

December 2025  
& January 2026



# CLOSE NEWS



## ► ADVENT

Fr Charles teaches us to pray through the Advent season.

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## ► CHRISTMAS

Details of services and concerts from Advent until Candlemas.

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## ► COMPETITION

Introducing the Christmas Caption Competition.

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## Service Times



### Sunday

09:15 — Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel*)  
11:15 — Choral Eucharist *or* Choral Matins  
15:15 — Choral Evensong

### Monday – Friday

09:00 — Sung Matins (*during school term*)  
11:05 — Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Festivals*)  
17:30 — Choral Evensong *or* Evening Prayer

### Saturday

11:05 — Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel*)

**W**ORSHIP HAS BEEN offered in this Cathedral for generations, and it continues to guide our life and work today. The Church's liturgy expresses clearly what we believe and provides a consistent pattern for our prayer, week by week. Through it, we gather as a community, hear the scriptures, and uphold the rhythm of the Church's year. We invite you to join us for any of the services here this month. Additional service information can be found on Page 7. If you are unable to join us in person, you are most welcome to tune in to the live stream: [spcd.ie/live](http://spcd.ie/live)

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*Cover: The Deanery at Christmas. (L–R: John Reardon, Laura Lowe, and the Dean.)*

## **The Editorial Committee**

**The Very Revd Dr William Morton** *Dean & Ordinary*

**The Revd Canon Charles Mullen** *Dean's Vicar*

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**Mr Clark Brydon** *Sustainability & Engagement Coordinator*

*Close News* is the monthly newsletter for Saint Patrick's Cathedral. It is designed and printed in-house by Clark Brydon. Any views which may be expressed in the features, news reports, articles, letters, and reviews are not necessarily those of the Board and Chapter of the National Cathedral and Collegiate Church of Saint Patrick in Dublin. Timely submissions to the Editorial Committee for inclusion are always very welcome.

**The deadline for publication in the February issue of *Close News* will be:  
Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026**



# The Dean Writes...

THE VERY REVD DR WILLIAM MORTON

**S**AINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL is a place which provides welcome to worshippers and visitors throughout the entire year, but this is especially true at Christmas.

Day after day, visitors arrive from every continent — some drawn by faith, some by history and culture, and some simply by curiosity. Each one, in different ways, carries with them the story of the world as it truly is: a world of beauty and wonder, but also a world marked by war, fear, division, and uncertainty.

Into such a world, the Gospel makes an astonishing claim: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' This is the heart of Christmas. The light of Christ does not arrive in times of comfort and certainty,

but in the cold reality of a stable, amid poverty, danger, and displacement. God chooses the darkness precisely as the place where His light will be seen most clearly.

This truth speaks powerfully to our own time. As nations tremble with conflict, as communities wrestle with division, and as many hearts carry private burdens of grief, anxiety, and loneliness, Christmas does not deny the darkness — it challenges it. The child born in Bethlehem is God's declaration that darkness will never have the final word.

For those who worship here regularly, and for the hundreds of thousands who cross our threshold each year, this Cathedral stands as a quiet witness to that enduring light. Within



these ancient walls, prayers have been offered through centuries of hardship and hope alike. The same Christ who was worshipped here in times of plague, famine and war is present with us still.

Christmas invites each of us not only to receive the light of Christ, but to reflect it — in kindness, in courage, in forgiveness, and in care for the

vulnerable. Even the smallest light, held faithfully, pushes back the dark.

May the light of Christ shine in your home, in your heart, and in our wounded world this Christmas.

Yours, ever,  
*William*

## Condolences

**S**INCERE CONDOLENCES ARE expressed to Mr Alan Rowden, and his wife, Canon Gillian Wharton, Prebendary of Dunlavin, on the death of Alan's father, **Cecil**, on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Cecil, who had reached the age of 95 years, was a former chorister in Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Cecil's funeral service took place in Saint Mary's Church, Deerpark, Howth, followed by cremation at Glasnevin Crematorium.

