



Scottish Episcopal Church to hold historic vote today on gay marriage

The Scottish Episcopal Church will on Thursday hold an historic vote over whether same-sex couples should be allowed to marry in church.

The vote could make the denomination the first Anglican Church in the UK to allow gay couples to wed, putting it at odds with the majority of the global Anglican Communion.



Speaking ahead of the vote, the conservative Anglican group the Global Anglican Future Conference said: "If this action is taken by the SEC it will further marginalise faithful Anglicans in Scotland who seek to uphold Jesus' teaching on marriage."

A motion to change canon law on marriage will be debated by the Church's governing body, its General Synod, in Edinburgh.

Synod last year ruled that the issue should be discussed across its seven dioceses. Six voted in favour of changing the law, with only Aberdeen and Orkney opposing.

A so-called "conscience clause" in the motion would allow churches an opt-out. To pass, the motion will need to secure support from two-thirds of the Synod's three houses; Bishops, Clergy and Laity.

Most Rev David Chillingworth Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, said: "At this General Synod we reach the final stage of our discussion of marriage and of same sex marriage in particular.

"The Scottish Episcopal Church, in common with all other churches, expresses a diversity of views on this question. Those views are held with integrity.

"Our church will seek to reach a decision on the canonical question while sustaining its unity in Christ. To do so will require both humility and generosity on all sides."

Same sex marriage became legal in Scotland in the end of 2014, despite opposition from the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church.

‘Politicians are letting Northern Ireland down’ PCI Assembly told

Political leaders in NI have been told they are being put to shame by the hard-working people of the Province, the News Letter reports.

Speaking as the General Assembly of the PCI discussed the current political crisis, Rev Daniel

Kane of West Church in Ballymena said the big talking point in the Co Antrim town was the lack of “grown up political leadership”.

He said: “The sad thing is that in contrast to this lack of political leadership is the quality of our commerce, our industry, our engineering and our technological expertise. We punch way above our weight on the global stage.”



Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton (above) was particularly critical of politicians for their lack of civility.

He commented: “Back in 2015 this (PCI) Assembly passed a resolution urging all those

who speak in the public square to do so with conviction, knowledge and civility. “Little seems to have changed – from phone-in programmes to political speechmaking. In re-affirming our commitment to civilised debate, I am sure that the whole Assembly regards it every bit as reprehensible to celebrate or seek the death of a political opponent as it is to engage in abusive and vulgar language in the European parliament. “Public discourse still needs serious upgrading, for low language keeps the sectarian pot boiling.”

Very Rev Dr Roy Patton said: “We pray that by God’s grace outpoured they will be able to rise above party political interests and work together for the common good.” The General Assembly resolved to express its “serious disquiet about the damage being done to the fabric of society” by the current crisis, and “strongly encourage all involved in upcoming political talks to urgently seek a resolution that establishes good government based on good working relationships”.

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Bellringers around the world sought for special day

Bellringers at cathedrals and churches around the world are being invited to join a worldwide day of music organised by the BBC. Already 20 locations outside the UK, including Kenya, Australia, Zimbabwe and the United States have signed up to take part in BBC Music Day at 7pm, local time, on Thursday 15 June.

The sound of bells proved to be a popular feature of the event last year with peals ringing from around 200 towers. Organisers are hoping

to build on that success by encouraging many more people to participate this year. Groups taking part are being asked to send a recording of their ringing to the organisers in advance. The organisers are gathering various performances to put on the BBC's "Bells on Sunday" [webpage](#). And, on the day itself, participants will be encouraged to be part of a global phenomenon by posting on social media pictures or videos of themselves ringing and by including the hash tag #bbcmusicday. The BBC World Service will also broadcast some performances from the Music Day.

BBC Music Day producer, Rebecca Sandiford, said, "Church bells are a wonderful symbol of community cohesion and since BBC Music Day is all about uniting people through music, bell ringing is going to provide a fantastic unifying moment. This year we'd like to make this even more special by inviting ringers around the globe to join us, ringing at 7pm local time, to show how the power of music can unite people around the world."

Anyone interested in taking part should email bbcmusic@bbc.co.uk for more details and resources.



**Michael Mulcahy, Chairman of the Cork Civic Trust
with Bishop Paul Colton.**

Spirit of Cork Award for Bishop Colton

Cork Civic Trust as organisers of *The Spirit of Cork Award* has announced that it will bestow the 2017 award on Dr Paul Colton, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

The Chairman of Cork Civic Trust, Michael Mulcahy, said:

“Cork Civic Trust, as hosts of *The Spirit of Cork Award 2017*, is very pleased to confirm that Dr Paul Colton is to be its recipient for the 2017

award. Through *Spirit of Cork*, our city and county has the opportunity to honour and recognise people who have made a real difference to Cork and her people. *Spirit of Cork* is an honour and recognition for people that we are proud to be part of our Cork family.

The Board of Cork Civic Trust has decided that Bishop Paul is a worthy recipient of this acknowledgment and has decided this for the following reasons –

- To honour him as Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross for the 18 years that he has served in Cork
- To recognise his outstanding leadership of people
- To recognise the affection that the people have for him as a person and Church leader
- To recognise his inclusiveness for all in our society
- To recognise his ability to speak out and be heard in Civic, Church and State matters
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This is only the third time that this award will have been presented. The inaugural recipient was Dr Edward Kiely of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, and in 2015 Cork man and leading sports broadcaster and businessman, the late Bill O' Herlihy was the recipient.

