

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Clifton, Connemara**

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## Image of the day - Clifton, Connemara

Clifden is the largest town in Connemara and the unofficial capital of the region. Nestled between the Twelve Bens and the Atlantic Ocean, it's surrounded by breathtaking beauty and is a popular base for tourists who wish to explore Connemara and all it has to offer. A short climb to the summit of Monument Hill is rewarded with stunning panoramic views of the town and surrounds. The monument, for which the hill is named, commemorates John D'Arcy who founded the town at the beginning of the 19th century.

## People and places

### **Moravian Church settlement at Gracehill near Ballymena moves step closer to World Heritage Site status**

**A Co Antrim village which represents the only complete Moravian Church settlement in Ireland has moved a step nearer to achieving World Heritage Site status, Graham Cousins writes in the Belfast News Letter**

Gracehill near Ballymena has been added to the UK Tentative List for potential nomination to UNESCO for this coveted international award.

The settlement at Gracehill is an early example of town planning reflecting the values of education, equality, industry, tolerance and spirituality that have been at the heart of the community since 1759.



Its intact core of historic listed buildings, Moravian Church, central square, and burial ground – or God’s Acre as it is known, feature in the sdescription submitted to UNESCO

See also -

[[] <http://www.moravian.org.uk/component/content/article/157-spotlight-news/451-world-heritage-moves-one-step-closer?Itemid=437> ]

## **Armagh Diocese raise over £20,000 for Hospices through annual appeal**

**The Annual Hospice Sunday Appeal in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Armagh has been taking place since it began in 2014.**



**Rev. Matthew Hagan (Annual Hospice Sunday Appeal Co-ordinator) presenting a cheque for £16,962.00 to Siobhan McArdle (Fund-raising manager, Southern Area Hospice, Newry).**

The initiative was the concept of the Rev. Matthew Hagan, Rector of Tynan, Aghavilly and Middletown Group of Parishes in Co. Armagh and to date the appeal has raised over £200,000 for Hospice care.

Amazingly in 2021, despite the Coronavirus pandemic when Church of Ireland Churches were closed for periods of time an amazing £21,670.00 was contributed to the 2021 Annual Hospice Sunday Appeal by the many different parishes.

£19,973.00 including Gift Aid was donated to the Southern Area Hospice, Newry; £932.00 to Foyle Hospice, Londonderry and £765.00 to NI Hospice, Belfast.

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Rev. Hagan who co-ordinates the appeal each year stated: “It is very encouraging the amount of genuine support the hospice appeal is given each year especially during this time of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

“I am truly grateful that in 2021 over £20,000.00 has been donated and distributed to each parish’s local hospice. I very sincerely wish to thank the Rector, Select Vestry and the parishioners of each parish who made contributions – your support for hospice care is very much needed in these very volatile times in healthcare settings. Please continue to support the appeal and thank you.”

Report courtesy Conor Neeson @ Armagh I,

## **Retirement from ministry in Ballymena**

**Rev Joseph Andrews retires from Ballee Presbyterian Church, Ballymena after occupying the pulpit there for 35 years.**

He preached his final sermon there on Sunday night, 13th February 2022.

Joseph arrived at the Old Antrim Road congregation on 16th January 1987 having previously served at Loughgall & Tartaraghan Presbyterian Churches in County Armagh.

However, longtime churchgoers will remember that Joseph served his Assistantship under Rev David Alderdice at the old Wellington Street Church from 1981-84.

## Bell ringing at 93 years old

Cyril Galbraith ringing bells in Taney Church, Dundrum, Dublin last Sunday at 93 years old..



## News reports

### Archbishop backtracks on pandemic church closures

**The Archbishop of Canterbury has denied being solely to blame for the closure of churches during the pandemic, arguing that he is “not the Pope”.**

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The Most Rev Justin Welby faced criticism for denying parishioners the chance to worship by approving the closure of churches in the Covid crisis.

The archbishop has denied he was solely to blame for the restrictions imposed on churchgoers, as the decision was made collectively by senior clergy and not a “Pope”.

He said: “It wasn’t just me. It’s not a dictatorship. I am not the Pope. But I had an influence and I’m not sure I got that right.”

Churches were closed in 2020, with the archbishop warning clergy and laity not to attend.

