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**Image of the day - Belfast dusk**

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## People and places



## Down & Dromore MU Diocesan President and Chaplain commissioned

**In Down & Dromore diocese Mrs Mavis Thompson and Revd Duncan Pollock have been commissioned as MU Diocesan President and Diocesan Chaplain respectively.**

The MU Trustees for the diocese were also commissioned at the service which took place in Dromore Cathedral on Wednesday 2 February in Dromore Cathedral. Bishop David McClay gave the address.

A parishioner of Dromara, Mavis has served for four years as Branch Secretary of the Mothers' Union there. She has been the Area Representative of Ballynahinch Area for the past few years and in 2020 became a Trustee as Worldwide Representative.

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Revd Duncan Pollock, who is rector of Groomsport Parish, takes over from Revd Gerald Macartney. He was appointed by Bishop David McClay who said:

“Duncan has done outstanding work during Covid–19 and is much loved in the Parish of Groomsport where he is rector. I am so pleased that the diocese at large will now benefit from his many gifts and his understanding of God’s wonderful grace for his church and for his world.”

Bishop David also expressed his thanks to the outgoing President and Chaplain, Mrs Roberta and Revd Gerald Macartney.

View Commissioning Service of Mothers' Union in Down and Dromore -

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYeYWCC676g> ]

## **New Dean in Kilkenny**

**The Very Reverend Stephen Farrell was installed as Dean of Ossory and instituted Rector of Kilkenny Union of Parishes at a special service in St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny on Tuesday, 1st February 2022 at 7.30 p.m.**

The new dean is from a Tyrone farming background and, most recently, was Rector of Zion parish, Rathgar in Dublin and Provincial and Diocesan Registrar in Dublin and Glendalough Diocese.

He succeeds the Very Reverend David McDonnell who has returned to primary school teaching.



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## **The Choir gave the new Dean a warm welcome**

Dean Farrell is an ecclesiastical lawyer with a Masters Degree in Canon Law from the University of Cardiff. Among other roles he is a member of the Colloquium of Anglican and Roman Catholic Canon Lawyers and teaches Ecclesiastical Law to Intern Deacons in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. He has also published many papers related to ecclesiastical law.

He spoke on the Gospel theme of the beautiful Shepherd and after referring to Stephen's many academic achievements said that this is a joyous occasion and that he has no doubt that Stephen's contribution as Dean, when viewed through the prism of history, will be considerable.

He went on to mention four areas in which he believes Stephen's ministry as Dean and Rector will be a thing of beauty – the skilled application of his exceedingly fine mind (beauty of mind), pastoral gifts that stem from legal training (beauty of academic discipline), being Dean of St Canice's

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(beauty of place and space) and the attractiveness and beauty that flows from genuine empathy, something that will lead to meaningful conversation connection with farmers and people from all walks of life in his parish and community.

“I finish by wishing Stephen, his wife Laura and their three daughters many years of happiness in the Close,” he said. Father James Murphy, speaking on behalf of the wider community in Kilkenny, said that he was delighted to



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welcome Dean Stephen and that he was very much looking forward to working and interacting with him in the future. Fr Murphy also spoke of how glad there was a Farrell connection in Kilkenny again, this time as Dean.



## Back to the future in St Patrick's

**A release from St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin states - We have something very special coming up!**

On Tuesday 8 February, celebrate the magnificent John Williams' 90th birthday at Saint Patrick's Cathedral with a night of timeless classics from the movies! Hear the music from your all-time favourites, including Star Wars: A New Hope, Harry Potter, Superman, Jurassic Park, E.T. the Extra Terrestrial and many more played on our mighty Willis

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Organ. Grab your tickets before they're gone from our website [www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/jw90](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/jw90)



## **Clogher Diocesan Curate has got her licence**

**Diocesan Curate receives her licence and prepares to begin her work in Clogher Diocese: Revd Alison Irvine and Revd John McClenaghan (Diocesan Registrar) along with Bishop Ian Ellis as she made her declarations and received her licence today at the See House.**

Revd Alison begins her ministry as a Diocesan Curate from Tuesday, 8th February serving in some vacant parishes in the Diocese. She is initially allocated to the parishes of

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Cleenish and Mullaghduon and also providing pastoral cover in Rossorry parish.