We believe that Bishop Paul is an excellent choice for *The Spirit of Cork Award 2017* and we look forward to presenting it to him at a formal Civic Dinner in December.”

Belfast Cathedral appoints assistant organist

St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, has announced the appointment of Dr Ed Jones as Assistant Organist. Ed, 28, is currently Organ Scholar at Exeter Cathedral, and will join the Music Department at St Anne's in January 2018.

Born and bred in Aberdeen, Ed played the cello and piano, but only began playing the organ when he was at Aberdeen University where he did Music Degree followed by a PhD in Choral Composition.



He will succeed St Anne's Organist Ian Barber and Assistant Master of the Choristers Thérèse Woodfield who will both leave the Cathedral later this year. The new role is an amalgamation of these two. More at - <http://connor.anglican.org/2017/06/07/st-annes-appoints-assistant-organist/>

Membership of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission announced

The membership of the newly-established Safe Church Commission has been announced. The



Commission has been established to promote the safety of people within the churches of the Anglican Communion. Garth Blake SC of the Anglican Church of Australia will chair the Commission.

Mr Blake is a member of the Anglican Consultative Council and has served as the chair of the Anglican Church of Australia's Child Protection Committee. He is currently the Convener of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network.

"I am very much looking forward to chairing the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission",

he said. “The Commission has come from a deep desire within the Communion to fulfil the biblical mandate for the safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. Its creation is vital and timely.”

The establishment of a Commission to promote the safety of people within the churches of the Anglican Communion was requested by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 in its resolution ACC 16.25. This was in response to a deep concern that lapses in behaviour by some clergy and church workers in a number of Anglican Provinces have had tragic consequences for those who have been abused. During the next three years, the Commission will identify safeguarding policies and procedures already in place, and develop guidelines and accompanying resources that will assist churches throughout the Communion to be places of safety.

The guidelines and resources will take into account the ‘Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion’ adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 and also the ‘Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion’. The Protocol was drafted by the Anglican Communion

Safe Church Network and welcomed by the Anglican Consultative Council in resolution ACC 16.27.

Thy Kingdom Come prayers in 85 countries

It has emerged that churches in eighty five countries participated in Thy Kingdom Come, a prayer initiative between Ascension Day and Pentecost (25th May – 4th June). Prayer events of all shapes and sizes took place, including round-the-clock prayer rooms, prayer days, prayer walks and half-nights of prayer.

People gathered across cities and towns to worship and to pray for the empowering of the Holy Spirit for effective witness.

In England 35 cathedrals were involved in running a prayer event. St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, Australia, hosted a beacon event last Saturday. On Facebook the organisers wrote: "A river of light extends from the High Altar at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne for #thykingdom #melbeacon17. They represent the people for whom we have prayed this week. We pray for God's Kingdom to come and our world to be transformed. Come, Holy Spirit."



Millions of people also engaged through social media. The project manager for Thy Kingdom Come, Emma Buchan, said international engagement far exceeded expectations: “Every diocese in England was involved and with so many events across the globe, it went way beyond what we could have imagined. We have got a firm foundation now and we aim to build on it for next year and expand it ecumenically; we hope this will become an annual time of intense prayer.”

In the days leading up to Thy Kingdom Come, Archbishop Moon Hing, of the Province of South East Asia, captured the excitement of the



St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne - designed by the same architect of St Mark's, Dundela, Belfast

build up: “Individuals, cell-groups, churches, regional gatherings and diocesan gatherings for this 10-Days Prayer will take place in 5 different languages, namely English, Chinese, Tamil, Iban and Bahasa Malaysia. We are very excited. Prayer booklets for the 10 days are produced for everyone in the parishes. Banners and posters have already been out in the churches. Tens of thousands will be mobilised to pray during these 10 days specifically for ourselves, our churches and our nation seeking

God's agenda and direction, vision and desires for our land.”

On Pentecost Sunday morning BBC television in Britain broadcast a live service with Archbishop Justin Welby. It came just hours after a terrorist attack in London in which eight people were killed and the service was amended to take account of the tragedy. The programme attracted double the usual number of viewers. Archbishop Justin spoke afterwards of the prayerful intensity of the service, at a time of national sadness. He also said it was one of the best services he had ever been involved with.

Reflecting on Thy Kingdom Come, Archbishop Justin said that behind the initiative was a good Anglican principle of lighting the spark and then letting the thing develop: "We let go of it so as not to control it.....people around the world were therefore praying in a way that was culturally appropriate for them.. It caught the imagination. We need to do what the Anglican Communion has always done – know the theological boundaries but give people their freedom.”

Today in Christian History, June 8

June 8, 793 (traditional date): Vikings attack the monastery at Lindisfarne, Scotland. The date is often considered the first event of the "Viking Age"

June 8, 1536: Following Henry VIII's Declaration of Supremacy, English clergy draw up the Ten Articles of Religion, the first articles of the Anglican Church since its break from Roman Catholicism.

June 8, 1794: French revolutionaries replace Christianity with a deistic religion honoring a trinity of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." They renamed churches "Temples of Reason," and a new calendar announced a 10-Day week and holidays commemorating events of the revolution. The "reign of terror" followed, with some 1,400 people losing their heads. Napoleon recognized the church again in 1804, then proceeded to imprison Pope Pius VII.

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