



Lord Mayor and Archbishop launch Dublin sitout

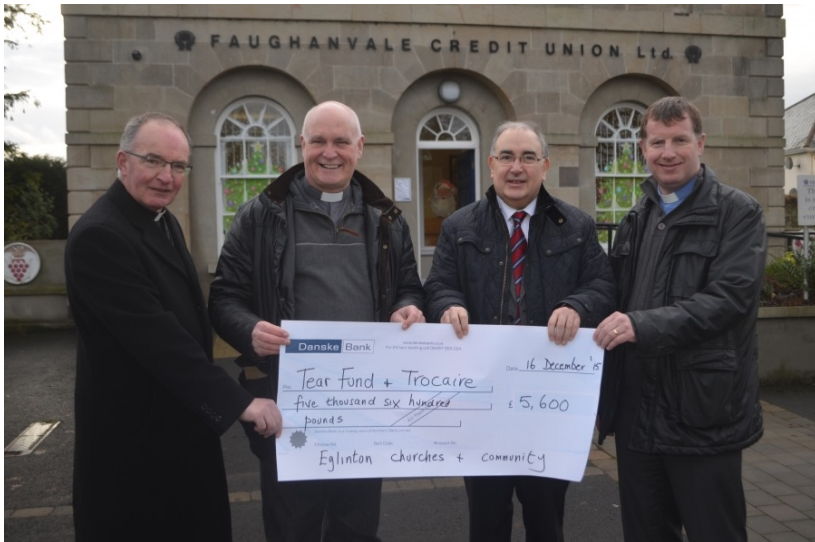
The 2015 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin, was officially launched yesterday Thursday, December 17, by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Críona Ní Dhálaigh. They were joined by the Choir of Kildare Place National School.

The annual sit out will continue right up until Christmas Eve. The Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie, joined by clerical colleagues from around the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, will remain outside the city centre church from 10.00 am until 6.00 pm each day collecting money for a number of charities.

This year they will be joined by a record number of choirs who will sing festive songs and carols each lunchtime. These include Castleknock National School, St James Primary School, Francis Street CBS, St Stephens Church Choir, Catholic University School, Taney Parish Junior School, Alexandra College, Kildare Place National School, Cornucopia Brass Group, Irish Life Choir, Revenue Choir, AIB Choral Society, Permanent TSB Staff Choir, John Scottus School, Loretto College, Seafield Singers, Dublin Male Voice Choir, the Line Up Choir, Steadfast Band and the Brook Singers

Derry clergy Container Sit-out Raises Over £5000 for Refugee Charities



A pre-Christmas 'Container Sit-out' by three Eglinton clergymen has raised more than five thousand pounds for two refugee charities.

Faughanvale Rector Rev Paul Hoey, Eglinton Presbyterian Minister Rev Lindsay Blair and Faughanvale priest Fr Noel McDermott, took it in turns to 'camp out' for a weekend in a container, outside the village credit union, to highlight the plight of Syrian refugees.

Parishioners and passers-by, who visited the trio, were invited to contribute to Tear Fund and Trócaire, two of the charities helping refugees on the ground in Syria and in neighbouring countries. This week, the proceeds - £5,600 – were shared equally between the two charities.

The ‘Eglinton Refugee Container Sit-out’ coincided with one of the coldest spells of the winter so far, with hailstones falling in the first half hour. Rev Hoey says they got the idea after hearing a news report about a refugee family who had been forced to live in a container in Easter Europe.

C of I Lent course on reconciliation

Reconciliation is the theme for the sixth series of Lenten Bible studies offered to the Church by the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland.

Its introduction explains: “Both the need and the hope for reconciliation – within and between churches, between cultures and continents, rich and poor, male and female, liberal and conservative – has recently captured more and more of our attention. New leadership in major churches, (Francis in Rome, Justin Welby in

Canterbury, and now Michael Curry in The Episcopal Church) has offered new inspiration and increased our hope. But the work of reconciliation has to be done at the grass roots. Without us it will not come about.”

The BACI team involved hails from both North and South, and includes William Olhausen. Linda Chambers, Barbara Bergin, Earl Storey, Paul Houston and Ginnie Kennerley. The five Bible Studies, are entitled:

1. Power and Service
2. Transcending Boundaries
3. Reaching out to Others
4. Taking down the Walls
5. Do as you would be done by.

