



2019 Calendar marking Disestablishment of C of I to aid world development



A 2019 calendar from the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal to support community initiatives in the developing world will be launched at General Synod. The calendar will also commemorate the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland –
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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on the 150th anniversary to be marked next year – and will include reflections from each of the Church’s bishops.

The Church of Ireland Bishops’ Appeal is selling a limited edition calendar for 2019, from General Synod (10th–12th May) onwards, to support community initiatives in the developing world throughout that year. The calendar commemorates the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland – the 150th anniversary of which takes place in 2019 – and each month provides a reflection from its bishops in relation to issues or projects that have been supported by Bishops’ Appeal over the years.

The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Chair of the Bishops’ Appeal Advisory Committee, said: ‘I welcome the launch of the Bishops’ Appeal calendar for 2019 – the 150th anniversary of the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Throughout those 150 years, this Church has worked to support the disadvantaged in some of the poorest parts of the world. The calendar is both a celebration of that partnership but also a reminder of how life is for so many. Those who purchase a calendar will be supporting this ongoing work as

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we seek to bring relief to disaster situations as well as supporting health, education and rural development projects.’

The calendar, which can be purchased for €10/£8 will be available at the General Synod in Armagh between Thursday, 10th May, and Saturday, 12th May, and will be available afterwards from Church of Ireland House, Dublin, by contacting Lydia Monds at bishopsappeal@ireland.anglican.org

World Meeting of Families 2018 marks milestone with 2,500th volunteer

Last weekend in the RDS in Dublin, the World Meeting of Families marked a volunteering milestone as they welcomed their 2,500th volunteer for the upcoming international event. The gathering in the RDS saw more than 800 volunteers from across Ireland continue

their training for the ninth World Meeting of Families which will take place from 21 – 26 August in Dublin.

The 2,500th volunteer was identified as Jinny Malazarte from Drimnagh, Co Dublin. Jinny signed-up as a volunteer alongside his wife Ressurecion, but Jinny was identified as volunteer number 2,500. Jinny, who is originally from the Philippines, has been living in Ireland for the past 17 years.

Speaking about his volunteer role with the WMOF2018, Jinny said, ‘As soon as I realised that the WMOF2018 was coming to Dublin, I was interested in volunteering for it. The preparations that go into an event like this are meticulous – the organisers have to think of everything including offering the famous Irish welcome to those who will come to Ireland for the event. I am looking forward to being part of welcoming the world to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families. I hope to be part of all the different events and to work with many of the volunteers that I have come to know these past weeks and months. It’s going to be a huge team effort.’

He continued ‘It has been really inspiring to see how many people are willing to make a contribution to an event like this – to just give churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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of their time and talents. It's going to be an amazing event for all those who attend and while I am going to be really busy as part of the volunteer team, I know that I am going to gain a once in a life time experience from it.'

Commenting on the volunteer milestone, Father Tim Bartlett, Secretary General of WMOF2018 said, 'Our volunteers are at the front line of everything we will be offering at the WMOF2018 and we could not deliver an event like this without them. While we are delighted to have reached this particular milestone in our volunteering numbers, we will need thousands more volunteers to join us for the World Meeting of Families. We are inviting people to sign up now on www.worldmeeting2018.ie to be part of this historic event.'

The World Meeting of Families 2018 will take place from 21–26 August in Dublin on the theme, 'The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World'. Pope Francis confirmed that he will attend the World Meeting of Families during a presentation of the WMOF2018 Icon of the Holy Family in Rome in March.

For more information on WMOF2018, please see www.worldmeeting2018.ie.

Bishop of Derry and Raphoe raises questions on Referendum on Eighth Amendment

The Rt Rev Ken Good in a statement this week writes - This month, voters in the Republic of Ireland face a stark choice in the Referendum on the Eighth Amendment.

The government proposes to introduce legislation allowing unrestricted access to abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, and in certain cases permitting it beyond 12 weeks. However, these changes can only happen if the Constitution is amended to remove Article 40.3.3 (known as the Eighth Amendment), which

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recognises the equal right to life of the mother and her unborn child.

The proposal for unrestricted access to abortion up to 12 weeks has caused grave concern among all the main Christian churches in Ireland. It goes far beyond allowing for termination in a few very difficult cases, implying that the unborn child—at least up to 12 weeks—has no right to life and should have no protection under the law. This is deeply troubling for Christians, who view unborn children as human beings made in God’s image.

We read in scripture how, on meeting the expectant Mary, Elizabeth said: ‘As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’ (Luke 1:44).

Unquestionably, the Referendum on the Eighth Amendment raises a number of complex questions: should abortion be dealt with in the Constitution or by way of government legislation; should the fact that hundreds of Irish women already leave the state every year to procure abortions influence our response; does the fact that many terminations are already taking place in Ireland (using unregulated pills) mean abortion should be made legal; and how should Ireland’s record of failure in the care of women and children – for example in the mother and baby homes – affect the way we vote?

Often, in the past, the protection of vulnerable women and children in Ireland left a lot to be desired, but legislating now to allow the lives of the most defenceless among us to be terminated is not the answer.

Past wrongs would be better addressed by providing better pastoral care in future for women, their partners and their families; by improving support services; and by investing more in medical and mental health services. We must be compassionate in responding to those for whom pregnancy is unwelcome or traumatic, and must seek to offer a positive alternative to abortion.

