AN UNPRECEDENTED SITUATION

Covid-19 impacts on Church and community

A NEW ARCHBISHOP

The Rt Rev Dr John McDowell

HISTORY COMES ALIVE

In St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork
The world is reeling from the Covid-19 virus, affecting countries rich and poor – no one knows what will happen or what to do.

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Cover photo: Students step back in time to re-enact the first reading of the Church’s Preamble and Declaration in Cork in 1870. Story on page 31. (Photo: Jim Coughlan).

Readers, contributors and parish Gazette representatives are asked to visit our website at www.gazette@ireland.anglican.org for updates on plans for the Gazette in the coming weeks as action to contain the spread of Covid-19 continues. Thank you for your continued support.


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Cover photo: Students step back in time to re-enact the first reading of the Church’s Preamble and Declaration in Cork in 1870. Story on page 31. (Photo: Jim Coughlan).
What strange times indeed. Weeks ago, it would have seemed unimaginable that schools, restaurants, theatres, shops and - painfully - churches would all have shut their doors in a bid to prevent the spread of a deadly disease. It will be an Easter like no other.

Already, a world without coronavirus, without social distancing, a world with normal human contact, an embrace, a handshake, a world where supermarket shelves were fully stocked and where we ate dinner with friends, seems hard to comprehend.

Doing the right thing can be difficult. Before heading on a school ski trip - when coronavirus was just a nasty bug in a faraway country - my 14-year-old expressed concern that she might catch it when she was away. Shame on me, I laughed. I wasn’t laughing when, days after her return from northern Italy, the 80 students on the trip were sent home to self-isolate.

After consulting a GP, she did return to school, but we genuinely did not know the right thing to do. There was no shortage of advice on social media, some of it very aggressive.

Social media has good points and bad. Right now, clergy across this island are getting to grips with technology and sharing prayers, readings and full services via Facebook, YouTube and others. Some have already been doing this - for others, it is a steep learning curve - but they are doing it and doing it well. Having been thrust into a new digital world through this crisis, our churches may be reaching people who would not normally come on a Sunday, as well as those who do.

Parishes and communities are also doing what they can to help anyone isolated or vulnerable - shopping, food deliveries, runs to the pharmacy, phone calls and more. These actions are being repeated around the world - humanity at its best, for once united against a common enemy.

Social media can be a great source of information, but also a source of fear, of terrifying facts and fake news. On page 34, Ron Elsdon urges us not to spend all day watching the news or checking social media. I agree. Too much ‘bad news’ can be overwhelming and lead to anxiety and depression.

Living in Ireland, many of us will have access to open countryside which is just bursting with the new life that comes with spring. Even if you aren’t able to walk far, step into your garden, look up at the sky and the clouds, across at the dancing daffodils or grazing cows, enjoy the sound of your neighbours’ children playing as a family in their garden, and you will know that we are part of something much bigger than coronavirus.

As individuals, we all want to do what is right and sometimes knowing what is right is difficult. We thank those in authority for taking these difficult decisions off our shoulders. The advice is simple: Stay at home and you will protect yourself and others.

Continue your prayer life - the liturgical notes on page 30 will help - and pray for those for whom staying at home is not an option, those key workers who will keep society going - some of whom may end up caring for those we love who fall sick, or even for us - at risk to their own health.

For anyone self-isolating alone, this must be an incredibly difficult time. The March issue of the Gazette featured an interview with Leah Batchelor who, when suffering locked-in syndrome, was isolated in her own body - an isolation more extreme than any of us could imagine.

But Leah knew she was not on her own. “As I couldn’t talk or move, He [God] was the only one who knew what I was feeling and thinking. At the time I could only talk to Him,” Leah said.

God is always with us, listening to our thoughts and our fears. How reassuring it is to know that, while we may be physically isolated, we are never alone.
‘THE BIG IMPOUNDERABLE NOW IS CORONAVIRUS’

BRIAN DONALDSON CHATS TO ARCHBISHOP-ELECT JOHN McDOWELL AS HE LOOKS AHEAD TO HIS NEW ROLE

The newly elected Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Rt Rev John McDowell, current Bishop of Clogher, will take up his new role in the Church of Ireland on April 28.

Having spent his early life in Belfast and, after university, pursuing a career in business there, Bishop McDowell was ordained in 1996 and served as curate of Antrim Parish and rector of Ballyrashane and Kildollagh in the Diocese of Connor before becoming rector of St Mark’s, Dundela, in east Belfast in the Diocese of Down and Dromore. He was elected Bishop of Clogher in 2011.

Now, after nine years as bishop in this rural cross-border diocese, Bishop McDowell is moving on to his next role to lead the Church of Ireland.

Following his election he said: “I was obviously surprised and very grateful for the confidence that my colleagues in the House of Bishops placed in me. There is a transition period where you are not really the Archbishop of Armagh, but you want to be as helpful as you can, and you are also trying to work out what and how you are going to approach the task.”

FACETS
The archbishop-elect explained the three facets to the role - firstly as Bishop of Armagh, with a larger population and more large towns than Clogher Diocese. Secondly, the role entails the Primacy of All Ireland, acknowledging there is another Primate in the southern province, but to some degree acting as ambassador for the Church of Ireland.

“The third element is your place within the wider Anglican Communion which I have relatively little experience of. You become a member of the Primates’ Meeting which is one of the instruments of communion within Anglicanism,” Bishop McDowell explained.

So what type of Church would the archbishop-elect like to see?

“There is a saying that the Church of Ireland is synodically-governed and episcopally-led. What the Archbishop of Armagh can do is to speak to the Church, and see what priorities it can concern itself with. It sets a bit of a tone as well,” he explained.

Bishop McDowell acknowledges that there is huge diversity within Anglicanism, which is part of its heritage.

Looking to the immediate challenges, he said: “The big imponderable at the moment is coronavirus, and we have no idea how deeply that will affect the patterns of society. We could come out the other side of that challenge a changed society, with maybe small changes and maybe some very profound changes.

RELATIONSHIPS

“Of course, the other big external issue is Brexit, which involves the relationships between the different regions within Ireland and the UK.”

He wants to see churches and their people realising that they are contributing to the communities in which they serve, enriching their presence and finding their place in those communities and society.

Bishop McDowell leaves Clogher Diocese after forging and maintaining good ecumenical links, and that is something he will easily translate to in Armagh Diocese, following the work of Archbishop Richard Clarke with the Roman Catholic Archbishop Eamon Martin.

He said: “I think the vast majority of committed Christian people see more in common with other Christian traditions than they see separating them. There is a very long history of ecumenism in the Diocese of Armagh as well, and I hope we can continue to build relationships and friendships.”

Relaxation for Bishop McDowell includes reading history and poetry, and one of his favourite places to visit is the collection of Irish Art at the Ulster Museum.

The archbishop-elect added: “The thing I am looking forward to most is reading the third volume of Hilary Mantell’s Wolfhall trilogy about Thomas Cromwell, The Mirror and Light.”

His wife Mary teaches in Enniskillen Royal Grammar School and their daughter Dorothy is studying at the University of Oxford.
There is no denying the gravity of the present situation. At this time of not only international but global crisis, everyone in society has a duty to do what he or she can to protect people's lives and minimise suffering...

However, I want to reassure parishioners that while we, as a Church, are responding to the two governments’ call for social distancing, there will be no spiritual distancing...

The Diocese of Derry and Raphoe is more than just a territory: It is a community - a caring, compassionate community. Now, in the midst of crisis, we have an opportunity to show what real Christian community is all about. And we all have a role to play in this... Let us choose faith, not fear.

The Most Rev Pat Storey, Bishop of Meath and Kildare

Having witnessed the closure in the Republic of Ireland of schools, followed by pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, I feel it is appropriate, with deep regret, to cancel public worship until a further update...

This is never something that a bishop does lightly, and I have received communication on both sides of the argument, as you can imagine. Normally it would be imperative to maintain public worship, but the most important factor in this crisis has become ‘social distancing.’ In church, sadly, we cannot guarantee that and we do not wish to put anyone, including clergy, at risk.

Having just buried my father, I am deeply sorry for people for whom funerals are going to be smaller, with perhaps a larger memorial service later in the year...

The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory

We are living through extraordinary days, unprecedented in all our lifetimes. It is clearly a time for much prayer, and for working out in our own situations the paradoxical truth that we best look after each other by meticulously practicing the concept...
The indications are that this virus will be with us for some months and I urge all in our diocese to take the necessary precautions as directed by the Chief Medical Officer and the HSE...

Difficult decisions are being demanded of us all at this time. I ask you to look after yourselves and your loved ones. Also, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, members of the Christian Family, please give due care and concern to those in your communities who are isolated and alone. There is a range of practical supports that all of us can offer those who are particularly vulnerable and for whom this is a frightening time.

The Rt Rev Patrick Rooke, Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry

In these days, our world needs a Church that is awake, that is servant-hearted, that is diligent in prayer and that continues to find ways to make Christ known. AW Tozer said that when the world is gripped by fear the world needs a fearless Church...

In all our parishes, let’s together follow the example of the Good Shepherd as we take the love of God in Jesus Christ to the people in the parishes where God has placed each of us. Together, let’s be unlike the shepherds in Ezekiel 34 and ensure that the weak are strengthened, the sick are healed, the injured are bound up, those who have strayed are brought back and the lost are found.

Personally, please be assured of my focused prayer for all of our clergy, staff teams, parishes, people and communities at this time.

The Ven George Davison, Bishop-designate of Connor

Like many of you, there has not been much sleep of late, and plenty of practical thinking and prayerful reflection about trying to do the right thing. In this diocese, I have discovered that clergy and laity alike have a myriad of different views about what the right thing is …

In the light of the request to so many other businesses and places of meeting in our community to close - and in the light of the shared conversations and consultation I have had with colleagues in this diocese - for the avoidance of uncertainty which adds to anxiety… I have decided to ask that all services be cancelled until the given review date … I urge everyone to pray more than ever, to find ways to worship at home, and to discover imaginatively what it is to be the Church in these extraordinary times.

The Rt Rev David McClay, Diocese of Down and Dromore

As I am writing this (March 12) the Covid-19 virus has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation… We can support one another by keeping in touch by phone and online. By following the advice to wash our hands regularly and to limit unnecessary physical contact especially if we feel unwell. We are in the season of Lent, a time of self-discipline and I would ask you to exercise self-discipline to allay the effects of this virus.
How is your appointment as diocesan registrar making history?

I suppose you could say it is making history in that this year marks the 100th year of service in the role by a member of my family. My dad, John L Jermyn, was appointed diocesan registrar in 1980 and steps down this year after 39 years. Dad succeeded my grandpa, John B Jermyn, who served for 33 years from 1947-1980, and grandpa himself succeeded my great grandfather, also John Jermyn, who was the diocesan registrar for 27 years between 1920-1947.

What is the role of diocesan registrar?

Each Church of Ireland diocese has a diocesan registrar appointed by the bishop, and the Diocesan Council is required to make arrangements for the safe custody of the registry and its contents. The contents may include:

- Judgments or orders of the Diocesan Court or the Court of the General Synod; records of appointments of clergy, appointments of clergy by licence, retirements and resignations; the appointment of deputy chancellors and deputy registrars of the diocese.

How does this fit in with your day job?

It fits in well as generally the installations I am required to perform take place on a Sunday and on average there may be less than six a year. Also, I am lucky that the team in the diocesan office prepares the necessary documents in advance of the installation,
and arranges filing of the signed versions after.

As regards the duties themselves, so far I have already performed a number of the functions in my capacity as assistant diocesan registrar and Bishop Paul and his team have been helpful in showing me the ropes. That said, some of the responsibilities have a legal element to them and that’s where my legal background helps.

What has been your professional career to date?

Having played hockey professionally for a couple of years, I started my apprenticeship in the Cork law firm RDJ. After qualifying in 2011, I continued to work in RDJ for seven years until taking up a secondment in Gas Networks Ireland in April 2017. This opened up my eyes to the possibility of switching from private practice to working in industry, following which I took up the role of Legal Counsel with Global Shares, a fintech company that specialises in equity compensation management.

When did you first pick up a hockey stick?

I first started training in Cork Church of Ireland (C of I) Hockey Club on Sunday afternoons at the age of four. Those sessions were run by my hero, Reg Treacy. Reg played for Great Britain and Ireland 53 times during a period when you could only play approximately three internationals a year. To put that into perspective, these days in a busy international calendar year you could play upwards of 35 international matches.

