



***Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh arrive at St Maccartin's Cathedral during the Diamond Jubilee tour in June 2012***

## **Enniskillen Churches set the pace for Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations**

Hundreds of official birthday beacons are set to burst into flames all over the UK, including Enniskillen, on the night of the Queen's 90th

birthday on April 21, 2016 - states The Impartial Reporter.

When Royal Pageant Master Bruno Peek recently updated the ever-burgeoning list of festive celebrations around Britain he welcomed Enniskillen's birthday event as "the most westerly beacon in the United Kingdom."

After Her Majesty lights the Principal Beacon, Viscount Brookeborough, Lord Lieutenant for County Fermanagh, will formally light Enniskillen's beacon, which will be a particularly significant feature of the town's birthday celebrations. As the flames flare higher, two additional beams of light will pierce the night sky and intersect hundreds of feet above the island town.

The 'crossing of lights' poignantly symbolises the Queen's historic visit to St. Macartin's Church of Ireland Cathedral in 2012 for a service of thanksgiving to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Following her attendance at the service, the Queen crossed the street to St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, where she met representatives of the community. It also commemorates the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty's first of three visits to Fermanagh as a young Princess on March 20, 1946.

Organised by local churches together with Enniskillen Rotary Club, those attending the Queen's 90th birthday beacon celebrations will be able to enjoy light refreshments and music at The Jolly Sandwich, Darling Street, at 6pm prior to a short interdenominational service led by the Cathedral choir in St. Macartin's at 7.30pm. After the service the Cathedral Bell Ringers will ring a special peal of bells in celebration as the birthday beacon is lit and the beams of light shine brightly into the night sky.

Monsignor Peter O'Reilly of St. Michael's and Dean Kenneth Hall of St. Macartin's extend an open invitation to the entire community of Enniskillen and beyond with the words 'The Queen was warmly welcomed by the community of town and county when she came to Enniskillen. We return the honour she did us with our prayer and our remembering.'

Ken Rainey, President Enniskillen Rotary Club, expressed his delight in supporting local churches with the planning of Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday Beacons' Event. Rotary International's theme for 2016 is 'Be a Gift to the World' and the Birthday Beacon Celebration Event is one of several local community projects Enniskillen Rotarians are actively involved with this year. Ken hopes that everyone will join them

in celebrating this important milestone in the Queen's life and is looking forward to Thursday, April 21. He acknowledged the help and support of local businesses including The Jolly Sandwich who will be providing refreshments for the event and Beatty Fuels and Flogas for sponsoring the gas for the Birthday Beacon.

More at -

[http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/14288556.Town to light up for Queen s birthday/](http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/14288556.Town%20to%20light%20up%20for%20Queen%20s%20birthd%20ay/)

## **55 Students at C of I 'Fit for the Purpose' Weekend**

A total of 55 students attended the Church of Ireland Theological Institute's 'Fit for the Purpose' weekend which got under way on Friday afternoon. The weekend saw the commencement of two training courses. Nineteen men and women from seven dioceses embarked on the one year Foundation Course programme. Meanwhile, 36 people started the fourth cycle of Reader training which lasts two years.



***19 candidates on the Foundation Access Course 2016.***

The weekend took as its theme a biblical and personal exploration of various matters to do with vocation. The main facilitators were Canon Dr Christina Baxter, former Principal of St John's College, Nottingham; the Revd Dr Andy Angel, Vice Principal of St John's; Jenny Corcoran, Senior Distance Learning Tutor at St John's; and Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI.

**Methodist President from Myanmar impressed by Irish church's witness**



***The Rev Dr Ngun Hlei (right) with Methodist World Mission Development Officer, Tim Dunwoody***

The President of the Methodist Church in Upper Myanmar, the Revd Dr James Ngun Hlei, has been spending 11 days in Ireland, speaking at church services and at Global Vision events in Enniskillen and Craigavon, and generally getting a feel for Irish Methodism which he describes as 'lively, international and very friendly'. He was particularly impressed by visits to the Skainos centre at East Belfast Mission, Edgehill

Theological College and the Container Ministry warehouse in Lurgan.

