

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mourne Country

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Wanting to know about the Mournes? No better starting point than “Mourne Country” by E Estynn Evans late Professor of Geography at Queen’s University, Belfast.

People and places



Honorary degree from Ulster University for Bishop Ken Good

A former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, is one ten leaders who are to be recognised with honorary degrees from Ulster University for their “outstanding contributions” locally and globally.

At a ceremony to officially install Dr Colin Davidson as the sixth Chancellor of Ulster University, the internationally renowned artist will be honoured for his outstanding commitment to remembrance, healing and excellence in the field of art.

Professor Rafael Bengoa, who led who led a review into the Northern Ireland health service, and award-winning playwright and creator of ‘Derry Girls’ Lisa McGee will join those being conferred as honorary graduates in recognition of their exceptional contribution within their specific field, across the areas of construction, media, arts, education, community regeneration and business.

For outstanding contribution to journalism, education and charitable projects in Northern Ireland, Sky News’ David Blevins will be recognised alongside golf and hospitality consultant Wilma Erskine OBE, for her outstanding services to golf tourism, economic regeneration and securing Royal Portrush as the 2019 venue for the British Open.

Bishop Good and Dr Alastair Hamilton CBE are being recognised for their outstanding leadership, while the commitment of Patrick Doherty OBE to economic and cultural development will also be honoured.

For services to education, the “inspirational” Principal of Hazelwood Integrated College Máire Thompson will be recognised, as will Keltbray Executive Chairman and owner Brendan Kerr for his support of apprenticeships, training and entrepreneurship.

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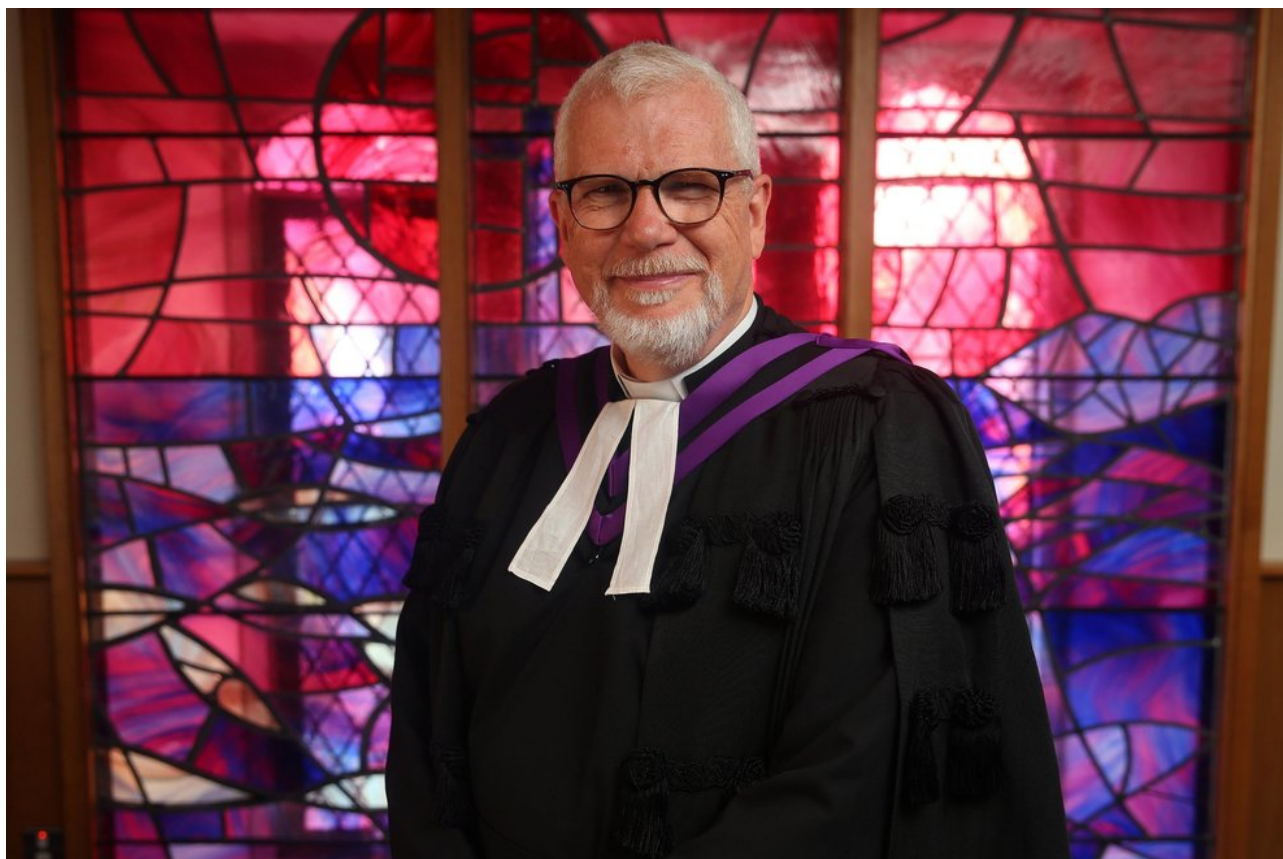
Commenting on the recipients, Ulster University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Bartholomew said: “Each year, we welcome thousands of students to Ulster University, and during their studies we strive to equip them with the skills, knowledge and experience required to make a positive contribution to society. We firmly believe it is important that our students have positive role models to whom they can look up to for inspiration; role models who are making a real difference in the world around them, whether locally or globally.

