

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – 400th anniversary of Bangor church**

## Image of the day

### 400th anniversary of Bangor church

Outside First Presbyterian Church, Bangor on Sunday September 10 2023 are (left to right) the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney, First Bangor's Minister, Rev Mairisine Stanfield and His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of County Down, Gawn Rowan-Hamilton

**The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr Sam Mawhinney joined members of First Presbyterian Church Bangor, the city's oldest established Presbyterian congregation yesterday when he preached at a special service of worship to mark 400 years of the Presbyterian presence in Bangor.**

The moderator was joined by various civic dignitaries and political representatives including His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of County Down, Gawn Rowan-Hamilton, the Member of Parliament for North Down, Stephen Farry MP, Ards & North Down Borough Council's Deputy Mayor, Councillor Hannah Irwin, along with local MLAs and councillors.

During the service Dr Mawhinney preached on his theme for the year, which is 'Confident in Christ'. "Four hundred years of Presbyterian witness in Bangor is a remarkable achievement that is worthy of celebration. I would like to



thank Mairisíne for her invitation to come and preach at today's special service of worship. It was my privilege to renew my acquaintance with her, and her husband David, whom I first met as fellow participants on the Arrow leadership course some 10 or so years ago."

Dr Mawhinney continued, "The course was aimed at growing Christian leaders of character, who understand their call, and desire to develop competency in leadership. In First Ballynahinch

Presbyterian, Mairisíne's first congregation, and now in First Bangor for the last decade, she continues to show good, wise and effective leadership.

"While I welcome to the opportunity to celebrate the Presbyterian presence in the city with my brothers and sisters in Christ, first and foremost it was an opportunity to highlight the goodness and sustaining power of God, who has blessed the churches past and present and their commitment to the Gospel and to effective leadership. As



Front row (left to right) North Down MP, Stephen Farry, Minister of First Presbyterian Church, Bangor Rev Mairisine Stanfield, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney, Deputy Mayor of Ards and North Down Borough Council, Councillor Hannah Irwin (Standing) Councillor Wesley Irvine, Stephen Dunne MLA, Alex Easton MLA, Connie Egan MLA and Adrew Muir MLA.

one of my predecessors said a few years ago at a similar service, be it the 40th or 400th anniversary that we are celebrating, what really matters is that Christian people preached the Gospel, sowed the seed and were faithful – and for that we can always give thanks. This morning was an important and very special moment,” he said.

Speaking after the service Rev Mairisíne Stanfield, who has just celebrated her 10th anniversary as minister of First



Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney with the Minister of First Presbyterian Church, Bangor Rev Mairisine Stanfield.

Bangor, said that the city had a long Christian heritage that began with the establishment of Bangor Abbey in the sixth century. “Our Christian heritage is not only long, but rich, with our Presbyterian story beginning over a thousand years after the setting up of the Abbey, when in 1605 Scottish Presbyterian James Hamilton was given land in and around Bangor by King James VI of Scotland, who had just become King of England and King of Ireland.

“James Hamilton repaired the Abbey and a few years later invited Robert Blair from Ayrshire in Scotland to come and minister to the growing number of Scottish settlers in the area. Robert was ordained and installed according to the Scottish Presbyterian service of ordination in the summer of 1623. And so began a Presbyterian community of faith that has made a significant contribution to the growth and

development of Bangor over the past four centuries. As a fellow Scot, I am proud to follow in Robert's footsteps as First Bangor's 19th minister," she said.

Having initially met in Bangor Abbey, the first Presbyterian Meeting House was built on Fisher Hill, which was destroyed in 1661. Until a new Meeting House was built in 1686, the congregation met in the open air. In 1741 a new stone building was built on Quay Street and 90 years later in 1831 the current Meeting House was built on Main Street, where worship continues today.

Mrs Stanfield said that today, 400 years on, there were nine Presbyterian congregations in the city and the surrounding area. "Throughout the decades our ministry has involved establishing schools as well as looking after the poor and marginalised as needs arose.

"As an integral part of the local community, we partner with other Presbyterian congregations and Christian groups to provide support to those in need wherever necessary. We also join forces with other Bangor churches, for example, to minister in creative ways to the asylum seekers and refugees placed in the city, and through the local foodbank, Storehouse North Down.