This approach later shifted, with faith leaders uniting to oppose this ban by November 2020 when closures were again ordered during the second national lockdown.

Archbishop Welby has previously admitted that he was “too risk averse” in his decision to close places of worship, and has stated that he would now take a different approach to the church closures.

Speaking to Radio Times, he said: “If I had the time again, I would be more cautious about closing the churches.”

The archbishop has spoken about the necessity of not seeking “perfection” from leaders, and admitted his fears for the future of church in an increasingly secular age, saying: “None of us want to see the thing go down on our watch.”

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While he entertains questions like “am I going to be the one who they’ll say finished the Church of England off?”, he has said that ultimately “it’s God’s problem, not mine”.

## **St Paul’s artwork tackles thorny past in Benin**

**St Paul’s Cathedral has waded into the cancel culture debate, installing a Nigerian artist’s new work beside a plaque of the Admiral who led the plundering of the Benin Bronzes.**

A brass memorial panel to Admiral Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843-1910) was installed in the Nelson Chamber of the Cathedral’s crypt in 1913.

As the panel notes, Rawson had a long career in the Royal Navy, which culminated in his commanding the Benin Expedition of 1897.

However, the panel does not include how he led a force that looted thousands of treasures in the Royal Kingdom of Benin – now part of Nigeria.

They burnt the palace, exiled the ruler, known as the Oba, and plundered the Benin Bronzes as well as other artefacts that are exhibited in museums around the world.

Now, in an effort to “reflect” and “understand the complexities of monuments in 21st-century Britain”, St Paul’s Cathedral is installing an artwork this week by Victor



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Ehikhamenor, a Nigerian artist, to exist “in dialogue with” – and in response to – the panel.

The move comes amid controversy over the future of problematic statues and monuments in the nation’s places of worship and universities after the toppling of the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol.

Ehikhamenor’s 12ft-high installation Still Standing is inspired by the Oba Ovonramwen, who was the reigning king of the Benin Kingdom at the time of Rawson’s expedition.

His work will go on display in the crypt of St Paul’s Cathedral, from Thursday to May 14 as part of the 50 Monuments in 50 Voices project, which invites responses to buildings’ memorials and the people they commemorate from artists, poets, musicians, theologians and academics.

Ehikhamenor said: “History never sleeps nor slumbers.

“For me to be responding to the memorial brass of Admiral Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson who led British troops in the sacking of the Benin Kingdom 125 years ago is a testament to this.

“I hope that we, the descendants of innumerable uncomfortable thorny pasts, will begin to have meaningful and balanced conversations through projects such as this.”

Still Standing is a mixed-media work that raises questions about remembrance, repair, and the legacies and losses of colonial war.

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The Very Rev David Ison, the Dean of St Paul's, said that Eikhamenor's latest work "contributes to the [task] of understanding the complexities of these monuments in 21st-century Britain".

Paula Gooder, the Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral, added that the exhibition aims "to explore the [history] of the cathedral from the Napoleonic Wars to the First World War".

## **New Zealand Anglicans recycle used foil into survival blankets for homeless people**

**Auckland Anglican Terrena Griffiths is encouraging churches to get involved in a new project she launched for Aotearoa New Zealand during the September 2021 lockdown.**

Known as the Chip Packet Project NZ (CPPNZ), the national organization that Terrena coordinates is modeled on the U.K.'s Chip Packet Project, started by Hastings-based artist Pen Huston. Worried by news of people dying from exposure on U.K. streets, Huston found she could make survival blankets to protect people sleeping rough by fusing together washed and flattened foil-lined chip packets.

Today her organization has grown to provide the survival bag service in several U.K. cities.

In Aotearoa, volunteers have taken up the challenge of upcycling used bubble wrap and foil-lined single use packaging from the foil-lined packets of potato chips,

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nachos or crackers and fusing them together to make survival sleeping bag covers. The tools they use are simple: an iron, some baking paper and a breadboard.

Once the flattened and fused packets are attached to a bigger sheet of plastic they can be used as survival blankets, pillows or ground sheets to help protect people sleeping out in the elements.

## **Martyrdom of 21 Christians in Libya must never be forgotten, says peer**

**Lord Alton of Liverpool has said that the martyrdom of 21 Christians by ISIS "demands a better response" from the world to the ongoing persecution and genocide of religious minorities.**

Twenty of the men executed on the beach on 15 February 2015 were Coptic Christians from Egypt. The other martyr was Matthew Ayariga, a Christian from Ghana. They were beheaded by Islamic State militants after refusing to renounce their faith.