“As a society and as individuals we have faced many challenges over the past two years. It is therefore timely and uplifting that we are now in a position to be able to honour these outstanding role models. Each of these individuals demonstrate leadership, resilience, integrity, progressive thinking, determination, talent and creativity, and they are a source of inspiration to us all.”

Moderator begins weeklong pastoral tour of Iveagh Presbytery

On Sunday, 27th February 2022, the Presbyterian Moderator, Rt Rev Dr David Bruce, will begin a weeklong pastoral tour of PCI's Presbytery of Iveagh.

It will be a busy day at the start of a busy week of engagements which will see him preach in a number of local Presbyterian churches, meet ministers and their spouses from across the Presbytery, visit schools and nursing homes, and meet with local business leaders....



Moderators normally undertake tours of four of the denomination's 19 regional presbyteries during their year in office and the visit to Iveagh will be Dr Bruce's penultimate tour. Unlike his predecessors, Dr Bruce is the first Moderator in nearly 130 years to serve two terms and has already undertaken five presbytery tours.

With 20 separate engagements ahead of him, Dr Bruce, who will be accompanied by his wife Zoë, will start his tour by preaching at the morning services in Magherally Presbyterian and Katesbridge Presbyterian Churches – the first of five services where he will preach over the two Sundays. That evening he will also conduct the first of two united services from Newmills Presbyterian Church for people from the Presbytery's western congregations.

A second united service will take place the following Sunday from Third Rathfriland Presbyterian Church, for people from

congregations in the eastern part of the presbytery to come and worship together. That morning he will make a poignant return to preach in Scarva Street Presbyterian Church in Banbridge, It was here, over half a century ago, that he was baptised. On Tuesday evening, as members of Presbytery gather for their March meeting in Drumlee Presbyterian, Dr Bruce will attend and conduct the opening worship.

“Presbytery tours are a wonderful opportunity for a Moderator to get ‘out and about’ and get to know the church, seeing first-hand the work that congregations are doing in the community on the ground. Zoë and I are very much looking forward to next week’s forthcoming tour,” Dr Bruce said.

“They are very much pastoral visits and after such difficult times I very much want to encourage the local Church, and especially our ministers, who have been on the frontline, acknowledging the work that they and their congregations have done, and are doing, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Throughout the week, there will be a strong focus on education, along with farming, with the Moderator visiting Rathfriland High School on Tuesday, where he will take the assembly, followed by a visit to Drumadonnell Primary School that afternoon. On Friday he will drop in to Banbridge Academy, taking part in a Q&A session with senior RE and politics students.

On Wednesday Dr Bruce will have lunch with PCI’s new Rural Chaplain, Rev Kenny Hanna and leading figures in the local farming and agri-sectors, including the President of the

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Ulster Farmers' Union, Victor Chestnutt, to hear of the concerns they are facing. The Moderator will then make pastoral visits to farms in the Tandragee area. He will also meet with local business owners in Banbridge.

Named after the historic title associated with the south and west County Down area, the Presbytery of Iveagh takes in 27 congregations and some 10,000 people who have a connection with PCI within its bounds. Each presbytery is responsible for overseeing those congregations in its local area, while undertaking other important tasks, which include the ordination and installation of ministers, the ordination of elders, and the annual selection of the Moderator.