Mrs Stanfield concluded by saying, "Today's service has been a very special moment. While we continue to share the love of Christ in practical ways, expressing God's heart for Bangor over all this time, our primary focus has always been spreading the Gospel of the risen Jesus. As a congregation, we wanted to use the 400th anniversary as an opportunity to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and to thank God for his

September 12, 2023

goodness and faithfulness, trusting in His continued plans and purposes for a new restoration of Bangor and its prosperity, the place where He has placed us. This special anniversary was also an opportunity to have our Moderator, and all our special guests, celebrate with us.” Report by Mark Smith, courtesy the News Letter

## People and places

### Dublin parish fostering relations in the Diocese of Maseno North

**“ACK Diocese of Maseno North was privileged to host a delegation of parishioners from Rathmichael parish for more than a week to aid in the refurbishing ACK Wandecche Primary and Junior Secondary School.**

“A team of 12 people from Rathmichael Parish in Dublin traveled all the way from Dublin to our Diocese as part of a developing link between Rathmichael and Wandecche Primary School in the Diocese of Maseno North. During their 10 day visit the team refurbished the school and enhance the education environment for both students and teachers.

“The team, which was led by the Rector, the Revd Sean Hanily, was commissioned by Archbishop Michael Jackson, worked tirelessly to put a smile to the pupils and teachers of Wandecche Primary and Junior Secondary School”.



Some of the members of the team from Rathmichael Parish that travelled to the Parish of Wandeché in Kenya with Archbishop Michael Jackson who commissioned them.

Speaking during handing over of the refurbished classes, The Rt. Rev. Charles Kascan Asilutwa recalled the relationship that began by the meeting he had with Archbishop Michael of Dublin back in 2022 at Lambeth Conference “This work is the hand of God. This work has connected two parts of the Anglican Communion in ways of which we might only have dreamed. For my part, I have The Lambeth Conference 2022, which was held last year, to thank for getting to know His Grace Archbishop Michael who from our meeting at the conference offered to send this team here to help us refurbishing this school. This noble service of God will be transformative for these pupils and



September 12, 2023

teachers and the community of Wandecche as a whole,” he stated.

The School under the leadership of Head teacher Mr. Patrick was thrilled by this general gesture and urged the Rathmichael parish to continue supporting the school by helping it to meet the rising cost of education.

The team led by Mr. Geoffrey Perrin promised to solicit funds back at Ireland to help the pupils and teachers meeting their needs in the transformation of Wandecche community



22 young people from Baltinglass and Kiltegan parishes were confirmed in St Peter’s Church Kiltegan on Sunday morning.

September 12, 2023

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The team comprised of Sean Hanily, Geoffrey Perrin, Fiona Ashe, Ben Allison, Anthony Perrin, Aine Halligan, Robert Gallagher, Peter Harty, Jan Ovington, Peadar Bruton, Aidan Reilly and Simon O'Connor. ACK Diocese of Maseno North is greatfull to these servants of God under the leadership of Archbishop Michael and look forward to fostering this wonderful relation

## **Growth problem for Methodists in Cavan**

**Methodist Face book post - "In Cavan this morning but less of the usual smile as we have a problem to solve.**

"We have outgrown our current premises and need somewhere bigger. This morning we welcomed another new person. This is all a good problem to have but it is a problem and appreciate your prayers that we can solve our accommodation issue and find a new home for our growing church".

## **200 people join 15th annual Sheep's Head Hike for Christian Aid**

**"The walkers might have come down from the hills but here at Christian Aid Ireland, we're all still on a high!"**



Derriaghy Mother's Union met recently to have a service of Holy Communion and after, long service certificates were presented by branch chair Melanie McAlister (far left) to (from left to right) Margaret Hanthorne, June Benson and June Belshaw. Well done ladies.

The weather was glorious on Saturday as almost 200 people joined the 15th annual Sheep's Head Hike around the breathtakingly beautiful Sheep's Head peninsula in west Cork. The views were amazing and it's not hard to see why this is one of Ireland's best-loved coastal walking routes.

The feedback has been incredible with several participants contacting us to congratulate the local organising committee on the running of the event and to share their images of the day.

