



World Council of Churches calls for immediate ceasefire in Syria



A Tornado GR4 from 903 Expeditionary Air Wing based at RAF Akrotiri, a type used in last weekend's airstrikes.

The international ecumenical body the World Council of Churches (WCC) is urging the international community to find a way to “break
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April 18, 2018

the cycle of violence in Syria.” In a statement issued following the airstrike carried out by France, the UK and US against suspected chemical weapons facilities, the WCC say that “a just and sustainable peace for all Syrians can only be brought about through a political solution” and that it is “intolerable that atrocities are still being perpetrated against civilians.”

In the statement, they say that the UN Security Council has “repeatedly failed to adopt sufficiently strong and consistent measures to put an end to these atrocities, to implement a durable ceasefire, to ensure respect for international law and accountability for all those who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of chemical weapons.”

In addition to calling for an immediate ceasefire, the WCC is asking for unconditional humanitarian access to all regions in Syria, the commitment of all parties to respecting international law and to seeking peace through dialogue and a political process rather than by armed force, the resumption of the UN-led Geneva peace process, and the prompt return in safety and dignity for all civilians who have been forcibly displaced from their homes and lands.

“WCC member churches in Syria and the region will have an important role to play in healing wounded memories and in bringing all Syrians together in a common narrative, for the preservation of Syria’s rich diversity and the restoration of social cohesion,” the statement said. “In this, the WCC assures the churches in Syria that the ecumenical family will accompany them together with the whole people of Syria on this path, in working for a just peace and for human dignity.”

Dromore Cathedral to hold prayer service for farming communities

Dromore Cathedral will host a special service on Saturday 28 April which will recognise the value of, and pray for, our farming communities.

April 18, 2018



Event organisers, The Health & Safety Executive Christian Union, would love to see Dromore Cathedral filled with people passionate to see our rural communities and farm safety transformed by prayer and the love of Jesus.

Rector and Dean of Dromore Cathedral, The Very Revd Geoff Wilson said:

“Having grown up on a farm in County Armagh, I understand only too well the many challenges facing those involved in every aspect of the farming industry at the current time. The

church family of Dromore Cathedral feels particularly privileged to be part of this initiative conceived of by the Christian Union within HSENI. Through the service on 28 April we hope and pray farmers, and their families, will feel that they count for more than the cost of their product and are highly valued in the eyes of our community and in the eyes of God.”

The service begins at **2.30 pm** and will last for approximately an hour with light refreshments served afterwards. All who are interested are warmly invited to come together to ask God to protect the lives of those who farm our land and for a new sense of hope and blessing on our rural communities. Funds raised from an offering on the day will benefit Rural Support NI.

Innovation in dementia care theme of Cork charity's conference

On Thursday 11th April, the 6th Annual Conference – Dementia: Innovations in Care – hosted by Saint Luke's Charity, Cork, and organised by the Northridge House Education and Research churchnewsireland@gmail.org

April 18, 2018

Centre at the Charity, took place at the Radisson Hotel, Little Island, Cork. It was attended by more than 150 delegates from the acute, disability and residential care sectors along with a range of 20 suppliers to the sector exhibiting their products to their customers.



David O'Brien (CEO St Luke's), Prof Alice Coffey (UL), Prof Jan Dewing (Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh) and Dr Paul Colton pictured at St Luke's Charity, 6th Annual Conference.

The opening address was given by the President of Saint Luke's Charity, Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork. As Bishop Colton noted in his welcoming remarks, in times of fast pacing change, responses are made to address changing needs and this was reflected in the title of the Conference, Innovations in Dementia Care.

Once again, a host of very experienced presenters challenged the assumptions many of us hold about the experience of those with Dementia and how to care for them.

Dr Ciara Macglade talked about the changes over time in our understanding of capacity and consent within a healthcare setting. She summed up by telling delegates that capacity and consent is about 'context, and choices and consequences, its about maximising freedom and minimising risk'.

Dr. Chris Luke talked about the improvements being introduced in A & E departments in Cork to allow the person with dementia as stress free a journey as possible ending with the simple message



Some of the participants at the St Luke's Charity, Cork 6th Annual Conference.

of how important it is to simply be kind, to be still and to listen instead of the usual knee jerk feeling that something must be done.

He said - The most important thing you can do is to hold the persons hand for 20 seconds. The transfer of warmth, the touching of a fellow human is astonishingly powerful.

Prof Alice Coffey talked about the development of palliative care guidance documents for persons with dementia produced in conjunction with the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Keynote speaker Professor Jan Dewing asked participants to reject 'staying the same' and to examine their own cultures and to be brave and not to be afraid to change to make things better, try different approaches and do this with everyone on board, ignore the hierarchy and develop a flat structure approach to improving life for people with dementia. She challenged listeners to free up some energy, to allow creativity which in turn effects positive change.

April 18, 2018

She talked about the innovative work of the Donegal Person-Centred Project and how half way through the timescale with another 18 months to go they are witnessing real culture change and real benefits. She acknowledged that it wasn't easy, required commitment at all levels but that it was worth it.

After lunch presentations by St Luke's own Celine O Shea on meaningful occupation for people with dementia along with Ms Mary Mannix CNM from the Mercy Hospital on improvements in there for people with dementia highlighted the growing awareness for attention and knowledge in this area.

