

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – South Ulster Sinfonia
summer sign off**



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South Ulster Sinfonia summer sign off

The South Ulster Sinfonia wound up their season with a wonderful Summer Concert in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh.

Their appreciative message says it all - "Thank you to everyone who came to watch us perform. We were blown

away by the support.

"As always, a massive thank you to Philip Walton, our conductor, all our soloists (Michael Russ, Catherine Holland and the fantastic Jan Faulkner) and all the members of the committee and orchestra. It is an amazing group to be part of. "See you all again in September. Have a lovely summer."

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People and places



Derry Cathedral's summer organ recitals

After the success of the organ recital series last July, this year's recitals begin in St Columb's tomorrow Thursday 6th at 1:10pm with Derry & Raphoe nurtured, Jack Wilson (above), Master of Music at St. Anne's Cathedral Belfast. All welcome, admission free.

Four Diocesan Evangelists commissioned in Down & Dromore

Four new Diocesan Evangelists were commissioned by the Bishop of Down & Dromore, Rt and Rev David McClay at the end of June.



Pictured left to right with Bishop McClay are: Sam Stevenson (Ballyholme), Jane Beaney (Orangefield), Andrew Davis (Shankill Lurgan) and Andrew McCaw (The Gathering). The Diocesan Warden of Evangelists, Capt George Newell, and Revd Ross Munro who leads The Gathering, complete the lineup.

The commissioning took place in the shadow of Belfast's famous Harland and Wolf cranes in St Martin's Church off the Lower Newtownards Road.

The newly commissioned evangelists successfully completed a two-year Evangelism Training Course which is distance learning based. The course is accredited by St John's College, Nottingham, and run in collaboration with New Wine Ireland.

50 years of Methodist ministry

There was a lovely surprise for Rev Ian Henderson from the Donegal circuit - celebrating his 50 years of ministry. "We all



Rev Ian Henderson (left)

...congratulate him, and recognise Ian as one of our senior ministers who continues to serve in so many ways in the life of our Church”.

Appointed to Crinken

The trustees of St James’s Church, Crinken, have announced the appointment of their new minister. Following a

comprehensive and detailed interview process, the Revd Tom O’Brien has been appointed minister in succession to the Revd Trevor Stevenson who retired earlier this year.

The trustees state - Tom brings with him a depth of experience having held senior positions within the HSE as well as from his time serving as a self supporting minister since his ordination in 2018.



The Revd Tom and Dani O'Brien and their family.

Tom has served in a number of parishes in Dublin and Glendalough including in Howth as Deacon Intern and then in Holmpatrick and has provided cover in Kill O' the Grange and Raheny and Coolock.

He is looking forward to this next phase of his ministry, which will begin in September, as he writes below:

“Life is a journey, so they say, and although I agree very much with this statement, somehow I believed that the path I was on, even with its slight bends and turns, was pretty straightforward. Six months ago, I saw myself mapping out a

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future in the Health Service, where I have been so happy for the past 30 years. But then, for several reasons, Dani and I felt that we needed to change our focus on life and that now was the time to listen to God afresh and consider what he had to say.

“As a Self Supporting Minister in the Church of Ireland, I have been so blessed, engaging with various churches in Dublin and Glendalough.

“I fondly remember my two–year deacon internship at St Mary’s in Howth. Canon Kevin Brew and his fantastic wife Rachel and their congregation taught me much.

“I returned to my home parish in Holmpatrick in 2018 and worked with my dear friend, the Revd Anthony Kelly, and the churches in Balbriggan, Skerries, and Rush. We had a fantastic time in the parish and worked with so many excellent and dedicated people who we will miss dearly.

“Last year, we spent several months in Kill of the Grange. It was such a privilege to work with Alan and Ruth and the volunteers and staff there. We were again exposed to so many new friends whose primary focus was on living as a community of faith and answering God’s call.

“We finally had the honour of working with the beautiful folk in Raheny and Coolock. Given that our two month stay was brief, we were both surprised that the people had such a significant positive impact on our lives.

“The Self Supporting Minister role opened the door to many experiences and diverse individuals. These encounters

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shaped the future path we are now encouraged to explore further.

“Our call to Crinken is a strong one. The Holy Spirit opened all doors pushed, and the O’Briens were ready for the challenge. The move involved significant life changes at a time when we felt all was going according to our plan. But, we know that ‘my thoughts are not God’s thoughts and His ways are not my ways’ ... and plans changed.

“We met with the trustees and some members of Crinken and were quickly convinced that this is where new challenges will be tackled together in a spirit of faith and collaboration. There is no doubt that exciting things await all of us as we trust God’s leadership in our lives. I look forward to being part of this fantastic new community and to sharing the gospel of hope with the many in our community and beyond.”

Fanlobbus Union welcome their new Incumbent

The Rev. Adam Pullen was instituted as the new Incumbent of Fanlobbus Union by the Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, at St Mary’s Church, Dunmanway, On Wednesday evening, 28th June.

