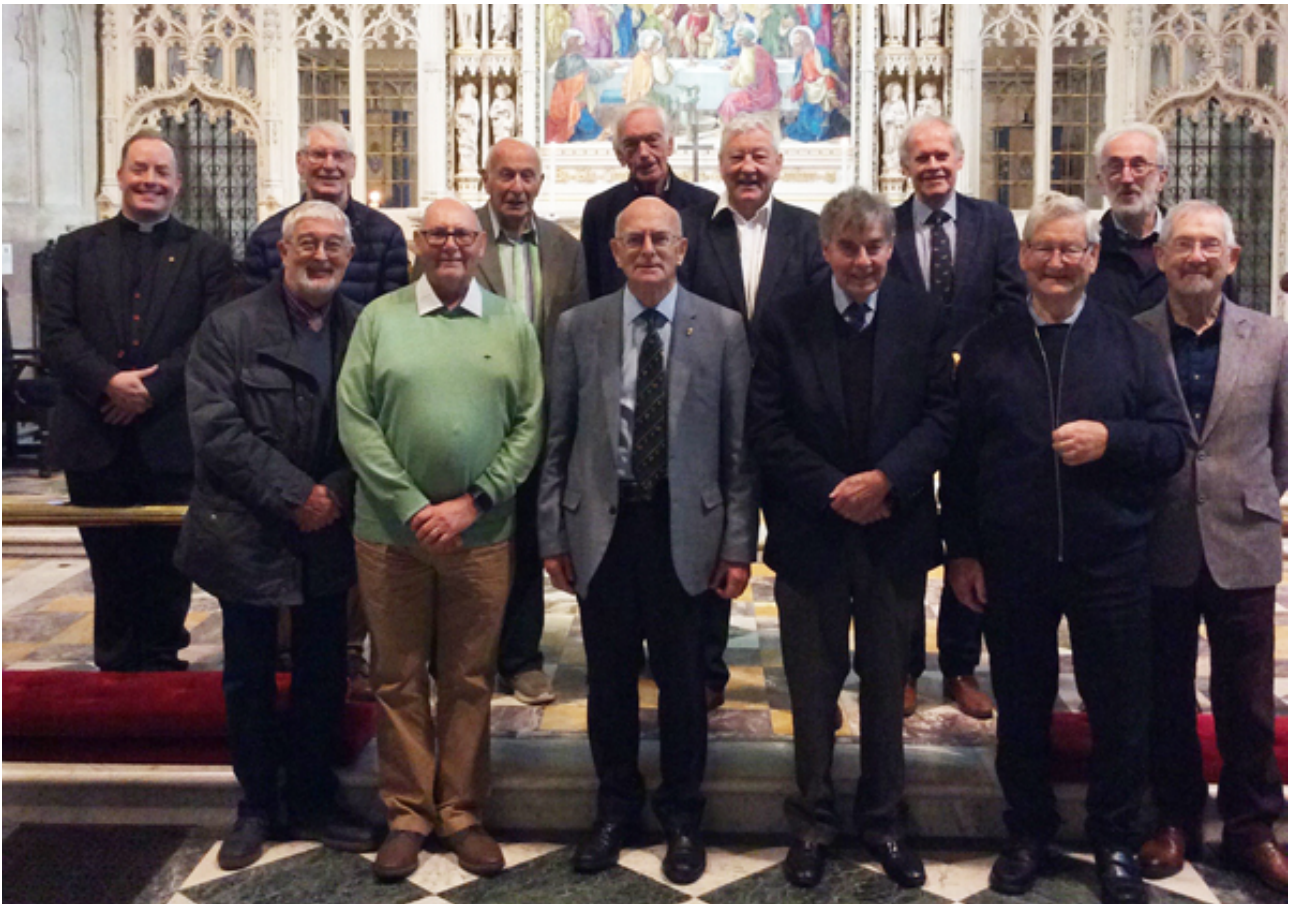
Members of the Retired Clergy Association (Northern Ireland) resumed their meetings after the summer break with a visit to St Patrick's Cathedral and the Robinson Library, Armagh.