Finally a refreshing HIQA Inspector for the disability Sector, Ms. Florence Farrelly, reassured the sector that whilst regulations must be understood and implemented, that her main focus was that clients in the disability sector were looked after with love and kindness and quality existences.

The masterclasses which followed the conference the next day continued the practical learning, discussion and debate.

Fellow delegates shared their enthusiasm for the Conference describing it as 'inspiring', 'really beneficial' and an opportunity for 'networking' and 'sharing experience'.

Trio to abseil from Belfast hotel roof for inner-city church re-start

An intrepid trio from St Stephen's & St Luke's, Diocese of Connor, will step off the roof of the Europa Hotel, Belfast, on Sunday April 22 and abseil down its walls to raise funds for their parish. Katrina McKechnie, Giselle Coulter and Giselle's dad Jackie Coulter are preparing for this daunting sponsored challenge to raise money towards a £10,000 target for the purchase of chairs for the newly renovated interior of St Stephen's Church in Millfield.

Team Ministry Leader, the Rev Canon James Carson, said: "It's fabulous that Katrina, Giselle and Jackie are up for doing the

April 18, 2018

abseil, it is a fun event and we will be cheering them on from the ground.”

Canon Carson said the parish has almost completed phase two of its renovation project. “Thanks to our terrific trio this sponsored event will bring us closer to hitting our £10,000 target for chairs,” he added.

A Just Giving Page has been set up for anyone who would like to encourage the abseil team and the congregation of St Stephen and St Luke’s. You can make a donation at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ststephens

Church women mark National Walking Month with fund raiser for post-natal Bags of Hope

Aurelia Kelly, organiser of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion parishes’ ME at 8 project, has jointly launched a ladies’ fitness initiative to mark National Walking Month.

Aurelia and her friend Amanda McCallion, from the Parishes of St Colmanell’s, Ahoghill, and Portglenone, launched *Fit for ME Fit for LIFE* on April 13 – recording a video in a field in the great outdoors! The initiative will be held during May, and ladies are invited to come together for a walk in the countryside followed by talks from a guest speaker.

The events will take place on May 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th, meeting at St Colmanell’s. Ahoghill, on the 9th and 23rd and at Drummaul, Randalstown, on the 16th and 30th.

Aurelia, wife of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion curate the Rev Trevor Kelly, said: “We are delighted to welcome Liz Weir, author and storyteller, and Lindsay Robinson (Have You Seen That Girl?) as two of our speakers.”

April 18, 2018

Lindsay has spoken at a previous ME at 8 meeting, talking about her experiences of post-natal depression, an issue close to Aurelia's heart as she herself suffered from this debilitating illness.

Following Lindsay's last talk, Aurelia and the ladies at ME at 8 pledged to raise funds to buy candles for Lindsay to include in the Bags of Hope she hands out to mums in the community.

"The candle symbolises to mums hope in times of despair," said Aurelia. "At our final May evening we will be hosting a special Vintage Supper as a fundraiser for Lindsay's Bags of Hope."

You can watch Aurelia and Amanda launching Fit for ME Fit for LIFE or get more information about the initiative on the ME at 8 Facebook page.

Christian rugby player cleared following gay comment controversy

Israel Folau, one of the world's best rugby players, has been cleared of wrongdoing after he found himself in the middle of a social media storm over comments about homosexuality.

The Australian full-back, who holds a traditional Christian understanding of the issue, replied to a question on Instagram which asked what God's plan was for gay people.

His employer, Rugby Australia, had said his comments "did not reflect the views" of the organisation but on Tuesday the organisation's boss said: "In his own words, Israel said that he did not intend to upset people intentionally or bring hurt to the game. We accept Israel's position."

Folau had defended his comments on the Players Voice website.

In a long article in which he talks about the basics of Christianity, he said: "People's lives are not for me to judge. Only God can do that."



"I have sinned many times in my life. I take responsibility for those sins and ask for forgiveness through repentance daily."

Speaking about his views on homosexuality and sin, he went on to say he was unprepared to "compromise my faith in Jesus Christ, which is the cornerstone of every single thing in my life".

Fields of Life Annual Carry Jerry event is back

This year to celebrate their 25th Anniversary the organisers are hoping to make it even bigger and better! They would love to get 250 people to join them as they walk the Causeway Coastal Route on Sat 5th May 2018 to raise funds for clean water in East Africa. Will you join them?

Download the Carry Jerry Challenge 2018 Information Pack from their website and keep an eye on their Facebook page for all of the information you need, like what to wear and what to bring (don't forget a raincoat and a packed lunch!)

When: 5th May 2018. Where: Causeway Coastal Loop. Distance: Approximately 5 miles

Registration: £10 per adult, £5 per child

Why: To raise funds to provide clean water in East Africa

April 18, 2018

Contact: helen.darcy@fieldsoflife.org for more information
Download and complete the Carry Jerry Registration Form and return to our office by 23rd April.

Download your Carry Jerry Sponsorship Form to raise funds for clean water in East Africa.

All forms and packs are available on the website <https://fieldsoflife.org/news/carry-jerry-2018/>



Renaissance Choir in Belfast Cathedral

The Belfast-based Renaissance Choir will be singing Choral Evensong on Saturday April 21 at 5.30pm. The choir is directed by Ian Mills. Music by Clucas, Gibbons and Tallis.

