

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – In the footsteps of Columbanus

Image of the day



In the footsteps of Columbanus

It was a great day on the North Down Coast when 100 people accompanied “the stoic four” who have proved that the Columbanus Walk from Carlow to Bangor works via beautiful landscape.



The 100 walked with the pilgrims towards Bangor Abbey where the Rector Canon Ronnie Nesbitt and local dignitaries awaited.

It is intended that this is the first of many walks in the future, in the footsteps of Columbanus. The finale was celebrated on International Peace Day in St

Comgalls Parish Hall with talented young musicians and the opportunity to inspect the replicas of the bell of the saint.

The Bishop of Down and Connor with some of the younger walkers



News

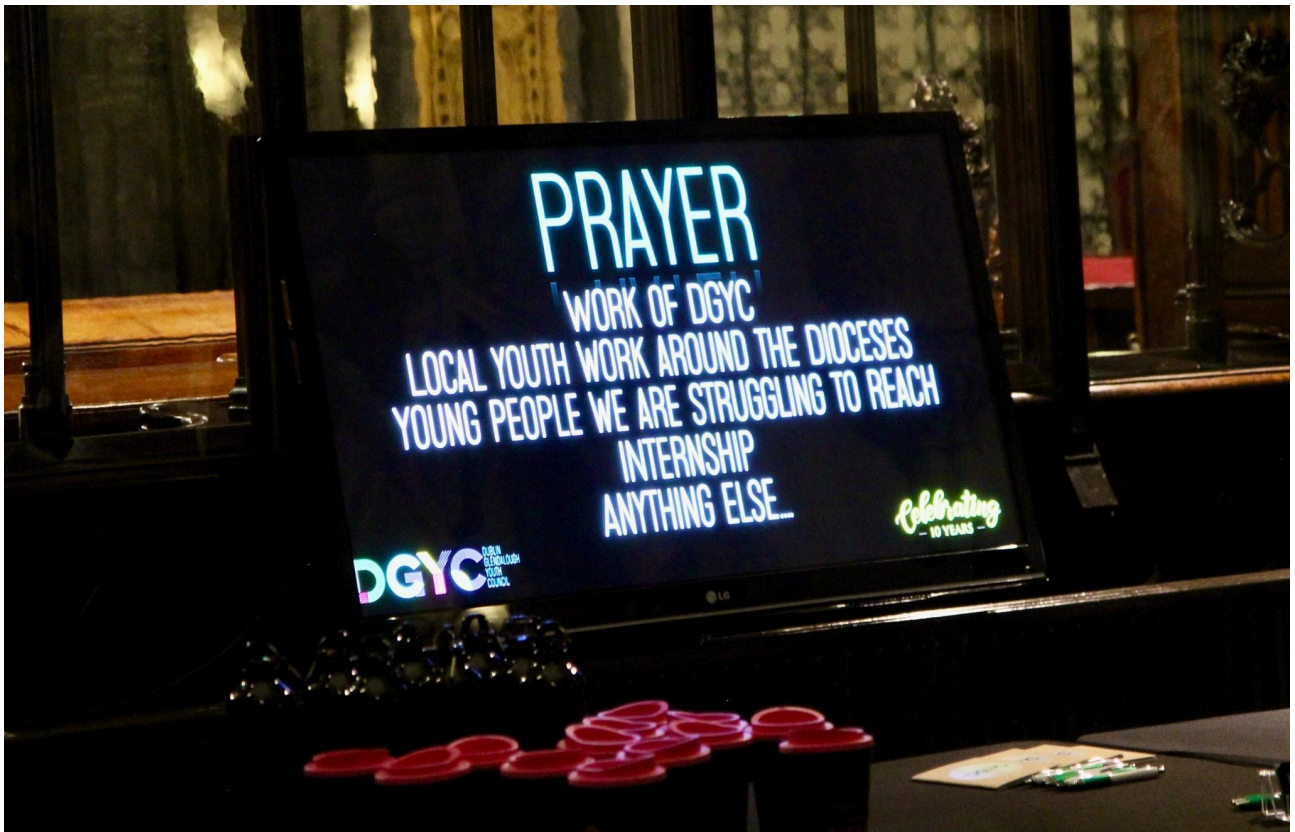


New Internship Programme introduced for Dublin and Glendalough Youth Council

Dublin and Glendalough Youth Council celebrated its 10th birthday on Saturday evening (September 21) with news of an exciting new initiative. DGYC has launched a new internship programme for 18–25 year olds and applications for the 2025 programme open next month.

