

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – 30th anniversary of key staff member at St Patrick's**

## Image of the day

### **30th anniversary of key staff member at St Patrick's**

Last Sunday the community at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, celebrated a very special anniversary. They reported, "Our beloved Cathedral Manager Louis Parminter marked 30 years of being a Verger. Congratulations Louis and thank you for all that you have done in that time. Here's to the next 30!"

## People and places

### **Film 'Lyra' screened by Corrymeela Community to mark 25th anniversary of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement**

"The fact that the voice of a young, gay, Catholic woman is being heard today in this film in a Protestant church shows that our society is changing for the better. Going forward, we all need to come together to create a better future in which everyone can thrive, particularly those who are most marginalised' - Nicola Corner, Lyra McKee's sister, speaking at a special screening of the film 'Lyra', as part of the Corrymeela Community's events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement



## **Bishop to become Patron of Changing Attitude Ireland**

**Mark Bowyer co-hosted 'From Exclusion to Embrace' on Saturday in Belfast and given his first speech as Chair of Changing Attitude Ireland.**

Commenting on the day Mark said, “It was such a great experience meeting and listening to people. I was also excited to announce that Bishop Trevor Williams has agreed



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to become Patron of CAI. Bishop Trevor will preach at our Pride Evensong to be held in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin in June.



## **Easter Liturgy in Dublin for the Ukrainian community**

**Traditionally, every year the Divine Liturgy on the day of the Resurrection of the Lord for the Ukrainian community of the Blessed Saint Nicholas Charnetsky takes place in one of Dublin's largest churches of Our Lady of Consolation.**

This year, April 16, the Easter Holy Liturgy began at 6:00 and already at this time the temple was filled with parishioners.

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The festive Easter Divine Liturgy was conducted by father Vasyl, accompanied by his beautiful singing by seminarians brothers from Andrii Khomen Igor Demidas, Іван Височанський , Mykhailo Kuz and Квартет семінаристів Fratelli

The service was also attended by Irish fathers: Michael, Robert and Pat.

Vasily congratulated the Ukrainian community of Ireland on Easter, and read the Easter message of His Holiness Svyatoslav (Shevchuk), Father and Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

After the Holy Liturgy there was a blessing of Easter dishes.



## Spring news from Eco– Congregation Ireland

**The Spring edition of Eco–Congregation Ireland’s newsletter highlights the hosting of the Climate Justice Candle by Wexford and Kilscoran Union and Carrigrohane Union.**



Holy Trinity Killiney is continuing with a monthly prayer or thought for the environment and St Mary’s, Carrigaline, plans to extend its pollinator–friendly garden and introduce some areas with Irish native wildflowers, such as angelica and red campion.

The newsletter also features several upcoming events and an opportunity to register your parish’s support for pollinators through a pledge as part of the All–Island Pollinator Plan.

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Eco–Congregation Ireland is an initiative of the Irish Inter Church Meeting, and includes members from the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church and Religious Society of Friends.

[[info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com)]

