



## 1,600 to attend Presbyterian Women's Annual Meeting next week



**Guest speaker will be Kate Patterson, a writer, speaker and part time school chaplain based in West London. Kate is on the leadership team at Holy Trinity Richmond and is the author of *The Promise of Blessing* and *The Gift of Blessing***

May 4, 2018

**Around 1,600 women from across Ireland will gather together next Thursday (10 May) as Presbyterian Women (PW), a part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) women's ministry, holds its Annual Meeting and Evening Celebration in Assembly Buildings, Belfast.**



**Pauline Kennedy, PCI's Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer**

Each of the 465 PW Groups seek to encourage women to become Christians, to live for Jesus and to actively reach out to others at home and overseas. Speaking

ahead of the event, which will include praise and worship, a series of talks around the PW theme for 2018/2019 and the unveiling of this year's Special Project, PCI's Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, Pauline Kennedy, said that all women are welcome to attend the free events.

“As we come together to worship and celebrate all that the Lord is doing throughout His church, we look forward to hearing what He has to say to us through His Word as we focus our hearts on this year's theme, ‘Beautiful’, which is taken from Psalm 27:4: ‘One thing I ask of the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.’

“Our guest speaker will be Kate Patterson, a writer, speaker and part time school chaplain based in West London. Kate is on the

May 4, 2018

leadership team at Holy Trinity Richmond and is the author of *The Promise of Blessing* and *The Gift of Blessing*,” Pauline Kennedy explained.

During the afternoon meeting, Kate will give her first talk on this year’s theme focusing on Psalm 27:1-4 in which David expresses his confidence in the Lord as his stronghold and salvation. In her second talk, which is part of the evening celebration, Kate will further unpack God’s Word, looking at key passages from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. In both she will explore how we live in a ‘wilderness world’ that God wants to fill with the beauty of His love and grace.

At this year’s meeting, outgoing President, Elma Leeburn, of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, will hand over to Lynda Stothers, a member of Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church in Belfast and the current PW Overseas Vice President. Speaking ahead of the meeting, the incoming president for 2018/19 said, “At the core of our organisation is the fact that there is the most beautiful message we can share – that God loves all of us so much that Jesus came to suffer and die and be raised from death in order that our relationship with Him is restored. That brings about a beauty, which is about more than how we look or what we achieve, rather it is about His beauty reflected in how we live our lives.

“I look forward to representing PW among women in the wider Church but even more so, to encouraging groups to play their part in equipping and enabling women to become and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ,” she said.

The Presbyterian Women’s Annual Meetings will take place at 2pm and will continue with an Evening Celebration at 7.30pm on the 10 May. No registration is required.

## **C of I to launch Daily Worship app at General Synod**

The Church of Ireland will bring *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP)

May 4, 2018

into the smartphone era when it launches its *Daily Worship* app at the General Synod in Armagh on Thursday, 10th May.

The app is an initiative from the Church's Central Communications Board in close co-operation with the Church's Liturgical Advisory Committee.

*Daily Worship* presents Bible readings, prayers, canticles and Services from the BCP in one place and in a simplified format. These are available for each day of the year, covering five Services: Morning and Evening Daily Prayer, A Late Evening Office, Compline, and Holy Communion.

The Most Revd Pat Storey, Chair of the Central Communications Board, said: 'I am delighted to launch this new aid to our devotional life. It is a powerful thing for a community such as the Church of Ireland to be praying together, and using the same daily readings, through the vehicle of a smartphone application. This app aims to help us in our personal and communal prayer lives, and to bring us closer together as a church family, and to the God whom we worship. The Central Communications Board hopes that this will be a catalyst for a deeper devotional life all across our Church.'

*Daily Worship* can be purchased for €1.09/99p, and downloaded from the App Store and Google Play for use on Apple iOS and Android devices from 10th May.

## **How Ireland rugby hero Stockdale balances Christianity and professional sport**

Ulster and Ireland rugby star Jacob Stockdale last week told Co Down church worshippers that it was "incredibly hard" combining life as a Christian with his professional sport, David Young writes in the Belfast Telegraph

More than 600 people crowded into Banbridge Road Presbyterian Church to hear the player talk about rugby and give his testimony as part of a youth night event.



**Hayley Truman, Beth Snelling, Erin McNally, Ireland and Ulster rugby star Jacob Stockdale and youth worker Philip Kennedy**

Star Stockdale - whose father is a former Presbyterian minister - has links to the Dromore church stretching back more than a decade.

In a wide-ranging interview with youth leader Luke Truman, the Six Nations try-scoring hero told the audience about his rugby career to date, the sporting goals that still lie ahead, and the Christian faith that inspires him.

But combining his Christian commitment with the world of high-pressure professional rugby has not always been easy. Ulster has [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

May 4, 2018

been embroiled in controversy recently after two star players - Paddy Jackson and Stuart Olding - were cleared of rape in one of the most high-profile trials seen in Northern Ireland.

Asked for his advice to anyone struggling to live as a Christian while being part of a sports team, Stockdale said: "It can be incredibly hard. It's probably something that I haven't quite mastered myself.

"You work with your mates - 40 lads - and it's quite easy to get caught up in lad banter, and to do things everybody else is doing because it's the easiest thing to do.

"The one thing that I found is to keep coming back to church, to keep getting refilled, refreshed.