Proceedings began with a tribute from the RCA (NI)'s chairman, Canon Jim Campbell, to Canon John McKegney, a former chairman of the Association, who died earlier that week.

Following light refreshments, members were welcomed by the Archdeacon of Armagh, the Ven Dr Peter Thompson, on behalf of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev John McDowell, and the Dean of Armagh, the Very Rev Shane



Prisons Week comment - Bishop Rachael Treweek



Forster, both of whom were part of the Church Leaders Group (Ireland) attending a seminar in Rome to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

Archdeacon Thompson celebrated Holy Communion, assisted by the Very Rev Gregory Dunstan, a former Dean of Armagh. Following the service, the Archdeacon outlined the history of the Cathedral's organ and gave members a musical treat by playing extracts of familiar hymns and music to demonstrate the full range of the organ's capability.

Carol Conlin, Assistant Keeper of the Robinson Library, gave members a brief history of the library, the oldest in Northern Ireland, founded by Archbishop Richard Robinson in 1771 as part of his plans to establish a university in Armagh. Ms Conlin had laid out some of the library's rare

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books, manuscripts, maps, coins and medals for white-gloved members to handle – with care!!

The visit ended with a tour of No 5 Vicar's Hill, built in 1772 as the Diocesan Registry, which now houses a museum and visitors' attractions, with examples on display including coins, gems, prints and early Christian artefacts.

Members agreed that the visit had been most interesting and fascinating and looked forward to the next meeting, to be held in Belfast Cathedral on Wednesday October 25, when the Rev Shona Bell will speak on the work of Corrymeela.

St Nahi's renovations dedicated at Harvest

Worshippers at the ancient and beautiful church of St Nahi in Dundrum gave thanks for the completion of recent refurbishment works at their Harvest Service yesterday (Sunday October 8).

The service was celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson who also dedicated the works which included the renovation of the baptistry, the church tiles, the floor and the brass behind the altar as well as the purchase of new chairs throughout the church.

St Nahi's stands on the original site of Dundrum Parish Church where, according to official records a church was built in about 800AD, probably on the ruins of an older



The Revd Jane Burns, Elaine Wynne, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Pat O'Doherty, the Revd Nigel Pierpoint and Richard O'Donnell at St Nahi's Church where renovation works were dedicated.

building. It was dedicated to St Nahi, a saint of the very early Irish church who is thought to have lived in a monastery at Churchtown around 600AD. The church was rebuilt several times, with the most recent restoration completed in 1910.

In his sermon the Archbishop drew on the Gospel reading [St John 4.35: But look, I tell you, look around at the fields: they are already white, ripe for harvesting.] He said the reading encourages us to focus on the harvest of potential and

opportunity and suggested that we need more of this in church life. “We need to find this hope and this joy in the life beyond the church, outside the church, and bring it into church as a harvest which we have gathered and which we can celebrate,” he said.

Noting the church’s historic connection to the Middle Ages of Christian heritage, he said that week by week we reap where others sowed and we also sow afresh for future generations for them to reap again at another time. “This is what worship is, this is what liturgy does. Work such as this is essential for the wellbeing of any building and for its inhabitants. In some ways, a church is no different from any other building. And yet, in many ways, it is radically different because it is particularly special and dear to the community of hope, to the body of Christ and to the individual pilgrim soul. It is the place to which generations of people come in faith, in hope and in love for occasions sad and sorrowful, joyous and uplifting – and they do this on a regular basis – and sometimes they are able to move from one way of being to a different way of being, because God is in the place where they are and God comes to meet them face to face in good ways. Beauty and quietness are two ways in which this often happens, as restoration and healing take their course,” he stated.

The Archbishop said that the service of thanksgiving honoured the depth of loyalty which made possible a depth of responsibility, and both had made possible a depth of generosity. He thanked the Rector and parishioners for all they had done which he said was testimony to their spirit of resilience. He stated: “I want to encourage you to keep this up and to keep this going, to keep reaping...”

