

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Uni Church's outreach coffee ministry

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Uni Church's outreach coffee ministry

Although only founded in 2018, UniChurch Belfast follows the long tradition of faithful biblical teaching that has been happening at All Saints' Church, Belfast for hundreds of years.

If you happen to be around on a Sunday morning, definitely check them out (they meet on the same site as UniChurch).

There is a strong team behind UniChurch including two full time pastors, a leadership team (part-time and voluntary as well as a team of interns each year.

The Uni Church web site says - 'Holyland' is an area of Belfast where the name of Christ is not known. As a church we see the need to make contact with those who will not come through our doors. Thus we have started a coffee van ministry to reach students who make up 95% of the local area. We plan to provide donation-based coffee to these students so that they can engage with members of our church who will provide the coffee. This will hopefully provide a steppingstone for these individuals so that they might hear something of Christ and then cross the threshold for a more formal church event. The outreach is not limited to mere invites however, with those who man the coffee van realising we may only have one contact with individuals and

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thus are endeavouring to share the gospel or distribute tracts, or other gospel literature, with the coffee.”

The Reverend Trevor Johnston is rector of All Saints with St Nicholas.

[<http://www.unichurchbelfast.com/who>]

People and places

Christian Aid Ireland grateful for Tralee support

Christian Aid Ireland “We’re grateful to Rev Jim Stephens, the rector of the Tralee and Dingle Group of Parishes and his parishioners in the caring Kingdom of Kerry who raised around €850 with a 10 km fundraising walk last month.

“Twenty-four people set out from the gorgeous Blennerville Windmill near Tralee and walked along the coastal route and canal path to the village of Spa, near Fenit before making the return journey.

Doesn’t it sound blissful? Please help us say a huge thanks to our ‘tra-mendous’ Tralee supporters, part of the Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe”.

[Another bunch of wee hand knitted teddies made with love](#)



Another bunch of wee hand knitted teddies made with love in memory of little Scarlett Rossborough.... On their way to Carrick Fire Brigade for distribution at any of their callouts where a child needs a wee comforter ted - By the parish churches at All Saints Craigyhill and St Patrick's Cairncastle in Connor Diocese

One week to go until Church Awards 2023 are announced

Just one week to go until the Church Awards 2023. This year seven historic churches from across Northern Ireland have been shortlisted:

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- Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Belfast for the Tourism Award
- Christ Church, Derry/Londonderry for the Tourism and Volunteering Awards
- Church of the Immaculate Conception, Strabane for the Tourism Award
- St Bestius, Termonamongan for the Volunteering Award
- St Mary, Altinure, Park for the Maintenance Award
- Killinchy Presbyterian Church for the Maintenance Award
- Holy Trinity Church in Waringstown for the Maintenance Award

Every church has a story to tell. Sign up to watch the livestream of the awards here: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-church-awards-livestream-tickets-715886605107

Last year St Macartan's, The Forth took home the Church of the Year 2022. Who will it be this year?

Ten churches in Dromore sign up to Watch Scheme

Ten churches in the Dromore area recently signed up to become part of a Church Watch Scheme to help reduce crime against places of worship, reduce fear of crime and help make communities safer.

Similar to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, Church Watch will see the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and police working together with the local community to encourage church users and residents to assist with looking after the church, to protect it from



The Choir of St Ann’s Church, Dawson Street, Dublin which sang at the major commemorative service this week.

vandalism and anti-social behaviour and improve safety and security.

“It is great to see so many churches in the Dromore area signing up to be part of Church Watch,” commented Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley.

“By working in partnership with each other, we can make a real difference within our communities to help make them safer for everyone - and it gives church users and residents a way of connecting directly with the police to report any issues and to have these issues dealt with quickly.”



At a recent Harvest Festival Service.

Over the coming weeks and months, Church Watch signage will be erected at each church and the schemes established and implemented.

Church users and residents will be encouraged to report

any issues, including anti-social behaviour happening in and around the church to the police to help them build up a profile and deal with the crimes accordingly.

“Our aim is to support each church by helping to develop good relationships between them and the Police so they have a single point of contact for any issues they may have,” commented Chief Inspector Brendan Green.

“We will also ensure that they are kept informed of crime reduction messages that can be passed onto their congregations, all of which will help protect our communities.”

This is the second Church Watch Scheme in the borough, with the first one set up in Rathfriland earlier this year.

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For further information on the Church Watch Scheme, or how you can get involved, please contact annette.blaney@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

In the media

St Anne's Church of Ireland cathedral set to mark milestone

The clergy of St Anne's Church of Ireland cathedral at Donegall Street in Belfast are to mark the 120th anniversary of the consecration of the cathedral's nave next June with a re-vamp of the building's furniture, Billy Kennedy writes in The News Letter.

The nave's anniversary will be marked with a service of celebration and thanksgiving on Sunday, June 2 next.

