

January 28, 2022



**Image of
the day**

**Euripop
The Neil
Hannon
Show**

January 28, 2022

Overview

+Image of the day - Euripop, The Neil Hannon Show

+People and places

Pope and Archbishop Welby to open and close 4 Corners festival

Prince honours UK survivors of the Holocaust

International community must tackle illicit drugs in peacebuilding. report warns

Coronavirus restrictions scrapped in English churches after nearly two years

+News briefs

The common cup - C of E clergy union grows - New primate Anglican Church of the Congo -C of E thanks front line covid workers

+In the media

Links to nine current reports and issues

+Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Onward - Presbyterian young peoples' programme

Europop - The Grand Tour: The Neil Hannon Show

Everyday Faith - accessible digital resource from C of E

+Perspective

Worship in unprecedented times by Archbishop Michael Jackson

+Poem for today In Westminster Abbey by John Betjeman

January 28, 2022

People and places



Pope and Archbishop Welby to open and close 4 Corners festival

Pope Francis is set to open the 4 Corners Festival in Belfast January 30, with a pre-recorded personal video message.

According to a statement from the 4 Corners, the Pope says in the three-minute long video that “the extent that we open more horizons, the more the grace of God enters us, the more the Lord is revealed to us”.

January 28, 2022

He expresses how pleased he is to hear that we have “my brother, Justin Welby”, Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the festival and that everyone must come out of our own “corners” and walk together.

Pope Francis’ video will open the festival via St Anne’s Cathedral. The festival which runs from Sunday January 30 to February 6, will close with an address from the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby delivered in person in St Peter’s cathedral.

The 4 Corners Festival is an inter-denominational event held annually in Belfast, aimed at promoting peace and unity in Northern Ireland. The theme for this year’s festival is ‘Common Ground, Common Good’.

One of the festivals directors, Dr Gladys Ganiel, said that the having the Pope’s message is “monumental”, adding that “we never expected that significant from the Pope.

“We’re really excited that he has this message for the festival and the people of Belfast,” Dr Ganiel told The Irish Catholic.

The Pope’s message will be broadcast from St Anne’s Cathedral, which in the 1980s was subjected to Paisleyite protests during the week for Christian Unity, when it held multi-denominational events.

“To have the Pope, in a way, speaking in St Anne’s is really significant. To mirror that, with the Archbishop of Canterbury speaking in St Peter’s, a Catholic cathedral, we’re really trying to embody what our forebears, the faith-based peace

January 28, 2022

builders, were trying to demonstrate during the troubles,” Dr Ganiel said.

The 4 Corners Festival seeks to inspire people from across Belfast to transform it for the peace and wellbeing of all.

<https://4cornersfestival.com/> and

[[https://stocki.typepad.com/.a/](https://stocki.typepad.com/.a/6a00e0097df5fe883301b7c9524f41970b-pi)

[6a00e0097df5fe883301b7c9524f41970b-pi](https://stocki.typepad.com/.a/6a00e0097df5fe883301b7c9524f41970b-pi)]



Prince honours UK survivors of the Holocaust

The Prince of Wales has hailed

the “living memorial” of Britain’s seven remaining Holocaust survivors, adding that new portraits of them will stand as a “permanent reminder” of the “depths of depravity” to ensure such horror never happens again.

The Prince, who commissioned the portraits and attended their unveiling at a Buckingham Palace exhibition, said the “special collection” will remind the world of “history’s darkest days”, as well as “humanity’s interconnectedness as we strive to create a better world for our children, grandchildren and generations as yet unborn”.

The seven portraits will be held in the Royal Collection, capturing a generation of survivors now in their 90s.

January 28, 2022

“They stand as a living memorial to the six million innocent men, women, and children whose stories will never be told, whose portraits will never be painted,” the Prince wrote in a foreword to the exhibition.



The Prince and the Duchess of Cornwall attended the opening of the Queen’s Gallery exhibition on Monday, meeting the subjects of the portraits and their families.