What have been your highlights in the game?

I have been lucky to have had many, but if I had to name a few I would say winning two Irish Schools with Ashton, winning the Irish Club Championships with Cork C of I, my first senior cap against Belgium in 2002, my last cap on home soil in Garryduff against France in 2018 and last, but definitely not least, playing in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

What was it like competing in the Rio 2016 Olympics?

It was a dream come true. Despite not qualifying for the quarter finals, I have very fond memories of the whole experience - not only the games themselves but also the seven-month preparation phase. For this, I was lucky enough to be allowed to take time off work to centralise in Dublin and essentially train like a professional. This was the phase that I enjoyed the most, and it enabled me to focus all my energy on making the team to travel to Rio.

Any words of advice for budding Olympians?

I suppose for the group of Irish athletes that have qualified for Tokyo, all I would say is that I really hope the Games go ahead and that they get the chance to realise their dreams.

I was involved in two qualifying campaigns where we narrowly missed out on qualification and I know how devastating that can be. I can’t imagine how it would feel to miss out on competing in the Olympics due to a crazy unforeseeable situation such as the coronavirus.

To all other budding Olympians, I would say back yourself.

What are your other interests?

All things outdoors including fishing, golf, kayaking, swimming, cycling, running and hillwalking. I have floated the idea of taking up surfing with my wife, but unsurprisingly she didn’t think it was such a great idea!

Are you a regular church goer?

To be honest up until about five years ago, I only used to go at Christmas. However, I started attending more regularly after the birth of my eldest daughter, Elizabeth. We now have a routine a couple of times a month where we go to the service and afterwards meet a few friends with kids the same age for a coffee or ice cream. Elizabeth seems to enjoy going to church, but then again you can’t underestimate the power of an ice cream bribe!
By Annette McGrath

Prayer for our nation was at the centre of cross-community St Patrick’s Day celebrations hosted by the Diocese of Down and Dromore on March 17.

The decision to go ahead was a difficult one, given the concerns about the spread of coronavirus, but with precautions in place, around 50 people gathered to worship, walk and pray at Saul and Downpatrick.

As in previous years, the day began with Holy Communion at Saul Church, followed by a pilgrimage walk to Down Cathedral. Led by Diocesan Evangelist, Glynis Matchett, the pilgrims stopped at several points along the route to pray.

The theme was ‘Thy Kingdom Come,’ and it felt providential that it had long been the plan to dedicate ourselves as a diocese to praying specifically for Ireland from St Patrick’s Day until Pentecost Sunday.

To that end, the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev David McClay, commissioned worshippers at the Festival Service as intercessors, and each person was given a Prayer for Ireland (BCP p145) to take away.

He said: “Today, Patrick’s courage and love for the people to whom God had called him are at the forefront of my thoughts. As a diocese, we are focusing on a period of prayer for our nation at a time when we are facing into a crisis. Like Patrick, we are refocusing on bringing God’s love to all in the power of the Holy Spirit and with a creative generosity that enables us to move into this period of doing church differently.”

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, was the guest preacher in Down Cathedral, and as he laid the wreath on Patrick’s grave, the cathedral bells rang out, joining others around the world. The international bell-ringing was coordinated by Downpatrick’s Saint Patrick’s Centre.

Dean Henry Hull commented: “St Patrick was a source of enlightenment for our ancestors. He was a man of faith who had to overcome many trials in his life, and he knew the power of prayer.

“St Patrick’s Day is a chance to remember what is most important in life and that means putting God first. I think in this crisis, the words of St Patrick’s Breastplate - which place Christ at the centre - are particularly poignant as the bells ring out.”

Dean Henry Hull at Saul Church on St Patrick’s Day. (Photo: Troy Rowe).
Christian communities in north and west Belfast came together during Lent in ReLENTLESS Prayer for a third consecutive year.

ReLENTLESS Prayer 2020 had a shared vision of encouraging people to pray and ask for God’s blessing and healing on the people and life of their community. Prayer spaces were open for everyone to drop in and spend time in quietness, to reflect and pray.

Central themes in prayer rooms included prayer for renewal and revival of faith in north and west Belfast, peace and harmony in communities, prayer for agencies that bring hope and help to the community, for doctors and hospitals, school teachers and a new enthusiasm for education amongst parents and children.

ReLENTLESS Prayer in north and west Belfast began when the Rev Canon Jim Carson and his wife Heather moved to the parishes of St Stephen and St Luke and St Michael. Having experienced ReLENTLESS Prayer in Lisburn, they wanted to introduce the idea to clergy and friends in north Belfast.

Jim and Heather encouraged the organisers of the monthly North Belfast Prayer Walk to join them in taking the initiative forward. This year, 27 churches and Christian communities of all denominations worked in partnership in prayer.

Each organisation hosted a prayer room on a set day (or days). Many were interactive and some simply quiet, reflective spaces. “ReLENTLESS Prayer is an opportunity for churches to find a new radical centre ground based on prayer from which they can develop partnerships and collaboration to create a kinder, calmer, harmonious and cohesive community,” Jim said.

Stephen Whitten, of Connor Diocese’s North Belfast Centre of Mission, said ReLENTLESS Prayer created spiritual unity between churches, and a sense of a shared vision for this part of the city.

“This area really needs prayer. It is one of the most deprived areas in terms of social economic indicators in Northern Ireland. Suicide is a major issue,” he said.

Many churches are declining in north Belfast, he added. “My opinion is that when people reject aspects of a higher purpose, some of life’s difficulties can be harder to deal with,” he said. “Having a relationship with God and knowing He has a plan for your life is emotionally, psychologically and spiritually huge. It changes people’s ability to face life.

“Our main prayer for ReLENTLESS is that it is a refreshing of faith, and that churches will be further equipped to connect effectively with people.”

Elsie Kirkpatrick visited the Prayer Room in Shankill Methodist Church. “It is good to come in and find a bit of peace and pray for the world in the state it’s in at the moment,” Elsie said. “The Health Service is really in need of prayer. How are they going to cope with it all? Then there are the floods in England. Thank God we can remember them and pray for them.”

Muriel Hughes, from St Michael’s Parish Church, was also in to pray. “It encourages your faith, and the neighbourhood really needs prayer,” she said.

Isaac Castle, St Andrew’s Parish Church, Glencairn, visited the prayer room in St Stephen’s Church, Millfield. “Prayer is good for your mind and your soul. When you come to a place like this to pray, you can see that you are not on your own.”

Fr Patrick Devine, Priest in St Vincent de Paul Parish, Ligoniel, brought a group of P6 children from their parish school to the prayer room in St Stephen’s. “ReLENTLESS Prayer is becoming more popular and relevant and is very much needed in the north Belfast area. We genuinely want to work together,” Fr Devine said. “Everybody’s journey is like a jigsaw. When all the pieces come together you make something beautiful.”

ReLENTLESS Prayer spaces closed on March 20. Stephen Whitten urged people to keep praying. “Prayer is powerful and the current crisis will create an openness to God and a need for His comfort for many,” he said.
Five years ago, we committed ourselves to a 20/20 vision for our churches. We aimed to be churches with community at the heart, nourishing growth. We aimed to be welcoming, caring and generous, and a place where ministry is for everyone. We aspired to be outward-looking and active in our communities and beyond. We committed to being connected in prayer and to prioritise children and young people.

The year 2020 is, therefore, time to take stock of the ways in which this vision has been realised. Leafing through the pages of our diocesan magazine, there is a palpable sense of community within our parishes. Our churches are places to celebrate significant events with our wider church family. They are places to grieve our losses and support one another. They provide a springboard to come together and engage with the wider community through heritage events, fundraising activities and local development or peace initiatives.

COMMITMENT
Our diocese aims to ensure that this sense of community is Christ-centred and aligned with the Word of God. This commitment to nourishing growth through a deeper understanding of the Good News can be seen in a wide variety of Alpha and Christianity Explored courses, Bible studies, growing groups, seminars and talks that are regular features of parish life.

Our commitment to exploring new ways of reaching out into our community has forged stronger links with other churches and organisations working to further God’s Kingdom in our communities.

For the past number of years, an interdenominational group of churches in Cavan has hosted the Cavan Christian Women’s and Men’s Conferences, bringing together women and men from across the county and beyond to delve deeply into the refreshing waters of God’s Word.

In Sligo, the Spring to Life Holy Week venture continues to bring different denominations together to celebrate the Easter promises. Interdenominational prayer services, remembrance services, youth and children’s events and outreach projects also take place regularly.

This year, our commitment to outreach was exemplified in ‘Gathered in Mission.’ In partnership with a team of mission partners from Through Faith Mission, our parish groups stepped out in faith to share the Gospel message in our local areas. In the same way, partnerships with mission agencies have allowed people from our diocese to create links with churches and projects as far afield as North and South America, Africa and Europe.

MINISTRY
In Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh (KEA), we are grateful for all those who take an active role in church ministry. Over the past five years, Bishop Ferran Glenfield has commissioned nine diocesan readers, 12 parish readers and six pastoral visitors. We have also provided four candidates for full-time ordained ministry and currently have seven candidates training for Ordained Local Ministry. Three people have been put forward for Church Army training and last August, Alan Williamson was commissioned as Church Army Evangelist to work in the Drumcliffe area.

This year, thanks to support from the Priorities Fund, four of our parish groups have been able to welcome ministry interns. We are delighted that two former KEA archdeacons, George Davison and Andrew Forster, were elected as Bishop of Connor and Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, respectively.

We thank God for all He has done in enabling us to realise our aspirations for 2020. We plan to celebrate the fulfilment of the 20/20 vision and to mark 150 Years of Disestablishment on Trinity Sunday, June 7, at three services in Kilmore, Sligo and Longford. [Dependent on the Covid-19 situation]. We also thank God that, with His power working within us, He can do much more than anything we can ask for or think of. To Him be the glory (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Jennifer Horner is Diocesan Communications Officer for Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh.
A group of 17 and 18-year-olds from Lisburn Cathedral ran a series entitled ‘Who?’ at their youth fellowship group from February 7 until March 8.

‘Who?’ explored four big identities of Christianity - I; Jesus; The Holy Spirit; and The Church. The series was a huge success, with many young people being impacted, challenged and encouraged by the identities that define our faith. Here the young people tell us more about the initiative.

IMPACTED

“We wanted to see lives impacted within our church and community, particularly among young people, and thought a teaching series would be the best way to do this. What started off as a small idea escalated into something bigger.

“We took over our Saturday night youth group, Mettle, for several weeks, and we provided worship, teaching, discussion and prayer ministry. We also made videos to go along with some of the sessions. Each of us had been really impacted by certain leaders as we grew up through Mettle, so we wanted to take this opportunity to inspire and encourage another age group in their walk with Christ, just as we had been.

“Some of the members of the group also were a part of the Serve leadership course run by Connor Diocese, and wanted to put what they learnt into practice.

ACCESSIBLE

“The series was aimed at 11 to 18-year-olds. We wanted to make Mettle accessible for all, so made the series appropriate for people to invite non-Christian friends and allow them to explore the Christian faith in a deeper way.

“Coming up with the ideas and the videos took a bit of brainstorming! We thought that the best way to interact with people would be to make videos tied in with the theme we were speaking about. This also meant we could share our message about Jesus with the wider community on social media platforms.

“Thankfully we have someone in the group who knows how to make videos and he really did pull it all together. The idea of the series ‘Who?’ was intended to explore further the identities in Christianity that define us and what that really means for you and me. We wanted to take a basic concept into something deeper with opportunities to explore and ask questions.

“The series was a massive success. The Holy Spirit moved in amazing ways, impacting people’s personal lives and addressing their identity issues. There were 40-50 young people in attendance most weeks, which was beyond what we thought would happen - God was there in the middle of it all. The series didn’t just impact those receiving, but all involved, bringing us closer and making our friendships stronger too.”

FLOURISH

The Rev Danielle McCullough, curate at Lisburn Cathedral, said it had been ‘a joy’ to see some of the young people grow and flourish through the ‘Who?’ series.

“There was an amazing sense of the Holy Spirit moving as our young people listened, discussed, worshipped and prayed together each week. We are so thankful for the group of young leaders behind the series,” Danielle said. “They were responsible for the whole thing - they designed it, planned it, wrote and delivered the talks, and also created some incredible videos to go with the series.

