

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Focus of concentration

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Focus of concentration

The greens for the Irish Open at Newcastle are in sharp contrast to that upsurge of several types of granite which with the help of ice form the Mourne Mountains.

Eyes will be raised to the hills in a variety of responses. Prayer and calmness of mind most likely will figure. Please say a prayer for sport, those who play, and those who spectate.

News



Official opening of East Belfast Mission Community Fridge

“We are thrilled to announce the official opening of our Community Fridge, a significant milestone for EBM and our entire community!

“A big thank you to everyone who attended, and a special thanks to the High Sheriff of Belfast, Sammy Douglas, who had the honour of cutting the ribbon and officially opening the fridge”.

Inspirational link between Chamber Choir and Church

Cór Fingal rehearse in St Andrew’s Church, Church of Ireland, United Parishes of Malahide, Portmarnock & St. Doulagh's every Monday night.

They will be giving a Christmas Concert in the Church on 14th December. Watch their web site for tickets and more information.

They will also be singing at the Remembrance Day Service on November 10 (11.30am) and at the Nine Lessons & Carols (4pm) on December 22 with the Church Choir.

Cór Fingal is seeking members - Love to sing? We are Cór Fingal, a vibrant adult mixed-voice chamber choir, and we are welcoming new members! We're especially looking for Tenor, Baritone, and Bass voices to join us. From classical to contemporary, we sing it all! Rehearsals resume on the 9th September in Malahide — spread the word & come and join us!



For more info please email - corfingalauditions@gmail.com
www.corfingal.com

Grant enables Portstewart Parish Church vital restoration work

Agherton Parish Church in the seaside town of Portstewart, has successfully completed a significant restoration project thanks to a grant from the Landfill Communities Fund.

Dungannon area churches forum to visit Grange Meeting House

Thanks to Andrew Trotter for sharing news of the local Churches Area Forum. The members have been extremely busy in recent weeks.

They are looking forward to their special occasion next week, down at The Grange Meeting House, close to The Moy.

The visit will be the first of five church tours in the district and these can be seen at the bottom of the photograph.

Andrew says the Forum was started in the 1980s and connects with all denominations in the district.

West Belfast: Moderator's return visit sees new beginnings for PCI

As part of their role in leading the Church, during their year in office Presbyterian Moderators sometimes return to places of personal significance – the church where they were married, the school they attended, the first church they were called to a minister – and on Thursday (12 September) was one of those days.

In supporting the work of a new special ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) in West Belfast, Right Reverend Dr Richard Murray, visited the former Broadway

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Presbyterian Church on the Falls Road, where in 1965, he was baptised.



Now home to the Irish language arts and cultural centre, **Cultúrlann MacAdam Ó Fiaich**, during his visit Helen McKelvey and Alice McClure, the daughters of Rev Robert Wilbur Gillespie, Broadway Presbyterian's last minister when it closed in July 1982, unveiled a plaque to her late father. As part of Rev David Moore's ministry in the west of the city, the centre is also the venue for the monthly service of worship.

The day began in **West Kirk Presbyterian Church** on the Shankill Road, when Dr Murray, visited the church's weekly outreach, meeting and thanking the volunteers who welcome anyone who wants to drop in for tea or coffee and a chat. It is also where, since he was installed into PCI's Home Mission and inducted into a Special Ministry in West Belfast two years ago this month, David and his wife have

been worshipping. Dr Murray also met Community Outreach Worker, Toni Bassett, who is supporting that work through serving and supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

Speaking about the Moderator's visit, and his own ministry, Mr Moore said, "It has been a real privilege to be able to welcome the Moderator to West Belfast and a place that like him, so many Presbyterians once called 'home', and give them a flavour of what the Church has called us to do as we become part of the community again."

"There was a time when PCI had five churches in this part of the city and a vibrant Presbyterian presence from before the first congregation was formed in the 19th Century. The last one, Suffolk Presbyterian, where Dr Murray's family once worshipped, closed in 1993 and while we can't ignore the historic reasons why some left this part of the city, and the pain of those times, it is a place that PCI wants to reconnect and engage with. It is also a place that has my heart and Elaine's," he said.