Professor Alister McGrath. to give C of I Queen's Theological Lecture

The 2022 Church of Ireland Theological Lecture at Queen's University, Belfast, will be given by renowned scholar, theologian, author and communicator, Professor Alister McGrath.

A renowned scholar, theologian, author and communicator, Professor McGrath is the current Andreos Idreous Professor of Science and Religion in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford.

The 64th Theological Lecture will be the second time he has delivered the lecture, having spoken on 'Rediscovering the Attraction of Christianity' in 1996. The title of his address this year is 'Theology: Why it matters to the academy and the churches.'

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Author of over 50 books, Professor McGrath will explore why theology remains important for both the Christian churches and the secular world, including the academy.



The lecture will discuss the many facets of theology, exploring its relevance for churches, understanding important works of art and literature, and for wider reflection on how we all reflect on life's deepest questions.

Professor McGrath will reference the insights of his fellow Ulsterman, C.S. Lewis, on some of these questions.

Alister McGrath was born on 23 January 1953 in Belfast, and grew up in Downpatrick where he attended Down High School. In September 1966 he became a pupil at the Methodist College Belfast, where his studies focused on mathematics, physics and chemistry. He went up to Wadham College, Oxford, in 1971 and gained first-class honours in chemistry in 1975. He began research in molecular biophysics in the Oxford University Department of Biochemistry. He later left Oxford to work at the University of Cambridge, where he also studied for ordination in the Church of England. In September 1980, he was ordained deacon and began ministry as a curate at St Leonard's Parish Church, Wollaton, Nottingham, in the English East

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Midlands. He was ordained priest at Southwell Minster in September 1981

The lecture will take place on April 4 at 6pm in the Isdell Courtyard at Riddell Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road, Belfast, with, Covid restrictions permitting, tea and coffee on arrival from 5.15pm.

More information can be found on this website -

[[] <https://thehubbelfast.org/2022/02/22/tickets-available-for-theological-lecture-at-queens-2022/>]

Seats can be reserved [HERE](#)

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/theology-why-it-matters-to-the-academy-and-the-churches-tickets-261838825977>]

Church Army Communications Vacancy

Communications Assistant - This role is perfect for someone looking for an opportunity to start a career in media and



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communications for a national charity.

Full Time (37.5 hours p/w)m £18,525-£21,630

Closing Date: 11 March 2022

[bit.ly/3t4rY0W]

News reports

Attack on Ukraine ‘an act of great evil’ - statement from Archbishops of Canterbury and York

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell have condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine as “an act of great evil”.

They are urging Christians to make this Sunday a special day of prayer for Ukraine, Russia and for peace. They are also supporting a global day of prayer and fasting for peace on Ash Wednesday.

In a joint statement they said:

“The horrific and unprovoked attack on Ukraine is an act of great evil.

“Placing our trust in Jesus Christ, the author of peace, we pray for an urgent ceasefire and a withdrawal of Russian forces. We call for a public decision to choose the way of peace and an international conference to secure long term agreements for stability and lasting peace.

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“We invite Christians to make this Sunday a day for prayer for Ukraine, Russia and for peace.

“We also give our support to the call from Pope Francis for a global day of prayer and fasting for peace on Ash Wednesday, March 2.”

No justification' for Russian invasion of Ukraine, say European evangelicals

The European Evangelical Alliance (EEA) has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as "unjustified" and "unprovoked".

There have been reports of explosions in Kiev, Odessa and Kharkiv after Russian president Vladimir Putin authorised a "special military operation" in Ukraine on Thursday morning.

Ukrainian military has been ordered "to inflict maximum losses" against Russian forces.

Responding to the crisis, the EEA said that Russia's claims to be protecting ethnic Russians in Ukraine and eliminating Ukrainian threats against Russia were "untrue".

The evangelical body said that the "disaster" unfolding in Ukraine had been "provoked" by Russian President Vladimir Putin "for wider geopolitical purposes".

"We see no justification for these actions and are deeply distressed by the death, destruction, chaos and misery that will result," said EEA General Secretary Thomas Bucher.

The EEA called on Russia to respect Ukraine's sovereignty. It has also asked Christians to pray for those in power and everyone affected by the invasion.

"And let's pray for all those with the power to stop the war and to bring about long term peace," it said.

World Evangelical Alliance Secretary General Bishop Dr Thomas Schirrmacher echoed the calls.

