

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Northern Ireland at Expo 2020 Dubai**

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## Image of the day

### Northern Ireland at Expo 2020 Dubai

The UK is participating in the World Expo in Dubai, taking place from 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022. The UK's participation theme is 'Innovating for a Shared Future' and its presence consists of a self-build country Pavilion and a global programme of content and activity you can experience in person or online. The UK is one of 190 nations participating in Expo 2020 Dubai. The UK Pavilion is the centrepiece of the UK's presence, accompanied by a six month events programme at the UK Pavilion and beyond. [<https://www.events.great.gov.uk/website/3127/>]

## People and places

### Ireland: National Divine Mercy Conference

**The 2022 National Divine Mercy Conference will take place in Dublin from Friday, 25th to Sunday 27th February.**

Guest speakers include Fr Hayden Williams OFM Cap, Fr Chris Alar from the Marian Fathers in the USA, Dr Mary Healy (a member of the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity, Bernadette Smythe, Fr Billy Swan, Fr Eunan McDonnell and Fr Robert McNamara.

Holy Mass will be celebrated by the Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell and Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan.

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The conference is free online.

For more information and to join the conference online, see: [www.divinemercuryconference.com/](http://www.divinemercuryconference.com/)

## Pupils of St Mary's NS Carrigaline donate to Cork Penny Dinners for St Valentine's Day



**For the eighth year in a row, the pupils of St Mary's National School, Carrigaline, have collected items to be delivered to Cork Penny Dinners on St Valentine's Day.**



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Canon Elaine Murray, Rector of Carrigaline Union, writes:

Cork Penny Dinners is based in Little Hanover Street in Cork City and was founded during Famine times as a soup kitchen. They are currently



They are currently serving over 2000 meals per week, compared to around 150 a week a few years ago. Their aim is a simple one – to give everyone who calls to them a hot nourishing midday meal. In addition, their clients get sandwiches and fruit to take away as an evening meal.

There's an open door and a warm welcome. They never judge, they serve. Sometimes a cup of tea, a handshake and a chat goes a long way towards beating the loneliness that's a big issue for many who come their way. Their aim is

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to provide a warm, dry place to sit and eat, with a welcoming atmosphere where no questions are asked, no judgments made. Regardless of ability to pay, all are welcomed with courtesy.

Every year for the past eight years, the children have brought items into school and we deliver them to Penny Dinners in Little Hanover Street, so that the clients and staff there get to know that there is more to St Valentine's Day than sappy hearts and cards. It's the perfect time to show them some real practical 'love' in action!

## News reports

### **Afghanistan humanitarian summit must be coupled with UK aid, Christian Aid says**

**International development charity, Christian Aid, has called on the UK Government to help Afghan people in need by “massively stepping up our own contribution” on the six-month anniversary of the fall of Kabul.**

The intervention comes as the UK Government announces plans to co-host an upcoming United Nations virtual pledging summit to help address the growing humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan.

Christian Aid, working with Save the Children and other campaigners, has been calling on the UK Government to

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host a humanitarian conference. They will today hand in a petition to the FCDO.

Fionna Smyth, Head of Global Advocacy and Policy at Christian Aid, said:

“Afghanistan is in crisis with millions on the verge of starvation. Reports of the elimination of women and girls from society are heartbreaking. However, the way to ensure the rights of women is not to starve them or their families.

“Following the efforts of Christian Aid and other campaigners, it is welcome news that the UK Government will host a United Nations virtual pledging summit.

"This is a step in the right direction. It must, however, be coupled with massively stepping up our own contribution to prevent famine and action to get the Afghan economy back on its feet.

“With the UN asking for \$4.4 billion, the £286 million committed by the UK is a drop in the ocean and does not reflect our historic responsibility. To make this summit a success, the UK has a moral duty to lead by example.”

## **Dean of Canterbury Cathedral to retire**

**The Dean of Canterbury, Robert Willis, has announced that he will cease to be Dean at midnight on 16 May 2022, the eve of his 75th birthday.**

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Dean Robert was installed in July 2001, and during the coronavirus pandemic he has become familiar to online audiences worldwide via his daily Morning Prayer videos from the Deanery at Canterbury Cathedral.



Canterbury Cathedral is known by many as the “Mother Church” of the Anglican Communion and is often visited by pilgrims from all around the world. The Cathedral hosts a conference for new bishops from around the communion. The Compass Rose, a symbol of the Anglican Communion spreading the gospel to all the world, is embedded into the flooring in the nave.

The standard retirement age for clergy in the Church of England is 70, but Dean Robert was granted permission by the Archbishop of Canterbury to continue in office until 75, the maximum age permitted by Church law.