The former minister of Knock Presbyterian in the east of the city, who has also served in congregations in Counties Monaghan, Cavan, and Kilkenny, explained that the vision for his ministry - which is called **An Tionólann**.

"It is a word that means 'a place of gathering', or 'a place of assembly', and our vision is to establish a vibrant worshipping community here in West Belfast, a gathering of God's people. To that end, it is also about building relationships, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, and prayer, and I want to thank the team at Forbairt Feirste, the local development agency, for organising the event at

Cultúrlann and for organising lunch with the Principal of St Mary's University College afterwards.”

Mr Moore continued, “It is a fact, sadly, that many people across the city have given up on religion and religious faith, without fully grasping what is at the heart of it, and that is Jesus Christ, and His gospel, which is not tied to any one cultural tradition. No matter where you are from, or who you are, it is for everyone, and as a Presbyterian minister that has always been my focus and is an important part of this special ministry,” he said.

Two weeks ago, Mr Moore led the first Sunday service, beginning a series that looks at signs that point to Jesus, the Saviour. Thirty people were present for the service and on Thursdays at a different venue, he has led a Bible study group for a year, exploring what the Bible says about who God is.

Speaking about his visit, Dr Murray thanked everyone who had taken the time to organise the various parts to it, and for the welcome that he had received throughout the day. He also joked that while he couldn't remember his actual baptism in Broadway Presbyterian, he did have fond memories of living on Brooke Drive, before moving during the early years of The Troubles to Finaghy in south Belfast.

“First and foremost, I want to commend David and Elaine in this special ministry, having been called to serve the people of West Belfast, as the loss of Presbyterianism from the west of the city has, I believe, made the area poorer. I also would like to thank Cultúrlann for hosting the Sunday



service and commend them for their generosity and welcome today.

“We started the day in West Kirk on the Shankill, a congregation formed after Albert Street Presbyterian closed. It stood not too far away from Broadway and united with Argyll Place in the early ‘70s. We saw the good work that is being done there, where there are still some older folk who came from Albert Street, 50 years ago. In that half century much has changed, yet they have prayed faithfully that they would see that Presbyterian witness return ‘over the wall’. With a renewed modern witness to the distinctives of Presbyterianism, it is perhaps the beginning of answered prayer, and a ministry that will greatly enhance the area and recover what has been lost,” the Moderator said.

In another way that emphasised how things had changed over the years, in the late 1940s and 1950s, Dr Murray said that his grandfather had managed a farm near the Bog Meadows in West Belfast, and how his mother remembered



drinking fresh cow's milk. It was, therefore fitting that the day ended with a visit to **St James' Community Farm** on Rodney Parade, where the Moderator met the volunteers, fed some of the animals and planted a small fir tree to symbolise the replanting of PCI back into this part of the city.

Evangelical Christian Sir Paul Marshall buys The Spectator for £100m

Evangelical Christian and Holy Trinity Brompton member Sir Paul Marshall says he is "delighted" to have

bought the world's oldest current affairs magazine, The Spectator, for £100 million.

The hedge fund tycoon and GB News investor outbid 20 other hopefuls to buy the right-leaning political title, first published in 1828.

Marshall, who has been described as one of the UK's most generous philanthropists, is reported to have given over £5.5million a month to charity in 2023 according to the Sunday Times Giving List.

Sir Paul, owner of online magazine UnHerd, donated £100,000 to the official Brexit campaign, Vote Leave in 2016 and has reportedly donated a further £500,000 to the Conservative Party.

Marshall is also a benefactor of the St Paul's Theological Centre, St Mellitus Training College, the Centre for Cultural Witness based at Lambeth Palace, and the Church Revitalisation Trust.

He is a founder trustee of children's charity Ark, and former chairman of Ark Schools. He is also the father of former Mumford & Sons banjo player, Winston Marshall.

