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**Nightlight works in the Golden Mile & Cathedral Quarter areas in Belfast, reaching out to those who are socialising. Pray that God would continue to bless the conversations Nightlight workers and volunteers have with people they meet.**

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## **RTÉ to broadcast programme celebrating 60 years of Irish Chaplaincy in London**

Today Wednesday, 19 December, RTÉ One's *Nationwide* will broadcast a special programme at 7.00pm celebrating 60 years of the pastoral service of the Irish Chaplaincy in London.

The Irish chaplaincy is an agency of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, and is partly supported by grants from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

When established by the Irish bishops in 1957 the London-based ministry had a wide network to serve and a large number of priests working with it. Today the Chaplaincy pastorally supports three specific Irish groups: seniors, Travellers and prisoners, and it is staffed mostly by lay people with Eddie Gilmore as its chief executive. The patron of the Irish Chaplaincy in London is President Michael D Higgins.

Some of the services provided by the Chaplaincy's support for prisoners include: visiting Irish prisoners and providing them and their families with advice and information; keeping in contact by letter; assisting families in Ireland to visit prisoners in England and Wales; offering pastoral support if requested; researching, identifying and responding to prisoner needs; and, working closely with other organisations and prison departments caring for the welfare of Irish prisoners and their families.

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**Belfast Cathedral has commenced advertising at the City airport offering a welcome at Christmas services to those people visiting the city**

The Irish Chaplaincy Seniors Project services consist of: visits to older Irish people regularly in their home, in hospital or residential care home and spending quality time with them to offer positive support and encouragement; maintaining regular telephone contact to ensure isolated older Irish have someone to talk to and share their hopes and concerns with; liaising and advocating on their behalf with health and social care providers and a range of other organisations as required; helping them to reconnect with their families back in Ireland; supporting those who want to move back to Ireland and making this transition as smooth

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as possible; offering a knowledgeable and comforting presence, in relation to end of life questions and concerns, and providing advice on funeral planning in London and in Ireland; exploring older people's faith and spirituality with them, and linking them to a local faith community if requested.

The Travellers Equality Project works closely with the British Prison and Probation Service; provides information, advice and free bespoke resources for practitioners working with Travellers; holds Traveller forums in prisons; provides diversity training for support group; and, carries out thorough research to identify the needs of Irish Travellers.

Wednesday's programme will also highlight the contemporary ministry of a Polish priest, Father Dariusz Plasek, who originally served his compatriots in Co Clare, but is now a parish priest in Ennis.

## **Ian Paisley under fire for advocacy on behalf of anti-Christian governments**

Ian Paisley has been criticised for lobbying on behalf of governments with some of the world's worst records for Christian persecution, the Irish News reports.

The North Antrim MP [was suspended from Westminster in July](#) for [failing to register a luxury family holiday in Sri Lanka](#) – a country whose government's has a poor human rights record and a history of persecuting Christians. The DUP MP later carried out [paid advocacy](#) on behalf of its regime.

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However, it is his [recently revealed trip to the Maldives](#), a Muslim country which ranks among the worst for its intolerance of other faiths, that has fuelled most outrage.

Mr Paisley and his family travelled to the Maldives in 2016 months after the MP had visited the island on parliamentary business. He had argued against economic sanctions being taken against the Maldives over alleged human rights abuses.

He has denied the holiday was paid for by the authorities in the south Asian island nation and said he was satisfied he did not need to declare the trip on Westminster's register of interests.

According to Open Doors, an international campaign group highlighting the persecution of Christians worldwide, the Maldives ranks as the "13th hardest place in the world to live as a Christian".

"Radical Islamic clerics exert strong control, making it impossible for converts to show their faith in any way," the Open Doors website states.

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**Keith and Kristin Getty will be returning for "Sing Belfast" on June 13, 2019 in the SSE Arena. New Irish Arts are participating. Early reservations are advisable.**

"Migrant Christians (from India and Sri Lanka) are strictly monitored, too – reportedly, most have ceased meeting, since it was drawing too much attention from the authorities."

