

# Church News Ireland

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Image of the day – Pray and caffeinate in Drumbo

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## Image of the day

### Pray and caffeinate in Drumbo

**You can Pray & Caffeinate every Tuesday from 6.30am-8.30am (yes that's early) and Wednesday at 10am at Holy Trinity Church, Drumbo.**

Grab a coffee and a prayer at the start of the day...there is a short led prayer-time at 7am and 10am of respective days.

## People and places

### South Sudan Bishop goes paddle sporting

**On the final activity day of Senior Camp at the Kilbroney Centre last week, participants had the privilege to welcome two very special guests to the centre.**





Bishop Wilson Kamani and his wife Mama Agnes were visiting Northern Ireland from the Diocese of Ibba in South Sudan, this link was established by CMS Ireland in 2011 and works in partnership with St John's Moira.

The Bishop and his wife not only were welcomed to the centre for the day, they even made it down to the lough for some paddlesports and a spin on the RIB.



## Sabbatical experience of church life in Egypt

**Archdeacon Patrick Bamber (CMSI Trustee) from Calry Parish Church Sligo has flown out to Egypt this week to spend part of his sabbatical working alongside and learning from CSMI partners in the Province of Alexandria.**

You are invited to pray that Patrick's time there will be a blessing and will provide him with the opportunity to minister, and be encouraged and refreshed in return. CMSI promise - We'll keep you updated on what he will be up to.

## Sudan visits Clogher

**Bishop Masimango and Mama Naomie (Kindu Diocese, DRC) visited Holy Trinity Dromore while in Northern**

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## Ireland for CMS Ireland and SAMS Ireland 'Kingdom Voices'.

Mama Naomie shared with some of our MU members from Clogher Diocese about her work with women in tackling illiteracy, poverty and gender-based violence.

The bishop spoke at our Praise and Ministry Service about us being the 5th Gospel - 'a letter from Christ' (2 Cor 3:1-3) to those around. He also spoke at our morning service about our need to sow in the Spirit, if we are to reap what will last.

They also met up with members from their link Parish



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(Calry, Sligo) in the Cathedral Hall as well as with Bishop Ian Ellis.

Their visit was a real blessing to all who met them.

## **Food for thought at Irish church's Café Ukraine in Chemnitz, Germany**

**Since the war in Ukraine began, millions of Ukrainians have left their homes to find safety elsewhere.**

More than 700,000 people have fled to Germany. Irish Methodist Mission Partners Barry and Gillian Sloan are sharing an update in the July edition of the Irish Methodist News Letter. on how the INSPIRE community in Chemnitz has opened its doors to welcome Ukrainian refugees through a weekly cafe.

INSPIRE is a small non-profit initiative in the Brühl, inspired by the Christian faith and shaped by a heart for people, community and creativity.

The café is a space to just be in community and to find comfort in the familiar. It is a response to the emotional and social needs of refugees in the area.

The team at INSPIRE also recognise the need to help Ukrainians communicate with locals while they are in Germany and how learning even the basics of a language can help. You can read the full story in the July/Aug edition of the Irish Methodist News Letter.....

## **Service of Thanksgiving for Rev. Bob Bagnall**

**A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and ministry of the Rev. Bob Bagnall was held in Ballyholme Methodist Church on Saturday 6th August, 2022.**

As befitted Bob, the church was packed with his family and friends.

The Rev. Harold Good conducted the service while the Rev. David Kerr offered the pastoral prayers. The main tribute was given by Bob's former colleague and friend, the Rev. Henry Keys.

The congregation heard that one person had described Bob as "the epitome of grace", and that was obvious to all who knew him.

The Rev. Bob Bagnall began his ministry in 1950 and was the "Father of the Conference".

The President was not able to be present but his words were read by the Lay Leader of Conference Mr. Tom Wilson:

"I send the love and prayers of the Methodist Church to Ann, Nial, Colin, Ruth and the wider family circle. While Bob's time on Circuit was limited, his ministry was exercised in the field of education. His name is revered amongst those students he taught during his many years of ministry in Methodist College as both chaplain and Head of RE.

