



17 reports on church life in Ireland including Armagh's 'On the Hill' programme for St Patrick's Day; Derry's massive mosquito net purchase

MAJOR CONFERENCE ON DEALING WITH THE PAST

Plans have been announced by the Presbyterian Church for a morning conference to be held at the start of April entitled "Dealing with the Past, Shaping the Future."



Organised jointly by the Presbyterian Church's Good Relations Panel and Church and Society Committee the conference seeks to explore from a biblical and theological perspective, issues surrounding the past and how we face the future and how the other issues raised in the Haass discussions affect our ability to reach a solution.

One of the organisers, Rev. Stephen Johnson, convener of the Good Relations Panel believes that the churches have a vital role to play in this matter. "The recent Haass talks and their inability to reach a full agreement demonstrated that the issues of flags, parades and dealing with the past are complex.

"In the midst of this situation, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continues to believe that working for a more just and reconciled society is a biblical and gospel thing to do."

The conference is planned for Saturday morning, 5th April in Assembly Buildings, Belfast and the two keynote speakers are Rev. David Cupples, minister of Enniskillen Presbyterian Church and former moderator and co-convener of the Church and Society Committee, Dr. Norman Hamilton.



A panel discussion will also involve Dr. Lesley Carroll, Rev. Michael Davidson and Dr. Peter McBride.

Dr. Hamilton is clear that the Church's conference is not its attempt to re-run 'Haass' for a few hours on a Saturday morning. "Our conference will not be able to do what Dr. Haass and Prof. O'Sullivan were unable to do. Their task was to seek agreement amongst political leaders and political parties. Our calling is different. We will studiously avoid sterile political analysis and fruitless debate, for we are mindful of Paul's instructions to avoid foolish or unwholesome talk.

"Yet these matters are of great importance in almost every corner of the province. We want to provide a thoroughly Christian opportunity to hear, think and pray about some of these matters, and so help us all towards better Christian witness and citizenship wherever we live or work or worship."

Application forms will be available in Presbyterian congregations or from the conference office in Assembly Buildings, tel: +44 (0)28 9041 7203 or by email: conference@presbyterianireland.org or book [online here](#).

DERRY AND RAPHOE MOSQUITO NETS PROJECT RAISES OVER £100,000

All over the diocese of Derry and Raphoe people are celebrating reaching a formidable target of £100,000 for mosquito nets for people living in malaria zones in Nigeria.

Donations continue to be made and already the target has been exceeded before the project closing date.



The celebrations are not simply for the generosity that has led to this achievement but for the diocese of Makurdi in Nigeria where people are being educated about the benefits of nets and where whole families are sleeping under the mosquito nets, reducing malaria and thus increasing school

attendance, work and productivity, whilst reducing precious money spent on medication.

The C of I Bishops' Appeal commented, " Not only can we celebrate a project realised but also a project carried out to the highest standard. If education is not provided, mosquito nets can be perceived as a taboo (the white net associated with a funeral shroud) or it can be sold to ascertain money to feed the family. Similarly, if mosquito nets are sent from abroad, they can completely undermine the market for selling the nets in the country. This is called 'dumping' and often occurs when we are moved to give and don't think of the wider repercussions. Nets Work obtained the nets locally, thus boosting the local economy. Training was given on the benefits of sleeping under a net and on the source of malaria. As more people were trained and saw their families getting sick less and less, peer training was used. This eradicated the selling of nets for food as people started to see the long term benefits.

"Our thanks goes to the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe for their vision and perseverance. Particularly we would like to thank Bishop Ken, Bishops' Appeal rep Albert Smallwoods and all on the committee who dreamt big and then saw it to completion. We would also like to thank Christian Aid, who sourced such a good project, provided resources and information and arranged for visitors from Makurdi to come and visit Derry and Raphoe.

"Finally our heartfelt thanks goes to all those working with the poor in the diocese of Makurdi. We thank God for their focus on sustainable development rather than quick fix gestures. We celebrate with them that so many families – up to 60,000 – will reap the benefits of this work."

AN AFTERNOON ON ARMAGH'S HILL ON ST PATRICK'S DAY

Visitors to Armagh on St Patrick's Day are invited to take in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh Public Library and No 5 Vicars' Hill, all of which will be open from 2.00 p.m. until 4.00 p.m.