Bishop Ellis said; 'We wish her God's blessing on her ministry in the Diocese.'

## **Orange Order delegation meet Taoiseach in Dublin for 'frank' discussion on Protocol**

Senior members of the Orange Order have met with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in Dublin to discuss their concerns over the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Grand Master Edward Stevenson and Grand Secretary Mervyn Gibson led the delegation which described the meeting as "frank and wide-ranging".

They said they spoke of their ongoing objection to the protocol, which was agreed by the UK and EU in 2019 in order to prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland post-Brexit.

A spokesperson for the Order said: "The Taoiseach was informed that solutions to the current impasse are possible - but only if they fully respect Northern Ireland's constitutional position, ensure unfettered trade between all parts of the United Kingdom and remove the authority of foreign courts and legislatures in the affairs of Northern Ireland."

The meeting comes days after Liz Truss also met with Mr Gibson.



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The chief Brexit negotiator was criticised for meeting the senior member of the Orange Order, as well as loyalist community representatives in Belfast last Thursday, while failing to engage with other civic society groups or three of Stormont's main parties.

## News Reports

### Assistant Bishop of Bangor announced

**One of the first women to become a priest in the Church in Wales will be consecrated as a bishop next month.**

Mary Stallard, who has served as Archdeacon of Bangor for the past four years, has been nominated as Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Bangor. She will share the leadership of the diocese while the Bishop of Bangor, Andrew John, serves as Archbishop of Wales.

Mary will be consecrated as a bishop at Bangor Cathedral on February 26. The new Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, John Lomas, will also be consecrated at that service.

### Archbishops of Canterbury and York comment on LGBT+ History Month

**In a joint-statement the Archbishops say - "Across the Church of England this February, many people will be marking LGBT+ History Month.**

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“As we work together to discover what it means to be a diverse church receiving the gift of everyone, our prayer is that this would be a time of truly valuing each other as God’s precious and beloved children. Let us pray that the Spirit of God would stir in us a deeper sense of belonging to each other as the Body of Christ.

“We also take this opportunity to lament and reject all prejudice, hatred, oppression, and violence against LGBT+ people. We pray that LGBT+ people around the world would be able to live lives free from fear and find joy in the love of God. Let us commit to building communities in which everyone experiences the unconditional love of God in Christ Jesus.

Archbishop Justin Welby  
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell

## **New report reveals that the majority of LGBT+ Christians don’t feel comfortable in churches**

**Research found that more than two thirds of LGBT+ Christians do not feel “safe to be themselves” when visiting places of worship.**

The survey was conducted by The Ozanne Foundation, Dignity and Worth and OneBodyOneFaith, amongst other organisations.

There were 1,121 responses from UK residents, with 754 stating that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual,

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transgender or non-binary Christians. Of that group, 69 per cent said that they went to church almost every week – most were part of Church of England congregations.

A third of LGBT+ congregants also said they had noticed no change in how safe they had felt inside churches over the last 5 years.

The report comes as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York released a statement as part of LGBT+ History Month.

They said: “As we work together to discover what it means to be a diverse church receiving the gift of everyone, our prayer is that this would be a time of truly valuing each other as God’s precious and beloved children.

“Let us pray that the Spirit of God would stir in us a deeper sense of belonging to each other as the Body of Christ.

“We also take this opportunity to lament and reject all prejudice, hatred, oppression, and violence against LGBT+ people.

“We pray that LGBT+ people around the world would be able to live lives free from fear and find joy in the love of God.

“Let us commit to building communities in which everyone experiences the unconditional love of God in Christ Jesus.”

When asked how churches could be made to feel safer for members of the LGBT+ community, many respondents said



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that having other openly-gay people within the congregation would help them feel more comfortable.

Other popular suggestions included having church leaders openly affirm same-sex relationships, and having positive recognition of LGBT+ people in sermons.

Having an inclusive statement on the church website was another popular response.