BACI chair William Olhausen says, “We have kept things very simple: each study has an introduction, a Bible text on reconciliation, some notes and some questions – questions prompting us to consider not only the needs for reconciliation in our lives, our communities and the Church, but also the practical steps God is calling us to take.”

The studies will be available from mid–January for free download from the BACI website www.bibliahibernica.wordpress.com and also in printed booklet form through leading Cathedral bookshops and Church House, Dublin, at €2.50 or £2.00 with discount for quantity.

They will also be available at the formal launch of the Bible study series by BACI patrons the Archbishops of Dublin and Armagh in Church House, Dublin, in mid–January.

Young people from Lambeg Parish sleep out for Abaana

On Friday December 11, six young people from Lambeg Parish, along with their youth leader took part in the Challenge 48 Sleepout with Abaana – a charity which supports street children in Uganda.

The aim of this challenge was to give people an idea of what life would be like for those living on the streets in Uganda but also to raise money and awareness of the charity and the work it does.



Challenge 48 sleepout at Bangor seafront for Abaana.

The sleepout took place in Bangor, and the group from Lambeg arrived around 7pm on Friday evening and started settling into what was going to be their home for the night – a cardboard box with a black tarpaulin over it to make it somewhat waterproof.

As the night went on more groups started to arrive and eventually there were around 36 participants. The only money they had on them was a couple of 20p pieces for the public toilets and so the young people were reliant on the generosity of passers by donating food and hot

drinks. Everyone huddled around the fire pit as this was the only source of heat.

Parish Youth Leader Aimee Gibson said:

“Members of the public were very generous as they donated tea and coffee, chips and pizza. Thankfully it wasn’t as cold as had been forecast, but being outside for a long period of time, everyone began to feel very cold.

“Around 2am everyone started to filter off into their boxes – they weren’t the most comfortable but it was better than being outside. 5am came and so did the rain, it got so heavy that the boxes started to give way to the weight of the rain.”

Aimee said a few groups ended up going home early due to their boxes being completely flooded.

For those who were lucky enough, only their feet got a little damp. Everyone was up by around 8am due to the wet conditions. The fire pit was very quickly re-lit and one of the local coffee shops brought over fresh tea and coffee. The group was able to take shelter under some gazebos that were brought down and enjoy bacon butties that were also donated.

Lambeg Parish was one of the first groups to be heading home, leaving at 12noon on Saturday, and so they took the first slot for street collection – based on Bangor’s main street.

Abaana’s Assistant Director Neville Jones is a parishioner of Lisburn Cathedral.

Justin Welby: Christ's birth is a source of 'hope and healing' for bereaved

The Archbishop of Canterbury has said he has "never got over" the loss of his eldest daughter in a candid message to bereaved families.

Justin Welby's daughter Johanna was killed in car crash 30 years ago when she was less than a year old. He spoke at a carol service held by Child Bereavement UK on December 10, a charity which supports families coming to terms with a loss.

"We never 'get over it'– that's such an atrocious expression – but we do begin to rebuild," said Welby in the service held at HTB, the charismatic church in central London attended by the Welbys before he was ordained.

"If we're wise, and if we have wise friends who love us... eventually we begin to look up a bit."

Welby spoke honestly about "tough words, bitter words of anger with God" and the struggle he and his wife Caroline experienced with unanswered questions.

Christmas, he said, was a particularly difficult time.

"You hear that reading about the shepherds and their joy and you think, 'Fine for them... doesn't feel much like that to me.'"

But Welby said that ultimately, he found comfort in the "great puzzle" of the Christmas message.

"There is one child in the whole of human history who died, whose father could have done something and didn't. Who could with a mere exercise of will have changed the world so it didn't happen.

"His beloved child, whom he sent, whom the angels announced, whom he sent to live this risky life, and who died unjustly some 30 years later, out of time, unfairly."

This story of Christ's birth was a source of "hope and healing" for his family, said Welby.

"We find a source of purpose, a source of going on, that is so boundlessly deep, so extraordinarily puzzling sometimes, but so wonderfully embracing, that in the dark moments and the light moments we are held and comforted and carried."

Welby explained that his daughter's birthday and anniversary were particularly difficult. "There's always that reality, and yet there's now that hope. I pray for you and for all of us here," he concluded. "For that hope that heals and strengthens and draws us forward, because that child who was born and risked and died and rose again, and offers life to us and to all we love. Amen."