Dean Robert has played an active role in helping to plan and prepare for the Lambeth Conference, based in



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Canterbury later this year, and particularly in the pre-conference retreat which is to take place at the Cathedral.

Speaking of his time at Canterbury, Dean Robert said: “These 21 years have been exceptionally happy and fulfilling, and I shall miss Canterbury greatly.

“The Archbishop of Canterbury and I had hoped that there could be some kind of extension for me to cover the Lambeth Conference, which takes place in late July and August this year, but, unfortunately, this option has been ruled legally impossible.

“In looking forward to the next few months, I’m hoping until Easter that the normal course of cathedral life can resume here and that all farewells can be left until after that time. Until Easter, we will still keep our commitment day by day to the Garden Congregations across the world, which has been a feature of ministry during the pandemic. I am sorry that we will not be here to see the full opening up of cathedral life as the months of Covid restrictions come to an end.

“There will be time to express heartfelt affection and gratitude to all who have been part of our life here and across the world during these happy years, but that will be for later as we prepare to say goodbye.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who was installed by Dean Robert at Canterbury Cathedral in 2013, said: “Dean Robert has been one of the most exceptional deans of the post-war period – overseeing Canterbury Cathedral’s life of worship, prayer and witness with creativity and imagination. He is



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deeply loved not just at the Cathedral but across the Diocese of Canterbury, the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and far beyond.

“Over the course of the pandemic, he has brought the comfort and hope of Jesus Christ to many thousands of people around the world through his daily Morning Prayer videos. Dean Robert has been a faithful, prayerful friend to our whole family and we will miss him greatly. In turn, we will be praying for him and all those who have supported him over many years, as he prepares for retirement and the next stage of his ministry.”

## **Church of England was covering up for predatory priest for 50 years**

**Church of England leaders knew about a paedophile vicar for 50 years but “covered up” his crimes, a review has concluded.**

The Rev Graham Gregory, who died in prison in 2019, was a “prolific, determined and tenacious abuser of children during the course of his ministry”.

Gregory, who had a 30-year career in the Church, was jailed for three years in 2014 for indecently assaulting a girl under 13, and was jailed for four years and four months in 2018 for historical assaults against three other children.

The abuses took place in the dioceses of Southwark, and Sodor and Man.

However, an independent report, published yesterday, has concluded that he could have been stopped sooner if members of the clergy had listened to the victims and their families. It also concluded the vicar's abuse continued "unchallenged" as the Church "suppressed" reports about his behaviour.

Ray Galloway, who led the Jimmy Savile Inquiry at Leeds General Infirmary, carried out an independent review of how Gregory's case was handled. He was commissioned by the Church's National Safeguarding Team.

He concluded in his 84-page report: "It is the institutional structures of the Church, and deference from within the community to those holding roles within it, that, at least in part, created the environment in which such abuse could be perpetrated and was not positively acted upon when it became known, notwithstanding the societal culture that prevailed at the time."

The report points out that the Child Protection Policy for the Church of England was not introduced until 1995, the year of Gregory's retirement, and that safeguarding "did not benefit from the same level of awareness and profile" as exists now. However, Mr Galloway added there was a "moral and ethical responsibility" to protect children that was "not acted upon".

Some recommendations include a review of the criteria for the suspension of a member of the clergy and a review of recruitment and selection processes.

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The Bishop of Huddersfield, Jonathan Gibbs, who also acts as the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop, described the report as a "stark and harrowing reminder" of how the Church failed victims and survivors.

"We are deeply sorry," he said, adding: "Where there is criticism of poor handling in the past, the National Safeguarding Team will be seeking reassurance that current safeguarding practice is up to date and that a very different approach would be adopted now."

## In the media

### **Donate energy rebate to charities, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell**

#### **Irish Times**

People who may not need the energy rebate, to be paid from April next, should donate it "to the Society of St Vincent de Paul, or other charities supporting the unfortunate," Catholic Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell has said.

"Targeting resources on those who need them most is fair and sensible. When targeting is difficult to achieve, there is an onus on those who don't need support to take their own responsibility for acting fairly and in consideration of the needs of others," he said.

"Those who will receive the energy rebate over coming weeks, but don't actually need it to cover their expenses, have the opportunity to direct it to those in greater need," he said.

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[ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/archbishop-farrell-issues-charitable-reminder-on-energy-rebate-1.4801954> ]

## **Some schools raise concerns about integrated schools with parents**

### **BBC News NI**

Some schools have told parents an integrated education bill would "elevate integrated schools" above other types of school.

Some Catholic maintained and controlled schools have sent letters to parents expressing concerns about the proposals.