The Archbishops of the Church of Ireland have stated that “unrestricted access to abortion in the first twelve weeks of

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pregnancy, or indeed at any stage, is not an ethical position we can accept.” Nevertheless, our tradition is concerned to ensure provision for terminations in – hopefully – rare circumstances and in a safe medical setting.

People differ on where the line should be drawn. Cases in which a woman’s life is at risk have long been regarded by our church as instances where termination would be justifiable. For some, cases involving diagnosis of a life–limiting condition which may prove fatal, or pregnancy resulting from sexual crime, are circumstances in which abortion could be justified. In every case, however, the church seeks to offer pastoral care sensitive to the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of women and families who find themselves in such difficult situations.

For Christians, there is a civic duty to vote in this referendum and a solemn responsibility to weigh up the consequences of their actions. It is important that between now and May 25th we all express our views with courtesy, compassion and clarity. The debate should not become vitriolic or personalised. The issues raised are sensitive and complex, and the outcome may well affect Irish society for decades to come.

I encourage all church members to deliberate carefully, and to be thoughtful and prayerful in their response to this referendum.

Four years of tea and fellowship at Carrick

Anyone fancying a cuppa in the Carrickfergus area on a Thursday morning can pop into the Holy Trinity Woodburn Fellowship Café, which has recently celebrated its fourth anniversary.

This not-for-profit initiative provides an opportunity for fellowship over a cup of tea to parishioners, visitors from other local churches, and from even further afield. Over the past four years it has also raised £14,000 for more than 40 charities.



Holy Trinity Woodburn Fellowship Café volunteers – from left to right: Jack Blair, Hazel Blair, Joanne Shimmon, Terry Shimmon, Joan Maxwell, Anne Langley, Maurice Langley

The Fellowship Café is run by Anne and Maurice Langley and a team of volunteers.

“Every Thursday, after we have set up, we spend a short time in prayer asking for God’s blessings and thanking Him for the opportunities that will arise,” Maurice said.

Visitors are warmly welcomed and can select what they would like to eat and drink.

“There are no charges for our refreshments, instead we offer the opportunity to donate, if they wish. If not then the refreshments are a gift from us.”

Maurice, Anne and the team keep an eye out to ensure no one is isolated. “If we notice anyone on their own or the conversation has dried up we sit with them and share fellowship,” Maurice said.

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ome of the food is provided by members of Holy Trinity Woodburn, and some is purchased from local outlets. Money donated is used to recover any costs, then all other profits are passed to local, national and international worthy causes.

Anne and Maurice were prompted to establish the Fellowship Café after helping with a tour by a [Fields of Life](#) Children's Choir in 2013. "During this concert tour we visited several churches in Northern Ireland. Some were 'dead', some healthy, and some were vibrant. The vibrant churches all had areas for coffee and fellowship," Maurice said.

"Although our own church provided coffee after the Sunday services, we felt God was prompting us to provide something extra during the week. Our Youth Fellowship renovated one of the rooms in our building to include a coffee bar, and on Thursday April 10 2014 we opened our doors for the first time."

The original set up was funded by members of the congregation.

Sufferer organises campaign for church prayer for ME sufferers

Joanne McDonald is a parishioner of Donaghadee Parish Church and for six years has suffered from Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). She is currently housebound but is part of a campaign to mobilise churches to pray for the healing of this very debilitating but misunderstood illness. The campaign is particularly focused on ME/CFS Awareness Week from 7–13 May.

Joanne explains...

Until six years ago I was a healthy individual, who between family, work and church, had a very happy life. After falling ill with thyroiditis from which I never really recovered, a neurologist diagnosed me with ME/CFS. I was told at the time that there was no cure and learning to manage it was the only way forward. Unfortunately that is still the case today.



My life has changed drastically since then. I have had to give up my job, I can no longer attend church and family life has turned upside down with me being cared for instead of me caring for them. As someone once told me 'this disease won't kill you but it will rob you of your life.' and that's just how it feels.

So for the past two years I have been learning to live with this illness. I pray to God many times throughout each day and I thank him for I know His love, presence,

care and provision in countless ways. I have never given up hope that he will heal this disease.

It's a long story but a month ago I was led to join an internet forum called Christians with ME/CFS and a few weeks later a lady called Kathryn joined too. Within a very short space of time we realised that we had the same aspiration, and that is to get as many people praying to God for the healing of this disease. To that end we are approaching as many churches and individuals as possible to pray for an end to this illness during ME/CFS Awareness Week from 7–13 May. We believe that God hears our prayers and in his time will answer them in his way.

Please lend your voice to ours this May.

Please pray:

- for ME/CFS sufferers and their families
- for their carers
- for healing
- for a cure and effective treatment
- for those carrying out research
- for funding for research
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[Find out more about the illness and prayer initiative from this flyer.](#)

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Bookspot : Connecting Worship and Vision

When a church enters into a period of discerning vision, worship is often not the first place to be looked to for inspiration. But linking the discernment process with the worshipping life of a church can help to root it in both the mission of the wider church, and the local context. This booklet explores how worship can inform the vision-setting process, and in turn, how a church's vision and values can inform its worship. Published by Grove Books £3.95

