

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Clogher’s Freezing fund raisers

Image of the day

Clogher's Freezing fund raisers

There was a heartwarming ending to the annual charity sit-out in Ballinamallard on Wednesday, 14 December by Archdeacon Brian Harper of Magheracross Parish Church and Revd John Beacom of Ballinamallard Methodist Church in sub-zero temperatures.

The amount raised at the end of the 12-hour sit-out was £5144.75, an increase on last year.

The day began for Archdeacon Brian, Revd John accompanied by Naomi Armstrong of the Youth Ministry Group, with temperatures as low as -10C only rising to -1C during the day when the sun came out.

However the group was encouraged by the continual support of parishioners and worshippers of both churches as well as passers-by and by the generous donations of hot food from local businesses and supporters.

The charities supported this year include Tear Fund and its work Ukrainian aid agencies and the Water Drops project building water tanks in Kajiado Diocese where drought is a major problem.

Photo - page 1: Naomi Armstrong with Revd John Beacom Archdeacon Brian Harper and Bishop Ian Ellis.

News reports

Carol service dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II and her values



Members of the Royal Family attended a carol service at Westminster Abbey to recognise the selfless efforts of individuals, families and communities across the UK, and celebrate and showcase the joy that human connection and togetherness can bring.

Spearheaded by The Prince and Princess of Wales' Royal Foundation, the service was dedicated to the late Queen Elizabeth II and the values she demonstrated throughout her life, including duty, empathy, faith, service, kindness, compassion and support for others. These principles are



shared and personified by the inspirational guests who were invited to the Abbey in recognition of their work to help and care for those around them.

Belfast Cathedral hosts one of three St Anne Trust Carolfests

A charity formed in 2015 to foster cross-community relations and build friendships through the medium of music hosted one of three Carolfests in Belfast Cathedral on Thursday December 8.

Involving three local schools, the Carolfest in the Cathedral has been organised over the past number of years by the St Anne Trust, which this year expanded its annual

programme, with schools' Carol Services taking place in two additional venues.

The first was held in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, on Thursday December 1 in the presence of two Archbishops of Armagh, the Most Rev John McDowell (Church of Ireland) and the Most Rev Eamon Martin (Roman Catholic) who delivered a joint blessing. Participating primary schools were Hardy Memorial (Richill), Saints and Scholars Integrated and St Malachy's, both Armagh.

The focus on Wednesday December 7 was the Parish of St Philip and St James, Holywood, when the choirs of Glencraig Integrated, Holywood Primary and St Patrick's Primary all shared their wonderful talents in a well-attended service.

When Carolfest returned to Belfast Cathedral on December 8, the pupils of Jordanstown School, along with children from Cliftonville Integrated and Holy Cross Boys' contributed to a truly festive service.

At all three services, teachers and parents representing the participating schools read the lessons and the congregations also enjoyed singing seasonal carols.

Patron of the St Anne Trust is Dame Fionnuala Jay O'Boyle DBE DStJ LL, who in a message to all those taking part wrote: "Music is a very special gift. It has the power to enhance, transform and heal and often it connects when words alone are not enough.



At the Carolfest in Belfast Cathedral are, from left: Mr Joe Watson, Chairman of the St Anne Trust; Dame Fionnuala Jay O'Boyle DBE DStJ, Lord Lieutenant for Belfast and Patron of the St Anne Trust; the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet; and Mr Richard Jay BEM, Vice Chair of the St Anne Trust.

“As Patron of The St Anne Trust, I am passionate about the power of music and singing. With my fellow trustees, I believe that every child should have the opportunity to raise their voice and experience the transformative power of singing in a choir. The skills learnt therein will be skills learnt for life.”

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, welcomed the schools and their wider communities to

December 17, 2022

Belfast Cathedral, describing the St Anne Trust Carolfest as one of the highlights of the Christmas season in St Anne's.

“Music is always special, and the music of Christmas allows us to weave harmonies instead of discord, and to discover the importance of waiting at a silent pause, to enjoy all the more the magic of a shared carol,” said the Dean.

“In this way, the meaning of Christmas, and the singing of the angels, are made more real for each one of us who participates in this festival of carols.”

Civic Recognition for work of Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross during Coronavirus Pandemic

The Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Deirdre Forde, recently hosted a reception in the Concert Hall at Cork City Hall ‘to recognise and build on the collective efforts of all Community Response Partners in supporting our most vulnerable people and communities over the past few years.’

Among those recognised for ‘outstanding service to the community’ during the years of the Coronavirus Pandemic to date was the Church of Ireland in Cork Cloyne and Ross. The Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, who is a member of the Community Response Forum in Cork City and Cork County was present to receive the certificate on behalf of everyone in the Diocese who served, volunteered and worked in so many ways to maintain and support community life during



With Bishop Paul Colton, at Cork City Hall for the recent awards ceremony were (l-r) Valerie Kirby, Kate Durrant (Blarney Parish) and Councillor Dr John Sheehan.

the pandemic, and especially those who are most vulnerable.

December 17, 2022

Introducing an ecumenical and interfaith minute's silence of remembrance and thanksgiving, Bishop Colton told the gathering that in his nearly 24 years as Bishop of Cork he had never seen such a diverse partnership of individuals and groups in both the City and County who mobilised across many boundaries and differences in order to do what needed to be done in recent years in response to the current needs of society. 'Quite simply' the Bishop said, 'these have been among the most potent partnerships I



December 17, 2022

have ever seen here. People who are very different in outlook and worldview have worked across their differences for the common good.’ This observation struck a chord with those present and was greeted with spontaneous applause.

