

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Kilkenny icon**



## Image of the day

### Kilkenny icon

**Last week the Icon of St Ciaran & St Canice was unveiled at St Canice's Cathedral.**

This year the Friends of St Canice's Cathedral commissioned an icon of Saint Ciaran and Canice for the Cathedral. Iconographer Ian Knowles (Photo left) was chosen for the commission which will hang in the Gash Chapel of the Cathedral. After months of intricate

work by Ian Knowles that Friends and the Cathedral are delighted to be able to have this wonderful piece on display for all to see when they come to worship and visit the Cathedral.

In the front [age photo: Dean Stephen Farrell, Bishop Adrian Wilkinson, Mr Pat Nolan (Secretary of the friends of St Canice's cathedral), Cannon Richard Marsh, Ian Knowles, Icon painter [@vicky\\_comerford\\_photography](https://www.instagram.com/vicky_comerford_photography)

## News reports

### Warm spaces and warm welcomes in Down & Dromore

**With winter upon us and the rising cost of food and fuel affecting everyone, a ‘warm space’ can be a sanctuary, especially for the elderly, the isolated and the vulnerable in our communities.**

Below are just some of churches in the diocese of Down & Dromore that are offering a warm space, a warm welcome and hot food.

**Ballywalter Parish** is running a weekly Soup Club where local people can come and have a warm meal in the Parochial Hall and enjoy both company and warmth. Open on Thursdays from 12–2pm with homemade soup, tea, coffee and traybakes on offer.

**St John’s Moira** is running ‘Winter Warmers’ on Friday evenings from 6–7pm in the Parish Centre. A free hot 2–course meal is served in a warm space.

**St Patrick’s Ballymacarrett** is running a ‘Winter Warmer’ on Tuesdays from 12–2pm with soup and chat for all. In partnership with the West Winds Development Association, the West Winds Community Church hosts a weekly Lunch Club on Tuesdays from 12–2pm offering toasties, soup and sandwiches alongside table–top games

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and a safe, warm space to meet. The team of ladies responsible for the Hen's Shed at have expanded their gatherings to focus on food and friendship every Tuesday evening from 6.30pm.



**Holy Trinity Drumbo** runs an adult drop in on Tuesdays from 11am–12.30pm with a lunch once a month and an after-school drop-in for secondary pupils on Tuesday afternoons.

**St Mary's Ballybeen** runs the Silver Threads Weekly Lunch Club on Mondays from 10am with a hot 3-course lunch served by a team of volunteers. The Sixty Plus ministry for Seniors, both provides food and a warm space for those who attend on the last Saturday of the month from 7pm.

**St John's Newcastle** has an open invitation to anyone in the community to come along to the hall on Wednesday mornings from 10–12 noon. Warm up with tea, coffee, toast, good company, boardgames, newspapers and books.

**Shankill Parish Church, Lurgan, and The Jethro Centre**, have partnered to open 'The Living Room', a warm space for everyone with free newspapers, TV, games, activities,

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tea and coffee. The drop-in session is each Monday from 1–5pm.

**St Jude's Church** is part of 'Cosy Hubs' where every weekday at least one place on the Ormeau Road is offering both warmth and an unconditional welcome to any who might appreciate it. St Jude's is open on Wednesdays from 12–1pm.

**Donaghadee Parish Church** has joined other local churches to offer a warm space in the village between 9.30am and 12.30pm. The parish space is open on Fridays.

## **Hospice post for former C of I cleric**

**The Reverend Edward Gorringe who served in the C of I has been appointed Chief Executive of Butterwick Hospice Care, Stockton-on-Tees, England.**

Butterwick Hospice Care provides end of life care, both in the hospices and at home, it also provides holistic care for patients and their families. Its dedicated team of nurses, doctors, counsellors, physiotherapists, complementary therapists and supporting staff deliver high-quality care to its patients and their families at a time and in a place that is right for them.

“We work in the local community, in schools and homes providing our support where it is really needed. We are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and all our services are provided free of charge.”

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Previous to his new position Mr Gorringer was Chief Executive of Newcastle Carers in Newcastle upon Tyne. He was Chief Operating Officer for Durham Diocesan Board of Finance. From 2013 - 2018 he was CEO of Mind Wise in Northern Ireland.

A keen motorcyclist he also serves as a chaplain in the army reserve.



## **Carols by Candlelight in Comber**

**Miskelly Chorale members are looking forward to "Carols by Candlelight" on Tuesday 6th December at 8pm in St Mary's Parish Church Comber.**

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All proceeds from this event will go towards supporting the work of the Welcome Organisation. Suggested donation of £10 - cash donations preferred, but the organisers can accept card payments. Join them for some wonderful Christmas music, poetry and readings.