## **Pakistan: Anglican priest shot dead in Peshawar**

**Tributes have been paid to a Christian minister who was killed on Sunday (30th January) in Pakistan after dedicating his life to persecuted and other suffering Christians.**

Gunmen on motorbikes shot William Silraj in the head and chest as he was driving away from Sunday service at a church, outside Peshawar city centre.

Also in the car was the Reverend Patrick Naeem, priest-in-charge of the Church of Pakistan parish, who was rushed to hospital with gun wounds but was later described as stable.

News channels showed emergency services taking Mr Silraj out of the car and people chanting "Long live Jesus Christ", as they carried him to his home.

Martyrs of All Saints' Church, in Chamkani, was set up after the September 2013 twin suicide blast at the city's All Saints'

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*Mourners carry the Rev. William Siraj to his gravesite*

Church, in which more than 120 people were killed and more than 250 injured.

Mr Silraj, a retired teacher with two grown-up daughters, lost his son-in-law in the All Saints' Church attack and afterwards committed his ministry to reaching out to survivors and their families.

Qamar Rafiq, a UK-based Christian originally from Pakistan and a close friend of Mr Silraj's family, spoke to many parishioners at Shodha Church and said people were "shocked". He added: "All of those supported by William Silraj are very sad at the loss of a very great and passionate man who was willing to reach out to Christians who had been through such a difficult time after what happened at All Saints' Church. After what happened, he would be knocking on the doors of victims' families, praying with them and reassuring them of his support. He was always willing to

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reach out to communities in the narrowest of streets, no matter how dangerous the area."

Following yesterday's attack, a police investigation has got underway after the submission of an FIR (First Information Report). As yet, nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack but speculation is mounting that Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) may be behind the violence.

Church of Pakistan Bishop Azad Marshall tweeted: "We demand justice and protection of Christians from the Government of Pakistan."

Police officer Abbas Ahsan was quoted as saying: "It was a terrorist act... We are determined to protect minorities."

Mervyn Thomas founding president of Christian Solidarity Worldwide said: "CSW extends our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Pastor William Siraj, and we wish Reverend Naeem a swift and full recovery. It has been over seven and a half years since the Pakistani Supreme Court issued a landmark judgement instructing the government to protect minorities, and yet attacks such as these are not met with sufficient action or even condemnation from senior figures in Pakistan, including Prime Minister Imran Khan himself. We call on the government of Pakistan to ensure that this attack is thoroughly investigated, that the perpetrators are prosecuted, and to significantly increase its efforts to protect minority communities across the country."

Mr Siraj's funeral was held on Monday.



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## In the media

### Backlog of passport applications affecting 113,000 people

#### Irish Post

There is currently a large back-log of passport applications in Ireland, leading to calls to upscale efforts to expedite the process.

113,000 people are currently waiting within the service to receive their passports.

[https://www.irishpost.com/news/backlog-of-passport-applications-affecting-113000-people-229093?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=trending](https://www.irishpost.com/news/backlog-of-passport-applications-affecting-113000-people-229093?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=trending)

### Money rules... Ulster know they should walk away from Kingspan

#### Belfast Telegraph

Given all that has made headlines over the past few weeks, let alone the past few years, it stretches credulity that anyone could still think politicians are fit to be the moral arbitrators of our society ...

[Money rules... Ulster know they should walk away from Kingspan](#)

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[https://www.e-pages.dk/belfasttelegraph/706/article/1526568/35/1/render/?token=57965c2479c93e8a8dcd98cba337ac21&vl\\_platform](https://www.e-pages.dk/belfasttelegraph/706/article/1526568/35/1/render/?token=57965c2479c93e8a8dcd98cba337ac21&vl_platform)

## **Churches urge UK government to help restore democracy in Myanmar**

### **Christian Today**

Churches have issued a joint call to the UK government to do more to find a ... the Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland** and Baptists Together.

