



Irish guests at US Episcopal General Convention

Global dimensions are resonating throughout The Episcopal Church's General Convention as international guests representing many of the Anglican Communion's 38 provinces travelled to Salt Lake City. Guests attending the June 25-July 3 convention also include several ecumenical and interreligious partners who will look to gain a deeper understanding of The Episcopal Church's polity and legislative processes and celebrate their common mission.

"The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be with us. a full communion partner," said Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori as the convention opened. "There will be representatives from the Moravian church, also a full communion partner. The retired archbishop of the Church of Sweden will be with us. We, together with the Church of Sweden, have acted as though we were in full communion for more than 200 years. We have shared clergy. Our bishops have participated in the consecration of bishops in the other tradition. And he will be here at least in part in the expectation that at this convention we will affirm the reality of our full communion relationship.

"And there will also Jewish and Muslim leaders with us as a sign of our partnership with people of faith from our other traditions."

Jefferts Schori has said that including international guests is a "wonderful reminder of

how we are connected across boundaries. When we learn from one another, we seek ways of working that we might not have expected."

The Rev. Chuck Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop, who has coordinated much of the international visitors program in collaboration with staff of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's Global Partnerships Office, said "It is important to help leaders from the other parts of the Anglican Communion, as well as our ecumenical and interreligious partners, to understand who we are as a church and how we come to decisions. But it's also important for us to learn from them."

Although there are no official guests form the Church of Ireland attending the major General Convention of the Episcopal Church (TEC) in Salt Lake City, there are three with strong Irish roots.

Most RevDavid Chillingworth, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church is present. He is a member of key Anglican Communion committees. TEC has strong historic bonds with the Scottish Episcopal Church due to the historic episcopal ordinations via that church when the C of E could not take part in episcopal ordinations in the wake of the US War of Independence. The name of Seabury is especially revered.



Canon Michael Rusk

Canon David Porter, formerly of ECONI in Belfast, is the Archbishop of Canterbury's director for reconciliation.

The third Irishman is Canon Michael Rusk, whose father was a cleric in Connor diocese. Michael was born in Belfast in 1958. Growing up during The Troubles, he attended Methodist College while attending the Parish of St Simon of which his father was the Rector. Following Methodist College's fine tradition of producing classicists, Michael gained a place at Jesus College, Cambridge where he took degrees in Classics and Theology.

After a curacy near Manchester, Michael became a university chaplain in the Cathedral City of Durham, where he combined pastoral work with teaching Classics in the University. In 1990 Michael was appointed Priest-in-Charge of St John's Nevilles Cross: a church on the outskirts of Durham.

Through the 1990s, St John's became the fastest growing church in the north east of England, being noted for its diverse vibrant worship, excellent preaching, and warm fellowship. It has proved to be the seedbed of many today's leaders and scholars in the Anglican Communion - among them Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury; John Pritchard, former Bishop of Oxford; and Canon Dr. Chuck Robertson of the Episcopal Church.

In 1999, Michael was appointed Rector of Oadby in the Diocese of Leicester in the East Midlands of England. Oadby is a large multi-ethnic suburban parish in an area of fast demographic change. The beautiful medieval church of St Peter's dates back to 1253. It has a vibrant, creative congregation that has combined a fine aesthetic for music and the creative arts with pioneering partnerships of working with vulnerable adults. Michael is a Canon of St Martin's Cathedral Leicester and together with the Dean is responsible for preparing the cathedral for the anticipated burial of King Richard III whose remains were unearthed after a spectacular archaeological dig close-by the

Cathedral in 2013. The Cathedral is currently awaiting the outcome of a judicial review that takes place in March 2014.

In recent years, Michael, along with his colleague, the Revd. Bonnie Evans-Hills, has emerged as an expert in Christian-Muslim dialogue. Their book entitled *Engaging Islam from a Christian Perspective* was published last year in the Studies in Episcopal and Anglican Theology Series. Michael believes that working in a community where there are significant numbers of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs offers the church a great opportunity to demonstrate and to share the radical inclusive love of Christ with everyone of whatever faith.

