

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Whitehead and Washington
parishes link in worship**

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Loreto McAuley, Music Director at St Patrick's, Whitehead, playing some Irish music for the Communion reception in the joint service with St Patrick's in Washington

People and places

Virtual walk leads to trans Atlantic joint worship in Whitehead and Washington

Parishioners in Whitehead and Islandmagee in Connor diocese have successfully walked almost 4,000 miles, and have formed a special partnership with a church in Washington DC in the process.

Following last year's virtual walk around the coastline of Ireland (they actually clocked up enough miles to lap the island two and a half times!) the parish set itself a target of walking to the USA between January 1 and St Patrick's Day this year. Both walks were aimed at fitness and raising funds for the church.

Jo Pawson, rector's churchwarden, said that parishioners had completed 4,180 miles between New Year and March 17 last year. "This year it was suggested at our Vestry meeting that we do a similar walk challenge to unite our

congregation in a common goal, but I felt we needed more to make it come alive and be interesting,” Jo said.

“As I reflected on St Patrick’s Day and where it is often best celebrated, I thought of the Irish diaspora in the USA. It then seemed like the perfect solution to find another St Patrick’s Church in the USA that shared similar values and beliefs, to whom we could walk to and establish a meaningful friendship link.”

Online research led to St Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Washington DC.

“We knew instantly that we wanted to get to know this congregation better. The rest as they say is history,” Jo said.

Having agreed on the destination of the virtual sponsored walk, the rector of Whitehead and Islandmagee, the Rev Canon Mark Taylor, suggested taking the ‘scenic route’ used by some of the early Christian missionaries, and this necessitated walking the equivalent of 3,779 miles between January 1 and March 17.

Each week, parishioners submitted the number of miles they had walked and these were plotted on the map to show how far the parish had covered on its journey. The route headed to the Faroe Islands, followed by Iceland, Greenland, and then over to Newfoundland in Canada before coming down the eastern seaboard of the USA. The walkers reached Washington DC with six days to spare!

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“A grand total of 4,694 miles was walked by midnight on March 17, so taking us 915 over target as well as exceeding last year’s walk,” Jo said.

“On Sunday March 20, it was agreed we would do a live link up between our two churches. Due to the four-hour time difference we held our service in Whitehead at 2pm, which meant our friends in Washington would be able to hold their service at 10am as normal. Everyone of course made a special effort to wear something green and the service was shared on a large screen with contributions from both congregations.”

The Rev Dr Lisa Barrowclough was celebrant at the joint service.

In Washington, the Rev.Kurt Gerhard gave the sermon, the Rev Dr Lisa Barrowclough was the celebrant. St Patrick’s, Whitehead, Music Director Loreto McAuley played some Irish tunes on the harp while Communion was shared at both churches.

Canon Taylor also took part in the service. “It was thanks to Canon Taylor that the technology all worked from our end and we had such an uplifting and celebratory experience sharing worship with St Patrick’s Episcopal Church, Washington DC,” said Jo.

“We have received so much from this particular church partnership. Not only have we been encouraged to keep fit by walking and raised sponsorship money for the church, we have also discovered the pleasure of making friends with

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fellow Christians thousands of miles away. A friendship we aim to maintain going forward.”

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Inspired by their friends in Co Antrim, the congregation in Washington DC set off on March 20 to walk virtually to Whitehead and all parishioners have been given (green) pedometers to encourage them. Jo said they have a target of reaching Whitehead by June 5. “We look forward to welcoming them then,” she added.



The joint service is available to watch on YouTube.

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbgnXrYqrYg>]

Courtesy Connor diocese

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Education workshop goes ‘Beyond the Stereotype’

A lively discussion involving around 50 representatives from churches, schools and a range of other key organisations with a role in education took place in Portadown, on Friday (25th March) with a view to helping our children and young people to reach their full potential.

The workshop at Seagoe Parish Centre was hosted by the Transferor Representatives’ Council – representing the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church and Methodist Churches in relation to education in Northern Ireland – and focused on a new research report from Stranmillis University College, *Beyond the Stereotype: Approaches to Educational Under(Achievement) in the Controlled Sector in Northern Ireland*.