The bill has been brought forward by the Alliance Party's Kellie Armstrong.

Her private member's bill would lead to the promotion, reform and the expansion of integrated education.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60369669?> ]

## **Stormont cannot strike three-year budget amid current crisis, minister says**

### **The Journal**

A draft three year budget for Northern Ireland that prioritised action on the region's spiralling health waiting lists cannot be introduced due to the powersharing crisis, the Finance Minister has announced.



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Conor Murphy said more than £300 million in additional funds earmarked for the next financial year can also not be spent because of the lack of functioning executive.

[[] <https://www.thejournal.ie/stormont-budget-crisis-5683632-Feb2022/> ]

## **Drew Harris to remain as Garda Commissioner until 2025**

### **Irish Times**

Cabinet approves term extension of Garda leader 'held in high esteem by the public'

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/drew-harris-to-remain-as-garda-commissioner-until-2025-1.4802916> ]

## **HIA - Stormont's five main parties to apologise to abuse survivors**

### **BBC News**

[ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60369581> ]  
[]

## **Post Office scandal: Public inquiry to hold hearings in Northern Ireland**

### **BBC News**

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-60381372> ]

## **Victim awarded 1.4 million pounds in damages over abuse by monks**

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[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-60377109> ]

# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

## The Archbishop Interviews

Archbishop Justin Welby writes - For a change, I've been asking the questions for a new series on Radio 4 called The Archbishop Interviews. I'll be speaking to fascinating people from different backgrounds – including Tony Blair, Stephen King and Elif Shafak - about the experiences and beliefs that shape their lives.

The best way to get to know someone is to be truly curious, to ask questions and listen deeply to the answers. In this time when our connections and relationships with people who are different from us are more important than ever, it's been an honour to hear about people's lives, ask about their stories and learn more about them.

I hope the series might give those who listen to it the curiosity to look at others who are different to them, to wonder who they might truly be, and how we might build relationships that cross divides. I pray it would be an encouragement to each of us to have conversations that seek to understand and know one another more fully.

Listen to the series on Sundays at 1:30pm on BBC Radio 4:

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## **Belfast Bible College course**

This course is for those who want to engage as faithful Christians with the big issues we encounter in the media and society.

Each week, BBC will introduce an issue and explore a variety of approaches to it, discussing how a Christian perspective will engage and contribute to the discussion. Subjects to be covered may include: racism; migration; the increasing need for food banks; climate change, divisions in society.

Click here to enroll:

[ <https://belfast-bible-college.learnworlds.com/course/faith-that-responds?msg=signup> ]

## **The online/hybrid DMin at Candler**

Candler School of Theology at Emory University offers an online/hybrid Doctor of Ministry degree so you can benefit from the resources of a top-25 university while staying rooted in your place of ministry, no matter where you are. Apply by March 1.

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Two tracks: Biblical Interpretation and Proclamation and Church Leadership and Community Witness

Learn from Candler's highly respected faculty, among the top teacher-scholars in theological education

Synchronous online classes build a close-knit community of ministry peers



Scholarships available: Apply by March 1 for the 2022-23 academic year

The Doctor of Ministry program is for experienced pastors who have completed a Master of Divinity from an ATS-accredited school, have at least three years of post-MDiv experience, and feel a sense of vocational identity in pastoral ministry and the church.

[[] <https://apply.candler.emory.edu/rfi/ens-stw-dmin-feb2022.html> ]

## **Unearthed Paddington tale to be an Easter treat**

A new Paddington story is being published thanks to an “unexpected and exciting” find by Hilary Delamere, Michael Bond’s agent.

Paddington’s Easter Egg Hunt was written by Bond and his daughter, Karen Jankel, for a charity newsletter many years ago. It will now be released as an Easter picture book together with RW Alley’s Paddington artwork, with the audiobook by actor Jim Broadbent.



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Kate Hayler, HarperCollins editor at large, acquired world rights from Ms Delamere at The Agency, which represents Bond, and Stephanie Fretwell-Hill at The Red Fox Literary Agency, which represents Alley.

It will be published in March

## Perspective

### John Faris - Praying beyond ourselves and our shores

**After retiring in 2017 from ministry in Presbyterian churches in the Republic, we moved north and engaged in a bit of “church tasting”.**

Although there was a friendly welcome everywhere and faithful biblical preaching, I was dissatisfied with the prayers for others, which tended to be brief and focused on the needs of the congregation – the sick and the sorrowing. The nearest we got to looking further outwards was to pray for mission teams. At that time there was an Assembly election campaign but you would not have known that from the Sunday prayers.