Canon Rusk has a particular interest in two areas: the first is to attend to people and to society in their brokenness: "speaking about disappointment really touches people where it hurts. The Church is called to sing the gospel in the minor key." Secondly, he advocates that the church should develop a theology of play: "when we play, we relax and become attractive to others. Christians are called to be absorbed in God just as a child is absorbed in play. It is a way of rediscovering Eden. It is irresistibly attractive."

Chronic lack of social housing and accommodation - SVP

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has called on the Government to deliver its targets in 'Social Housing 2020' and expressed concern that the 2015 targets for new social housing won't be realised.

SVP wants the Government to incentivise landlords to rent to tenants on Housing Assistance Payment.

This is just one of many proposals from the SVP in its Budget 2016 submission to the Government.

The charity has day-to-day experience of what it calls the "chronic" lack of social houses and private rented accommodation for the people it helps.

It wants the Government to pay incentives to landlords who take on those in receipt of housing assistance and in return improve the quality and energy efficiency of the accommodation they offer.

It also called for an increase in Rent Supplement immediately.



"Some landlords are reluctant to participate in HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) as they see no advantage to entering into a long-term lease with a HAP tenant and not be free to take advantage of projected high rent increases – almost 10% annually in Dublin 5."

"Additionally, the limits on monthly rents that HAP recipients are allowed to pay are the same as those for Rent Supplement (RS). The limits do not meet market rents, and the gap is causing homelessness," states SVP in its submission.

The RS rent limit for Dublin, excluding Fingal, for a family with three or more children is €1,000 per

month. However, the average rent in Dublin in 2014 was €1,301 for a house.

The SVP has called on the Government to deliver on its targets in 'Social Housing 2020' but also expressed concern that the 2015 targets for new social housing will not be realised. It wants a review in early 2016 of the housing delivery to date against the targets.

In its pre-budget submission entitled 'Investing in What Matters', the SVP says that while it welcomes the reduced unemployment figures, it is concerned at low incomes.

"Wages and welfare supports are crucial – but so are affordable, quality services," the SVP stated.

"Early childhood care and education, as well as after school care provision, are totally inadequate and too expensive for people on lower incomes. This is particularly true for one parent families currently being required by Government to take up employment or increase their working hours. In addition private rented housing is incredibly expensive in main urban areas where most employment is located."

The Society believes that political will is required to make real change and to ensure an allocation of resources that will give an equal opportunity to all citizens, and break the cycle of poverty and inter-generational disadvantage.

"Much discussion has taken place over the past year in regard to ethics and the type of society we should aspire towards. Whilst these discussions have been useful we fear that they are now largely forgotten."

Atheist Ireland criticises RTÉ's Angelus revamp

Plans by RTÉ to revamp the Angelus to make it accessible to "people of all faiths and none" have been described as discriminatory because it would remain a Catholic call to prayer.

Irish Times - Atheist Ireland, which campaigns for the separation of church and state, said the national broadcaster's plan to retain the 18 peals of the Angelus bell during the "moment of reflection", as well as continuing to call it the Angelus, amounted to the "facilitation of Catholic pre-evangelisation".

It said RTÉ's plan contravened the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's code of programme standards and called on the station to reconsider its plans for the slot in order to make it "genuinely inclusive".

RTÉ has invited proposals for six new short films to be broadcast on RTÉ One television at 6pm every day in the *Angelus* slot before the main evening news.

The Angelus, a Catholic devotional prayer traditionally recited three times daily – at 6am, noon and 6pm – has been marked by RTÉ since 1950 on radio at noon and 6pm.

It is also broadcast on television at 6pm.

It was last revamped in 2009 when accompanying religious imagery was replaced with a film featuring people taking a minute for reflection.

