

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Church of South India and
C of I joint witness in Dublin**

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Image of the day



CSI and C of I joint witness

Holy Trinity Church of South India congregation in Dublin welcomes minister

A Service of Welcome to the Revd Jenu John by the Church of Ireland was held on 18 June 2023.

The Archbishop of the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough, The Primate of Ireland and Metropolitan, The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson led the service, shared the Word of God and celebrated the Holy Eucharist. Revd. Neal O'Raw (Archdeacon of Glendalough), Revd. Canon Mark

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Gardner (Rector of St. Catherines & St. James Church), Revd. Philip McKinley (Diocese of Meath & Kildare) were also present. The Permission to Officiate was presented to Revd Jenu John. CSI Madhya Kerala Diocese Bishop's message was read during the service.

People and places



Ice cream session at Streetreach Commissioning Service 2023

The Bishop of Connor, Rt Rev George Davison commissioned this year's Connor Streetreach team at a



service in Ballyrashane Parish Church which was hosted and coordinated by the Rector Rev Amanda Adams.

Streetreach is a major event in the Connor Youth Council diary.

Rev Patrick Barton rector of Ballintoy also took part with young people,

leaders, prayer supporters of the team and members of the Parishes the team is partnering with in this annual outreach.

This event concluded with an ice cream session.

New Diocesan Readers commissioned in Armagh and Down & Dromore

The Archbishop of Armagh Most Rev John McDowell commissioned seven new Parish Readers.



They are - Margaret Knipe (Clonfeacle Derrygortreavy & Eglis), John Matchett (Kilmore & Dobbin), Keith Moore, Noelle Moore (both Donaghmore & Castlecaulfield), Edmund Slaine (Derryloran), Lisa Smith (Clonfeacle Derrygortreavy & Eglis) and Sam Strain (Milltown)

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And a Diocesan Reader - Robert Brown (St Mark's Armagh).
God's blessings and strength for their ministries in the days to come.

Four new diocesan lay readers were commissioned by the Bishop of Down & Dromore at a service in Holy Trinity, Banbridge, on Monday 19 June.



Pictured with Bishop McClay are Archdeacon Roderic West and Diocesan Warden of Readers Revd Willie Nixon, the new Readers are, left to right:

Diane Ruddock (Seapatrick, Banbridge), Millie Bellew (St Patrick's & St Mary's Newry), Doreen Speers (St Saviour's Craigavon) and Tracy Baker (Bangor Abbey)

The diocesan lay readers serve chiefly in their home parishes but are licensed to conduct services and to preach

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anywhere in their diocese. Training as a lay reader is no small commitment and the church is grateful to each of them for offering to serve the diocese with their gifts of leading and preaching.



Queen's University Catholic Chaplaincy pilgrimage to Lough Derg

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A small group of students and alumni made pilgrimage to the ancient penitential site of Lough Derg last weekend. They kept us in their prayers.



Methodist Women BBQ at the Killyhevlin Hotel

An amazing night was spent in the Killyhevlin Hotel in Enniskillen at an All Ireland MWI BBQ.

“Beautiful surroundings, great food, wonderful friends and a fantastic choice of tops, jeans, scarves, jackets and a selection of jewellery from Crabtree Online.

“ Friends from all around the Connexion enjoyed a superb night of variety. Friendships formed and renewed. A wonderful way to start the Summer”.



Commercial Pilots Licence after three years of hard work by Antrim student

Congratulations to former Antrim Grammar School pupil Jack Craig on passing his Commercial Pilots Licence after three years of hard work and determination.

In the process of becoming a Commercial Pilot, Jack has taken around 22 examinations as well as accumulating around 200 hours of flying experience around The UK, Ireland and Spain.

In the media

Presbyterian General Assembly 2023: Why has Presbyterian Church in Ireland vacancies for 67 ministers?

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland currently has vacancies for 67 ministers across its 525 congregations, leaders of the denomination will hear this week. Philip Bradfield writes in the Newsletter

Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, told a press conference ahead of the General Assembly that the current number of 67 vacancies is a larger number than normal.

However he said the gap was primarily due to a significant number of trainees entering the ministry in the 19080s and 1970s who are now retiring and leaving a disproportionate gap.