"That makes it easier to go back into Ulster (Rugby) every week, and be who I want to be."

He said his deep faith helps him cope when things go wrong.

"Whenever I have a bad game, or I screw up, or do something stupid, I can just let it go and say: 'God, you know what you're at here, so I'll let you sort it out'. And that takes a lot of pressure off."

The Ireland wing told the rapt audience - who had travelled from all over Northern Ireland - of the moment when he decided to give his life to the Lord.

"When I was at school I went to a Christian summer camp in Carrickfinn.

"I went there for eight years in a row, from the age of 11. I loved every single minute of it," he said.

At 13 - his third year at the camp - Stockdale realised he had to make a serious commitment to God. "This is who I am and this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," he said.

"That was the moment when I became a Christian."

May 4, 2018

Happily posing for selfies later, he added that his faith helped him get away from rugby and just be Jacob the youth worker, instead of Stockdale the rugby star.

## Women take time out for themselves at Connor MU event

On Saturday April 28, almost 60 women came together in the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim, to take time out for themselves at a Women's Health and Wellbeing morning organised by Connor Mothers' Union Younger Members' Committee.

The ladies heard from four speakers, three talking about mental, physical and spiritual health and a fourth about Mothers' Union itself.

The women were drawn from parishes all over Connor Diocese and were a mix of Mothers' Union members and non-members. Diocesan President, Valerie Ash, opened the morning with a Bible



May 4, 2018

reading, prayers and a brief introduction to her role in Mothers' Union. Alison Skillen, Vice President of Action and Outreach, introduced each of the speakers.

First on the programme was

**Lynda Bryans,**

**former radio and television journalist,** (photo above), who spoke about her own mental health journey and how she had found great support not only from her family and friends but also from her faith. She challenged those present to ask themselves: "What do you do on a regular basis to look after your mental health?"



Dr Laura Bunting, a General Practitioner in Broughshane Medical Practice, spoke about the importance of physical health and gave advice regarding screening, diet and exercise. Despite the seriousness of the topic, Laura brought her own unique humour to the talk, whilst still getting her message across.

The speaker on spiritual health was the Rev Elizabeth Hanna, rector of St Nicholas' Parish in Belfast. Elizabeth spoke about the importance of prayer, reading and service for spiritual health and also of looking at 'which step have we reached today?' The eight steps ranged from 'I won't do it,' to 'Yes, I did it!'

The last speaker was Wendy Halligan, Mothers' Union Young Members' Representative for Connor Diocese, who spoke about the work of Mothers' Union and her journey from being a 'Reluctant M.U.M.' (Mothers' Union Member) to the enthusiastic member she is today.

At the end of the morning, each lady was given a 'goodie bag' containing literature on Mothers' Union, health screening and some treats. A special thank you to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough



May 4, 2018

Council for contributing packets of seeds and literature in connection with their [Bee-licious](#) campaign.

Feedback on the morning has been very favourable and Mothers' Union in Connor has possibly gained a few new members. The event was funded by a 'Mums in May' grant.

## **John Bell of Iona at Changing Attitude Ireland session at General Synod**



**John Bell, a member of the Iona Community, Presbyterian minister,**

**broadcaster, hymn-writer and international lecturer will be the Changing Attitude Ireland speaker at this year's General Synod lunch-time session on Friday May 11th.**

He has chosen the title, "God, Delight and Diversity", and plans briefly to explore three subjects: problematic approaches to scripture, the created order as diverse by design, and the need for the laity to have their intelligence, experience and aspirations inform the Church's deliberations on sexuality.

Bell was largely responsible for the Church of Scotland's most recent hymnal, and with his colleagues has produced songs and liturgical materials which are used and have been translated across the globe. He regularly speaks at the Greenbelt Festival on issues

May 4, 2018

relating to scripture, spirituality and justice. His work has resulted in the conferring of several academic and ecclesiastical honours, most recently the Thomas Cramner Award for Worship from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Last year, in response to the story of the teenager Lizzie Lowe, who took her own life rather than tell her parents about her sexuality, John Bell publicly came out as a gay man, admitting that he had remained single in order to work without compromise as a public Christian.

## **Mothers' Union to join in Thy Kingdom Come at Coventry Cathedral**

"Thy Kingdom Come is not only a great initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, calling us to pray for friends and family to come to faith in Jesus, it is a rediscovery of the great New Testament story of how the early Church spent the period between Ascension Day and Pentecost. This year the Mothers' Union service is coming from Coventry Cathedral, a wonderful place where so much prayer and work for reconciliation has gone on. What more appropriate holy space to host the service which focuses on our need for reconciliation with God made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ. I hope that we will all be inspired to enter into the work of reconciliation by praying for those known to us to come to know Jesus" - The Very Reverend Robert Key, Thy Kingdom Come team

On 14th May at 3.00pm (GMT) Mothers' Union members will be uniting in a Global Moment act of worship from Coventry Cathedral to pray "Thy Kingdom Come" as part of the Archbishop's Pentecost call to prayer. We are delighted that The Very Reverend Robert Key will be preaching at this special service. Members who are able to attend are welcome too - please email [communications@mothersunion.org](mailto:communications@mothersunion.org) so we can keep track of numbers.

The Global Moment will also be live-streamed on the website and we will upload the order of service shortly so you can follow along [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

May 4, 2018

at home or with your MU branch if you so wish.

