



Church of Ireland rector wants to raise suicide awareness at Belfast Pride

A Church of Ireland clergyman taking part in the Belfast Pride parade said he wants to make a stand as the suicide rate among those in the LGBT community is far too high.

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Rev Andrew Rawding, the Rector of Coalisland, Stewartstown and Ballyclog, will be holding a placard at Saturday's parade saying: 'We are sorry for how the church mistreated LGBTQ+ people'.

Walking under the 'Christians At Pride' banner, along with members of his family, Rev Rawding will be joined by fellow Christians from across many denominations.

According to the group, their aims are to celebrate god-given diversity, to say sorry for the damage the church has done and to demonstrate that many Christians want a more inclusive church.

Speaking on his own dealings with those in the LGBT community, Rev Rawding said that those with suicidal thoughts must be offered pastoral care.

"From a pastoral point of view with responsibility to be sharing positive messages of God's love for everyone, I really feel very, very strongly that I need to stand up and make a stand as a clergy person," he said.

Meanwhile a family who quit the Presbyterian Church over its stance on same-sex relationships have said the church needs to be more welcoming to gay Christians.

Lesley Macaulay and her husband Tony, whose daughter Beth (25) is getting married to her partner next year, resigned from the church in June 2018 after it voted not to accept people in same-sex relationships as full members.

The Portstewart family now worship at All Souls, a non-subscribing Presbyterian Church on Belfast's Elmwood Avenue.

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Ms Macauley said that the Presbyterian Church is nowhere near to welcoming same-sex couples.

"I have to say [last year's vote] had such a huge ripple effect on the whole of our society," she said.

"It's been a negative ripple effect for the Church because people still say to me that 'it's typical of the Church' and 'they call themselves Christians'.

"There are no signs of regret from the Church or no sign of care over the hurt they have caused."

Report by Ralph Hewitt in Belfast Telegraph

New Foreign secretary must pledge to protect persecuted Christians, say religious freedom groups

As Jeremy Hunt has been removed from office, Christian charities are calling on his replacement, Dominic Raab, to uphold the promises of his predecessor to persecuted Christians.

The former foreign secretary, Mr Hunt, who also ran to be prime minister, pledged to enact the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro, Rt Rev Philip Mountstephen, that were made in a report into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) support of those discriminated because of their Christian faith around the world.

[Mr Hunt told Premier](#) during the campaign that the first thing he would do as PM would be to work with countries whom Britain already has a diplomatic relationship with, such as

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Nigeria and India, and encourage them to protect persecuted Christians.

However, Mr Hunt is now neither PM nor foreign secretary and will now be returning to the backbenches, with Dominic Raab taking his place.

With fresh faces in the department, Christian charities are calling on the new arrivals to not let their work on this issue collect dust.

Religious freedom charity Open Doors told Premier they are: "urging the new prime minister, Boris Johnson, to keep his promise to 'prioritise protecting religious freedoms' and 'stand up for those facing persecution' and Open Doors is calling upon the new foreign secretary, Dominic Raab to carry on the vital work started by his predecessor and implement the recommendations of the report into the persecution of Christians."

They added that they are pleased that shadow foreign office minister, Liz McInnes asked for the FCO to focus on countries such as Nigeria where persecution is escalating and for the prime minister's special envoy on freedom of

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religion or belief, currently Lord Ahmad, to be made permanent.

Speaking on Premier Christian Radio's News Hour, Dr. John Newton from Aid to the Church in Need, who contributed to the first stage of the report, called on Mr Raab to "commit to taking the findings of the report very seriously."

He said: "I'm quietly optimistic, very quietly optimistic, that we will see the report bearing some sort of fruit - that we won't just see it side-lined or stuck on a shelf to gather dust but I think it's also incumbent upon us within the church, and more widely within all religious groups, to ensure that this report doesn't get side-lined, to keep up reminding governments that the recommendations in here are just, their equitable, and at the end of the day they're only asking for fair treatment for religious groups and that's something that we have to keep pushing for. I don't really think that what it's calling for is something that government can legitimately say no to."

In Church Commissioners questions on Thursday in the House of Commons, Caroline Spelman MP (the Second Church Estates Commissioner, whose role is to liaise between the church and parliament) started by paying tribute to Mr Hunt for his work in this area and added: "I sincerely hope that the new foreign secretary will follow through on the recommendations of the report."

Diana Johnson MP asked whether Mr Johnson would stick to his own pledge of supporting persecuted Christians, to which Mrs Spelman replied: "I'm pleased to say that the new prime minister did give his pledge to follow through on this and the report is very revealing...and acknowledges a great

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deal needs to be done to provide more support for persecuted Christians around the world."



Christian woman stoned to death in Syria

A woman who was one of a few Christians that remained in their Idlib countryside home, despite jihadist occupation, has been repeatedly raped, tortured and stoned to death.

Susanne Der Krykor's body was discovered earlier this month at her home in the village of Yaqubya, after she failed to turn up to a prayer meeting she regularly attended.

A coalition of jihadist groups including Nusra Front - the Syrian branch of Al Qaeda - took over Idlib in 2015 after defeating Syrian government forces.

They imposed Sharia law on all residents, which led to many of the village's Christians fleeing from the region.