Mumford and Sons are well-known for their Bible-infused lyrics. The band's lead singer, Marcus Mumford, is the son of John and Eleanor Mumford, who founded the Vineyard Church in the UK and Ireland.

The Spectator and Telegraph Media Group (TMG) were both owned by the billionaire Barclay family until last year

when the businesses were put up for sale to help pay off the family's debts to Lloyds Bank.

They were acquired by Abu-Dhabi-backed media consortium RedBird IMI, through a £600 million call option.

However, in March, the UK Government had RedBird IMI relist the media assets, introducing legislation that prevents foreign states from owning UK newspaper companies.

After the deal was announced, Spectator chairman and journalist Andrew Neil resigned with immediate effect, having previously expressed concerns that hedge fund ownership of news outlets posed a conflict of interest.

Neil said it was his "greatest regret" not to have been able to choose a new owner for the magazine.

Former prosecutor Nazir Afzal appointed as CofE safeguarding chair

Former chief crown prosecutor Nazir Afzal has been appointed as the new independent chair of the Church of England's National Safeguarding Panel (NSP).

Mr Afzal is a practising Muslim, known for his work prosecuting those involved in the Rochdale grooming cases. Previously, he was the inaugural chair of the Catholic Church's safeguarding body in England and Wales.

His role is set to commence in September. Mr Afzal's selection was part of an independent recruitment process.

Established in 2014, the NSP plays a crucial role in offering essential advising and scrutinising policy and guidance within the Church of England, incorporating insights from survivors. The panel aims to deliver strategic counsel on safeguarding policies and practices, foster excellent safeguarding measures throughout the Church, and advocate for a survivor-focused approach. The NSP does not engage directly with individual cases.

Nazir Afzal said: “I am pleased to take on this important role to lead the continuing work on scrutinising and providing challenge to the Church of England’s safeguarding... from my 30-year career I know the challenges faced by institutions who can seem faceless to those who have been harmed by them.

“The Church of England has a presence in every community across the country and with that comes huge responsibility. I look forward to playing my part in holding the Church to account by bringing my professional experience to the work of the Panel.”

The Bishop of Stepney, Joanne Grenfell, who is the bishop in charge of safeguarding, welcomed Mr Afzal's appointment saying: “I am delighted that Nazir Afzal has agreed to take on this role and with his great experience will provide vital scrutiny and challenge on our safeguarding policies and practice, with his work with the NSP.

“As we continue to work out details around wider independence, following the General Synod vote, the work

of the NSP will ensure our work is held to account and I look forward to working with Nazir as he leads the NSP.”

During the interim period preceding Mr Afzal's appointment, General Synod member Kashmir Garton and survivor representative Jane Chevous served as acting chair and vice-chair of the NSP, succeeding Meg Munn.

Cathedral Calls



Canterbury's 'The Crown and the Cathedral' Tour

**Discover
Canterbury
Cathedral's rich
royal heritage
while exploring
some of its most
famous places,
and hear stories of
royal pomp and
ceremony.**

From the patronage bestowed by Edward the Black Prince and King Henry IV, to the assistance lavished by King Charles II following the restoration of the

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monarchy, Canterbury Cathedral has often enjoyed a special relationship with the crown, reflected in the royal tombs and regal artefacts which can be found within.

£5 per person, plus Cathedral admission charge.

<https://ow.ly/uv1H50T9u46>

* Tuesdays and Thursdays (September-October),
11:15-12:30* On Thursday 24 October this tour will run
14:15-15:30

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



St. Columba's Church of Ireland present

Harvest Gospel Concert

Live Music Featuring

Ballybay Country Gospel Group
Amy Meehan & friends

Friday 20th
September 2024 | 8pm | St. Columba's Church,
Churchill

DONATIONS WELCOME IN AID OF CHURCH FUNDS

The poster features a warm, autumnal color palette with illustrations of leaves, a pair of brown boots, musical notes, and pumpkins.