As part of the Belfast cathedral '120 Celebration', the cathedral board has launched an appeal to replace the existing wooden chairs of the nave.

These have been in continuous use for 120 years and they will be replaced with new chairs which will be more comfortable and more easily stacked and moved for the many different events which make up the life of a 21st century cathedral.

St Anne's cathedral clergy are inviting parishioners, friends of the cathedral, and parishes across the dioceses of Down, Dromore and Connor, to make this possible by purchasing one or more chairs with a donation of £100 for each chair.



The Dean of Belfast, the Rev Stephen Forde, says: “We believe that many people may wish to donate a chair in memory of someone whose death occurred during the

Covid pandemic when it was so difficult hold the funerals we would all have wished, or as a memorial to someone special whose death was at another time.”

Every donation will be listed and acknowledged for the future. Details on how to donate will be posted on the Cathedral website and on the weekly service sheets. It is hoped 500 new seats will be in place in the Cathedral nave for the anniversary service.

On that date in 1904, the Rev Dr Wellar, bishop of Down, Dromore and Connor, led the service of consecration for the new cathedral nave. The number of worshipper at that service was huge, as the offering was £3,000, which Dean Forde says today equates to £406,000 in modern currency.



The weekend of the anniversary next June will be celebrated not only by the special service, but there will be various other events, and later in the year, a gala event. ‘Belfast Cathedral 120’ will extend beyond 2024.

“At our 120th anniversary celebrations, we propose to launch an ambitious plan to raise new funding to secure the future viability of our cathedral for the coming years,” Dean Forde confirms.

“Over a three-year period from 2024 to 2027, and in partnership with Belfast company Callow Events Ltd, the cathedral board will seek to raise funding from across Northern Ireland, across these islands and internationally.

“By establishing a new Belfast Cathedral Foundation with the aim ‘Preserving the Past, Building for the Future’, the cathedral plans to raise a significant sum of money from

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individuals and charitable trusts to establish a funded foundation. The foundation will ensure that the future of this great cathedral is secure for whatever challenges and celebrations the coming decades may present.”

St Anne’s cathedral is regularly used every year for major Northern Ireland state, civic and church services and events. The cathedral is located on a landmark site in Belfast city centre.

Maud Kells funeral: Missionary was a 'Northern Irish national treasure'

The funeral of an “incredible and loving” nurse who devoted her life to aid work in Africa, and survived being shot at the age of 75, has taken place, Claudia Savage writes for PA and News Letter.

Maud Kells, from Cookstown, Co Tyrone, was a missionary midwife in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for decades, travelling there nearly every year since 1968.

Ms Kells survived being shot at her home in the town of Mulita in January 2015.

She was 75 when she was hit at point blank range after grabbing hold of the gun as a bandit opened fire during an attempted robbery.

Twelve hours after the shooting Ms Kells was airlifted out of Mulita and spent several weeks being treated at Nyankunde hospital.



Ms Kells received an OBE for her work, which included overseeing the building of a maternity hospital, an operating theatre and a school.

During her final visit to the country she was awarded a Medaille du Merite Civique by the governor in Kunda, for services to the DRC.

Emily McKeown, Ms Kell's great-niece, spoke at the funeral at Molesworth Presbyterian Church in Cookstown, and said Ms Kells lived "an amazing life devoted to her faith".

"However, not only was she a legend in her fields of work, she was also the most incredible and loving person who was admired by all," she said.

“Widely known as Auntie Maud, she made it her second mission in life to love everyone.”

Ms McKeown said that after the coverage of the shooting in 2015, her great aunt was called a “Northern Irish national treasure”.

“She was widely recognisable around the town, usually marching head down, backpack in place, with see-through umbrella at the ready,” she said.

“She always reasoned it to me by saying, ‘well in Africa we have to walk everywhere so if where I’m going is close enough, I’ll walk it’.”

Reverend Tom Greer told the service that Ms Kells became well known after being shot in 2015, but that her family would remember the love she had for those who knew her best.

“Perhaps in Christian circles she gained a kind of celebrity status, but she never sat easy with the fame, much preferring to do what she did so well – caring for people who were her family and friends and who mattered so much to her,” he said

“Today I know that you, her family and loved ones, will have many precious memories of her and the love, care and encouragement she provided as a sister, an aunt and a great aunt – things that others will know nothing of, and for those things we thank God.”

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Ms Kells' work was carried out through WEC International, an interdenominational mission agency of evangelical tradition.

WEC's former international training director, Phillip Crooks, said the organisation "was privileged to have had Maud as one of its members".

And he added that as well as her commitment to international aid, Ms Kells remained active in her local community in Tyrone.

"Maud's call was for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, but we would do her a great injustice if we were to limit it to that," he said.

"She had a vision for people without Jesus wherever she went, for whoever she met regardless, her family members, her home town of Cookstown, people she met wherever she went such as her fellow patients in hospital."

