

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mournes salmon

June 26,2023

Image of the day

Mourne salmon

Let's head to one of Europe's best Salmon rivers...

The River Mourne is believed to be on a par with the Rivers Moy and Blackwater in Ireland and the River Tweed, Scotland. The most renowned and famous pool is the Snaa which is similar in appearance to 'the Junction' on the River Tweed.

The river is particularly good sport between August and October — so, there's still time to book your trip!

Head to Fishpal to discover the river's beats
<https://www.fishpal.com/Ireland/Mourne/>

Photo courtesy the Baronscourt Estate

People and places

Busy week for the choir of St Peter's Belfast

Yesterday morning Sunday 25th at 11.00 the choir sang Choral Matins for Petertide... Responses (Radcliffe), Jubilate and Te Deum in Bb (Stanford) and Locus Iste (Bruckner). The guest organist at this service was Tristan Russcher.



In the afternoon the choir sang Evensong in St Anne's Cathedral at 3.30...Peace be to this Congregation (Alison Cadden), Responses (Radcliffe), Dyson in D and Evening Hymn (Balfour Gardner).

Today - On St Peter's Day June 29th at 7.30 there

June 26,2023

will be Choral Evensong followed by a wine reception.

The music at this service will be Responses (Radcliffe), Noble in B minor and Cantique de Jean Racine (Fauré). Two of our singers, Ellen Cowan and Rebecca Armstrong will also be performing music by Telemann for piano and viola as part of this Patronal Evensong. The organist at both services of Choral Evensong will be Jack Wilson, newly appointed Master of Music at Belfast Cathedral.

If you are in the Belfast area at any of these times the choir would love you to come and join them in worship

A promotional poster for a healing service. The background is a light grey with a subtle pattern of white geometric shapes and a faint image of a white cloth. The text is in bold black and gold. In the top right corner, there is a logo for DHM, which consists of a gold cross inside a gold circle with a flame-like shape above it, and the letters 'DHM' below it.

Healing Service
"Today is the Day of your Miracle"

7.30pm Tuesday 27th June

St. Finnian's Parish Church
Cregagh Park
Belfast

Br David Jardine



Worship: James Turner



Prayer Ministry and Anointing with Oil

June 26,2023

Maghera parish vintage car rally



There was an excellent turn out of vintage vehicles and a tremendous response to the social side of the event at St Lurach's on Saturday.



The volunteer team of organisers certainly worked hard before, during and after the event



Drumbeg Parish outreach to migrants and refugees

Another successful migrant/refugee event has been held at Drumbeg Parish with folks from -

Iran, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, Eretria, Tunisia, Hong Kong and Afghanistan.

June 26,2023

“We had a 'wet' Summer BBQ, with wonderful food, good music and a warm welcome to those who find themselves living among us as 'strangers and foreigners'. We prayed the Lord's blessing on them at the end of the evening”.

Summer Show rings bells in Kilkenny



A RTE film crew with presenter Nuala Carey spent a day in Kilkenny recording St. Canice's Cathedral and the Bell ringers for an episode of 'The Summer Show' to be aired on Sunday

13th August, thanks to Ian McCullagh the Tower Captain and all the bellringers... another photo next page...



“We are always looking for new ringers if this sparks an interest. . .”

‘True Conversion’, Down & Dromore Bible Week

Down & Dromore invites you to the end of the summer Bible Week with evangelist and practical theologian, Revd Greg Downes. Greg’s theme will be True Conversion and he will lead us in four studies in the first chapter of Colossians.

Tuesday 29 August: A change of address (Colossians 1:1–2)



Wednesday 30 August: Conversion to a cause (Colossians 1:3–14)

Thursday 31 August: Conversion to Christ (Colossians 1:15–23)

Friday 1 September: Conversion to a community (Colossians 1: 24–29)

Greg will also be with the diocese for the month of September 2023 when he will engage in mission throughout the diocese.

“As well as inspiring teaching, our annual Bible Week includes worship and prayer ministry. It is a wonderful opportunity for clergy, leaders and parishioners alike to be refreshed ahead of the busy autumn term. Don’t miss it!”

Meet Greg

Greg Downes is the director of Kingfisher Ministries and Theologian & Missioner of St Mary’s Cogges near Oxford.