We remember also in our prayers Mrs Meeda Mills, and her husband Canon Cecil, on the death of **Ruth-Anne**, wife of Meeda's nephew, Chris Chambers, Glencormac, Kilmacanogue, County Wicklow. Ruth-Anne, mother of three young daughters, Isla, Daisy, and Evie, passed away peacefully, all too soon, on Thursday, 6th November, aged 49 years. She was formerly of Ballycarry, County Antrim. Chris, Ruth-Anne, and their daughters were known to us here at Saint Patrick's as Chris was Dublin Regional Director of Clancy Construction who carried out the Cathedral roof project. Ruth-Anne's funeral service was held in

Saint Patrick's Church, Powerscourt, Enniskerry, followed by burial in the adjoining churchyard.

Condolences are also expressed to Mr John Kinirons, one of our team of vergers, on the death of his aunt, **Miss Una Kinirons**, last surviving sibling of John's late father, Noel. Una, who lived at Blackrock, County Dublin, was on the staff of the Bank of Ireland all her working life. She often visited Saint Patrick's Cathedral when singing there at concerts as a member of the Goethe Choir, conducted by Mr John Dexter. Our prayers are also very much with John over these days as he and the members of his family lay to rest the ashes of his dear mother, **Christina**.

All who mourn are assured of our thoughts and prayers.

*Father of all, we pray to thee for those whom we love, but see no longer. Grant them thy peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in thy loving wisdom and almighty power work in them the good purpose of thy perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



# A Shot from the Canon

THE REVD CANON  
CHARLES MULLEN

IT'S THE SUNDAY after Christmas. The congregation is smaller, the shepherds have returned to work, the infant slumbers, Mary has devised a feeding and minding routine. But God has come among us. We must come to terms with something that's beyond our understanding, though first comes a time of comfort rather than explanation. Though afraid, Mary accepted the angel's startling greeting, 'You will give birth to a son'. Throughout life she remained faithful in her love for him, and we now attune our mind's ear to Mary comforting her son and Saviour: 'Lullay, my dear heart, my own dear darling'.

CM

## O Little One Sweet

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,  
When she to Beth'lem Judah came,  
And was delivered of a Son,  
That blessed Jesus hath to name.  
'Jesu lullaby, sweet Babe,' sang she.  
And rocked him gently on her knee.

*Anonymous,*  
from *Will Ballet's Lute Book* (c.1600)

O little one sweet, O little one mild,  
With joy thou hast  
the whole world filled;  
Thou camest here  
from heaven's domain,  
To bring us comfort in our pain,  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

from a translation  
by *Percy Dearmer* (1867–1936)

# Services & Preachers

## DAILY SERVICES

Please see Page 2 for the full details of our normal pattern of daily worship.

DAY	SERVICES	CANON IN RESIDENCE
<b>ADVENT SUNDAY</b> Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> November	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 18:00 – Advent Procession	<b>REVD D. W. OXLEY</b> <i>Prebendary of St Audoen's</i>
<b>THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD M. T. KINGSTON</b> <i>Prebendary of Yagoe</i>
<b>THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> December	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Carols for All	<b>REVD A. W. A. MAYES</b> <i>Prebendary of Newcastle</i>
<b>THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Nine Lessons & Carols	<b>VEN. K. M. POULTON</b> <i>Prebendary of Swords</i>
<b>THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD</b> Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> December	11:05 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 16:00 – Nine Lessons & Carols*	<i>* Admission by ticket only. This service will be broadcast live on RTÉ Radio. Be seated by 15:45.</i>
<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> December	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist	<b>VERY REVD W. W. MORTON</b> <i>Dean &amp; Ordinary</i>

**The Service & Preachers List continues overleaf.**

## Services & Music List

*For an up-to-date and comprehensive list of forthcoming services, scan the QR code or visit the monthly Worship page on our website.*



The Cathedral will be closed on Saint Stephen's Day.  
We will re-open on the 27<sup>th</sup> December.