The study, which was commissioned and funded by the TRC, aims to go ‘beyond the stereotype’ of the well-documented challenge of underachievement among Protestant working-class boys from disadvantaged inner-city communities, and to ‘cast the net wider’ to provide a broader and more representative picture. Particular challenges in rural communities, which have not been reported extensively to date in previous studies, are identified with some school leaders speaking of the difficulty in motivating boys to work hard towards GCSEs.

Significantly, *Beyond the Stereotype* also finds that while pupils view educational achievement as largely related to



From left: Dr Noel Purdy, Stranmillis University College; Linsey Farrell, Department of Education; Dr Peter Hamill, TRC Secretary; Rosemary Rainey OBE, TRC Chair; and Archbishop John McDowell.

success in external exams (such as GCSEs and A-levels), many school and community leaders (including employers) place greater value on a wider range of skills and abilities, and pupils' mental and physical health, self-confidence, happiness and willingness to learn.

Dr Noel Purdy, who led the research through Stranmillis' Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement, said: "We've certainly identified lots of challenges – there are big challenges facing controlled schools and indeed every school in Northern Ireland – but what we did see was a diverse, committed,

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community–orientated and innovative sector which is committed to maximising achievement for all children. In other words, allowing all the children in schools to stand tall and achieve to their full potential.”

The TRC represents its member churches in all matters of education in the region, and oversees the appointment of over 1,500 governors to controlled schools. The three churches transferred (hence the origin of the term ‘transferors’) their school buildings, pupils and staff into state control on the understanding that the Christian ethos of these schools would be maintained.

You can find out more about the TRC through its website at www.trc-churcheducation.org.

More information on the work of the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU) can be found at www.stran.ac.uk/research/creu

Reconnecting and rebuilding confidence – MU looks to future as new Diocesan President commissioned

Mothers’ Union members from Dublin & Glendalough turned out in force on Friday evening (March 25) to celebrate and support their new Diocesan President. Ada Lawson was commissioned by Archbishop Michael Jackson at a service in her home church of St Brigid’s in Castleknock. Members joined the service both in person and online.

The congregation was welcomed by the Revd Dr Norman Gamble who is currently taking care of the parish. He noted

that the preacher, Canon Aisling Shine, could not be present but her sermon would be read by Canon Leonard Ruddock, the diocesan MU chaplain.

Introducing the sermon Canon Ruddock said he hoped to do Canon Shine's words justice. He added that Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla was also Aisling's home parish and she is a member of its Mothers' Union branch who are very proud to have Ada as president.

Canon Shine said that when Ada took up the post of president in January, it looked as if Covid was on the wane and Europe was at peace. "We live in a different world even from then. A world that has forced change upon us," she said.

2022 Mothers' Union theme 'Transformation Now'

She addressed the 2022 Mothers' Union theme 'Transformation Now'. She said that in 2020 and 2021 Mothers' Union members had shown great resilience. Now was the time to build on that by transforming themselves personally and spiritually and to transform the communities they operate in to reflect Christ's Kingdom while also reforming Mothers' Union to reflect 21st century life.

She said that Ada saw the starting point of transformation being in connecting and reconnecting – individually and among branches. In Ireland, members of Mothers' Union often saw their role as supporting those in need and the vulnerable, she stated. While this would continue, members were being encouraged to look inwards to themselves and see how they were doing.



Canon Leonard Ruddock, newly commissioned Diocesan MU President Ada Lawson, Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Revd Dr Norman Gamble.

During the pandemic members may have found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being the marginalised and the vulnerable, Canon Shine observed. “Many of us have had to admit that as we lived with a different sense of dependence and isolation, we found ourselves on the receiving end of care and concern. That’s not us as Mothers’ Union members, we want to be givers and carers. We are Marthas. Give us a job and we’ll be happy,” she said.

She said members now needed to focus on their ‘Mary’ sides to metaphorically sit at the feet of Jesus, to connect and to receive and to heal. This depended on honesty to admit personal needs and to face them. Living out faith is about connections and reconnections because it involves

relationships. She warned against making reconnecting a blame game, suggesting that people should not focus on whether or not they had heard from friends during the pandemic. But she asked that people draw a line under their upset and reconnect one cup of coffee at a time.

