

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Somme Remembrance

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Somme Remembrance

The bravery and sacrifice of all those who lost their lives during the Battle of the Somme will be remembered during a poignant service at Knockagh War Memorial this Sunday, 25 June.

This year's commemoration marks the 107th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, which lasted from July to November 1916 – with the terrible loss of many soldiers from County Antrim serving in various regiments.

Organised by Mid and East Antrim Council, the event will include representation from the Navy, Army and Air Force as well as Council's service organisations and community groups.

Taking place at 11am the service will be conducted by Pastor Jonathan Grant and members of the public are welcome to attend to show their respect and remembrance for the lives lost during the battle.

The largest war memorial in Northern Ireland, Knockagh Monument was erected in remembrance of the men from County Antrim who died in the First World War.

Although the foundation stone was laid in 1922, the monument was not completed until 1936. After the Second

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World War, it was dedicated in remembrance to those from County Antrim who also died in the conflict.

People and places



Youth With A Mission Border Walkers sustained by Mothers' Union

Members of the Mothers' Union in Garrison group of parishes hosted the YWAM - Youth With A Mission - Border Walk 2023 at the Wark Hall.

The group were offered a menu of Beef Stew, boiled potatoes, Rice, Pasta Bake, Garlic Bread, Cottage Pie, Quiche and freshly home made fruit soda and fruit treacle

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bread.

The hot meal was greatly appreciated by the group who are walking along the border from Newry to Londonderry. The clean plates and empty serving dishes said it all.

The MU members enjoyed the fellowship with the walkers after the meal and they explained what Mothers' Union does in the Parishes, the Diocese and Worldwide, living out their faith by reaching out to the community and to visitors.

First Elders Mary Robinson and John Alderdice visit Israel

In Tel Aviv, Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon began the first Elders' visit to Israel and Palestine since 2015 with a meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

There were good exchanges on how to tackle challenges to security, peace and dialogue for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The Elders also met with a number of Israeli human rights organisations to learn more about the work supporting rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, challenging impunity and annexation, and protecting space for civil society._

And in Jerusalem, the Elders heard from Daniel Seidemann on a tour around the Old City of the increasing expansion



and entrenchment of illegal settlements on Palestinian territories including the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, and how this further harms the prospects for peace.

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Lord Alderdice commented that he had an excellent meeting with Archbishop Hosam Naoum at St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, saying "He is such thoughtful, courageous leader in increasingly challenging circumstances and deserves the prayerful support of Christian's everywhere."

News reports

Irish Inter–Church Committee speaks out against intimidation of people seeking international protection

In the wake of a series of recent intimidatory protests that targeted people seeking international protection, the Irish Inter–Church Committee, which comprises representation of 16 churches in Ireland, makes the following appeal:

“The targeting of people seeking protection in Ireland is unacceptable and wrong. As Christians we are called to love our neighbour. The scriptures again and again specifically command us to care for the stranger in our land. Underlying this targeting are fears arising from issues such as the housing and cost of living crises. These are valid matters for protest, and affect some areas and groups more than others, but the scapegoating of people seeking international protection is both unfair and distracts attention from the real causes.

“We believe in the dignity of every person, made in the image of God. As followers of the refugee Christ, we

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Windrush 75 - Visiting Caribbean Bishops attending a reception at Speakers House. It was good to hear the Speaker of the House, Lindsay Hoyle MP speak about growing up with Windrush generation friends and his continued love of Ska music

express our solidarity with those who have had to leave their home in order to seek a life of safety and peace.

“The intimidation witnessed in recent weeks is damaging the social fabric of our communities, further wounding already economically deprived and struggling areas. Local community leaders have repeatedly stated that these incidences of intimidation do not reflect their communities and are often fomented by outside actors.



21 June 1675. The laying of the foundation stone of the new St Paul's Cathedral began. The cathedral was designed in the English Baroque style by Sir Christopher Wren. Its construction was part of a major rebuilding programme in London after the Great Fire of 1666.

“The housing crisis, cost of living crisis and other community concerns are the result of political decisions over many years, for example in the under-provision of social housing since the 1990s. As a wealthy country we have the means to provide for the fundamental needs of the population. Government policies need to give greater priority to the common good.

“Local congregations around the country are supporting people seeking protection, as well as those most impacted by the cost of living and housing crises. We encourage them to continue to do this, and to listen to the concerns of their

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communities, whilst supporting them to be inclusive and welcoming. At this time of tension, people need to hear messages of hope and encouragement.