DAY ( <i>ctd</i> )	SERVICES ( <i>ctd</i> )	CANON IN RESIDENCE ( <i>ctd</i> )
<b>THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS</b> Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> December	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Eucharist	
<b>THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS</b> Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD P. I. ARBUTHNOT</b> <i>Prebendary of Castleknock</i>
<b>THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD</b> Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> January	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Matins 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD J. K. McWHIRTER</b> <i>Prebendary of Taney</i>
<b>THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY</b> Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> January	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>VEN. J. M. GODFREY</b> <i>Prebendary of Kilmactalway</i>
<b>THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY</b> Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> January	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Matins 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD C. W. K. McCAULEY</b> <i>Prebendary of Tipperkevin</i>

The Cathedral Office will be closed from Christmas Eve until 2<sup>nd</sup> January.  
A telephone answering service will be available.



The Dean, Rosemary, and Duke would like to wish everyone at  
Saint Patrick's Cathedral every blessing for Christmas, and all good wishes for 2026.





# The Administrator Writes...

MR GAVAN WOODS

**A**S WE DRAW close to the end of the year, it is timely to draw attention to some of the highlights of 2025 and to pause and reflect as we develop our plans for the year to come.

2025 saw a new record set in terms of visitor numbers with over 96,000 visitors coming to the Cathedral in August alone; the first time we exceeded the 90,000 threshold in a single month. Such numbers bring challenges in addition to income, and maintaining the quality of the experience in the face of such a throng. We noted a slight dip in retail sales over the period as the crowds at the west end made it difficult for some to access our shop.

My colleagues — both volunteers and staff — in the customer facing roles did a sterling job engaging and welcoming such strong numbers. I hope that they can make the most of the current quieter period to build enthusiasm and their reserves of patience for the spring season ahead!

Thanks to the marketing, education, community, and management teams for their enduring professionalism

and regard for the Cathedral through the year. From my perspective these are qualities that make it a pleasure to work here.

2025 saw over 70 events delivered outside of the summer months, which kept our excellent events team on their toes. The often unseen finance and administrative staff worked hard in the background to allow us to take advantage of our visitor and retail income to further the charitable and religious aims of the Cathedral and to care for our beautiful and important buildings.

The Mews project, begun almost a year ago, is now in its final stages and nears completion. This has been an immense undertaking and great credit is due to the architect, contractor, technical team, and — not least — our own staff for ensuring that this important project has been delivered smoothly and within budget. We will officially open the Mews in the new year and it is timely now to offer our great thanks to *Benefact Trust*, who granted us almost €120,000 to ensure that the Mews is fitted out to the highest standard and will be able to

deliver on its purpose for the Cathedral and the wider community.

As we look forward to 2026 and the opportunities and challenges it will bring, we can reflect on the many blessings experienced by the Cathedral over the past 12 months. This year, we have begun to plan seriously for a very significant upgrade to the visitor facilities, possibly involving the creation of new welcome and retail buildings together

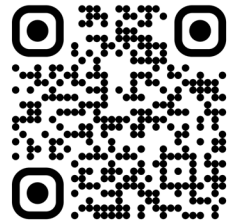
with other infrastructure. It is very early days but the board have made this a key priority, and I will keep you all updated as plans develop.

Finally, may I wish you all a happy and holy Christmas, and I hope to meet many of you in the Cathedral at the events and services in the weeks ahead.

GW

## Support Us

If you would like to support the Cathedral's mission and work, please consider donating securely online. You can scan the QR code or visit: [spcd.ie/support](https://spcd.ie/support)



## Friendly Brothers

THE FRIENDLY BROTHERS from Wicklow knot visited the Cathedral by kind invitation of the Dean. The two vergers — Aaron and Colette — were brilliant, giving us a history of the Cathedral, its renovations, and discussing points of interest

throughout our tour. The tower views were spectacular, with a panorama of the whole of Dublin. Mrs Morton then treated us to a fabulous reception in the Deanery. It was a day that will live long in our memories.

