

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Ukraine focus
for Archbishops' Christmas broadcast**

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Archbishops meet Ukrainian refugees as Christmas message recorded in Dundalk

Page 1 Photo. Eamonn Martin, Helena Mullins and her son Harvey, and Archbishop John McDowell

The Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin and Archbishop John McDowell met with Ukrainian refugees when they visited Dundalk recently for the recording of their annual Christmas message to be aired on Christmas Eve.

The two Archbishops travelled to Dundalk earlier this month to record their message from St Patrick's Cathedral, with performances from the pupils of Dundalk Grammar Junior School and Realt na Mara, Margaret Roddu writes in The Argus.

They spoke to volunteers from St Patrick's Soup Kitchen who will be handing out hundreds of food parcels for those in need this Christmas.

While in Dundalk they also met with Ukrainian refugees staying in Glen Gat Guest house.



It was a very special occasion for the refugees who are preparing to spend their first Christmas away from their homeland. Most of them are women and children who have had to leave their husbands behind.

They have been given a warm welcome by Tim Mullins and his family, who make every effort to make these displaced people feel at home.

“These people are in a very bad situation and it’s up to us all to do what we can to help them,” says Tim. “When I look at my daughters and grandchildren and when I imagine what it would be like for them to be without their husbands in another country I would hope that they would be welcomed with open arms.”

He says that the families staying with them “are very nice people trying to make the best of a tragic situation.”

They are not the first homeless people or refugees to be accommodated in Glen Gat, as the business works closely with Louth County Council and other services.

"We've had families from Somalia, we have Irish Traveller families, and now we have Ukrainians along with our regular guests," says Tim.

When the first Ukrainians arrived in Glen Gat in March, they weren't just welcomed by the Mullins but by a fellow countrywoman Irene, who has been working there as a cook for several years.

"We now have three Ukrainian women working here – they appreciate the work and we appreciate having them."

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Tim says that having people from different countries staying with them has been hugely educational for the family as it drives home the message that “we are all the same”.

"It goes beyond business, we want them to feel this is their home. We know it's very tough for them and sometimes you will see them in tears when they are speaking to loved ones back home. It's up to us to make them more comfortable."

His daughter Helena has been working closely with the families since their arrival and is planning on helping them celebrate Christmas on January 7, as is the Ukrainian tradition.

She said that the visit by the Archbishops was much appreciated by the Ukrainians, some of whom shared their experiences of fleeing after the Russian invasion and their journey to Ireland.

"We have one woman who was a performer with Circque du Soile. She was living in Kiev and left after the house next door to her was bombed."

She realises that this Christmas will be very different to the one that they enjoyed last year with their loved ones in Ukraine and is determined to help make this one as special as possible.

She already hosted a party for the mothers and children to coincide with The Toy Show.

'When the women saw that I was baking, they joined in and made treats which they serve at Christmas time.'

News reports

Hillsborough Parish partner with work in East Belfast

Hillsborough Parish Church have cemented their partnership with those working on the ground in East Belfast this Christmas.

Most recently they have partnered with St Brendan's Sydenham in their ministry providing Christmas dinners to local families struggling during the current cost of living crisis.

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Following a collection earlier in December, Hillsborough Parish gave £6,500 to St Brendan's Mission Fund and also donated toys to the Salvation Army in East Belfast.

Revd Claire Pearson, Curate in-charge of St Brendan's said:

"We are so grateful at St Brendan's for the wonderful generosity of those at Hillsborough Parish Church. These funds mean we are able to support and provide Christmas



meals and much needed supplies to those who are most in need in Sydenham. This will make a real difference to many over the festive period and help share the love of Jesus to those who feel hopeless. We thank God for the joy of partnership!”

This support builds upon an existing relationship between Hillsborough Parish Church and the Belfast East CAP Centre at Willowfield which has also received £5,500.

Hillsborough Rector, Canon Bryan Follis, said it was encouraging to see the growing willingness of parishioners to contribute to the Christmas Appeal. “This flows from our teaching series about becoming more and more a ‘Church which cares as Christ cared’ and it is great to see members catching the vision, making donations and enabling this partnership.”