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/atheist-ireland-criticises-rt%C3%A9-s-angelus-revamp-1.2261871

Down Synod rejects plea to stop increasing parochial levies

Down and Dromore's Diocesan Synod was held in St Comgall's, Bangor Parish, on 25 June 2015 where the day began with a service of Holy Communion. The preacher was Mr Peter Lynas of Evangelical Alliance.

Bishop Harold delivered his Presidential Address on the theme of 'Grace' before Communications from the General Synod were laid on the table and the Synod was informed about elections to the General Synod Board of Education.

Mr Michael Davey proposed the Report of the Diocesan Council and several members of Synod rose to comment on different aspects of it.

In Synod business, five motions were tabled, the first two of which concerned parochial assessments for the Diocesan General Fund. Motion 1 was proposed by Revd Kingsley Sutton (Newry) and seconded by Mr Michael Johnston (Cregagh, Belfast). Synod agreed by 110 votes to 80 to accept a recommended 1% increase in the overall assessment in 2016.

A second, related motion noted the financial strain that the assessment placed on some parishes. It was proposed by Revd Canon Jonathan Barry (Comber) and seconded by Revd Stanley Gamble (Killinchy, Kilmood & Tullynakill). It asked Synod to instruct the Diocesan Council to reduce expenditure in the diocese in due

course, so that the assessment on each parish may gradually be reduced, beginning in 2016. This was defeated by 91 votes to 81.

During the afternoon session Synod heard presentations on the charter for Dignity in Church Life (Janet Maxwell), and 3 faith courses – Alpha (Mr Dave Dickinson), Christianity Explored (Revd Peter Bourke) and Pilgrim (Revd Nigel Kirkpatrick). Diocesan Development Officer, Andrew Brannigan, also gave a presentation on the work of the Diocesan Youth, Children and Families Department.

In other motions, Synod voted for positive action on climate change and on people smuggling and migration.

New Extension to Bandonbridge National School opened

On Thursday, 25th June the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, performed the official opening of yet another extension to Bandonbridge National School, Bandon, Cork. This is the second such development to be dedicated by the Bishop and to be opened at the school in recent years.



The children of Bandonbridge National School gather in the playground with their teachers and Bishop for a Service of Thanksgiving. Photo: Trevor Collins

The morning started with a Service of Thanksgiving outdoors in the school playground. At the conclusion of the Service the Bishop, as is the custom in the school, presented each 'graduating' member of sixth class with a Bible. Traditionally the class group then inscribes each other's Bible.

Students and teachers were then joined outside the new extension by the Board of Management, parents and guardians, past-pupils, visitors from other schools, and local dignitaries, while the Bishop dedicated the new building. Mrs Harriet Pritchard, Principal of the School shared her memories of the school and expressed her gratitude to everyone for bringing the project to a conclusion

The chairperson of the Board of Management, Andrew Coleman, thanked each person involved in the project. Before officially opening the extension and cutting the tape (assisted by junior infants and politicians alike), the Bishop thanked all the partners in the school for making it the great school that it is, particularly the children, parents, staff, Principal, chairperson and Board of Management.

In addition to the grant from the Department of Education and Skills, the school community undertook significant additional fund-raising to achieve their goal for the school which has 212 pupils and 11 teachers. The transformation of the 1960s school building into a school hall is one of the features of the recent works. This was named in honour of the school's famous Principal, Miss Betty Beamish. Her niece, Mrs Dorothy Verplancke (herself former Principal of Templebreedy National School in Crosshaven, County Cork) was present to recall the giftedness as a teacher of her aunt and to unveil a plaque.

Among the guests on this occasion were Jim Daly, T.D., Michael McCarthy, T.D., Councillor Margaret Murphy-

O'Mahony, and Councillor James O'Donovan. The local rector, the Reverend Denis MacCarthy, was joined by the Very Reverend John Kingston, Parish Priest of Bandon, the Reverend Denis Maguire from Bandon Methodist Church, and other clergy from the Diocese including the Reverend Peter Hanna, and the Reverend Eileen Cremin. Chairpersons of the boards of management and school principals from schools in the Diocese were also present, along with Mr Billy Skuse, Diocesan Secretary, and Miss Susan Perrott, secretary to the Diocesan Education Committee. Afterwards everyone enjoyed wonderful hospitality in a marquee erected by parents in the school grounds.

