



Vicar of St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Canon David Gillespie; the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Críona Ní Dhálaigh; and the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson at the launch of the 2015 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Church with the choir of Kildare Place School.

Dublin Black Santa Sitout sets new record

The 2015 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, has yielded a record breaking sum for charity. A total of €41,400, the

largest amount in the Dublin appeal's 15 year history, was collected during the sit out which took place on the street outside the Dublin city centre church in the days running up to Christmas.

Every cent donated goes directly to the charities involved. Cheques will be distributed at a special service in St Ann's on Sunday February 7 at 11.00 am. The preacher will be the Archdeacon of Dublin, the Ven David Pierpoint.

The Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie, has paid tribute to all who donated, collected, counted and offered hospitality during the appeal.

Canon Gillespie and his team of volunteers from the parish as well as other clergy were joined each day by a number of choirs including Castleknock National School, St James Primary School, Francis Street CBS, St Stephens Church Choir, Catholic University School, Taney Parish Junior School, Alexandra College, Kildare Place National School, Cornucopia Brass Group, Irish Life Choir, Revenue Choir, AIB Choral Society, Permanent TSB Staff Choir, John Scottus School, Loretto College, Seafield Singers, Dublin Male Voice Choir, the Line Up Choir, Steadfast Band and the Brook Singers.

Among the charities that will benefit from the appeal are Trust, the Salvation Army, the Simon Community , the Peter McVerry Trust, Protestant Aid, Barnardos, St Vincent De Paul, the Laura Lynn Foundation and Solas Project.

The Black Santa sit out is modelled on a similar appeal, which has been run by successive Deans of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast for many years. It became known as the Black Santa appeal because of the long heavy black cloaks worn by the clergy to keep out the cold.

Archbishop of Canterbury to focus on reconciliation in C of I sponsored lecture at Queen's University

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, will give the annual Church of Ireland Theological Lecture in the Great Hall at Queen's University Belfast on Monday 8th February at 6pm.

The Archbishop has chosen the theme of reconciliation for his lecture and there will be an opportunity for Q&A following his address. Whilst they cannot guarantee that any particular

question may be put to the Archbishop, the chaplaincy team invites you to submit a question in advance via the website below.

This event is free and open to all, but with a high demand for spaces attendance is by reservation only. Seats can be reserved at www.thehubbelfast.org

General Assembly Summary Report published

With six months to go to the 2016 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in June, the Church has published its Summary Report of last year's Assembly.

The 30-page publication reports on some of the 80 Resolutions that were debated across the seven sessions of [last year's General Assembly](#) and gives a snapshot of some of the work that the Church undertook during the year.

The [General Assembly](#) is the decision-making and policy-making body of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Approximately 1,000 people from congregations across Ireland were involved in the four days of worship, prayer, Bible study,



celebration and decision-making at Assembly Buildings in Belfast from 1st to 4th June.

The Assembly officially opened with the formal **election and installation** of the new Moderator, Rev. Dr. Ian McNie. Writing in the Summary Report, Dr. McNie said that the Report was “...a welcome innovation as it offered a snapshot of what we discussed, the decisions the Church took and gave a flavour of the work of the church over the year.”

Writing in the introduction, the Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev. Trevor Gribben, said that the gatherings had become important times of coming together, discussion and debate.

“Democracy is one of the strengths and hallmarks of our Presbyterianism. The General Assembly is where decisions are taken, the significant, the routine and the mundane together, that can affect the direction the church takes for years to come, or until the Assembly decides otherwise of course...

“It was a busy and productive time and I hope that in this short publication you will get a sense of some of the decisions taken and the work that God is calling us to do as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.”

Final items of business before the end of last year's Assembly affected arrangements for subsequent General Assemblies, with Members agreeing to alter the meeting times. While future Assemblies will still begin with the traditional Monday evening Opening Night with the installation of the new Moderator and commencement of business on Tuesday morning, they will conclude on Friday lunchtime

or late afternoon – affording an additional one and a half business days.

The 2016 General Assembly will therefore open on the evening of Monday, 6th June and close on Friday, 10th June. Copies of the Summary Report of the 2015 General Assembly are available from Assembly Buildings.

Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and Jerusalem start journeying together in Epiphany Agreement

The Archbishop of Dublin and the Archbishop of Jerusalem have signed an accord which will see the people of the dioceses journey together as brothers and sisters in Christ on a common pilgrimage of faith and discipleship. The Epiphany Agreement was signed in St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem yesterday (Sunday January 10) and officially establishes the link which has been growing between the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East for the last year.



Archbishop Jackson and Archbishop Dawani in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, at the signing of the agreement.

The Epiphany Agreement commits to developing a link relationship of equal partners between the two dioceses which is sustainable, practical, effective, mutually supportive and mutually enriching.

The stated aim of the link is to strengthen mission and evangelism in the church communities in both dioceses, to increase awareness between the dioceses of their

solidarity in the cause of Christ, to respect and learn of and from each other's cultural heritage and to enable the world to recognize more clearly God's mission.

The agreement was signed during a visit by a delegation from the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. The delegation is led by Archbishop Michael Jackson who is accompanied by the Revd Ken Rue, chairperson of the Diocesan Council for Mission and Linda Chambers and Jan de Bruijn of the United Society.

Following the signing, Archbishop Jackson said the agreement signified mutual respect between the people of both dioceses. "The signing of this Epiphany Agreement not only cements the friendship between the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, it also gives a very strong sense of the mutual respect in which the people and the clergy of both diocesan families hold one another," he said. "Having had the opportunity since Epiphany to visit institutions and parishes in the Jerusalem Diocese, I have formed a strong sense of the ministry of healing and teaching carried out by the people of the diocese in partnership with

their neighbours of other World Faiths. The motivation always is service of other and especially of those in need. This can be a stimulus and an example to us in our own dioceses as the link and partnership develop and grow.”

Archbishop Suheil Dawani hoped the relationship would blossom in the coming years. “We in Jerusalem are delighted to sign formally the Epiphany Agreement with Dublin and Glendalough Dioceses. We in the Land of the Holy One see our ministry as your ministry and we welcome you into sharing this ministry with us. Already you have been so generous to us in the support you have given to the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza. We deeply appreciate your generosity. Our prayer is that the new relationship of friendship, solidarity and hospitality will flourish in the years ahead,” he stated.

The Diocese of Jerusalem spans Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Lebanon. The link is to last for an initial period of five years. It will see the establishment of structures in each diocese to foster ways of expressing the relationship at diocesan and parochial levels and will encourage an interchange of people and skills. The

relationship will be reviewed and evaluated towards the end of the five year period.

Bishop John McAreavey visits vulnerable Christians of Middle East

Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore, along with bishops from across Europe, North America and South Africa is participating in a ten-day visit to the vulnerable Christian communities of Gaza, Bethlehem and refugees in Jordan for the meeting of the Holy Land Coordination group.

On Thursday 7 January the delegation visited the small Christian community in Gaza, celebrating Mass at the parish of the Holy Family, meeting with parishioners, visiting the school of the Holy Rosary Sisters and various projects helping people to rebuild their lives following the most recent conflict in 2014.

The bishops are returning for the third consecutive year during which time the conflict of 2014 has led to the deaths of over two thousand Gazans, including over five hundred children with one third of the population being internally displaced.



Procession to Mass through the Holy Door in the Latin Parish of the Holy Family

The Christian community comprises 2,500 people, of whom Catholics number around two hundred. The bishops will then return to Bethlehem where they will celebrate Mass and visit the Christian community of Beit Jala which has suffered the loss of land and livelihood following the annexation of their property as well as the building of a Separation Wall in the Cremisan Valley.

The focus of the remainder of the visit will be Jordan and the refugees who have been forced out of their homes as a result of the ongoing

conflict in Syria and Iraq. The United Nations puts the total number of refugees currently in Jordan at just over one million people, the vast majority of whom are Syrian. The delegation will arrive in Jordan on 10 January, leaving on 14 January.

The Holy Land Coordination was set up at the invitation of the Holy See at the end of the last century to offer support to the local Christian communities of the Holy Land. For the past fifteen years the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales has organised the visit which this year will be led by Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton.

Doctorate for hospital chaplain

Canon Daniel Nuzum, a whole-time hospital chaplain in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, has been awarded a doctorate by University College Cork following the submission of his thesis and *viva* examination in recent days.

Dr Nuzum's research was in the field of pregnancy loss and stillbirth; the title of his thesis is:
'The spiritual and professional impact of stillbirth.'

