

## The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

### Pettigo Methodist Dream Becomes Reality

**Pettigo  
Methodist  
Church has  
recently  
acquired funding  
to refurbish and  
build an**



**extension to its church hall. This has enabled Pettigo Methodist Church to continue and reinforce its local community relationships.**

For several years the church hall has been used by a variety of community groups. This placed the church in a favoured position to explore the possibility of securing financial support to enhance the property to extend its community outreach activities.

The Pettigo Methodist Church therefore decided to engage with the European Peace III programme. The application was submitted for them by Donegal County Council in partnership with Fermanagh District Council and ADoPT (Association for the Development of Pettigo and Tullyhommon) to the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) in 2008. Funding has since been obtained whereby the church was able to achieve total refurbishment of its existing hall and to build a large extension that includes youth/common room, kitchen, toilet facilities, a vast reception area and an extensive outdoor area at the rear of the hall.

The Minister for Pettigo Methodist, the Rev Eleanor Hayden said, " *We are delighted - the dream is now a reality! All praise and glory to God.*"

- See more at: <http://www.irishmethodist.org/news/20-march-2014/pettigo-methodist-dream-becomes-reality#sthash.V56ecU26.dpuf>

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/gay-woman-to-advise-church-of-ireland-on-sexuality-30119179.html>

## Gay woman to advise Church of Ireland on sexuality

**The Church of Ireland has appointed a worshipper from the gay community to advise its Select Committee on Sexuality.**

Belfast Telegraph - However, the Church fell short of inviting Pam Tilson – church warden at St George's Church, [Belfast](#) – to become a full member of the 16-member committee, none of whose members identify themselves as gay.

The select committee was appointed by the General Synod after a controversial vote in 2012 in which it passed a motion to back the traditional Christian view of marriage.

It sparked uproar in the gay community when it stated that "faithfulness within marriage is the only normative context for sexual intercourse".

After facing criticism for not including a member of the gay community, the select committee also met with a delegation from the Church's pro-gay group, Changing Attitude Ireland, in Dublin last Tuesday.

Afterwards, Ms Tilson was contacted by the chairman of the select committee, the Dean of Belfast, the Rev [John Mann](#), and asked to join an advisory panel.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/gay-woman-to-advise-church-of-ireland-on-sexuality-30119179.html>

## Kildare Churches - interdenominational stress busters

**A Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic parish in Co Kildare have joined forces to organise two Stress Busters events. The first of these will take place in Dunboyne Castle Hotel on Wednesday 2 April. It will look at Dealing with Stress.**

These imaginative public events are sure to be of great interest to everyone in the community and admission is free.

Revd Janice Aiton is the Church of Ireland Rector of Dunboyne and Rathmoylon Parish grouping. She said, 'We are so grateful for the quality of community life we enjoy in this area. Stress Busters is about looking at themes that everyone can relate to.' She continued, 'We all know what stress feels like. That's why we have invited speakers who have great experience to come along and share their thoughts and advice.'

The first event on dealing with stress, on Wednesday 2 April, will be addressed by a person from The Samaritans. Stress is at the heart of the Samaritan work and they will talk for 30 minutes about their work. After a break for coffee there will be an opportunity to hear Vicki Gillian speak on stress from her own personal experience.

Bishop Pat Storey (Bishop of Meath and Kildare) said, 'I am delighted to see parishes joining to put on events that look at practical challenges we all face in our lives. It is a great sign of community spirit that these local Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic parishioners are working together to do something so positive for all of us.'



### **DEALING WITH STRESS**

**JOIN US AT 8PM  
IN DUNBOYNE CASTLE HOTEL  
ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL**

**TALK-THE SAMARITANS  
GUEST SPEAKER -VICKI GILLIAN**

**JOIN US AT 8PM  
IN DUNBOYNE CASTLE HOTEL  
ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**

Stress Busters are free events and a warm welcome is offered to everyone to attend. They will take place at 8.00 p.m. on 2 and 9 April in Dunboyne Castle Hotel. It is organised by St Peter's Church of Ireland and St Peter's and St Paul's Roman Catholic parishes.