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“He along with others was responsible for much of the GCSE and A-level religious education syllabus.

“We also thank God for the work of Ann who together with Bob provided a “home from home” for many of the boards, especially those from overseas.

“May you as a family know the presence and peace of the Risen Lord, both today and always.”

## World News

### **Christian Aid calls for prayers, government action as Taliban mark 1 year in Afghanistan**

**Christian Aid has said it's essential that the next UK prime minister act to prevent the current dire situation in Afghanistan turning into a humanitarian disaster.**

The Taliban marked a year in power with small-scale celebrations by the group's fighters as Afghanistan struggles with rising poverty, drought, malnutrition and fading hope among women that they will have a decisive role in the country's future.

Some people fired celebratory gunshots in the air in Kabul and Taliban fighters gathered, waving the group's black and white flag to mark a year since they marched into the capital after series of battlefield victories.



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But Christian Aid has interviewed Afghan families in several provinces to find out how their lives have changed one year on from the Taliban seizing power. All said a combination of soaring food and fuel prices and a seven-year drought has made life extremely difficult.

Fionna Smyth, head of global advocacy and policy at the charity said: "Agricultural production and the food that people need to survive, has been really, really hard hit. And this is at a time when food prices are continuing to rise because of the war in Ukraine as have energy prices.

"So just to put that into some sort of context, the price of diesel is 89 per cent more than it was this time last year. Fertilizer is up 115 per cent. The price of wheat, which is so important to make bread, has gone up by 45 per cent.

"So this means that people are really suffering a massive hunger crisis. And 18.9 million people are in what we call IPC three, which is just behind famine-like conditions, and over half the population are having to survive on humanitarian aid. That's pretty desperate."

Christian Aid has called for the UK government and the international community to reverse the cuts in last year's aid budget back to 0.7 per cent of GDP so there is more funding to go around. It's also called for restoration of the Afghan central bank so that money can be printed and circulated for the economy to function properly and reach those most in need.

The charity also wants Afghan civil society organizations, particularly women-led organizations inside and outside

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Afghanistan, to be able to access funding and support so that 20 years of civil society development is not lost.

Smyth encouraged people to firstly pray for women and girls in Afghanistan.

"Their teenage girls have not been able to go to school in Afghanistan for a year now. It's absolutely terrible. And they really were the hope for the people, for the future of Afghanistan, and they are desperate to get back to school".

"Praying for everybody to have enough to eat... we're having hard times and cost of living crisis here ourselves. I think everybody does appreciate that. But it's not like that - levels of starvation that are forcing people to sell their own daughters just so they can feed the rest of their family. So I think there's lots that we should be praying for, and of course, for peace and for peace to be maintained within Afghanistan as well."

## **Pope Francis urges people to pay attention to the 'mortal danger' facing Somalia**

**Pope Francis has stressed the urgency of the situation in Somalia.**

During his Sunday address Francis highlighted the "mortal danger from drought" that is affecting Somalia and neighbouring countries.

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The Pontiff said: "The populations of this region, already living in very precarious conditions, are now in mortal danger from drought.

"I hope that international solidarity can respond effectively to this emergency.

"Unfortunately, war diverts attention and resources, but these are the objectives that demand the greatest commitment: the fight against hunger, health, education."

According to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) more than 755,000 people have been internally displaced in Somalia due to severe drought this year.

This latest figures bring the total to one million people since the drought began in January 2021.

Mohamed Abdi, NRC's country director in Somalia told Vatican News: "This one million milestone serves as a massive alarm bell for Somalia.

"Starvation is now haunting the entire country.

"We are seeing more and more families forced to leave everything behind because there is literally no water or food left in their villages.

"Aid funding urgently needs to be ramped up before it is too late."

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have also said that famine could set in eight regions of Somalia by September 2022 if crop failures and lower livestock production continue.