Dr Ngun Hlei, who has served for two terms as Associate General Secretary of the Myanmar Council of Churches, in which the Methodist Church works alongside over a dozen other member-Churches, is hopeful of new opportunities for mission following the political reform that has been under way in his country since 2010.

The MCM President referred to the years of military dictatorship as a time when the Church in Myanmar (formerly Burma) had had to operate under severe restrictions. Today, however, people were experiencing a new democratic freedom and ability to engage with the outside world. “We will be free more and more for our Christian mission,” he said.

Living in a 90 per cent Buddhist country, Dr Ngun Hlei has been encouraged by the opportunities for inter-faith dialogue and by the good relationships which currently exist between the member-churches of the Myanmar Council of Churches, and between Christians and those of other faiths. However, he highlighted the need for help and resources to make the most of future mission opportunities.

Since 2014, the Methodist Church in Ireland has been developing a partnership with the Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar and plans are currently being made for Methodist President-Designate the Revd Bill Mullally to make a return visit to Myanmar during his presidential year. Possibilities of a supportive partnership between Methodist Women in Ireland and its sister organisation in Myanmar are also being explored.

## **North Belfast Prayer Walks are gathering momentum**

The monthly Prayer Walks in north Belfast, organised by Connor's Church Army Evangelists at the North Belfast Centre of Mission, continue on Monday March 7.

This walk begins at Holy Trinity and St Silas Parish Church in Ballysillan Road and walkers should meet at 7.30pm.

Evangelist Stephen Whitten said the Prayer Walks bring people from different churches together under one cause.

“For the people in the community that we meet and pass by it shows that the church is not just a



bunch of buildings but a group of people who care and believe there is hope,” Stephen said.

“We believe that prayer is powerful and it is worth giving time to in the hope that we see God move more and more in these communities.”

The Prayer Walks have certainly gathered momentum, with up to 30 people attending on a night.

All are welcome. For further information contact Stephen on [s.whitten@churcharmy.org.uk](mailto:s.whitten@churcharmy.org.uk).

## **Are you 18-25 and interested in short-term mission?**

The Concorde Travel Fund was established to help young Irish Presbyterians travel for short-term service into overseas situations, where they might learn from and contribute to the life of the wider church.

Jemma Aitcheson benefited from the Fund when she spent a year in Nepal with two different organizations.

“This year I felt God was calling me to take a break from University and serve Him abroad, at



he time I wasn't quite sure what that looked like but I ended up volunteering with two great organisations – Tearfund and Stand by Me.

“I will never forget my time in Nepal and God certainly used it to help me to readjust my priorities and to see his precious children in a different light”, Jemma said.

With the support of the Concorde Travel Fund, Jemma and others have been able to work for God in places that they would never have imagined. You can read more of Jemma's story [here](#).

If you meet the criteria, then Grants will normally be available to finance travel either wholly or in part.

Further information about the Concorde Travel Fund and an application form can be downloaded [here](#). You can also contact the Council for Congregational Life and Witness office by email [clw@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:clw@presbyterianireland.org) or phone +44 (0)28 9032 2284 for more details. The closing date for travel this summer is strictly 1st March 2016.

## **"The Year of Prayer is Over but the Praying Continues" - Bishop of Derry and Raphoe**

The Derry and Raphoe Dioceses' Year of Prayer and Preparation for 2016 ended on Sunday evening with a Service of Prayerful Celebration in St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe, attended by Bishop Ken Good.

Between the beginning of Lent last year and this, each parish in the diocese had taken it in turn to organise its own week of prayer in preparation for 2016, which has been designated a Year of

Opportunity. The Raphoe, Raymochy and Clonleigh Group of Parishes was the last in the twelve-month cycle and the Service in St Eunan's Cathedral was the last event in the calendar.

The Service included a time of quiet prayer. The Dean of Raphoe, Very Rev Arthur Barrett, told the congregation: "Prayer isn't all one-sided. It's not just about us talking at God. It's also about being quiet, and listening to God's voice in our lives as well." Those present were invited to write down a prayer on a card and to hang it on a 'prayer tree', or to take a stone – representing whatever was burdening them in their lives – and leave it at the foot of a cross near the front of the church.