The DUP has been vocal in highlighting the persecution of Christians globally.

SDLP MLA John Dallat accused Mr Paisley of "double standards" for willingly accepting luxury holidays from regimes with an "abhorrent record of Christian persecution".

"Not so long ago Mr Paisley was quoting Old Testament

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prophets in the House of Commons after his holidays gifted by the Sri Lankan government entered the public domain – for me, this highlights the shocking double standards of the North Antrim MP," the East Derry MLA said.

"The SDLP have requested that the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards fully investigate allegations of Mr Paisley's trips gifted by foreign governments to ensure public confidence is restored."

Sinn Féin MLA Philip McGuigan said the Sri Lankan regime's human rights record should have been the focus of the scandal for which the MP was suspended.

"Much of the attention centred around his failure to declare two lavish family holidays paid for by the Sri Lankan government," he said.

"But for Sinn Féin, the bigger issue has always been the fact that Ian Paisley actively lobbied the British prime minister to oppose a United Nations resolution to establish an international investigation into the human rights abuses in Sri Lanka."

Academic Peter Shirlow raised questions about the contradictions between Mr Paisley's professed faith and his decision to accept hospitality from governments with a record of persecuting his co-religionists.

"This is a man who says he is opposed to homosexuality and gay marriage because he is a Christian yet he appears to have few qualms about choosing holiday destinations where Christians are persecuted," the University of Liverpool lecturer said.

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## **First female C of E Bishop now announced as new Bishop of Derby**

Right Reverend Libby Lane, currently the suffragan bishop of Stockport, will become the diocesan Bishop of Derby.

Bishop Libby was the first woman to become a bishop in the Church of England when she was appointed in 2015 after the General Synod vote on the issue in July 2014.

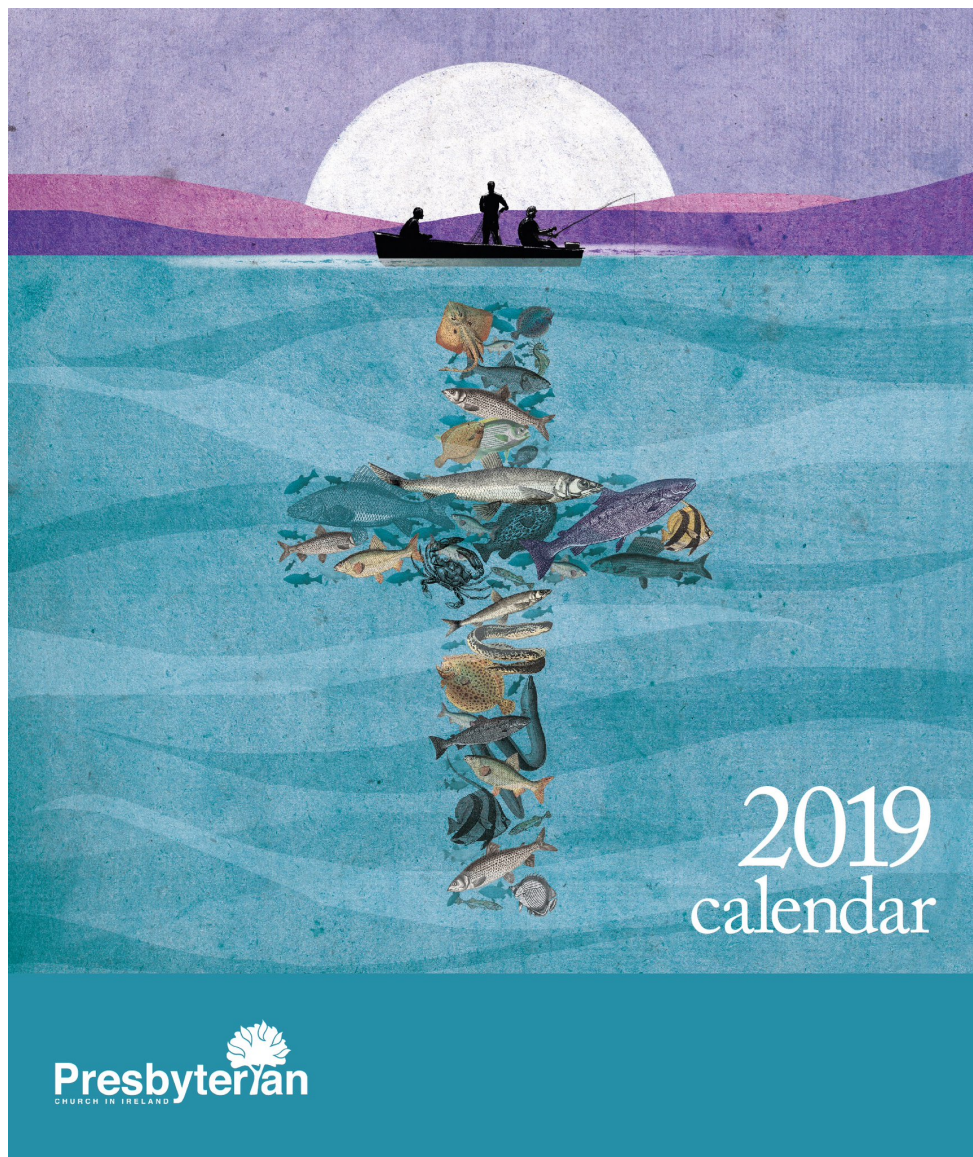
Downing Street announced on Tuesday that the Queen has approved her nomination for election as Bishop of Derby in succession to The Right Reverend Alastair Llewellyn John Redfern, who resigned in August this year.