## 4CornersFestival theme and dates for 2023 festival



**This years theme is - DREAMS...Visions for Belfast**

Taking place from Friday January 27th to Sunday February 5th The 2023 Festival was launched recently at the QUB Catholic Chaplaincy - photo top of next page



**The Cathedral Church  
of Saint Patrick, Armagh**

**The Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols**  
**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 3.15 p.m.**

The graphic is set against a dark green background. At the top, there are two red poinsettias with green leaves. The central image is a photograph of the Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick in Armagh, showing its Gothic architecture and a snow-covered roof. The text is in a red, serif font. At the bottom, there are more red poinsettias and lit candles.





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## MTh graduation at Trinity

Former Master of Theology students at the C of I Theological Institute graduated last week. They were supported by staff of the Institute, family, and friends





## Dedication of Mansion House Crib

The Vicar of St Ann's Dawson Street Dublin dedicates the municipal crib - an act of public worship

## **Secretary of State's funding of abortion services in Northern Ireland not only deeply regrettable, but deplorable - Presbyterian Church**

**Following Friday's announcement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that he has formerly commissioned abortion services, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), has described his decision as 'not only deeply regrettable, but deplorable', saying that 'Mr Heaton-Harris has chosen to give life to the most destructive and liberal abortion regime in these islands'.**

The Church also expressed its astonishment at the lack of consistency on the part of the Secretary of State in choosing to take action in this particular area while leaving Permanent Secretaries to take unaccountable political decisions in most other areas.

Speaking following the latest development, Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church said, "Today, hard-pressed doctors and nurses begin a new week caring for people across a desperately under-funded and pressurised NHS in Northern Ireland, a week that also sees the dawn of fully commissioned and funded abortion services, following Friday's announcement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

“The fact that Mr Heaton-Harris has chosen to give life to the most destructive liberal abortion regime in these islands is not only deeply regrettable, but deplorable. It is a sad and distressing day for everyone who values the sanctity of life, and is devastating for those who will not live to experience it,” Mr Gribben said.

“There are many challenges facing Northern Ireland and its Health Service in particular, including lengthy waiting lists, staff recruitment and retention, and other services that are under resourced. It is particularly curious to note that no interventions appear to be forthcoming in these areas – no ‘ring-fencing’ of resources for the real priorities of those who work in and are served by our NHS.

“Given the pressures on education, within the police service, infrastructure projects, and with the energy support payment still not available to people in Northern Ireland, it is not only astonishing, but also deeply disappointing, that the Secretary of State has taken this decision while seemingly unable to take others around the prioritisation of budgets, passing what is a political responsibility instead on to Permanent Secretaries.”

Mr Gribben continued, “We recognise that women, their partners and families, do not take decisions about terminating a pregnancy lightly. We note therefore that the Secretary of State has not ring-fenced resources to actually support women and their families experiencing a pregnancy crisis situation, or care for mothers carrying children who have been diagnosed with life-limiting conditions, or for women experiencing mental ill-health during pregnancy or after giving birth. Neither has thought been given to support

the provision of comprehensive perinatal care services that involve practical, emotional and spiritual support for women.

“Whether the Secretary of State was obliged to take this action now is debatable and a matter of interpretation. We should not forget that 79% of people responding to the UK Government’s 2019 abortion proposals opposed the introduction of these measures,” Mr Gribben remarked.

“Not only have these developments been an abuse of the fragile devolution settlement, but their genesis came about by a shameful manipulation of the democratic processes of the House of Commons in 2019, facilitated by the then Speaker. It is worth noting that in the recent debates on the latest Northern Ireland Executive Formation etc Bill, amendments relating to this matter were correctly rejected by the current Speaker of the House of Commons, a notable departure from the actions of his predecessor.”

Mr Gribben concluded by saying, “There are many staff across the health and social care sector who will not want to participate in the abortion process for reasons of conscience – Christian staff, those of other faiths and none. There appears to be little guidance, or instruction in this regard. Perhaps the Secretary of State has not had time in his busy schedule to address these particular and very real concerns.

“Many people today will be rightly angry that the Secretary of State has prioritised the commissioning of abortion services in the midst of an economic crisis. The result will be the creation of a ‘new normal’ in Northern Ireland, with the implementation of the most extreme abortion regime across these islands. As a Church with a strong pro-life position we

want to make clear that this is not only an affront to democracy, but also to the sacredness of life.

“Finally, it is ironic that these services have been commissioned by the Secretary of State in the run up to Christmas – a time when we remember that a baby was born who went on to change the world in ways that continue to unfold. It is devastating to think that, as a result of this announcement, there are many other babies who will never have an opportunity to realise their full potential. It is not too late for Mr Heaton-Harris to do another U-turn.”