## **Presbyterian church seeks a 'just and peaceful society'**

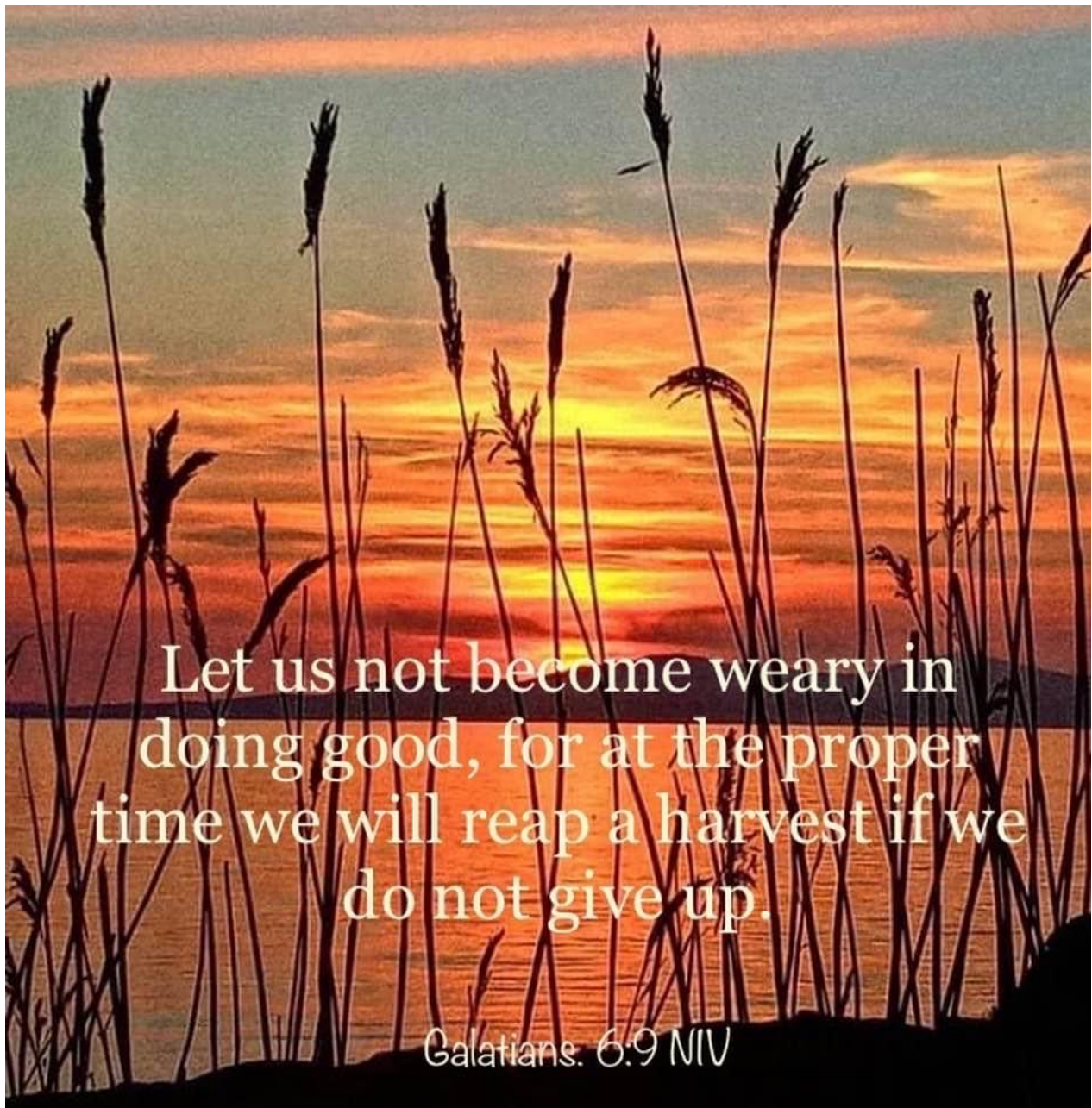
**Presbyterian moderator the Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick says he believes there is still much work to be done in Northern Ireland in pursuit of a "peaceful and just society".**

The moderator's stark observation came in a week when United States President Joe Biden has visited Belfast and other events were being held to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast political agreement of 1998.

Dr Kirkpatrick reminds that the words "peaceful and just society" are echoed in the Irish Presbyterian church's 2016 'Vision for Society' statement which was fully supported that year by the Church's General Assembly in Belfast.

The church statement sought to continue placing "peace-building firmly at the heart of Christian discipleship and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" and this Sunday (tomorrow) Dr Kirkpatrick is encouraging his ministerial colleagues to consider using the text of the 146-word 2016 statement at services across the church's 500-plus congregations, in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.





“Much has been written about and reported on that day in 1998 when a political agreement was reached that many saw as ending of the conflict that was known as the 'Troubles'.

"Undoubtedly, the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, and the further progress that has been made since, has left us in a better place today than we were in during those dark days," said Dr Kirkpatrick.



"However, there is much that still needs to be achieved," he added.

"Throughout scripture God encourages His people to pause and take time to remember and reflect on significant moments in the past.

"For this reason, I have encouraged our congregations to consider taking a short time during this Sunday's services to reflect on the events of 25 years ago and to do so using the words of our 'Vision for Society' statement.

"It is a moment for prayerful remembrance and giving thanks for the progress that has been made since 1998, whilst acknowledging that this anniversary, and the media coverage surrounding it, has been difficult for many."

Dr Kirkpatrick said that along with his wife Joan, he has had the privilege to meet with victims and survivors of the Ulster conflict, and listen to their testimonies.

"This was not an easy experience, but has helped me to reflect again on the ongoing pain and the hurt felt by many, and expressed by those we met with.

"It also reaffirmed to me the need to be sensitive to the needs, hopes and fears of those who have experienced the very worst, having lost loved ones, or still live with the consequences of injury,"

The moderator added: "Even as we mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement, we need to recognise

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that as a society we have not achieved the full peace and reconciliation we long for.

"Indeed, true peace and ultimate reconciliation will only ever be experienced in the new heaven and new earth that is yet to come.

