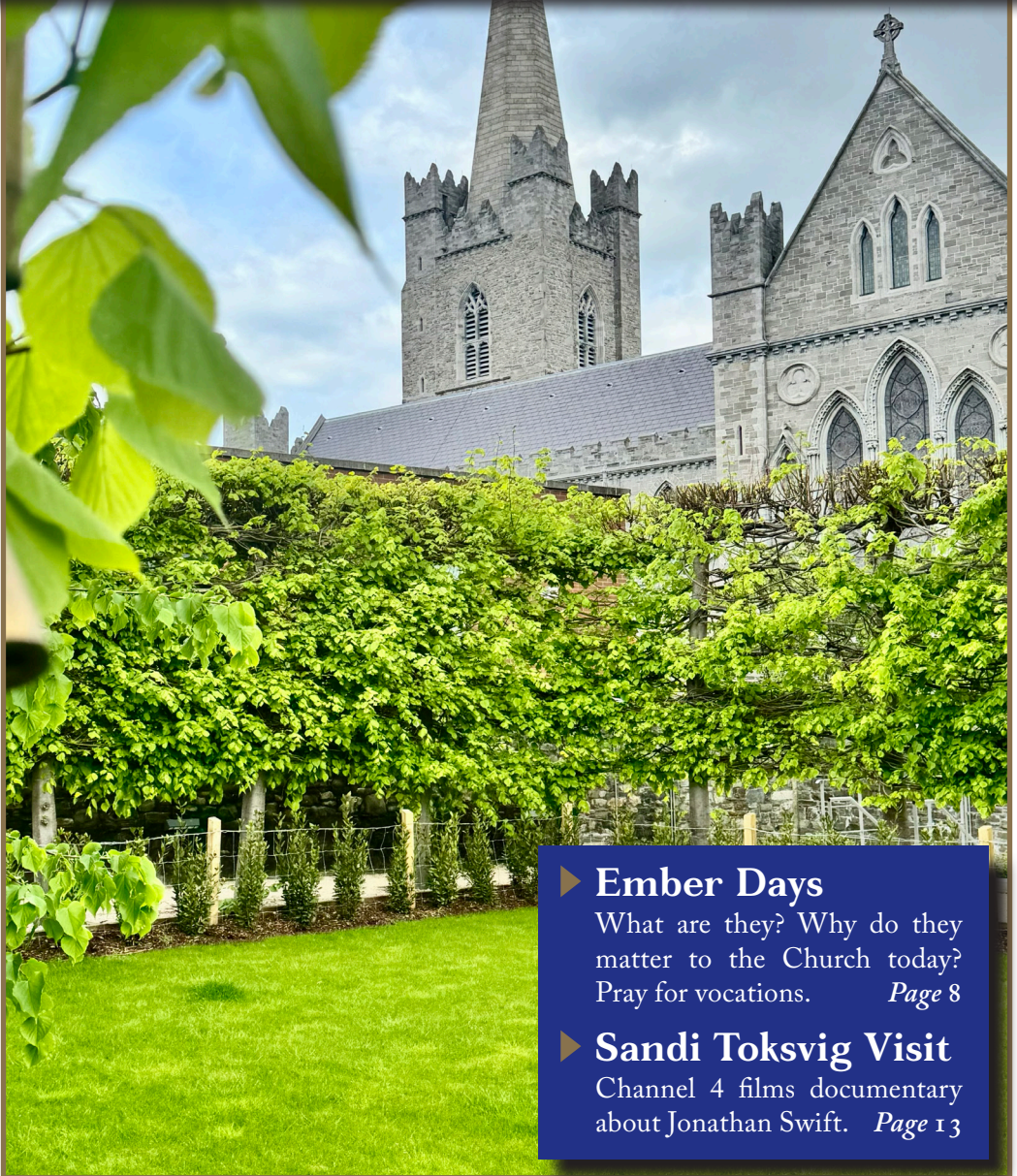


# CLOSE NEWS

MAY 2026 · SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN · €2.50



## ▶ **Ember Days**

What are they? Why do they matter to the Church today? Pray for vocations. *Page 8*

## ▶ **Sandi Toksvig Visit**

Channel 4 films documentary about Jonathan Swift. *Page 13*



## The Daily Offices & Holy Eucharist



### 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 Feast Days*)
- 17:30 — **Choral Evensong** or **Evening Prayer**

### Saturday

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

**I**N THIS CATHEDRAL, the worship of Almighty God has been offered without interruption for generations. In word and sacrament, psalm and canticle, the Church's liturgy orders our common life and gives voice to what we believe. Here, the Scriptures are read, the Sacraments faithfully celebrated, and the prayer of the Church is offered day by day according to the rhythm of the Christian year. All are welcome to join us in an act of worship. Further service information appears on *Page 6*. Those unable to be present in person may join the Cathedral's worship online at [spcd.ie/live](https://spcd.ie/live).

