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Woman to lead Bible Society in Northern Ireland

For the first time a woman is to lead The Bible Society in Northern Ireland. The Society has announced the appointment of Catherine Little as its new General Secretary. She will join the Society on 1 April and will succeed John Doherty who is retiring in May.

Catherine is a native of Fermanagh and she is familiar with the Voluntary/Charitable sector. She will join the Society having served most recently with Praxis Care as Co-Ordinator of their Volunteer, Befriending and Counselling services. She will also bring experience gained developing a special programme with the Church of Ireland Youth Department and as a trainer with Youth Link NI. This work embraced both community relations and youth work, and has included training with many of the province's Youth organisations.

Catherine will be seeking to develop the Society's relationships with all Churches and mission agencies throughout Northern Ireland, as well as BSNI's extensive involvement with and



Catherine Little

support for Bible projects on every continent through the worldwide *United Bible Societies*.

While the Bible Society traces its roots in Belfast back to 1807, Catherine will be the first woman to lead the organisation, and the Board and staff team are very much looking forward to welcoming her on board.

**1916: Presbyterian Church's
'Continuing the Conversation'**

Over 350 people attended January's conference, [‘The Future of our Past: Remembering and Reassessing 1916’](#), to hear leading academics and commentators discuss how the Easter Rising and Battle of the Somme continues to exert such a central place in how Ireland views its past and present.

Announcing the 25th February event, Convener of the Church's Council for Church in Society, Very Rev. Dr. Norman Hamilton, said that it is an opportunity to continue the conversation.

“The Future of our Past was one of the best attended conferences we have organised in recent years, with people from many different backgrounds and from across Ireland coming together to explore the issues and impact of these two seminal events in our history.

“We are keen to develop and move the public conversation around 1916 on and are delighted that Professor Wolffe is able to address us. As a specialist in the area of religion and martyrdom he has also written on the interfaces between religion, nationalism and national identity, so it will be an interesting evening,” Dr. Hamilton said.

Following Professor Wolffe's talk former Moderator, Very Rev. Dr. Trevor Morrow, who addressed the January conference, will join him for an open discussion with other panel members on the events of 100 years ago.

Looking forward to the event, Professor Wolffe said, "With the probable exception of Patrick Pearse, the leaders of the Easter Rising did not set out to be martyrs; they have been constructed as such after the event.

"Just as no-one foresaw the scale of casualties in the Somme offensive, the language of martyrdom and sacrifice was common currency in the West in 1916, but the particular circumstances of Ireland have caused these terms to be more persistent than elsewhere, something we will explore on the night."

There is no charge for attending the event, which starts at 7.45pm (tea and coffee from 7.15pm). For further information and to book a place please email info@presbyterianireland.org or telephone +44 (0)28 9041 7204.

Video of the speaker's talks at the January conference can be [viewed here](#).

St Patrick's Day Celebrations at Saul and Downpatrick



Bishop Harold Miller will host the annual Down & Dromore St Patrick's Day Celebrations at Saul Church and Down Cathedral on 17 March. The theme this year is 'In the Footsteps of Patrick – Proclaiming Christ' and at the Festival Service the first group of Diocesan Evangelists will be commissioned. The Bishop will give the address.

Programme

9.15 am: Holy Communion at Saul

Preacher: Captain George Newell (Church Army)

10.15 am: Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick

11.45 am: Festival Service in Down Cathedral

Preacher: The Rt Revd Harold Miller (Bishop of Down & Dromore)

Wreath laying ceremony at St Patrick's Grave

1.15 pm: Irish stew lunch in the marquee

Transport to Saul

From 8:00 am private buses will leave from the Mall for the communion service and pilgrimage.

– The last bus for the communion service leaves at 8.45 am.

– The last bus for the pilgrimage leaves at 9.45 am.

– The last bus from Saul to the Cathedral leaves at 10.40 am.

Archdeacon breaks out of gaol

As part of a Friends of Sligo Gaol fundraiser, the Venerable Isaac Hanna was arrested on Saturday 13th of February and remanded into custody on the charge of 'getting rid of communion wine that was out of date'. The complaint had been made to the authorities by one, Ms. Sally Higgins. The nominators have, however, met the minimum bail terms of €50



and the Venerable Isaac Hanna was released just in time to do a baptism on Sunday morning.