Schools’ dedication praised by Moderator

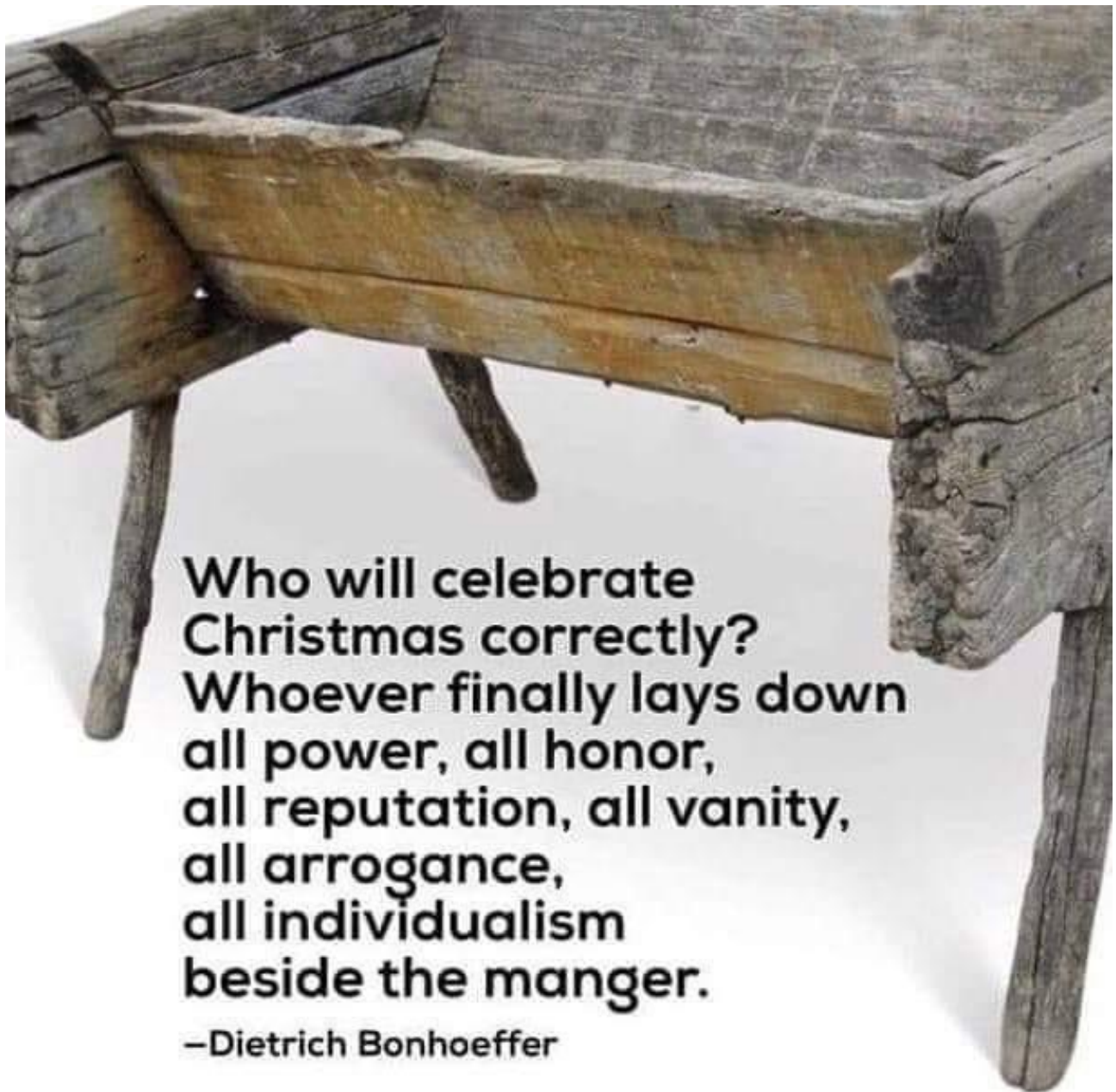
The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, has written to the principals of controlled schools in Northern Ireland to express on behalf of the Church, his ‘heartfelt thanks’ to all staff and governors for ‘...their dedication and commitment to the education of children and young people, particularly during these challenging times.’ He also said that he would ‘continue to encourage those throughout our Presbyterian family to uphold you and your colleagues in prayer.’

In his letter, issued through the Controlled Schools Support Council ahead of the end of term, Dr Kirkpatrick said, “On

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behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks to you, your staff and governors for your dedication and commitment to the education of children and young people, particularly during these challenging times.

