

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Dublin's Black Santa

Image of the day

Dublin's Black Santa

Canon Paul Arbuthnot of St Ann's, Dawson Street, Dublin, is keeping alive this much needed tradition of enabling support for local charities and causes.

People and places

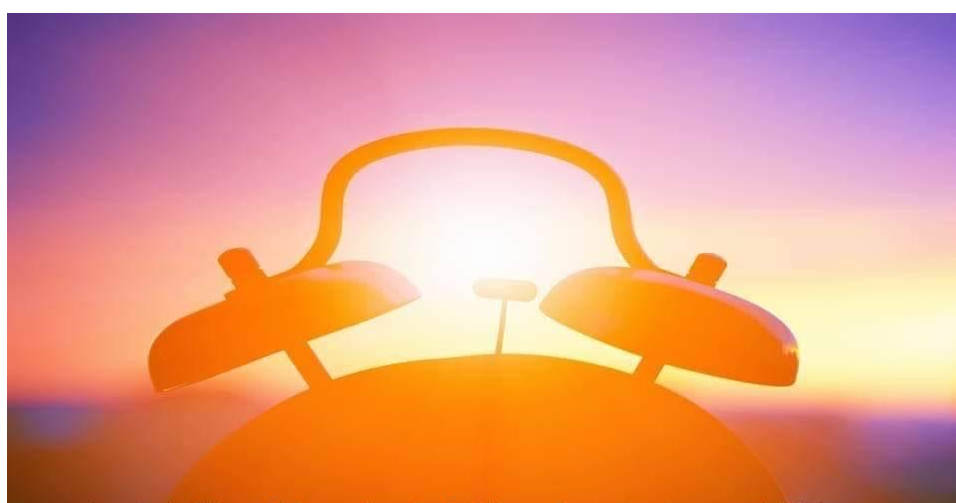


Seasonal clerical attire in Clogher




 **Carol Service** 
Sunday 18th at 3:30PM **ST MARY'S PRO-CATHEDRAL**

Palestrina Choir this Sunday at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral



Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy, whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy, be there at our waking and give us, we pray, your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day. ~ Jan Struther



News reports



Former church school property is part of £40 million Northern Regional College campus

The £40 million Northern Regional College campus on Union Street, Coleraine will be a ‘shared asset’ for students and the local community

The former St Patrick’s Church of Ireland hall will be a self-contained performing arts and music centre providing an additional resource not only for the College but also for the community.

When walking or driving around Coleraine town centre area you simply cannot miss the imposing construction taking place on Union Street.

The new state-of-the-art Northern Regional College (NRC) campus site is an impressive addition to the town's skyline, and having reached its maximum height and the halfway stage of the construction, a topping out event was held to mark the occasion with Economy Minister Gordon Lyons in attendance.

A strong association between the local community and the



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

11.30 p.m.

Midnight Communion
and Crib Blessing

Christmas Day

10.00 a.m.

Family Service

New Year's Day

10.00 a.m.

Informal first
Sunday service

6.30 p.m.

Compline



St Mark's Dundela, Belfast

estimated 1000 students expected to attend the new campus is a key factor with a number of exciting shared spaces an integral part of the NRC's plans.

A fully equipped and high quality restaurant and hair and beauty salon, both of which will, at set times, be open to the public will provide students with the opportunity to train in a realistic environment.

Joint Christmas Message from the Bishops of Cork

The Most Reverend Dr Fintan Gavin and the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton write:

Christmas 2022 is here. Yet another year has passed with all its many changes and immense challenges. Yet, the Christmas message remains timeless. 'The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us.' God is with us. Jesus Christ is the light who shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not put out that light.

More than that, in a time of so many threats to our humanity and our well-being - the continuing pandemic, war in Europe and conflicts around the world, poverty, famine, migration on a massive scale, poverty, homelessness - the Christmas Message speaks pointedly and timelessly once more into these and many other situations too.

What could be more challenging to us all individually and as a society at this time than the experience of the Holy Family?



The Bishops of Cork out and about this week at the blessing of the SHARE Crib in Cork with the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Deirdre Forde. Bishop Fintan Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross (left) and Bishop Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (right). Photography By Gerard McCarthy

‘There was no room for them at the inn.’ In their country at the time the whole world was in upheaval and on the move.