“As a leader, it was so inspiring to watch some of them step out of their comfort zone and into leadership and teaching roles, which they took really seriously. We’re looking forward to seeing how we can continue to help shape and empower them as leaders, and how God will use each of them in the future.”

Meath and Kildare Dioceses have appointed Luke Hawkins to the joint post of Diocesan Youth Officer and Chaplain of Wilson’s Hospital School. Luke, a teacher in The Wirral, England, has an honours degree in History from Cambridge, a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, and has undertaken a course in Youth Leadership. He also has considerable experience of voluntary youth work.
The Rev Canon David Humphries, rector of Kilbride Parish, Diocese of Connor, has been leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land for more than 22 years.

His next pilgrimage, based in Jerusalem and Galilee, was booked for May but may not go ahead due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Another is scheduled for May next year.

David, who grew up in Belfast and attended St Bartholomew’s Parish Church, Stranmillis, was a music and RE teacher and organist in St Mary’s, Crumlin Road, and Stranmillis, before ordination in 1986.

He was curate in Ballyholme, Vicar Choral at Belfast Cathedral, and rector of St Molua’s, Stormont, Diocese of Down and Dromore, for 23 years before moving to Kilbride in 2016.

It was when he was in his early days at Stormont that he first heard a talk about the Holy Land, delivered by Dr Noel Donaldson who had stepped into the breach when a speaker booked for a Church of Ireland Men’s Society meeting cancelled at the last minute.

“Dr Donaldson had just been on a day trip, but he put his experiences across very well,” David said.

“Chatting to him afterwards, I commented that the parish should have a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and thought no more about it. I was not the sort of person to go on foreign holidays, and had never thought about the Holy Land. It was the only year we had to change our itinerary. All organisation is done on the ground, with the personal touch.”

All David’s pilgrimages take in the main Holy Land places, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Via Dolorosa, Jericho, Mount Carmel, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi and Nazareth. Tours have also included Samaria and Jacob’s Well.

“That was a bit different,” said David. “There are not many tourists in that area. We stopped at a post manned by young Israeli soldiers who were gobsmacked to see a busload of tourists!”

David’s pilgrimages developed over the next few years, with most pilgrims coming from his own parish. “There were not many people conducting pilgrimages in the early days. People came once. They raved about it,” he said.

In 2006, David switched to McCabe Pilgrimages.

SPIRITUAL

“Previously all our guides had been Jewish, and did not join in our prayers and worship. McCabe introduced us to a new guide, Rafi, who was an Armenian Christian, and had a significant spiritual input,” he said.

“On that first pilgrimage with McCabe in 2006, I met Mrs Albina, owner of Albina Tours. On the morning we were due to go to Bethlehem, she said we couldn’t go as there had been some trouble, but she had already arranged a different visit. It was the only year we had to change our itinerary. All organisation is done on the ground, with the personal touch.”

All David’s pilgrimages take in the main Holy Land places, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Via Dolorosa, Jericho, Mount Carmel, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi and Nazareth. Tours have also included Samaria and Jacob’s Well.

“That was a bit different,” said David. “There are not many tourists in that area. We stopped at a post manned by young Israeli soldiers who were gobsmacked to see a busload of tourists!”

Varying the itinerary slightly each year means that if people choose to come on more than one pilgrimage, they will see a lot more.
‘THE LAND DRAWS ME BACK’

THE REV DAVID HUMPHRIES HAS BEEN LEADING PILGRIMAGES TO THE HOLY LAND FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS

David said it is the land that draws him back year after year. “Some people are very inspired by Jerusalem, some people would prefer Galilee because nothing has changed up there - you can look across and see a young Jesus doing the same thing.

“For me it is God’s land. Many times He says in the Old Testament, ‘this is My Land.’ That’s what I feel. “Pilgrimages to the Holy Land go back 1,700 years. People have gone to see the places where Jesus was. That’s one reason I go back. Nowadays, there’s another reason.

CULTURE

“When people went to the Holy Land in the early days there were no hotels. People had to stay with locals, and learn about their culture. Today the hotels, no matter how good, tend to be impersonal. I want my pilgrimages to get close to local people. Meeting other Christians isn’t difficult, we meet them in the hotels, at the sites we visit and in church. But we are also meeting Jewish and Muslim people. McCabe’s slogan is ‘See the places, meet the people.’

“On the pilgrimage we visit the Jeel al-Amal School and Boys Home in Bethany, an amazing place.”

Bethany, once home to Mary, Martha and Lazarus, is now a village in economic collapse, hidden from view behind the new Separation Security Wall.

The Jeel al-Amal (Generation of Hope) School and Boys Home was founded in 1972 by a Christian Palestinian, the late Alice Sahhar, whom David knew well. Three hundred children are being educated in the primary school, and 100 boys live in the Home. The boys come from Jerusalem and from towns and villages in the Palestinian territories. Many are orphans or have endured terrible domestic problems.

PROTECTED

“Here we have Christian and Muslim boys being taught about their faith,” said David. “The boys are all so friendly. They show a lot of love and are very keen to have photos taken. They are protected from things going on outside and are being brought up together which is a miracle. There are very few places in Israel where that happens.”

The orphanage is supported by the McCabe Educational Trust.

The cost of David’s next pilgrimage is approximately £2,175 per person, sharing a twin bedded room. “Some people think that this is excessive, but in fact it isn’t,” David said. “This covers everything - flights, transfers, accommodation, food, entry to all the sites on the itinerary and even tips. When people return home afterwards they say that it is definitely worth the money.”

Anyone interested in learning more about these pilgrimages should visit David’s Holy Land website at pilgrimage106.org.
A ‘WOMAN OF REAL SUBSTANCE’

By Paul McFadden

March 6 was a proud day for Garvagh Parish stalwart, Helen Livingston, as she watched a Blue Plaque being unveiled at her local church to commemorate the woman who introduced the Women’s Institute (WI) to Northern Ireland.

Dorothea Florence Macausland, who worshipped in St Paul’s for many years before her death in 1970, formed Northern Ireland’s first WI branch in the village in 1932. Her achievement was marked by the Ulster History Circle with the erection of one of its celebrated Blue Plaques on the east wall of the local church.

Mrs Livingston has written Mrs Macausland’s life story for posterity, and has campaigned for many years to have her memory honoured publicly.

The unveiling ceremony was performed by Mrs Macausland’s great-niece, Joanna Clark. Among those in attendance were the Lord Lieutenant for County Londonderry, Alison Millar; the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Sean Bateson; the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster; the Chairperson of the Federation of Women’s Institutes in Northern Ireland, Lady Anthony Hamilton; the Chairperson of the Federation of Women’s Institutes of Northern Ireland, Colette Craig; and another of Mrs Macausland’s relatives, Jack O’Sullivan.

Bishop Andrew, whose late mother had been a member of the WI, said: “Dorothea Macausland clearly lived a remarkable life. Born in India, she was a nurse during the war, she was on a ship that was torpedoed during the war. She was a woman of real substance and an indomitable daughter of Garvagh.”

Addressing the many WI members who had travelled to Garvagh for the ceremony, Bishop Andrew said: “Many of you love Women’s Institute. Why? Because it brings you together. It’s about community. It’s about being a positive and good force in the community, and all of us know that our community needs positive and good people making an impact.”

CELEBRATING RÉNOVATIONS

Parishioners in Malahide, Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, celebrated the reopening of their newly renovated church by Archbishop Michael Jackson on March 1.

Parish treasurer Brian Brown who, along with glebewarden Ian Watkins, oversaw the works to St Andrew’s Parish Church, said that €100,000 had been spent. Work included restoring the main aisles, replacing the old plaster with lime plaster and repainting. The entire ceiling was restored and insulated, and the clock in the tower replaced.

Archbishop Jackson said that the work carried out in St Andrew’s to the glory of God and the benefit of the community was intricate and expert. He paid tribute to all involved.
By Katharine Hayhoe

I don’t believe in climate change - I believe in God. I believe He created this amazing planet we live in, and gave us responsibility - or stewardship - or dominion - over it. I believe God delights in His creation and wants us to, as well. And I believe we are to love others, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and those most in need, as Christ loved us.

I’m a Christian - but I’m also a scientist. I spend my days studying how climate change is affecting us, in the places where we live. Rainfall patterns are shifting, sea level is rising, and weather is getting weirder. When we add them all up, there’s more than 26,500 separate lines of evidence that the planet is warming.

I don’t believe in global warming. The evidence of God’s creation tells us it’s real. Nearly 200 years of meticulous scientific studies has established that it’s not a natural cycle this time: It’s us. And my own research demonstrates the severity of the consequences for all of us, particularly those less fortunate than us, who are already suffering. We care about a changing climate because it exacerbates the risks we face today: Hunger, poverty, disease and injustice.

Yet when we hear Christians discussing climate change, often the predominant responses are negative: Hostility, anger, and denial, a stew of toxic emotions underlain by fear. Fear of losing an identity that’s based on politics and ideology if we get on board with a ‘liberal’ issue; fear of rejection by our family, our community, even our church; or fear of losing our comfortable lifestyle in search of what’s right and just.

As Christians, we have a litmus test for these emotions. Because, as the apostle Paul writes to Timothy, “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” So when we see people responding in fear, we know that’s not who we’re meant to be.

What gifts does God give us? Power - to effect meaningful, long-term change. Love - to share God’s heart for our brothers and sisters who are hurting and in need. And a sound mind - to look at the reality of what is happening in our world and acknowledge that yes, climate change is real, it’s serious, and we need to fix it.

Being Christian isn’t a hindrance to acting on climate change. On the contrary, if we believe we’re called ‘to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God,’ then caring about a changing climate, and those already suffering its impacts, is what we’ve been created to do. It’s who we are.

Prof Katharine Hayhoe is an atmospheric scientist known for her work bridging the gap between scientists and Christians on climate change.
FISH WHERE THE FISH ARE!

By Stephen Fletcher

After two years as the Diocesan Radio Officer in Limerick and Killaloe, Bishop Kenneth Kearon asked me to take on the role of Diocesan Communications Officer - a wide-reaching role which brings with it responsibility for the website and social media channels, as well as dealing with the outside media.

I realised quickly that I knew very little about the internet and the potential it holds, so set about trying to find out how these tools could be applied in our diocese. For the last six months, I have been looking into the problems of communications in a rural diocese and how we might use the tools that are available to enable us to build our church communities.

I recently gave a presentation on ‘Communications in a Rural Diocese’ in Dublin at a conference of diocesan communications officers and magazine editors. While preparing for this, I was very taken preparing for this, I was very taken

officers and magazine editors. While preparing for this, I was very taken with the Gospel for the Third Sunday after Epiphany (Matthew 4: 12-23) when Jesus called his first disciples.

“As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake - for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fisher of men.’” That is what we are all called to be. We are called to tell people about where we see God working in our communities. We all have stories to tell - we just have to find ways of sharing them with others.

THE RIGHT FLY

I don’t know much about fishing - but I have a friend who is a great fly fisherman. He told me there are just two rules for fishing: 1. Fish where the fish are; 2. Use the right fly.

When our Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe joins with the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, the new diocese will extend over 310km from north to south and around 100km from east to west. Finding the fish in such a vast pool is tricky - we cannot rely on engaging with people by meeting them face to face.

When it comes to using the right fly, I believe the answer is to use the internet and digital communications to tell our stories.

This can seem quite an overwhelming task, but there are some reasonably simple places to start sharing stories and news, taking advantage of the many free tools available online.

The first is the parish website. This should be the hub and central reference point from which all the other tools come or point towards. Then there is Facebook, Instagram, podcasts, Twitter, WhatsApp, eMail, Snapchat, Pinterest and others.

Take Facebook. There are 2,200,000 users of Facebook in the Republic of Ireland, and 920,000 of them live in rural areas. Isn’t Facebook just the place we should be fishing? Fish where the fish are!

Using Facebook to advertise special events, share photographs, and engage with the local community, helps us to connect with our existing congregation in a different way. It also makes it easier for them to share content, stories and events with the wider community.

PODCASTING

I have a special interest in radio and podcasting, which I believe offer great opportunities for churches. We should be building relationships with local radio stations, putting up people for interview, telling stories about our church communities and where we see God at work in those communities.

Local radio in rural Ireland is very strong - in Co Clare, 48 per cent of the population listens to Clare FM each week. By comparison, the BBC local radio station I am involved with in the UK reaches less than five per cent of the population.