Dr George Miller



# Remembrance Sunday

**E**VENSONG ON 9<sup>th</sup> November saw the President, with representatives of Dáil and Seanad Éireann, the Diplomatic Corps, the Judiciary, and the Defence Forces, gathering in the Cathedral to commemorate those who died in the Great War and in subsequent conflicts. This year marked the centenary of the establishment of what became the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland branch. The preacher was the Revd Peter Rutherford, the branch's Chaplain.

This was the last official function of Michael D. Higgins as President, Remembrance Evensong in 2011 having been his first. He received resounding applause when the Dean welcomed him, and the National and RBL standards were dipped in the aisle as a mark of respect while he processed past them from the Cathedral following Evensong.

*CM*







## New Candle Stands

THE CATHEDRAL HAS introduced bespoke candle stands that sit more comfortably around the pillars in the building, guiding visitors naturally towards a place of quiet prayer and practical compassion.

Their design makes clear that every candle lit contributes directly towards the fund used to support people

in need, strengthening the link between personal devotion and tangible care and compassion for the community.

Lighting a candle is a simple, prayerful act: it allows us to pause, remember, and entrust our hopes or concerns to God. It also joins our individual prayers with the wider worshipping life of the Cathedral.

# Advent Rescue Kit

**D**EAR, STRUGGLING ADVENT, the season that offers much inspiration but is so easily overwhelmed by our preparations for Christmas. To try to rescue Advent, here are some old and new prayer suggestions that can be used when Christmas preparations get the better of Advent — and us.

## Advent I: Christmas Decorations

Light out of darkness is the Advent theme as we prepare for the coming light of Christ at Christmas. On dark, wintry nights, we cheer ourselves by decorating a tree with lights, so:

*Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that on the last day when he shall come in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## Advent II: Christmas Cards

Christmas cards serve many purposes, from giving us an opportunity for an annual exchange, to communicating our heartfelt greetings to our closest family and friends, so:

*Almighty God, through our exchange of greetings we thank you for the friendships we share with one another; help us to see in them the love you share with us – the love so deep that you sent us your Son to bring us to eternal life with you; bless us and those*

*to whom we send greetings, that in giving and receiving them we may eagerly await and desire that message which calls us into friendship with you; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Advent III: Christmas Presents

The exchange of gifts at Christmas is a tangible way of communicating the value we put on friendship between ourselves and those who receive our gifts, so:

*Almighty God, your servant John the Baptist proclaimed the message of the Advent of your Son; through the delight of the gifts we exchange help us to listen and hear that joyous herald voice which calls over the noise of our busy lives, inviting us to find in your Son a gift that far exceeds all we can desire and which we are not worthy to receive, save through your grace, made known in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Advent IV: Christmas Dinner

Having sent our Christmas cards and delivered our presents, we greet the personal visit of our nearest and dearest, those who will join and dine with us on Christmas Day, so:

*Heavenly Father we praise you for the childbearing of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which brought us the personal visit of your Son through whom we know you, and in whom we find the way to everlasting life with you; bless us and all with whom we share our joyfulness and celebrations, and grant our souls ever to magnify your holy name in humble obedience, and an expectant faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

CM



# ADVENT · CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY · CANDLEMAS at Saint Patrick's Cathedral

## ADVENT PROCESSION BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November • 18:00

## CAROLS FOR ALL

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December • 15:15

## A SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December • 19:30 (*admission by ticket only*)

## NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December • 15:15

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December • 16:00 (*admission by ticket only*)

## FESTIVAL CHORAL EUCHARIST

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December • 11:15

## BENJAMIN BRITTEN: A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January • 15:15

## CANDLEMAS CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February • 15:15

[stpatrickscathedral.ie/worship](http://stpatrickscathedral.ie/worship)



# A Saint Patrick's Cathedral Christmas

Join us on **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December** at **19:30** for an enchanting evening of seasonal music at our annual Christmas concert given by Choristers and Lay Vicars of Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir and orchestra, directed by Stuart Nicholson, with seasonal readings from Bryan Dobson.