Donations are still coming in so it's too soon to tell how much was raised but it looks like it might be more than €10,000.



“Our Bandon-based Church and Community Officer, Andrew Coleman puts his whole heart and soul into this event and is supported by a wonderful team which includes Margaret Skuce, David Hayward and Caroline Coleman. We are grateful to all of them and to the guides and leaders, as well as the bus drivers and caterers for their steadfast support again this year. Special mention goes to Kilcrohane Community Hall Committee, The Sheep’s Head Way Committee, Irish Red Cross, TFI Local Link Cork, Ulla Zepperit and her team who provided the catering, and the parishioners of Kilmocomogue Union of Parishes who assisted on the day. We're also grateful to Ecclesiastical

September 12, 2023

Ireland who sponsored the advertisements and publicity for the event”. If ‘ewe’ would like to join us next year, the Sheep’s Head Hike takes place on Saturday 7 September 2024. So, why not put the date in your diary and join us to help stamp out poverty.

## News reports



## Pope Francis meets John Wesley



## **John Wesley (the bobblehead version) has moved to Vatican City...**

Last week in an extraordinary event, Dr. Ashley Boggan met Pope Francis while at the Vatican with a group of church leaders who are in Italy to attend the European Methodist Historical Convocation. After shaking the hand of His Holiness, Ashley gifted John Wesley to the Pope, who chuckled and said “Methodistica”!

## **Hundreds join Christian climate pilgrimages across England**

**Christian climate pilgrimages have been taking place across the UK this weekend with the aim of highlighting concern about climate change.**

The pilgrimages have been designed around points of reflection en route, at places of significance to the climate and ecological crisis. In Bristol the pilgrimage was designed to conclude at Bristol airport, in a protest against its expansion.

Christian Climate Action says the aim of the pilgrimages is to highlight the widespread public concern regarding the climate crisis and to call upon the government to pass policies in line with no new oil and gas expansion. The group says they're also a space and practice that allows the walker to reflect on the climate crisis and our role within it.

13 climate pilgrimages have been taking place in Brighton, Bristol, Durham, Epsom, Glasgow, Newbury, Merseyside, Oxford, York and 4 pilgrimages in London.

In London, one of the pilgrimages reached the statue commemorating where the Mayflower left London, en route to America (via Plymouth). They spent some time reflecting on the plight of refugees and migrants.

Around 40 pilgrims in Durham walked along the banks of the Wear, stopping at Barclays on route to prayerfully protest, and ending under Gaia in Durham Cathedral.

## **Family murdered by Nazis become saints**

**A Polish couple and their children, who were killed by the Nazis for sheltering Jews during the Holocaust, were beatified last Saturday, becoming the first people to take the final step to sainthood together as a family.**

Jozef and Wiktorja Ulma were shot dead in 1944, along with their children, in the south-eastern Polish town of Markowa after a German police unit discovered that they had been hiding members of two Jewish families.

Under the laws of Nazi occupation in Poland, the punishment for harbouring Jews was death.

Listed among those murdered on March 24 1944 was an unborn baby. The Vatican has said, however, that the unborn child will not be included in the beatification process.

The six other children ranged in age from 18 months to seven years.

The eight Jews from the Goldman and Szall families, who were found hiding in the Ulmas' attic, were also killed in the massacre. The Vatican's website describes the beatification, the last step before sainthood, as "an unprecedented event in the modern canonisation process".





Polish Catholic couple Jozef and Wiktoria Ulma and their 7 children including an unborn baby, who were killed by the Nazis for sheltering Jews, has been beatified by the Catholic Church.

“This unusual beatification stands as a testament to their sacrifice during World War II, when they sheltered and protected eight Jews from persecution,” the website said.

September 12, 2023

Jozef Ulma was a farm worker while his wife looked after their young family.

Both had a strong Christian faith that inspired them to extend protection to their Jewish neighbours from Nazi forces, for which, in the end, they paid the ultimate price.

For many Poles, the grim fate of the Ulmas and their children is evidence of the exceptional courage some of their compatriots showed during the Second World War when it came to protecting Jews.

Speaking last Sunday at a ceremony of remembrance in Markowa, Andrzej Duda, the president of Poland, said that Poles who saved Jews during the German wartime occupation are “our national heroes, on a par with those who fought with weapons in hands”.