Speaking after the service, Ada thanked everyone for coming to the service and thanked the choir for singing the anthem. She also thanked Karen Nelson, who she succeeds as Diocesan President, for her leadership over the last six years.

Stepping into the role of Diocesan President, Ada said she was excited for the challenge ahead. She noted that Covid-19 is still with us as we journey through yet another variant and urged members to remember the people of Ukraine and Afghanistan as their lives have been turned upside down.

She outlined her vision for 'Transformation Now' saying that members should start by meeting each other and reconnecting to build hope and confidence. She encouraged members to take baby steps. For the coming three years she wants to ensure MU does a lot of communicating. She commended the use of technology in bringing branches forward.

“We all have to look at ourselves and really work at this because this is going to be a journey for the next three years. Our society is going to change completely when we have lots of people coming in... we will all have to think about what we do over the next three years,” Ada stated.



Young parishioner from Clogher represented Army Cadets at Service for the Late HRH Prince Philip

Christopher Hunter (above), a young parishioner in Clogher diocese had the honour of representing the Army Cadet Force at the Service of Thanksgiving this week for the Late HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh.

Christopher also had the honour of being asked to attend the House of Lords by





Viscount Brookeborough, KG, KStJ after the Duke of Edinburgh's Memorial Services.

Viscount Brookeborough was kind enough to guide Christopher around the Palace Of Westminster, allowing him to sit in on topical debates in both the Lords and Commons, guide him around the

Palace and invite him to afternoon tea in the Peers Restaurant.

News reports

New Dean for St Paul's Cathedral

The Very Revd Andrew Tremlett has been appointed as the next Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London, Downing Street has announced. He will succeed the Very Revd Dr David



Ison, who is due to retire in September 2022 after ten years as Dean of St Paul's.

Andrew will take over leadership at an important moment for St Paul's as it plays a central role in the rejuvenation of the City of London following the pandemic. He will oversee a growing schedule of services and special events, as visitors from the UK and overseas begin to return in their numbers to the capital.

Commenting on his appointment, The Very Reverend Andrew Tremlett, says, "I am delighted to be appointed as Dean of St Paul's, following David Ison's faithful tenure over the past decade. I'm keenly aware that I join the team at St Paul's at a pivotal time with both immediate and systemic challenges.

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“As you can well imagine, this is a bitter-sweet occasion, because I have fallen in love with Durham and in particular with the people here, who I hope I have served to the best of my ability through the recent pandemic, as well as in more normal times.”

“I am also honoured to be able to build on the experience of the past 6 years here in the North East to now serve St Paul’s Cathedral at the heart of our capital city and to put into practice on a national stage many of the lessons I’ve learnt here at Durham Cathedral. I am looking forward to working with colleagues and across the Capital’s diverse churches to reach out to Londoners and continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

Dean of Durham since 2016, Andrew has shaped a skilled Executive Leadership Team to lead the Cathedral’s day-to-day operations and led national thinking on the role of residentiary canons under the Cathedrals Measure 2021. He has worked closely with the business community to



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establish an endowment fund to support the Cathedral's conservation. In 2021, he led the Cathedral's negotiations to establish Durham Cathedral School's Foundation, which educates 600 pupils and provides Chorister places for 24 boys & 24 girls on an equal and needs-blind basis.

Andrew was previously based in London between 2010 and 2016, when he was Rector of St Margaret's Church at Westminster Abbey. In 2012 he established the Westminster Abbey Institute, working with Public Service Institutions and Parliament Square to support ethics in public life.



Primates' Meeting is underway at Lambeth Palace in London

This is a chance for the Primates of the Anglican Communion to meet together for leisurely thought, prayer, Bible study and deep consultation. Please pray for them.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Queen's Platinum Jubilee funding for groups in Belfast

Funding is available to groups who want to organise community events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the extended bank holiday weekend (2-5 June).

Eligible groups can apply for a maximum of £2,000 from the £100,000 available. Applications are now open and are being administered by Community Foundation for Northern Ireland on our behalf, with the closing date 1pm on Monday 11 April.