"Nonetheless, God, through His word, urges us to do all we can to build a genuinely peaceful and reconciled society."

## News reports

### King selects gospel choir for Westminster Abbey service

**The Ascension Choir, a group of eight “hand-picked” singers from the group that performed at Prince Harry’s wedding to Meghan Markle, have been chosen to sing at the ceremony on May 6.**

The King, a lifelong music enthusiast and champion of the arts, has been personally involved in commissioning and organising the music at his Coronation.

Charles’s decision to include a gospel choir in the proceedings for the first time follows the invitation he extended to south London’s Kingdom Choir to perform at his son’s wedding in 2018.

The group sang the Ben E King song Stand By Me at the May ceremony at St George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle.



At the time, it was assumed the Duke and Duchess had invited the group to perform, but Karen Gibson, the choir's conductor, later told The Daily Telegraph: "Actually it came from Prince Charles. He's the one who loves gospel."

Now a select few from the group will take the stage at the King's Coronation.

The Ascension Choir, led by Abimbola Amoako-Gyampah, will sing Alleluia (O Sing Praises) at the ceremony on May 6, becoming the first gospel group to perform in Westminster Abbey at a Coronation.

The group will sing as part of a two-part composition that was commissioned from Debbie Wiseman, an award-winning TV and film composer.

"It's eight hand-picked singers from the choir that sang at the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's wedding," she said. "I've written a special piece for them and we've been rehearsing it together," she said. It's fantastic, it will warm everyone's hearts."

Another first at the King's Coronation will be a Welsh language performance of Paul Mealor's Coronation Kyrie.

The song, which Mealor described as "a cry from the deep soul of the hills and valleys of Wales for hope, peace, love and friendship," will be sung by bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel and the Choir of Westminster Abbey.

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New details of the music at the King's Coronation were announced by the Palace on Friday, three weeks to go before the event.

## In the media

### Foster backs Clintons to sway DUP over Stormont

**Bill and Hillary Clinton are more likely to succeed in helping to persuade the DUP back to Stormont where Joe Biden failed, Dame Arlene Foster, the party's former leader, has suggested, Will Hazell Political Correspondent, The Daily Telegraph**

Baroness Foster, who served two terms as first minister of Northern Ireland, said the Clintons would get a better hearing on a visit to Belfast this week because they had "more credibility" with the DUP than President Biden.

Commemorations of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement continue this week with a three-day conference at Queen's University. Rishi Sunak will join the Clintons in his fifth visit to Northern Ireland since becoming prime minister.

As US president, Mr Clinton took a keen interest in the peace process and played an important role in the negotiations that culminated with the landmark deal in 1998.



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He will attend the conference while Mrs Clinton, a former US secretary of state, will be hosting the event in her capacity as chancellor of Queen's.

*'The Clintons do have more credibility. Bill Clinton has always been even-handed as such'*

Mr Biden was last week criticised for spending little time in Northern Ireland during his visit to the island of Ireland, and



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a senior aide was forced to deny the president was “anti-British”.

He pledged yesterday to continue to work with the UK and Irish governments to restore devolution. Mr Biden claimed “hundreds” of US corporations were ready to invest in Northern Ireland – but were “cautious” about the lack of devolved government.

Baroness Foster said: “The Clintons do have more credibility. Despite anybody’s misgivings about Bill Clinton he has always been even-handed as such.” She said President Biden’s “sympathies very much lie with Irish Nationalism”.

Will Hazell Political Correspondent, The Daily Telegraph

## **Why a more inclusive, less divided future lies ahead for NI - Barry White**

**To capitalise on our unique trading position, we must present ourselves to the world as a going concern, with a devolved government that stays together, writes the former Belfast Telegraph Political Editor**

Every so often a British government, usually Conservative, comes up with a definitive statement or initiative about Northern Ireland that indicates a page has been turned. It happened in 1972, after Bloody Sunday, when Ted Heath decided direct rule was the only alternative to misrule by Stormont. In 1984 Maggie Thatcher said no to any Irish



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involvement but a year later signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, giving Dublin a vague role here, in the mistaken assumption it would lead to better security co-operation on the border.

Then there was the groundbreaking declaration that the UK had no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland, which helped bring about the Good Friday Agreement, along with a lot of off record assurances. Recently we've heard of an MI5 spy adding his own twist, independently telling the republican hierarchy: 'the island shall be as one'.

On March 23 we had another telling comment from Secretary of State Chris Heaton-Harris: "The DUP has yet to come to terms with the vote in the Commons." The huge vote for the Windsor Framework, despite Sir Jeffrey Donaldson's warnings, was evidence of Rishi Sunak's determination to finalise Brexit and salvage the nation's relations with the EU, with or without the DUP.