At the same ceremony, Ella Goldman, a relative of the Goldmans who died alongside the Ulmas in 1944, said her family did not speak about the Holocaust.

So, it was only through her own research that she learned the fate of the members of her extended family and the Ulmas.

“I didn’t know then that five of the eight Jews the Ulmas hid were members of my family,” she said.

“It was Saul Goldman and four of his sons. When I realised this, everything I heard about this event became even more painful and even more tragic.”

September 12, 2023

She added that it was comforting to know that “during these horrific times, in the midst of this tremendous nightmare, there were people and families who, like the Ulma family, had the courage to do what they thought was right”.

The courage and the tragic fate of the Ulmas forms part of the long, and still acutely sensitive debate in Poland over the behaviour of Poles towards their Jewish compatriots during the Second World War.

Some historians allege that Poland, as a nation, has still failed to come to terms with the anti-Semitism that existed within its society at the time, and the fact that some Poles betrayed Jews in hiding or, in some cases, participated in their murder.

However, others argue that there were many people in Poland prepared, like the Ulmas, to harbour and help Jews despite the huge risks involved of reprisals from the occupiers.

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books**

### **Healing Service today in Annalong**

**An opportunity to receive prayer for healing in the context of worship and the ministry of the Word. Revd Greg Downes will give the address.**

September 12, 2023

The prayer ministry team will be drawn from The Church's Ministry of Healing, Interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries and New Wine Ireland.

Kilhorne Church, Annalong, at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12 September.

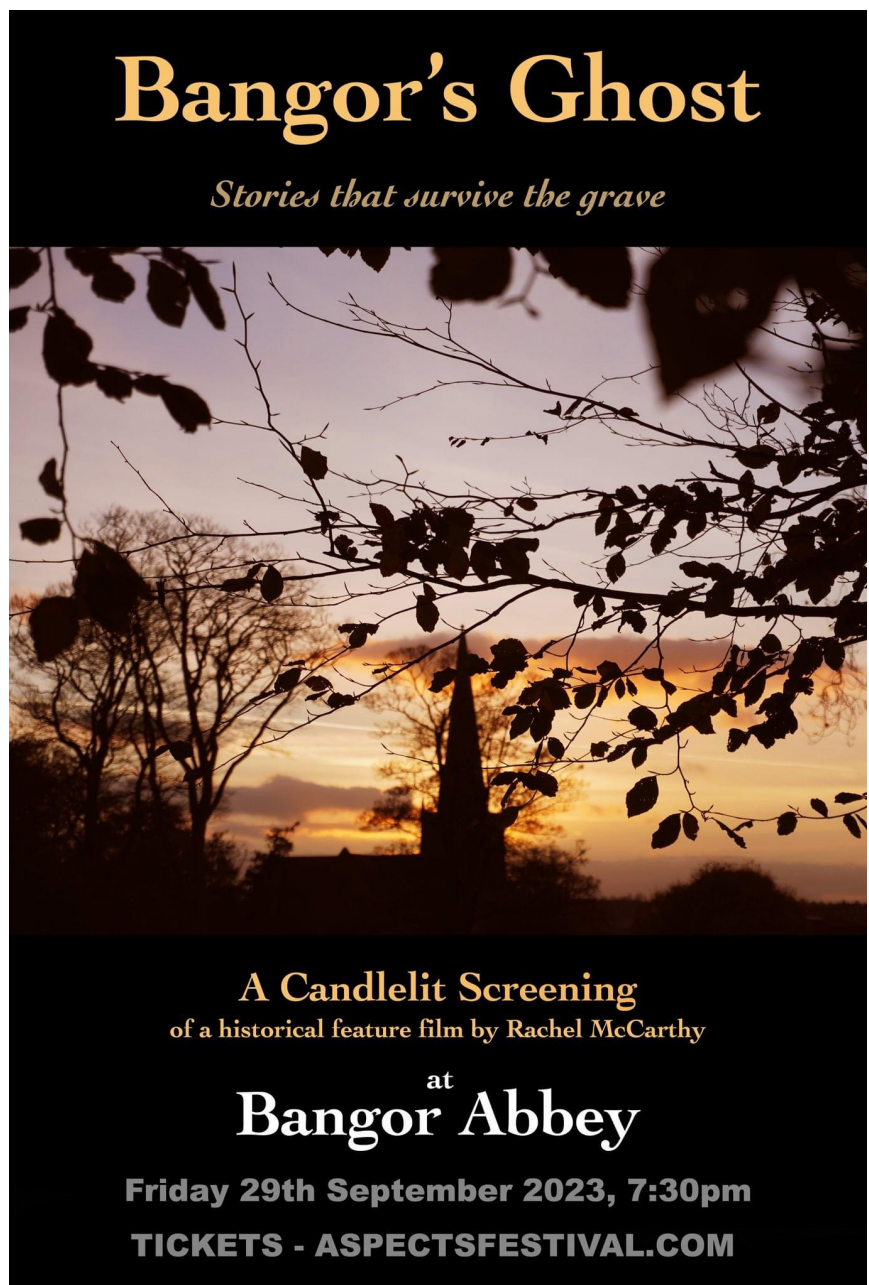
Greg Downes is the director of Kingfisher Ministries and Theologian & Missioner of St Mary's Cogges near Oxford. He is a passionate follower of Jesus, dedicated to using his life and gifts to extend Christ's Kingdom. He is an evangelist, practical theologian and ordained minister of the Church of England.