According to an Orthodox priest who spoke to charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), less than 200 Christians remain in the region, compared to approximately 10,000 before 2015.

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CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said: "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and community of Susanne Der Krykor.

"This heinous crime is emblematic of the violations being perpetrated against innocent civilians by the extremist groups that have overrun parts of Syria.

"We call on Russia, Turkey and the rest of the international community to find a sustainable political solution to the Syrian conflict, ensuring that vulnerable communities are provided the protection they so desperately need."

Susanne Der Krykor was a retired teacher of Armenian heritage in her early 60s, who volunteered most of her time to teach children the Arabic language and other subjects.

She regularly attended a weekly women's meeting at the village's church.

Clergyman named first Grenfell community hero dies

A Cornish clergyman recently named Grenfell's first community hero has died of cancer this week.

Reverend Julyan Drew used social media to campaign for justice for victims of the 2017 tragedy from his hospice bed.

Last year the dad of three, of Newlyn, Cornwall, met survivors from Grenfell who visited Cornwall for respite holidays.

The father-of-three served as Superintendent of the West Penwith Methodist Circuit and for 20 years, as Minister of various West Cornwall Chapels.

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Chaplain of the Penlee lifeboat, he has also served as Chaplain to the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, the town council and been chair of numerous local bodies, including as chair of the YMCA, The Newlyn Fish Industry Forum and the 3 Villages Project.

Rev Julyan was the first person to receive a Grenfell Community Hero Award by Grenfell United, survivors of Grenfell Tower Fire for his support.

The accolade was launched this year to celebrate local community heroes, whose lives exemplify exceptional community spirit and leadership in their own areas all over the UK.

It was inspired by the outpouring of love and kindness from people all over the capital and further afield, which followed the Grenfell tower fire.

It was presented to Rev. Drew in his hospice in Cornwall by Esme Page, founder of the charity Cornwall Hugs Grenfell, which brings those affected by the fire for respite holidays in Cornwall.

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Cornwall Hugs Grenfell's Esme Page said: "Julyan was an inspirational mentor and a dear friend. He was loving, giving, making us smile and fighting for justice for the vulnerable with his very last strength.

"Forever in our hearts. Huge sadness at the loss of Rev Julyan Drew Christ-like servant leader, inspirational mentor, joker, singer, dear friend, warrior for justice even with his last strength and the very first Grenfell Community Hero.

"The Grenfell community joins with us in giving thanks for the life and enormous unconditional love of this great man. Truly, he was a model for us all."

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July 31 - Today in Christian history

July 31, 1556: Ignatius of Loyola, Spanish Roman Catholic reformer and founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), dies in Rome. During his life he saw 1,000 men join his order and 100 colleges and seminaries established. Apart from his order, Ignatius's greatest legacy he left in his Spiritual Exercises, a devotional guide that has been in constant use for over 460 years.

July 31, 1566: Bartolome de las Casas, the first Spaniard ordained in the New World and "Father to the Indians," dies in Spain. He wrote several books detailing the horrors committed upon Native Americans by the Spanish settlers, and argued for the humanity of the Indians against many of his countrymen who had described them as children or subhuman.

July 31, 1966: After John Lennon proclaims the Beatles to be "more popular than Jesus," residents of Alabama burn the band's records and other products.

July 31 News Links

[Irish bishop condemns mosque vandalism as assault on 'all people of faith'](#)

Crux: Covering all things Catholic

A statement from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association of **Ireland** sent to the ... and Equality, said he was "greatly disturbed" by the **news** of the attack.

[Ireland: Galway Bishop criticizes attack on mosque](#)

Vatican News

By Vatican **News**. The Bishop of Galway, Brendan Kelly, has strongly condemned an act of vandalism perpetrated against a mosque on the outskirts of ...

[Rite&Reason: Toxic theology underpins segregation and sectarianism](#)

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Irish Times

Reynolds was a prophetic Christian leader: as Rev Dr Ken Newell, former Moderator of the Presbyterian **Church in Ireland**, stated at the launch, ...

Church to host convention event

Lurgan Mail

St. Saviour's **Church**, Dollingstown will host an event as part of Bangor Worldwide on ... He will be joined by George Newell from New Wine **Ireland**.

Ulster Youth Choir members to perform in France as part of 20th anniversary

Belfast Live

Ulster Youth **Choir** celebrates its 20th anniversary with a tour to the Provençal Festival, France , with 40 of Northern **Ireland's** most talented young ...

Body & Soul announces amazing line-up for Electric Picnic 2019

RSVP Live

... Gospel **Choir**, the Trinitones, Inishowen Gospel **Choir**, Cinnnte, Bunoscionn and some of **Ireland's** best ambient nighttime DJs and visual submersion.

Oxfordshire parents' court challenge over Christian assemblies

BBC News

A couple are taking the **Church of England** to court over Christian school assemblies which they say are "indoctrinating" their children. Lee and ...

HIV positive gay priest Jide Macaulay: 'I thought I'm going to die'

PinkNews

After being diagnosed with HIV in 2003, the **Church of England** deacon ... through much learning, to become a voice [for] gay people in the church," he ...

Cathedral in England opens indoor mini-putt course, Catholics tee off on the idea

National Post

Church officials at **England's** second oldest cathedral have provoked ... who served as the Queen's chaplain, told the **Church Militant news** website, ..

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