“Finally, we appeal to political leaders to intervene constructively, acknowledging legitimate concerns but recognising that people seeking protection are not at fault. We can all help to create an environment in which community concerns can be addressed in a healthy and meaningful way. This also means challenging disinformation and unwelcome interventions that generate a hostile environment.”

Being Churches Together in 21st Century Ireland

This year marks 100 years since the foundation of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and 50 years since the historic Ballymascanlon Talks, which led to the establishment of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

You are invited to the event, ‘Being Churches Together in 21st Century Ireland on 7 September 2023, from 10:00-16:30.

The event celebrates 100 years of the Irish Council of Churches and 50 years since the Ballymascanlon Talks which led to the formation of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

‘Called to be One’, an updated history of ICC and IICM written by Rev Dr Ian Ellis will be launched on the day.

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Three speakers will examine how churches can bear witness to our vision of hope for society in Ireland today:

Witnessing for a reason: Connecting Christian values and public concerns

Prof Philip McDonagh, Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International relations, DCU

Witnessing together: How churches build connection and work together effectively

Dr Nicola Brady, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Witnessing in diversity: Churches working for an Ireland of belonging

Rev Dr Livingstone Thompson, Moravian Church

This will be followed by workshop sessions exploring how churches can work effectively on different issues affecting society today such as sectarianism, economic inequality, ethnic and gender discrimination and the climate crisis.

Registration

Please register via Eventbrite.

[\[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/being-churches-together-in-21st-century-ireland-tickets-653866501307\]](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/being-churches-together-in-21st-century-ireland-tickets-653866501307)

Further information - Please see the Churches in Ireland website.

[\[https://www.irishchurches.org/events/153/being-churches-together-in-21st\]](https://www.irishchurches.org/events/153/being-churches-together-in-21st)



“Great meeting with all our World Youth Day Pilgrims last night. Great chats and laughs, really looking forward to World Youth day in Lisbon,” Archbishop Eamon Martin

In the media

Protect young Christians who are going against the flow New Presbyterian Moderator

Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney, who was installed as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on Wednesday evening, knows how important it is to

protect young Christians from peer pressure having given himself to God at the age of eight, Graeme Cousins writes in the Newsletter

Dr Mawhinney grew up in Ballycastle and it was at his local primary school that he saw the light.

He said: “I heard God call me to become a Christian in the dining hall of my primary school, which the CSSM (Children’s Special Service Mission) were using as an evening venue.”

He added: “In those days it was easier to become a Christian, the anti-Christian pressure wasn’t really as strong. If you’re going to live as a Christian in this society you will very definitely be going against the flow.

“I think that is why it is important as parents that we are at least engaging with our young people about those issues and recognising that it is tough.

“In churches we really need to talk about peer pressure, that this is not going to be easy, following Jesus was never easy, but he is with us and he helps us through that.”

Dr Mawhinney and his wife Karen have three boys – Peter, Andrew and David – all in their mid-20s and all keen sportsmen like their father who could turn his hand to a number of sports, especially hockey.

Of his installation as Presbyterian moderator and the general assembly, the 61-year-old said: “I’m looking forward to it, I’m a bit daunted as well.

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“I’m looking forward to seeing the church come together for us to be able to both worship God and debate issues that are important for the church.”

Discussing the 50-page report entitled ‘Radical Reconfiguration of Ministry’, he said: “I think that over many years we’ve been a denomination that has been in decline in terms of numbers.

“We’re having to rethink what ministry will look like going forward.

“Society has changed, it is more difficult for us, but I still think the means are similar – we want to tell them about Jesus, we want to teach the Bible, we want to form communities that work. Those are the things that matter today and I still think we have the answers.

“People are lonely and churches provide – both in Jesus himself and in the community – friendships and relationships. Lives can get messed up because of all the difficulties that we’re having. We have forgiveness here as well.”

Dr Mawhinney was a qualified GP before going into the church and for a year in Kenya in the early 90s he combined both duties.

He said: “I had applied to be a Presbyterian minister and been accepted. I was qualified as a GP and had one year to wait before I could start my theological studies.

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“The overseas board rang me up and said they had a vacancy in Kenya. The two dovetailed perfectly.

“I loved the church community out there. I did lots of C-sections, some surgeries – things I would never have done here in Northern Ireland.”

He added: “I don’t miss being a doctor, I felt that God wanted me to be a minister.

“I sensed the call to ministry as a late teenager but I put it off.”

Christians seen as ‘aggressive’ in trans court cases

Christians are seen as “aggressive” in transgender court cases, the Church of England has claimed, Gabriella Sterling writes in the Daily Telegraph.