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Diocese of Armagh study trip to Church Army HQ



From left to right: Canon Matthew Hagan, Mr Jonny Price (Church Army resources officer), Revd Sarah Parkinson, Revd Carlton Baxter. Photo - David Brown, Youth and Children's officer.

A group from Armagh diocese recently took part in a three day "study trip" to Church Army Sheffield with a focus on understanding current challenges and opportunities facing youth, children's and family ministry.

A short report to be given at Diocesan Synod, October 2023. Sincere thanks to the Diocesan Board of Education for support in this venture.



Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox Church opens in Belfast



The opening service has taken place of the new St Stephen's Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox Church in Berlin Street.

Guests invited by the Rev Angelos were present.

The majority of Egyptian Christians in Northern Ireland

are adherents of this faith and this may be their only church in Northern Ireland. The new church wishes to be part of the local community.

News reports

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem unite in a call for peace and justice

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, an ecumenical group of Christian leaders which includes the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, Archbishop Hosam Naoum, have issued a statement calling for peace and justice amidst unfolding violence.

Their statement in full is produced below.

The Holy Land, a place sacred to countless millions around the world, is currently mired in violence and suffering due to the prolonged political conflict and the lamentable absence of justice and respect for human rights. We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, have time and again appealed for the importance of respecting the historic and legal Status Quo of the holy shrines. In these trying times, we come together to raise our voices in unity, echoing the divine message of peace and love for all humanity.

As custodians of the Christian faith, deeply rooted in the Holy Land, we stand in solidarity with the people of this region, who are enduring the devastating consequences of

continued strife. Our faith, which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, compels us to advocate for the cessation of all violent and military activities that bring harm to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

We unequivocally condemn any acts that target civilians, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or faith. Such actions go against the fundamental principles of humanity and the teachings of Christ, who implored us to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

It is our fervent hope and prayer that all parties involved will heed this call for an immediate cessation of violence. We implore political leaders and authorities to engage in sincere dialogue, seeking lasting solutions that promote justice, peace, and reconciliation for the people of this land, who have endured the burdens of conflict for far too long.

In our capacity as spiritual leaders, we extend our hands to all those who suffer, and we pray that the Almighty may grant comfort to the afflicted, strength to the weary, and wisdom to those in positions of authority. We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts to mediate a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land, based on equal rights for all and on international legitimacy.

Let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). In the spirit of this divine message, we implore all to work tirelessly towards an end to violence and the establishment of a just and lasting peace that will allow the Holy Land to be a beacon of hope, faith, and love for all.

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May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all during these challenging times.

Prayers of Love and Faith: C of E Bishops agree next steps to commend to Synod

The Church of England's House of Bishops has agreed in principle that prayers asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples – known as Prayers of Love and Faith – should be commended for use.

The House, which met in London on 09/10/2023 concluded that structures for special services for same-sex couples, based on Prayers of Love and Faith, should go forward to be formally authorised under canon law.

The bishops will bring proposals to General Synod next month which will pave the way for a process that would lead to the authorisation of these special services under Canon B2.

This process, expected to take until 2025, would involve consultation with every diocese and require approval by General Synod.

Bishops gave serious consideration to an alternative legal process which could have enabled special services to be authorised almost immediately - but temporarily – (under Canon B5A). This would still have required a further process for the services to be authorised permanently (under Canon B2) by Synod.

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New draft pastoral guidance will be brought to next month's meeting of Synod, setting out how the system could operate. Further work is already in progress on the second part of the Pastoral Guidance which will look at matters in the life and work of clergy and lay ministers.

Proposals for the Prayers of Love and Faith were discussed in an historic debate at the General Synod in February of this year. Synod called on the bishops to work on Pastoral Guidance and other arrangements needed to implement that decision.

The proposals will be discussed in detail at a meeting of General Synod in London on November 13 to 15.

At Monday's meeting the bishops agreed that:

The prayers and readings in Prayers of Love and Faith for use with same-sex couples will be commended by the House of Bishops for use in public worship.