Two more Causeway Coast Vineyard pastors resign over apology

Two pastors at a scandal-hit north coast church have resigned amid a row over a statement of apology issued in relation to the conduct of a "narcissistic" former pastor, Liam Yunney writes in the Belfast Telegraph

Concerns had been raised in relation to the leadership of the Causeway Coast Vineyard (CCV) Church in Coleraine



Flowers on Sunday last at Belvoir Parish Church, Belfast

after it was revealed former pastor Alan Scott and wife Kathryn Scott were embroiled in a \$62m fraud lawsuit in California.

The couple moved to the USA five years ago after leaving CCV, where they took on roles as pastors for Vineyard Anaheim, one of the movement's churches.

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A report in the Religious News Service (RNS) last year said the Scotts had claimed that God told them to lead their church out of Vineyard.

The move led to nine former members filing a lawsuit alleging that the Scotts took control of the Anaheim church and its assets, valued at \$62m, under false pretences.

In July 2023, it was further revealed concerns had been raised about the behaviour of Mr Scott while he was leader of the church in Coleraine.

CCV issued an apology, saying it “failed to spot some of the warning signs” about its former pastor, with the findings of a subsequent independent review due to be published next week.

On Sunday, the church announced two further pastors would be leaving in a dispute over the apology issued in July.

In the statement, the church confirmed they had accepted the pair's resignation after “lengthy conversations between Neil, Janet, the SLT, Trustees and the national Vineyard leadership to try and find a way forward”.

CCV also announced they would be holding a church meeting on November 2 to address any questions their congregation may have about the findings.

It comes after financial statements filed by the evangelical church last week revealed they had allocated £30,000 to cover the cost of the review and counselling for alleged victims.

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The annual report and financial statements for 2022 showed balances of £2.1m at the church.

It then describes how CCV and Vineyard Churches UK and Ireland (VCUKI) commissioned a review from Trusted HR Ltd on the allegations against Mr Scott.

It added that the church's "risk management assurance framework" included safeguarding processes for the vulnerable.

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 30/10/2023

Catholics agree on urgent need to expand women's role

A month-long Roman Catholic congress has agreed on the "urgent" need to give women decision-making roles but stopped short of suggesting any concrete action to achieve it, Giovanni Legorano in Rome for the Daily Telegraph

"There is an urgent need for women to participate in decision-making processes" the final declaration said.

Synod leaders acknowledged that the idea of women becoming deacons and therefore eligible to preside over baptisms, marriages and funerals – but not masses – was divisive.

But they asked for further "theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate", with the results

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due to be published at the next Synod of Bishops in a year's time.

The report is likely to disappoint progressives who have been campaigning on issues such as women's participation, the place of the LGBT community in the Church and priests' celibacy.



Two of the 81 paragraphs of the report dealt with the issue of women's ordination as deacons. One noted there were diverging positions on the matter, while the other simply called for more research ahead of next year's synod. Each paragraph needed two-thirds approval. Even though both paragraphs on women deacons were approved, they received the most negative votes.



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, one of the organisers of the Vatican summit, who is considered a liberal, said that he was surprised that so many people had voted in favour on the issue.

“That means that the resistance is not as great as people have thought,” he told reporters after the meeting.

The report barely referred to the issue of the rights of the LGBT community, despite the openness on such matters shown by the Pope. It also said the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation required more study.

New Ways Ministry, an organisation supporting LGBT Catholics, said: “With no positive statement on LGBTQ+ issues in the document, and with only two references which

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simply state what was known when the Synod began, Catholics globally will be greatly disappointed.”

Concrete recommendations to the Pope will only be issued after another gathering in October next year.

The Pope will then write a document on issues facing the Church.

Perspective

From Anglican Humour of the day

An Anglican priest dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a white shirt, leather jacket, and jeans.

Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, 'Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?'

The guy replies, ' I'm Bruce, retired airline pilot from London.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, 'Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom.' The pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff.

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Next, it's the Anglican priest's turn. He stands erect and booms out, 'I am Father James, Rector of All Saints Cathedral for the last 30 years.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the priest, 'Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom.'

'Just a minute,' says the good father. 'That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?'

'Up here - we go by results,' says Saint Peter. 'When you preached - people slept. When he flew, people prayed.'

Poem for today

Isn't it The Truth?

Some stay at home because it's cold,
And some, because its hot;
And some, because they're getting old,
And some, because they're not!

Some stay at home because their dress,
The seamstress has not finished.
And some, because their liking for
The Minister's diminished.

Some folks declare they don't enjoy
The singing of the choir
While others state , a fellow saint's

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Aroused their wrathful ire.

Alas! How our excuses grow
To drive our thoughts from God,
And turn us from the House of Prayer,
That once our Fathers trod.

Author unknown.

Taken from 1935 issue of Newry NSPCI magazine, during
Rev McCleerys ministry.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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