

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Effigy at Westminster Abbey

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Effigies at Westminster Abbey



From the late 13th century funeral effigies of monarchs and other royal persons were carried in a funeral procession on the coffin beneath a canopy. 20 of these effigies are displayed in the Abbey's Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries. Here are some of the effigies at the Abbey...

Front page and above is Charles II - By the time of his death in 1685 the custom of carrying an effigy at a royal funeral had ceased. Instead a crown on a purple cushion was placed on the coffin. But a wax effigy was made to stand by

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his grave as he has no monument. This even has silk underwear.

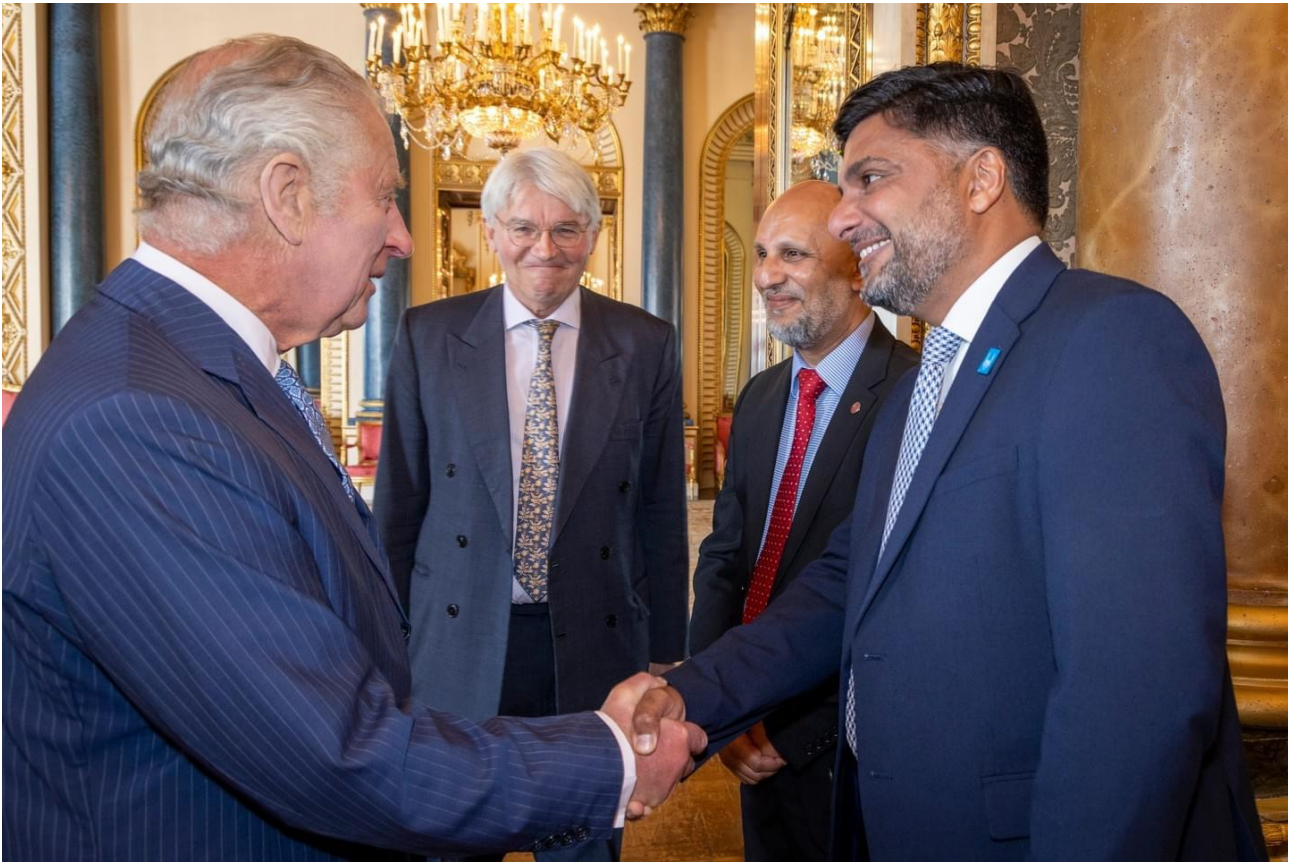


Elizabeth I - The original funeral effigy that had been carried on her hearse was remade in 1760 with a wax head and new outer clothes. The original, and unique, corset from the 1603 effigy still survives.