Ancient Holy Well Rededicated at Drumcondra

Within the grounds of the church of St John the Baptist, Drumcondra, is an ancient holy well which for generations has been a part of the historic and ecclesiastical heritage of the area. A number of years ago the well was considered dangerous and was covered over. It has now been fully restored and decorative railings erected around it to define the well site and to ensure safety for those who visit. Traditionally the well has been resorted to by those seeking cures for eye complaints. The well was restored by a number of parishioners and friends.



Choir of Christ Church Cathedral at rededication of Drumcondra Holy Well

The well was rededicated at a service of Choral Evensong sung by the choir of Christ Church Cathedral as part of their Diocesan Music Outreach Project. This is a project which seeks to build strong and positive relationships with the parish churches of the dioceses.

The sermon was preached by the Residential Priest Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral, the Revd Garth Bunting, who expressed delight in being invited to preach at such an unusual occasion in the life of the Church of Ireland. He reminded the congregation of the endless possibilities for transformative engagement made possible by

the holy well and hoped it would become a place where the whole community could engage and live out the Gospel together.

Reflecting on the occasion after the service Canon Roy Byrne said he was delighted with the well restoration project. He thanked those who had carried out the work and those who had supported the project financially. He noted that the well was an ecumenical place of prayer and devotion, something which could and should be at the spiritual heart of the area. It is his hope that people would simply come and sit beside it in prayer and contemplation, take the waters in whatever way people found spiritually beneficial and use it as an opportunity for engagement with God the creator.

'Kids Big Adventure' days are back in October

Connor Diocese's 'Kids Big Adventure' days are back in October, with a host of activities planned for two venues.

The theme for this year's events, organised by Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton, is 'God's Big Garden' and the Big Adventure days will be hosted by Cloughfern



Parish on Saturday October 10 and Ballymoney Parish on Saturday October 17.

Each session will run from 2pm-5pm. Jill said: "We will be focusing on creation and the fall of mankind and looking at how God responded by sending Jesus."

Jill introduced the Kids Big Adventure Days last year, and almost 300 children and leaders

attended sessions in Ballymoney, Jordanstown and St Paul's, Lisburn, for fun, games, worship and learning on the theme 'One Big Step.'

"We really hope and pray that even more children and their leaders will come along and make Kids Big Adventure part of their yearly programme," said Jill.

Children from every parish in Connor are invited to attend. "We would love your church to be involved so why not plan to come along and participate this year!" said Jill.

"It's a chance for the children in Sunday Schools and other children's organisations to meet other children from across the diocese, have fun, connect with others and feel part of something bigger than their own church setting.

"It inspires us all to know that there are lots of children and leaders meeting all around the diocese learning about Jesus and trying to follow Him. For leaders, it is a chance to talk to others who are doing the same (sometimes challenging job) of teaching and enthusing children in their journey of faith.

"Many of the ideas/songs/resources used on the day can be used again by leaders in their own setting."

A leaders café will be available, so there is time to chat to others whilst enjoying a coffee and a homemade bun.

Registration packs will be sent to all churches at the beginning of September with flyers, posters etc. Extra packs and additional flyers etc. can be sent out on request. Download a <u>Kids Big Adventure flyer 2015</u>.

Service of Thanksgiving for outcome of referendum

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving for the outcome of the referendum at St Audoen's Church on Saturday June 27 at 11.30 am. The service will feature a number of speakers who will talk about why they are giving thanks.

Launch of Kells Type Trail

Kells TypeTrail 2015, 'IMAGINE' was launched on Thursday evening 25th June 2015 in The Church of Ireland, Church St, Kells, by Lindy Cooke, director, Hay Festival and the Hay Festival Kells.

