

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day



Westport Eco Congregation

To Hope and Act with Creation was this year's slogan for the Season of Creation.

Front page photo - After Sunday morning's ecumenical Harvest Thanksgiving service in Holy Trinity Westport, with Brid McAuley (Westport Eco Congregation representative), Emma Lynch (Tearfund Ireland), Fr John Kenny (guest preacher and Administrator of St Mary's Westport), and the Rector.

They lit the ECI Climate Justice Candle. The prayers and sermon reflected on caring for our Common Home and the Laudato Si Prayer for this Season of Creation was printed

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in the booklet for the congregation.

The collection at the morning and evening services was towards the work of Tearfund Ireland in relieving suffering, and the amounts donated were 420 and 253 euros.

Westport Eco Congregation were delighted to be successful in receiving a grant from ECI towards the purchase of bird and bat boxes.

These boxes were made locally and will be used in the Aughaval Group of Parishes – Holy Trinity Westport, Christ Church Castlebar, St Thomas's Dugort Achill and Turlough Church. Season of Creation was celebrated in Westport and parishioners took part in a beach clean. Read their update in full on the ECI website.



News

SAMS mission partner from Concepción, Paraguay

**Melissa served
with SAMS, in
Concepción,
Paraguay, from
August 2017 to
January 2018.**



More recently, she has been serving for the last 3 years as a mission partner with the Methodist Church in Ecuador. She will be serving as a SAMS mission partner in Ireland.

Melissa will be returning to Ecuador in mid-November, but will be carrying out deputation work until then and again in the spring when she will return to Ireland for a few months. SAMS and their friends will have an opportunity to hear more from Melissa at their mission morning in Lisburn on 19th October.

If anyone would like more information about the ministry Melissa is involved, or how you can support her, please contact the SAMS office. You can also follow her journey on

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Instagram (melissa.in.ecuador). No doubt we will hear more from Melissa in the coming days.

Ecumenical Service in Taney Church celebrating Fr. Dermot Lane



The service concluded the weekend celebrating the contribution of Fr. Dermot Lane. Bishop Paul Dempsey expressed thanks to +Michael Jackson and +Rowan Williams and all those who organised the wonderful weekend.

New President of The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade

Mark Smyth has been appointed President of The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade (BBNI).

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Making the announcement to leaders Glen Miller, Chair of BBNI said: 'This is an exciting time for BBNI and our new President joins us as we begin to implement our new strategy in Northern Ireland and Donegal.

Through Boys' Brigade our volunteer leaders help to make a positive impact on many young lives as they seek to encourage them to achieve their full potential and develop a strong set of skills that will equip them for later life. Our vision is that we can work with churches to raise generations of Christ-like men, and see them make a positive impact on society.'

Mark is no stranger to Boys' Brigade having attended and subsequently served as an officer in 3rd Larne Boys'



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Brigade. He was captain of 1st Saintfield Boys' Brigade and served as a Brigade Training Officer.

Mark brings to the role a wealth of leadership experience gained from a career in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. Mark retired from NIFRS as Area Commander of Belfast & Lisburn in June this year after 31yrs service. During his career he served across NI including Area Commander in the North West in Londonderry during the COVID period and was also responsible for Operational Performance and Improvement for many years in HQ.

Offering his congratulations to Mark, David Blevins, President, The Boys' Brigade, Northern Ireland District (2016-2023) said:

'My advice to Mark may seem strange, given his career in NIFRS : keep the fire burning! I'm confident he has the burning passion for advancing Christ's kingdom in a new generation.'

Speaking about the appointment, Mark said:

'Boys' Brigade and in particular, some amazing leaders, played a significant role in my younger years. I am the leader I am today due to the foundations of faith taught to me during my BB days. It is such an honour to take up this role I look forward to connecting with leaders and meeting the boys and young men who are at the centre of our organisation.'

