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Moderator congratulates new Secretary of State

On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Moderator, Right Reverend Dr William Henry, has offered his congratulations to the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP, on his appointment as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

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Rev Dr William Henry

In a joint letter with Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to Mr Smith, the senior Presbyterians said that his/her appointment came at ‘challenging time’.

“The absence of a locally elected Assembly continues to have a severe and detrimental impact on our schools and hospitals, among many charities and community and voluntary organisations, and the lives of some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society,” they said.

Referring to the involvement of the leaders of Ireland’s main churches in the inter-party talks in May – including the

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Presbyterian Church in Ireland - Dr Henry and Mr Gribben said, “At the time we conveyed the growing sense of hopelessness and despair that there was at the lack of progress and the continuing impact that it was having on everyday services and people’s lives.

“At the meeting we also wanted to encourage the participants to go the extra mile, as the Lord Jesus calls us to do for one another, and to find a balanced accommodation that has reconciliation at its heart and is focused on the common good and welfare of all. We hope and pray that there will be substantive progress that leads to the establishment of a sustainable power-sharing executive, and in that, you will have an important role to play.

“The need for this has become all the more urgent following the passing of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill: it is extremely important that a local Assembly is in place before 21st October so that locally elected politicians are in a position to take decisions on devolved matters and that the people of Northern Ireland do not have these decisions imposed on them by Westminster.”

They concluded by saying, “As Christians we are called to pray for those in authority over us. So please be assured of our prayers and those of many throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. While we acknowledge that there are major challenges to be overcome, it is also our prayer that you, along with local political representatives, will be able to find a way forward for the good of all.”

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7 Christian denominations write to Prime Minister against no-deal

Seven church denominations have signed a joint letter to the new Prime Minister Boris Johnson, asking him to avoid a no deal at all costs.

The Methodist church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Salvation Army, Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, Quakers in Britain and United Reformed Church all call on the Conservative leader to consider the well-being of the poorest in society and not to ignore evidence that they argue shows the poorest will suffer most from leaving the European Union without a deal.

Currently, the law states that Brexit will happen on 31st October unless the law is changed. Mr Johnson has promised this will happen "do or die".

He has called Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement "dead" and accepted that no-deal might be the only way to leave in 3 months' time.

The church leaders from across the UK say they have a particular concern about the number of people already homeless, in debt and using food banks.

Their letter reads: "we are compelled to write expressing our urgent concern about your position that leaving the European Union without a deal is acceptable. Advice and data from multiple reputable sources, including the UK Government, indicate that failing to agree a deal will hit those held back by poverty very hard indeed.

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"The UK imports 10,000 shipping containers of food from the EU each day. These containers are part of long and complex integrated supply chains. Even minor disruptions to this chain have in the past rapidly had serious consequences. A no-deal Brexit will cause a huge and potentially crippling disruption. Government and many other reputable sources highlight the immediate risk of shortages and price rises. Over the longer term they point to the costs of new and less fluid supply chains increasing food bills for families."

The church leaders, which include the new President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, and Rev Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, wrote that the Trussell Trust gave out 1.6 million three-day supplies of food and say: "we believe it is irresponsible to consider a course of action that is expected to make that situation worse."

They also raise concern over energy and medical supplies and point out that many of the difficulties potentially caused by a no-deal exit "can only be tackled in collaboration with the EU" and say that the government are taking a gamble in assuming the EU will co-operate without an agreement, something they call "a huge gamble to take with the basic needs of our poorest citizens and communities."

"The impacts of a no-deal Brexit are at best highly uncertain, and at worst deeply worrying. Our view that it would put at risk the welfare and safety of the poorest communities in the UK is formed on the basis of the best available evidence, including our presence in local communities in every part of the UK. It is notable that assurances about our ability to

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cope with a no-deal Brexit, while frequent, are yet to be supported by substantial evidence.

"Evidence-free dismissals of well-founded concerns are at this stage both dangerous and inappropriate. Your government's willingness to embrace a no-deal Brexit places upon it a responsibility to demonstrate that the most vulnerable in our communities, those locked in poverty, will not be harmed."