The 10 month internship programme is geared to help young adults develop their skill sets and leadership capabilities through serving in church youth ministry around Dublin and Glendalough.

Speaking at the launch in Christ Church Cathedral, DGYC's Youth Ministry Development Officer Emma Fawcett had a





The vintage Jaffa Cake game after DGYC's 10th anniversary service

message for potential interns and the young people of the dioceses. “This internship is about investing in you and training you. We want to help you grow as a person, to deepen your faith in God and to leave with some brilliant experiences and great life skills,” she stated.

Interns will be matched to a local church where they will help run and develop youth ministry. They will also be part of the DGYC team at regional and national youth events and will get to work alongside other Christian youth organisations around the country. There will be opportunities to go on retreats and attend Christian events. “We want young people to know that God cares for them, and that their lives can be better with Him at the centre. You can be part of that!” Emma added. More at DGYC website www.dgyc.org

Queen's University and St Mary's University College dialogue

Professor Sir Ian Greer, President and Vice-Chancellor welcomed Paul Maskey MP and Professor Peter Finn, Principal St Mary's University College Belfast to Queen's University Belfast on Monday to discuss issues of relevance in higher education and for Belfast.

Sir Ian posted - It was useful to provide Paul and Peter with an update on current developments in the University, including our civic university status, the work of our three Belfast Region City Deal at Queen's University Belfast Innovation Centres, and our programme of events for the year as we look ahead to our 180-year celebrations.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the relationship between Queen's and St Mary's and how we can continue to enhance our already strong partnership.



Boys Brigade NI catch the vision

Lisa Keys writes - A number of months ago I had this idea that we should start the new session of The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade (BBNI) by getting leaders together for worship, prayer, teaching and chat.

With leaders spread throughout NI and Donegal, we couldn't simply book one venue and expect everyone to come to us.

Recently thanks to an incredible team who caught the vision, "ABIDE" ran in 3 locations, attended by over 250 leaders, helpers and chaplains.

It was such an amazing night with worship led by the team at Dundonald Elim, a powerful message from Andy Hickford based on John 15 and a prayer of commissioning for all our leaders, helpers and chaplains as they begin another season of working with around 11,400 children and young people in local BB companies.

The event could not have happened without so many brilliant people who took my idea and turned it into a reality. Huge shout out and thanks to our volunteer James McConkey who masterminded the tech and AV set up. James was brilliantly supported by Jonny W. who ran the production from our Belfast venue, live streamed to Cookstown and Ballymena. Thanks also to our other IT volunteers Angus McBride and Matty Swarbrick.

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Thanks to the incredible The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade (BBNI) staff team for so much hard work over many weeks and for managing each venue last night. We could not have done it without you all - David, Bethany, Jonathan, Emily, Wendy, Deborah and Donna.

BBNI leaders in each location made sure everyone received a warm welcome and a great cuppa and it was fabulous to see so many leaders staying afterwards to chat, encourage each other and connect with new leaders.

When people around you catch the vision incredible things happen! We are starting the new BBNI session with enthusiasm. We have been challenged by the teaching of John 15 and what it really means to abide in Jesus and we have taken time to commit our plans into God's hands as we seek to advance His kingdom through The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade (BBNI).

Recent C of I central committee decisions

The Standing Committee of the General Synod also met on Tuesday, 17th September, in Church of Ireland House, Dublin.

The Standing Committee approved the proposals of the Budget Sub Committee and recommended them for consideration by the Allocations Committee of the Representative Body.

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As recommended by the Representative Body, the Standing Committee set the rates of **Minimum Approved Stipends** as follows with effect from 1st January 2025:

£37,310 per annum in Northern Ireland; and
€45,640 per annum in the Republic of Ireland.

