



Final touches for new community mural on Lower Newtownards Road with the Inspirational quote: "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream" C. S. Lewis. Well done to children and leaders at Ballymac Friendship Centre.

RTE television Good Friday broadcast

St Bartholomew's Church, Clyde Road, Dublin, will broadcast Solemn Liturgy for Good Friday on Friday 25 March at 3.10pm on RTE 1 television.

Holy Week "Impact" in Castlederg

'Impact Castlederg' – a seven-day initiative for Holy Week – is underway in the Derg Valley in West Tyrone.

It has been organised by various local churches and aims to "show God's love in Jesus through words and deeds".

The Rector of Derg and Termonamongan, Rev Peter Ferguson, says various local churches are working together on the initiative. He says his own parish has got involved as part of its contribution to Year of Opportunity 2016.

As part of the week-long event, a Prayer Room was opened in the Diamond. It was open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., up until Good Friday evening. There was a street 'give-away' on Wednesday afternoon; a 'Movie with a Message' was shown at tea-time on Wednesday; an Easter Praise Party was held for children on Holy Thursday morning; and there will be an Easter Praise Picnic in Castle Grounds on Sunday afternoon.

Rev Ferguson says many of the other churches in the area have got involved, with Children's Ministry leaders from various churches working together for the 'Kidz Praise Party' and the Praise Picnic.

Dublin nun honoured for work in East Africa

A Dublin nun - one of Ireland's longest serving missionaries - has been honoured for work in Uganda. When Sr Cosmas Cullen left Ireland for East Africa in 1949 she thought she would never see her family or homeland again.

Sr Cosmas (90), originally from Churchtown, Dublin, was honoured for her many years of dedicated work in Uganda at the annual St Patrick's Ball in the Sheraton Hotel in Kampala.

Sr Cosmas lived through often turbulent periods and pupils in her school included two daughters of the dictator Idi Amin.

But she said that the challenges were many throughout her time.

"Children returned to school and life gradually became more normal," she said. "But of course we had new challenges, particularly the HIV



scourge, which saw so many of our children being left orphans."

In recent years, Sr Cosmas has been helping destitute young people prepare for their O and A level exams at the Sharing Youth Centre in Kampala. She was also helping in two nursery schools until she was diagnosed with breast cancer last August.

Irish Ambassador to Uganda Donal Cronin said Sr Cosmas deserved to be honoured.

"Like the other Irish missionaries here over the years, she clearly imbued a deep sense of education and thirst for knowledge in who ever she taught."

Belfast Methodist Church lecture on response to the 'Decade of Centenaries'



One hundred years exactly from the launch of the Easter Rising, as part of Belfast South Methodist's series of public lectures, Rev. Dr. Johnston McMaster, associate professor of the Irish School of Ecumenics, will lead us in our thinking on the churches' response to the 'Decade of Centenaries'. All welcome. A free event. Tea and coffee afterwards.

Event Date: Monday, 25 April, 2016 - 19:30

Venue: Agape Centre, 238 Lisburn Road Belfast
BT9 6GF

Email: reception@agapecentrebelfast.org

Website with Further Details: [http://
www.agapecentrebelfast.org/monday-25th-
april-2016-at-7-30-pm-in-the-agape..](http://www.agapecentrebelfast.org/monday-25th-april-2016-at-7-30-pm-in-the-agape..)

Precious Life online petition to stop eugenic discrimination of Down's babies

A leading Pro Life agency, Precious Life, has appealed to members of the public to support an online petition not to discriminate against people on the basis of their genetic predisposition.

The petition calls on the Secretary General of the UN, the Commissioner for Human Rights from the Council of Europe and the European Commissioner for the Charter of Fundamental Rights to appeal to member states to use genetic testing solely to enhance human care and well-being of babies.

“Many countries are on the brink of expanding national prenatal screening programmes with a new generation of genetics tests aimed at

detecting Down Syndrome,” says Stop Discriminating Down.

21 March was World Down’s Syndrome Day, a day highlighting to the world the talents and power of people with Down’s syndrome, but according to the lobby group it has also become a day in which “we need to acknowledge the basic right to exist of people with Down’s syndrome”.

“The pharmaceutical industry is continuing to perfect its screening methods to detect Down’s syndrome in utero. Non invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) can identify Down’s syndrome in an unborn child by testing the mother’s blood, and it is spreading quickly across the world. Increasingly, governments (including France, the UK and the Netherlands) are preparing to introduce NIPT into their public healthcare programmes as part of standard prenatal care,” it says.

Abortion rates for babies with Down’s Syndrome following prenatal diagnosis is already over 90% in France, the UK and the Netherlands.

The group, which is supported by seventeen pro life agencies, including Northern Ireland’s Precious Life, says no-one should have to

defend threats to their life because of his or her genetic make-up.

Members of the public may sign the petition at:
<http://stopdiscriminatingdown.com/sign-the-petition/>

Jo Bailey Wells, C of E priest with U.S. ties, appointed bishop of Dorking

The Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain, the Rev. Canon Jo Bailey Wells, was named March 24 to be the fifth bishop of Dorking in the Church of England's [Diocese of Guildford](#).

