

Church News Ireland



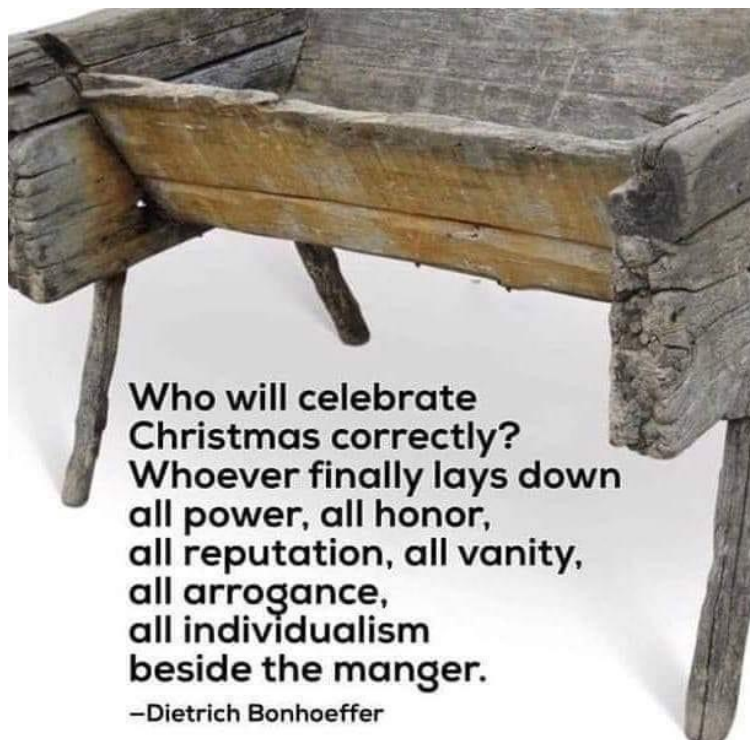
Image of the day – Maghera nativity

Image of the day



Maghera nativity

The young people of St Lurach's Maghera retold and reenacted the Christmas story.





New manger scene in Armagh cathedral

St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh has a new manger scene and has expressed gratitude...

“for the skill, time and effort that went into the creation of our beautiful new Manger Scene in the Cathedral.

“It was designed, created and assembled by Mrs McDowell and colleagues from the Royal School Armagh, to whom we offer our sincere thanks.”

It is located in the South aisle of the Cathedral”.



Ballyclare and Ballynure share Christmas blessings

“And so the Christmas blessings continue in the United Parish as we bless our community with hot chocolate, Christmas wrapping paper, sellotape and candy cane giveaways.

“A huge thank you to all those who helped spread cheer on our streets. Even Santa made an appearance...

'Not that numbers matter by here's what we served :

'200+ hot chocolate, 80 rolls of wrapping paper, 50 sellotape rolls, 200 candy canes

Christmas Day Dinners

The following will be open on Christmas Day to provide traditional Christmas Dinners



City Church Belfast

City Church Belfast are opening on Christmas Day to provide Free meal on **Christmas Day 12pm-2pm** for those who find themselves lonely and homeless over the Christmas period. The Christmas Dinner will be taking place in **Common Grounds 12-24 University Ave, Belfast**. There will be Halal & Veggie options available on the day. To book please contact City Church: 028 9023 8443



Ballynafeigh Methodist Church & Rosario Youth Centre

Ballynafeigh Methodist Church & Rosario Youth Centre are partnering to provide a Community Christmas Dinner on **Christmas Day 12-2pm**. The Christmas meal is taking place in **Ballynafeigh Methodist Church 338 Ormeau Road**.

No booking is required to attend the Christmas Day Meal



Belvoir Community Hub

Belvoir Community Hub are having a Christmas Dinner Bring & Share on **Christmas Day 12pm-4pm**. If you are are lonely on Christmas Day or want some family company you can join Belvoir Community Hub for Christmas Dinner.

To book your space please contact James Scott on 07738081992 or james@belvoircommunityhub.co.uk



Christmas Day Dinners in South Belfast

Ballynafeigh Methodist Church, Rosario Football Club, Belfast City Church, Belfast and Belvoir and Milltown Community Hub are providing Christmas Dinners on Christmas Day to anyone who finds themselves lonely or facing financial hardship this Christmas.