The Rev Dr Malcolm Brown, of the Church of England, made the comments in the wake of the case involving a Christian teaching assistant who was sacked after expressing her views on transgender books in primary schools but who last week won an appeal.

The Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England was the third party in the appeal hearing of Kristie Higgs and her former employer. Dr Brown said that the Church became involved because “the representatives of Christians claiming to have been discriminated against argued that the freedom

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to express their beliefs in public was absolute, whoever it offended.

“[But] a chill-factor was leading employers to regard any expression of religious belief as potentially problematic. Senior contacts in the legal profession told us of a judiciary increasingly frustrated with the way these cases were being argued in the courts, with the aggressive voices beginning to be seen as typically Christian.”

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Introduction to Prayer Ministry training

The 'Introduction to Prayer Ministry' training of the Irish Methodist Church is open to all who desire to learn more about this ministry, for refresher training, and will equip participants to provide prayer ministry in a church, event or community setting.

Explore what it means to pray with others, to intercede on someone's behalf, and to help those who want to respond and spend time in God's presence to receive His love, peace, comfort and healing.

Saturday 1st July, 2023. Dundrum Methodist Church
Register and find out more at: bit.ly/3SzjD04



DIOCESE OF DOWN AND CONNOR

SINGING FOR BOYS SUMMER 2023

Monday 11 August – Friday 18 August

St Dominic's Grammar School
135 Falls Road
Belfast BT12 6AE

Applications available from Saint Peter's Cathedral House
or by emailing schola@downandconnor.org



Annual Summer Singing School for Boys 2023

Aimed at boys aged 8-16 who want to improve their singing voice and music skills.

Ideal for boys who have a passion for music and want to take their singing to the next level.

Contact for more information or email schola@downandconnor.org

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Tablet Webinars – Women Saints and Scholars

Throughout July The Tablet will be running a series of webinars looking more closely at Women Saints and Scholars.

To purchase your ticket, visit: ow.ly/fbxL50OxCUq

The Hub at QUB is hiring

The Hub chaplaincy has 3 exciting full-time roles on offer!

- Operations Manager
- Community Ministry Lead
- Hospitality Ministry Lead

If you, or someone you know, is passionate about building the kingdom among University staff and students, get in touch!

For job descriptions and details on how to apply:
www.thehubbelfast.org

Applications close Monday 10th July at 12 noon.

The studio at Castle Ward

Ann Smyth Stained Glass has been a resident artist at Castle Ward - National Trust for 10 years and is now joined by new resident artist Charlene Rooney Ceramics.

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The Studio is now open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11.00 till 5.00.

Perspective



Called and sent – Diane Ruddock

Diane Ruddock is one of the four diocesan lay readers who were commissioned by Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore on Monday 19 June.

An active lay person throughout her life, Diane shares her account of being called, trained and sent into this new area of service -

I grew up in a loving Church of Ireland home where church on Sunday was as much a pattern of our week as school on Monday. This upbringing provided me with a firm foundation for a personal Christian faith which has been integral to me almost all my life. I was confirmed and married in my 'home' church, Christ Church, Bessbrook, and then I didn't stray too

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far, as I have been worshipping at Holy Trinity, Banbridge (Seapatricks Parish) for over 30 years.

I regularly sought opportunities to deepen my faith, including through joining Bible study home groups, and Diocesan events such as Bible Week and Bishop's Bible Course. I have served in various ways, including in Sunday School, and more recently as part of our prayer ministry team. I've also been churchwarden, and I am on our Select Vestry and on Diocesan and General Synod.

However, over the years, despite this practical involvement, I often wondered if God might have a different call on my life, to serve as a lay reader, but I always told myself 'I wouldn't be good enough' or 'not now' or, as time passed 'I'd be too old'. But in 2021, I heard Bishop David say that our Diocese needs men and women from all walks of life – young and old – to support our ordained clergy and to play their part in the mission of the church. Somehow all my excuses disappeared and I applied for the Diocesan Reader course.

The course, including weekends at Church of Ireland Theological Institute, was spiritually enriching and intellectually stimulating. I have forged friendships with people from almost every diocese in Ireland, from farmers to potters, teachers to poets, all united in a shared endeavour of study to equip us for service. This was augmented by a Preaching Course provided by the Diocese, led by our Warden of Readers, Rev Willie Nixon.

I have been so blessed by the prayers and encouragement of my family, friends and the parishioners and ministry team

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in Banbridge, without which, I'd never have reached this point. I know their prayers and support will continue as I step forward in the role of Diocesan Reader, and seek to live out our parish mission statement: 'Growing in God's love and sharing it with others.'

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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