According to a survey by Reuters last year, 37 per cent of Irish people listen to a podcast weekly. The Republic of Ireland has the third highest listenership to podcasts in the world after high-tech South Korea and Spain. That is where the fish are!

I believe internet and digital communications can enable each of us to reach out to people and to build our church communities by engaging with them where they are and telling them our stories of where we see God working in our different communities.

It is well worth looking through the treasure trove of resources to be found in the Church of England Learning Blog (www.churchofengland.org/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/labs-learning-blogs). It is fully searchable and covers many interesting topics of direct relevance to our needs, all written from the perspective of the ‘ordinary person in the pew’!

You can find our own diocesan podcasts at www.anchor.fm/limerick-anglican.

Happy fishing!

Stephen Fletcher is Diocesan Communications Officer for Limerick and Killaloe Diocese.
MISSING IN ACTION

By David Brown

Issues impacting on the place of young men in the Church were examined by clergy and lay people from Armagh Diocese at a workshop held on February 21.

The ‘Missing in Action’ event aimed to inform, resource and challenge participants to enable them to better engage with young men. Through presentations and round table discussions, it sought to highlight and explore ideas that engage young men in children’s ministry.

The workshops were facilitated by Bishop Ken Clarke; Sinead Hughes, Promoting Well-being Specialist Lead, Southern Health and Social Care Trust; and Heather Antony and Harry Simpson from the Boys to Men programme at St Mark’s Parish, Portadown. Around 25 people from across Armagh Diocese took part and contributed much learning and insight to the facilitated discussion.

There can be little doubt that across wider society, men and young men in particular - those aged 16 to 25 - can experience negative and significant life-changing events and circumstances. Sinead Hughes, speaking on men’s physical and mental health, noted that 12 men die by suicide each day across the UK, and three out of every four deaths by suicide are men. Participants found that the link between men’s physical and mental well-being resonated deeply with the teachings of Christ and belonging to a welcoming community, such as the Church.

HOLINESS

Taking his lead from 1 Timothy 4:7 - where Paul exhorts Timothy to ‘train yourself in holiness...’ - Bishop Ken Clarke spoke of his experience of ministry to and with men in the pursuit of a Christ-like holiness, and of the particular challenges facing men. He observed that in his experience some men, though by no means all, hit their 40s and 50s and encounter what he termed their ‘manopause’ - whereby they seek a redirection in terms of life and work that is meaningful. This can be a difficult journey for men and one the Church may not always understand.

VOLUNTEERS

The final workshop, led by Heather Antony, Youth Worker from St Mark’s Portadown, and Harry Simpson, a volunteer with St Mark’s, focused on the work of the parish. Here, a group of volunteers works alongside primary schools, teaching boys and girls practical skills, building resilience and self-confidence in children transitioning from primary to secondary school.

The importance of this work was noted - particularly for some young boys who, for complex reasons, may not have a male role model at home. It was also observed that with few men entering primary school teaching, this lack of a male presence also means some young boys do not encounter a male teacher/role model until secondary school.

Feedback during and after the workshop was mostly positive. It was felt that a three-hour workshop in terms of how the Church might better support young men would only just about ‘scratch the surface’ of this issue. It was also noted that when it comes to supporting any ‘demographic’ (such as young men), the Church has much to learn and yet in Christ much to offer.

One participant, addressing the question as to young men being ‘missing in action’ in terms of their engagement with the Church, asked: ‘What actions do we want or need men to set themselves?’ - a great conversation starter on the topic of young men and their relationship to the Church and Christ Himself!

The workshop was supported by the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund. Further information at www.armagh.anglican.org.

David Brown is Youth and Children’s Development Officer with Armagh Diocese.
April 13 1742 saw the first public performance of Handel’s *Messiah* in Neal’s Musick Hall, Fishamble Street, Dublin, in the shadows of Christ Church Cathedral.

Given the strong religious nature of the oratorio, it is perhaps no surprise that its first performance drew so heavily from the two cathedrals in Dublin in particular, as well as the Established Church in general. This relationship between the Church and Handel’s masterpiece was marked by a special celebration on the 200th anniversary of its first performance, on April 13 1942.

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, Germany, in 1685, but would eventually become a naturalised British subject in 1727. Handel always had close ties with the religious authorities where he resided, both in a personal and professional capacity. It is no surprise that, upon his move to Great Britain, he developed strong ties with the Established Church and worked extensively with religious bodies to showcase his new works.

In 1741, the decision was made to give a season of concerts in Dublin in late 1741 and early 1742. These were performed in the Musick Hall, Fishamble Street, but did not feature *Messiah*, nor any version of the oratorio. These concerts proved phenomenally popular and Handel continued to work in Dublin during the spring of 1742.

While Handel’s *Messiah* originated from his time in London, it matured and was appreciated in Dublin. He wrote the music for *Messiah* during a frenzied period of inspiration the previous year, in late August and early September, continuing to revise the work prior to its performance in Dublin in 1742. It is said that Handel - writing to the librettist of *Messiah*, Charles Jennens, during Christmas 1741 - noted ‘the politeness of this generous nation cannot be unknown to you.’ Handel himself was residing in a house on the corner of Abbey Street and Liffey Street, and used these premises as a residence and ticket-office.

By early March 1742, contact was made with St Patrick’s and Christ Church cathedrals to explore the use of their choirs for the forthcoming concert. Permission was granted to utilise the services of 16 men and 16 boy choristers from both cathedrals, with some of these men performing solo parts. It is a testament to the high standards associated with both choirs that so many were chosen to be part of such an eminent production.

Despite the high reputation that Handel had throughout Europe at this time, there was some reticence on the part of the cathedral authorities to have their members associated with a performance in a secular venue.

It might be said that such concerns dimmed over the following 200 years, and on the occasion of such a momentous anniversary, the cathedrals decided to celebrate the event by performing two concerts to be held on April 13 in St Patrick’s Cathedral and the following day in Christ Church Cathedral.

The Representative Church Body (RCB) Library holds extensive collections with regards to both cathedrals, and there are detailed important accounts relating to the choirs. One such example is RCB Library C2/9/1, which is a booklet produced in the 20th century showing the original octavo edition of Handel’s *Messiah* in vocal score, edited by WT Best (London: Novello and Company). What makes this such a unique item is that the notice for the cathedral concerts in April 1942 is included, along with a full list of those who performed originally, as well as those performing in the 200th anniversary celebration. Also saved is a page, on Church of Ireland Printing Co Ltd paper, showing the signatures of those ‘gentlemen of the choir’ who performed in 1942.

For further information, contact Dr Susan Hood, Librarian and Archivist, RCB Library, tel: +353 1 4923979 or email: susan.hood@rcbdub.org.
untangle the Church from some of these humourless misconceptions and caricatures from the time of the Early Church through to modernity. This paves the way for what I termed the ‘rehabilitation’ of humour as a lens through which we might better understand some passages of Scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments. I argue that humour is found in the character of God, and became incarnate in Jesus Christ.

CREATIVE
Perhaps this shouldn’t come as a surprise to us. We already know from some of the Gospel accounts that Jesus was a magnetic, creative and charismatic speaker and teacher, and I am convinced that he could also be very funny.

When we allow ourselves to interpret his talk of camels squeezing through needles and rigid wineskins erupting in this way, humour sharpens the point that Jesus is making, foregrounding the great truths which these parables reveal to us.

As a way forward, I conclude by considering what a ‘Theology of Humour’ for the Church of Ireland might look like. How an openness to the presence of humour might advance the Church’s pastoral ministry, inform its preaching and our ability to share the faith. I try to describe the cathartic qualities of humour which often arise where and when we least expect it, even in the most extreme of circumstances.

In hoping you might want to read more, I feel obliged to include the caveat that it is not a funny book! Many parishioners, colleagues and friends have discovered that the hard way over the past few months. But we’ve been able to laugh about it. And, just perhaps, God has laughed with us.

*The Hermeneutics of Humour: A Serious Look at the Lighter Side of Faith* is available online at store.ireland.anglican.org.

The Rev Dr Ian Mills is curate-assistant in the Parishes of Larne and Inver, Glynn and Raloo, Diocese of Connor. (Photo: Lynn Glanville).
As Down and Dromore Bishops’ Appeal diocesan representative, I was privileged to be invited to travel to Sierra Leone in West Africa by Christian Aid Ireland in January. As we read in the February edition of Gazette (letters page), Bishop’s Appeal had supported Christian Aid Ireland in 2019 with a €70,000 donation, and has allocated funding to Christian Aid projects at other times.

Many Church of Ireland members also directly support Christian Aid in different ways - through personal donations, by purchasing charitable Christmas gifts, and during Christian Aid Week each May.

I had not thought too deeply about how the money we give ends up helping those in need. This trip, in the company of a small team of senior Christian Aid staff, gave me the opportunity to see how our individual financial support and that of Bishops’ Appeal is utilised and, more importantly, to see the beneficial impact it has on so many people.

Christian Aid works with local partners in the regions, with the aim of addressing a variety of deep and often complicated needs to lift people out of poverty.

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Having suffered 10+ years of civil strife from the early 1990s and then being one of the countries most affected by the Ebola virus, it is surprising that Sierra Leone is by no means the most impoverished country in Africa.

However, with an average life expectancy of 53, average gross income just a fraction of that of the UK and Republic of Ireland, and ranked 184th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index Ranking, it is not, by any definition, a developed country.

Christian Aid supports medical care for expectant mothers and young children. Sierra Leone is amongst the most dangerous places in the world for mothers to give birth. In Ireland there are eight maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births, in Sierra Leone this number is 1,360, and half of these are teenagers.

It shouldn’t be the case that young women are at such risk because they are pregnant. And one in nine children shouldn’t die before the age of five.

The causes of these horrific statistics are many, including the fatal loss of 10 per cent of local nurses during the Ebola crisis, poor local health centre facilities and inadequate supply of essential drugs and medicines. In rural areas, there are for the most part no roads as we know them, running water or electricity, so if a baby chooses to be born when the expectant mother is well, is close to a facility where there is a trained nurse and comes during daylight hours, its chance of survival is good.

COMPLICATIONS

But often the mother lives a distance away from a nurse. There may be complications or the baby comes at night, delivered in the dark by traditional birth attendants and often complicated needs to lift people out of poverty.

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HELPING
IN SIERRA
LEONE

The 106th Irish National Christian Endeavour (CE) Convention will be held on September 19 in Ballyhenry Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim.

The Rev Jimmy Warburton, minister of High Street Presbyterian Church, Holywood, will speak on the theme ‘Sowing the seed.’

Russ Armour, Newtownards, will be installed as Irish CE Union President in succession to Ruth Agnew, Tandragee.

Further information available from conventioninformation@gmail.com.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev Sam McGuffin, with the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster. (Photo: Paul McFadden). The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev Sam McGuffin, paid a courtesy visit to the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, in Londonderry on March 2.

Mr McGuffin and Bishop Andrew are long-time friends, having first got to know one another during the bishop’s ministry in the Diocese of Armagh.

The church leaders exchanged gifts - a Book of Common Prayer and a Book of Methodist Worship - before Bishop Andrew gave his guest a guided tour of the Diocesan Centre in Londonderry, a building once owned by the Presbyterian Church.

The Methodist President was accompanied by the Superintendent of the Methodist Church in the North West, the Rev Richard Johnston.

SOWING THE SEED

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FAMILIES IN SIERRA LEONE

Eight communities by providing solar-powered fridges needed to store medicine, as well as paying for more medical staff and beds. Local communities have helped fix access roads to the health centres. And antenatal care attendance has increased four-fold in a year.

Christian Aid has supported local volunteer health monitor groups to demand more from hospitals and health centres, resulting in more nurses, hospital beds and refrigerators, as well as ensuring health centres in 10 communities have better access to clean water and are regularly cleaned.

Another partner of Christian Aid works with local authorities to ensure the supply of services and medical facilities and equipment. In the UK and Ireland, we expect our local and central government authorities to deliver on policy promises and laws, but often there is insufficient experience or finance in Sierra Leone, so the partner also holds the Government to account.

SELF-SUFFICIENT
Christian Aid Ireland has numerous projects in different regions of the country. Apart from emergency situations where humanitarian aid is needed first and foremost, most are guided by the principle we all have heard - it is better to teach or help someone to fish and fend for themselves, than to simply give them the fish. Thus they become more self-sufficient.