He is a passionate follower of Jesus, dedicated to using his life and gifts to extend Christ’s Kingdom. He is an



St Nicholas Collegiate Church, Galway, Choristers just finished their final term of the year. They were given hearty congratulations to each of them for the hard work they put in each week. And behind it all are Mark and Dottie who work so diligently with the choristers to foster a love of music.

evangelist, practical theologian and ordained minister of the Church of England.

Greg has served in a number of roles over the years: Study assistant to John Stott; Tutor in Evangelism at The London School of Theology; Evangelist-in-Residence at St Andrew's Chorleywood; Chaplain at Pembroke College, Oxford University; Oxford Pastorate Chaplain (based at St Aldate's Church) and Theologian & Missioner at St Michael le Belfrey York.

He was until recently Director of Ministerial Training and Dean of the Wesley Centre for Missional Engagement at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University.

Since 1 January 2022, Greg has been the Director of Kingfisher Ministries which exists to equip the church to fulfill her Great Commission.

His passion is to lead people to Christ and to equip others to do the same, as well as serve as a consultant to churches and mentor and coach to missional leaders.

Greg is married to Tamie, a doctor. They have two young daughters and make their home in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds.

Bible Week will begin each evening at 7.45 pm in Willowfield Church, 149 My Lady's Road, Belfast, BT6 8FE.

News reports

Focused emphasis on church planting

Members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland have affirmed the importance of church planting across Ireland and approved the Council for Mission in Ireland's Church Planting Strategy.

It also gave the green light to creating a new role – 'Mission Pioneer' - focusing on church planting, or strategic pioneering work.

June 26,2023

PCI's principal decision-making body, which brings together ministers, elders and others from the church's 500-plus congregations across Ireland, met in Belfast last week.

Speaking on the Council for Mission in Ireland's (CMI) Report to the General Assembly, Council Secretary **Rick Hill** said that that the Council's Church Planting Panel had worked hard to develop a Strategy that can guide the denomination in its church planting efforts and offer help to individual congregations seeking to plant.

"Our desire is to fan into flame a vision for church planting... We can point to the need to open an overflow area in Kilkenny, church planting progress in Balbriggan, encouragements in Sligo and Naas, the process of electing local elders in Galway and Corboy. We can point to positive start to the work in West Belfast and a significant property project to establish an inaugural church building in Maynooth, after almost two decades of meeting in rented space.

"More generally there have been new communicant members, the sustaining of stable witness in rural areas, congregations reaching migrants in grace-filled ways, and the fruitfulness of an Alpha Course in the International Meeting Point, which led to more than two dozen baptisms in one of its neighbouring congregations. Praise God!" Mr Hill said.

Quoting from Ecclesiastes in the Bible's Old Testament, the Council Secretary reminded the General Assembly that "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to

June 26,2023

die, a time to plant and a time to uproot” (Ecclesiastes 3:2.)
“This is the mixed economy of moving forward missionally, as a Church in this cultural moment. Birth and death. Renovation and innovation. Sustaining the old and pioneering the new...”

Addressing the Moderator, **Dr Mawhinney**, who is currently the minister of Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church, in Dublin, but has also served in two congregation in Counties Cork and Tipperary, Mr Hill said, “you know more than most the reality of ministry in Ireland and I know that close to your heart are the many villages, towns and even cities which lack a strong evangelical witness or reformed church presence.

“Church planting lies in the history and heart of Irish Presbyterianism. For each of our congregations to exist, they had to be planted, and today the need remains to spread our nets wide across this land. If we don’t, we will simply go about the task of reallocating resource and managing decline in a way that gives us our day, but fails in our basic missionary calling.”

He pointed out that over 80 towns of more than 10,000 people had been identified as having no significant gospel witness. “A quick glance at a current PCI map shows significant gaps across Ireland. Of the top 50 population centres, 17 contain no Presbyterian congregation, including large towns and cities like Waterford, Limerick and Navan. Whole counties lack any Presbyterian witness and less than 10% of our congregations are found within the provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht. A challenge is identifying the right people to lead such work.” Mr Hill explained.

With that in mind, he said that the Council seeks to establish a called role of 'Missional Auxiliary Ministry'. This would see appropriately assessed and trained people acting as 'Mission Pioneers' in various settings to focus on church planting or strategic pioneering work. They would be approved and deployed by the Council to serve under the oversight of a local congregation, or Presbytery, to focus on church planting or strategic pioneering work.

