

## **CNI Evening Post and [www.review](http://www.review) June 6**

### **Irish education focus at General Assembly tomorrow**

On the second full day of business at this year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) meeting in Belfast, matters concerning the public square feature heavily, with members discussing education in the Republic of Ireland, proposals on the Eight Amendment of the Irish Constitution in relation to abortion and the political situation in Northern Ireland.

In January of this year, the Minister of Education and Skills in the Republic of Ireland set out four possible approaches for changing the rules on school admissions to faith based schools. Currently when a denominational school is oversubscribed, it may give priority in admissions to children of families of a particular

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religious denomination to ensure that the ethos of the school is maintained.

The Assembly will debate the four possible policy options, which would either diminish or remove the role of faith in determining admissions to oversubscribed faith-based schools.

As part of their witness and work in the community, Presbyterians have sought to provide a place of education for their children and the wider community. All the options set out by the Minister present potential problems for minority faith schools in the Republic of Ireland, and so a resolution before the Assembly calls upon the Irish Government to ensure the sustainability of schools with a Protestant ethos.

The General Assembly will keep its focus on the Republic of Ireland when it will discuss the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, which acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and the equal right to life of the mother. In April of this year, the Citizens' Assembly recommended a change to the Constitution and significant widening of access to abortion, including abortion on request.

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## Newtownards churches now planning for Christmas

Okay, maybe it's a little bit odd to be sitting in the warmth of June organising a major event for December!

But plans for Glen Community Church's Christmas Tree Festival in Newtownards are at an advanced stage.

This Christmas Tree Festival is part of the bi-centenary celebrations of St Mark's, Newtownards, the Glen's 'sending' church. The event will support the sustainability of St Mark's church family in the Glen, as well as being a blessing to the school community.

From Friday, December 8 through to Sunday, December 10, the festival will be staged in Londonderry Primary School, Glenbrook Road, Newtownards where the Church Plant meets for worship and some of its mid-week outreach. It will run on Friday (8pm–10pm), Saturday (10am–10pm) and Sunday (2pm–6pm). The larger spaces within the school will be transformed into a Dickensian backdrop to complement the many bespoke Christmas trees designed by members of the church family, pupils from the school, the local community and

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local businesses. The school orchard will be specially illuminated, bringing to life a veritable winter wonderland, complete with Santa's Grotto.

## **Journalist Rev Giles Fraser moved to tears by support after heart attack**

A priest and journalist has thanked people for messages of support after revealing he suffered a heart attack at the weekend. Rev Giles Fraser announced he would not be working again for some time and praised the medical staff who had looked after him.

Writing on Twitter, the Church of England priest and Guardian newspaper writer said: "Thank you for all well wishes. I had a heart attack on Sunday and gonna be off for a while enjoying the hospitality of the wonderful NHS.

"Thank you for that kindness, twitter. You have made me cry."

Messages of supporting came from figures including Daily Telegraph writer Tim Stanley who said "Oh no! I had no idea. I'll pray for you. Get

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well soon." and author Dr Mark Stibbe: "Praying for you Giles and sending lots of love x".

Rev Fraser said on Twitter "thank you" to the doctor attending to him in accident and emergency - who had also been responding to people caught up in the terrorist attack to hit London Bridge and Borough Market on Saturday night.

He also thanked a hospital chaplain who delivered a cross and a prayer, which read: "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and grant you his gift of healing and peace."

## **Syrian Christians ask for prayer as they fight to claim Raqqa back from ISIS**

Christians are fighting among Kurdish-led forces to free the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces have begun an offensive to capture the northern city.

Johannes de Jong works closely with Syriac-Assyrian Christians involved in the campaign. He gave Premier News Hour a description of the resistance Christian fighters face from ISIS. He

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said: "The very clear picture they're giving me is that there's a wall around Raqqa, they put it full of mines.

"You have to imagine a situation where they have to fight for every street and every house.

"It will be bad. There are still a lot of civilians they [ISIS] will use as human shields.

"They still have high end military equipment they stole in their past from places like Mosul. It will be tough".

De Jong said the Syriac-Assyrian Christians are desperate for the support and prayers of the international Christian community. He said prayers should be focused on strength and resources for the fighters. "Pray that as many as possible will make it through and this fight will not be too long.

De Jong added: "Pray that there will be guns and ammunition for Syriac-Assyrian Christians while part of this fight to liberate Raqqa. "Your prayer shouldn't be lofty, but we should pray to Jesus for the daily bread."

## **Rector appointed to Fermanagh parish**

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The Revd Paul Thompson has been appointed rector of Derryvullen North and Castle Archdale Group of Parishes. Revd Thompson, who is a native of Dungannon, grew up in Co Armagh and studied Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies at Trinity College Dublin before attending the Church of Ireland Theological College.

Following ordination he served first in the Diocese of Down and Dromore and then in the Diocese of Connor for almost 11 years before joining HM Prison Service in England where he has served as a Senior Chaplain for just over 17 years. While in the Prison Service he also trained as a Therapeutic Counsellor. Revd Thompson and his wife, Lorraine have two grown up sons, Hugh and Oliver.

Looking forward to his appointment, Revd Thompson stated: “Being appointed to Derryvullen North and Castle Archdale is an exciting time for us. Lorraine and I are looking forward to settling down in the area and getting to know people.

“While I enjoy the wide variety of ministry, including worship, organisations and teaching, one of the things I enjoy most is being with people, the pastoral aspects, being part of the community.”

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“My interests include cycling, ancient history, geology and writing,” he added. Details of his institution will be announced in due course.

## **WWW Review**

### **New Presbyterian Moderator on Christian fear of post-modern world**

Incoming Irish Presbyterian Moderator the Rev Dr Noble McNeely has asserted that many Christians in Ireland are finding it more difficult to share their Christian faith in a complex post-modern world situation.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/new-presbyterian-moderator-christians-must-assert-their-faith-1-7994107>

### **Community shock at sudden death of Presbyterian minister**

A rural farming community in Co Tyrone has been “deeply shocked and saddened” by the loss of a “gentleman” cleric who put his energy into his community and was devoted to his family.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/shock-at-gentleman-cleric-s-sudden-death-1-7994251>

### **Head of Irish Islamic centre warns of those spreading hate.**

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/head-of-irish-islamic-centre-warns-of-those-spreading-hate-1.3109227>



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## **Upset and shaken - Galway mosque attacked during Ramadan**

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/muslims-terrified-after-galway-mosque-attacked-during-prayers-1.3109231>

## **London attacker used Rathmines address when he got married**

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/london-attacker-used-rathmines-address-when-he-got-married-1.3109353>

## **Bishop- Manchester has yet to grieve over attack**

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/06/bishop-manchester-has-yet-to-grieve-over-attack/>

## **Pioneering QUB leader touched so many lives**

The field of cancer research has suffered an “enormous loss” with the sudden death of Professor Patrick Johnston.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/pioneering-qub-leader-patrick-johnston-touched-lives-of-so-many-1-7994116>

## **Jail term sought for director of Irish college Louvain**

<http://www.rte.ie/news/courts/2017/0606/880476-court-leuven-fire/>

## **Six killed on Irish roads since Saturday**

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<http://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2017/0606/880529-m1-dunleer-rta/>

### **300,000 Russians queue to see relics of St Nicholas.**

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/06/more-than-300000-russians-queue-to-see-relics-of-st-nicholas/>

### **Thief steals part of St John Bosch's brain**

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/05/thief-steals-part-of-st-john-boscoss-brain/>

### **Tories lead narrows to one per cent**

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2017/0606/880469-theresa-may/>

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