During the Service, the Diocesan Youth Officer, Martin Montgomery, interviewed members of three different parishes about their experiences of their Weeks of Prayer.

Georgina Armstrong said in one sense Inver couldn't have picked a better week because – in Christmas week – everybody was already talking about God. "It gave families the opportunity to do something in their own space, in their own home and, maybe at a different time of year, they

mightn't have been as inclined to do it. I would definitely do it again; it's a great opportunity."

John Sheeran, from Stranorlar, Meenglass and Kiltteevogue, said "after a long interregnum" the parishes were setting off on a new journey with a new Rector, so their Week of Prayer "re-set" their compass. John said he would love to do it again. "Next time we would try and do it better. Perhaps it's something we could build into our church calendar. We need to extend it (I'm not sure how) but everybody felt a little bit better at the end of the week – everybody who was involved – and, therefore, surely we can do something with that."

David McKinley said the Moville Group of Parishes didn't really know what to expect from their Week of Prayer. "We had an evening in each of the five churches – Moville, Culdaff, Carndonagh, Greencastle and Malin. It brought the five closer together and gave them a real bond. It was very good for us. And it took me – personally – to a different level that I never realised I had."

In his sermon at the Service, Bishop Good said the urgency of praying was reinforced again and again in the word of God, and we neglected it at our peril. "I'm encouraging us, as this Year of

Prayer comes to a close, to continue to pray, and to find a pattern and a way that works for us.

“It may be the daily office in our prayer book that gives us a structure; it may be reading of scripture; it may be writing; it may be walking. Whatever it is, find a pattern and use it, because we do not know the significance – spiritually – of what happens when we pray. It’s not only about us getting the answers that we want from our praying; it’s about God knowing we love Him and trust Him, that we adore Him. It’s about us confessing and acknowledging our frailties before Him; it’s about us giving thanks to Him for his goodness and blessings of this life. And a small part of it may then be about asking for the things that we long for in our hearts.”

The Bishop thanked parishes for their part in the Year of Prayer, for accepting the responsibility and stepping out in faith. “The year is over,” he said, “but the praying continues. And we have to find a way of building on what’s already been accomplished in the year that’s just gone.”

## **Irish Methodist President appeals for retraining for Bombardier workforce**

A senior churchman has appealed to the Stormont Executive to do all it can for those Bombardier workers who could lose their jobs.

Last week, the Province was dealt a severe economic blow when the Canadian-owned aerospace manufacturer said that 580 jobs will be lost this year at its Belfast plant with a further 500 to go during 2017.

The Rev Brian Anderson, an east Belfast-man “born and bred” and who is president of the Methodist Church in Ireland, said he was “alarmed and saddened” at the jobs cuts.

He revealed that he himself “experienced the pain of redundancy” before entering the ministry and so has some idea of how Bombardier employees are feeling at this time.

He added: “I would encourage the ministers in the Stormont Executive to do all in their power to provide retraining for those who will become casualties in this round of redundancies.”

## **Rector of Ballyclare appointed to Ballymena**

The Rev Mark McConnell, rector of the Parish of Ballynure and Ballyeaston, has been appointed

as rector of the Parish of Ballymena and Ballyclug.

A native of Lisburn, Mark is a former pupil of Lisnagarvey Secondary School and Lisburn Technical College. He grew up in the Parish of Lisburn Cathedral.

After A Levels, Mark worked in Redmond Jefferson's hardware store in Bow Street, Lisburn, for two years before moving to the Northern Ireland Civil Service where he held jobs in a number of departments, all relating to industrial development and the export of Northern Ireland goods overseas.

He was with the Civil Service for more than seven years, and it was during this time Mark felt the call to ministry. He moved to north London to study theology at Oak Hill Church of England Training College.

“At the start of the course I was not sure that ordained ministry was for me, but I knew I wanted to serve the Lord and needed a good grounding,” Mark said. “It was while I was at Oak Hill that the call to ordained ministry arrived.

“The then Bishop of St Alban's, Bishop John Taylor, and the Diocese of St Alban's took me



under their wing, and in my last year I was accepted for Church of England ministry.”