**TALK- MABS  
ON FINANCIAL TIPS  
AND ADVICE!**

**SPONSORED BY ST PETER'S CHURCH OF IRELAND  
&  
ST PETER'S AND ST PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**



For further information please contact Revd Janice Aiton (Rector of St Peter's Church of Ireland) Tel: 01 – 8253288 or David Seaman (Diocesan Communications Officer) Tel: 01– 6275352

## Voice for Life - RSCM Ireland

Come and have all your questions answered regarding the [Voice for Life](#) scheme by the Chief Examiner, John Wardle.

# VOICE *for* LIFE

The afternoon will start at 2pm and the session will include what is expected at each level of coloured ribbon and the requirements of the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

**Dublin venue to be confirmed - Saturday, 03 May 2014 at 2:00 PM -** Please book using the form which will be available here very shortly. For more information, please contact Mark Bowyer - +353 (0)87 117 2995.

[www.rscmireland.com/events](http://www.rscmireland.com/events)

## PCI Kenya partners on home leave

**Derek and Linda Roulston are currently in Ireland for a period of study and home assignment.**

To build on, and further develop, their work with ['WHEAT Foundation International'](#), a non-profit organisation registered in Kenya that exists to assist in community development, they are both undertaking further skills development.

In Timau in Kenya, WHEAT through Derek, has been involved in a seed potato development project that uses cutting edge technology and has the potential to significantly impact food security for Kenya; contacts made with potato farmers through this project have also opened open doors to share the gospel.

In Northern Ireland, [The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute \(AFBI\)](#) are now helping Derek develop further skills by providing a work placement and training in seed potato production.



Over the next while, Derek will spend time learning about all aspects of potato growing and the work being done with those involved in the potato industry in Northern Ireland by AFBI, [The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development \(DARD\)](#), and [The College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise \(CAFRE\)](#).

Derek will join various teams to learn about their work and the impact it's having on improving potato production. Topics he will cover include: blight, viruses and blackleg; potato varieties, trialling and testing; nematology (study of round worms); breeding and seed certification.

Derek and Linda first arrived in [Kenya](#) in October 1998 where, based in Nyeri to the North of Nairobi, they were involved in establishing *Honi Training Farm*, an agricultural training and development initiative of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) aimed at improving the practical skills of local farm workers and helping farmers improve their farming techniques.

In 2002, they moved to [Malindi](#) on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast, to establish a new PCEA development project among the Wataa people who live in villages scattered along the banks of the Galana River in an area which is two to three hours' drive inland from Malindi and close to the eastern boundary of the Savo East game reserve. Now there is a small and growing church community in Galana, a school and health centre were built, as well as two footbridges across the crocodile-infested Galana River.

The Roulstons' third move came in 2010, when they relocated to Kisima near Timau in the North of the country, to work with the WHEAT management team in overseeing their projects in this area.

## [Lisburn rector visits Christian Aid projects in Zimbabwe](#)

**Canon George Irwin, rector of St Mark's, Ballymacash, travelled to Zimbabwe on March 21 along with a group of eight other supporters of Christian Aid Ireland.**



Canon Irwin is Chairman of the Lisburn Christian Aid Committee. His group, made up of people from different churches and communities throughout Ireland, is spending 10 days visiting Christian Aid partners around Zimbabwe, seeing how these local partners are empowering men, women and children to overcome the challenges they face to bring about a transformation in their communities.

Of Zimbabwe's population of 12.6 million, around 45 per cent are malnourished, with a 2008 estimate putting life expectancy at birth at just 39. Conflict, bad governance and political unrest have all contributed to

the poor health and education provisions, hyperinflation and collapse of many social services seen in Zimbabwe today.

Food production has fallen following a major land reform programme, leaving tens of thousands of farm workers out of work. These social and economic problems, combined with longer drought spells and other effects of climate change, have brought about a number of new and major challenges for the people of Zimbabwe and for Christian Aid's partners.