St Mary’s Church was full for the occasion with parishioners, clergy and readers from the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, as well as guests from Adam’s previous parish, Stranorlar in the Diocese of Raphoe. Also present were ecumenical guests, and representatives of the community.



The Rev. Adam Pullen was presented to the Bishop by the Archdeacon, the Venerable Andrew Orr and the preacher at

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the service was the Rev. Ian Jonas, former Incumbent of Carrigrohane Union of Parishes. After the service, speeches were given by the Bishop, as well as by Gillian Kingston on behalf of the parishioners of Fanlobbus Union.

Following the speeches, the new incumbent spoke to the congregation and thanked everyone for their warm welcome. Afterwards everyone enjoyed the hospitality of the Parish in the Cox Hall in Dunmanway.



Passing of Down & Connor teacher priest

Fr. Oliver Treanor, a priest of Down & Connor, passed away earlier this week. Fr. Oliver taught for many years in St Malachy's College and in St Patrick's College, Maynooth. He published several books on all aspects of the Catholic faith.

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Fr Oliver's remains will be buried after Requiem Mass in Warrenpoint today Wednesday 5th July. Requiescat in Pace.

News reports

Award-winning NI Christian singer/songwriter couple Keith and Kristym Getty fill Sydney Opera House in culmination of tour

Northern Irish hymn writers and Grammy-nominated recording artists, husband and wife duo, Keith and Kristyn Getty, are best known for their song "In Christ Alone"

They celebrated a debut performance at the Sydney Opera House on June 29.

The concert concluded the Sing! World Tour, which spanned three continents.

Prior to the Australian leg of the tour, the Gettys performed in Belfast, Northern Ireland at the SSE Arena and in Singapore at the Star Theatre. Over 19,000 people attended the various concerts.

The Gettys are no strangers to iconic venues, having previously appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Centre, the Grand Ole Opry House, and London's Royal Albert Hall.

Widely considered ambassadors for the hymn genre, Christianity Today named the Gettys “pre-eminent” hymn writers of our generation who have “changed the way evangelicals worship”.

Beginning with “In Christ Alone,” the Gettys have written or published 38 of the 500 most sung songs in US/UK churches.

Their original publishers, Integrity Music, estimate that over 100 million people around the globe sing their hymns each year.

In 2018, Keith Getty became the first contemporary church musician of the modern era to receive the OBE from Queen Elizabeth II for his services to music and hymnody.

The Getty’s global tour incorporated a blend of Celtic music, bluegrass, folk, classical, and gospel, accompanied by a band of virtuosic musicians from Nashville and Ireland.

Featured guests included saxophonist Kirk Whalum (known for his collaborations with Whitney Houston and Luther Vandross), jazz vocalist Dana Masters (longtime background singer with Van Morrison), leading Australian children’s TV personality and country singer Colin Buchanan, contemporary worship artists CityAlight and Matt Papa, and classical group New Irish Arts.

Throughout the tour the Gettys featured selections from their Grammy-nominated album *Confessio: Irish American*

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Roots, which they described as a “love letter to Northern Ireland.”

The record includes Celtic and folk arrangements of classic hymns alongside original repertoire.

Many of the songs featured on the tour were first performed at the Sing! Conference in Nashville, which the Gettys founded in 2017.

The event, taking its name from the Gettys’ book *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*, has grown into an annual music festival attended by thousands both in Nashville and online.

The Sing! World Tour will continue in the upcoming years, with the Gettys planning to lead the singing at the Fourth Lausanne Congress in Seoul, South Korea in 2024, and to host concerts in Latin America and Africa in 2025.

The Gettys have also announced a Christmas tour throughout the US in December 2023 including appearances at Carnegie Hall and the Museum of the Bible.

Speaking as the Gettys first world tour concluded at the Sydney Opera House in Australia, Keith Getty OBE, said: “It was an utter privilege and delight on our first visit to Australia to fill the Sydney Opera House with congregational singing—hymns old and new that stir our hearts with the beauty of Christ.”

Kristyn Getty, added: “Our debut performance at the Sydney Opera House has been a humbling experience. To stand on

such a well-known stage and yet remember that each of us is merely a jar of clay in the hands of the Lord, a vessel for his truth and goodness and beauty – and to hear the global people of God raise their voices in awe and wonder at the good news of Christ, has been nothing short of extraordinary.”

Struggling C of E parish churches ‘to be rented out instead of sold’

THE Church of England is set to rent out parish churches instead of selling them under new proposals to deal with dwindling congregations.

Under current measures, churches that are struggling to fill pews are often merged with other parishes and their buildings sold off. However, under plans being considered by the General Synod, the Church’s legislative body, buildings would be allowed to lie “fallow” with the option to reopen them.