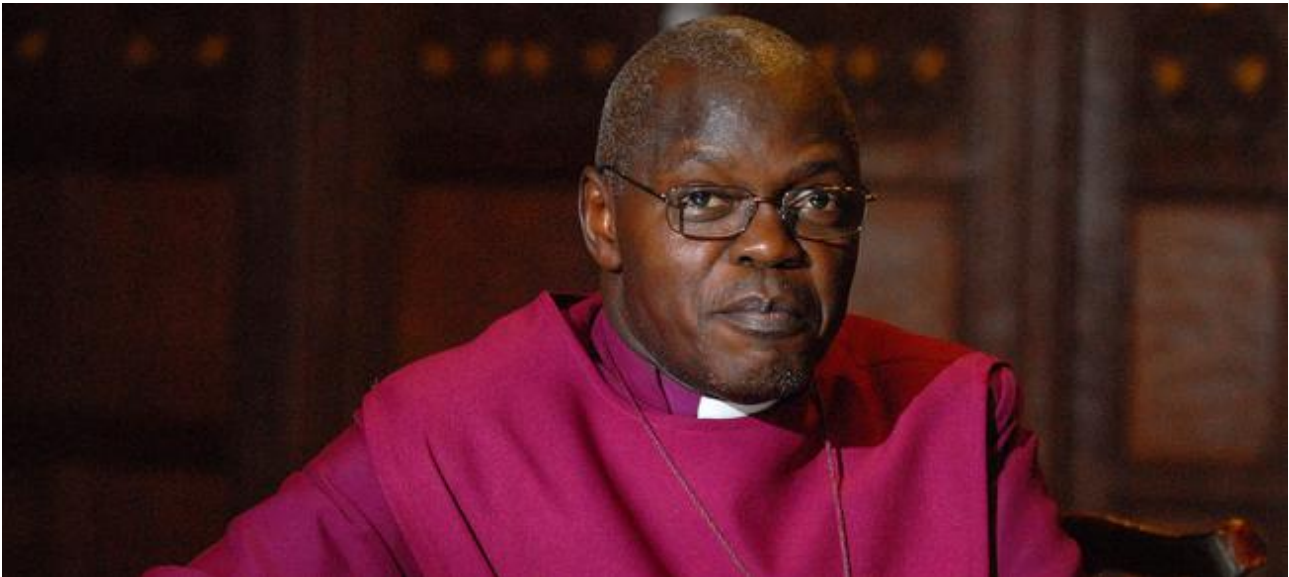
They finish by asking that Mr Johnson's new government to publish urgently its current evidence on the impact of a no-deal Brexit on disadvantaged communities and for him to listen to evidence from communities.

"We assure you of our prayers as you take up this challenging new role."

The full signatories are Revd Nigel Uden, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church; Mr Derek Estill, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church; Professor Clive Marsh, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference; Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference; Revd Dr Richard Frazer, Convenor of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland; Rev Lynn Green, General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain; Rev Alan Donaldson, General Director, Baptist Union of Scotland; Reverend Judith Morris, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales; Most Revd Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church; Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, Territorial Commander, The Salvation Army; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk for Quakers in Britain.

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Archbishop of York looks forward to retiring before he goes 'gaga'



The Archbishop of York has explained why he supports a compulsory retirement age of 70 for all Church of England clergy, with less than a year before he steps down.

Speaking to the Telegraph, Dr John Sentamu said: “The reason I think there is a limit on the retirement age of archbishops is that you can go gaga really and start embarrassing everybody!

“There is nothing more terrible than that, when someone is in their prime and can do a wonderful job. It doesn’t help in any way – it doesn’t help the person, it doesn’t help the Church either.

“But I give thanks to God because I’ve gone through a lot of major health problems – five operations in four years – but my health is very, very good at the moment.”

The second most senior figure in the Church of England [announced last year](#) that he would retire from his post on

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7th June 2020, three days before his 71st birthday. He was given special permission by the Queen to extend his term.

He said he decided to make the announcement to “provide the Church of England with the widest possible timeframe to pray, discern with wisdom and insight and put in place a timetable for my successor and to consider fully the work they will be called to do in service to the national Church, the Northern Province and the Diocese of York”.

There has been a lot of speculation over who will replace Dr Sentamu.



[The first ever female Archbishop](#) may be appointed next year by the Church if the bookies' favourites are correct.

William Hill has named the bishops of London and Ripon - Rt Rev Sarah Mullally (above) and Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley and the Bishop of Chelmsford, Rt Rev Stephen

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Cottrell - as the joint 3-1 front-runners for the soon-to-be vacant post.

“They were given nearly two years warning that I am going and the process of nominating my successor has already began so I’m hoping that it won’t be very long before people know who my successor will be,” Dr Sentamu continued.

“We tend to take nine months a year. I don’t think that will be the case this time.”

Tributes to 'gentle' Belfast Redemptorist Fr Phil Dunlea

Tributes have been paid to a west Belfast Redemptorist who died suddenly just minutes before he was due to say Mass at Clonard.

Fr Phil Dunlea was making coffee for the Redemptorist community at about 6.45am on Tuesday when he collapsed in a small dining room in the monastery.

The 84-year-old, who was originally from Rathkeale in Co Limerick and grew up in Cork, had been based at Clonard for the past 17 years.

He was ordained in 1962 and, before joining the Clonard community in 2002, he had been based for nine years at St Gerard's on Antrim Road where he was a curate.