Wells, 50, studied at the University of Minnesota and from 2005 to 2013 was the director of the [Anglican Episcopal House of Studies](#) at Duke Divinity School in North Carolina. She was also associate professor of Bible and ministry at Duke.

She will succeed Bishop Ian Brackley who retired in the autumn. The bishop of Dorking is the suffragan bishop for the Diocese of Guildford. The bishop of Dorking assists the bishop of Guildford in leading the diocese, according to the churchnewsireland@gmail.com



Diocese of Guildford's [announcement](#). Wells' particular brief includes nurturing vocations and working with the many schools and colleges in the diocese.

She was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, before going to Minnesota, according to an [announcement](#) by the office of the United Kingdom's prime minister. Her appointment was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth II, the announcement said.

Wells trained for ordained ministry at St. John's College, Durham, and was ordained in 1995 in the first wave of female priests in the Church of

England, according to the Guildford press release.

She was chaplain of Clare College, Cambridge from 1995 to 1998 and dean from 1998 to 2001. From 2001 to 2005, Wells served as a lecturer in Old Testament and biblical theology at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. From there she moved to Duke. On her return to the U.K. in 2013 she took up the role of chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, based at Lambeth Palace in London. Since 2015 she has also served as canon theologian at Liverpool Cathedral.

Her first day as chaplain involved carrying the primatial cross at the enthronement of Archbishop Justin Welby with a congregation of 2,000 in Canterbury Cathedral and an estimated audience of 20 million worldwide, the Guildford announcement said. She has accompanied Welby at events such as the re-burial of Richard III and the baptisms of Prince George and Princess Charlotte – as well as the recent gathering of Anglican primates.

Wells is married to the Rev. Sam Wells, who is vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. They have two children. Her interests include art,

architecture and textiles. She has spent a significant portion of her annual leave over many years in East Africa, most recently in supporting Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul in theological education in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.

Churches in Wales unite to safeguard children

The Church in Wales has joined with other Christian denominations in the country as well as expert and survivor organisations in a new forum to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to ensure that all churches in Wales are safe places for them.

The Welsh Christian Safeguarding Forum brings together the safeguarding officers from churches throughout Wales and has been established to share and develop best practice and to give Christian organisations a stronger voice on safeguarding issues in Wales.

In addition to the churches' safeguarding officers, the forum includes representatives from the group Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MASCAS), as well as the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). A



Posed by model

CCPAS Associate, Simon Plant, will chair the new forum.

“The Church in Wales is doing all it can to ensure churches are safe places for children and all vulnerable people and we welcome the Forum as a chance to strengthen our work and share good practice with other denominations – particularly in how we respond to survivors of abuse,” the Church in Wales’ head of safeguarding, Elaine Cloke, said, “All the safeguarding officers have shown enthusiasm and commitment to the Forum and we all hope it will give us a stronger voice to lobby the Welsh Government on those areas of safeguarding

which are devolved – the quantity and complexity of which have increased rapidly over the past few years.”

In order to ensure it is fully representative of Christians in Wales, the Forum has begun an engagement project with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) churches and communities throughout the country. It is also seeking to develop strong links with the Inter-faith Council for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Cross Party Working Group on Faith and, in a wider UK context, with the Churches Forum for Safeguarding.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Pensioner who injured knee falling in icy conditions outside Armagh church to receive £60k in damages

Belfast Telegraph

Judge also determined that warning signs and more gritting around a pedestrian gate at the church on Lower Irish Street could have prevented the

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/pensioner-who-injured-knee-falling-in-icy-conditions-outside-armagh-church-to-receive-60k-in-damages-34566725.html>

De La Salle College: Associate principal to step in after quit call

BBC News:

An associate principal is to be appointed to De La Salle College to work alongside the current principal and senior management.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35878502>

Buncrana tragedy: Catholic Primate visits grieving family

BBC News

The leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland is to visit the woman who lost five family members in a drowning tragedy at Buncrana, County Donegal.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35885811>

Voices of 1916: 'Crying, terrified children came to us for shelter'

Journal.ie

Fr Aloysius Travers was at lunch when he heard the first shots of the Rising. By the end, he was accompanying Volunteer leaders to their execution.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/readme/aloysius-travers-voices-of-1916-2667741-Mar2016/>

Clerics in Mayo to bless the roads in bid to improve driver safety

Journal.ie

The move is part of a broader road safety campaign.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/crashes-road-mayo-bless-safety-2676749-Mar2016/>

Census 2016 to contain question on same sex marriage

Irish Times

People filling the form are asked what is their **religion**. There are five **religions** stated, including Catholic and Church of **Ireland**. There is a further two ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/census-2016-to-contain-question-on-same-sex-marriage-1.2584456>

Kent online

Reports a visit the Archbishop of Canterbury made to Kent this week, including dropping into the local pub for a pint. Archbishop Justin was visiting Sittingbourne to help the local deanery in its outreach work. He attended a question-and-answer session at Borden Grammar school before joining the Christian social group, The King's Men, for a quick pint in the evening.