Lord Alton said their faith and sacrifice must never be forgotten.

"We should certainly try to forgive but not to forget," he said. "Forgiving and remembering is very different from Jihadist calls to revenge and the promotion of an ideology based on the hatred of difference."

The crossbench peer said that love was the "antidote to the hatred represented by those who would disguise their identity in black masks and then on a beach in Libya, in murderous cold blood, execute a group of men working overseas to support their loved ones in Egypt".

It was also the antidote, he said, to the actions of the Liverpool suicide bomber who tried to commit another atrocity on Remembrance Sunday last year "in the name of a twisted ideology based on a distorted view of religion with no regard to the injunction against shedding innocent life and based on hatred rather than love".

Lord Alton said that while forgiveness was important, those responsible for doing evil should nonetheless be brought to justice and held accountable.

He called on governments and individuals to stand in "common humanity" with persecuted religious minorities, including Christians, Uyghurs and Rohingya.

He paid particular tribute to the "extraordinary act of love and solidarity" shown by Matthew Ayariga in choosing to die alongside his Egyptian brothers, which he said "stands as a rebuke to us all who remain silent in the face of the persecution of 250 million Christians worldwide".

“His act of extraordinary solidarity shames so many of us when we consider our tepid response – often based on political expediency, institutional considerations, or trade and business – to the persecution which is experienced by religious and ethnic groups the world over – discrimination that morphs into persecution; then persecution which

morphs into crimes against humanity; and then ultimately into the crime above all crimes, genocide," he said.

He added, "Heroic bravery in the face of evil demands a better response from us – even if it is only a pale imitation of the remarkable act of solidarity by Matthew Ayariga on that deadly beach in Libya in 2015.

"When Matthew Ayariga stood with his Coptic brothers, he did so in an uncommon, atypical, display of common humanity. Are we willing to do the same?"

## **U.S. Ukrainian Catholic Bishops urge prayer, fasting for peace in Ukraine**

**As fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine continue to mount, the Ukrainian Catholic bishops of the U.S. have called for a three-day prayer vigil “for peace and the conversion of the hearts of those who preach violence and escalate war.”**

The appeal, directed to Ukrainian Catholic faithful and “to all people of goodwill,” was issued in a Feb. 12 letter signed by Archbishop Borys Gudziak, who heads the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia and is metropolitan archbishop of Ukrainian Catholics in the U.S.

Also signing the letter were: Bishop Paul P. Chomnycky of the Eparchy of Stamford, Connecticut; Bishop Benedict Aleksiychuk of the Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago; Bishop Bohdan J. Danylo of the Eparchy of St. Josaphat in



**Members of the Russian armed forces drive tanks during military exercises in the Leningrad region of Russia in this handout photo released Feb. 14, 2022. (Photo: CNS/Russian Defense Ministry, Handout via Reuters)**

Parma, Ohio; and Auxiliary Bishop Andriy Rabyi of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

“We ask that each pastor and community, each family and each person, participate in this vigil in whatever way is possible for them,” said the bishops. “May our churches be open throughout the day, may the prayer of the church interchange with personal contemplation.

“Conduct and participate in services, pray the Jesus Prayer, the Marian rosary, the Paraclesis (a prayer service of

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supplication), sit with the Scriptures. Fast in order to focus on the hope that only God gives.”

Russia has amassed more than 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian border, while launching large-scale joint maneuvers with neighboring Belarus Feb. 10.

In recent days, a number of countries, including the U.S., the United Kingdom and Germany, have urged their nationals to leave Ukraine.

A massive Jan. 14 cybersecurity attack, regarded by many as a prelude to Russian military action, crippled approximately 70 Ukrainian government websites, with an onscreen message warning users to “be afraid and expect the worst.”

“Over the last weeks, the world has become fully aware of the fact that democratic Ukraine and its freedom-loving people are increasingly surrounded by hostile military forces prone for invasion,” said the bishops.

The threat marks what the bishops termed an escalation of “the eight-year Kremlin-led war” since Russia’s 2014 annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula.