The bail money raised will be put towards the refurbishment of Sligo Gaol with a vision to seeing it reopen as a tourist attraction. If you would like to support the Friends of Sligo Gaol – Jail and Bail fundraiser you can see more information at: <http://www.sligogaol.ie/#!jailandbail/e5mzd>.

Scottish links renewed tonight as First Hispanic woman is made Cathedral Dean in Connecticut

The Very Rev. Miguelina Howell, the first Hispanic woman to be elected a cathedral dean in The Episcopal Church will be installed at Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Connecticut on Thursday evening, February 18. Dean Howell was born and raised in the Dominican Republic is a clinical psychologist, and was ordained to the priesthood in 2003.

Today, February 18, 2016, starting at 6:30 p.m., the Very Rev. Miguelina Howell will be formally installed as Dean. Hartford's Mayor, other city leaders, and many officials and guests from across The Episcopal Church including denominational officials in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic are anticipated to help mark this historic event: the Cathedral's first woman and the first Hispanic woman to be elected a cathedral dean in The Episcopal Church.

Unique among the guests are those from the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in the Scottish Episcopal Church. These attendees highlight the historic 232-year relationship between Connecticut and Scotland, when, in 1784, the Rev. Samuel Seabury of Connecticut was consecrated in Aberdeen as the first American Episcopal bishop.

“I am humbled and overjoyed by the opportunity to serve as dean of Christ Church Cathedral,” said Dean Howell, “and to participate in God’s mission during times of evident adaptive changes, creativity and collaboration in the ever evolving landscape of the City of Hartford, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and in the world. I look forward to strengthening existing partnerships and fostering new ones, working in collaboration with our bishops, lay, clergy and civic leaders in Connecticut and members of the cathedral’s congregations.”

Howell has served as a member of the Episcopal Church’s Presiding Bishop’s staff as Associate Program Officer for Young Adult Ministries and Leadership Recruitment at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City. She recently served on The Episcopal Church’s national Task Force for Restructuring the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church Executive Council, and is a member of The Episcopal Church Latino/Hispanic Ministries Council of Advice.

In the Dominican Republic, Howell served three congregations and as Executive Director of the Diocesan Camp and Conference Center. Before

moving to Hartford, Howell served parishes in Orange and Patterson, New Jersey.

Church of England approves historic agreement with Church of Scotland

An historic agreement recognising the longstanding ecumenical partnership between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England and paving the way for future joint working between the two churches has been backed this week by the General Synod.

Members voted to approve the Columba Declaration and welcome Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission, a report by the Joint Study Group of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, as a 'significant development' in the relationship between the two churches.

The General Synod also called on the Council for Christian Unity to oversee the implementation of the commitments in the Declaration and to set up a Contact Group to coordinate future work between the two churches.

The motion backed by the General Synod also notes the Church of England's valued relationship with the Scottish Episcopal Church within the Anglican Communion and requests that the Council for Christian Unity ensures that the Scottish Episcopal Church is invited to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Contact Group.

Moving the motion, the Rt Rev Dr Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester, co-chair of the Joint Study Group, said: "The dialogue and partnership between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland is shaped by our shared calling as 'national' churches, which have a parish structure covering the nation, and a recognition by the State and wider society.

"As our country has become more secular, we find ourselves drawn together as we face common problems, and opportunities.

"For all the ways in which our recognition and calling as national Churches has had very different histories and legal structures, we have found that we have more in common, in our common tasks in mission, than we might have been led to suppose."

Commending the report and Declaration, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison, told the General Synod: "The strengthening of the bonds which already exist between us can only serve the 'advance of the Gospel' which is our united desire and aim."

The report will now go to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May for approval.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Brother Kevin: 'Where are the 70,000 emigrants the government are luring back going to live?'