Armagh owes its inheritance to St Patrick's choice of its Hill for his church, the principal church in Ireland. From the time that monks and scholars were first drawn to the site, Patrick's decision has shaped the development of Armagh down to the present day. The Book of Armagh, written here is 807, records events on Patrick's life. The wealth of the Church in Armagh led to many Viking raids and much destruction from the year 832 onwards. In 1014, Brian Boru, High King of Ireland, was buried on the Hill of Armagh after his death at

the Battle of Clontarf, in accordance with his wishes. The eighteenth century renaissance of the City was the product of Archbishop Richard Robinson's vision. It is still the only city in the world with two cathedrals dedicated to St Patrick.

In 1765 Richard Robinson became Archbishop for Armagh. In 1771 he founded Armagh Public Library on the Hill, adjacent to the Church of Ireland Cathedral. The nucleus of its collection is Archbishop Robinson's personal gift of seventeenth and eighteenth century texts on subjects such as theology, philosophy and history. The Library's collection has since expanded to include 46,000 volumes. Copies of the 1913 reproduction of the 'Book of Armagh' are on display. Also to be seen are reproductions of costume designs by the artist, William Conor, for a pageant held in 1932 to celebrate the fifteen hundredth anniversary of St Patrick's coming ashore at Saul, County Down.

Number 5 Vicars' Hill, owned by Armagh Public Library, was built by Archbishop Robinson to hold civic and church records. Examples of these records are on display, as well as some of the Library's collections of coins, gems, prints, early Christian artefacts and other curiosities. There is a small collection of four-sided iron bells, which are characteristic of the early Irish Church. They were used in worship and would have been familiar to St Patrick.



Admission charges will apply to No 5, and all three buildings will have staff to welcome visitors.

For further information about any of the three venues, please contact Carol Conlin or Lorraine Frazer at Armagh Public Library – Tel. 028 3752 3142

SMW2014 - SOUL MATES WEEKEND

This weekend hundreds of children and their leaders have headed to Lurgan for Soul Mates weekend – the national children's weekend for the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Soul Mates is synonymous with fun, laughter and an utter lack of sleep. However, it is an important weekend spiritually for both the children who attend and their home churches. Children hear words of truth from leaders, stewards, helpers, speakers and worship leaders. They are encouraged to deepen their faith and be salt and light wherever they are.

Children's Ministry Worker Nicky Blair asks for prayer that 'in a busy, cynical, attention-grabbing world, the message of Christ will be proclaimed, listened to and acted upon'. He asks readers to, 'pray for home churches to be places of nurture – for refreshment and energy for leaders for this weekend and for the work they do in their own churches – for safety of travel there and back – for Leah McKibben as she speaks, Dave Morris as he leads worship, the TOM team as they perform dramas and Steph and Em-J as they lead the prayer team.'

The weekend will be demanding for Nicky, Janette and the IMYC staff, so they need prayer too.

POP UP CHOIR IN POP UP CAFE



One of the first events in the diary for the lovely shiny DOCK Cafe 3.0 in Belfast's Titanic Quarter, was a new venture called Singergy, which happened on Tue & Wed this week after the cafe was closed for the day.

Ian, the mastermind and maestro behind Singergy, had invited people from local businesses to call on their way Home from work to sing together for an hour – with the promise that an unprepared, unpractised bunch of strangers would be singing in perfect harmony before going home for their dinner!

Chaplain Chris Bennett comments "Was he successful? – see the link below and judge for yourself! – but there's no doubting that it was amazing for the body, soul and spirit to lift our voices and make music at the end of a busy day."

[m.youtube.com/watch?
utm_source=twitter.com&feature=youtu.be&utm_medium=social&utm_content=buffer4178b&v=ad19rbqtR6Q&utm_campaign=buffer](https://m.youtube.com/watch?utm_source=twitter.com&feature=youtu.be&utm_medium=social&utm_content=buffer4178b&v=ad19rbqtR6Q&utm_campaign=buffer)



Dr Kenneth Milne, Dean Dermot Dunne and Canon Ken Kearon at the opening lecture in the Introducing Christ Church

FULL HOUSE FOR FIRST INTRODUCING CHRIST CHURCH LECTURE

The Music Room of Christ Church Cathedral, DUBLIN, was packed to capacity yesterday (Tuesday March 5) for the first in series of lunchtime lectures entitled 'Introducing Christ Church'. The large crowd gathered to hear Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Canon Ken Kearon, give his personal reflections on what cathedrals are for.

Proceedings were opened by chairman of the Cathedral Library and Archives Committee, Dr Kenneth Milne. The committee has organised the lectures and Dr Milne said

that they aimed to highlight different aspects of the cathedral.

The Dean of Christ Church, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, said they were delighted to welcome Canon Kearon, as a son of the Church of Ireland, to begin the lecture series. He said the speaker was well placed to talk about his subject as he was a member of five cathedral chapters.

