



Presbyterian Moderator begins last week in office

As Presbyterian Moderator Dr. Noble McNeely begins his final week in office on Monday, ahead of the Church's General Assembly which opens



on June 4, Dr. McNeely has said that throughout the year he has been “constantly reminded of the humbling experience it is to serve Christ and His church.”

[Writing a final blog for the Church's website presbyterianireland.org](http://presbyterianireland.org), Dr. McNeely spoke about the privilege it had been of meeting a “huge variety of amazing people” and how he had been “greatly heartened by the church that is responding to the pressures and challenges throughout Ireland.

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“We saw many church members, faithful Christian people, just getting on with life - being good neighbours and helping one another, recognising these demands and being prepared to try new ways to share the gospel,” he said.

“For me, the most outstanding memories have been the opportunities that we had to visit church members at home in Ireland and further afield. Many were just humbly and quietly getting on with their work - on top of their day jobs - witnessing for Christ and serving as His disciples. To see this commitment and compassion was amazing, especially in the rural areas. We sometimes forget their struggle, or fail to see the issues that farmers face. It has been a hard year for them, but we found a people committed to the church, their community and their faith.”

During his year in office Dr. McNeely and his wife Florence visited 69 churches where he then preached, while undertaking three busy weeklong tours of the denomination’s Dublin and Munster, Route and Derry and Donegal presbyteries. He also spent 12 days in Zambia seeing first-hand the work of one of PCI’s global mission workers, Diane Cusick.

“Being able to travel to Zambia was very special for Florence and me. This was an exceptional God given opportunity to see Diane at work in a very demanding environment,” Dr. McNeely said.

Dr. McNeely also spoke of his time in Cairo to attend the Reformation commemorations in Egypt, which was hosted by the Protestant Churches of Egypt, the organisation that represents 16 officially recognised reformed denominations in the country. “In the midst of many invitations the Church received during the special anniversary year, it was felt that it was important to attend as an act of solidarity with Christians of all denominations from across the Middle East, who as everyday disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ have suffered violence, death and general persecution on a scale that has not been witnessed in many years,” Dr. McNeely said.

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At home, the Moderator said that some of the events he and Florence attended were also poignant, like the anniversary of the La Mon Hotel bombing he had been invited to. "To see relatives - like so many others who were bereaved - participate with such outstanding dignity was inspirational." Another poignant and personal occasion came out of the blue when on a visit to Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, where Dr. McNeely found the name of a childhood Boy's Brigade friend on the last page of a Book of Remembrance. Corporal Trelford Withers had been the last Royal Irish Regiment soldier to be killed before the 1994 ceasefire.

"Seeing Trelford's name on an illuminated page, being at the La Mon commemoration and visiting the memorial to the victims of the Kingsmills Massacre; experiencing the emotion and just some of the pain and sense of loss brought to mind the importance of the whole issue of legacy and getting to grips with dealing with our troubled past, especially for the sake of those who still live with such pain and loss," he said.

Dr. McNeely will share his reflections in his final address as Moderator on the Opening Night of the Church's General Assembly on the evening of 4 June 4, which is open to the public. Members of Assembly and invited guests will join together in worship and witness the installation of the Church's 179th Moderator, Rev. Charles McMullen, minister of West Church, Bangor in County Down. The ceremony will be broadcast live on Radio Ulster 1341 Medium Wave from 7 pm. A live daily Twitter feed can be followed at @pciassembly, or using the hashtag #pciga18.

You can read more of Dr. McNeely's reflections on his year in office in his blog at www.presbyterianireland.org.

Bishop Michael Curry leads anti-Trump protest

US Bishop Rt Rev Michael Curry has led a march protesting against President Donald Trump's "America First" agenda.



The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, who preached a sermon about the power of love at Prince Harry and Meghan's royal wedding on Saturday, shared a similar message to an audience in Washington DC on Thursday.

"Love the neighbour you like and love the neighbour you don't like. Love the neighbour you agree with and the neighbour you don't agree with," he said at National City Christian Church.