Lily Ebert, 98, showed the Prince the number tattoo forced on her in Auschwitz and told him: “Meeting you, it is for everyone who lost their lives.”

The Prince, who appeared emotional, leant forwards to clasp her shoulder and told her: “But it is a greater privilege for me.” “It’s an absolutely lovely portrait,” said the Duchess. “And what’s wonderful is that it is here forever [in the Royal Collection].”

The project was the subject of a 60-minute BBC Two documentary, *Survivors: Portraits of the Holocaust*, which was aired on Holocaust Memorial Day yesterday.

International community must tackle illicit drugs in peacebuilding. report warns

International development agency, Christian Aid, has published a new report warning the international community must acknowledge that vulnerable communities in areas of violence have “little choice but to engage in the illicit [drug] economy” and called on the EU to adopt a peace and development approach to tackling drugs.

The report, published by Christian Aid as part of a Global Challenges Research Fund consortium alongside SOAS University of London, examined marginalised groups in Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar where illicit drug economies are prominent.

At the time of publishing, Myanmar and Afghanistan once again face authoritarian rule while in Colombia protests have been met with excessive use of force. In all three, the pandemic has compounded these developments, devastating local economies and livelihoods.

The report warns that failing to consider the tackling of illicit drug crop economies, as part of development rather than simply a law enforcement issue, leads to missed opportunities for both development and peacebuilding.

This is especially the case for marginalised communities where extreme poverty, violence, fragility and displacement are rife. Despite the violence and coercion, the report finds

January 28, 2022

livelihoods, particularly for women, can depend on these illegal economies.

The EU is therefore being urged to end traditional counternarcotics measures and instead use indicators such as access to public services, poverty reduction, respect for human rights, human security, confidence in the state and access to meaningful employment.

The development charity also warns political agreements do not bring an end to violence while market-based development does not guarantee good outcomes. Peace processes, Christian Aid says, should incorporate longer timeframes and prioritise gender dynamics.

Paul Quinn, Head of From Violence to Peace with Christian Aid, said:

“In places like Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar, the research shows that drug economies are often the only way out for vulnerable people in desperate circumstances to make a living and stay safe.

“There is no easy solution, but it is evident that the war on drugs isn't working. The old approach of prioritising hectares eradicated or the capture or killing of traffickers is not reducing violence and providing a lasting peace for innocent people.

“Christian Aid believes we need a new, alternative approach to drug policy that is linked to development, peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty and the rights of people most affected.

January 28, 2022

“Like other multilateral institutions, the EU does not have a unified approach to considering drugs and peace and instead the issue is still viewed through a security lens. To really help the most vulnerable around the world, the EU must show leadership and change.”

Coronavirus restrictions scrapped in English churches after nearly two years

Restrictions brought in halt the spread of Covid-19 will today be scrapped in churches throughout England and Wales after nearly two years, Simon Caldwell writes in the Catholic Herald

The wearing of masks inside churches will be optional rather than compulsory and there will be no social distancing.

The use of shared hymn books will be resumed, the sign of peace reintroduced and holy water stoups filled up again.

On Ash Wednesday, which falls on March 2, priests will be able to administer ashes with their thumbs instead of a cotton bud.

Bishops and priests will no longer use cotton buds for anointing during the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Sick.

The relaxation of restrictions corresponds with the end of the Government’s “Plan B” restrictions introduced in

January 28, 2022

response to the arrival of the highly infectious by comparatively mild Omicron strain of the coronavirus.

The majority of British adults are also vaccinated against Covid-19, and the death rate and pressure on the NHS is low in spite of the prevalence of the virus.

Canon Christopher Thomas, general secretary of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, said the time had come for people to live with the virus.

“The scientific consensus is that society is moving towards the stage where the virus is transitioning from the pandemic phase to the endemic phase, but ... there is still a risk associated with gathering for sustained periods in enclosed spaces and therefore there needs to be continued caution by all against infection,” he said.