In the media

Sudanese Anglican cathedral is now a graveyard for civil war victims, archbishop says - RNS Religious News Service

The Sudanese civil war is the world's largest displacement crisis today. By Fredrick Nzwili, September 12, 2024

Despite the Sudanese civil war that's devastated the region, the All Saints Anglican Cathedral in Khartoum is still standing. But its compound is now a graveyard, with a vandalised altar and missing pews, which have been chopped by soldiers for firewood, according to Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo.

At the start of the war in April 2023, the cathedral was the seat of Kondo, the 67-year-old primate of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan. On April 15, 2023, fighters from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces quickly seized the compound, flipping it into an operation base while Kondo and his family remained inside.

“It happened very abruptly. Nobody expected it,” Kondo recalled, speaking to RNS from Port Sudan, a city on the Red Sea where he has sought refuge since June of last year. “It was Saturday when we were in the office preparing for the Sunday service, after the first week of Easter

Sunday. We heard a very heavy sound of gunfire, only to get out and find heavy smoke billowing nearby.”

The war for control over northeast Africa is being fought between two rival factions of the military government of Sudan: the Sudanese Armed Forces, under Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and its allies, under the Janjaweed leader Hemedti. The factions turned on each other after jointly wresting control of the civilian government.

Restrictions on media and aid access have made precise statistics on the scale of devastation hard to obtain. The United Nations estimates that 750,000 people are at threat of starvation, while U.S. envoy Tom Perriello has estimated that the war has killed as many as 150,000 people. Other estimates are much lower, at about 15,000 confirmed deaths. The war has also displaced more than 10 million people, making it the largest global displacement crisis, and left an additional 25 million in urgent need of humanitarian aid, over half of the country’s population.

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For some, this is the second civil war they’ve fled in recent years. In South Sudan, nearly 400,000 people were killed in clashes from 2013 to 2018.

The cathedral is close to the army headquarters and the airport, where the full-scale war broke out during Ramadan last year. With the armed confrontation intensifying, the Rapid Support Forces had rushed its soldiers to surround the church compound, hoping the place of worship would not be bombed and would guarantee them some protection.

“They were there at the gate and we were unable to do anything. We were unable to get out,” Kondo said. “All the families that were there gathered in the church hall. Other people also ran and joined us. We spent three nights there.”

After three days in the cathedral’s basement without water or food, Kondo and other leaders decided to leave. After interrogations at gunpoint, the soldiers finally allowed them to go. The church leaders and their families then walked for an hour and a half to find transport to take them to the south of Khartoum with less violence. Kondo’s family remained there for two months, only to move again after the bombardment became more intense and closer.

“One of the shells fell near where we were,” Kondo said. He then decided to move with his family to Port Sudan. “It was very difficult, but we thank God. He has been our protector.”

In Port Sudan, Kondo continues to call for peace as he ministers in the diocese there, while staying in touch with Anglicans still in Khartoum.

“There are pastors who are still with the people there and I tell them to be strong not be afraid,” Kondo said.

Out of 33 Anglican churches in the greater Khartoum area, only five are no longer functioning.

The archbishop is angry that many people have died in what he calls a needless and senseless war.

“I would like to urge parachurch organizations to join in the effort to send relief food to the people of Sudan. If food is not given, many people are going to die,” Kondo said.

Less than 3% of Sudan’s population is Christian, while 91% is Muslim, according to 2020 Pew Research Center data. So far, the fighting armies have attacked or destroyed 165 churches, according to Open Doors.

The war has also emptied most of the senior church leaders and missionary organizations from Khartoum.

Kondo wants the two fighting factions to end the war and agree to give peace to Sudan’s people, but for that to happen, the countries supplying weapons to the two parties must stop, he said.

The international community has been attempting to bring the fighting factions to the negotiating table. Last month’s U.S.-led peace talks in Switzerland ended without a deal, just like two previous ones in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

As the war continues, many Sudanese are dying from diseases, hunger and natural disasters such as floods. The U.N. has warned that the violence could turn into or be recognized as a genocide, with reports of civilians being targeted based on their ethnicity. But Kondo said he still hopes in God.

“Yes, we are in trouble, the country is in trouble, but we know God is our refuge,” he said.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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Church News Ireland

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