Mark took a year out, during which time he married Cherith, who hails from Omagh, Co Tyrone, and was employed as a church worker in the parish of St James’ in Muswell Hill. “That was a great year of growth and learning,” Mark said.

After his ordination he served a three year curacy in Christ Church Parish, Bedford, before he and Cherith had a call, in late 1987, to return home to Northern Ireland.

They moved to Bangor Parish Church, Co Down, with their young son Daniel, where Mark served a second curacy in this very busy church.

His first incumbency was as rector in Killyleagh, Co Down, and he was appointed rector of Ballynure and Ballyeaston in 1999.

Mark and Cherith now have three children, Daniel, Matthew and Erin. Cherith, a former special needs teacher in primary schools, works for Barnardo’s.

“We prayed long and hard about a move, being very happy and blessed as we are in Ballyclare,” said Mark. “We wanted to stay close to our

elderly parents, and we wanted Erin, who is 13, to transition gently, we did not want to suddenly unplug her from everything that her world is.

Mark said the news that he had been appointed to a large parish like Ballymena had come as something of a shock. "I have been curate in a large parish and have experience of being a junior in a large team, but I don't have any real experience of being a leader in a big parish unit," he said.

Mark succeeds the Rev Canon Stuart Lloyd who retired from the Parish of Ballymena and Ballyclug last November.

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Nun who works with homeless calls for greater government support**

BBC news

A Belfast nun, known affectionately as Mother Teresa by the homeless people she helps, has added her voice to calls for more to be done to help those who sleep rough.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35614665>

### Christian Today

Steve Chalke, theologian and founder of the Oasis charity says he believes parts of Islamic theology better

reflect God's character than some Christian teaching. Speaking about the publication of his new book *Radical*, Mr Chalke explains he has come to the conclusion "Muslims and Christians worship the same God".

### **Exp**

Further reports that a group of 200 MPs and Council leaders are calling for a relaxation of Sunday Trading laws. The group says that increasing spending on Sundays would boost job prospects and help shops compete with online firms. They back the government plans to devolve Sunday trading laws to local councils. The Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, is quoted amongst those opposed to the plans.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/646112/End-Sunday-trading-laws-Nearly-200-politicians-demand-retail-reform>

### **Mail**

Further coverage of a new book produced by the Bible Society, HM The Queen writes of her enduring Christian faith. In the forward to the book *The Servant Queen And The King She Serves* published to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday later this year, the supreme governor of the Church of England, writes "I have been – and remain – very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for His steadfast love. I have indeed seen His faithfulness."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3457017/Queen-reflects-enduring-Christian-faith.html>

### **Exp**

Further reports of a speech given by the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, at a Mansion House dinner hosted by the Lord Mayor of London for Anglican

bishops. He is quoted as saying the church has a role to articulate an inclusive version of the English story. <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/646227/Bishop-London-English-pride>

### **UK News**

The Bishop of Wakefield, Tony Robinson, has become the first elderly care ambassador at Pinderfields Hospital. His new ambassador role will see him promoting the message that health care for elderly matters. The article highlights that the Leeds diocese organises dementia friendly acts of worship and parish travel rotas, enabling residents to attend church. Read the [full story](http://www.newsrt.co.uk/news/bishop-is-first-elderly-care-ambassador-3934672.html) <http://www.newsrt.co.uk/news/bishop-is-first-elderly-care-ambassador-3934672.html>

### **Tel**

An article extolling the beauty of Salisbury Cathedral and its Close is sparked by news that a 15 foot high sculpture of clasped hands, called the Kiss, is being moved at Salisbury Cathedral because people on mobile phones keep walking into it. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/12166488/Put-away-your-phone-and-enjoy-the-world-around-you.html>

### **BBC**

A peel of bells have been returned to a church near Swindon, where they will go on show. A blessing of the five 17th Century bells took place at All Saints Church at Liddington this weekend. A new set of six bells is due to be installed in the church in July, which will allow bells to be rung for the first time since 1979. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-35621834>

**GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY**

**Facebook and Twitter**

**Click on logo at CNI Home page**

**[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)**

**+ Please share CNI with your friends**

**[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)**