## **BBC faith coverage exposes its ‘intellectual arrogance’**

**An Irish cleric and former head of religion at the BBC has accused the broadcaster of “intellectual arrogance” regarding its faith coverage.**

Irish Presbyterian minister Ernie Rea, 77, who was the BBC’s Head of Religious Broadcasting from 1989 to 2001 and until earlier this year presented Beyond Belief on BBC Radio 4, claimed that the broadcaster does not cover religion and faith properly.

His comments come after the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released data revealing that those who consider themselves as Christian account for less than half the population of England and Wales for the first time.

Mr Rea accused BBC bosses of not taking the topic of religion seriously, and of being “people of a secular hue”.

He said: “When you think that about 82 per cent of the population of the world cling to a faith tradition, and what an important part that faith tradition plays in the politics, the culture, the society all over the world – it’s [plain] the BBC should be covering it, should be exploring it, should be criticising it...It should be part of the of the asking questions to power, but it’s not doing it.”

Mr Rea made the comments during an interview on Roger Bolton’s Beeb Watch podcast.

He claimed that when he had meetings with the BBC controllers, he would come “out of those meetings, absolutely frustrated, not because my ideas had been turned down because they weren’t good enough, but because I hadn’t had a fair hearing”.

“The controllers of BBC television were people of a secular hue,” Mr Rea claimed.

“I can remember in the early 1990s, proposing a series on Islam in Britain.

“And the controller looked at me and he said, ‘I can’t imagine that anybody would be interested in that’. You look back on that and there’s such an intellectual arrogance about [that].

A BBC spokesman said: “As Ernie Rea says, he is talking about his experiences from over 20 years ago. Since then, the BBC has reaffirmed its commitment to religion and



ethics broadcasting, [far] exceeding what we are required to do.”

## **Bishop Rowan Williams: Don't demonise anti-gay marriage believers**

**People with opposing views on same-sex marriage should not be labelled as “monstrous”, the former Archbishop of Canterbury has said.**

Lord Rowan Williams, 72, will make the comments as part of his talk for the BBC's Reith Lectures series.

The Sunday Telegraph has seen an advance copy of his speech in which he warns that moral debates “have become weaponised in the current culture wars”, meaning that nuance is lost.

He will also caution that cancel culture means that people of opposing views on contentious issues – such as same-sex marriage, abortion and assisted dying – are seen as “automatically monstrous and oppressive”.

His speech reads: “What about the Evangelical registrar who will not solemnise same-sex marriages? What about the legal allowances made for Catholic doctors who will not perform abortions?”

“Questions like these have become weaponised in the culture wars raging, in ways that rule out nuanced exploration of what's going on.”

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The speech continues: “It won’t do to demonise those with inconvenient consciences as automatically monstrous and oppressive. You can’t ascribe deliberately evil intention to someone who disagrees on principle with the principles you think self-evident.”

Lord Williams, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002 until March 2013, is one of four speakers to deliver the BBC Radio 4 Reith Lectures for 2022, alongside the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie, the Scottish rapper and social commentator, Darren McGarvey, and Dr Fiona Hill, the British-American foreign affairs specialist.

His comments come after last month the Bishop of Oxford, The Rt Rev Steven Croft, become the most senior Church of England cleric to back same-sex marriage. Currently, according to canon law, no Church of England minister can bless or marry gay couples.

Lord Williams’ lecture will also discuss the role of faith in a secular modern world. He will say: “Modern societies have settled for a kind of lukewarm tolerance – a recognition that, within reasonable limits of public order, people may conduct whatever rituals they please, because none of this should impinge on the way they make significant decisions or order their civic and personal lives,” he will say.

The Reith Lectures can be heard on Radio 4 and BBC Sounds on Wednesday at 9am

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# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

## Photographic exhibition of 42 Church of England cathedrals

Coming to St Paul's, Cathedral, London, this week is photographer Peter Marlow's touring exhibition of 42 Church of England cathedrals!

Capturing the ethereal, contrasting beauty of Anglican cathedrals using natural light, 'The English Cathedral' runs from the 6th December - 26th January. Find out more:



<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/whats-on/exhibition-peter-marlows-english-cathedral>

## Poem for today

### When all the others were away at Mass by Seamus Heaney

When all the others were away at Mass  
I was all hers as we peeled potatoes.  
They broke the silence, let fall one by one  
Like solder weeping off the soldering iron:  
Cold comforts set between us, things to share  
Gleaming in a bucket of clean water.  
And again let fall. Little pleasant splashes  
From each other's work would bring us to our senses.

So while the parish priest at her bedside  
Went hammer and tongs at the prayers for the dying  
And some were responding and some crying  
I remembered her head bent towards my head,  
Her breath in mine, our fluent dipping knives-  
Never closer the whole rest of our lives.

## World Cup Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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