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/churches.urge.uk.government.to.help.restore.democracy.in.myanmar/138122.htm>

## **Pope Francis tells Belfast festival to keep 'building bridges'**

### **BBC News**

A goodwill video message from the Pope was broadcast during the opening night of a cross-community festival in Belfast on Sunday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60193019>

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books**

**St John's Nottingham: From Northwood to Nottingham – a history of 50 years. 1963-2013 274pp**

**By Colin Buchanan published by St John's College, Nottingham £10.00**

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Review by Chris Sugden

The final closure of St John's Nottingham in November 2021 is occasion for revisiting the history of the college from the centenary of its founding in 1963 to its 150th anniversary in 2013. Bishop Colin Buchanan was commissioned to write the history over the six years from 2007.

His meticulous study, richly indexed, derived from both college documents and interviews with two hundred alumni and others, gives an unrivalled history of the growth of the role of evangelicals in the Church of England over those 50 years. It should be a set book for any course on recent church history in England.

Bishop Buchanan documents the process by which the London College of Divinity decided to move to be near the Nottingham University campus on land bought for a graduate college by the Church of England. The decision was prompted by the Church's requirement that graduate theological education be closely linked with a university. He also carefully records the changes of staff and development of courses over the next 50 years.

His study gives substantial evidence for a claim that the processes of theological entrepreneurism that characterized the life of St Johns made a major, if not the major contribution to the role, visibility and acceptance of evangelicals, their pattern of training for ministry and how ordained ministry has been exercised in the Church of England from 1970 to date.



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The rise of St Johns was at a time when Wycliffe Hall and Ridley Hall were in the doldrums and Tyndale Hall and Clifton College in Bristol had imploded. Though its move was in response to central decisions of the CofE, the college leadership was not content to wait on directives from the centre. Indeed the staff often disputed Church of England recommendations and reports. It was the entrepreneurial spirit of the college's leaders that gave it its unique flavour. The move itself was a 'leap of faith' in securing enough funds to provide for married accommodation on site (itself a new development). A director of pastoral studies was an innovation for any theological college, and those who completed a two year theological degree would complete their course with a Diploma in Pastoral Studies. The college embraced the emerging charismatic movement to identify itself as a charismatic evangelical Anglican college. It pioneered Extension Studies, at one time having 2000 such students on its roll.

The work of the college had significant impact on local churches in the Nottingham/Derby complex. Staff and graduates made major contributions to theological writing, liturgical developments, publishing, as members of General Synod and its committees and in time as members of the House of Bishops.

In some ways the college appears to have been the victim of its own success. Its innovative work on part-time courses and extension studies was taken up by others who then naturally became competitors for candidates. Would St Melitus have come into existence without the pioneering work of St John's for securing formal acceptance of such training?

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At the same time the college was also subject to the vagaries of central decisions made by the Church of England. For instance, at no time was the full cost of training an ordinand in residence ever met by the Church of England. So residential training itself operated at a loss. Also a number of schemes were floated from the centre for various Regional Partnerships and collaborations.

Bishop Buchanan records all these developments with carefully chosen and often very diplomatic language to cover events and discussions which were clearly quite difficult at the time.

What he does not need to gloss over was the wonderful sense of community that was engendered in college life and which sets its stamp on the expectations of those who trained there of what Christian parish and community life could and should be like. An essential part of this was the well-developed sense of humour in the college, emanating from the staff who never took themselves too seriously. In addition to a sprinkling throughout the text, four pages are dedicated to jokes and japes.

It is that sense of community which is lost when ordinands and lay ministers are not trained in residence. The inability of the Church of England to fund residential training properly led to the demise of the college and will lead to the subsequent loss of the vision of community that St John's graduates took into the wider church.

Chris Sugden (St John's Nottingham 1972-74)

Courtesy the Church of England Newspaper January 21  
2022

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## Poem for today

### Inniskeen Road: July Evening by Patrick Kavanagh

The bicycles go by in twos and threes -  
There's a dance in Billy Brennan's barn tonight,  
And there's the half-talk code of mysteries  
And the wink-and-elbow language of delight.  
Half-past eight and there is not a spot  
Upon a mile of road, no shadow thrown  
That might turn out a man or woman, not  
A footfall tapping secrecies of stone.

I have what every poet hates in spite  
Of all the solemn talk of contemplation.  
Oh, Alexander Selkirk knew the plight  
Of being king and government and nation.  
A road, a mile of kingdom. I am king  
Of banks and stones and every blooming thing.



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