The Lord Mayor called the evening ‘Glance Back – Look Forward’. It is planned to build on these community partnerships which have also been to the fore in responding to the needs of Ukrainians fleeing the war in Ukraine. More recently the Community Response Forum in Cork City has broadened its brief to harness the collaboration, in support of all of the most vulnerable in the City.



Church Missionary Society Ireland has completed a planning process with Dean Geoff Wilson (Dromore Cathedral) as he prepares to undertake part of his sabbatical in the Diocese of Maridi, S. Sudan in early January. Your prayers please for Dean Wilson as he prepares to fully immerse himself into the life and ministry of the Sudanese Church for 4 weeks.



Cathedral architect for St Patrick's Dublin

Following a series of recruitment competitions, Saint Patrick's Cathedral announced the appointment of James Howley as Cathedral Architect.

(L – R, photograph): Cathedral Fabric Committee Chair George Good, The Very Reverend Dean Dr William Morton, Cathedral Architect James Howley, Cathedral Administrator (CEO) Gavan Woods

Director of Dublin-based architectural design practice Howley Hayes Cooney, James has undertaken several

December 17, 2022

major projects including work on the Law Society of Ireland, Carlingford Castle and People's Park Pavillion.

His diversity and expertise will be a great asset to Saint Patrick's Cathedral in the next phases of crucial development. The Cathedral team looks forward to a long and successful partnership.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Follow The Star: The Great Invitation

Follow The Star: The Great Invitation consists of 12 reflections from a range of contributors including the Archbishops who share personal stories exploring themes of invitation.

Starting on Christmas Eve and continuing daily (Monday to Saturday) until the Epiphany (6 January), these reflections will help you make space this Christmas. On each of the 12 days, a different contributor will share something that speaks of a Christmas invitation for them, bringing the theme to life through a mixture of personal story, Bible reading, reflection and challenge.

These reflections will also be made available freely via:
Email

December 17, 2022

The Follow the Star App, with written reflections and audio, both written and audio with accompanying resources for children and families

Smart speaker: tell your smart speaker to "Ask the Church of England for today's Follow the Star reflection"

The Daily Hope free phone line to listen each day: 0800 804 8044

[\[https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/follow-star-great-invitation\]](https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/follow-star-great-invitation)

Advent and Christmas St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork

A full list of Services for Advent and Christmas 2022 and into 2023 is available at this link on the website of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork. All are welcome to worship.

[\[https://corkcathedral.webs.com/advent-christmas-services\]](https://corkcathedral.webs.com/advent-christmas-services)

Perspective

Graced by God: Elizabeth, Mother of John the Baptist - An Advent reflection by Andrew Nunn

There is one person who stands out from all the rest as being an Advent companion, though what kind of companion he'd make I am not really sure.

Any group of pilgrims will have easy companions amongst them and those who, well, let's say, are more challenging. Chaucer's 'Miller' is anything but an easy character.

Physically he's stout and brawny, has a wart on his nose and a big mouth. When he gets his way in telling his tale it turns out to be blasphemous, ridiculing religious clerks, scholarly clerks, carpenters, and women, some of whom are amongst the party.

As we light the third of the candles on the Advent Crown we remember John the Baptist. Whilst he's not like the Miller he doesn't ever hold back in his criticism of people. If you were a soldier, or a tax collector or just a member of the crowd there was sting in the tail for you. John was a colossus; just as Anna who we thought about last week brought the Old Testament spirit of prophecy into the new, so does John, but on another scale. It is as though Elijah is back, challenging, upsetting. John is not the person to invite to your Advent supper with his strange diet, his unkempt appearance and his way with words; the table would be in uproar. Yet this is one of the companions on the journey as we are heading to Bethlehem, 'Bethlehem Bound' as I describe it in my new book.

But there is someone associated with John that we don't hear much from, yet she has a part to play in this journey. The person is Elizabeth, John's mother. She is nowhere near the desert where John is to be found, instead she is in the Judean hills, in a small town where she is still the talk of the neighbourhood. Her story is told in Luke Chapter 1.

They still look at me, you know, a sideways glance. Don't get me wrong, they are pleasant, more than pleasant, friendly. But when I'm leaving the market with the food I need to prepare a meal for my husband Zechariah, I can feel them looking, hear them whispering. I'm not really

December 17, 2022

fascinating at all, except for one small, maybe not so small, thing. We had given up all hope of having a baby. I was too old, that was the top and bottom of it, too old, barren, like a piece of useless wasteland. They looked at me then with pity. So when word got round that I was pregnant it wasn't only my husband who was struck dumb! I called him John, that also disturbed their way of thinking, unsettled their conventions – but I had to, that's what the angel had told us to do. John. Actually, that's what you call him, but I called him Yohanan, and in Hebrew that means “graced by God.” My husband made up a song about him. “And you child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways”. My grace-filled baby, who brought grace and joy to my life – whatever the neighbours might think.

God of grace,
may we know your blessing
and be your blessing
in the world.
Amen.

The Very Revd Andrew Nunn is Dean of Southwark. His latest book is *Bethlehem Bound: Journeying with the Characters of Christ*

Poem for today

A Song for Simeon by Thomas Stearns Eliot

December 17, 2022

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;
The stubborn season has made stand.
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,
Like a feather on the back of my hand.
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.
Grant us thy peace.

I have walked many years in this city,
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,
Have taken and given honour and ease.
There went never any rejected from my door.

Who shall remember my house,
where shall live my children's children

When the time of sorrow is come ?
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation
Grant us thy peace.

Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,
Now at this birth season of decease,
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
Grant Israel's consolation
To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.

According to thy word,
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
With glory and derision,
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.

December 17, 2022

Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and
prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.

(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,
Thine also).

I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after
me.

Let thy servant depart,
Having seen thy salvation.

World Cup 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