See a complete list of all 20 effigies at the Abbey: <https://westminster-abbey.org/about-the-abbey>

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People and places



King meets with Disaster Emergency Committee

DEC charities met The King to discuss how the generosity of the British public has helped hundreds of thousands of people in Pakistan in the first six months of the response to the devastating floods last year.

The meeting comes as the DEC releases a report detailing the impact of donations to the Pakistan Floods Appeal. For example, DEC charities provided basic health services such as treatment for illnesses, immunisations and maternity

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services to over 158,000 people. Thousands of others received food, shelter, clean water, and other essentials.

Thank you to everyone who supported the appeal and made this possible. You have made a crucial difference to people who lost everything in these historic floods.

Find out more and read the report: dec.org.uk/pakistan

SOMA mission teams in Down & Dromore

Thanks were expressed to the SOMA team for joining clergy and parishioners in ministry and mission in Banbridge and Seapatrick.

“It's been such a blessing to get to know them, to hear their stories of faith, and to have them serving with us at services and events over the past week.



“After a Quiz Night in Holy Trinity, the team are travelling home or to other Parishes in the Diocese this morning. Please do pray for them as they continue to serve God here and in their home churches”

Clergy and parishioners in Holy Trinity Glencraig, used the words of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3 NIV to express their thanks

[1] ... Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

[2] We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

[3] We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ...

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“We could change these words to say thanksgiving for the SOMA team’s faith!

“Matthew, Brittnee, Siri and Diane thank you for all the ways you’ve served the Lord here as you joined us in ministry and mission here in church in Seahill.



“It's has been an amazing privilege and a blessing to get to know you all and to hear stories of hope and faith, and to have served alongside them at our week of events.

“The team now move to Magheralin Parish and so please continue to pray for them as they continue to serve God.”



News reports

General Assembly Evening Celebration – Confident in Christ

One of the highlights of each year's General Assembly is the Evening

Celebration - and this year is no exception, as it is a great time of praise, worship and fellowship.

The theme for the evening is 'Confident in Christ' and it is open to everyone, is free and there is no need to book.

Having been formally nominated, elected and installed on the Opening Night of the General Assembly, PCI's new Moderator, Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney (Photo above) of Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church, will host the event. The evening will include, worship, scripture readings and prayer. He will also be joined by various colleagues from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, who will give a brief insight into its work. All are very welcome.

Date: Thursday 22 June 2023. Venue: Assembly Buildings, Belfast. Time: 7pm-9pm

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Drawing everything together will be the evening's keynote speaker, Rev Jonty Rhodes. He and his wife Georgina, live in Leeds with their five children. They came to the city to plant Christ Church Central in 2017, which began with about 15 people, and has grown to about 120 or so.



Keynote speaker, Rev Jonty Rhodes

A minister in the International Presbyterian Church, which was founded in the 1950s, he is an author of a number of books and is no stranger to Northern Ireland. He has spoken previously at Keswick in Portstewart and other local events, he also teaches at

Cornhill Belfast.

He has preached at a number PCI congregations over the years and says that he is very grateful for the friendship and fellowship of Hill Street Presbyterian Church in particular, as the Lurgan church has been great supporters of the Leeds church plant.

Looking forward to joining everyone for the evening, Jonty said, "I've really enjoyed getting to know various PCI folk and congregations, so it's an honour, and a somewhat daunting privilege, to be able to come and preach at this year's General Assembly.

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“We'll be thinking about how we needn't be overwhelmed when we see the seeming drift of the world around us away from the gospel. Neither do we need to panic and think we need totally revolutionary strategies, or to be incredible evangelists and debaters.