The lives of Mary and Joseph were turned upside down by the unexpected. Their baby was born in a vulnerable and unsuitable place. Many wondered what was going on and what it all meant. Many still struggle to understand. That young family had to leave in a hurry to escape the threat of violence and death. They were given safety and shelter in a

neighbouring country. All of this, seems to speak to so much in our own time and context still.

Our calling as followers of the baby born that Christmas Day in the manger is to love the baby born in the stable and the adult he became, to love God whose love for us is unending and never limited, and, because of that love, to love our neighbour.

As an adult Jesus taught us that our neighbour isn't just the familiar person next door.

Again and again, we are called, by him whom we follow, to love and to respond to the needs of strangers and to offer hospitality to them.

The generosity of so many Irish people at Christmas time is inspiring as we reach out to support those who are most vulnerable in our society.

As we respond to the seemingly timeless challenges of people in our communities we become instruments of God's timeless love and presence.

Together, at this Christmas, we pray for God's blessing on you all and thank you for all that you do as neighbours to and for each other, friend and stranger.

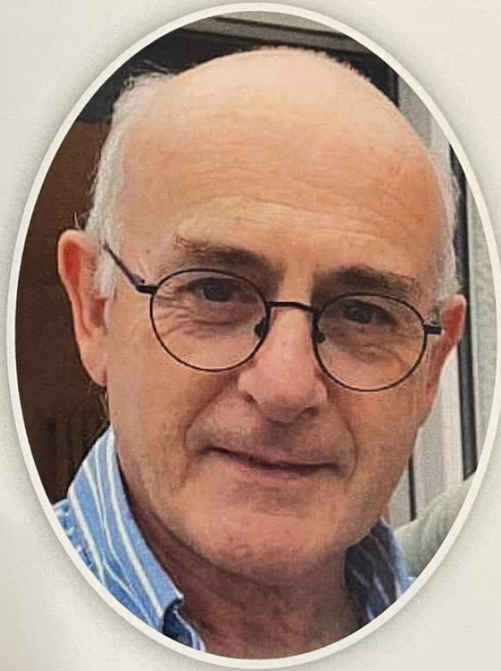
May the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas.

+Fintan Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross.

+Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

Requiem Mass for the happy
repose of the soul of the late
**Rev Deacon
Brendan McAllister RIP**

18th November 1956 - 13th December 2022



May he rest in Peace

Saturday 17th December 2022
at 12 noon

Main Celebrant: Very Rev Canon Francis Brown



Printed on behalf of
Daniel Mallon Funeral Directors
The Gatehouse, Mill Road, Bessbrook
Tel: 0300 222 220 / 0300 222 220

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Read by Brendan's nieces and nephews

Brendan and his family were blessed in the care, skill, kindness and generosity he received from the nurses and doctors in Daisy Hill Hospital. We pray that they will know what a difference their loving care made.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Brendan's time studying for and carrying out his role as deacon was a time of deep spiritual fulfillment. During this period he found a new community of brother deacons. May God guide them as they continue their vocation, now guided by his love and friendship.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Brendan had a lifelong vocation for building peace, reconciliation, and healing here in Northern Ireland and globally.
We pray for peace on our island and peace in our world.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

In addition to his spirituality, Brendan's sense of humor defined who he was. He was a joyful storyteller, with a sense of humor that was mischievous, silly, and delivered with a twinkle in his eye.
May we always have time for joy and laughter.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Brendan believed that after the death of our loved ones, we see their spirit in each other and in all of creation, sensing their spirit in all sorts of places, touching us with love, surprising us, and stretching us for the rest of our lives.
We remember today those who have gone before him, especially his parents Dessie and Lucy.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Brendan said repeatedly that he felt so happy, lucky, and loved by his entire circle of family and friends, but especially by his grandsons, children, and his Elizabeth. May God wrap his loved ones in his loving care in the weeks and months to come.
Lord Hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Funeral of Brendan McAllister

The Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Colman in Newry was packed on Saturday for the Funeral of Brendan McAllister.

The homily, reflections and prayers of the faithful were a powerfully moving, loving and even funny tribute to a great

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man, and the music and choir singing was just heavenly, Justin McNulty writes.

Brendan was a man of immense talent and diverse interests. He was someone who was prepared to step outside his own niche and try something completely different. He was creative and innovative, fair minded and strong willed.