Mothers Union events in Clogher diocese

Friday 15th January – Commissioning Service of MU President, Mrs Irene Boyd in Colebrooke Parish Church at 7.30pm. Saturday 20th February – Prayer Breakfast organised by MU Faith and Policy Unit in the Killyhevlin Hotel. Speaker: Mrs Jacqui Armstrong, All-Ireland Co-Ordinator of the Faith and Policy Unit. Theme: 'A Celebration of Faith - 140 years'

C of E publishes 2014 attendance statistics

New Church of England statistics for 2014 published today show that just under one million people attend services each week. The survey, carried out over four weeks in October 2014, found 980,000 people attending church each week, with 830,000 adults and 150,000 children.

The statistics also show that 2.4 million attended a Church of England Church at Christmas in 2014 and 1.3 million people attended a service at Easter. Additionally, 2.2 million people attended special Advent services for the congregation and local community whilst 2.6

million attended special Advent services for civic organisations and schools.

The statistics also highlight the other services carried out by the Church of England on a regular basis. In 2014 the Church carried out just under 1,000 weddings, 2,000 baptisms, and almost 3,000 funerals every week of the year. Some 12% of births during 2014 were marked by a Church of England infant baptism or thanksgiving service whilst 31% of deaths were marked by a Church of England funeral.

As a whole the figures represent a continuing trend which has shown a 12% decrease in attendance over the past decade with an average decline of just over 1% a year.

Speaking on the publication of the statistics, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt. Revd. Graham James, said:

"The 2014 figures are not in any way a surprise. Whilst the recent trend of the past decade continues, it has been anticipated and is being acted on radically.

"As part of a prayerful and considered response to these trends the Church is embarking upon the biggest renewal and reform process in over 150 years focusing our resources on prayer,

evangelism, discipleship, vocations, leadership & training.

"We do not expect that trend to change imminently or immediately over the next few years due to demographics. We lose approximately 1% of our churchgoers to death each year. Given the age profile of the CofE, the next few years will continue to have downward pressure as people die or become housebound and unable to attend church.

"As a Church we are unashamedly committed to following the teachings of Jesus Christ in our worship of God, discipleship and service to the poor and the marginalised. Our confidence, resilience and service is rooted in Jesus.

"The story is not one of inevitable decline. During 2013-14 some dioceses continued to increase their attendance. In the past 12 months alone there are examples of growth and new churches across the country. In my own diocese the church of St. Thomas Norwich has grown from 50 to 450 people in the past two years. In Bournemouth, St Swithin's - a church which started in 2014 - now sees 500 people attending every week whilst in Birmingham St Luke's Gas Street in is already attracting hundreds of young people since its beginning in

2015. There are many others like these and each is a sign of hope.

"Attendance statistics do not tell the whole story. There are many things that churches do that are not included in these data from running homelessness services and hosting foodbanks, to educating a million children a day in our schools to providing welcome and accompaniment to the least, the last and the lost in our society."

The statistics are available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2432327/2014statisticsformission.pdf>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Arlene Foster: Let's find another way of doing business

Belfast Telegraph

... of the DUP uneasy because she was the first woman leader and First Minister, and had a Church of Ireland background, Mrs Foster simply said: "No.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/arlene-foster-lets-find-new-way-of-doing-business-34355523.html>

No shift in DUP's Christian values

News Letter

On her first day as First Minister, Arlene Foster has said that the DUP will not shift from its “Christian values” on issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/interview-dup-s-christian-values-will-not-change-says-foster-1-7155534>



‘Her second most important job’: One politician’s take on the North’s first female leader

The **Journal.ie**

Edwin Poots has found himself in bother after his congratulatory speech.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/sexist-edwin-poots-arlene-foster-first-minister-2542756-Jan2016/>

Arlene has disappointed Enda

News Letter

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has declared his disappointment in Northern Ireland's new First Minister over her plans to snub 1916 Easter Rising commemorations.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/enda-kenny-disappointed-at-foster-s-attitude-to-1916-1-7155017>

Foster's C of I background will not matter, say DUP members

Irish Times

Since Ms Foster quit the Ulster Unionist Party in 2004 to join the DUP much comment has been made about the fact that she is a Church of Ireland ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/foster-s-c-of-i-background-will-not-matter-say-dup-members-1.2491673>