Deirdre Gilsenan, sang the John Lennon song 'Imagine' at the launch of this, the sixth year of the Kells Type Trail, in which will see the word 'IMAGINE' appearing in various locations around the town. The Type Trail is a celebration of lettering as a modern art form. There will be an up to 25 type specific instillations the town of Kells. Each art work you will see different variations of this year's chosen word, interpreted in a variety of art forms by artists and local community groups.

- See more at: http://www.meathchronicle.ie/news/roundup/articles/2015/06/25/4038528-launch-of-kells-type-trail-this-evening/#sthash.AwDDdfw9.dpuf

Openly gay vocations officer for the Diocese of Bangor

The Bishop of Bangor, the Right Rev'd Andrew John, has announced the appointment of the Rev'd Dominic McClean as the new Vocations Officer for the Diocese of Bangor. Dominic will be working alongside the Ministry Archdeacon, the Venerable Mike West and the Training Officer, the Rev'd Susan Blagden. He will also have the role of Assistant Priest in the Bro Cyfeiliog and

Mawddwy Ministry Area, and will be based in Machynlleth.

Dominic was born and brought up in St Albans in Hertfordshire and studied Theology and Education at Leeds Trinity University. He then responded to God's call to Ordained ministry and went on to train at Allen Hall Seminary in Chelsea. He was ordained a Deacon at Westminster Cathedral by Cardinal Basil Hume in 1989.

He did further study at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury along with a course in counselling studies at Canterbury College. He worked in the Voluntary Community Sector running a number of organisations deeply engaged in community social action.

He undertook further ministerial training at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham and was received into the Anglican Church in 2010, and ordained as a priest in 2011 at Leicester Cathedral.

He served a curacy in the parish of St Catherine, Burbage (Hinkley), and then moved on to be the Team Rector of the Benefice of Market Bosworth and the Sheepy group, covering 13 churches and 20 communities.

Dominic has a civil partner, Anthony, who is a member of the Gorsedd. Together they enjoy bird watching, and both have a great concern and interest in the natural environment, and love Brittany.

From Meath & Kildare diocesan web site -

Recently a new Diocesan Link was launched between the Diocese of Bangor (north Wales) and Meath and Kildare.

"The diocese covers the counties of Anglesey, most of Caernarfonshire and Merionethshire and a small part of Montgomeryshire. The diocesan office is in the city of Bangor where the Cathedral Church of Saint Deiniol is also situated. Bishop Andy John is Bishop of Bangor.

"Bangor diocese shares many similarities with Meath and Kildare in that it is largely rural, with some large towns. It has also shared the experience of the rest of the Anglican Communion on these islands, in having to respond to the changing place of the Church in society.

"Bishop Pat and four other members of our diocese, Kevin Bowers (Chair of Finance & Glebes Committee), Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson, Canon John Clarke and Earl Storey visited Bangor over the weekend of 5-8 June this year. During their visit they met Bishop Andy John and members of his leadership team along with other members of the diocese.

"During the visit we had an opportunity to learn how the diocese has gone through a process of reenvisioning itself and planning for the future. Our group met with diocesan staff as well as people who were ministering in parishes. There was a sense of a diocese that had faced the significant challenges of a changing society but that was doing so with real hope and a planned determination

"The link was launched in Bangor Cathedral on Sunday 7th June, where Bishop Pat preached at two special services. To inaugurate the new link between the Dioceses, Bishop Andy presented Bishop Pat with a Pastoral Staff which had been specially made in the Diocese of Bangor. At an earlier meeting Bishop Pat had presented a gift of a pottery Chalice and Paten to the Diocese of Bangor."