Programme includes a veritable feast of Christmas classics including music from Handel's *Messiah*, Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. There will also be carols for the audience to sing (accompanied by David Leigh on the Cathedral's mighty Willis organ, all 4,000 pipes of it).

## Book Tickets Today

For more information and to book tickets, scan the QR code  
or visit: [stpatrickscathedral.ie/christmas25](http://stpatrickscathedral.ie/christmas25)





# Christmas Workshop

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December | 11:00**

**A**S LIGHTS BEGIN to twinkle, trees are decorated, and that unique Christmas spirit fills the air, treat your family to a creative session to welcome the holidays.

You'll have the chance to design and create your very own Christmas tree decorations using simple, festive materials. Together, you'll craft charming mini wreaths and handmade ornaments,

creations that will become memories to hang on your tree for years to come.

This workshop is perfect for children aged 5 and up, offering a cosy and creative way to enjoy the season together.

This workshop will run on a drop-in basis. Feel free to stop by the South Transept anytime between 11:00 and 13:00. Booking is recommended. Please note that all children must be accompanied by an adult.





# Volunteers' Reception

ON SATURDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> November, the Dean and Mrs Morton hosted the annual Volunteers' Reception. There were approximately 20 volunteers in attendance, representing a range of roles including tour guides, bell ringers, and stewards.

In thanks for their many contributions to the Cathedral's operations, the volunteers enjoyed an afternoon of refreshments and socialising in the festively decorated Deanery.

*KB*





# First Fortnight

## Dublin at Dawn

January 2026 | 08:00

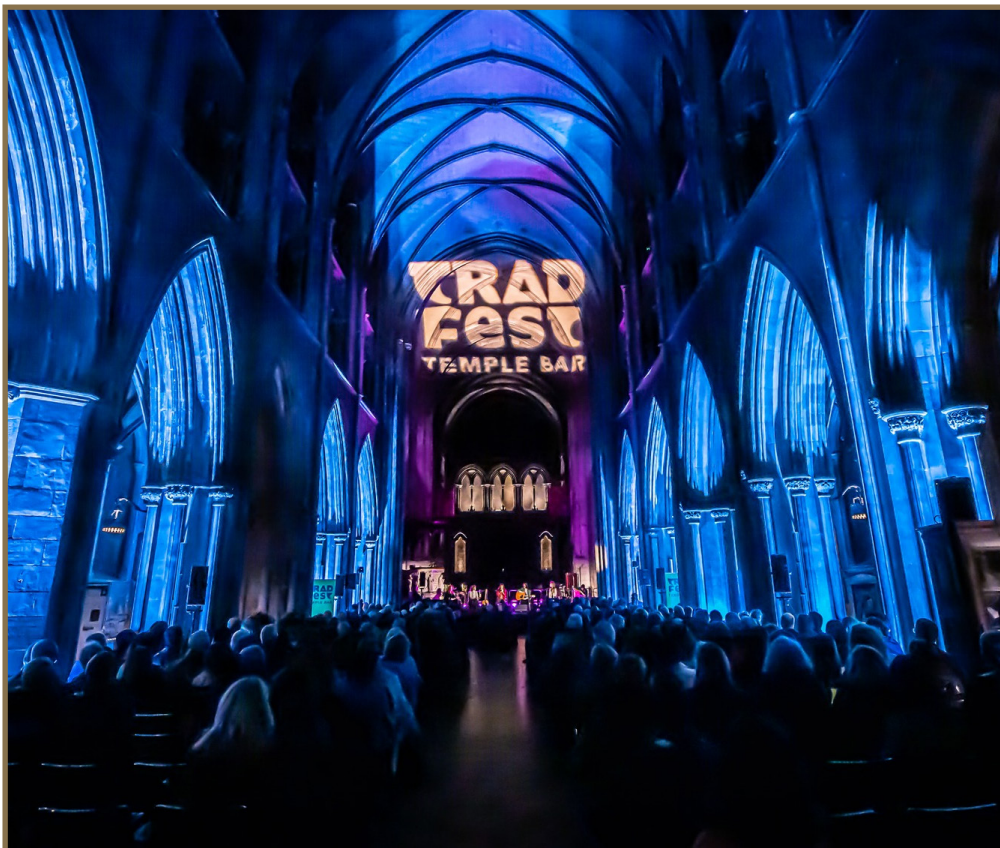
FOLLOWING ITS sold-out debut at the 2025 festival, *Dublin at Dawn* returns by popular demand for First Fortnight 2026. This truly unique experience invites a small group to climb the bell tower of the Cathedral and take in a breathtaking bird's-eye view of Dublin as the city awakens.