"Love your Democrat neighbour, your Republican neighbour. Your black neighbour and your white neighbour, your Anglo neighbour, your Latino, your LGBTQ neighbour."

Following the service, Bishop Michael as well as other church leaders and protesters marched peacefully with candles to Lafayette Square - a park facing the White House.

They formed a prayer circle and read a declaration which called for Christians to reject the "growing attacks on immigrants and refugees who are being made into cultural and political targets".

"We believe two things are at stake: the soul of the nation, and the integrity of faith," they said.

"We reject 'America First' as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject

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xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal.

"We reject the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership."

More than 2,000 people were in attendance.

St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin hosts 'Uprooted' exhibition for Christian Aid Week 2018

Christian Aid Ireland's 'Uprooted' exhibition was launched in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, recently in aid of Christian Aid Week 2018. The guest of honour was the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, The Very Revd Dr William Morton.

'Uprooted' displays stories from people forced to flee from their homes due to conflict in places like Iraq and Nigeria, and because of drought in Kenya. More than 40 million people have been forced to flee by conflict, and a further 24 million were forced to flee by disasters in 2016 alone. Yet, because they haven't crossed a border, they receive almost no political attention, funding or support.

Speaking at the launch, Dean Morton said: "We are delighted to launch Uprooted this morning for Christian Aid Week, to highlight the organisation's work to support those who have been forced to abandon their homes. The stories and photographs displayed illustrate the difficulties faced by people uprooted from their homes and villages, but also seek to inspire, with examples of how host communities and individuals have extended their hospitality to people in need."

Jane Burns, Christian Aid Ireland's Church and Community Officer said, "We are most grateful to Dean Morton and St Patrick's Cathedral for their incredible support of our exhibition and for hosting a coffee morning today, to raise funds for our work.

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Christian Aid Ireland believes that everybody counts. Our Christian Aid Week appeal this year highlighted the situation faced by people in Haiti who have survived earthquakes and hurricanes and who have been reached with new disaster-resistant homes”



Dean William Morton and Jane Burns of Christian Aid Ireland in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

Jane also added a sincere thank you on behalf of Christian Aid Ireland to St Patrick's Cathedral, "The support of the congregation in St Patrick's Cathedral, and from the Church of Ireland, is enabling us to reach out to many people in need and is making a huge difference to reducing poverty and tackling injustice. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all at St Patrick's Cathedral for their generous support through our Christian Aid Week coffee morning and for hosting our exhibition."

Christian Aid Week is supported by an incredible network of volunteers from local churches across the island of Ireland, who fundraise in their communities. If you would like to support Christian Aid Ireland's work please go to www.christianaid.ie or call the Dublin office 00 353 (0)1 4967040.



Two routes for Slieve Bloom Hike will help global neighbours

Whether you're an intrepid hiker or a first timer, the Slieve Bloom Way will satisfy any

ability. The area is picturesque, peaceful and one of the least explored in Ireland.

This year's hike offers two scenic routes, a 13km (4.5hr) hill hike and a 6km (2.5hr) family-friendly walk through flat woodland terrain. The 13km hill hike will be led by local guide and [Collite Trails](#) Manager - Richard Jack. Richard has extensive knowledge in the history, flora and fauna of the Slieve Bloom Way.

The cause

Vilia lost her mum and her home when an earthquake struck Port-au-Prince in 2010. Bereaved and homeless, she went back to her home town with her husband and children. But life was a struggle, and they had nowhere safe to live. Christian Aid partner KORAL built her a new home that was strong enough to stand up to natural disasters.

On the terrifying night when Hurricane Matthew hit, Vilia's neighbours fled to shelter with her. As the storm raged, she shared her home with more than 50 of her neighbours for several days. Despite the ferocity of the hurricane, which swept away surrounding homes, her house was barely damaged.

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Vilia allowed her home to become an emergency shelter when Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti. She is incredibly grateful for the help she's received but worries about those without a secure home.