Two projects we visited brought this principle to the fore. Because of disputes between arable farmers and cattle farmers over land rights, both communities were farming less effectively than they could and neither community assisted or supported the other. The net result was that people remained in poverty.

A project to improve relations, output and general well-being was given impetus by the introduction of a local bye-law and independent disputes’ tribunal. Both groups of local farmers we met were improving their farming production as a result of the justice project, with harmonious relations after decades of hostility much in evidence.

Christian Aid’s local partner, Women’s Network for Environmental Sustainability (WoNES), has implemented a vegetable gardening and tree planting programme in three communities. Ninety women from across these communities formed into three groups which received training, as well as equipment such as seeds and wheelbarrows - empowering them to become vegetable gardeners.

The groups were also taught tree planting skills so they could develop tree crop nurseries. The programme helped these communities adapt to changing and less regular weather which can ruin harvests, as well as providing them with an alternative and sustainable means of earning a living.

Christian Aid is also instrumental in researching and designing projects that address national issues such as budget advocacy, public financial management, accountability in the mining sector, land management, chieftaincy reform, and strengthening health systems, especially in the areas of HIV and Malaria.

The charity develops projects which are designed to run for three or five years. One of the objectives of our visit was to assess projects which are approaching the end of their initial funding period.

This trip was challenging on many levels, but it was hugely valuable.

I was highly impressed by the professionalism of Christian Aid, by its influence amongst religious groups, government, and the Irish Embassy in Sierra Leone, by its careful stewarding of resources, by the strength and extent of its reach into communities in need and by its desire to spread indiscriminately the message of the love of God.

While it is impossible to address more than a few areas of need in this country and elsewhere, we are called as followers of Jesus to continue to do something. The needs of our brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone are, without doubt, huge.

Working through partner mission agencies like Christian Aid, Bishop’s Appeal does not fund development and emergency work directly. Rather, by encouraging parishes to contribute on an ongoing basis to a central Church of Ireland fund, it allows timely and appropriate responses to emergency appeals and to meeting identified needs and projects.

By coming together in this way, Bishop’s Appeal is able to make a more meaningful donation to projects and hopefully therefore have a bigger impact than the alternative of individual parishes supporting aid agencies directly.

The Rev Colin Darling is rector of St John’s Parish Church, Killyleagh, and Bishops’ Appeal representative for Down and Dromore Diocese.
CELEBRATING EDWARD BUNTING

The headline concert in St George’s Parish Church, Belfast.

St George’s Parish Church, Belfast, hosted the headline event of the annual Remembering Bunting Festival which was held in Belfast for the third year.

Events over the weekend of February 20-23 were held in celebration of Edward Bunting, a historical Belfast figure.

The festival, hosted by Dún Uladh Cultural Heritage Centre, Ulster Regional Resource Centre for Ulster Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, is based around the exquisite work and musical stylings of Edward Bunting.

Bunting burst on to the Belfast music scene when he became apprentice organist at St Anne’s Church (the small church which once stood on the site of St Anne’s Cathedral), whilst residing at the famous McCracken Home in Belfast, where he was hired to transcribe music presented at the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792.

The Remembering Bunting Festival saw a plethora of exciting cultural events centred around the work of ‘Belfast’s adopted son,’ with the harp as an integral part of his work. The festival explored rich cultural and musical history and heritage, with talks, performances, interactive workshops and the headline performance in St George’s on February 22.

This featured an electrifying showcase by the cross-community Omagh Community Youth Choir, the CEOL Band - an initiative by Dún Uladh Cultural Heritage Centre supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the Reconciliation Fund.

The choir is made up of young members of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and Music Service for Pipes and Drums, all coming together to honour Edward Bunting and build bridges between shared heritage and culture.

For more information, visit www.dunuladh.ie.

MU FEATURES ON SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC Songs of Praise fans will have spotted that the work of the Mothers’ Union (MU) was showcased on Mothering Sunday, March 22.

The popular programme, hosted by singer Katherine Jenkins, featured the MU’s community project at Worthing Hospital, England.

When parents are faced with a stillborn or premature birth, MU provides support in the form of a memory bag to capture every second of the baby’s life from birth. MU also provides a maternity pack to ensure an emergency and unplanned visit to the hospital is a little less stressful.

Kylea Reynolds had a difficult third pregnancy and complicated birth. Her little boy Logan was born at 20 weeks. “The few hours we had with him before he passed away were some of the most precious minutes in my life,” Kylea said.

“Charities like Mothers’ Union make one of the most difficult times in your life more bearable. The special things including the gorgeous blanket that Logan was wrapped in and a memory bag were incredibly precious.”
A LONG HISTORY

Above and below: The Glenavy Parish Choir which sang at the institution of the Rev Linda Cronin as incumbent on February 16.

CHOIR CALL CATCHES UP WITH THE CHOIR OF GLENAVY PARISH

Glenavy Parish, Diocese of Connor, is made up of three sister churches: St Aidan’s, Glenavy; St John’s, Crumlin and St Andrew’s, Tunny.

The choir has a long history – the exact date of its foundation isn’t known, but historical references include expenses for choir hymn books and a salary for conducting the choir in St Aidan’s way back in 1876, and reference to St Andrew’s Church having a chancel added in 1893, with a new harmonium and furniture for the choir. So it can be surmised that the choir existed before 1876.

Someone who is well remembered is James Walker, who came to the parish in 1926. His primary role was to teach at Glenavy National School, but he soon found that the job of organist/choirmaster had also been ‘thrown in!‘

Mr Walker continued in this role for around 50 years, long after his retirement from teaching. Such was his love of choirs that he was instrumental in pioneering the Lisburn Rural Deanery Choral Festival, and conducted it for many years.

His daughter, Peggy Moore, took over from him, possibly before or upon his death in 1978, and she held the post for some 16 years.

The choir’s most recent full-time director was Olive Totten, who has served in all three churches, having started in St Andrew’s in 1960. She took over at St John’s in 1982, and coupled this with St Aidan’s from 1992 until 2018. She continued to play at St John’s until the start of this year, but has now retired after a magnificent career as a church organist spanning 60 years.

The choir has continued through a recent clergy vacancy (now filled) with the assistance of part-time organists Vivien McCullough and Tim Howe. The post for a full-time organist/choir director will be advertised after a job description has been decided upon by the new incumbent, the Rev Linda Cronin.

Choir members currently number 13 in St Aidan’s, and this is augmented to 19 when singing as a joint parish choir. The oldest member, Ronnie Purdy, is aged 80.

The parish choir comprises seven sopranos, three altos, two basses and one tenor, singing primarily traditional music, although more modern music is being introduced.

The choir sings at one service per week, with rehearsals dependent on upcoming special services, such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Glenavy Parish Choir now has a WhatsApp group and recent performances have been videoed and uploaded, allowing members to see how competent they are!

If you would like to see your parish choir featured in Choir Call, please email editorcofigazette@gmail.com.

Glenavy Parish Choir 1981.

Glenavy Parish Choir 1952.

Glenavy Parish Choir 1963.
‘Did you lock the door?’ What an awful feeling - perhaps you are feeling it right now - that your house isn’t secure.

Our insecurities are food for advertisers: The pension to fund your lifestyle, the mortgage to let you put down roots. Of course, we need insurance, locks and alarms because that house isn’t as secure as we may hope. Then there are our more personal anxieties, so effectively highlighted by the cosmetic, clothing and fragrance industries, who capitalise on our insecurities.

We seek political security every time we cast our vote, believing that if only we could get this person in - or out - we could be secure... then the coronavirus appears, and we start stockpiling hand gel!

SMART... OR LUCKY?
Not long ago, people were persuaded to buy personal fallout shelters to secure against nuclear war. Stop and consider for a moment - who were the smart ones? Those who purchased the shelters, or those who didn’t? Were the ones who didn’t smart, or just lucky? It’s difficult to tell, isn’t it? What is security, anyway?

The compiler(s) of the Psalms, probably in Babylonian exile, decided that the Psalm we should read first has security as its primary subject.

“Blessed is the man...”

“Oh, the blessedness of the man who is like this one I’m about to describe.” (I am using ‘man’ intentionally... please be patient, you’ll see why in just a little while).

‘The Man’ described is one who rejects one of two ways of life - a way that grinds to a halt. He does not: Walk in the ideas, the values, the beliefs of the wicked; stand in the path, the behaviour, the lifestyle of sinners; or sit, joining the world in their cynical disrespect of God and His ways.

‘The Man’ is shown wise by not walking that way. He will not stand in solidarity with those who confuse this world’s priorities with God’s purposes - pursuing profit and pleasure for security. He will not sit down with the cynicism of this age, belittling ‘those poor fools’ who need religion.

GODS’-WORD-WRITTEN
Instead, ‘the Man’ chooses another way - delighting in the Law of the Lord. He carries Scripture in his memory and meditates on it. Day and night, there is not one moment when God’s-Word-written is not directing his thoughts.

What irony that this Word is so accessible today - it’s even on my smartphone - and yet, do I delight in it? How far am I from being ‘the Man.’

The Psalm continues, describing ‘the Man’ himself. ‘A tree planted,’ carefully positioned by the planter, in suitable soil, by streams of water - secure. Droughts and dry winds come but ‘its leaf does not wither.’ Consequently, ‘the Man’ is productive. Contrast ‘the wicked’ who are ‘blown away like chaff’ - the destiny of those who do not delight in God’s Word.

The psalmist’s two ways are blunt. Does that sound binary and superficial? I know so many people who seem so good: Family members, friends, neighbours. Respectable people, but with no interest whatsoever in the God who created them.

Psalm 1 reveals that, for all their outward goodness, they are walking, standing and sitting in the opposite of ‘blessedness.’ They are the superficial ones - outwardly good, while rejecting the One who made them.

WICKED
As I meditate on this part of the Law of the Lord, I find I am not ‘the Man.’ Where does that leave me? I am among the wicked.

How wonderful that the Psalm does not finish there!

The final two verses leave imagery behind and deliver the key to the Psalm, and to security. They introduce something new, ‘the congregation of the righteous,’ who - unlike the wicked - will stand ‘in the judgment.’ Who are they?

We find the answer when we see that the Psalm uses language found elsewhere in the Old Testament. Passages like Deuteronomy 17:14-20, Joshua 1:7-8, Psalm 19 and 1 Kings 2:1-4 show that ‘the Man’ is Israel’s leader, their king... their Messiah.

Jesus did not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers. His delight was in the law of His Father. Jesus is the ‘The Man,’ planted by streams of water and who prospers. Not even death destroys Him. His Kingdom does not wither.

In Jesus, ‘The Man,’ the One to whom Psalm 1 ultimately points, great David’s greater son, we find true security.

Having a house and insurance and good leaders are all good things, but the security they bring is fleeting.

We find true security only in one place: ‘The Man’ Christ Jesus.
The All Ireland Trustees decided on March 10 to postpone the Mothers’ Union (MU) Triennial Conference scheduled for March 27-19 at An Grianan and also the Service of Celebration to be held on March 29 at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin.

The overriding concern at the time the decision was taken was the potential risk to members in the context of the Covid-19 virus, but there was also the fact that the Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, was being advised not to travel to the UK - besides her visit to Ireland, she also had commitments in Scotland and England.

The Government of the Republic of Ireland subsequently banned all such gatherings and the Government of Guyana suspended travel from the country.

All Ireland President, June Butler, said festival services planned for March had to be postponed and other events cancelled or put on hold. “These are unprecedented times and we have to be sensible in order to minimise the risks to our health and that of our loved ones,” June said.

“However, I know that all our members throughout Ireland will be selfless, while also being sensible, about the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. We should be giving some thought about those in our communities who are ill or self-isolating, and how we can best support them.

“We might be able to collect essential supplies and medication for them. Also consider other methods of communicating with them, such as by phone or email. Please pay particular attention to the care and needs of single people, and the elderly who are isolated from their families.”

June, who is also a Worldwide Trustee of the MU, said that it is special to know that through this worldwide pandemic all MU sisters are involved and praying for each other.
DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IMPLEMENTED

Member States at the United Nations (UN) have agreed to fully implement the Beijing Declaration on gender equality.

The political declaration was adopted on March 9, when the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held a one-day procedural meeting, rather than the planned two-week summit. The full meeting was postponed following concern about the spread of Covid-19.