And with only 10 prospective students being nominated for the ministry at the General Assembly this week, the number of new recruits “does not match the number of ordained ministers retiring”.

He said the church is considering how to use ordained ministers more strategically while being supported by other trained members of congregations.

And he added that turning out eight to ten new ministers each year is “amazingly good” compared to Church of Ireland, Catholic and Methodist denominations.

Former Principal of Union Theological College, Rev Stafford Carson, agreed the number of serving ministers had been reducing.

“The church normally needs 10-12 new ministers each year to fill vacancies due to retirements,” he said.

“In some recent years the number of new ministers eligible for a call has sometimes been in single figures.”

He added that a report to this year’s General Assembly states that by 2027, the denomination will have 62 fewer ministers than vacant charges (A charge can be one or several congregations cared for by a single minister). This is approximately 20% of the charges of in the denomination.

“Traditionally Presbyterians have been committed to a learned or educated ministry and it may be that some young people recoil at the length of the period of training before ordination. But there is no occupation that has greater rewards.”

He added: “The general mood of our society is one of apathy and opposition to the Christian gospel such that Christian ministers are not valued or held in respect as they once were.”

Similar trends are evident in other denominations.

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A Church of Ireland spokesperson said that at present, it has 444 parish units across the island of Ireland with 390 paid clergy, meaning that it has vacancies for ministers across 54 parishes.

As with the Presbyterian Church, they are being supported strategically by other trained members of the church.

Canon Ian Ellis, a former editor of The Church of Ireland Gazette, said: “I very much agree with Dr Stafford Carson that this is a culturally challenging time for recruiting to the ordained ministry.

“As one who was ordained just over 45 years ago, I can only say that my experience of ministry over those years has been a great privilege and has brought me much fulfilment.

“For anyone who is considering ordination, I would say that any sense of such a vocation should be followed up.”

A spokesman for the Methodist Church in Ireland said that “some congregations” are being led by retired ministers or lay workers under the supervision of ordained Superintendent Ministers, but that it ordained five probationary ministers last week.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Diocese of Down and Connor said it currently has 86 parishes and 146 churches which are ministered to by around 84 priests – that is, 61 more churches than priests.

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“Twenty years from now, it is forecast that there will only be approximately 24 priests available for the current 86 parishes,” the spokesman added.

New bishop warns current model of Catholic Church in Ireland ‘will not survive’

The new bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois has acknowledged that the temptation to despair is “great” when people look at all the difficulties the Church is currently facing, Sarah Mac Donald writes in The Irish Independent.

Addressing his new flock at St Mel’s Cathedral in Longford, Bishop Paul Connell highlighted the “ageing priesthood” and said “the model of Church we have been living with will not survive what is happening now”.

Speaking to the Irish Independent, he revealed that the youngest priest in the diocese is 50-years-old.

“We have a large number of priests coming towards retirement and we have no seminarians at the moment. That is the structure we have known: where there were priests in every parish and there were priests to take the place of those who retired or died. That is no longer the case. We don’t have enough personnel to do what has been done in the past,” he said.

“We are going to have to look at how best to maintain the Church going forward.”



The ordination of Fr Paul Connell as the new Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois took place in Saint Mel's Cathedral in Co Longford on Sunday afternoon. In St Mel's Cathedral in Longford Ireland's newest Bishop Paul Connell of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise said that "we need priests and religious and we need now more than ever to pray for vocations and encourage people, young and older, to accept" Christ's invitation...

The former president of St Finian's College in Mullingar, who has worked as executive secretary of the Bishops' Council for Education, he said the Irish Church must become "a listening Church" and try to discern its future direction in the midst of "this necessary change".

In the presence of the new Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, the leader of the Irish Church, Archbishop Eamon Martin, as well as other bishops and local civic and educational representatives, Dr Connell

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told the packed cathedral that Irish society was “in danger of losing the sense of the sacred” as its “moral compass is imperilled with an increasing stress on the rights of the individual to the detriment of society as a whole”.