Libby Lane was elected for ordination while working in the parish of St Thomas Brampton, Chesterfield but was brought up in Glossop in the north-west of Derbyshire, where her parents still live and where she returned on Tuesday with her husband and two children, following the announcement.



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She said: “I am excited and privileged to have been called to serve as Bishop of Derby.

“I grew up here and my vocation was fostered here. Derbyshire nurtured me and brought me to faith and I want to love Derbyshire back.

“I want to lead a church in Derbyshire where people find hope because they know they are loved by God in Christ,  
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and I pray that hope sets us free to live our lives in ways that bring change for good.”

The Dean of Derby, the Very Reverend Dr Stephen Hance, said: “I am thrilled that Libby is coming to be our bishop. Her roots are here in Derbyshire, and we are all very much looking forward to welcoming her home and working with her in the months and years ahead.

“This announcement presents us with an opportunity to think afresh, about who we are and who we hope to be, about the opportunities and challenges that face us as we move forward.”

Libby Lane is spending the day travelling around the diocese, meeting people in the agricultural industry and then a reception at Derby Cathedral followed by Evening Prayers.

The service to install Bishop Libby in Derby Cathedral will take place after Easter.

## **News briefs**

### **Carols by Candlelight service at Down Cathedral**

You will be warmly welcomed at Down Cathedral for a Carols by Candlelight service in memory of Sir William Hastings.

The service will be led by the choir and brass ensemble of 2nd Presbyterian Church, Comber, with a special guest appearance from Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway.

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The service on December 16 begins at 4.00 pm (doors open at 3.30 pm).

### **50 years helping children in need**

For almost 50 years, St Katharine's Parish, Belfast, has been donating toys for children in need.

These have been distributed by the Newtownabbey Children's Services to local families. Included in the picture above at this year's presentation are Adam Turnbull and Debbie Williams from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, along with the rector of St Katharine's, the Rev Canon William Taggart.

### **God on side of Archdeacon?**

There was fun for all at the All Saints' Parish, Antrim, Beetle Drive and Pudding night in the Parish Centre on Friday November 30.