Christian Aid has been involved in Zimbabwe since 1980 and now works with 12 local partners who run projects across the country. Christian Aid has strong relationships with Zimbabwean churches and partners, implementing projects which are concerned with a wide range of issues including food security, water conservation, education, HIV, health, human rights, gender equality and peace building. Canon Irwin and the team will be paying a visit to a number of these projects.

As part of their trip they will travel to the remote district of Binga, where Christian Aid partner 'Open Schools Worldwide' (OSWW) operates an educational programme for children. Many children in this area are forced to work or provide care for their ill parents or orphaned siblings; often they do not have the time or opportunity to attend school.

Motivated by their Christian faith, OSWW are responding to the educational needs of children shut out of the traditional school system or at risk of educational failure for reasons beyond their control. They work hard to bring

education directly to those who need it, through training teachers and providing a 'School in a Bag'.

In doing this they are able to meet the various, and often complex, educational needs of children across the different communities in Binga. Although fairly new, this is an exciting project to be visiting as it has proven highly successful in South Africa.

Canon Irwin has been a life-long supporter of Christian Aid and has served as Chairman of the Lisburn Committee since 1995. Before leaving for Zimbabwe, he said he was looking forward to meeting with the individuals and organisations who are fundamentally changing lives for whole communities.

Canon Irwin said he appreciated the encouragement and support he had received from the Diocese of Connor, the Parish of Ballymacash and the local community in Lisburn.

## Fermanagh's youngest priest (35) taking to his new station

**AT JUST 35-years-old, Fr Raymond Donnelly is almost certainly the youngest priest in Fermanagh, if not the whole diocese of Clogher.**



Fermanagh Herald - The Monaghan man was ordained in June 2013, and for the past six months has been adapting to life in Fermanagh as the curate in St Michael's Parish, Enniskillen.

A 'late starter' to the priesthood, Fr Raymond left his job as a teacher in Castleblayney in his late 20s, in 2008.

And, despite having a career carved out for him through teaching, he has always felt that the priesthood was a line he was certain to go down.

“I suppose like many young people you maybe want to experience other aspects of life.

“Maybe you want to try college or university, or travel. And that was a good thing. But I think in the back of my mind I always knew that priesthood was going to be the ultimate goal,” Fr Raymond said.

On resigning his job, he said: “In the back of your mind you always think, where’s my safety net here?”

“Because I had resigned my job, I think when it came to making the decision I had to take the decision to leave very seriously.

“It’s a very personal and spiritual journey too. But I never doubted as soon as I started that journey and I never looked back.”

Asked whether recent scandals within the church had affected his resolve, Fr Raymond explained: “None of that really entered my mindset. When God plants that seed in your heart, it’s not that it doesn’t matter – you’re aware of it – but in time you’re able to rise above it.

“There was that sense that you could make a difference in people’s lives.”

- See more at: <http://fermanaghherald.com/2014/03/fermanaghs-youngest-priest-35-taking-to-his-new-station/#sthash.M7dEFx4L.dpuf>

## Archbishop of Liverpool appointed

**Bishop Michael McMahon has been appointed the ninth Archbishop of Liverpool.**

Catholic Herald - Archbishop-Elect McMahon’s Mass of Installation as Archbishop of Liverpool will be celebrated at 12 noon on Thursday 1 May 2014, the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool.

Speaking at a press conference in the Metropolitan Cathedral Archbishop-Elect McMahon said:

“I am honoured and humbled to have been appointed by our Holy Father Pope Francis as Archbishop of Liverpool. I promise to do my best to repay the trust that he has placed in me, and which the priests and people of the Archdiocese of Liverpool are being asked to put in me from today.



“I would like to thank Archbishop Patrick Kelly for his many years of service in this Archdiocese, and Bishop Tom Williams, who has been Apostolic Administrator since Archbishop Kelly’s retirement last year.