He made his comments on the Irish Church’s Day for Life. Asked by the Irish Independent about the current debate on assisted suicide, the 65-year-old Mullingar native said he felt that the stress on the rights of the individual was very often to the detriment of society as a whole.

“While we have great compassion and understanding for people who find themselves in very difficult positions with regard to wanting to end their life because of illness, really, for the good of society as a whole, we have to have respect for life from birth to death,” he said.

In his homily for the ordination, Fr Michael McGrath appealed to the new church leader to “help us to think big” though the task is “enormous, and though the labourers are indeed few”.

Addressing the congregation in St Mel’s, which was rebuilt after it tragically burnt down on in the early hours of Christmas Day 2009, Fr McGrath acknowledged that “too often religion is seen as divisive”.

He asked the incoming bishop to help people to work together to “bring back the stray, look for the lost and bandage the wounded of our world” and build a Church of solidarity with “the haunted faces of refugees and the voiceless victims of injustice”.

Boys' Brigade in NI to split from UK and Irish organisation

The Boys' Brigade (BB) in Northern Ireland has finalised the terms of its split from the organisation in the UK and Ireland, Robbie Meredith BBC News NI education correspondent writes.

A new organisation called the Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade is to be established.

But companies from County Donegal will be able to remain in the Northern Ireland body as part of the agreement.

The final decision to set up the new organisation is expected to be approved at a meeting on Monday.

The BB in Northern Ireland originally decided to become a separate body in 2022.

The split with the BB in the UK and Ireland is due to differences over finance, governance and some "cultural differences" on faith matters.

With about 11,000 boys and 2,500 leaders in about 260 churches across Northern Ireland, the BB is one of NI's biggest youth organisations.

It is connected mainly to Presbyterian churches, as well as some other Protestant denominations.

LGBT issues

The first BB company in Northern Ireland was set up in Donegall Pass in Belfast in 1888, five years after the organisation was founded in Glasgow.

There are now about 1,200 companies in the UK and Ireland as a whole, and many more in other countries across the world.

BBC News NI understands that stances on LGBT issues accounted for some of the "cultural differences" with the BB in the UK and Ireland.

But a spokesperson for the Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade said it did not hold a "doctrinal position" on LGBT issues.

"That is a matter for each church denomination with which we partner," they added.

According to the terms of the split agreement, seen by BBC News NI, the Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade "would not actively seek to form companies in the Republic of Ireland".

But the agreement with the BB in the UK and Ireland means "Donegal companies will be part of the Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade".

The Northern Ireland BB will also pay a "fixed annual fee for five years" for intellectual property to continue using the BB anchor emblem, logo, uniform and the "Sure and Steadfast" motto.

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The organisation in Northern Ireland will continue to take part in UK-wide award and activity schemes for "an initial period of five years".

The decision for Northern Ireland to become an "autonomous organisation" was previously approved by an overwhelming majority of companies.

As a result the vote on the final split agreement is also expected to be approved at the Monday's meeting.

But some members of the BB who have contacted BBC News NI have been critical of the move, saying it creates a "BB Irish Sea border".

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Podcasts from Limerick

Listen to Limerick diocesan communications adviser Stephen Fletcher's latest podcast - with the Very Revd Lynda Peilow, Rector of the Galway Group of Parishes. She is also the Church of Ireland's Central Director of Ordinands and this conversation explores the journey into ministry.

<https://www.mixcloud.com/TLKCOMMS/very-revd-lynda-peilow-rector-of-st-nicholas-collegiate-church-galway/>

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Check out all of Stephen's podcasts at tlk.ie under the News and Podcasts tab.



Conversation with Archbishop of York

To listen to Archbishop Stephen Cottrell's conversation with Sarah Major at BBC Radio Sheffield from last Sunday's breakfast programme.

This was recorded at All Saints Church Laughton en le Morthen for the commemoration and rededication of the War Memorial (22:37 mins in).

Archbishop Stephen was on a mission weekend in Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fr7nm2>

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SCM needs two Faith in Action Project Workers



Wondering what's next after uni? SCM is looking to appoint two Faith in Action Project Workers for a 1 year placement. recent graduate? passionate about social justice? want to make a difference to the lives of students? Find out more at <http://movement.org.uk/vacancies>

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