The series continues next Tuesday, March 11, when 'Music at Christ Church' will be the subject of a lecture by Ian Keatley, Director of Music at the cathedral. On Tuesday March 18 Professor Raymond Gillespie, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, will speak on 'Christ Church and its history'. On Tuesday March 25 'The silver of Christ Church' will be highlighted in a lecture by Canon Roy Byrne.

The lectures get underway at 1.05 pm and last about half an hour. They are followed by a short break for tea and coffee and discussion concluding at 2.00 pm.

Admission to the lectures is free and the series is supported by the Friends of Christ Church.

ARCHBISHOP STILLS SEEKS CLARITY FROM MATER NUNS

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin is still seeking clarity from the Sisters of Mercy on the Mater Hospital's controversial stance on abortion seven months after the Catholic-run institution agreed to comply with the Government's abortion law.

Irish Catholic - Discussions between Archbishop Martin and the Sisters of Mercy remain "ongoing" at this point, according to a spokeswoman for the archdiocese.

The board of the Mater announced in September of last year that it would comply with the Government's abortion legislation which permits the direct targeting of the unborn child in the womb for the first time.

Dr Martin vowed to seek clarity from the nuns after the board of the Catholic hospital's statement that it "will comply with the law as provided for in the Act". Hospital authorities refused at the time to give further clarity on the issue or how the issue affects the Catholic ethos of the hospital.

They said: "The Mater Hospital has carefully considered the Act. The Hospital's priority is to be at the frontier of compassion, concern and clinical care for all our patients. Having regard to that duty, the hospital will comply with the law as provided for in the Act."

The archbishop's spokeswoman previously confirmed to The Irish Catholic that he "has met with the Sisters of Mercy and the matter is ongoing".

- See more at: <http://www.irishcatholic.ie/article/archbishop-still-seeking-clarity-mater-nuns-abortion-stance#sthash.Zepvulbw.dpuf>



ROSSORY ON RTE

This Sunday 9th March – Revd Canon Arthur Barrett and members of Rossorry Parish Church (Clogher diocese) will lead the RTE TV Service, to mark the Tercentenary of the United Society (formerly USPG).

The service will be broadcast live, usually starting at 11.10am.

SUPPORT FOR CRAIGAVON AREA FOOD BANK

'Kingdom Come' is a night of worship aimed at bringing together the church community to offer praises collectively to our worthy God.

The organisers state - We are pleased to have Kathryn Scott leading our first event. Kathryn is a singer/songwriter, originally from Portadown and is a wife, mother of two, senior pastor, worship leader and lover of God.

Kathryn has written songs such as 'Hungry', 'At foot of the cross' and 'Search Me'. Her songs have also appeared on many Vineyard Worship albums, most notably 'Hungry' which was named as one of the most influential albums in international contemporary worship music.

We hope that you can join us for this event, proceeds from ticket sales will go to Craigavon Area Food Bank.

Saturday 29th of March, 7:30pm @ Drumcree Parish Church (tickets £12)

Tickets are available from Faith Mission (Lurgan & Portadown) or online @ www.bookings.drumcree.org or call 02838332503

BELFAST SCHOOL OF MUSIC IN CONCERT

St Katharine's Parish Church, Dunlambert Park, Belfast, is proud to present for one night only The City of Belfast School of Music.

This takes place in the church on Friday April 4, with the concert getting underway at 7.30pm. The evening will include a varied programme of music – Flute Ensemble, Wind Quintet, Harp Ensemble, Cantanti and various Soloists. Tickets are £10 and will include light supper to be served in the church hall after the event. All are welcome and tickets are available from the Rev Canon William Taggart, please telephone (028) 9077 7647.

DRY WEEKEND 2014

The DRY (Derry & Raphoe Youth) weekend is back with a bang!

"This year our theme is UNCONDITIONAL - focussing on the unconditional love God offers each and every one of us, no matter how we look, what we sound like, what we wear. No matter what we have ever done, or ever will do - God

UNCONDITIONAL
DRY weekend
21-23 March
Bushmills Centre
Cost £40.00

offers us His amazing unconditional love. To help us explore this in more detail - Andrew Frame from CIYD is coming to lead us in our sessions. This promises to be EPIC.

“Andrew is new into the job of working in the North with the Church of Ireland Youth Department, and is keen to come and meet us all. We are delighted to welcome him. We really want as many young people as possible coming to this weekend, so book early to avoid disappointment!”