“I am grateful to my family and friends, my Dominican brethren, and the priests and people of the Diocese of Nottingham for their support, guidance and friendship. I am naturally sorry to be leaving Nottingham, my home for the last thirteen years, and I will miss the people there; I hope that the prayers of my Diocese will come with me as I prepare to bid them a fond farewell shortly after Easter.

“The Archdiocese of Liverpool has a long and proud history, rich in the tradition of missionary discipleship. We just have to think of the many priests, deacons, religious and laypeople who have done so much to proclaim the Kingdom of God and who gave their lives in his service, and the Archdiocese’s parishes, churches and schools are living witnesses to God’s love for us. The rich and living Catholic heritage of the Archdiocese should inspire us and challenge us, and I know that I can rely on the prayers and support of the Catholic faithful as I take up the challenge which lies ahead of me.

“I am also looking forward to working with my fellow Christians from other Churches and communities, people from all religious traditions, and civic and political leaders, building up the good relationships which already exist between us, in our endeavour to serve the common good.

“From the day of my installation I will do my level best to lead, guide and serve the people of this great Archdiocese, in Liverpool, west Lancashire and the Isle of Man, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. There is much work to be done, because the challenges which we face as a community are real. But we are a people of hope; just as the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King is visible for miles around, speaking to us of God’s presence in our midst, I pray that all of us in the Archdiocese of Liverpool will be living signs of God’s eternal love, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in all that we say and do.

More at -

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2014/03/21/bishop-malcolm-mcmahon-is-appointed-archbishop-of-liverpool/>

The Pope’s choice for the new Archbishop of Liverpool shows that he is prepared to search far and wide for new bishops

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2014/03/21/the-popes-choice-for-the-new-archbishop-of-liverpool-shows-that-he-is-prepared-to-search-far-and-wide-for-new-bishops/>

## C of E annual stats for 2012

**The Church of England recently released its annual statistics for 2012. Almost 1000 Occasional Services each day of week and no significant change in attendance over past decade**

Overall in 2012, on average 1.05m people attended Church of England churches each week showing no significant change over the past decade. Figures for all age average weekly attendance show around 1 in 5 churches growing, and just over this number declining with 57% remaining stable.

In 2012 the Church of England conducted over 356,000 services of baptism, wedding and funerals at an average of about 6,700 each week - almost 1,000 per day - marking the rites of passage in people's lives in communities across the country. Last year the Church of England baptised almost 140,000 people (2,700 per week), performing around 56,000 marriages in (1000 per week) and conducted 160,000 funerals (3,000 per week).

Christmas and Easter services continue to attract higher numbers with services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day attracting around 2.5m people and services at Easter attracting 1.4m people.

The 2012 statistics also suggest that around 38,000 people who had not previously attended church were welcomed in to a worshipping community in 2013, compared to just over 19,000 who died or who left due or illness. Nearly 23,000 joined a church due to moving into an area compared to 18,500 leaving because they moved away.

The 2012 figures also show that more than 100,000 young people aged 11 to 25 attended activities connected to the Church in 2012. Around 28,000 adults work voluntarily with young people aged 11-17 and around 2,000 are employed to do.

Dr Bev Botting, Head of Research and Statistics for the Archbishops' Council said: "These statistics for 2012 show that weekly attendance over the past decade has not changed significantly. The introduction of cleaner data and more rigorous methodological approaches and analysis means these figures provide a clearer picture of Anglican churchgoing in the decade to 2012."

The figures can be accessed here:

[http://churchofengland.org/media/1936517/statistics for mission 2012.pdf](http://churchofengland.org/media/1936517/statistics-for-mission-2012.pdf)

## **Ian Paisley's son: St Patrick's flag should fly on days when Union flag does not**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ian-paisley-s-son-st-patrick-s-flag-should-fly-on-days-when-union-flag-does-not-1-5955281>

## **€5m distillery planned for Dublin church**

Multinational animal feed player to build distillery on site of St James's church where Daniel O'Connell laid foundation stone.

<http://businessetc.thejournal.ie/distillery-dublin-liberties-st-james-church-1379008-Mar2014/>

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