Brendan had many roles that he excelled in including being a former chair of the SDLP Newry Branch, however, Brendan's major contribution to Ireland and across the world was as a mediator who helped solve many contentious situations. He was trusted and respected wherever he went.

Brendan will be sorely missed by his family and everyone who knew and loved him.

Pope Francis' Message for World Day of Peace 2023

Pope Francis has released his message for the World Day of Peace, to be celebrated on 1 January 2023, stressing that all crises are interconnected and we must not forget any of them, but work for the good of humanity.

The Holy Father's message, released on Friday, opens with a quotation from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (5:1-2).

"Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

Thus, the Pope recalls that the Apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonian community to remain steadfast. Likewise he says, "when tragic events seem to overwhelm our lives, we are called to keep our hearts open to hope and to trust in God, who makes himself present, accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness and, above all, guides our path."

There is light even in the darkest hour, says Pope Francis, before going on to use the Covid-19 pandemic as an example: "The pandemic seems to have upset even the most peaceful parts of our world, and exposed any number of forms of fragility."

Three years later, he stresses, "the time is right to question, learn, grow and allow ourselves to be transformed as individuals and as communities" reminding us, as he has done before, that "we never emerge the same from times of crisis: we emerge either better or worse."

This experience has made us all the more aware of the need for everyone, including peoples and nations, to restore the word "together" to a central place in our lexicon. Only the peace that comes from a fraternal and disinterested love can help us overcome personal, societal and global crises.

"Our greatest and yet most fragile treasure is our shared humanity as brothers and sisters, children of God. None of us can be saved alone."

Pope Francis goes on to stress that this is not the post-Covid era we had hoped for or expected. "At the very moment when we dared to hope that the darkest hours of the Covid-19 pandemic were over, a terrible new disaster befell humanity," he said, noting that the world witnessed the onslaught of another scourge: another war, "driven by culpable human decisions."

Pope Francis notes that the war in Ukraine is "reaping innocent victims and spreading insecurity, not only among those directly affected, but in a widespread and indiscriminate way for everyone, also for those who, even thousands of kilometres away, suffer its collateral effects - we need but think of grain shortages and fuel prices."

"This war," he says, "together with all the other conflicts around the globe, represents a setback for the whole of humanity and not merely for the parties directly involved."

While a vaccine has been found for Covid-19, suitable solutions have not yet been found for the war."

"Certainly, the virus of war is more difficult to overcome than the viruses that compromise our bodies, because it comes, not from outside of us, but from within the human heart corrupted by sin."

"What then is being asked of us?" the Pope asks, in light of all these difficult times: "First of all, to let our hearts be changed by our experience of the crisis."

In fact, he explains: "we can no longer think exclusively of carving out space for our personal or national interests, (...) instead we must think in terms of the common good."

More at -

[<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46144>]

Bishops to remain silent following meeting to discuss Church's stance on same-sex marriage

Bishops in the Church of England have met for a second time this year to discuss the Church's next steps for same-sex marriage.

The House and College of Bishops met during three days last week to further discuss the outcome of the Living in Love and Faith report, a call for churches to discern whether to allow the blessing and marriage of same-sex couples.

During the meeting, bishops shared their views on the report's results and agreed that in the next meeting, scheduled for mid-January 2023, they will decide on an "offering" that will give "a clear sense of direction".

Their "offering" will then be put to the Church's General Synod to discuss.

They also discussed “commitments that bishops will take and develop further in line with the direction of travel to be agreed by Synod in February 2023”.

Commenting at the end of the meeting, the Dame Sarah Mullaly, Bishop of London, and also chair of the bishops’ Next Steps Group, said: “It was deeply heartening that bishops continued to walk together united under Christ and celebrated our differences over the course of the last three days.

“They manifested a desire to find a way forward that will be good news to the Church and to wider society.”

Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, said: “The College continued to be engaged positively, robustly and frankly with three days of conversations held in a heartfelt commitment of mutual respect and understanding.”

Most Rev Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, added: “As our second meeting closes and as we continue our journey on to the next stage in the LLF process, we continue to pray for continued guidance by the Holy Spirit through the scriptures about God’s intention for human life in all its glory and joy.”

Church News Ireland

In the media

Ding-dong over which cathedral is the cradle of Merry Christmas

Rochester's Tudor martyr John Fisher may have to give way to contender from 150 miles away in Hereford, Daniel Capurro writes in the Daily Telegraph

The first man to use the phrase "Merry Christmas" was John Fisher, a saint, martyr and cardinal. Or at least, that's the traditional telling.