The increases in the Minimum Approved Stipend rates for 2025 are reflective of the Consumer Price Indices in the respective jurisdictions for the year ended 30th June 2024.



As recommended by the Executive Committee of the Representative Body and the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions

St Matthew's Church, Shankill, Belfast

Trustee, the Standing Committee set the rates of Pensionable Stipend as follows with effect from 1st January 2025:

£33,390 per annum in Northern Ireland; and
€42,247 per annum in the Republic of Ireland.

In addition, as also recommended by the Executive Committee and the Trustee, the Standing Committee set the rate of levy to be paid by each diocese towards the cost of securing the solvency of the Clergy Pensions Fund from 1st January 2025, at the unchanged percentage rate of 3% of the Minimum Approved Stipend in force on that date.



St Matthew's Church, Shankill, Belfast from above where the distinctive shamrock shape is readily identifiable

The Standing Committee approved amendments to the **Clergy Permanent Health Insurance (PHI) Policy and Guidelines**, also approved by the Representative Body at its meeting on the same day.

The Standing Committee approved that the **General Synod of 2026 will take place in the Slieve Donard Hotel**, Newcastle, from Thursday, 7th May, to Saturday, 9th May.

A paper was presented on behalf of the Honorary Secretaries detailing a proposal for the introduction of an electronic voting system for in-person meetings of the General Synod to replace the voting card/teller system. This will be followed by a demonstration of the proposed system and an opportunity for the members of the Standing Committee to provide feedback.

Appointments were made to various church bodies:

- the Revd Catherine Simpson to the Board for Ministry with Children and Families, representing the Board of Education (Northern Ireland);
- Mrs June Butler, Mr Stephen Trew, Dr Simon Woodworth, and the Revd Canon Gillian Wharton to serve on a working group to consider the motion passed at General Synod 2024 on how to articulate more effectively the voice of the Church on subjects relating to global conflicts;
- Ms Rachel Fraser to the Advisory Council to the Church of Ireland Centre at Dublin City University, in her capacity as a school principal;

- the Revd Rob Jones to the Commission on Ministry, representing the Standing Committee;
- Bishop Pat Storey (as Chair), the Revd Carlton Baxter, the Revd Canon Gillian Wharton, Canon Dr Kenneth Milne, Dr Raymond Refaussé, Mr David Ritchie, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Dean Nigel Dunne, and the Revd Alan Rufli to the Central Communications Board (with the Press Officer and the Dublin and Glendalough Communications Officer in attendance);
- Canon Dr Kenneth Milne (as Chair), the Revd Canon Peter McDowell, Dr Raymond Refaussé (as Secretary), the Revd Canon Ricky Rountree, Fr Bernard Treacy OP, Ms Cecelia West, and Mr George Woodman to the Literature Committee (a sub-committee of the Central Communications Board).

Clergy and ministry

Meet Valerie Raitt, a Pioneer minister in Tuam, Killala and Limerick

There are exciting times ahead. Welcome to the team.

Valerie writes - Originally from County Donegal, I now reside in County Galway in the West of Ireland. My career has taken me to many parts of this island as well as overseas, working as I did in various roles within the construction industry.



MEET THE PIONEERS

VALERIE
RAITT



Parish:

Creagh Union

Diocese:

Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe

After many years, I have now chosen a new path in life and gained a qualification in tourism.

With a love of the countryside where nature nourishes the soul, brings peace at the end of a day as one watches the sun set over the Atlantic ocean – I now promote Spiritual Tourism to this Emerald Isle. Here you can travel the ancient holy walkways, visit places to pray, reflect,

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reconnect and enjoy the fellowship with others, not to mention the 'ceol agus craic' = music and fun!

Within the community of the church and the parishes I have lived in across four dioceses of Ireland, it is the people, the friendships that one makes, the outreach and welcome that is given and received, also reaching those with little or no connection to church that resonates with me and pioneering ministry. 'le gach beannacht' = with every blessing.