Special standalone services set out in Prayers of Love and Faith should be brought to the General Synod to decide whether to authorise them under Canon B2, after consultation with dioceses.

There is also further work under way to explore further forms of pastoral reassurance and formal structural pastoral provision to ensure the conscience of everyone is respected.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who co-chaired the steering group which has brought the proposals forward,



said: “The House of Bishops’ decisions today continue to implement Synod’s vote to recognise publicly the commitment of same-sex couples and to pray God's blessing for them.

“They have agreed to commend Prayers of Love and Faith and also considered the best way to authorise special standalone services. Having carefully considering the legal, theological and pastoral implications of possible approaches, the bishops concluded that it would ultimately be clearer to proceed directly to consideration under Canon B2.

“We acknowledge that there are some who would like this process to move faster, however the move to full authorisation will provide clarity and wide consultation ahead of a final decision by synod in 2025.

“I know that for some, these measures go too far and, for others, not nearly far enough and the bishops discussed the need for pastoral reassurance, and for some the need for formal structural pastoral provision.

“But the heart of the gospel is reconciliation – our desire is to remain together as one Church in our uncertainty, finding ways to live well with our different perspectives and convictions.”

The meeting included times of prayer and worship, with prayers said for crises around the world including the situations in Israel and Gaza, and in Afghanistan.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Derry & Raphoe Ministry of Healing training

Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Ministry of Healing's training day - for clergy and lay people - is fast approaching and the organisers encourage everyone intending to take part to register 'a.s.a.p.'

Rev Paul Lyons and his colleagues will deliver this special event, 'Bringing Wholeness in Christ Through Prayer', in St Peter's Church, Culmore Road, Londonderry on Saturday 21st October from 9.30am–4pm.

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The day's designed to equip attendees for the challenges and opportunities this kind of ministry presents.

You can register by calling Rev Carmen Hayes on 07907 579913 or, alternatively, emailing carmenmirandahayes@hotmail.com

Tea and coffee will be provided, but please bring a packed lunch.

Thrive Collection from CPAS

Anglican evangelical mission agency CPAS has launched a new collection of resources for multi-parish benefices, The Thrive Collection.

Most Anglican churches in the UK are now in groups - multi-parish benefices (MPBs). MPBs contain seeds of enormous promise, despite being formed from necessity. They also face distinctive and substantial challenges.

The Thrive Collection is the fruit of nine years of work and research in this area. It comprises of four resources exploring the opportunities and challenges of MPBs. The Thrive Collection includes a book for incumbents and a pocket prayer guide for churchgoers (jointly published with Church House Publishing), as well as a course for lay and ordained leaders and sessions for PCCs. The resources can be purchased separately, or for a combined price of £30.

Through a theologically underpinned and carefully planned learning-and-action process, and based on church growth research, Thrive enables MPBs to consider: prayer, the



stories of our churches, developing leaders, growing disciples, sharing faith and vision for the future.

Pam Macnaughton, author of *The Thrive Collection*, is a former CPAS Leadership Specialist, and now works for the Church of England Vision and Strategy team and as an ordained pioneer minister for a Derbyshire group of churches. Pam has spear-headed *Thrive*: a proven and targeted collection of resources developed for MPBs, to help them release their potential.

‘A gift to many multi-parish benefices. It reflects the challenges they face, yet is hopeful about the incredible potential they represent.’ The Rt Rev Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester.

‘This accessible, practical book is the fruit of deep thinking and much experience. it will be an invaluable guide towards growth for all engaged in multi-parish ministry.’ The Rt Rev Dr Andrew Rumsey, Bishop of Ramsbury.

For further information please visit www.cpas.org.uk/thrive or contact David Skoppek at CPAS on dskoppek@cpas.org.uk or 0300 123 0780.

Poem for today

Spring and Autumn by Francis Ledwidge

Green ripples singing down the corn,
With blossoms dumb the path I tread,
And in the music of the morn
One with wild roses on her head.

Now the green ripples turn to gold
And all the paths are loud with rain,
I with desire am growing old
And full of winter pain.

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