Now, Hereford Cathedral has revealed evidence that would take Rochester Cathedral's title as the home of Merry Christmas and transplant it 150 miles west to Herefordshire.

Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, used the phrase in a 1534 letter to Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister.

Both men would later be executed during the religious turmoil of the 16th century, but in 1534 Fisher was cheerful enough to end his letter to Cromwell: "And this our Lord God send you a merry Christmas."

For decades, this had been assumed to be the earliest-ever use of the phrase now so commonplace, from seasonal toasts to Christmas cards and extravagant lights displays.

However, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, archivist at Hereford Cathedral, has discovered a new, earlier contender for the title.

While researching yuletide facts in preparation for a Christmas event at the cathedral, Ms Semper O'Keefe - uncovered a letter from the 16th-century Bishop of Hereford Charles Booth to a colleague.

Booth opened his letter to his fellow clergyman, a local canon, with the line "I pray God you may be in all good - charity and merry this Christmas."

Crucially, the dispatch was drafted a full 14 years before Fisher put quill to parchment. "I think it is a lovely turn of phrase," said Ms Semper O'Keefe. "It is interesting to see how it's developed from that very kind of prayerful invoking of God into our much more casual use, which we write a million times in our Christmas cards."

The archivist insisted that it was not a matter of competition between the two cathedrals, but instead further evidence of how festive language was changing in the 16th century.

The carol *We Wish You A Merry Christmas* is also thought to have originated around the same time, Ms Semper O'Keefe said, showing its growing popularity compared with older terms such as "the nativity of Our Lord".

She said: "Both references are survivals of the early use of that phrase, and it's obviously starting to become commonly used in such a way that both bishops are putting it within their day-to-day administrative letters and it's just chance really as to which letters survive."

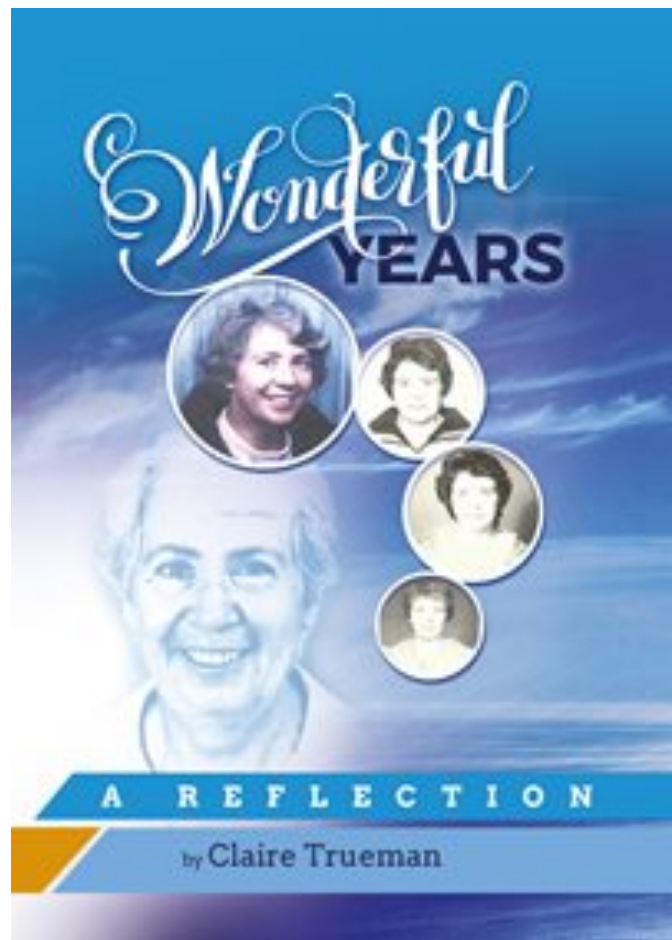
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Fisher met a brutal end when he was executed in 1535 on the orders of Henry VIII for refusing to recognise the king as the supreme head of the Church of England. He was made a saint in 1935 by Pope Pius XI.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Wonderful Years by Claire Trueman Memories of Jamaica over the years published

The life, work and ministry of Claire Trueman, one of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) overseas mission workers, has been celebrated with the launch of her memoir 'Wonderful Years – Memories of Jamaica over the years' by the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI) and PCI's Council for Global Mission.