This could mean renting them out for a period of time and also offering them out to other institutions, such as local authorities or even other Christian denominations, under a shared ownership deal. The plan has been proposed by the Church Commissioners for England, the group that manages the Church of England’s investment portfolio as well as its £10.3 billion endowment fund and is chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Set to be debated at Synod this week, the plans have been welcomed as a victory by campaigners who have long

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accused archbishops of presiding over rapid disintegration of parishes.

The Rev Marcus Walker, chairman of the Save the Parish campaign group and a General Synod member, described it as “a real win for local parishioners across the country” to help avoid “the final death” of their church being sold.

It is expected that under the proposals, congregants whose church building is lying fallow, will have to travel to worship elsewhere.

Responding to the proposals, Mr Walker, who is also Rector of St Bartholomew the Great Church, London, and who was consulted on the proposals, said: “Before a church would have to be either fully functioning or closed down and everything handed over. The idea of [an] in-between stage isn’t a bad one.”

A Church of England spokesman said: “As the review notes, church life is a shared community endeavour which includes everyone whether they have some belief or none.

“These are draft proposals aimed at helping the church explore ways of keeping churches open so that they can continue to play a central role as a Christian presence in their communities.”

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Calling all singers Woods festival masterclass



Specialist Vocal Coach Paul Farrington will be giving private singing lessons and two Vocal Masterclasses during the 30th Charles Wood Festival this August in Armagh

If you are 16 years old or over, and Grade 6 standard or above, don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the world's leading vocal tutors.

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For more details and bookings please see the Charles Wood Festival website:

<https://www.charleswoodsummerschool.org/latest-news/2023/7/3/paul-farrington-returns>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068853499890>

Ringing a bell in Limerick

Stephen Fletcher talks to Kieron Brislane, one of the bell-ringers at Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick about his experiences as a bell-ringer and the history of the bells at the Cathedral. Click on the link to listen.

<https://www.mixcloud.com/TLKCOMMS/keiron-brislane-bellringing-at-st-marys-cathedral-limerick/>

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Applications close Monday 10th July at 12 noon.

Archbishop Welby in conversation with actor Gabriel Byrne

“I like to sit in a church where the silence is trapped inside. Even for an agnostic or an atheist it can be tremendously comforting.”

Listen again to the latest Archbishop Interviews on BBC Sounds, with actor Gabriel Byrne on spirituality and religion:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0014p3p>

There are links at the above to all the previous interviews including John Clees. Coming up this Sunday, Cressida Dick

New book - The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick

Ireland has "caricatured" national saint "a little too much down the centuries" - Archbishop Eamon Martin

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A new book titled 'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick' is a compelling argument for a re-evaluation and recognition of St Patrick's profound spiritual legacy.

The book, published posthumously, is the work of the late Fr Aidan Larkin, a Columban missionary and former SDLP councillor and assembly member, who also worked as a legal adviser in Brussels to the Council of Ministers.

It was launched in Dalgan Park, Navan, Co Meath, home of the Columban Missionaries in Ireland by the leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh.

In his book, Fr Larkin argues that St Patrick's works are of such calibre that he should be counted among that select group of theologians who established the intellectual and doctrinal foundations of the Church - the Church Fathers.

Every year millions of people celebrate St Patrick. He is Ireland's most famous ambassador. Yet, what do we really know about him, about his spirituality, his mission, his vocation? Can we really only say that he was no friend to snakes?

In his address at the launch, Archbishop Martin regretted that people had "caricatured" St Patrick "a little bit too much down through the centuries".

Dr Martin said the book showed that St Patrick is a saint for the whole Church and that 'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick', which is published by Messenger Publications,

provides a much broader vision of St Patrick than that which the Archbishop grew up with.

Archbishop Martin also described Patrick as "a saint for our times" in view of the his experience of trafficking. As someone who was trafficked into slave labour in Ireland, he said Patrick "empathises with a whole host of people nowadays who are forcibly moved from their country or indeed who are forced from their circumstances and have to leave home as refugees or migrants."

"A lot of the really good work that is going on in Ireland today to prevent trafficking is being done by our religious congregations who are highlighting this awful evil. Pope Francis described it as a scourge on the face of the earth. To think that Christians and people of faith may actually be turning a blind eye to trafficking which is happening in our own streets and in our own cities - that is something that I think St Patrick, if he was here today, would want to waken us up to."

At the launch the regional director of the Columbans in Ireland, Fr Raymond Husband, quoted Fr Aidan Larkin's words in the Introduction to the book in which he stated: "My purpose in writing this book is not to resolve every problem Patrick's writing poses. Instead, my aim is pastoral. I wish to evangelise. I wish to put myself at the service of God and of Patrick, who in Heaven prays continuously for his people here on earth."

The book reproduces St Patrick's 'Letter to Coroticus' and his 'Confession' in their entirety and Fr Aidan, who was

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writing the book when he died in 2019, brings out a wealth of patristic resonances in these writings.

'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick' by Fr Aidan Larkin SSC (2023) can be purchased from Messenger Publications here:

www.messenger.ie/product/the-spiritual-journey-of-st-patrick/

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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