After greeting the sunrise, participants are welcome to stay for morning prayer or Matins — followed by a warm morning cuppa and time for reflection. Peaceful and uplifting, *Dublin at Dawn* offers a rare blend of history, architecture, and mindfulness in one unforgettable early morning experience. A perfect start to your day!

These tours take place on 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Tickets can be booked by scanning the QR code on the facing page.





# TradFest 2026

**S**AINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL is delighted to be hosting four events for *TradFest* 2026, including the return of *Women OfNote* with Aoife Scott & Friends on 21<sup>st</sup> January. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, we will host *Chords and Timber, Reeds and Strings* with Matt Molloy, Maighread

Ní Dhomhnaill, Paddy Glackin, Derek Hickey, Mike McGoldrick, and special guest Stephen Rea, followed by Julie Fowlis, Zoë Conway, Éamon Doorley & John Mc Intyre on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Last but not least *A Lazarus Soul* will perform at the Cathedral on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

## Book Tickets Today

For more information and to book tickets, scan the QR code or visit: [stpatrickscathedral.ie/events](http://stpatrickscathedral.ie/events)





## Community & Charitable Fund

**W**E WANTED TO reach out to thank all at Saint Patrick's Cathedral for your very generous support of ARC Cancer Support Centres. Your partnership is invaluable. All of our services are provided completely free of charge, and this is made possible because of supporters like you. Through your support, men, women, and children affected by cancer can receive the psychological, emotional, practical, and educational support they need completely free of charge. We are deeply grateful for your support; our clients and their families are too. This is the difference you are making, these are the lives you are changing:

I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the Staff and Volunteers in ARC for the emotional and holistic support that's been provided to me over the last number of years. Your

care and kindness have buoyed me up through so many tough times.' *Fiona (ARC Client)*

In the first nine months of 2025, ARC provided:

- 2,650 adult counselling sessions to 760 people
- 610 child and teen therapy sessions to 78 children and adolescents
- 1,240 complementary therapies to 300 people (including acupuncture which Saint Patrick's Cathedral directly funded)
- 62 support group sessions with 190 people (totalling 512 attendances)

This is made possible because of your generosity. Thank you for choosing to support ARC. Wishing you and your team all the best for 2026.

*Stephanie Nolan*  
Head of Fundraising  
(ARC Cancer Support Centres)

# Christmas Caption Competition



*Photo: Laura Lowe.*

Entries to Clark Brydon ([clark@stpatickscathedral.ie](mailto:clark@stpatickscathedral.ie))  
by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026.



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## Will Us Well

**W**HEN MAKING OR amending your will, please consider including a legacy bequest to the Cathedral. If you are interested in supporting us in this way, let your solicitor or will-writer know that you wish to make provision for the Cathedral in your will.

For more information, please contact the Cathedral Administrator, Mr Gavan Woods:  
*adminstrator@stpatrickscathedral.ie*

## Safeguarding

**T**HE CATHEDRAL'S SAFEGUARDING Policy can be viewed on our website. If you have a general enquiry or any concern relating to safeguarding at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, please contact the Safeguarding Officer:

**Ms Kelley Bermingham**  
COMMUNITY & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

*safeguarding@stpatrickscathedral.ie*  
+353 (0) 86 103 0931

If you recognise a safeguarding emergency in which a child or vulnerable adult is in danger, Tusla Child and Family Agency can be contacted on +353 (0) 1 856 6856.





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