Archbishop invites more young Christians to spend 'a year in God's time'

The Archbishop of Canterbury has invited more young Christians to join the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth Palace.

Applications are now open for the second year of the programme, which offers people aged 20-35 the opportunity to spend 'a year in God's time' as they live together as a community inspired by the monastic traditions.

The participants commit to a year of prayer, studying theology and ethics, and serving the poorest in local communities, adopting a pattern of life devoted to Jesus Christ that monastics down the centuries would recognise.

The first year of the programme has seen 36 young men and women forming a community based at Lambeth Palace. Sixteen residential members from around the world – including the USA, Kenya and Australia – have been joined by 20 non-residential members who live and work in London.

Archbishop Justin Welby has made the renewal of prayer and Religious life a priority for his ministry.

The Prior of St Anselm, Anders Litzell said: "I'm looking for people who above everything else want to follow Jesus, grow in likeness of Jesus by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and to the

glory of God the Father. It is as simple as that. You can come from any Christian denomination and any part of the world.

“Our first intake have been here for three and a half months and it’s been an extraordinary journey. It’s been beautiful, it’s been challenging, it has been of God and I am deeply humbled, very excited for what the rest of this year will hold for the current members.”

Shannon Preston, a residential member from Minnesota, USA, said: “Having two hours a day to pray is unreal and I’m not sure where I would get that outside of this year. I show up and trust that God is there as well. It’s such a gift.”

Media digest

Moderator's Christmas Message: 'Show Christ's love and compassion'

In his Christmas Message, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian

McNie has urged us to show Christ's love and compassion, especially to those who may find Christmas a particularly lonely time of year.

<https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/Article/December-2015/Moderator-s-Christmas-Message-Show-Christ-s-love-a>

Christmas Message from the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good

<http://derryandraphoe.org/news/item/729-a-christmas-message-from-bishop-ken-good>

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The Government's advisor on legal reform has published a report calling for major changes to British marriage laws. The report by the Law Commission suggests that current laws are unfit for "a multi-faith, multi-cultural society", and sets out their case for reform.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12055060/British-marriage-laws-are-hopelessly-out-of-date-government-told.html>

Guard/Herald Scotland/City AM

The Royal Bank of Scotland has announced plans to sell more than 300 branches through the Williams & Glyn brand beginning in 2016. RBS has been working on the flotation on the London Stock Exchange since 2013 with a consortium which includes the Church Commissioners.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/dec/16/santander-royal-bank-scotland-bid-rbs-branch-takeover-williams-glyn>

http://www.heraldscotland.com/business/14150241.Suitors_keen_on_buying_Royal_Bank_of_Scotland_offshoot_Williams_Glyn/?ref=rss

<http://www.cityam.com/230974/rbs-williams-glyn-trade-sale-to-kick-start-next-year>

Bury Free Press/Ipswich Star

The Revd Canon Dr Michael Harrison was announced as the new Bishop of Dunwich in the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

<http://www.buryfreepress.co.uk/news/local/latest-news/new-deputy-bishop-of-st-edmundsbury-and-ipswich-appointed-1-7118644>

[http://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/
next_bishop_of_dunwich_visits_
felixstowe_academy_in_tour_of_suffolk_1_435
0170](http://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/next_bishop_of_dunwich_visits_felixstowe_academy_in_tour_of_suffolk_1_4350170)

Reuters/IPE

Calls for mining companies to show their work on reducing the impact on climate change have been released by investor coalition Aiming for A, which includes the Church Commissioners (see above).

[http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-
investment-mining-idUKKBN0TZ1BS20151216](http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-investment-mining-idUKKBN0TZ1BS20151216)

[http://www.ipe.com/news/esg/esg-roundup-
aiming-for-a-pfa-heidelbergcement/
10011221.article](http://www.ipe.com/news/esg/esg-roundup-aiming-for-a-pfa-heidelbergcement/10011221.article)

Tel

Mosques in Britain could be designed without minarets to look like "quintessentially English" places of worship, the former Conservative Party chairman Baroness Warsi has suggested. She is urging architects to come up with a new model for Islamic places of prayer as part of a drive to develop an authentically "British" brand of Islam.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12054848/Baroness-Warsi-UK-Mosques-could-be-designed-without-minarets-to-look-like-English-places-of-worship.html>