"Pioneers are those who go first, pave the way and initiate connection with those outside the church to engage them with both the gospel and Christian community. We are praying for those who would carry a vision for the outermost parts of our island; to the towns and cities; the remote and rural; the southerly and westerly; to put their hands up to minister and lead mission; pastor and teach; plant and pioneer; to seek revitalisation and renewal," he said.

Mr Hill concluded by saying, "We believe there is a way forward for the church in this land. Jesus remains good news, the fields are still harvest-white, and posturing ourselves once again with bold faith, creative imagination and courageous action will help plot a pathway to a more dynamic future."

Looking at the practicalities of what had been approved by the General Assembly, the Council for Mission in Ireland has developed a 'Church Planters Network', which met for the first time in March. On the back of the Church Planting Conference that was held in February 2022 in Dundalk, a 'Taster Day' to help identify potential church planters is planned for 21 October 2023. It is hoped that a church planting handbook will be published soon.

In the media

Presbyterian General Assembly 2023: Church needs to repent on disability says former moderator

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland needs to repent of its failure to fully accept into membership people with intellectual disabilities, a former moderator has said, Philip Bradfield reports in the News Letter.

Rev Dr David Bruce was speaking at the church's general assembly in Belfast today, as chair of the Membership and People with a Disability Task Group.

Several members of the group are parents of children and young people with an intellectual disability, and as their report said, it was made aware from its first meeting of the "family pain and gospel challenge before the Church" in the lives of people with intellectual disability.

The Task Group had listed some principles to address the issue, which the General Assembly adopted;- that a person with intellectual disability who is able to articulate their own faith should be allowed to express it in an accessible manner and that a person who is non-verbal may be welcomed into membership on the basis of the normal vows taken on their behalf by their parents at their baptism.

Dr Bruce said: "The report concludes with probably the most challenging aspect of its message – which is that while we

June 26,2023

can debate the place of vows and the processes by which we welcome new members... we as a people have a blind spot when we think of those with an intellectual disability.

“We may not in our attitudes and practice fully accept them as part of the body of Christ. The Task Group believes that we need to repent of this attitude...”.

The General Assembly accepted the recommendations of the report, which will now result in drafting new vows in accessible language.

Presbyterian General Assembly ‘Grave concern’ at Sec of State Chris Heaton-Harris' sex education plans

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has expressed "deep regret" and "grave concern" at the Secretary of State’s "patronising imposition" of new plans for Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools across NI. Philip Bradfield reports in the News Letter.

The church’s Council for Public Affairs presented a report to elders and ministers from across the island this week on the subject, with Council Convener, Rev Daniel Kane of of West Church in Ballymena offering his assessment.

“The autonomy afforded to school Boards of Governors in Northern Ireland to develop their own RSE policy, based on the ethos of the school, has come under sustained attack from many quarters,” he said. “Recently the Secretary of

June 26,2023

State introduced legislation, which could affect how RSE is taught in post primary schools in Northern Ireland. There are obvious concerns around the implications this will have on the education of our young people.”

He also referenced the recent Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission report on RSE, which affirmed Secretary of State Chris Heaton Harris’ plans.

Rev Kane said the commission’s approach would result in RSE which is “value-neutral and outside the parameters of school ethos” which he said would be “a further challenge to the independence of School Boards of Governors in Northern Ireland to determine the ethos of their particular school”.

The resolution passed by the church states that its leaders “deeply regret and express their grave concern at the Secretary of State’s patronising imposition of a series of measures” based on a UN committee’s recommendations for RSE in NI from 2018.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

The Archbishop Interviews

This BBC production is always enlightening. It is an interview programme in which the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, interviews public figures about their inner lives.



The guest in the most recent broadcast is the songwriter, poet and author, Nick Cave. Archbishop Welby invites Cave to discuss his own faith and how his beliefs shape his values and actions. Cave's creative life has developed in the context of a series of profound bereavements and difficult life experiences. He has also acknowledged the influence on his music of art and literature.

Nick Cave -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001n8dv>

Link to all previous interviews including John Cleese and Tony Blair

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



In a thin place - the Celtic Connection

Ruth Harvey on The Holy Island of Lindisfarne, with Bishop Trevor Williams, former leader of the Corrymeela community, and Sarah Hills, current vicar of St. Mary's Church, Lindisfarne.

Listen in and join their conversation next Tuesday 27th June, 19:30 - 21:00 BST, when they'll be exploring the idea of 'thin' places and asking questions of belonging. Part of the Celtic Connection series.

Find out more and register at iona.org.uk/learn

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