“Many schools have stepped up to host school uniform swaps, provide meals and take part in other initiatives to alleviate some of the pressures faced by pupils and their families as a result of the cost of living crisis. Please know



that this significant contribution to the education and wellbeing of children and young people is not taken for granted.

“It has also been a real encouragement to be able to come together this year for nativity plays and Christmas Carol services, after a period when it was not possible to hold these events. I recognise too that such initiatives place extra demands on staff, who often work over and above the call of duty throughout the year.”

Having taken office in June of this year, Dr Kirkpatrick has visited a number of schools already, taking assemblies, engaging with P7s and Sixth Formers, while meeting teachers, principals and governors. In October he visited Wallace High School and Pond Park Primary School in Lisburn along with Dromore High School as part of his tour of PCI’s Presbytery of Dromore. Last month when he was in another of the all-Ireland denomination’s 19 regional presbyteries, Route Presbytery, he visited Ballycastle High School, Bushmills Primary, and William Pinkerton Memorial Primary School in Dervock.

Dr Kirkpatrick concluded his letter by saying, “...it is my heartfelt prayer that during the holiday period you will be able to take some time out to rest with your friends and family, and know something of the hope and light that we, as Christian people, believe has made all the difference in the world through the birth of Jesus Christ.

“And as we approach a new year and new term I will continue to encourage those throughout our Presbyterian family to uphold you and your colleagues in prayer.”

Central Chaplain to the Worldwide Mother's Union to be the next Bishop of Kensington

The Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York has been appointed as the next Bishop of Kensington.

Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson will take up the role in Spring 2023 and will join the College of Bishops in the Diocese of London. She succeeds Rt Rev Dr Graham Tomlin who stepped down earlier this year to lead the Centre for Cultural Witness.

As Bishop of Kensington, Rev Dr Emma will have pastoral oversight for the London Boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea, Hounslow, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Richmond-upon-Thames.

Bishop Emma was ordained in 2000 and served her curacy in the Diocese of Sheffield, before moving to Devon where she was a Chaplain to Lee Abbey. She became Principal of Trinity College in Bristol in 2014 and was later appointed Bishop of Penrith in the Diocese of Carlisle. She took up her current role at Lambeth Palace in 2021.

Among other roles, the Bishop-designate is also Central Chaplain to the Worldwide Mother's Union.

On being appointed as the next Bishop of Kensington Dr Ineson said:



The Armagh Youth and Children's Board (AYaC) held a "Messy Christmas" event in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh on Saturday 10th December 2022. Thanks were expressed to all those who came and took part and thanks especially to all who organised and helped make this event happen.

“The Kensington Area, so wonderfully diverse, stretches from Knightsbridge to Heathrow, encapsulating areas of extreme wealth and also of poverty, with nearly a million Londoners calling it home.

“For the good news of Jesus Christ to reach every corner of Kensington, we need to enable people to be confident in living and speaking about their faith, so that everyone has an opportunity to hear and respond.

“We need to be ambitious in supporting our parish churches in their transformational engagement with local communities, and ambitious about taking the risks needed