Free **WELLBEING WEDNESDAY**
BREAKFAST

£FREE

BELFAST
UUSU Bar, CQ Social, Block BC
Ground Floor

COLERAINE
Students' Union

MAGEE
Rock Road Social, in the
kitchenette space

JORDANSTOWN
Collect a free breakfast pack from
the Sports Centre

30TH NOVEMBER
7TH DECEMBER
14TH DECEMBER

8:30AM - 10AM



Clergy sit out for charities



24 hour stout for Habitat for Humanity at Drumbeg

Canon Willie Stewart of Drumbeg Parish in the Diocese of Down & Dromore has completed another of his annual 24 hour stouts raising awareness of and funds for Habitat for Humanity

In Clogher Diocese

Two leading clerics in Clogher Diocese will be wrapping up warm over the next few weeks as they prepare for 12-hour charity sit outs.

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On Wednesday, 14 December, **Archdeacon Brian Harper** will be taking part in his annual charity sit out at the gates of Magheracross Parish Church, Main Street, Ballinamallard alongside his colleague in Ballinamallard Methodist Church, Revd John Beacom. The sit out will take place from 8am to 8pm.

This year they will be supporting Tearfund and its work with Ukrainian aid agencies and the Water Drops project, building water storage tanks in Kajiado diocese where drought is a major problem. Water Drops is a charity run by Ronnie and Maggie Briggs who have 40 years' experience of living and working among the Maasai community in the Kajiado Diocese of Kenya where they worked as mission partners with CMS Ireland.

Then on Thursday, 22 December, **Dean Kenneth Hall** will take part in his first charity sit out at the gates of St. Macartin's Cathedral, Church Street, Enniskillen, from 9am to 9pm for local, national and international charities.

The charities supported by the Dean's sit out include Water Drops. Another charity supported is Air Ambulance NI which provides the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service for the region. The final charity supported is St Macartin's Cathedral Outreach Fund helping to fund groups such as Parenting and Wellbeing, Messy Church, Xplore, Supper at Six and Senior Citizens.

CNI



Congratulations to all these Girls' Brigade members who recently received their Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award at the Presentation Evening on Friday 25th November.

News reports

Parish minister denies £10,000 fraud

A parish minister has denied stealing more than £10,000 from his church and a hospital group.

Rev Adrian McLaughlin pleaded not guilty to six charges of fraud, most of them relating to the alleged abuse of the position he held at St Colman's Parish Church in Dunmurry.

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The other relates to his role with the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) Liver Support Group, with the offences alleged to have been committed over a two-year period. The 48-year-old stood in the dock of Craigavon Crown Court on Thursday to deny the charges against him.

Currently on gardening leave from his church, the minister is accused of writing out a £10,000 cheque to himself, taking a £1,000 donation and £520 from two people, one who paid to use the church hall.

It is also alleged he pocketed donations from a funeral held at the church intended to go to RVH's Liver Support Group. At the time he was a trustee for the money which would benefit the charity.

A defence lawyer said a forensic accountant would be instructed to look at the finances of Rev McLaughlin and St Colman's Church.

Rev McLaughlin was bailed, with the judge scheduling the trial for February and listing it for review next Friday.

Paul Higgins reporting in Belfast Telegraph December 10 2022

Former York Minster chorister Naomi wins BBC Young Chorister of the Year Contest 2022

York Minster has celebrated the outstanding achievement of former chorister Naomi Simon who on

Sunday announced as the winner of the BBC's Young Chorister of the Year Contest.

Sixteen year-old Naomi, a chorister at York Minster from 2016 until 2020 and now a student and chorister at Rugby School, took the title in the contest final which was televised on BBC Two on Sunday 11 December. Samuel Brophy, 15, a former chorister from 2018 until 2020, also reached the final stage of the contest.

Naomi won through with a performance of the Christmas song 'Mary, Did You Know' composed by Lowry and Greene.

Canon Victoria Johnson, Precentor at York Minster said: "There are no words to describe the absolute joy and pride of everyone at York Minster this morning. It was thrilling enough to have two former choristers make it to the final. To have Naomi win the title is simply overwhelming.

"Being a chorister is a very special experience. As well as learning how to sing and perform the most sublime choral music, choristers also learn self-discipline, self-organisation, resilience and patience - skills that will prepare them for life. It is also great fun!

"We hope Naomi's achievement will inspire and encourage children who love singing to follow in her footsteps and explore the possibility of becoming a chorister."