“Thankfully all the power, both to defend the church and to reach the world, is found in Christ, who has continually built his Church, in all sorts of cultures and circumstances, for 2000 years - and He will no doubt continue to do so! I hope God will use the occasion to give us all confidence in His message, methods and means of reaching our communities!” he said.

Methodist Church in Ireland review of past safeguarding cases

In November 2020 the Methodist Church in Ireland initiated a Safeguarding Past Cases Review. No specific issue prompted the Review other than the wish of the Methodist people to acknowledge and honestly reflect on the past so that victims could be heard, acknowledged and supported to ensure that the Church can be a safe place for all today.

The Review had the widest possible remit, encompassing all cases and situations of safeguarding concerns or issues of which the Church was aware. It included appeals that any who had knowledge of issues, reported or unreported would make them known to the Panel. The final report is now available and will be presented on Saturday 10th June at the annual Conference of the Irish Methodist Church.

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There are nine main findings detailed and fourteen recommendations for the Methodist Conference. Consequently, the Methodist Conference will be issuing the following apology:

We apologise. The Methodist Church in Ireland apologises without reserve to all those who have been victims of abuse in the life of our Church. We have failed you, failed society and failed our Saviour. Our processes that were designed to protect all have not done that. We have caused pain that goes beyond measure. We apologise that we have not been the beacon of light that we are called to be. It has taken us too long to recognise our failings and face up to the truth. We have failed to listen carefully to what we were being told in the past. We apologise.

The incoming Methodist President, Rev David Turtle, describes this report as:

‘a time to say sorry, an opportunity to ensure that our policies continue to be robust and to renew our resolve to protect all and to be a place of safety for all. Our resolve is that what we have learnt will further enable us to be a place of healing and hope for everyone’.

One purpose of a past cases review is to further raise awareness and create an opportunity for survivors of abuse to speak in safety. If anyone wishes to make a report they should initially contact the Methodist Church Safeguarding Officer on safeguarding@irishmethodist.org. All details of Irish Methodist safeguarding policies and procedures are found at www.irishmethodist.org/safeguarding

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Rev Dr Stephen Skuce (Vice Chair, Past Cases Review)
stephen.skuce@irishmethodist.org +44 7803 828589

Rev Dr Heather Morris, General Secretary, The Methodist Church in Ireland secretary@irishmethodist.org

Archbishop Justin Welby responds to the Church of Uganda's support for the Anti-Homosexuality Act

Yesterday the Archbishop of Canterbury responded to the stance of the Uganda church. Full statement follows:

“I have recently written to my brother in Christ, the Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba, to express my grief and dismay at the Church of Uganda’s support for the Anti-Homosexuality Act. I make this public statement with sorrow, and with continuing prayers for reconciliation between our churches and across the Anglican Communion. I am deeply aware of the history of colonial rule in Uganda, so heroically resisted by its people. But this is not about imposing Western values on our Ugandan Anglican sisters and brothers. It is about reminding them of the commitments we have made as Anglicans to treat every person with the care and respect they deserve as children of God.

“Within the Anglican Communion we continue to disagree over matters of sexuality, but in our commitment to God-given human dignity we must be united. I have reminded Archbishop Kaziimba that Anglicans around the world have long been united in our opposition to the criminalisation of



The Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba

homosexuality and LGBTQ people. Supporting such legislation is a fundamental departure from our commitment to uphold the freedom and dignity of all people. There is no justification for any province of the Anglican Communion to support such laws: not in our resolutions, not in our teachings, and not in the Gospel we share.

“The Church of Uganda, like many Anglican provinces, holds to the traditional Christian teaching on sexuality and marriage set out in Resolution i.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. That resolution also expressed a commitment to minister pastorally and sensitively to all – regardless of sexual orientation – and to condemn homophobia. I have said to Archbishop Kaziimba that I am unable to see how the Church of Uganda’s support for the Anti-Homosexuality

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Act is consistent with its many statements in support of Resolution i.10.