Seasonal advice

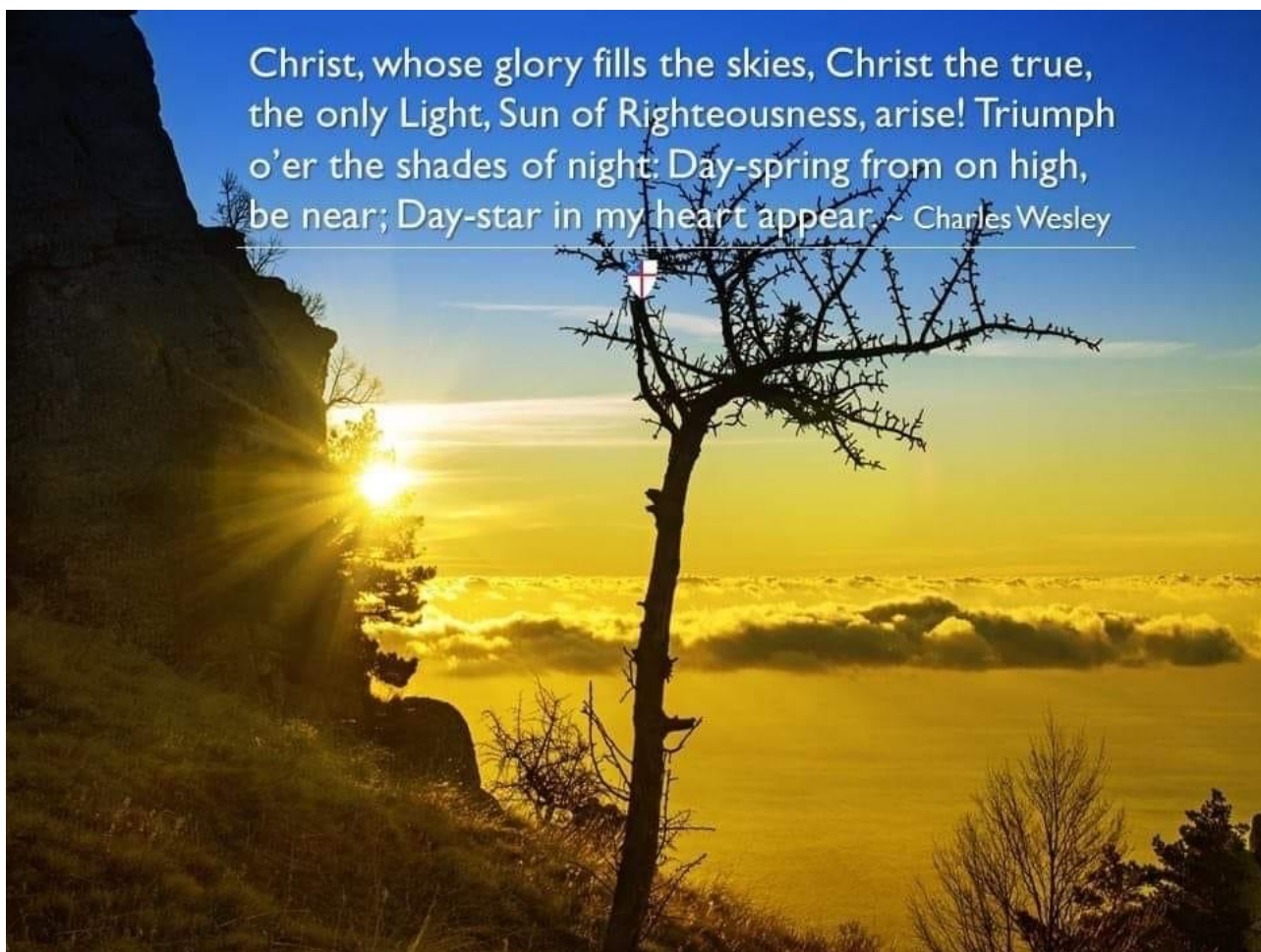
to try the new and creative things that will herald the Kingdom of God here in London.”

Most Rev Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, said: “My delight that Bishop Emma will be moving to a new role, where her considerable skills and expertise will be put to excellent use, is tempered only by my disappointment that

we will not have the benefit of her presence at Lambeth Palace.

“In a relatively short period of time, she has played a key role in some truly historic moments for the Church of England and the global Anglican Communion, from chairing the Lambeth Conference Working Group, to her work supporting the College of Bishops on LLF (Living in Love and Faith) and her efforts to make the Church of England a place where vulnerable people are upheld and valued in safeguarding.

“Much of this work has been complicated and sensitive, and there has been no better person than Emma, with her acute grasp of, and love for, people, to steer it through.”



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Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, said: “I’d like to thank Bishop Emma for all she has done as Bishop to the Archbishops and more widely in her work on this summer’s Lambeth Conference.

“Her theological depth and pastoral heart has been a huge blessing. Emma will bring many gifts and broad experience to her new responsibilities as Bishop of Kensington. She moves on with my gratitude, prayers and blessing.”

Christmas is a magical time of year for children - Bishop of Derry & Raphoe

Christmas is a magical time of year for children – and even for many ‘older children’ among us – as they look forward to Christmas morning and discovering what presents they’ve got this year, says Rt Reverend Andrew Forster in his Christmas message.