We know how to make it happen – of the 700 houses we built after the 2010 earthquake, just one needed to be repaired after

Hurricane Matthew. But we're relying on the kindness of people like you to be able to do more, and reach more of our global neighbours in their hour of need.

[Will you walk or hike Slieve Bloom and #StandTogether with your global neighbour Vilia and help build hope in some of the world's poorest countries?](#)

Registration

Registration for both walks takes place at 11am in the [Clonaslee community centre](#). Both walks begin at noon and refreshments for the 6km walk is available at 2.30pm and 5pm for the 13km hill hike. Refreshments are in the community centre.

The Slieve Bloom hike is supported by churches and communities in Tullamore, Mountmellick, Roscrea and other towns across counties Laois and Offaly. We thank all communities involved for their continuing support.

For further information on the Slieve Bloom Hike, or if you have any questions please contact Andrew Coleman on 023 88 41468 or email acoleman@christian-aid.org.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Join in “pilgrim prayers” for women overcoming violence



People across the world will have an opportunity to join in a special prayer for women who are standing strong in the face of gender-based violence.

Each Thursday, beginning 31 May, the World Council of Churches (WCC) will release via its website and social media a prayer shared by members of “Pilgrim Teams” who have been visiting communities in conflict, and hearing the stories of women who are facing sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence and other injustices.

These “pilgrim prayers” will reflect the experiences of Pilgrim Team members who, during the past two years, have been witnessing the deep wounds among women in conflict situations.

Pilgrims visited Abuja, Jos and Yola in Nigeria in August 2017, and Burundi in December 2017. In February 2018, pilgrim teams visited Cauca, Uraba, Atlantic Coast, Bogota, Barranquilla, Valledupar and churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Bolivar in Colombia. A visit also took place in Juba, South Sudan in May this year.

“In all the countries we have visited so far we were not prepared for the stories that our sisters have shared,” said Isabel Apawo Phiri, deputy general secretary of the WCC. “Our sisters are carrying unspeakable wounds. The women’s strength comes from their faith in God who is able to transform the conflict to justice and peace.”

The weekly prayers will be shared as part of “Thursdays in Black,” a global movement resisting attitudes and practices that perpetuate rape and violence.

[Thursdays in Black](#)

Women of Courage at St Paul’s cathedral

In 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed which allowed women over the age of 30 who met a property qualification to vote. Although 8.5 million women met these criteria, it only represented 40 per cent of the total population of women in the UK.

It was not until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 that women over 21 were able to vote and women finally achieved the same voting rights as men. This act increased the number of women eligible to vote to 15 million. To mark the anniversary of the Representation of the People Act, and the installation of the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally as the first female Bishop of London, St Paul’s is focusing on the lives of several extraordinary women who have been celebrated in the cathedral or have played a significant role in its life and work.

More at -

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/history-collections/history/women-of-courage>

News briefs

+++C of I BISHOP SPEAKS AT SOLEMN NOVENA - The 4th Night of Solemn Novena on Tuesday 22nd May was a very unique

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occasion. The only female Bishop in Ireland - Bishop Pat Storey, Church of Ireland, Bishop of Meath & Kildare was the guest speaker. Canon Lynda Peilow, Edenderry introduced her Bishop as her friend and classmate. Bishop Pat spoke of her own faith journey, which began in her student years in Trinity College, Dublin, the big congregation enjoyed her humorous stories and her inspiring words of wisdom. Fr. McEvoy celebrated the Mass and read out a sample of the hundreds of petitions, a feature of the Novena. St. Mary's choir led the singing. The Mass concluded with Benediction. The guests later gathered with the Liturgy committee for a cuppa in the Priest's house next door to the Church. Next Tuesday 29th May - Kathleen Chada: a native of Ballymurphy, Co. Carlow is the guest speaker. Kathleen is a remarkable person, living with great courage and hope after a devastating tragedy to her family.