The downgrading (and sometimes removal) of prayers for others was something I had noticed when worshipping on holiday especially with new fellowships but it was sobering to realise when attending various Presbyterian churches how far this trend was embedded in my own denomination. John Witvliet’s article in Christianity Today December 2021 “If a Social Issue Matters to God, the Church Should Be

Praying About It”\*\* makes it clear that this also affects reformed as well as other churches in America. He writes .... “Painfully, in the worship of far too many churches, there is barely even a mention of the world’s horrors. Instead of lamenting, confessing, and interceding with specificity and honesty, these churches tend to avoid, deny, or minimize the public trauma that is all around them. The understandable desire for a respite from trauma ends up perpetuating a pattern of disengagement from society.”

There are many interrelated reasons for this liturgical silence. First, some churches operate with a thin, individualistic view of the gospel, focusing nearly all their liturgical attention on individual conversion and comfort. Second, some churches are conflict avoidant and eager to stay away from public controversy during worship. A third, perhaps underappreciated, reason is a pronounced decline in public intercessory prayer.

In many worship contexts today, intercessory prayer has fallen on hard times. It is stunning how often my students report that while their churches have robust practices of congregational singing and preaching, they include almost no prayer at all in public worship. They say their churches will pray about the physical health needs of members but never mention any larger societal concerns.

Permit me a bit of trumpet blowing about my own practice in ministry. I found often that there was more feedback to the prayers for others than to the sermon! I learned that it was important and fruitful to spend time praying about what I should lead people in prayer for others. I often would select an item in the news and seek to pray into that or take a

sensitive topic and seek to pray scripturally and I trust compassionately. Once I sensed I should pray for people struggling with bitterness and was warmly thanked afterwards by one person for how helpful that had been to him that day. At weddings, as well as praying for the couple I would mention also those whose marriages had ended through death or divorce and for those who had no prospect of the blessing of marriage. At one reception, a divorced person whose situation I did not know said that that was the first time she had been prayed for in church. A single person quietly thanked me for a more sustained prayer about the challenges of singleness. Once we had an episode of vandalism in the church car park and I prayed specifically for the person or persons doing the damage that God would speak into whatever personal bitterness or darkness was driving them and somebody commented afterwards that that had helped him to have a more compassionate attitude to the situation. (We also prayed for those who had suffered damage!)

Let me challenge and encourage those who lead worship to give attention to praying for others, especially where there is no liturgical format such as in Church of Ireland practice. It is good to have a checklist: personal needs, church life, the local community, politics and government, international mission and world concerns. A newspaper can be a good guide to “what’s hot”. Witvliet’s article gives some creative suggestions. If the reformed practice is followed of having intercessions after the sermon as part of the response to what has been shared, then issues raised in the sermon can be followed through.

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To be clear, it is good and right to pray for personal needs of those close to us and for mission teams, but more is needed. The story of the Good Samaritan reminds us that loving our neighbour involves loving beyond our own tribe and prayer is one, perhaps neglected, means of loving. We need to find ways of praying for those we find hard to love.

John Faris is married to Heather and they have two adult children. He has served as a Presbyterian minister in North Belfast, Co Fermanagh and then in Co Cork until 2017. Although still a supporter of Munster rugby, he retired to become an Ulster Scot once again. He retains involvement in the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster, and compiles the fortnightly Presbyterian Notes in the Irish Times.

## Poem for today

### Sunrise On the Hills

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I stood upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch  
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,  
And woods were brightened, and soft gales  
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.  
The clouds were far beneath me; bathed in light,  
They gathered mid-way round the wooded height,  
And, in their fading glory, shone  
Like hosts in battle overthrown.  
As many a pinnacle, with shifting glance,  
Through the gray mist thrust up its shattered lance,  
And rocking on the cliff was left  
The dark pine blasted, bare, and cleft.



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The veil of cloud was lifted, and below  
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow  
Was darkened by the forest's shade,  
Or glistened in the white cascade;  
Where upward, in the mellow blush of day,  
The noisy bittern wheeled his spiral way.

I heard the distant waters dash,  
I saw the current whirl and flash,  
And richly, by the blue lake's silver beach,  
The woods were bending with a silent reach.  
Then o'er the vale, with gentle swell,  
The music of the village bell  
Came sweetly to the echo-giving hills;  
And the wild horn, whose voice the woodland fills,  
Was ringing to the merry shout,  
That faint and far the glen sent out,  
Where, answering to the sudden shot, thin smoke,  
Through thick-leaved branches, from the dingle broke.

If thou art worn and hard beset  
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget,  
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,  
Go to the woods and hills! No tears  
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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