Clonard Rector Fr Peter Burns said the Redemptorist community had been left "shaken by the suddenness" of Fr Dunlea's death.

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"Our community woke up yesterday morning to the death of one of our confreres unexpectedly," he said.

"He was getting ready to say the 7am Mass. He was making coffee in the small dining room and just collapsed and died on the floor."

"He was a very quiet but a very easy presence in our community and we are very shaken by the suddenness of his death," he added.

Fr Dunlea's remains are reposing in Clonard Monastery and will remain there until 5.30pm today.

Fr Burns said people were "very welcome to come and pay their respects".

Tributes were also paid to Fr Dunlea online, with one woman describing him as "very soothing and sincere" while another said he had been a "gentle and spiritual support".

Another person described him as "such a kind, clever, loving man – an example to the world".

Fr Dunlea's remains will be removed to Clonard Church at 5.30pm today for 6.15pm Mass.

Requiem Mass will take place tomorrow at noon at Clonard Church.

He will be laid to rest afterwards in the Redemptorist plot at Milltown Cemetery.

Jumpin' Holiday Bible Club in Ballyholme

The Jumpin' Holiday Bible Club is running in Ballyholme Parish this week and the kids are having a fabulous time.

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The theme for 2019 is *The Incredibles* with a focus on heroes of the Bible and an invitation for the children to see themselves as the incredible creations of God.

With two sessions (morning and evening) and running Monday through Friday, the programme is combining action songs, dramas, silly costumes, outdoor activities and time to make friends and bond with leaders.

116 children was the limit this year and all the places were snapped up within 24 hours of launch with a number of families booking their summer holiday around the Jumpin' dates. The hands of the 20 volunteer young people, a number of whom were Confirmed this year, have been kept more than busy.

There will be a Jumpin' service in St Columbanus to celebrate the week on Sunday 28 July at 10.30 am.

July 26 - Today in Christian history

July 26, 1603: James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England. Among his many acts affecting English religious life (it is he for whom the King James Version is named) was the issuing of the Book of Sports, approving sports on Sunday.

July 26, 1833: Having abolished the slave trade in 1807, Britain's House of Commons bans slavery itself. When William Wilberforce, who had spent most of his life crusading against slavery, heard the news, he said, "Thank God I have lived to witness [this] day." He died three days later .

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July 26, 1869: England's Disestablishment Bill is passed, officially dissolving the Church of Ireland. It is from this act that we get the mighty word "antidisestablishmentarianism," which was the organized opposition to the legislation.

July 26, 1925: William Jennings Bryan, American editor, politician, and anti-evolutionary leader, dies five days after being publicly ridiculed for his role in the Scopes "Monkey" trial.

July 26 News Links

[Irish people don't want hard border, says new Armagh bishop](#)

The Tablet

Paradoxically, it liberates the **Church** "to find a new and creative voice in the present," he said. "The **Church** will be smaller and humbler in the future ...

[Church will be smaller but much stronger](#)

The Irish Catholic

Armagh's new Auxiliary Bishop Michael Router said that the Church of the ... Archbishop Richard Clarke represented the **Church of Ireland** and Rev.

[Plotting the route for our future Church](#)

The Irish Catholic

At a time in **Ireland** when the **Church** is experiencing tumultuous and unprecedented change, visionaries who can move it in the right direction are ...

[Peter Stockland: Abortion battle cloaked in defeat](#)

The Catholic Register

Belfast, Northern **Ireland** -- In the mid-19th century, St. Malachy's **Church** on Alfred Street added to its existing structure the largest bell in a city full of ...

[How we turn our backs on martyrs](#)

The Irish Catholic

Episcopal boldness is something we clearly need in our **Church** today, but it's ... Dear Editor, Thank you for giving us that great **news** in your front page of 42 ... This was the first Catholic **Church** built in **Ireland** after King Henry VIII's ...

[Ian Ellis: Rank populism sets people more deeply against one another and erodes trust between ...](#)

Belfast Newsletter

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Does it take long, or can it be more swift? Recently I had the privilege of representing the **Church of Ireland** at a five-day German **church** festival of faith ...

[Relative backs call for memorial to airmen killed in wartime crash](#)

Belfast Telegraph

... the scene and were either repatriated, as in the case of Mr Jenkins' uncle, or buried in the Commonwealth graves at Ballykelly **Church of Ireland**.

[Doubt, delight and delusion as faithful Tories bow to the 'Dude' Boris Johnson](#)

Scottish Daily Record

The Conservative Party used to be described as the **Church of England** at ... comfort while making off with the church funds and the elder's daughter.

['Incredible storyteller' wins Sermon of the Year](#)

Church Times

A READER in the **Church of England**, Dr Clare Masters, who is a former palliative care doctor, has won the Sermon of the Year 2019. The national ...

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