To sign up to our mailing list and stay up to date with Pioneer Ministry, click here: <http://eepurl.com/iob42s>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Next Steps funding now available from CIYD

Youth workers and volunteer youth leaders are strongly encouraged to apply for the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) bursary fund – Next Steps – to boost their skills and bring out their potential.

The closing date for the current round is Saturday, 30th November 2024.

Next Steps has been set up – with the support of the Priorities Fund – to significantly encourage the number of people who lead our young people to undertake third level

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professional qualifications and development within the wider youth ministry sector, the impact of which would benefit ministry in the Church of Ireland.

Qualifications can include undergraduate and postgraduate courses in relation to youth ministry, which might otherwise have been financially challenging. This is an Ireland-wide project with the hope that it will support many young people and young adults with a significant impact in ministry.

“CIYD’s Next Steps programme has had a number of very grateful recipients thus far and we would love to see more – this is why the fund exists,” National Youth Officer Simon Henry says.

“Vocational training and development in youth ministry is so essential and its impact on the Church can last for generations to come.

“Could this Next Steps programme benefit you or someone you know? We would love to see more and more people undertake professional qualifications and development in youth ministry and this support available could encourage those who otherwise would feel challenged in the current financial climate.”

If you would like to request an application form, please get in touch with Barbara Swann, CIYD’s Office Administrator, at admin@ciyd.org

Methodist Church First Transformation Prayer Gathering

The first Transformation Prayer Gathering of the Methodist Church in Ireland is happening this month at Mountmellick Methodist Church in the Southern District on Saturday 28th September at 2pm

A new resource is available for local churches to host their own Transformation Prayer Gathering.

On the Methodist Church website:

- View the current dates
- Download promotional slides
- Download the new resource
- and get details on hosting your own gathering!
- irishmethodist.org/living-wholeheartedly

Connor Diocese Creation Light Party for all the family

Connor Diocese will host a Creation Light Party for all the family in Mossley Parish on November 2.

Diocesan Children's Ministry Development Officer Victoria Jackson said: "At a time of year filled with creepy costumes and dark decorations we want to do something a little different!

"Come dressed up as something from God's amazing creation (hint for those who don't like to dress up...He created YOU!)"

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There will also be prizes for the best costumes and much, much more!



The event runs in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Mossley, from 4-6pm, with crafts for all the family to enjoy, followed by a sing-a-long, storytelling and s'mores around the 'campfire.' The event will finish with food and a Light Parade which everyone is invited to join!

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Further details and booking at -
<https://connor.anglican.org/2024/09/19/creation-light-party-for-all-the-family/>

Heritage

Royal Irish Regiment beat Retreat in St. Peter's Piazza at the Vatican recalling 1944 visit to the Pope





On 12 June 1944, the Massed Drums and Pipes of the 38th (Irish) Brigade performed a Beat Retreat in St. Peter's Piazza at the Vatican, following an invitation from Pope Pius XII.

Eighty years later, on 12 June 2024, the UK Embassy marked the anniversary of the Liberation of Rome with a special commemoration.

As part of the event, The Bugles, Pipes, and Drums (BP&D) of The Royal Irish Regiment recreated this historic occasion by performing during the General Audience with Pope Francis.

As they navigated through the crowd, the BP&D played Regimental tunes, including "Killaloe."



Pipe banner featuring the Regiment's crest on one side and the Papal Coat of Arms on the other.

Following the General Audience, they were invited for a photograph with Pope Francis.

Chris Trott, the UK Ambassador to The Holy See, expressed how moved he was when the initial plan changed unexpectedly; Pope Francis asked them to play for him once more.

Trott noted that this was "unexpected and The Pope's own initiative," possibly inspired by The Colonel of The Regiment, Major General Colin Weir CB DSO MBE, presenting the Pope with a pipe banner featuring the



Regiment's crest on one side and the Papal Coat of Arms on the other.

Major General Weir described the event as "a tremendous privilege and one of the most moving and profound experiences" of his 32-year military career.

Pipe Major William Mitchell echoed the sentiment, describing it as a "hair-raising moment" to be part of the Bugles, Pipes, and Drums marching through St. Peter's Square, as our forebears did in 1944.

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

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