## In the media

### **Need for change in Catholic Church evident to ‘anyone with two eyes in their head’, says Archbishop**

#### **Catholic Church in Ireland has sent synthesis of 26 diocesan reports seeking reforms to Rome, Patsy McGarry writes in the Irish Times**

The Catholic Church in Ireland and across Europe is on “a journey towards another way of living, with God, and with each other”, said Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell on Monday.

In a sermon at the Pro Cathedral, marking the feast of the Assumption, he said he was speaking “on this day when the church in Ireland submits its national synthesis to the Holy See” in Rome. The synthesis is due to be published on Tuesday.

“Anyone with two eyes in their head can see that renewal in our church is clearly and urgently necessary. The challenge is to find the good way of renewal,” he said.

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Last October Pope Francis launched a worldwide consultation process within the church in advance of a synod of bishops which takes place at the Vatican in October 2023. The diocesan phase of the synod began with consultations in parishes throughout Ireland's 26 dioceses then too, with all 26 subsequent reports published last June.

In general, these called for a greater role for women in the church, including ordination, removal of mandatory celibacy for priests, radical change in the church's attitude to LGBTI+ and other marginalised people, as well as for a much greater role for the laity.

These diocesan reports were discussed, as were independent submissions, at a national assembly of the church in Athlone on June 18th last in advance of a synthesis to be prepared by a synodal pathway steering group, chaired by Nicola Brady. That synthesis was sent to Rome on Monday as representative of the views of the Irish Catholic Church for consideration at the Synod of Bishops there in October next year.

## **Knock Shrine**

In tandem with the publication of the synthesis on Tuesday, Dr Brady will address its content in a talk at Knock Shrine then also, as part of the resumed national novena there. The novena had been suspended in recent years due to the pandemic.

In his sermon on Monday, Archbishop Farrell said that what was needed in the church today included "functioning structures — parish [and diocesan] councils and committees

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which work and which are empowered to work, and are allowed to work; more active involvement by all”.

He continued that “we need to look anew at how we celebrate the Liturgy, and at the quality of our celebrations” and he asked “who will lead our communities in listening for the voice of God which is spoken in the heart of every person? What structures will help us find ways of waiting for God’s word, and of acting in its light?”

Referring to “the synodal way”, he said “marriage and family were “prime examples of the synodal ways in our lives. What is a marriage but two people who have committed to journeying through life together. In order for this to be worthwhile and life-enhancing, they have to listen to each other, speak with each other, make sacrifices for each other, and at times even endure being misunderstood or taken for granted.”

Looking to the future, Archbishop Farrell said “the church is learning lowliness anew. Year by year, it is becoming more like the humble and simple Christ. It is not an easy road, but it is the only road”.

## **Shankill Road church closing doors after 144 years' serving community**

**A church on Belfast's lower Shankill Road is closing after almost 150 years. Townsend Street Presbyterian Church will shut its doors on Sunday, September 11, Alf McCreary reports in the Belfast Telegraph**

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Rev Jack Lamb, who will retire as minister on September 16 after 27 years' service, previously spent 15 years with a congregation in Stirling. He said church attendance has been in decline.

“When I came to Townsend Street in September 1995 we had 180 families and a congregation of around 120 people each week. Now, we have only about 26 people who come to church on Sunday,” he said.

“This is part of the decline of the population in the local area, which someone has described as 'the pillage of the Shankill'.

“It is also part of the change in the Presbyterian Church at large, which is becoming more of a rural church rather than an inner-city church, although there is encouraging growth in some former inner-city churches with a less traditional form of worship.”

There was a church on the site from 1833, but a local entrepreneur, William Johnston, spearheaded the funding to build the present church in 1878.

It has had a distinguished history serving the people of the Shankill area, and its magnificent 1921 Hunter organ — a memorial to those who served and died in the First World War — is still in great condition.

Rev Lamb added: “Each week a blind man meets me in the church and he plays the organ, which brings the building alive. He plays Bach like a genius.”

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Another feature of the church is the impressive glass window by Wilhelmina Geddes, one of three in revival Irish stained glass featured by the Tower of Glass group.