"We are gravely concerned to yet again witness armed conflict that will inevitably lead to tragic loss of human lives, including innocent civilians who only desire to live in peace," he said.

"We call for an end to the hostilities, an immediate ceasefire and respect for Ukrainian territorial integrity.

"We also call on the global Christian community to pray for peace in Ukraine. Europe has witnessed the horrors of war in the past and has learned that armed conflict and military occupation only brings suffering and devastating."

What did your church learn during lockdown?

In a few weeks, the UK will mark two years since the country's first Covid lockdown. Churches closed their doors for worship as infection levels, hospital admissions and, tragically, deaths rose, Peter Crumpler writes

Even today, some worshippers are reluctant to return to 'in person' worship, and many churches are still taking care to limit Covid risks. In many ways, we are still emerging from the pandemic and waiting to see what the 'new normal' looks like.

But what did we learn in the almost 24 months since the pandemic became part of our everyday lives?

I have picked out four learning points:

1. Churches built stronger links with their local communities.

Church services may have been suspended, or moved online, but many churches set up networks of support for people within their congregations and across their areas.

Churches supported or set up ways of helping the most vulnerable in their communities, and many churchgoers volunteered to help local caring charities and, later, at vaccination centres.

2. Churches reached new people by going online.

Overnight, many churches threw open their doors to people on their doorstep, and further afield. Suddenly, distance did not matter – and people were 'attending' online services at churches around the world. Worshippers with disabilities welcomed the online services – and gently asked why it had taken the wider Church so long to acknowledge their needs.

The Covid-19 pandemic "propelled the Church into the contemporary world," declared a report from CPAS, an Anglican evangelical mission agency working with UK and Irish churches. The churches' offering had been transformed from "the Odeon to Netflix" as people could worship online at any time.

The report encouraged churches to prepare for an influx of online worshippers into their buildings when lockdown was lifted. It's as yet unclear how far this has occurred.

3. Churchgoers learnt to be grateful for all the things they had taken for granted.

Suddenly, singing hymns or worship songs together, receiving communion with bread and wine, and responding to a sermon together, all became a memory from an earlier time. We realised how much we needed each other and appreciated each other's fellowship and presence. Home-based fellowship groups, now online, thrived, and became the back-bone of many churches. In some, the Sunday services became supporting events for the midweek groups.

4. Churches chose their priorities.

During lockdown, many churches asked themselves, what really matters? What are our priorities now? Disputes around issues of church governance or practices were put on the back-burner and congregations focussed on providing services of worship and supporting those in need.

These are just my 'top four' suggestions – and of course they will not apply to all churches. Perhaps I have painted

too rosy a picture? Some will say that the decision to close churches as the pandemic raged was misguided. People were seeking spiritual solace and were met with locked doors.

Many churches are still deeply affected by the impact of the pandemic, with attendances and finances taking a hit.

Why not ask yourself, what your church learnt during lockdown – and how far those lessons could help you plan for the future?

Rev Peter Crumpler is a Church of England minister in St Albans, Herts, UK, and the author of 'Responding to Post-truth'.

In the media

Dorcha Lee: Russia is experienced in consolidating control

Irish Examiner

The Russia-Ukraine crisis has entered a new and dangerous phase after Russian president Vladimir Putin signed a decree recognising the two separatist-controlled areas in the Donbas districts of Luhansk and Donetsk as independent republics.

Just before Putin's address to the Russian nation on Monday evening, he held a cabinet meeting which was also broadcast on Russian TV. Each member of the cabinet individually called on the president to sign the independence

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decree. The choreography of the meeting sent a powerful message across Russia and around the world. The image of the cabinet evoked the memory of the Central Council of the Supreme Soviet, while Putin presided over the scene just like a czar. In drawing together two strands of Russian history, Putin has placed himself at its very centre.

[<https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-40814142.html>]

NI store staff forced to 'run gauntlet' as street preachers fight it out to be heard

Belfast Telegraph

Belfast city centre shop staff are being “traumatised” by street preachers with amplifiers, a council committee has heard.

At Belfast City Council's recent Strategic Policy and Resources Committee , shop owners pleaded with elected representatives to change local bylaws, so that amplification would be forbidden on city centre streets.

Particular mention was made about the noise made by street preachers.

The appeal came as elected members received an update on draft amenity bylaws for the city, away from the public and press.