<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/sittingbourne/news/archbishop-of-canterbury-visits-pub-in-sittingbourne-93196/>

Tel

Review of BBC2s *Mary Berry's Easter Feast* programme, which featured the Archbishop of York. The article highlights a conversation between Ms Berry and Archbishop Sentamu as they walk in Bishopsthorpe's gardens. It touches on the Archbishop's imprisonment and Mary Berry's personal tragedy – the death of her son William aged 19, in a car accident and the comfort that the Resurrection message gives her.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/food-and-drink/features/mary-berrys-easter-feast-episode-two-a-hymn-to-how-immigration-h/>

Christian Today/Tel

Reports that a "crown of syringes" has replaced the traditional crown of thorns in a film released by the CofE to mark Easter (see *above*). The film is a modern-day Passion Play and stars people who have fought drug addiction, crime and homelessness. Based on Psalm 22, it contains the lines, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" and can be viewed at justpray.uk.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12201607/Church-of-England-turns-Jesus-into-drug-addict.html>

ITV

Report that the Church of England is facing legal action over birth defects caused to the children and grandchildren of girls who were given large doses of prescription drugs in one of its care homes, Kendall House in Gravesend, Kent during the 1970s and 80s. The Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff, last year announced an [independent review](http://www.itv.com/news/meridian/update/2016-03-23/former-care-home-residents-sue-church-of-england-over-birth-defects/) into the case <http://www.itv.com/news/meridian/update/2016-03-23/former-care-home-residents-sue-church-of-england-over-birth-defects/>

Mirror/Ekklesia

Report an [open letter](#), whose signatories include four Bishops and the Archbishop of Wales, written to the new UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Stephen Crabb, asking him to stop cuts to support for disabled and sick people. The letter calls on Mr Crabb to "reflect upon the impact" of welfare cuts as Easter approaches. They called on him to "be compassionate" and reverse cuts to Employment and Support Allowance, and review Spare room subsidy or bedroom tax.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/christians-urge-stephen-crabb-scrap-7617028>

<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/22896>

Yahoo Finance

Agency copy reports the American Securities and Exchange Commission has ruled Exxon Mobil must include a climate change resolution on its annual shareholder proxy. The Church Commissioners are a member of a group who have been pushing the oil giant to take more regard of last year's UN Climate Change agreement.

<https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/exclusive-exxon-mobil-must-allow-213414232.html>

Mail

Reports that HM The Queen will mark Maundy Thursday by distributing commemorative coins to 90 men and 90 women - each representing one of her 90 years. The monarch, who is preparing to celebrate her 90th birthday, will be joined by the Duke of Edinburgh for the Royal Maundy service, which is being held in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle for the first time since 1959.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3507203/Queen-hand-commemorative-90th-birthday-coin-Maundy-money.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Ind/Times/BBC

Reports research commissioned by the Church of Scotland shows that the UK's Christian community may be much larger than is suggested by declining Sunday service attendances. Modern Christians are increasingly

turning to the internet and other less formal surroundings to practice their beliefs, while around two-thirds of those who stop attending church maintain a strong personal faith afterwards, the research found. The findings are presented in a new book *The Invisible Church*, by Dr Steve Aisthorpe, a mission development worker for the Church to be published next month.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/churchless-faith-british-christian-community-may-be-far-larger-due-to-changing-forms-of-practising-a6948591.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4720289.ece>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-35885163>

Sun/Times/Exp/Mail/BBC/Guard

Reports scientists conducting a radar scan of the grave of William Shakespeare say his skull appears to be missing. The archaeological work is being conducted in Holy Trinity church in Stratford-upon-Avon, for a Channel 4 documentary. The work seems to support theories that the skull was taken by 18th century trophy hunters.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/7023718/William-Shakespeare-skull-missing-from-grave-after-radar-scans.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4720329.ece>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/655155/Shakespeare-skull-stolen-claims>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3506702/Shakespeare-grave-missing-skull-according-radar-survey-Bard-s-resting-place.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-35883872>

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/mar/23/shakespeare-stolen-skull-grave-robbing-tale-true>

Mail

Reports research which suggests women are more religious than men and are more likely to pray every day - and they may even be born that way. The study published in *The Gender Gap in Religion* from Pew, a US-based research institute has found British women are nine per cent more likely than their male counterparts to give thanks to God every day. Women are five per cent more likely to go to church every week and are more likely to say that religion is 'very important' to them.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3506486/The-gender-pray-gap-Women-likely-religious-men-genes.html>

BBC

Reports that a 100-year-old church organ that caught fire, causing a Palm Sunday congregation to be evacuated, could cost up to £80,000 to fix or replace. The blower pump overheated, filling St John the Baptist church in Peterborough with "acrid smoke". Canon Ian Black said it was "very dramatic" but no-one was injured. He said a grand piano had been brought in for Easter "as there's no way we'd let something like this stop us celebrating Christ's resurrection".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-35881900>

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Good Friday, March 25

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