Bridging the gap on Ireland's increasing divide between north and south

Belfast Telegraph

Malachi O'Doherty writes -The churches are mostly all-Ireland bodies, including the **Church of Ireland** and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. But the synods and assemblies ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/news-analysis/bridging-the-gap-on-irelands-increasing-divide-between-north-and-south-34353967.html>

Last week Gerry Adams launched Sinn Fein's commemoration of the centenary of the Easter Rising

Alex Kane comments in News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/sinn-fein-s-attempt-to-rewrite-the-history-of-1916-is-colossally-stupid-1-7152964>

The public cost of Pastor James McConnell's trial

News Letter

An official figure can now be revealed for at least part of the public cost of Pastor James McConnell's trial.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/full-mcconnell-trial-cost-figures-emerge-but-total-unclear-1-7155382>

Abortion bill hasn't led to more women "claiming suicidality" to get a termination

Journal.ie

Fears that this would happen have been proven unfounded.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/terminations-abortion-suicide-2540564-Jan2016/>

Confirmation names – the possibilities aren't endless

Irish News

<http://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/2016/01/12/news/confirmation-names-the-possibilities-aren-t-endless-379459/>

Spotlight movie shines light on Catholic Church abuses that are all too familiar

Journal.ie

The new Hollywood movie focuses on the Pulitzer Prize winning investigation carried out by The Boston Globe into the Catholic Church's cover-up of child-molesting priests.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/spotlight-movie-2530108-Jan2016/>

A teaching revolution that 'makes the classes come alive'

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/a-teaching-revolution-that-makes-the-classes-come-alive-1.2488446>

NI flooding: £1.3m fund to focus on prevention

BBC News

Stormont ministers agree to spend the full £1.3m of additional funding for flooding on preventative measures and preparing for future incidents.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35279629>

More have died by suicide than were killed during the Troubles

Irish News

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/01/11/news/more-have-died-by-suicide-that-were-killed-during-troubles-378739/?>

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Tel/Times/Mail

Reports from the gathering of the Anglican Communion Primates which is taking place in Canterbury this week. The Mail quotes the Archbishop of Canterbury as saying ‘God is bigger than our failures.’ Revd Sally Hitchener writes an opinion piece on why she believes it might be better for the Communion to split over the issue of sexuality. Hugo Rifkind urges the Primates to look to David Bowie’s lead while considering the sexuality issues.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12094160/The-schism-in-the-Anglican-Church-might-be-a-good-thing.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4662596.ece>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3394803/Welby-Church-split-gays-not-disaster.html>

Tel

Reports that Sunday schools could be banned from teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman. Conservative MPs have wanted that Ofsted inspectors could be sent into church youth groups and Scout groups to search for signs of radicalisation.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/12093949/Tory-MPs-warn-that-Sunday-schools-could-be-banned-from-teaching-that-marriage-is-between-a-man-and-a-woman.html>

Mail/Times/Ind/Express/Mirror/Sun

Articles reflecting on the life and achievements of the musician David Bowie who died at the weekend include a tribute from the Archbishop of Canterbury provided in

response to a direct question on the R4 Today Programme yesterday.

The articles also state that Bowie, who was 69, was a member of a church choir.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3394953/The-lonely-boy-devoted-tragic-brother-ALISON-BOSHOF-reveals-midwife-delivered-Bowie-insisted-mother-Earth-before.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/article4662563.ece>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/music/article4662813.ece>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/david-bowie-dead-brixton-tribute-new-album-blackstar-cancer-a6806671.html>

<http://www.express.co.uk/celebrity-news/633408/David-Bowie-dead>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/news-david-bowies-tragic-death-7160064>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/6852647/Singer-David-Bowie-has-died-after-battle-with-cancer.html>

Christian Today

Report on the “surprising” surge of Christianity in the Middle East. It cites increases in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the-surprising-surge-of-christianity-in-the-middle-east/76239.htm>

Mail

Peter Hitchens blog on the case against Bishop George Bell.

January 13

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/01/justice-for-george-bell-the-story-so-far-.html>

BBC

A ceremony was held yesterday at the graveside of Agatha Christie at St Mary's Church in Cholsey. It marked the fortieth anniversary of her death .

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-35281900>

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