“This, however, has to be balanced against the need to move forward safely towards a normal lifestyle and these two positions will always be held in tension,” he said. “This holding in tension is the key to living safely with Covid-19, namely keeping infections from a virus that cannot be eliminated to levels which minimise disruption to people's lives.”

Courtesy the Catholic Herald 27/01/2022

News briefs

The common cup - can be used once again at holy communion in the C of E, although, “given continued

January 28, 2022

potential risks to health”, it remains permissible for the eucharistic president to be the only one to receive the consecrated wine, updated C of E guidance on Covid.

C of E clergy union grows - Concern about pastoral reorganisation and a reduction in clergy numbers is one of the main drivers behind growing trade-union membership among Church of England clergy, the chairman of Church of England Clergy Advocates (CECA) said this week.

New primate Anglican Church of the Congo - Archbishop Titre Ande Georges has been installed as the new primate of L’Eglise Anglicane du Congo (The Anglican Church of the Congo). He was installed on Jan. 23 after being elected by the General Synod in July 2021. He succeeds Archbishop Zacharie Masimango Katanda. The installation service took place in a hall at the Botanic Gardens in Kinshasa with many hundreds of representatives from all over the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from the government and from other churches.

C of E thanks front line covid workers - Bishop of London Sarah Mullally has thanked front-line workers, parishes and all who have made sacrifices to help protect one another from COVID-19 as England prepares to move away from “plan B” restrictions on Thursday. Mullally, who chairs the Church of England’s COVID Recovery Group, was speaking as new advice was published by the Church of England ahead of the change of national rules on Jan. 27. She said: “When the first measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 were introduced in March 2020, few would have imagined that we would still be making adaptations to the way we live our lives – including our worship – almost two years on.”

In the media

DUP to halt Brexit checks at Northern Ireland ports, as Sinn Fein accuse party of 'stunt politics'

Belfast Telegraph

The DUP has confirmed they will act to halt post-Brexit checks at Northern Ireland's ports, following the failure to secure a vote on the issue at the Executive table on Thursday. First Minister Paul Givan said his party colleague and Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots was obliged to ensure he complied with his legal responsibilities.

[<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dup-to-halt-brexit-checks-at-northern-ireland-ports-as-sinn-fein-accuse-party-of-stunt-politics-41284605.html>]

Why has Sue Gray's report not appeared yet?

BBC News

The expectation across Whitehall was that Sue Gray's long-anticipated report would be passed to Downing Street on Wednesday.

So why hasn't it appeared, and what is it likely to find when it does?

The announcement of the Met Police investigation has inserted a spanner in the works - especially as all contentious evidence had been given to the police by the cabinet office last week.

And there had been liaison throughout the internal inquiry.

January 28, 2022

It's understood the Met Police Commissioner Cressida Dick examined the evidence at the weekend.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-60157517>]



Tom Clonan: Russia's decision to locate off Ireland gives the two-fingers to the US, EU & NATO

The Journal.ie

The security analyst says it also demonstrates the pathetic state of Ireland's capacity to meet the minimum standards of our Neutral status.

[[] <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/russia-military-exercises-off-ireland-5664043-Jan2022/>]

IFA warning of higher food prices

RTE News

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

January 28, 2022

The President of the Irish Farmers' Association has warned consumers they should expect higher food prices. Speaking at the IFA's annual general meeting at the Mansion House in Dublin, Tim Cullinan said food prices had not risen in 20 years and farmers are under severe pressure due to the rising costs of inputs such as fertiliser and feeds. He said some could go out of business if something is not done.

[[] <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2022/0127/1276206-ifa-agm-in-dublin/>]

We have to learn from the past - Holocaust survivors

Independent.ie

There are certain sensations that can trigger feelings of fear among survivors of the Holocaust.