Our tradition of giving gifts owes its origin to the account of the nativity in Matthew’s gospel. There we read how the Magi travelled from the east, searching for “the one who had been born king of the Jews”. They followed a star which led them to a house in Bethlehem. “They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh”.

Magical though the festive season is, it can be bitter-sweet, too. It’s a time for reflection. Since last Christmas, we’ve seen war return to Europe, with thousands of people killed in Ukraine and millions displaced. Here at home, many

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people have been struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and that terrible dilemma: whether to heat or eat. I think of those battling against illness, or wrestling with addiction, or consumed by grief for a lost loved one. I think back to the twin tragedies at Enagh Lough, in August, and Creeslough, last October. The pain of loss can be felt most acutely at this time of year.

Last September, too, of course, we lost our beloved sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. The late Queen drew strength, she said, from the message of hope in the Christian Gospel. In one of her many Christmas messages, she told us how much she relied on her faith to guide her through the good times and the bad. The only way to live her life, she said, was to try to do what was right, to take the long view, to give her best in all that the day brought, and to put her trust in God.

King Charles III faces an almost insurmountable task in seeking to emulate his late mother; but I am certain he will rise to the challenge, beginning at 3pm on Christmas Day when he delivers his first Christmas message. He will certainly be in my thoughts and prayers. So, too, will you.

I pray that you will discover what the Magi knew – and what our late Queen found out – that the greatest gift any of us can ever receive is Jesus Christ. His message of hope is fortifying and transformational for those who receive it and those who witness it.

Remarkably, that gift is there for all of us, if we want it. His is 'the King's message' that I want you to hear this Christmas.

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I wish you and your loved ones the peace of Christ.

+Andrew

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

RTÉ Christmas Day broadcast with Archbishops of Armagh

This year's Christmas Day message with the Archbishops of Armagh was recently recorded in Dundalk, where Archbishops John and Eamon visited a local soup kitchen and met with families from Ukraine in a guesthouse which has given them accommodation after arriving in Ireland.

The Archbishops will speak on the themes of home and hope, in the 10-minute programme which will be broadcast on RTÉ One television at 12.10pm and on RTÉ Radio 1 at 1.05pm. Music was kindly provided by Scoil Náisiúnta Réalt na Mara and Dundalk Grammar School, at St Patrick's Church. (See report Page 1)

Christmas Day morning service on BBC Radio Ulster

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, will lead BBC Radio Ulster's morning service on Christmas Day in a

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celebration featuring music from the New Irish Choir and Orchestra, directed by Jonathan Rea.

The Bishop will share a number of short reflections as part of the service, which will be broadcast at 10.03am on December 25.

The broadcast is pre-recorded, and Bishop Davison will be the preacher in Belfast Cathedral at the Festival Communion for Christmas Day, starting at 11am. The celebrant is Bishop Trevor Williams.

Church of England services online

Journey to Christmas with services from across the Church of England. Discover more. Copy and paste: cofe.io/ChristmasServices

Poem for today

A Christmas childhood by Patrick Kavanagh

“ One side of the potato-pits was white with frost –
How wonderful that was, how wonderful!
And when we put our ears to the paling-post
The music that came out was magical.

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
Was a hole in Heaven’s gable. An apple tree
With its December-glinting fruit we saw –
O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me

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To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's. Again

The tracks of cattle to a drinking-place,
A green stone lying sideways in a ditch,
Or any common sight, the transfigured face
Of a beauty that the world did not touch.

My father played the melodion
Outside at our gate;
There were stars in the morning east
And they danced to his music.

Across the wild bogs his melodion called
To Lennons and Callans.
As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry
I knew some strange thing had happened.

Outside in the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking;
The light of her stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

A water-hen screeched in the bog,
Mass-going feet
Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes,
Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows wheel.

My child poet picked out the letters
On the grey stone,
In silver the wonder of a Christmas townland,

The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.

Cassiopeia was over
Cassidy's hanging hill,
I looked and three whin bushes rode across
The horizon — the Three Wise Kings.

And old man passing said:
'Can't he make it talk —
The melodion.' I hid in the doorway
And tightened the belt of my box-pleated coat.

I nicked six nicks on the door-post
With my penknife's big blade —
There was a little one for cutting tobacco.
And I was six Christmases of age.

My father played the melodion,
My mother milked the cows,
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the Virgin Mary's blouse."

Speaking to the soul – Christmas series

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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