The Anglican Communion had planned to take a delegation of eight women from all around the world to CSW, but an announcement from UN Women, just days before the summit was due to start, said no delegations based outside of New York would be allowed to attend. The UN has said that the summit will be re-scheduled for later this year.

“My heart goes out to the delegation in this time of disappointment,” Rachael Fraser, the Research and Advocacy Officer at the Anglican Communion Office, said. “We have been walking alongside them since October 2019 and it’s been an honour to witness their energy, passion and vision for a world free from injustice.

“But the work does not stop: We are already hearing the ways that our delegates are organising to continue the fight for gender justice in their communities.”

In the political declaration, member states welcomed the progress made towards the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, but expressed concern that overall, progress has not been fast or deep enough. In some areas, progress has been uneven, and structural barriers, discriminatory practices and the feminisation of poverty persist.

A Eucharist Service was planned to mark the opening of the 64th UN Commission on the Status of Women at the Episcopal Church Centre in New York. The Centre held its regular midday Eucharist service instead, but the Prayers of the People were written by the women who were part of the Anglican and Episcopalian delegations. [ACNS].

MARTYR’S TUNICLE SET TO RETURN

The tunicle which former Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket is thought to have been wearing when he was murdered is to return to Canterbury Cathedral for an exhibition marking the 850th anniversary of his martyrdom.

Archbishop Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29 1170 by four knights of Henry II. Tradition says that they interpreted Henry’s words - “Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?” - as a command for him to be assassinated.

The tunicle is housed inside a 17th century glass reliquary, which usually resides at the Papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. It is being loaned to the cathedral by the Vatican for public display from July 4 to August 3 this year. [ACNS].

LAUNCH OF THY KINGDOM COME

The global ecumenical prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come, which started life as a simple request from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the clergy of the Church of England, will this year take place in more than 90 per cent of countries around the world.

The event runs from Pentecost to Ascension (May 21-31) and its launch took place in March at Lambeth Palace, the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the launch, Archbishop Justin Welby was joined by a number of church leaders, including Pete Greig from the 24-7 Prayer movement, Bishop Nicholas Hudson from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, and Teresa Carvalho from the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales.

A new smartphone app with gaming and augmented reality technology has been created for this year’s Thy Kingdom Come initiative. During the 11-day prayer focus, the app will provide a game, Bible story or video reflection. The resources will be available from www.thykingdomcome.global. [ACNS].
The Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Dr Agnes Abuom, announced that the meetings of both the WCC’s Central Committee and its Executive Committee have been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Central Committee was due to elect a new General Secretary, to succeed Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, who stood down at the end of March.

Dr Abuom, from the Anglican Church of Kenya, wrote to Central Committee members saying: “The decision is a prudential one, taking into account all relevant information and assessing the total risks for the participants, the WCC as an organisation, the integrity of a meeting of the governing bodies under these circumstances, and for the health of all involved in such a gathering, directly or indirectly. “The decision reflects an abundance of caution about the possible difficulties members would encounter in travelling safely abroad and ensuring a quorum for decision-making, as well as ensuring the health of attendees and other participants.”

The Central Committee had been due to elect a new General Secretary. The final two candidates are Dr Elizabeth Joy of the Malankara Orthodox Church, a Director of Churches Together in England, and Prof Dr Jerry Pillay, the Dean of Theology and Religion at South Africa’s University of Pretoria.

In early March, Dr Abuom announced that the Central Committee’s leadership team had appointed Fr Prof Ioan Sauca as Acting General Secretary. He took up his temporary role on April 1 and will continue until the WCC Executive Committee meeting in June. [ACNS]
5 APRIL
THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT (PALM SUNDAY)
• Psalm 118 - ‘O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever.’
• Matthew 21:1-11 - Holy Week begins with an eternal reminder of how fake praise can be. The crowds that cheered Jesus as the hoped-for Messiah, the Son of David, were to - within days - bray for His murder and watch Him be tortured to death.

APRIL 12
EASTER DAY - THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EASTER
Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!
• Jeremiah 31:1-6 - God loves us with an everlasting love, which is the great covenant promise in the Hebrew Scriptures.
• Easter Anthems - Christ has been raised from the dead: The first fruits of those who sleep. For as by man came death, by man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
• Acts 10:34-43 - Peter attests to Jesus, as the Lord and judge of all, the One from whom we receive redemption and forgiveness.
• John 20:1-18 - The risen Christ addresses the anguished Mary Magdalene by name, and from the unutterable joy of that encounter, she is sent to bring the Good News to the disciples. Our encounter with the risen Christ is also a commission to bring that same hope to our age.

APRIL 19
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
• Genesis 8:6-16 - After the horror of the flood, Noah and his wife and family leave the ark - God has given them a new land, a new beginning.
• Psalm 16 - Praise the Lord for He hears the howl of anguish of humankind and delivers us.
• 1 Peter 1:3-9 - ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.’
• John 20:19-31 - The risen Christ meets the disciples in the Upper Room, sending them forth with the grace of absolving sin. Thomas’ initial doubt becomes a great declaration of faith, but ‘blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

APRIL 26
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
• Isaiah 43:1-12 - We are called and we will not be overwhelmed for the Lord our God, the Holy One declares ‘you are precious in my sight.’ In that great love there is healing, sight and hearing, and it is to that that we are called to witness.
• Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17 - The one who knows the depth of God’s redeeming love has no option but to proclaim this great freedom.
• 1 Peter 1:17-23 - Through Christ we have come to trust God and from Christ we learn to love - ‘deeply from the heart’ and in Him we have come to hear the voice of God anew.
• Luke 24:13-35 - The great recognition of Christ in the interpretation of the Scriptures and in the breaking of bread leads these disciples to return to from whence they came - changed, joyous and commissioned to proclaim the risen Christ.

LITURGICAL NOTES
REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

The Very Rev Maria Jansson is Dean of Waterford Cathedral, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.
History came alive in St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork, on February 24, when young people from Ashton School, Bandon Grammar School and Midleton College accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, to re-enact a seminal moment in the history of the Church of Ireland.

This was the reading of the Church’s Preamble and Declaration for the first time by Bishop John Gregg of Cork on February 19 1870 at the General Convention of the Church of Ireland.

The students and Bishop Colton were joined by clergy of the diocese, Dr Richard Clarke and Bishop Michael Mayes.

Amidst the fallout of the passing of the Irish Church Act in 1869, the Church of Ireland had just over a year to organise itself on a new footing before it would be disestablished on January 1 1871. A new Constitution was required, and a body to be legal trustee of the Church’s property (the Representative Church Body) was to be set up by Royal Charter.

In 1870, the archbishop and bishops, together with clergy and lay people elected from every diocese, met for two extended sessions as a General Convention in Dublin. It was essential to set down first principles. A new Church was not being founded, rather it was a continuation of the ancient Church, catholic and apostolic, which had espoused also the principles of the Reformation.

On February 19 1870, the fifth day of the General Convention, the meeting turned to first principles: The continuity, tradition and key beliefs of the Church of Ireland. These were set out in a Preamble and Declaration which was proposed for adoption by the Bishop of Cork, John Gregg, and seconded by the Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Chevenix Trench. This short but powerful and symbolic moment in the history of the Church of Ireland was re-enacted in part of St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, which was transformed to emulate the Antient Concert Rooms on Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), Dublin, where the General Convention convened.

The chaplains of the three schools recruited the cast, who wore period costume. Dr Clarke fulfilled the role of Archbishop Marcus Gervais Beresford, and Bishop Mayes took the part of the Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Chevenix Trench. The re-enactment was filmed for posterity.

It is a fact that women were not members of the General Convention in 1870. Indeed, they were not part of the decision-making synods of the Church until the 1950s. It is not known whether or not they attended as guests, but in this re-enactment they did, emphasising the historical fact of their non-participation.

After the re-enactment, the entire cast accepted the Bishop’s invitation to lunch at the Bishop’s Palace.
GUIDE TO SHARING SERVICES ONLINE

By Tim Burns

In a time of real uncertainty, it is important that people can remain connected with who and what is familiar and encouraging. By providing regular online services that include the Bible being read and taught, prayers and worship, we can encourage people to remain connected to a God who cares intimately for us, the Church and each other.

Online services can provide opportunity for support and encouragement, and remind people in isolation that they are not alone. For many, the thought of isolation is scary and challenging, and to know support and familiarity in the midst of this will be incredibly valuable.

Although delivering a service online may feel unusual, the benefit will far outweigh the cost, as it not only encourages those that tune in, but also allows us to maintain a regular worship service.

When it comes to either pre-recording and uploading the service or live streaming, consider that pre-recording allows you to address mistakes easier, while live streaming allows for the potential to interact with a live audience. Beyond that, there are a few other things to be aware of:

There is a licensing requirement regarding the streaming of copyrighted music content, either played live or on-demand. This does not apply to non-copyrighted music such as the older hymns in the hymnal. To find out more about using music on recordings and streaming, visit ccli.com or prsformusic.com. You cannot obtain a copyright licence for streaming through Facebook Live.

We recommend that you choose, if possible, a familiar setting within the church to set up for recording or live streaming, an area such as the chancel. The equipment needed includes a phone or a video camera, a lectern (or music stand) and a microphone stand or similar for recording, and possibly a lapel microphone that will connect with your phone.

Once you get set up, ensure that your light source is in front of you rather than behind, conduct a dry run, and once adjustments have been made, you are ready to go.

For uploading a pre-recorded service, navigate to your church’s Facebook page, click publish, write a description of the video, click the video/photo link and follow the directions from there.

For live streaming through Facebook, once again go to your church’s Facebook page, click publish, write a description of your video and then start live streaming.

Once either of these have been posted, you will be able to share the link through email and text message, providing people with direct access to the video.

Providing online services is one way, amongst many, of supporting people during this time, and it is important.

Tim Burns is Youth Development Officer, Diocese of Down and Dromore.
RESPONDING TO A NEED IN EGLINTON
CHURCHES RESPONDED QUICKLY TO APPEALS TO SUPPORT THE VULNERABLE AND ISOLATED - THEY INCLUDE EGLINTON CHURCHES TOGETHER

By Paul McFadden

Eglinton Churches Together is responding to the Covid-19 public health crisis by introducing a free service for local people in the Eglinton and Greysteel areas of Derry and Raphoe Diocese who are self-isolating or feeling vulnerable.

Clergy and members of the three main churches in the area are joining with Eglinton Community Centre to offer practical help and moral support. More than 3,000 homes in the two villages and surrounding areas were to be leafleted with flyers explaining what assistance is available and providing contact details.

Three individuals from the churches were nominated as ‘contact persons’ who can be telephoned by members of the community. Volunteers will be available to pick up and deliver shopping, collect medicines and other urgent supplies, and post mail. Church members will also be available for friendly phone calls to those who are feeling lonely or anxious.

The churches involved are St Canice’s Church of Ireland, Faughanvale Roman Catholic Parish and Faughanvale Presbyterian Church.

The rector of St Canice’s, the Rev Canon Paul Hoey, said: “Eglinton Churches Together members have already been responding prayerfully to the public health emergency, but we felt that it was important to respond in a practical way, too.

“There will be many people in our community - neighbours of ours - who will be hurting in the weeks and months ahead. Some will be self-isolating. Many will be anxious. Some will be experiencing financial distress. We want to be there for them, to help them and support them.”

THANKS TO SCHOOLS

The Transferor Representatives’ Council (TRC) - representing the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland in educational matters - has expressed its thanks and appreciation to principals, teachers and governors in these unprecedented times.

Speaking on behalf of the TRC, Chairperson Rosemary Rainey said: “We want to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to principals, schoolteachers and governors who have been working hard during this period of uncertainty to continue providing education to the pupils in their care in these unprecedented times.

“At the beginning of the school year, our thoughts were focused on budgetary pressures and other significant challenges. We could never have imagined the crisis that was to come.

“Across society, we are being asked to make significant changes to our daily patterns and habits, and those involved in delivering or receiving education are no exception. While nothing can match the face-to-face classroom experience, we recognise and greatly appreciate the enormous efforts that have been made throughout to ensure that children and young people continue to have an opportunity to learn while they face a period of separation from their peers.

“There are undoubtedly more difficult times ahead, but please be assured of the prayers of both TRC and the Churches at this time.”

FIND OUT MORE

The guidelines issued to churches by the bishops of the Church of Ireland, which vary from diocese to diocese, can be viewed via the Church of Ireland website: www.ireland.anglican.org.