[[] <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/irelands-holocaust-survivors-we-have-to-learn-from-the-past-41284330.html>]

Sex education in schools 'inadequate', says commissioner

BBC News NI

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60147012>]

Northern Ireland students: Third got top degree grade in 2021

BBC News NI

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60147530>]

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January 28, 2022

Get on your bike?

RTE News

A campaign is under way to encourage more teenage girls to cycle to school after an Oireachtas committee heard there has been a dramatic drop in girls using bikes. Read more: bit.ly/3IF4fux

What's changed since the last election?

BBC Red Lines

Rev Steve Stockman and Fr Martin Magill reflect - on BBC Red Lines

Listen here:

bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0...

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

Onward - Presbyterian young peoples' programme

Onward is a chance for young people across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to unite together again.

ONWARD will take place in halls across the island around one centrally streamed gathering, allowing us to be together in a totally new way. Whether you are a smaller or larger youth group, or a number of local churches joining together, we want to see more young people than ever before come

January 28, 2022

together at the same time to move onward, journeying together in hope.

Programme

ONWARD will be a mix of “mainstage” input which will be streamed live to your venue, and dynamic, fun elements for young people to enjoy there together. There will be worship and talks from two fantastic youth speakers: Nicola Clarke Orangefield Presbyterian Church and Carl McManus Young Life NI who will help us reflect from God’s Word as we all walk a journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, a journey of hope to strengthen us all as we look to the future.

The streamed programme on Saturday 2 April will start at 7.30pm and run until 9pm, which gives you an opportunity to meet early for food, or stay later for supper and optional small group discussion - you make it work best for your circumstances.

Registration

You can register to be an ONWARD satellite venue on the PCI website, either for your group or congregation alone, or joining with other churches locally, according to your capacity.

www.presbyterianireland.org/onward

Europop - The Grand Tour: The Neil Hannon Show

Join Neil Hannon for a new series on BBC Radio Ulster as he visits six European countries or regions discovering the influence their music and creativity has had on the rest of

January 28, 2022



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buildingblocks

Children's Ministry Conference



LENT & EASTER ONLINE TRAINING & RESOURCE PACK

JOIN US! 
FEB 17TH @ 7.30PM

- JOIN THE BUILDING BLOCKS TEAM FOR LENT & EASTER INSPIRATION: 40 DAY FAMILY CHALLENGE, VIDEOS, INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING & SO MUCH MORE!
- COME AWAY WITH GREAT RESOURCES & FRESH IDEAS TO EQUIP FAMILIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR USE IN YOUR CLUBS & SERVICES.
- MEET OTHER CHILDREN & FAMILY VOLUNTEERS FROM ACROSS IRELAND
- €10 BOOKING FEE



For more info contact
Lydia:
lydia.monds@gmail.com

the world. Europop - The Grand Tour: The Neil Hannon Show starts Sunday 6 February at 4pm. @BBCSounds

Everyday Faith - accessible digital resource from C of E

Everyday Faith is an accessible digital resource from The Church of England which is designed to help people find and follow God in everyday life, share this journey in community and live as fruitful witnesses.

As part of the resource, reflections on the Archbishop's book, "Prayer: Where to start and how to keep going" consider ten basic questions about prayer and offer simple help for making prayer a part of everyday life. Find out more at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/everyday-faith-portal>

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January 28, 2022



Perspective

Worship in unprecedented times by Archbishop Michael Jackson

**The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough writes to
clergy and church members**

Dear friends

The past two years in church life have been unprecedented. They have been difficult beyond comparison for so many of us. I want to thank all of you for what you have given and for what you have done, both inside church and outside church, as clergy active and retired, in the stipendiary, non-stipendiary and self-supporting ministries, as Diocesan and Parish Readers and as parishioners in all your faithful witness. This has ranged from provision of regular worship, in circumstances of ever-changing Regulations, to

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Page 18

January 28, 2022

neighbourliness and kindness in situations where both have been deeply appreciated. Of course, we miss congregational singing but, in the context of a wider society and a wider world, this is a lesser rather than a greater anxiety. Variants of Covid-19 wane and new variants take their place. The unpredictable frames our decisions and our planning.