+++SERMON AT BELFAST IDAHO SERVICE - You can now read the sermon preached by Rt Rev Trevor Williams at the IDAHOT service at St Georges Belfast on Sunday LAST

<http://changingattitudeireland.org/news-blog/sermons-addresses/bishop-trevor-williams-address-at-idahot-service-st-georges-belfast-20th-may-2018/>

+++NEW PRESENTER OF SOUNDS SACRED - Richard Yarr, who is well known in church music circles, has been appointed to succeed Canon Noel Battye as the new presenter of BBC Radio Ulster's long-running sacred music programme, Sounds Sacred. The programme returns, with Richard behind the mic, on Sunday 3 June at 5pm. You can send on your requests and event news to sounds.sacred@bbc.co.uk

+++ DIVINE HEALING MINISTRY - DHM are very much looking forward to a visit from Pastor Hendrik Hoere and a team from Columbia from 18th June 2018. Pastor Hendrik will speak at the 1pm Holy Communion service in St George's, High Street and again at the Monday night service of healing in St Anne's at 8pm and also at St Finnian's Church, Cregagh on Tuesday 19th. The visit will also allow time to plan for the visit of DHM to Bolivia in October, 2018.

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+++ DERRY CATHEDRAL - This Sunday is Trinity Sunday. Family Service at 10.00am, sung by the Ladies Choir. 11.00am, Choral Eucharist with music by Franz Joseph Haydn (Little Organ Mass) and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (Hymn to the Trinity). 4.00pm, Choral Evensong sung by the Cathedral Chamber Choir. Music is by Thomas Attwood Walmisley (Evening Service in D minor) and Grayston Ives (Listen sweet dove).

+++ EAST BELFAST MISSION AQUA RACES - Take on the ultimate summer challenge this August by taking competing in the East Belfast Mission Aqua Races! Race across an inflatable obstacle course on water with a team of 5 friends, family or colleagues and compete to see which team can complete it in the fastest time. Get sponsored to dash through the course, climb up the XXL Action Tower and jump off into the water, all to help raise funds for East Belfast Mission's vital work with the most vulnerable people in inner East Belfast. *All welcome from the age of 7, 110 cm tall – you must be comfortable in water and able to swim.* In association with Cable & Wake, Aqua Park. Friday 24th August, Knockbracken Reservoir, Carryduff, BT8 8BP. Sign up costs £50 per team of 5. Minimum fundraising £500 per team. To sign up now email fundraising@ebm.org.uk or call 028 9045 8560

+++PAPAL INDULGENCES FOR WORLD FAMILIES MEETING - Vatican News has reported that Pope Francis will grant plenary indulgences for those who participate in the events of the ninth World Meeting of Families, which will take place in Dublin from 21-26 August, according to a decree published on Monday 21 May by the Apostolic Penitentiary. Pope Francis is offering the possibility of indulgences so that those who participate will be 'spiritually prepared in the best way possible', the decree states.

+++PAPAL NUNCIO TO JOIN CLOGHER PILGRIMS - Up to 500 people are expected to take part in the annual Clogher Diocese pilgrimage to Lough Derg, which will take place today Saturday 26 May. Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, His Excellency Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, will join the pilgrims on the day in what will be his first visit to the Sanctuary of Saint Patrick since he took up his appointment to Ireland last year. The pilgrimage is being led by the

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Diocesan Administrator, Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, and will see up to 500 pilgrims travel from the 37 parishes across the Diocese of Clogher.

+++PORTSTEWART SUPPORT FOR BABY BASICS PROJECT - Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton travelled to Agherton Parish on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, to collect donations for the Baby Basics initiative. Baby Basics is a project run by Connor's Centre of Mission based in the Connect Base, Shankill Road, Belfast, and Agherton is the latest Connor parish to rise to the Baby Basics' four-week challenge. The rector, the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, encouraged the congregation to take part in the challenge which involves buying a few extra items along with the weekly shop; items like baby equipment, toiletries and baby clothes, and then bringing them along to church over a period of four weeks. The final date for the collection at Agherton was Pentecost Sunday, and as the congregation focused on Pentecost and the birth of the church, it was a fitting way to mark this special date by handing over their donations to Baby Basics. The project gives assistance to families who have just had a new birth of their own.