“More recently, at the 2016 Primates Meeting in Canterbury, the Primates of the Anglican Communion "condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation." We affirmed that this conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. We also “reaffirmed our rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people” – and stated that “God's love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression.”

“These statements and commitments are the common mind of the Anglican Communion on the essential dignity and value of every person. I therefore urge Archbishop Kaziimba and the Church of Uganda – a country and church I love dearly, and to which I owe so much – to reconsider their support for this legislation and reject the criminalisation of LGBTQ people. I also call on my brothers in Christ, the leadership of GAFCON and the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), to make explicitly and publicly clear that the criminalisation of LGBTQ people is something that no Anglican province can support: that must be stated unequivocally.

“As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to honour the image of God in every person, and I pray for Anglicans to be uncompromising and united in this calling.”

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Going Deeper

With guest Matthew Rudolph:
Teaching & Ministry on Healing and Reconciliation



10am - 4pm Saturday 17th June

**at St John Church of Ireland
10 Fort Rd, Helen's Bay
BT19 1LA**



**Matthew is a Jewish believer in Jesus.
He is Leader of Gateways Beyond International, a
family of messianic missional communities.
Matthew has been inspired by early Irish
Christianity & is passionate about seeing God's glory
being revealed in Israel, Ireland and the nations.**

Bring packed lunch - tea/coffee provided
To register interest:
email: office@divinehealingministries.org

La Verne Church of the Brethren choir will present 'American Songbook' concerts in Derry

The Sanctuary Choir of the La Verne Church of the Brethren presented its spring concert, "American Songbook," Wednesday June 7 at the church, 2425 E St., La Verne.

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These performances will serve as the send-off for the choir's trip to Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland, where they will attend the American Songbook Festival June 19-24.

The festival is a celebration of the music of Shawn Kirchner, a Los Angeles-area composer who is a tenor with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and was the chorale's composer in residence from 2012 to 2015. Kirchner is also the pianist and organist at the La Verne Church of the Brethren.

The festival's theme is based on the poem "I Will Arise and Go" by Irish poet William Butler Yeats, and Kirchner has set that poem to music. The La Verne concerts will include that piece and a number of others by Kirchner, who will accompany the choir on the piano, according to a news release.

Following the June 19-24 festival, the La Verne choir will travel in Northern Ireland and Ireland and perform at Drumcliffe Church, where Yeats' grave is; Kylemore Abbey and St. Nicholas Collegiate Church in Galway; St. Mary's Cathedral in Killarney; and Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin.

Directing the La Verne choir is Niké St. Clair, a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale who is a frequent soloist for other Southern California choral groups and a session singer for film scores, according to the news release. She also directs choirs at Cal Poly Pomona.

Perspective

Moderator reflects on an eventful year

With the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) opening in just under two weeks' time (21 June), outgoing Moderator, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, has spoken of the unique and historic events that he took part in, like the Coronation, and how he feared tripping in his robes. But, by his own admission, his year in office "...has been one of overwhelming joy and a privilege..."

Few Presbyterian Moderators have had a year in office like the year Dr Kirkpatrick has had: representing the all-Ireland denomination at the State Funeral of a queen, attending the Coronation of a king, a working lunch with Ireland's president, and seeing for himself the realities of mass displacement due to war. Along with his wife Joan, he has taken the year in his stride – and it wasn't the big occasions that made the greatest of impact, he says.

"There have certainly been times when you think you are so privileged to be in a particular moment, and people might automatically assume that they are the big occasions that stand out. But it is the people that you meet in the midst of them, and the people you meet going round the congregations, which are often the moments that are extraordinary and so encouraging.

Looking back he continued, "I thought it would be busy at the weekends, and no one would be bothered with you

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during the week, but once you become the principal public representative of PCI, well, that's a different matter, and it's been nearly every day – just as 'church' is every day and not just on Sunday. The experience has been one of overwhelming joy and a privilege, not a burden in anyway; a time of incredible blessing," Dr Kirkpatrick said.