The church, unlike some other crumbling ecclesiastical edifices, is in superb condition inside and out.

Rev Lamb added: “We knew that, following my retirement at 70, there would not be enough people left for the Presbyterian Church to appoint a new minister here.

“Around the same time part of the sandstone was eroding, and could be a danger to health and safety, so we decided to refurbish the building and also the stained glass.”

This cost some £150,000 and the money came from the congregation's donations stretching back to Victorian times, as well as the charity Ulster Garden Villages and money from the government-backed Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

“Some people might ask why we spent so much money when we knew that we would be closing, but we were determined to leave the building in pristine condition for whoever would come in to start another project,” Rev Lamb explained.

But the story has a brighter ending: the beautiful building and a former primary school on the site is now the base for the Ulster Orchestra, which has moved from its premises in Gloucester Street in Belfast city centre.



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The administrative staff now work in the former school and the church building is used by the musicians, who recently rehearsed with their chief conductor, Daniele Rustioni, prior to their successful visit to the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall.

The orchestra has shown an interest in renting the building for its own purposes.

Rev Lamb added: "We had no idea in advance that this would happen, but we are delighted with the Ulster Orchestra, with whom we have a very good relationship.

"I think that this is literally a godsend — and it feels so right. When I heard the 80-piece orchestra rehearsing for the London Proms in my church, where I had ministered and preached for 27 years, the sound blew me away."

After his retirement Rev Lamb intends to become a tour guide.

## **North Belfast church dismisses claims it is to close or be demolished**

**A north Belfast church has dismissed claims that it is to close or be demolished amid rumours about a planned housing development, Suzanne McGonagle reports in the Irish News**

In a statement, St Gerard's Church on the Antrim Road, said it is to remain open and the "Redemptorist Order remains wholly committed to this parish and to this community".

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It comes following speculation about the future of the church amid plans to build more than 60 houses in the area.

The church said it wanted to "bring parishioners up to date with developments and also to address any misinformation or confused messages you may have heard".

"Most of you will know that planning permission was received to build 64 new much needed houses a few years ago," it said.

"We are now moving ahead with that project and in the next few weeks the formal sale of the land will be completed.

"The first major part of the work, which will take place is the widening of the road to the right of the church, which will allow for access to the site when the housebuilding begins. That does mean there will be disruption here at St Gerard's as the road work takes place. You may have heard that St Gerard's will close, and indeed never re-open. That is not the case.

"The Redemptorist Order remains wholly committed to this parish and to this community."

The church also said "weekend mass will continue throughout the build period", but could be subject to some changes.

"It is likely though that daily mass will move when the time comes, as access to the church during the day, when the construction work is taking place, will simply be impractical," it said.

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"One option is that daily morning mass is moved to the evening and we will also have to consider how midweek funerals will be managed also. But none of this is for the immediate future."

The statement also confirmed that Stepping Stones nursery that uses the parish hall will relocate to Park Lodge Primary School for the coming year as "it is impractical that they access the hall during the constriction period".

"I want to stress too that contrary to anything you might have heard or been told, there are no plans to demolish the hall," the statement added.

## Poem for today

### In Killarney by Francis Duggan

Rain clouds like dark woolly fleeces are in the southern sky  
Where the pied oystercatchers are piping as they fly  
Above the beach at Killarney on Sunday the first of May  
In the grayness before sunset in the fading light of day  
Autumn in south western Victoria is a pleasant time of year  
The weather not too chilly though the Winter days are near  
The humidity of Summer died in the Autumn rain  
From a personal point of view it is nice to have the cooler  
weather back with us again  
A calm Autumn evening by the ocean the weather nice and  
cool  
In Killarney between Port Fairy and the City of Warrnambool

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On the beach a woman walking her golden labrador the only person apart from me  
It is usually a quiet old place Killarney by the Pacific Sea  
The silver gulls are mewling and the pied oystercatchers call  
On Mayday in south west Victoria in Killarney in the Fall.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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