On the website, you will also find information on services from our churches that can be viewed or listened to online, and further information on how to go about broadcasting your own services, videos or podcasts on social media.
By Ron Elsdon

We are living through tumultuous times. ‘We will get through this,’ said Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in a TV broadcast. Yes, we will. But, perhaps a situation like this no longer drives people to church to pray.

So how do we maintain optimism? I find myself connecting with the Scriptures. Thus the pilgrims in the valley of Baca found water by digging deep (Psalm 84:6). Romans 8:31-39 reminds us that nothing separates us from the love of Christ. So how do we not just hang on to faith but seek to nurture it?

CONTACT OR ISOLATION?
Church services are suspended - Psalms 42 and 137 express anguish at separation from a treasured place of worship. But there are new ways of ‘doing church.’ Some acts of worship are streamed online and many are listed on the Church of Ireland website. Bible study groups operate on Skype. Apps such as Facebook and WhatsApp help us stay in touch.

We can therefore still pray together, and if the nation is no longer able to cry out to God for deliverance (Psalm 91:3-4) then Christians must do it (‘the priestly role of the Christian is the most essential for the coherence of our society, for its well-being and for its spiritual and psychic health’ (Basil Hume - see Genesis 18:22).

Don’t forget the telephone! We call at least one friend each day, to assure them of our prayers. The radio can help. There is a weekly Sunday morning service (Radio 4 at 8.10am and Radio Ulster at 10.15am). Radio 3 broadcasts Choral Evensong on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons; Radio 4 has a 15-minute morning service every weekday on Long Wave.

GOOD NEWS OR BAD NEWS?
The bad news that threatens to overwhelm can be addressed in faith (see the ‘robust and defiant’ words of Psalm 46:2-3), Proverbs talks of the wife who can ‘laugh at the days to come’ (31:25). So don’t spend the whole day watching the news on TV or social media. In our house, we guillotine it after the dinnertime bulletin for the rest of the evening.

There is also good news. Community groups are springing up, looking out especially for the vulnerable and the elderly. There are hotels delivering hot food to them, free of charge. I am challenged by Paul’s instruction in Philippians 4:8 to look for whatever is honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable etc.

This is a discipline which one might tend to neglect. And I wonder if the paroxysms that we are beginning to go through could lead to the makings of a better society, refocused on what really matters.

LAUGH OR CRY?
Whatever makes you laugh, visit it! For me, it’s vintage comedy on Radio 4 Extra. On Facebook, some of the cartoons about coronavirus have made me laugh out loud - most are to do with toilet rolls! One features two aliens looking down on Earth from their spacecraft. One says, ‘I don’t know what wiped them out, but they had the cleanest bottoms I ever saw!’ If you find something to laugh about, share it!

LIFE TO THE FULL OR LIFE ON EMPTY?
Many of us will be at home more than usual, so routines need to be built into daily existence. This is especially true if you are classed as ‘vulnerable,’ as my doctor tells me my wife and I are. Part of ours will be the service of Compline each evening - and so will birdwatching.

The Bishop of St Albans’ ‘Golden Rules’ can help fashion Christian conduct and witness for these days. One urges us to ‘live life to the full.’ He notes how Jesus challenges His people to rise above fear about tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34). I note also how the risen Lord came to fearful disciples who were meeting beyond locked doors (John 20:19-31).

IN CONCLUSION
All of us will know days when fear threatens to overwhelm, as when the disciples, in a boat with Jesus in a sudden storm, panicked as they saw the boat filling with water. Jesus’ stern and startling rebuke was ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ (Mark 4:40). And so, we will need to face fear down deliberately with a response of trust and openness.

The Rev Ron Elsdon is retired rector of St Bartholomew’s Parish, Stranmillis, Diocese of Connor.
THE GOSPELS IN IAMBIC VERSE!

By Lynne Glanville

Two new books which present the Gospels as poems offer a novel way to read the Scriptures. *Meet the Apostles* and *The Gospels in Iambic Verse*, by the Rev Canon Prof John Bartlett were officially launched in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI).

The Rev Canon Bartlett, a former Precentor of Christ Church Cathedral and former Principal of CITI, has been working on the project to render the Sunday Gospel readings from the Revised Common Lectionary into iambic verse. He has illustrated them with his own quirky line drawings.

*Meet the Apostles* is a prequel which provides an introduction to the apostles of the New Testament in iambic verse. *The Gospels in Iambic Verse* is the first volume of a series of three which will take the reader through the three-year cycle of the Revised Common Lectionary.

The books were launched by musician, liturgist and theologian, Dr Margaret Daly-Denton. She described the poems of the Sunday Gospel readings and the accompanying drawings as ‘a novel way to hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them.’

Bishop Michael Burrows, who was unable to be present, described Canon Bartlett’s work on the iambic pentameter Gospels as ‘an absolute triumph of brain and - in the proper sense - wit.’

Canon Bartlett said the project began when he was listening to the Gospel one Sunday and the words fell into iambic pentameter: ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ From that point on it became a hobby, he added.

He thanked everyone who supported him in getting the books published, and said that the proceeds, after costs, would go to Christ Church Cathedral.

DOUBLE CELEBRATIONS IN FAHAN

Members of the Moore family with the new parish history written by Anne Moore.

There was double cause for joy in St Mura’s Church, Fahan, Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, on March 8, as the community launched a year of celebrations marking 200 years of worship in the building, as well as a new history of the Parish of Fahan Upper.

The book’s author, organist Anne Moore, was unable to be present, but members of her family were there to see the book launched by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

Bishop Andrew preached at a Service of Evening Prayer which also celebrated the feast day of St Mura of Fahan.

He said it was an occasion to be thankful to God that under Him, somehow, bricks and mere mortar became special, sacred places to us.

70 YEARS SERVICE!

Audrey Anderson has been a faithful member of the choir at St Colmanell’s Parish Church, Ahoghill, Diocese of Connor, for 70 years! In recognition of this, Audrey was presented with a gift from the choir, led by Michael Ashcroft, and a bouquet of flowers, presented by the Brownies and Rainbows, on behalf of the wider church family. In the picture with Michael and Audrey is the rector of Ahoghill and Portglenone, the Rev Dennis Christie.
THE MESSAGE OF LOVE
Author: Patrick Mitchel
Publisher: IVP Academic 2019

The Message of Love is an excellent book. Patrick Mitchel is Senior Lecturer in Theology at the non-denominational Irish Bible Institute in Dublin, and it is the latest in IVP’s ‘The Bible Speaks Today’ series.

It follows the customary structure of the series, devoting individual chapters to a detailed treatment of chosen Bible passages which illustrate important aspects of its theme - in this case, love.

There are 17 chapters, arranged thematically in four sections: ‘Love in the Old Testament;’ ‘The love of God revealed in the mission and death of Jesus Christ;’ ‘Love in the life and teaching of Jesus;’ and ‘The Church as a community of love.’ The book ends with a summary postscript entitled ‘A vision for human flourishing.’

Particularly noteworthy for this reviewer are Dr Mitchel’s demolition of the false dichotomy between the Old Testament God of wrath versus the New Testament God of love; the stress on the Church as a community of love, often seen as less important than doctrinal orthodoxy; love as a relational dynamic rather than an individualistic one (‘the overwhelmingly corporate and relational nature of the Christian life,’ page 231); his sustained critique of sub-Christian notions of love, autonomy and freedom - always threatening to infiltrate the church; and a provocative and, sadly, subversive understanding of Christian marriage based on Ephesians 5:21-33.

Here, as elsewhere in the book, the orthodoxy expressed will be unwelcome to some, but his arguments will reward careful study if they are not simply tossed aside as politically incorrect.

Ron Elsdon

A PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
Author: Nancey Murph Publisher: SPCK

Is Christian faith credible in the modern world? That is the question that Nancey Murphy seeks to address in this book. In the first part (pages 9-101), she traces the relationship between reason and pre-stoic Greece to the 21st century to show the shifts in the development of belief. This reaches a climax in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre.

Using MacIntyre’s thought, the author shows how Christian faith has adapted to new contexts and new challenges. Though systems of belief can only be measured by their individual methodology, when faced with ‘crisis points,’ they can be brought into dialogue with new worldviews to adapt and maintain intellectual credibility.

These new contexts or ‘crisis points’ make up the second part of the book (pages 105-300), examining the challenges to faith that sprang from the Enlightenment in chapter five, divine action in chapter six, and the question of evil and suffering in chapter seven, while chapters 8-10 study questions surrounding science and Christian faith.

Nancey Murph’s book is well structured and relatively easy to follow, considering the complexity of its content. Despite notable absences that one would expect to find in a work like this, eg Kierkegaard and Heidegger, A Philosophy of the Christian Religion is an important publication for anyone wishing to engage in high level apologetics.

Andrew P Campbell

FIVE FAMOUS DOGS OF IRELAND
Author: Maureen Donnelly
Publisher: Clachan Publishing

The beautifully illustrated book is Maureen Donnelly, who has been writing books and scripts for schools in subjects such as history and nature for many years.

I read this book to my grandchildren, ages four and five, and they sat so quietly listening to the stories that it showed me they were interested and thinking about what was being read.

The book targets later primary age, 8-12+, but my five-year-old grandson especially loved it, so I would encourage any parents or grandparents to read it to children of any age. Although it is only 20 pages, it is full of interesting folklore, facts, illustrations, pictures, poems and questions.

The story that I enjoyed the most was the runt of the litter of grey hounds, called Master McGrath who won ‘The Waterloo Cup.’ No one expected him to be of any use, just like society does to many people who are different or don’t fit in - they put them on the scrap heap or push they to the edge of society life. Gladly, many don’t stay there: They run their own race and they win.

I can honestly say that I enjoyed this little thought-provoking book. It was interesting to read stories about our own country. The author has also written eight more books and pamphlets.

Janet Hunter
By Paul McFadden

The first of this year’s ‘Derry and Raphoe Youth Invites’ services, led by the Dean of Raphoe, the Very Rev Arthur Barrett, and held in St Eunan’s Cathedral, drew a large crowd.

The Chairperson of the Derry and Raphoe Youth (DRY) Board, the Rev Peter Ferguson, had stressed that the service was for the whole diocesan family, not just for young people, and he and the dean were rewarded with a congregation that comprised people of all ages from parishes in both dioceses representing counties Donegal, Tyrone and Londonderry.

Dean Barrett welcomed everyone to what he called ‘a special occasion.’ It was special, he said, because it was St David’s Day, March 1; it was special because it was the first Sunday of Lent; and it was special because of the music, led by the Mark Ferguson Band.

A particular feature of the ‘Derry and Raphoe Youth Invites’ services is the testimony of young people. The congregation in the cathedral heard about the impact of the new Exodus youth outreach programme, which was introduced in the Stranorlar, Meenglass and Kilteevogue parishes last year; about the weekly Confirmation class in Leckpatrick and Dunnalong, where the SPARK initiative - first pioneered in Garvagh - is due to be rolled out this summer; and details of the new interdenominational youth group which meets at weekends in Donegal Town.

The Archdeacon of Raphoe, the Ven David Huss, revealed details of the ‘On the Move’ weekend, which had been scheduled to take place in Donegal Town and Laghey from April 24-26. The weekend, which has been postponed due to coronavirus, is for young people aged 13 years of age and over. They stay in a local school and go out and about in the local community, performing public-spirited tasks such as litter-picks and fence-painting, blessing the community and showing the love of Christ to their neighbours.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, who gave the address at the service, was in a reflective mood. He said he had brought with him a ‘picture’ of the kind of people God wanted to speak to, those God was interested in, those God saw great potential in and, most importantly of all, those God loved. Bishop Andrew then produced a large, circular mirror, which he held aloft before walking down the aisle of the cathedral, showing members of the congregation their reflections.

The bishop pointed out that the Scripture reading in the DRY Invites service, containing the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Lost Coin from Luke 15, had three themes: Being lost, being found and rejoicing.

“For you and me, I think that tells us something about whenever we are found in Christ, found in Jesus, found in God, found by Him and His love - that there’s a rejoicing with joy that springs up within us, a joy that’s there that’s really special and important for us. Lost, found and rejoicing - that’s what we’re talking about today,” Bishop Andrew said. “That’s the God who loves you today. And that’s the God who wants to bless you today.”