With four presbytery tours under his belt – some with 30 engagements packed into a week – and two overseas visits to countries that have either experienced the pain of civil conflict and economic collapse as in the case of Lebanon, or the ongoing brutality of unprovoked war, as witnessed in Ukraine, it hasn't been a run of the mill year.

"Physically and literally Joan and I have been upheld in prayer," he says. And it has been needed, both at home and overseas. "There is no more profound thing than that, a religious cliché some might say, but when you are in the thick of it, especially when you are tired and need to focus, you are given the capacity to do something that you know is beyond you. You really end up finding that Grace is actually working in your life...But it is only when you are in that situation you experience it and we both found that. It has been demanding and tiring, but never did I wake up and think, 'oh no, do I really have to do this?' It has been an incredible blessing," he said.

Each of the congregations they visited were unique in their own different ways. "One of the blessings that we experienced right across the whole island was the kindness, the warmth, hospitality and love that was shown to us in the congregations. It's a truly humbling thing to just be blessed by people in that way. There's no doubt about that, and it

gives you a greater appreciation and love for our Church,” he explains.

“People dignify you because they dignify the office you hold. And that to me is very, very important. You come to understand that the office you hold is an important one. It's about what God wants to do through that office for the good of the Church and wider society, so it certainly isn't about you.”

Dr Kirkpatrick continued, “When you realise that it isn't about you, that's liberating. You go to represent your people, Presbyterians from across the island, your Church and your Saviour. You are conscious, or at least I was, of the weight of that responsibility on your shoulders, which is OK, while thinking at the same time, ‘my goodness, please don't let me trip in these robes and be replayed a million times on YouTube!’” Thankfully he didn't.

As a son and grandson of the Manse – both his father and grandfather were Presbyterian ministers – he enjoyed going back to the congregations where they had served and where he had spent those early years of his own ministry. So how did he find the Church? “I think that it would be fair to say that we were greatly encouraged by the life and vitality the we found, and not just on the four Presbytery Tours, but each Sunday when we visited, especially when you remember that we are still in a post-Covid world,” he said.

But there were also hard and challenging times too, especially meeting victims and survivors who had lost loved ones during The Troubles. He also said it was the same in

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Creelough, “supporting PCI’s ministers after the explosion, meeting families and standing with colleagues in other churches at a time of tragic loss,” he said.

Dr Kirkpatrick also got to see the work of the Church overseas, where he came to appreciate the real value of gospel based partnerships. His most recent journey was to the Middle East, when he was a guest of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon at a conference on the outskirts of Beirut at the end of May. Here he met and prayed with Presbyterian ministers from Damascus, Aleppo and Hama.

In October last year he stood in solidarity with members of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia in Western Ukraine, a time he wouldn’t forget easily, having witnessed how PCI’s partner, the Reformed Church in Hungary, was caring for the thousands of Internally Displaced People fleeing the war in eastern Ukraine with the support of part of the £1.5 million raised for the relief effort by Presbyterians across Ireland.

At the same time, he would never forget the sound of the air raid sirens, or the resilience and reality of the faith in people that he met. “Faith is altogether different, especially in a country at war, or a country like Lebanon and the hardships people are experiencing due to the economic collapse, but faith has to have legs on it. We saw amazing work being done by our partners, where there is a tremendous sense of dependence in God,” he said.

“Even in those places, which are so different, it still sharpens your faith, totally. Faith is not theoretical, it's like

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that old saying, ‘You never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have.’”

In one final reflection, Dr Kirkpatrick said, “...sometimes the Lord and His mercy pulls back the curtain a little bit to show you what He is doing in the lives of his children. And having pulled back the curtain, it allows you to see that Grace works, or maybe, more specifically, Grace at work.”

As his year in office comes to an end, Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney of Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church in Dublin, will succeed him as Moderator at this month’s General Assembly. Dr Kirkpatrick will return to Portrush for a few months, before he retires from active parish ministry to the County Antrim farm where he was brought up.

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