The Journal.ie

Crowley has been running the Capuchin Day Centre since 1969 – he says there are more people at risk of dying on the streets now.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/kevin-crowley-housing-crisis-2607364-Feb2016/>

Clergy fuming over 1916 ceremony Easter church lockout

Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/1916/clergy-fuming-over-1916-ceremony-easter-church-lockout-34456473.html>

Easter church services cancelled due to 1916 centenary parade

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/easter-church-services-cancelled-due-to-1916-centenary-parade-1.2535867>

C of I disappointment with Dublin centenary arrangements

News Letter

The main Protestant church in Dublin has expressed “disappointment and sadness” that the Easter Rising centenary parade will force the closure of its seven churches.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/coi-disappointment-at-closure-of-churches-for-dublin-1916-parade-1-7218859>

Faith, hope and secularity: Ireland on brink of change as church power wanes

The Guardian

The head of the Catholic church in Ireland, Cardinal Sean Brady. The archdiocese of Dublin commissioned research showing attendance at mass is to ...

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/17/faith-hope-and-secularity-ireland-on-brink-of-change-as-church-power-wanes>

Key Farming issues identified for NI elections

News Letter

Key issues affecting Northern Ireland's farming community have been revealed ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/farmers-set-out-list-of-concerns-before-assembly-election-1-7215897>

BBC

The children of farmers are going overseas to get jobs in agriculture because their parents can't pay them to stay at home and work the family farm.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35581194>

Why Pope John Paul's letters to married woman are a game changer for Church

Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/mary-kenny/why-pope-john-pauls-letters-to-married-woman-are-a-game-changer-for-church-34460258.html>

Irish prison officer IRA victim's son rejects Gerry Adams' claims

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/ira-victims-son-rejects-gerry-adams-claims-34459852.html>

Times/Guard/Premier

Article reports the comments of the Bishop of Burnley, Philip North at Synod that the CofE is too focused on the

middle class and middle-aged and needs take the "battle for the Christian soul of this nation" to urban housing estates, the young and ethnic minorities. During a debate on evangelism, Bishop Philip said the church centred its resources too heavily on the middle class and said it must step up its presence among poor communities. Comments by the Archbishop of Canterbury are quoted in the *Guardian* (*see above*). A summit to examine the issue is scheduled to take place next month in York.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4692300.ece>
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/16/church-life-is-fading-fast-in-poorer-communities-synod-warned>
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Bishop-slams-Church-for-preferring-the-rich>

BBC/Times/Christian Today/Premier

Reports that General Synod has backed a report proposing an agreement with the Church of Scotland (*see above*). The Columba Declaration paves the way for future joint working between the two churches.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-35581273>
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4692386.ece>
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/General-Synod-passes-historic-Columba-Declaration>

Tel/Pink News

Further coverage of plans for the General Synod in July to focus on small group discussions on the topics of same-sex marriage and homosexuality. The article reports the letter written by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York (*see above*) to Synod member Jane Ozanne, responding to one signed by her and other co-

signatories calling on the CofE to "repent" of its attitude towards homosexuality.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12159981/Church-of-Englands-centuries-old-teaching-on-marriage-up-for-discussion.html>

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/02/16/church-of-england-may-reconsider-equal-marriage/>

Premier

Reports that funerals and weddings conducted by the CofE will continue to have extra charges levied for the services like vergers and heating. The General Synod rejected a motion that would have meant all fees for services would be included in the one bill.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Synod-rejects-proposal-to-scrap-extra-charge-for-heating-at-funerals-and-weddings>

BBC

Hundreds of people have attended a thanksgiving service for the Suffolk author, gardener and broadcaster Peggy Cole at St Mary's church in Woodbridge. She acted in the 1974 film *Akenfield* about changing rural lives and the garden at her council house in Charsfield was a visitor attraction.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-35587604>

[Christian Today](#)

The article examines some of the reasons Christians stop attending church. It concludes that at the root of refusing to go to church is often a lack of realisation of how important church is. The author concludes that belonging to the church is an essential part of being a Christian.

Comment

Telegraph: "The #PrayForDawkins debacle shows how bitter and cynical we have become", writes Emma Yeomans. "What does it say about our society that some people can't even believe the Church of England is sincerely praying for its enemies?"

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12159291/The-PrayForDawkins-debacle-shows-how-bitter-and-cynical-we-have-become.html>

Spectator: Melanie McDonagh writes that "If I were Richard Dawkins I'd count me blessings" commenting on the tweeting of prayers for the professor who suffered a stroke."

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/if-i-were-richard-dawkins-id-count-my-blessings/>

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