That same year, Russian-backed separatists proclaimed “people’s republics” in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, together known as the Donbas. The move came just 23 years after Ukraine gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union, of which it had been a part.

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Since 2014, clashes, shelling and sniper attacks have become common in eastern Ukraine. The United Nations reported close to 1.5 million registered internally displaced persons in the country as of 2021, and at least 3,353 civilian deaths and more than 7,000 civilian injuries between April 2014 and March 2020.

In total, between 14,000 and 15,000 are estimated to have been killed in the conflict to date.

A full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine would “bring about devastating bloodshed and untold human suffering,” resulting in “a disaster with global repercussions,” the bishops warned.

“Deaths could be in the tens of thousands and refugees in the millions,” they said. “The economic and political shockwaves of the social devastation and material destruction in Ukraine will be worldwide.”

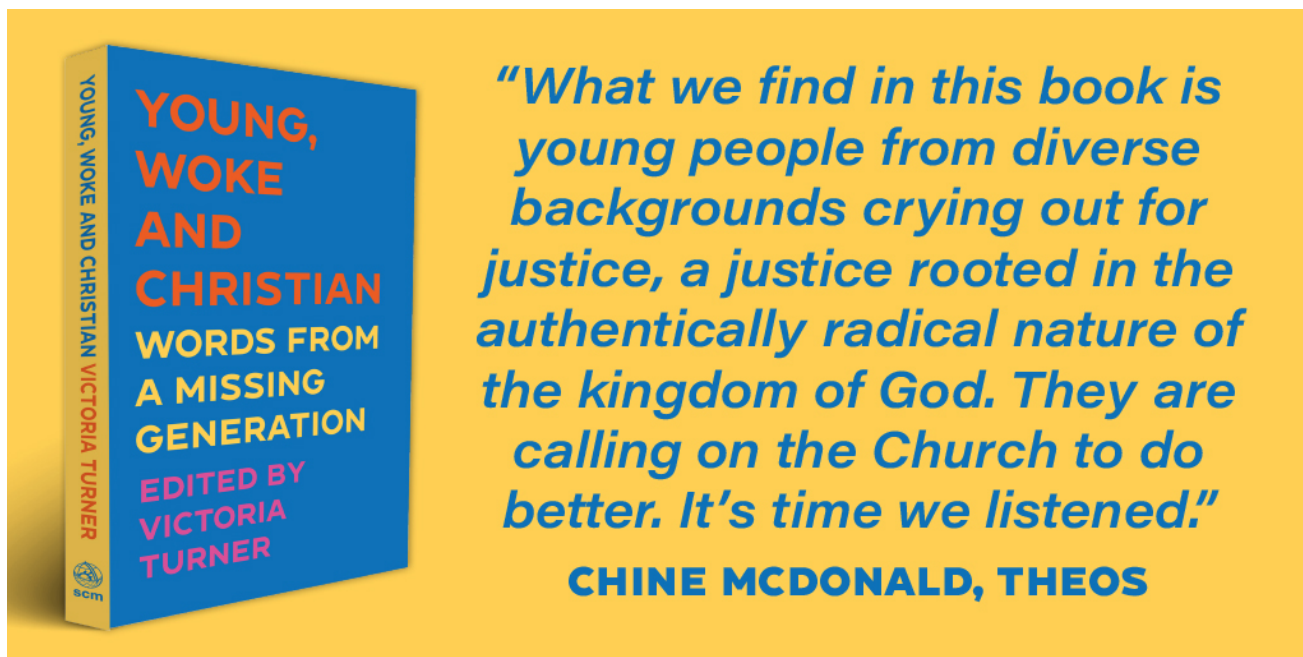
Amid the grave situation, the bishops urged faithful to “pray and be full of hope,” citing Scripture passages from the First Letter of Peter and psalms 20 and 125.

“Ukrainian faithful of all confessions have witnessed miracles,” they said. “In recent history, we saw the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the dissolution of the Soviet prison of nations, the liberation of our churches, which occurred without war and bloodshed. We put our trust in God and ask for divine intervention. ... Know the Lord and God’s love for the world!”

Courtesy of Gina Christian and The Tablet 14/02/2022



# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



## Young, Woke and Christian

This collection is a cry for the reform of the church to not ally with 'woke' issues because they are popular with youth, but because they are gospel issues.