York Minster is currently recruiting new choristers for the academic year 2023. For more information please contact,

St Peter's School, York, the Choir School for York Minster at www.stpetersyork.org

Rev Dr Norman Taggart remembered by church in Sri Lanka

Rev Dr Norman Taggart a former President of the Irish Methodist Church served as the Minister at KMC in Sri Lanka from 1990-1994. The church there stated, "After having served the Lord faithfully for many decades, he was called to continue to serve Him in His nearer presence on Saturday 10 December".

One of the many missionaries from the Irish Methodist Church who served at KMC, Rev Taggart's ministry at KMC saw a new awakening in all aspects of its ministry. Many of those currently in leadership today came into leadership through his encouragement. Towering a great height of 6'4", he won the hearts of young and old of all three congregations. He participated with great enthusiasm in all the activities of the different ministries, and was not above having a rollicking game of chair volleyball with the young people, or doing various dances during skits! His ministry saw the launch of Christian Care of Kollupitiya, a particular feature of which was the weekly prayer vigil for Sri Lanka, the monthly Christian growth seminars held on Poya Day, a very successful revival mission with the launch of several housegroups, just to name a few. Rev Taggart was renowned for his pastoral care. A unique feature of his ministry was his giving each ministry the space to carry out their programs while keeping himself aware of all that they

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were doing. His sermons were simple yet profound, and greatly inspiring.

Rev Taggart, after his return to Ireland, served as President of the Irish Methodist Church. He continued to visit Sri Lanka regularly, and never failed to minister at KMC during his visits, even celebrating his 75th birthday with the KMC family.

“The KMC family extended its sympathy and assurance of prayers to his children and their families. May Rev Taggart rest in peace and rise in glory”.

Perspective

The present-day relevance of the Christmas Story - The Archbishop of York

The Archbishop of York joined BBC Radio 2 Breakfast on Monday morning to deliver a Pause for Thought. This follows in full:

Twenty years ago, when our children were little and money was tight, I sometimes dreaded switching on the television at this time of year.

One glossy advert after another told them what stuff I had to buy them. Or painted such an impossibly cheery, fun filled and extravagant picture of Christmas family life that I felt sure the reality of our Christmas would be rather disappointing.

Neither were things necessarily much better when we went to church, for the Christmas story itself was often presented in a way that seemed way too cosy, almost Disney.

So a stable turned out to be quite the loveliest place for a mother to give birth. Shepherds in the middle of the night the most welcome visitors.

I expect for many families things may feel even worse this Christmas. Money is very, very tight. Bills higher. Help welcome, but limited. And last night it snowed, the world grinds to a halt.

What do we say to our children and grandchildren when we simply can't afford to buy the things the adverts stress they want or need. How will we put Christmas dinner on the table when so many people who were donating to food banks a year ago now use them themselves? Or even harder to imagine, or to bear, those who are having to make choices, between heating and eating?

I don't know the answers to these questions.

But I do feel the stress.

All I can do is turn to the Christmas story itself.

Which is not cosy. It's about a pregnant teenager, a poll-tax summons, a difficult journey, an overcrowded city, a frightening birth in the outhouse at the back of a pub, and then a little refugee family fleeing genocide.

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Christians believe that this incredible story is the story of God, God come down to earth. God sharing what it is to be human. It brings hope to the bleakest situation, precisely because it is so real and resonates so powerfully with the dark and difficult things we experience.

It is therefore light in the most oppressive darkness.

And it can also bring joy in great simplicity.

Therefore, this story, the story of God among us, might enable us, however challenging things are, to have a very happy Christmas when it comes.

And maybe even make the next fortnight, as we get ready for Christmas, a little less stressful.

Poem for today

The Blackbird Of Derrycainn by Austin Clarke

Stop, stop and listen for the bough top
Is whistling and the sun is brighter
Than God's own shadow in the cup now!
Forget the hour-bell. Mournful matins
Will sound, Patric, as well at nightfall.

Faintly through mist of broken water
Fionn heard my melody in Norway.

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He found the forest track, he brought back
This beak to gild the branch and tell, there,
Why men must welcome in the daylight.

He loved the breeze that warns the black grouse,
The shouts of gillies in the morning
When packs are counted and the swans cloud
Loch Erne, but more than all those voices
My throat rejoicing from the hawthorn.

In little cells behind a cashel,
Patric, no handbell gives a glad sound.
But knowledge is found among the branches.
Listen! That song that shakes my feathers
Will thong the leather of your satchels.

World Cup Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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