DUP says IRA memorial at GAA club ‘raises questions’

BBC News

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A memorial unveiled at a GAA club to three former IRA members "raises questions" for both Sinn Féin and the GAA, the DUP has said.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60483921>]

Domestic abuse: New coercive control laws now in force

BBC News

New domestic abuse laws have come into force in Northern Ireland.

[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60456063>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



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Morning Service from St John's, Malone

BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service this Sunday, February 27 will be led by the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding of St John's, Malone, Belfast.

The service will be broadcast at 10.15 am and will be available afterwards at this link.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0014wp7>]

Episcopal monastery invites readers into a bite-sized, daily practice during Lent

For Lent, the Brothers of The Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE) invite you to take on a simple practice that draws on the rhythm and richness of the monastic life – yet fits into your day. “Brother, Give Us a Word” has been helping people to start the day with prayer for over a decade. This Lent, the Brothers are expanding the daily message to include additional ways to engage the WORD throughout your day: through a practice, a provocation, or a prayer. Subscribe now at [<https://www.ssje.org/word/>]

In its time, “Brother, Give Us a Word” has been the most popular and influential of SSJE's ministries, giving people the option to click through and read or listen to the full sermon for deeper context. “Brother, Give Us a Word” meets people where they are with bite-sized pieces of wisdom at the start of the day. The meditations on the daily word offer true depth and are a way for people to start their days contemplatively even if they haven't managed to keep up with other practices.



This offering is an invitation to a deeper relationship with God in the form of a sustainable spiritual practice. During Lent, an extra formational element alongside the meditation

will introduce new readers to diverse ways of engaging this offering.

Subscribers to “Brother, Give Us a Word” have felt its impact for the last 10 years. As one noted, “ ‘Brother, Give Us A Word’ can show you how to live. All activities become creative when they don’t just depend on you. For me, more than any beliefs, it has become a compass.” Over 13,000 people across the globe currently receive the daily offering in their inboxes at 5 a.m. local time.

Connect with others on this journey across social media platforms and be sure to tune into Facebook for a series of live conversations with Brothers and others about how they pray with the daily WORD. Subscribe at

[[] <https://www.ssje.org/word/>]

About The Society of Saint John the Evangelist

SSJE is a community of men devoted to living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ and rooted in the ancient monastic traditions of prayer and community life. We engage critically with the contemporary world as we seek to share an authentic experience of God's love and mercy with all.

Anglican Monks to provide virtual sermons this Lenten season

What: The Brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Massachusetts are providing a series of recorded sermons for congregations this Lenten season. The free sermon resource can be used in a service where a preacher may not be available, or they can be used as an adult forum resource.

Bonus: The resource is also available for individuals who want to use it as a Lenten devotion.

Why it matters: Of the almost 6,000 congregations of the Episcopal Church, some 1730 of them have 29 or fewer people on an average Sunday. Many of these do not have a clergy person present on many Sundays. This resource aims to provide them with monastic wisdom for the season that prepares us for the incarnation of Christ.

Go deeper: This resource, called Virtual Preaching Monks, is another experiment from TryTank Experimental Lab.

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TryTank offers inventive approaches to the challenges facing the Episcopal Church.

Last Advent, the Brothers offered a similar resource and expected a few congregations to participate. In the end 484 signed up.

This time around, the resource is available to congregations outside the Episcopal Church.

The details: Interested congregations can register for the resources at

[www.VirtualPreachingMonks.org.]

Once registered they will receive access to the resource page that hosts the sermons.

The sermons are based on the Sunday lectionary, are about 12 minutes in length, and cover:

Ash Wednesday

The Sundays in Lent

Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

The Great Vigil/Easter Day.

On the webpage users will also find access to a simple one-page curriculum if they opt to use the sermons as a seasonal adult forum. At the end of the season, TryTank hopes the participating congregations will fill out a survey about their experience.

About the SSJE: The brothers of SSJE are a community of men in the Anglican/ Episcopal tradition living in union with

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God – and that changes everything. Traditional vows in a non-traditional setting: Rooted in the ancient monastic traditions of prayer and community life, we are committed to standing in the full flow of the modern world, inviting all people to stop, to be still, to reflect, and to receive the love of God.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people,” writes the prophet Isaiah. SSJE aims, at home and in their ministries, to share with others gifts from the Spirit: Worship, Silence & Sanctuary; Guidance in Prayer & Spirituality; and A Vision for Wholeness.

More information: For more information at [www.VirtualPreachingMonks.org]

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