Young, Woke and Christian edited by Victoria Turner  
[ <https://scmpress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/97803340> ]

## Literature and Faith at North Belfast Festival

Steve Jaffa is looking forward to giving a Jewish perspective as a panellist at the North Belfast Festival. Come along if you can! 27 Feb 3pm University of Ulster, York Street campus, in person

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Tickets here -

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/literature-religion-panel-tickets-244351500917>

## The Digital Labs blog

On this C of E blog you'll find a hub of free resources for your church. Find advice on design, photography, social media strategy and more, all aimed specifically at those running social and web projects in churches.

Explore more at

[ [cofe.io/DigitalLabs](https://cofe.io/DigitalLabs). ]

The poster is for a Zoom event titled "ASK PHILIP YANCEY ANYTHING". It features a large portrait of Philip Yancey on the left. The text "ASK" is in a green speech bubble, "PHILIP YANCEY" is in large white letters, and "ANYTHING" is in a red speech bubble. The date "Tue 1st March 2022" is at the bottom center. On the right, there is a smaller circular portrait of Justin Brierley with the text "HOSTED BY JUSTIN BRIERLEY". The top right corner says "Premier. Unbelievable? LIVE". The bottom left corner says "Powered by zoom". The bottom center has the times "8pm-9pm UK / 3pm-4pm Eastern / 12pm-1pm Pacific" and a red button that says "REGISTRATION REQUIRED". A pink banner in the top left corner says "FREE EVENT".

## Want to ask Philip Yancey anything?

Well now you can! Tune into Unbelievable? Live on 1st March via zoom. 8pm-9pm GMT / 3pm-4pm EST / 12noon-1pm PST

REGISTRATION FREE <https://unbelievable.live>

## Perspective

### C of I Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin on the easing of Covid–19 restrictions

**The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John McDowell, and the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, have issued the following message of thanks and encouragement to all members of the Church of Ireland following the announcements of the easing of Covid–19 restrictions:**

We write with great thankfulness to God and heartfelt gratitude to you, as we on this island begin to adjust to the lifting of public health restrictions on many aspects of our lives. The speed with which this has happened has taken many of us by surprise, and it will no doubt take some time for each of us to adjust, not only our social arrangements, but also our mental outlook in the months ahead.

Of all the seasons of the year Spring comes most gradually; the anticipation we see in snowdrops, then in cyclamen and daffodils. Then we notice the greater intensity and variety of birdsong at dawn and the vibrant loveliness of cherry blossom against still grey skies. Finally there comes the full opening up of leaves on the trees as the annual rebirth of nature arrives in its full form.

This may be how it happens for us in terms of our greater participation in social and parish life, as we feel this renewed sense of optimism grow into the confidence that

we are at a new point in our lives at which we can live with Covid–19, without imperilling our health services or putting vulnerable people in harm’s way.

In our genuine sense of relief and perhaps enthusiasm to “get going again,” we need also to remember those for whom the past two years have been much more than an inconvenience or a nuisance. There are families who have lost loved ones in the most chilling of circumstances; all who have worked in the health services and in the care sector, often putting the welfare of others before their own well–being, along with those who have maintained education and other essential services at all levels. People who are utterly exhausted by the experience of worry, loneliness and stress over two long years cannot be left behind. Children and young people who have missed out on experiences which simply will not come round again need to be nurtured and encouraged.

We wish to thank all who have worked so hard in parishes up and down this island, both in maintaining the worship and witness of the Church and in serving their communities, often in partnership with other organisations. We also thank all who have worked and prayed and persevered. We have passed through a uniquely difficult time which has placed great demands on practical discipleship. And it has been for all of us a time when nothing could be taken for granted. Now we are emerging into the light.

Risk assessments will continue to be a feature of parish life, and each of us, clergy and lay people, will need to make many judgements about exactly how and at what pace we move into our greater freedoms. At the same time there is a

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new sense of hope. There is an appropriateness in making this cautious journey through Lent and into Easter. Not in the sense of forty days of long faces, followed by an exhausted smile. Instead in a spirit of quiet preparation for the fullness of the resurrection light of Easter; God's final and irrevocable act is that he has not let the world slip from his grasp, but has rescued and redeemed it in his Son.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and prayer on this site daily

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## Church News Ireland

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