Obviously, it is critical that we continue to make worship available. We are working hard to maintain the current level of provision. Worship is paramount in these strange and unsettling times. It means so much to so many of us. The archdeacons of Dublin and of Glendalough, following their discussions with a range of Rural Deans and others, have been considering our current context with me along with other issues affecting the life of the dioceses that relate directly to this. While everything in terms of Restrictions has changed, other issues we face are not going away soon. A large number of parishes is without a resident priest as rector, as a direct result of a significant number of retirements all coming around the same time. The issue of sustainability in the short term of the level of provision of public worship on Sundays comes to the fore. There are clergy who speak of very small numbers of people gathering for worship in some parishes, largely out of fear of catching or spreading Covid-19. Such reticence is entirely understandable. A number of these clergy has asked if there is anything we can do and so we are seeking to respond. This situation is not universal but, where it is real, it is now acute. Even with new possibilities opening up following the removal of so many Restrictions, many will remain cautious and will need to be encouraged and supported to come to church.

January 28, 2022

What we are asking for is your co-operation and assistance, as the archdeacons make arrangements for a sustainable baseline for the continued provision of public worship for as long as needs be. In parishes where there is a vacancy or sickness, simply stated this would mean having a single service Sunday by Sunday in one parish church in any given area. It would involve as many people who feel safe to do so attending this service as a witness to faith in God and as a witness for those who are not able to attend in person but who may join on-line or by other means, not least as our society opens up safely and responsibly. This service would vary between Morning Prayer or a Service of The Word and Holy Communion, but there would be the assurance of at least one Holy Communion Service per month. Public worship would, in this way, be kept going, conducted by a priest, a Reader or a churchwarden, the last of these being envisaged only in extreme circumstances. A rota would be provided and distributed to parishioners by clergy and by those in charge of parishes currently without a rector insofar as is possible. This will mean that any of you may find your Sunday Service conducted by someone whom you do not know. This has long been a norm in dioceses other than our own and is a way of life across the Church of Ireland.

I seek your co-operation and understanding, as details for your area emerge. I thank you in advance for your willingness to enable all of us, in strained and straitened circumstances, to work together for the good of everyone.

“We are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, through Christ our Lord, who came and preached peace to those who were far off and to those who were near.” Ephesians 2.19, 17

January 28, 2022

Yours sincerely

+Michael Dublin & Glendalough

Poem for today

In Westminster Abbey by John Betjeman

Let me take this other glove off
As the vox humana swells,
And the beauteous fields of Eden
Bask beneath the Abbey bells.
Here, where England's statesmen lie,
Listen to a lady's cry.

Gracious Lord, oh bomb the Germans,
Spare their women for Thy Sake,
And if that is not too easy
We will pardon Thy Mistake.
But, gracious Lord, whate'er shall be,
Don't let anyone bomb me.

Keep our Empire undismembered
Guide our Forces by Thy Hand,
Gallant blacks from far Jamaica,
Honduras and Togoland;
Protect them Lord in all their fights,
And, even more, protect the whites.

Think of what our Nation stands for,
Books from Boots' and country lanes,
Free speech, free passes, class distinction,

January 28, 2022

Democracy and proper drains.
Lord, put beneath Thy special care
One-eighty-nine Cadogan Square.

Although dear Lord I am a sinner,
I have done no major crime;
Now I'll come to Evening Service
Whensoever I have the time.
So, Lord, reserve for me a crown,
And do not let my shares go down.
I will labour for Thy Kingdom,
Help our lads to win the war,
Send white feathers to the cowards
Join the Women's Army Corps,
Then wash the steps around Thy Throne
In the Eternal Safety Zone.

Now I feel a little better,
What a treat to hear Thy Word,
Where the bones of leading statesmen
Have so often been interr'd.
And now, dear Lord, I cannot wait
Because I have a luncheon date.

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