**'Bangor's Ghost' is a love letter to Bangor. Don't miss it.**

**Bangor's Ghost (the film) will be screened this month at Bangor Abbey as part of Aspects Festival.**

This is the perfect venue for it as it is

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**Bangor's Ghost**  
*Stories that survive the grave*

A Candlelit Screening  
of a historical feature film by Rachel McCarthy

at  
**Bangor Abbey**

Friday 29th September 2023, 7:30pm  
TICKETS - [ASPECTSFESTIVAL.COM](https://www.aspectsfestival.com)

September 12, 2023

right at the heart many of the film's stories. At least four of the fascinating people we have written about have been laid to rest here.

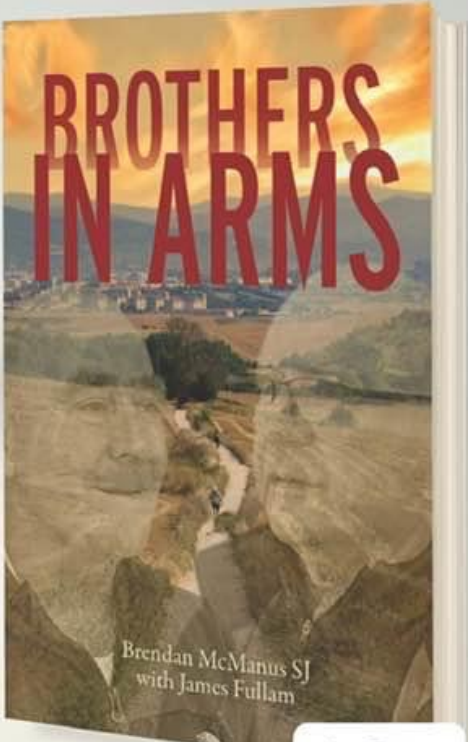
The first screening last December was sold out and received wonderful feedback from the audience. It hasn't

**Two Men, A Camino  
And A Heatwave...**

**Join us for a Book Launch**

*'powerful, very moving and very instructive... it overflows with a deep sense of humanity.'*  
**The Irish Catholic**

*'I absolutely loved Brothers in Arms – the reflections, the songs, the stories of people you met along the way. I've no doubt it will help many people make the right choices along their chosen path in life.'*  
**Patricia McCann, Playwright and author of Bring Me Back Alive**



7pm, Friday  
15 September 2023  
Gardiner Street Church, The Ignatian Chapel  
Special Guest: Peter McVerry SJ  
Followed by Refreshments. All Welcome!

**Peter McVerry Trust**  
All proceeds go to the Peter McVerry Trust

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September 12, 2023

been shown anywhere else since then and this will be the second and most likely last screening before it becomes available to watch online in January next year.

There will be some extra treats thrown into this one for you so be sure to tell your friends and family about it. It will be a lovely night out.

Ticket link - <https://aspectsfestival.com/whats-on/bangors-ghost-love-letter-town>

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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