Come along to info sessions at some of our community and leisure venues today and tomorrow to find out more about applying, or join us online this Friday 1 April at 11.30am.

For a full list of sessions, and more info about what's available, visit our website – www.belfastcity.gov.uk/jubilee

Other events to look out in June include the lighting of a jubilee beacon, themed tea dances at City Hall, a Big Community lunch, a service of thanksgiving at St Anne's Cathedral and City Hall illuminated in purple on Sunday 5 June.

Our new city centre venue, 2 Royal Avenue, will also step back into time to 1950s Belfast with a day of activities,

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inspired by 1952, on Saturday 4 June. Visitors can enjoy intergenerational workshops and storytelling events, live music, a photography exhibition, film screenings and lots more.

Methodist Church's 50 Days of Wholehearted Prayer

To aid us with preparation for our special focus of '**50 Days of Wholehearted Prayer**' there's two specific ways you can get involved now:

→ Full details at: irishmethodist.org/50days
Submission Deadline: Thurs 31st March

Perspective

Peter Smithwick, an appreciation

Judge who led an inquiry into the murders of two RUC officers

Peter Smithwick, former President of the District Court in the Republic of Ireland, who has died aged 85, made headlines in 2013 when, following a public inquiry, he reported that the IRA murder in 1989 of two officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on their way back from a meeting with police in the Republic was the result of information supplied from within the Republic's police force.

The inquiry was instituted in 2005 as part of a package agreed between the Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, who was pressing for a public inquiry into murders of Catholics alleged to be the result of collusion between the security forces in Northern Ireland and Protestant paramilitaries.

But, availing himself of the practice of privilege in the House of Commons, the Unionist MP Jeffrey Donaldson had named an Irish policeman whom he alleged was responsible for informing the IRA of the movements of the RUC officers, so facilitating the ambush that led to their deaths.

After an exhaustive and meticulous investigation lasting eight years, Smithwick found that the man named by Donaldson had indeed given information to the IRA. But the evidence was not sufficient to confirm suspicions that he had passed on the information that had led to the murders.

Police in the Republic were offended by Smithwick's remarks that earlier cover-ups on their part, designed to protect the good name of the force, had inhibited the search for the truth. The IRA denied that they had received information from within the Irish police to facilitate their ambush.

Discouraged by the length and expense of their inquiry into the shootings of civilians in Londonderry by the Parachute Regiment in 1972, successive British governments failed to fulfil their side of the bargain that had brought the Smithwick Tribunal into existence. The failure to hold a full public inquiry into the murder of the Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane,

and a number of other murders, remains a bone of contention between the two governments.

Peter Alexander Smithwick was born on February 15 1937 into a Catholic merchant family in Kilkenny who owned a brewery founded in the 18th century; it was older than the Guinness brewery that was to take them over in the 1960s. His ancestors included mayors, deputy lieutenants and high sheriffs.

Qualifying as a solicitor in 1961, Smithwick was one of the few of his background to involve themselves in the more populist politics of independent Ireland. He worked his passage with the local Fianna Fáil party as a director of elections, a local councillor and member of its National Executive.

It was a Fianna Fáil government that appointed him President of the District Court in 1990. That court, consisting of legally qualified justices, was the successor of the pre-independence Resident Magistrates that was immortalised in the works of Somerville and Ross.

Smithwick succeeded in having the justices re-designated as judges, so making clear that they were more than mere magistrates. In his own court Smithwick was noted for his courtesy, and a compassion that found expression in lenient sentences.

Off the bench he was sociable and took part in local cultural and historical societies. He never lost his keen and sometimes wicked sense of humour and enjoyed a jest – even if it was at his own expense.

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A devout Catholic, albeit ecumenical in sympathies, he was a lifelong member of the Order of Malta and was a progressive president of its Irish Association. Most years he went with its pilgrimage to Lourdes in France, taking care of the sick and afflicted seeking consolation and cure at the Marian shrine.

Peter Smithwick married, in 1974, Deirdre, daughter of Commander Cooper of Markree Castle in Sligo. She survives him with their two daughters.

Peter Smithwick, born February 15 1937, died March 8 2022

Poem for today

A Thing of Beauty from Endymion by John Keats

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils

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With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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