One of around 35 men and women who went to Jamaica from PCI between 1858 and 1988, Claire arrived three

months after the island's independence from Britain 60 years ago. Born in Rostrevor, County Down, in 1938 it was while she was training to be a teacher at Stranmillis College in Belfast that she believed that God – in her own words – “was calling me to climb farther.” As she recounts in her memoir, ‘I wrestled with this call throughout College and while in my first teaching job I finally disposed of all twenty plus excuses and...surrendered to my call. From that moment on I had peace in my soul. The next question was, “Where does God want me to go?”

Claire soon had a response when she received a call from the Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA) Mission Secretary asking if she would consider teaching in Jamaica. “That for me was my answer..,” she writes, “...so I said ‘I will go’” beginning her journey to the Caribbean island on her 23rd birthday. After a three week voyage across the Atlantic, on 17 November 1962 the Italian liner the SS Ascania dropped anchor in Kingston Harbour. “From the moment that I set foot on Jamaican soil I knew I was home...” she writes.

Initially Claire taught in a preparatory school in the capital Kingston, a school that was run in those days by the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, the precursor of today's United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (United Church). It was just the start of a journey of service to children, young people and adults, in various capacities, that spanned 36 years.

Across just over 100 pages, her story is told through a collection of letters, diary entries, articles, reports, general reflections and poetry, which have been edited by former

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PCI

Moderator

Very Rev Dr John Dunlop, who served on the island from 1968 to 1978. Claire's ministry came to a formal end with her retirement in



1998. Her love for the island and its people, however, didn't stop there as she chose to make Jamaica her permanent home. Now aged 84, she lives in Mandeville, 60 miles to the west of Kingston

The book launch took place at Assembly Buildings in Belfast where guests heard a message from Claire, who expressed her appreciation to all who had helped to get the book to this stage, including its editor, Dr Dunlop and Rev Dr Liz Hughes, who also served with her minister husband Brian, working with the United Church on the island. They attended the launch along with others who had served in Jamaica. Esther Parker, President of Presbyterian Women (PW), which is a part of PCI's women's ministry and the successor organisation to the PWA, also attended.

Speaking from Jamaica via video link Ms Trueman sent her 'warm greetings'. "I cannot express enough appreciation to all who made this possible," she said. "I am so glad I started compiling the book when I did because my memory and

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technical ability are fading rapidly. It gives me great satisfaction to share just some of my experiences. I received a very clear call to Jamaica which I never doubted. I left my biological family in



October 1962...and have been blessed with a much larger family as numerous as the stars. This is my legacy to the United Church, as well as PW, and I sincerely hope who shares it will be enriched.”

Also joining from Jamaica via audio link was the United Church’s General Secretary, Rev Norbert Stephens, who paid tribute to Claire. He also described the book as her legacy to the United Church “...which chronicles her amazing journey of faith, hope and love. By God’s grace, her path is one that was not confined to a church building but she has taken the love of Christ and the heart for mission across Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

You can order copies of ‘Wonderful Years – Memories of Jamaica over the years’ by Claire Trueman from the PHSI website or call into the Society’s offices at Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast, BT1 6DW. Alternatively telephone 028 9041 7299.

[<https://presbyterianhistoryireland.com/publications/catalogue/wonderful-years/>]

Poem for today

The Truce of Christmas by GK Chesterton

Passionate peace is in the sky--
And in the snow in silver sealed
The beasts are perfect in the field,
And men seem men so suddenly--
(But take ten swords and ten times ten
And blow the bugle in praising men;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And misers haggle and madmen clutch,
And there is peril in praising much.
And we have the terrible tongues uncurled
That praise the world to the sons of the world.)

The idle humble hill and wood
Are bowed upon the sacred birth,
And for one little hour the earth
Is lazy with the love of good--
(But ready are you, and ready am I,
If the battle blow and the guns go by;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And the men that hate herd all together,
To pride and gold, and the great white feather
And the thing is graven in star and stone
That the men who love are all alone.)

Hunger is hard and time is tough,
But bless the beggars and kiss the kings,
For hope has broken the heart of things,
And nothing was ever praised enough.
(But bold the shield for a sudden swing
And point the sword when you praise a thing,
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And mime and merchant, thane and thrall
Hate us because we love them all;
Only till Christmastide go by
Passionate peace is in the sky.)

Speaking to the soul – Christmas series

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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