THE KIND OF PEOPLE GOD LOVES

The Dean of Raphoe, the Very Rev Arthur Barrett, with the Mark Ferguson Band. (Photo: Paul McFadden).
I recently read articles by authors who had decided to detox from reading news. One said they were addicted to the drama of it all, another decided to reduce levels of anxiety and distraction that daily news produced in them.

Unfortunately, a lot of the news that reaches us is negative, and when we are exposed to a large sum of negativity, we may start to feel powerless. For someone who didn’t manage to develop a proper habit of reading news, I always thought that not having this habit was a defect. Now it appears that this tendency to not read the news all the time helps me to preserve some peace of mind.

It is not only the news that has a potential to overwhelm us. A lot of us have had to juggle various responsibilities or challenges that can eventually lead to burnout. Last year, I went through a short period of increased stress. I wasn’t used to it and it left me out of my depth. The only potentially good thing about this experience was that it made me more sensitive to others who, for various reasons, might feel similar.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?
“Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.” (https://www.helpguide.org).

It may be hard to acknowledge the signs of burnout for fear that others will think us weak or incapable. And so we think that we have no choice but to continue as normal. It is, however, not normal to live under prolonged stress, and it is crucial to include self-care in our daily routine while we care for those around us.

Brené Brown suggests giving ourselves ‘permission slips.’ She writes: “A permission slip is when a person in authority allows someone to do something. For example, when a parent signs a paper allowing their child to go on a field trip. For personal permission slips, you are in charge of your own behaviour - so you’re giving yourself permission to feel or act in a certain way. It is setting an intention for how you wish to behave in difficult situations.”

We may need to give each other a ‘permission slip’ to be human beings with limitations. Even Jesus needed time to rest. He would go alone to a secluded place to spend time with the Father in prayer. From this prayerful attitude, He discerned what to do and what not to do, and how to minister to those around Him.

On one occasion, after Jesus was busy ministering to people and healing them, He went to a solitary place to pray. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’ Jesus replied, ‘Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.’” (Mark 1:35-38).

Jesus had freedom to say ‘no’ to some invitations and demands in order to do what He was called to do. This came out of His prayer life and relationship with God the Father. If we are to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, then we are to have the same discerning spirit.

CONSECRATING EMPATHY
John Eldredge speaks about ‘consecrating empathy.’ The answer to being overwhelmed with news or the of life, does not mean that we should shut out every negative story we might hear and do nothing. Instead, Eldredge says that we can ‘consecrate our capacity to care.’ In other words, we are joining our own capacity for caring with Jesus’ capacity, which is infinitely greater. We are also giving Him permission to direct us, to guide us as to how to use this capacity.

Taking on too much or caring productively for ‘everything’ is simply not sustainable long term. We take to heart situations that we have discerned God is calling us to take. Having invited Jesus to help us in this caring process may eventually increase our own capacity to love others, deepen our prayer, and bring creative solutions to our actions. A proper response to reducing anxiety and burnout is not to remove our responsibility for doing good in the world. Rather, it is giving our whole heart to a few issues, in prayer and action, that we are called to engage with.
The Standing Committee of the General Synod met on March 10. Archdeacon George Davison opened in prayer, remembering the communities served by the Church at this time of anxiety, those who are currently ill, and those involved in health services and planning.

The committee met in Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines, as it offered more space and ventilation. Archbishop Michael Jackson welcomed Bishop David McClay to his first meeting.

The Rev Matthew Hagan was elected as a new clerical member for the Diocese of Armagh and Jan Peach as a new lay member for the Diocese of Down and Dromore. The following were nominated to continue as members of the Secondary Education Committee: Wilfred Baker, Elizabeth Hassell, the Rev Robert Jones, Kara Turner, Hazel Corrigan, Roy Crowe, the Rev Katharine Poulton and Joyce Ryder.

The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and the Rev Dr William Olhausen were appointed to attend the Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland from July 9-13 in Swanwick, Derbyshire. The Rev Alison Calvin and Rhonda Willoughby were appointed to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from June 1-5, in Belfast. The Rev Katherine Poulton and Ken Gibson were appointed to attend the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland, from June 10-14, in Lisburn.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe was nominated as Vice-President of the Irish Council of Churches. The following were appointed to networks within the Anglican Communion: The Rev Canon Andrew Orr (Environment); Dr David Hutchinson Edgar (Peace and Justice); June Butler (Family); Jacqueline Armstrong (Women); and Robert Dunne (Safe Church).

The report and recommendations of the Priorities Fund Committee were received and adopted. The Priorities Fund received 62 applications in 2019, requesting grants amounting to €1,472,120, and the committee recommended 49 grants totalling €726,115. As recommended by the Priorities Fund Committee, Standing Committee resolved that the diocesan targets for contributions to the 2021 Fund should not be increased and should remain at their current levels.

Standing Committee approved proposed modifications to the Standing Orders and relevant changes to the Constitution to revise the bills process, to be presented in legislation at the 2020 General Synod. Legislation on General Synod representation and compliance with charities legislation was also approved for presentation at the 2020 General Synod in the Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin.

The following resolution was passed to mark 150 years since the election of the first members of the Representative Body: “That the Standing Committee notes, with great thanksgiving to Almighty God, that on March 11 1870, 150 years ago tomorrow, the General Convention of the Church of Ireland, on the 22nd day of its meeting, elected the first members of the Representative Body and, furthermore, records its deep appreciation of the faithful work of that Body in the years since Disestablishment, together with the service of all its members throughout the intervening years for the welfare of the ministry and mission of the Church of Ireland.”

THE REV CANON MARK WATSON

The following is an abridged version of the address by the Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher, at the funeral service of the Rev Canon Mark Watson, held at Christ Church, Maguiresbridge, on March 5.

Mark Watson was a big man. A big family man. A big presence in the parishes where he served. A big influence in the many organisations to which he belonged. A big contributor to the communities he lived in. He was a life enhancer...

I first came across Mark when we were both studying for Orders in Trinity College Dublin in the early 1990s... His passions in those days - and they didn’t change much over the years - were, in no particular order, the Book of Common Prayer (1662), Wolverhampton Wanderers FC and tubes of Pringles...

There was indeed in many ways a childlike openness about him, which is one of the reasons why he was such an effective pastor... As I say a big man, but with a very unthreatening presence, which is so important when dealing with people one to one, especially in difficult circumstances...

He cared for people and he respected them. He was interested in them and in their families.

He was a true Christian also in the sense that when he committed himself to something he didn’t give up... An intensely practical person, he had a gift and a passion for building things, as the parishes of Florencecourt, Brackeleville, and Trory and Killadeas will attest. They didn’t need anything built in Maguiresbridge and Derrybrusk, so he was in the process of building them up in faith, hope and love instead, before a series of very serious illnesses curtailed him in that vocation...

Rona was simply the love of his life and both Mark and she were rightly proud of their two sons, Samuel and Peter, who they both shaped... but shaped not so much in their own image, as tried hard to burnish the image of the God in whom they were made.

DEATHS

Keogh.

Watson.
Outreach Worker in Mount Merrion Church, said: “I loved the course and it really encouraged me to see that the work of a youth worker is so important in making a real difference to young people’s lives. Hearing each other’s stories about why we were all there proved the point.

“I loved the course material and the gleaning of personal experience from the leaders and other group members was invaluable.”

Andrew Watson, Youth Worker at Ballyholme Parish Church, was pleasantly surprised by his experience: “Having already worked as a youth worker for 18 months, and with years of experience volunteering before that, I didn’t think I would learn a whole lot on the OCN course. Thankfully, though, I was wrong!” he said.

“Every week I left with a deeper understanding of things like inclusion, safeguarding, participation and even the very purposes of youth work. For anyone involved in youth work or youth ministry, this course is an absolute must. I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a whole lot along the way!”

OCN courses are another element in the Down and Dromore diocesan strategy of developing and upskilling new leaders. The team is currently delivering OCN Level 3.

Nearly 180 people from All Saints’ Church, Belfast, Diocese of Connor, descended on Castlewellan Castle, Co Down, from February 21-23 for a weekend of fun and Bible teaching. The speaker was the Rev William Taylor, rector of St Helen’s, Bishopsgate, London. Children’s ministry was led by a team from the Child Evangelism Fellowship and the teenagers were taught by Matthew Topley (Church of Ireland ordinand) and his wife Erin (Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh Diocesan Youth Worker).
APPOINTMENTS

The Rev Elaine Dunne
Priest-in-Charge of Omey Union of Parishes, Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, to be Rector of Ballybay Group of Parishes, Diocese of Clogher.

The Rev Francis Rutledge
Bishop’s Curate of Christ Church Primacy, Diocese of Down and Dromore, to be Rector of Magheraculmoney, Diocese of Clogher.

The Rev Edna Wakely
Curate-Assistant of Limerick City Parish, Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe, to be Incumbent of Castlecomer Union of Parishes, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.

RESIGNATION

The Rev Alison Seymour-Whiteley
Priest-in-Charge of Templemore Union, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory; March 31.

BOWLING MATS: For sale three indoor mats complete with fenders at £50.00 per mat and fender. Contact Bob Armstrong telephone 028 9070 1407.

FOREST LODGE: Bed and breakfast, Hornhead, Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal, tel. Jean Scott, NI (0035374) ROI (074) 9136104; mob: 08632 15396 after 6.00pm; website: www.forestlodgedonegal.com or email: info@forestlodgedonegal.com.

NORTH ANTRIM COAST: Self-catering accommodation. Complete two-bedroom bungalow, usual facilities, close to Coleraine town centre, private parking, along main public transport route. Contact Clarke: 07716868255.

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THE MAURICE TRUST
This Trust was set up to offer financial assistance when circumstances proved difficult to serving or retired clergy and clergy widows/widowers based in the Republic of Ireland.

Those wishing to make an application for the next meeting on Monday June 15 2020 should contact the Secretary for the necessary form. Deadline for receipt of applications - June 1 2020.

Ms SJ Walker, 28 Mountain View Crinken Glen, Shankill, Dublin 18 Email: sallyjwalker28@gmail.com

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MUSICAL DIRECTOR

St Jude’s is an Anglican Evangelical Church a couple of miles from Belfast city centre. We seek to live and share the good news of Jesus Christ to all in this growing multicultural area of the capital.

We hope to appoint a Musical Director this year to develop the music ministry leading the congregation in corporate worship through contemporary songs and traditional hymns. We are looking for someone ideally with the ability to play the organ and keyboard.

This is an opportunity to serve in a local church with a responsibility for music ministry. An hourly rate will apply which is commensurable to similar positions in other churches, and will be discussed with the candidate.

For further information and job description please contact:
The Rev Peter Bourke (Rector)
Email: peter_bourke@hotmail.com
Tel: 028 9508 9369
Closing date: June 30 2020.

DIOCESE OF GLENDALOUGH
GROUPED PARISHES OF NEWCASTLE AND NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY WITH CALARY

This parish group is now seeking to appoint an Incumbent.

This parish, with three churches and a national school, is located in picturesque east Wicklow. The rectory, situated close to Newcastle Parish Church, is in excellent repair and of a high standard.

To obtain a Parish Profile or to lodge an expression of interest, please write to: The Archbishop of Dublin’s Personal Assistant, Archbishop’s Office, Church House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6.
Email: archbishop@dublin.anglican.org.

The Board of Nomination will not meet before 29th April 2020.

DIOCESES OF TUAM, KILLALA AND ACHONRY, PARISH OF GALWAY

ST NICHOLAS’ COLLEGIATE CHURCH

seek to appoint a

VICAR

who will work alongside the rector 0.5, and 0.5 Chaplain to NUIG and GMIT
Full MAS

Closing date for applications:
Friday May 16 2020

For further information, please contact the rector
The Very Rev Lynda Peilow,
The Rectory, Taylors Hill Road,
Galway H91 ENN3
or email: rector@stnicholas.ie.
CLERGY DAUGHTERS’ SCHOOL GRANTS

Educational Grants for the academic year 2020-2021 are available for the daughters of the Church of Ireland Clergy, who are in Secondary Schools (1st-6th Year) or in Universities or other Third-Level Colleges.

Application forms are available at: clergydaughters@gmail.com or from the C.D.S. Secretary, Caroline Cummins, 7 The Avenue, Rathdale, Enfield, Co. Meath and should be returned, when completed, to arrive by 30th April.

SCHOOL FOR EDUCATING DAUGHTERS OF THE IRISH CLERGY

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the School for Educating Daughters of the Irish Clergy will take place on:

Monday 11th May 2020 at 3.30pm in Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 (by kind permission).

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