Almost 100 parishioners of all ages came along and the evening proved to be a great way of including everyone in a fun activity which all could enjoy.

The Beetle Drive was won by the Vicar, Archdeacon Stephen McBride. Some sore losers accused him of having God on his side!

The evening began with the sale of Christmas crafts created by Antrim Parish's Holy Knitters group which meets every Monday evening. The total raised has exceeded £400.

The evening's entertainment concluded with a feast of delicious puddings.

### **Two wise canons installed at Killala Carol service**

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The annual Tuam, Killala and Achonry Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent was held in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Killala, on Sunday 9th December.

The liturgy was prepared and led by the Revd Canon Jennifer McWhirter, Priest in Charge of Killala Union. Lessons were read by representatives of all the parishes in the Killala and Achonry end of the diocese. Music was provided by Daphne Higgins.

The Dean, the Very Revd Alistair Grimason, preached and also, with the guidance of the Diocesan Registrar Mrs Audrey Shannon, installed two new Canons to the Chapter of Saint Patrick's: the Revd Canon Lynda Peilow (Galway and Kilcummin) to the Prebend Stall of Lackan and the Revd Canon Andrew Ison (Ballysodare, Colooney and Ballymote) to the Prebend Stall of Errew.

### **Successful Christmas Tree Festival**

Christ Church Parish, Ballynure, held a very successful Christmas Tree Festival over the weekend of December 8 and 9.

Each tree was designed by a different community group and each had its own story to tell. All voluntary donations made at this spectacular exhibition benefited the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice and Church funds.

### **Festival of Wreaths marks season of Advent and Christmas**

The Priory Church, Killadeas in Clogher Diocese has been marking the beginning of Advent and the Christmas season

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with a Festival of Wreaths during Saturday, 8th December and Sunday, 9th December.

The event brought the whole community together and proceeds were in aid of the Killadeas Priory Church Repair Fund and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Almost 120 wreaths were on display in the church, some from parish organisations and many others donated by local businesses, community and voluntary groups from around Enniskillen and the north Fermanagh area. These included local primary schools as well as post-primary schools in Enniskillen.

The Parish held a workshop a few weeks earlier at which around 20 local people made wreaths, some on behalf of donors. These were displayed at the end of pews, on window sills and in the sanctuary area of the church.

The Priory Church was recently re-opened following an extensive refurbishment programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **News links**

**Who does Leo Varadkar think he is? | Spectator USA**

<https://spectator.us/leo-varadkar-brexit/>

**Two Irish commentators challenge Dublin over the Brexit border backstop**

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/two-irish-commentators-challenge-dublin-over-the-brexit-border-backstop-1-8743254>

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## **Special advisers: Does NI have different rules than GB?**

The UK code of conduct for special advisers is much clearer than its' Northern Ireland equivalent.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-46595503>

## **NI May never get a Catholic majority at all**

The Dublin economist David McWilliams has been recently been writing that Northern Ireland is a failed economy with a soon-to-be Catholic majority and is headed for a United Ireland.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/province-may-never-get-a-catholic-majority-at-all-1-8738275>

## **Why 'Silent Night' and the stories around it endure 200 years later**

<https://religionnews.com/2018/12/14/why-silent-night-and-the-stories-around-it-endure-200-years-later/>

## **PSNI officer 'forced to cut' family tie**

The officer said **Northern Ireland's** political stalemate does not help with issues around policing. "If they can not sort it out at Stormont...support the same teams, like the same ...

# **Bishops Christmas messages**

## **Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin**

<https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2018/12/17/christmas-message-2018-from-archbishop>

## **Bishops of Cork: Bishop John Buckley and Bishop Paul Colton**

<https://churchofirelandcork.com/2018/12/18/joint-christmas-message-from-the-bishops-of-cork-bishop-john-buckley-and-bishop-paul-colton/...>

## **Bishop John McDowell, Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher, and Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Diocesan Administrator of Clogher**

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/8518/joint-christmas-message-from-bishop>

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