Media digest

Gay marriage court battle to begin - Belfast Newsletter

http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/gay-marriage-court-battle-to-begin-1-6818922

Sinn Fein MP slammed for 'hypocrisy' on disabled protest - Belfast Newsletter

http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/sinn-fein-mp-slammed-for-hypocrisy-on-disabled-protest-1-6818832

Historical abuse inquiry: Cardinal Brady admits 'shroud of secrecy' over sex abuse investigations - Belfast Telegraph, Irish Times

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/historical-abuse-inquiry-cardinal-brady-admits-shroud-of-secrecy-over-sex-abuse-investigations-31328954.html

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religionand-beliefs/brady-s-evidence-raises-questionsabout-1975-abuse-investigation-1.2263279#.VYxuMyz3LE.twitter

Smyth victims take legal action against Gardaí - UTV news, News Letter

Victims of the paedophile priest Brendan Smyth have said they will be taking legal action against An Garda Síochána

http://www.u.tv/News/2015/06/25/Smyth-victims-take-legal-action-against-Gardai-39764

http://www.newsletter.co.uk/fr-brendan-smyth-victimsstart-legal-action-against-garda-1-6818948

Tel

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby writes ahead of the *Inclusive Capitalism* conference taking place Friday 26th.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11696974/ Capitalism-should-stop-being-so-self-serving.html

Guard/BBC/Mail

Reports on the first funerals of victims of the Charleston shootings. They state mourners gathered at the Royal Missionary Baptist church to pay final respects to 70-year-old Ethel Lance, who's funeral is the first to take place since mass shooting. A service was also held for victim Sharonda Coleman-Singleton at the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist church in North Charleston.

http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2015/jun/26/charleston-shooting-mourners-gather-for-first-funerals-since-massacre-video

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33258820 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3139304/First-funerals-begin-victims-church-massacre-claimed-nine-innocent-lives.html?

ITO=1490&ns mchannel=rss&ns campaign=1490

Tel

Report that the Labour leadership front-runner Andy Burnham has insisted faith schools must be forced to teach about gay and lesbian relationships on a par with heterosexual couples. The Shadow Health Secretary said those who argue that requiring all schools to teach about same-sex unions would be a threat to religious freedom were "straightforwardly wrong". Mr Burnham, who is from a Roman Catholic background, said he had gone through rifts with members of his own family after he become one of the first prominent MPs to publicly support same-sex marriage.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/andy-burnham/11699408/Faith-schools-must-be-forced-to-teach-about-homosexuality-Andy-Burnham.html

Mirror

Article on discovery of a tiny carving of the Chester Imp revealed by a drone camera filming high up on Chester Cathedral. A spokesman for the cathedral said they knew a sculpture was there, but footage taken by the flying drone gave them their first close-up of it. The drone was capturing footage for the city's new Chester Unlocked history trail..

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/prince-darkness-devil-statue-hidden-5949144

BBC

Article on the decline of religion in the West, looks at the issue of religious doctrine versus the law and also the survey by American Pew Foundation projecting decline in church attendance into the future.

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-33256561

Guard

Report that a rare copy of the first Bible to be printed in English, bought in a second hand bookshop by its current owner for 25 shillings (£1.25), is to be auctioned next month. The William Tyndale translation of the New Testament into English is expected to fetch around £35,000 at Sotheby's. It was printed in 1537, from Tyndale's first complete Bible printed in English in 1526. http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/26/rare-copy-of-first-bible-printed-in-english-to-be-auctioned

Mail/Tel

Further reports that headteacher, Stephanie O'Grady, at St Patrick's CofE Primary Academy in Birmingham has been sacked following accusations that pupils' answers were changed after their Key Stage 2 maths test had finished.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3138786/ Headmistress-Church-England-primary-school-sackedclaims-maths-exams-answers-changed.html http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/11698785/ Head-of-CoE-primary-sacked-after-pupils-maths-examanswers-were-doctored.html

Mail

Report that the US Episcopal Church's top legislative body is reviewing its policies on alcohol and addiction after a Maryland assistant bishop was charged with drunken driving while texting and killing a bicyclist. It states Cook, who has been defrocked, has pleaded not guilty to vehicular manslaughter, drunken driving and other charges.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3139560/ Episcopal-assembly-responds-fatal-drunken-drivingcase.html#ixzz3e8prNnN5