Read more here <https://lnkd.in/eTKhYEHd>

Harvest Thanksgiving marks 10th Anniversary of Newcastle Parish Centre

Parishioners of Newcastle and Newtownmountkennedy with Calary had two reasons to celebrate last Friday night (September 27). They gathered in Newcastle Church for a united Harvest Thanksgiving and they also took the opportunity to mark the 10th anniversary to the day of the opening of the parish centre.

Archbishop Michael Jackson preached at the service and afterwards rededicated the parish centre along with a bench in memory of Mervyn Garrett who played a leading role in creating the centre.

Drawing on the reading [Deuteronomy 8: 1–10](#) the Archbishop said that the words of Moses formed the backdrop to the celebration of harvest, both in Newcastle and in churches across the Church of Ireland, encouraging gratitude to God.

He noted that for many the celebration of harvest may be less immediate or tangible than it was generations ago or is for those living in the suburbs. Suggesting an alternative way of looking at the celebration he said that farming and agriculture had become more diverse and complex with the skills needed to navigate them becoming more broad ranging.

“As import and export both play their part in the harvesting of creation worldwide, the questions asked of us broaden in terms of ecological responsibility. Farming and agriculture

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draw in a very wide range of skills and those who farm the land and farm the sea find themselves caught fair and square in an ecological conversation that few would have



Archdeacon Ross Styles and Archbishop Michael Jackson at the Harvest Festival in Newcastle Parish Church.

predicted in an earlier generation. Farming is newly–complex as well as being oldly–difficult. Weather is always weather – unpredictable, sporadic, opportunistic and unreliable yet sometimes glorious.

Anyone who brings in a harvest will readily tell you that doing so is an annual miracle. The politics of agriculture is another matter entirely. We believe that it is God who provides,” he said.



Rededicating Newcastle Parish Centre and dedicating a bench in memory of Mervyn Garrett.

Archbishop Jackson said that another type of harvest had drawn parishioners together – the harvest and thanksgiving for work completed. He congratulated the parish on their harvest of skill, generosity and vision.

He recalled the parish’s imaginative scheme, encouraged by the then rector, the Revd William Bennett, which saw the existing rectory adapted and developed into a multi–function parish centre. A new rectory was built in the Glebe field. “This is the initiative and this is the use that we celebrate this evening and that we consolidate as these developments move into their second decade alongside a parish church steeped in history and association and resonance for the community of Newcastle and for the Parishes of Newcastle,

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Newtownmountkenedy and Calary. To everyone both in times past and in times now I say: Well done! and: Thank you," he commented.

Retirement of the Living Church Office for Down and Connor

As part of the ongoing process of Diocesan renewal, Pathways to the Future, some changes are being made to organisational structures.

The Living Church Office has retired after thirteen years of faithful and fruitful service to the Diocese. The Living Church Office, which was set up by the late Archbishop Noel Treanor and led by Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, made a real contribution to the life of the Diocese. Among the highlights of its thirteen years of service were the Living Church Congress in the Waterfront Hall, the Faith and Life Conventions, work on developing Parish Pastoral Councils, adult faith formation and much else. We owe everyone who worked in the Living Church a debt of gratitude.

The next stage of the work, developing Parish Pastoral Councils, seeking to form lay ministers and faith development leaders, and supporting Families of Parishes will be supported by the Pathways to the Future team of Jackie Kerr, Aishling Steen, Claire Carmichael and Fr Paul Byrne.

The office can be contacted:

Telephone: 02890690920

Email: pathwaystothefuture@downandconnor.org

Cathedral Calls



Angels Descend on Lichfield Cathedral: A New Installation

Lichfield Cathedral will unveil a captivating new installation called "Where Angels Tread", on 6 October 2024. The installation will feature angelic figures suspended throughout the cathedral, offering visitors a spiritual journey through the life of St Chad, the cathedral's patron. Special events will bring the angels to life with lighting, music, and reflections on St Chad's visions.

Read the full article here: <https://bit.ly/4gZvn9R>

Belfast Cathedral success with school visits



It was a busy day for the Music Department as two staff members travelled across Belfast to meet with young people and their teachers.