SUICIDE

The Board of Social Theology in action is holding a presentation in Enniskillen.

It will answer - What are the signs? What can we do? Speaker: Conor McCafferty — ZEST.

Thursday 20 March at 7.30pm. Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen. This event is open to everyone who is concerned about this issue which has been so prevalent in recent times.

GOING BAREFOOT FOR HOLY WEEK Linda Chambers is going barefoot for Holy Week and is seeking support.

She writes: My name is Linda Chambers. I work for The United Society in Ireland. My feet are used to the protection of socks, slippers, shoes and boots. I am uncomfortable in bare feet, even around the house.

The pupils in the primary schools of Swaziland have much tougher feet; they walk many miles barefoot, in all kinds of weather, and over all sorts of terrain. They have no socks, slippers, shoes or boots.

In solidarity with them, and to raise funds for Swazi schools, I plan to go barefoot for Holy Week.

You can help by joining me or sponsoring me. Please sponsor me on this link: www.lindaatuspg.blogspot.com or contact me on: 086 8586337 or us@ireland.anglican.org

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or contact me on:
086 8586337 or
us@ireland.anglican.org
to join in. And please circulate this as widely as you can.

Us.
The United Society
Egan House, St Michan's Church,
Dublin 7

TRIBUTES DR VALERIE JONES

Tributes have been paid to Dr Valerie Jones who died on Friday last, February 28. Valerie made a significant contribution to the Church of Ireland at central Church, diocesan and parish level and was a member of General Synod and Standing Committee as well as Dublin and Glendalough Diocesan Synod.



She was also Diocesan Communications Officer for Dublin and Glendalough for a number of years and a great proponent of the Irish language.

Her funeral took place in St Ann's Church, Dawson Street on Wednesday March 6.

The Vicar of St Ann's, the Revd David Gillespie said - "Valerie Jones was well-known throughout the Church of Ireland, as is evidenced by the significant numbers of people at this service.

She has left her mark on many aspects of parochial, diocesan and national church life. There are few, who are as well versed as she was in the particular ways of Irish Anglicanism.

In the united diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, she worked under two Archbishops of Dublin as Diocesan Communications Officer.

A member of both General Synod and Diocesan Synod, she was associated with the Board of the Church of Ireland Gazette and, for many years, was a member of Standing Committee which carries out the work of the General Synod.

A teacher by profession, she had a lifelong interest in education and was a robust advocate of the role of faith based schools in Irish society.

A fluent Irish speaker, she was a leading member of the Irish Guild of the Church, which celebrates its centenary this year."

More at - <http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2014/03/Tributes-Paid-to-Dr-Valerie-Jones.php>

FORMER CHURCH TREASURER FACING JAIL

A former treasurer of a Church of Ireland parish has been told she will face jail time for defrauding the organisation of £34,000.

UTV News - Lindsay Bredin, 27, from Primity Crescent in the Waterside area of Londonderry had originally pleaded guilty to 10 of the 19 charges involving her stealing £19,000.

However, when she was re-arraigned before Judge Philip Babington on Thursday, she pleaded guilty to a further nine charges.

The total amount of money she has admitted stealing for her former employer, the Church of Ireland Culmore parish, between March 2010 and August 2011 totals £34,000.

When asked by Judge Babington how much of the money Bredin had repaid, defence barrister Ivor McAteer said none so far but he said a schedule for repayments was in the process of being drawn up.

He said he hoped the repayment process would start within the next four to five weeks.

Judge Babington said the offending crossed the custody threshold and he said repayments, or a lack of them, prior to her sentencing was something he would have to take into consideration.

He adjourned sentencing until 11 April and ordered the preparation of a pre-sentence report.

In the meantime the former parish treasurer, who was accompanied in court by a church minister and by several members of a church congregation, was released on continuing bail.

GAY RIGHTS - NI CONSULTATION STRATEGY SET

A public consultation on a long-delayed strategy to underpin the rights of gay people is set to begin next week.

BBC News - The 12-week consultation carried out by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister will assist in designing a draft strategy.

However, critics say the Sexual Orientation Strategy itself was promised at least a year ago.

It is designed to promote equality of opportunity for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

It was consulted upon in 2006 during direct rule and a commitment to deliver the strategy was included in the 2007 devolved programme for government.

Since then, a series of promises around delivery have been missed, including a pledge by DUP junior minister Jonathan Bell in June 2012 that the strategy would be published with full consultation by the end of 2012.

Ulster Unionist leader Mike Nesbitt welcomed the fact a consultation on a draft strategy was now starting, but regretted the delay.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26475910>

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