The effect of this new resolve was to legalise a green and red channel approach to the Irish Sea border checks, carried out by the UK on behalf of the EU. The objections of the unionist/loyalist community, on the grounds that it undermines NI's long standing position as an integral part of the UK, subject to the same trading laws, have been overruled.

But the government's warning goes deeper than that. It signifies that in future Westminster is going to pursue the interests of the whole nation, regardless of opposition. Just because unionists are fearful of being subject to EU laws is

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not going to stop London seeking better relations with Brussels.

In short, the government is saying to the people of Northern Ireland: “We have done our best for you, getting a deal that gives you free access to both the EU and UK markets - with some paperwork and minimal checks - so we expect you to comply. Now grow up!”

The first item on the new agenda must be the return of Stormont, without which nothing is possible. The boycott by the DUP served its purpose, focusing minds on the worst aspects of the old protocol and achieving reforms that might not have been passed by conventional means.

But those days are over. For Northern Ireland to take advantage of its unique trading opportunities it must present itself to the world as a going concern, with a devolved government that stays together and can cut corners for investors. The alternative, of course, is to remove the ban on boycott by one party.

No one seriously expects the DUP to surrender its main weapon against the Irish Sea border before it can test its electorate in the May 18 council elections, but soon after a way must be found. Both main parties at Westminster are heavily committed to seeing the Windsor Framework succeed, so if Keir Starmer is the next Prime Minister even more pressure will be exerted, with probably less money available.

A section of the unionist population will never be reconciled to the new terms of UK membership, which mean that



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Northern Ireland is to be treated as a place apart, subject to different trading arrangements. For them any threat to sovereignty is abhorrent, but provided Stormont is restored and the “brake” is shown to be effective their numbers should be containable.

At the same time, it must be expected that as the relationship between Belfast and Brussels develops, fresh friction can be expected. Sunak may want to moderate the hard Brexit he inherited, but he needs to diverge from European rules to compete, and Northern Ireland cannot automatically follow.

So far the government's concentration has been on unionist dissidents but they cannot overlook the interests of the narrow nationalist majority or the growing centrist Alliance. They need to show that last May's votes still count and that a Sinn Fein First Minister can wield some influence with Dublin as well as London.

No one seriously imagines that even if Sinn Fein were top dogs in the Republic, as well as Northern Ireland, a border poll is inevitable but new weight would be given to the cross-border initiatives that were an important part of the Good Friday Agreement.

Regular meetings of unionist, as well as nationalist, ministers would be expected.

As for a border poll, more time and work would be needed to prepare voters north and south. Divisions are simply too great in both parts of the island at present to justify a fair proposition to be put to the electorate, and there is little

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appetite in the south, plagued by a housing crisis, to take on a still recalcitrant unionist population.

Much will depend on the out-workings of the Windsor Framework, as to whether it attracts the UK and international investment that is promised and whether the unavoidable checks on Irish Sea trading are bearable. Will it be embraced by as many unionists as nationalists, even at the expense of their 100% Britishness? Do they know that the alternative to devolution would be a harsher form of direct rule, perhaps with Dublin input?

The scene is set for a much more decisive quarter century of the Good Friday Agreement than the last, with hopefully more police activity against the unwanted remnants of paramilitarism that blight communities. With the new direction from London, Brussels and Washington, better informed of the difficulties than ever, a more inclusive, less divisive future awaits.

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

### **The Church Choir Award 2023 – in partnership with RSCM Centre**

If you lead a flourishing church choir and are seeking to develop further your music-making programme, then they want to hear from you!

Deadline: 26 May More info  [bit.ly/cca-23](https://bit.ly/cca-23)

## **Book - Cathedrals, Chapels, Organs, Choirs by Sarah Macdonald**

David Flood was Organist and Master of the Choristers of Canterbury Cathedral 1988-2020, and President of the Cathedral Organists' Association 2016-19. His review of this book in the Church Times is inspiring and informative

Cathedrals, Chapels, Organs, Choirs by Sarah Macdonald  
August Press £26.99. (979-8-2180421-4-1)  
Church Times Bookshop £24.29



## **Blessed be the God and Father - Hereford Cathedral**

A glorious recording from Hereford Cathedral where this piece was first performed in 1834. Words to be found in Sunday's epistle.



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S.S. Wesley "Blessed be the God and Father" Hereford Cathedral 1980 (Massey)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulvgjRILJ0U>

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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