Firstly they had the opportunity to lead assemblies in: Belfast Royal Academy, Holy Cross Girls' Primary School and Harding Memorial Primary School



Lastly they headed to Cairnshill Primary School where they got to work with their wonderful choir after school.

They had a great time showing the kids what the Cathedral has to offer potential choristers, and they even managed to do some stretching, laughing, and singing!

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They are grateful to the many schools which they have visited so far, and for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Clergy and ministry

Deacon at St George's Jerusalem



Congratulations to the Reverend Saleem G. Kasabreh, who was ordained this week to the sacred order of Deacons at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem



Exploring issues of evangelism and discipleship in Winnipeg

The Archbishop of York with the Bishop of Brandon and the Bishop of Rupert's Land and other colleagues at a training day in Winnipeg this week exploring issues of evangelism and discipleship.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Church Times Festival of Preaching

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The Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, gave the plenary lecture at the Church Times Festival of Preaching this month in Great St Mary's, Cambridge

Listen to the full podcast episode: <https://churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/27-september/audio-video/podcast/dr-guli-francis-dehqani-encouraging-the-weary-with-a-word>

Read about this year's festival:
<https://churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/>

In the media

Growing number of non-believers gives churches much to ponder - Belfast Telegraph

Growing number of non-believers gives churches much to ponder - leading article October 2, 2024

Northern Ireland is losing belief.

And while a Queen's University Belfast-led research project over the past three years has shown that, in the UK as a whole, there are now more atheists than believers in God, the signs are that young people are rapidly turning away from the church and seeking meaning in their lives along different paths.

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In truth, it's not a surprising development. The most recent census revealed that more and more people are identifying as having 'no religion'.

But there will be plenty to ponder for churches as they continue to battle against dwindling numbers at services.

And the shift away from belief could have far-reaching consequences in the political world.

Young Protestants, the report suggests, are more likely to turn away from religion than young Catholics. And that has meaning for our political parties which have broadly been based on milking one side of the community or the other for votes.

Unionist parties who continue to pedal a conservative approach in their politics linked to religious belief and tradition will face a tougher job in years to come.

Society has changed; religion has remained constant. But by sailing different courses, society and religion have been slowly parting ways over the past decade. But it could be about to speed up.

There will be a question over how faith can be made more relevant, how it can find a place in modern society, and how churches can stop the slide towards atheism and repurpose for the 21st century.

Some political parties, particularly on the unionist side, should be alarmed at the shift of young people brought up in

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Protestant families who no longer see their religion as important in their lives.

The Catholic Church in Northern Ireland does not, the academics suggest, have the same institutionalised power as in the Republic of Ireland. Young Catholics here are more likely to remain believers.

Whether we like it or not, religion and politics have always walked hand in hand in Northern Ireland. Where the grip starts to slip could herald an escalation in the shift of political power which we have witnessed over the past few years.

What the report does show is that young people today are no longer afraid to say they are non-believers. After decades of following the religious and cultural upbringing of their parents in early life, they feel no longer bound by tradition and are beginning to embrace freedoms.

That will be a challenge for both church and politics as the landscape of Northern Ireland continues to change.

Poem for today

Raglan Road

by Patrick Kavanagh

On Raglan Road on an autumn day I saw her first and knew
That her dark hair would weave a snare that I might one day
rue;

I saw the danger, yet I passed along the enchanted way,



And I said, let grief be a fallen leaf at the dawning of the day.
On Grafton Street in November we tripped lightly along the
ledge
Of the deep ravine where can be seen the worth of
passion's pledge,
The Queen of Hearts still making tarts and I not making hay
Oh I loved too much and by such by such is happiness
thrown away.
I gave her gifts of the mind I gave her the secret sign that's
known

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To the artists who have known the true gods of sound and stone

And word and tint without stint for I gave her poems to say.
With her own name there and her own dark hair like clouds
over fields of May

On a quiet street where old ghosts meet I see her walking
now

Away from me so hurriedly my reason must allow
That I had loved not as I should a creature made of clay
When the angel woos the clay he'd lose his wings at the
dawn of day.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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