<b>The Dean Writes...</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Services &amp; Preachers</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A Shot from the Canon</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Saints &amp; Celebrations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Administrator Writes...</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Condolences</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>News</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What's On?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Who's Who?</b>	<b>26</b>

*Cover: The lime trees outside the Deanery Mews in full bloom.  
Photo by Clark Brydon (1<sup>st</sup> May 2026)*



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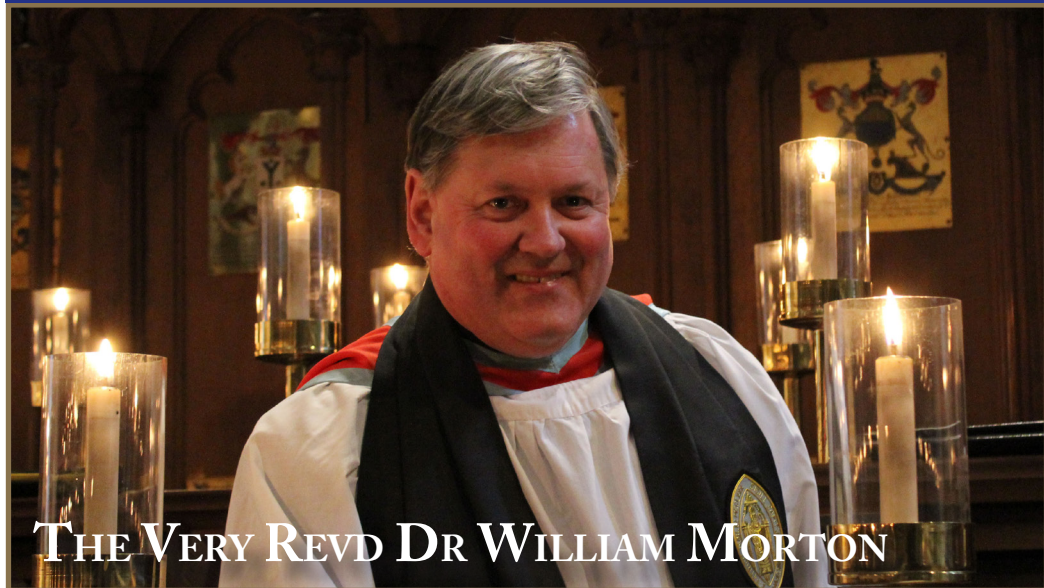
Mr Clark Brydon  
*Sustainability & Engagement Coordinator*

*Close News* is the monthly newsletter of 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.

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The deadline for publication in the June issue of *Close News* will be:  
**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**

# The Dean Writes...



THE VERY REVD DR WILLIAM MORTON

**F**ORTY DAYS AFTER Easter, the Church celebrates the Ascension of our Lord; this year it falls on Thursday 14th May. The trouble with the Ascension is that we often imagine it to be about the absence of Jesus, rather than the fullness of his presence.

After all, Jesus prepares his disciples for his departure. He tells them that soon they will not see him. He tells them that he is leaving them. The Gospels state that he was taken from their sight, that he disappeared into the cloud, and that he was carried up into heaven.

In Christian art, the Ascension is often portrayed (rather curiously!) by the sight of a pair of feet vanishing into the underside of a cloud. It can all seem to suggest that the Ascension is simply the end of Christ's presence: the close of those forty days, the conclusion of his appearances, his final withdrawal from the world. If we stop there, however, we miss the point entirely.

'I will not leave you comfortless,' Jesus says. 'I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' 'This is my body; this is my blood.'

Before the Ascension, Christ was present in one place. Now he is present in every place.

Then he sat and ate with his disciples by the lakeside; now he feeds his people with the bread of life in every land and in every generation.

Then he walked the dusty roads of Palestine; now he walks through every nation, borne by his Church.

Then he was present in one place and time; now he dwells in every life opened to him in faith.

Then he healed the sick who were brought to him; now he blesses and comforts the suffering through the hands of his people.

Then he taught the crowds on hillside and shore; now his word is

proclaimed in every church, in every language, throughout the world.

Then he prayed alone on the Mount of Olives; now he prays within every faithful heart.

Then his body was broken for us on the cross; now we receive his risen life in the sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Then he showed compassion to the weak and the vulnerable; now he shows that same compassion wherever his people feed the hungry, tend the suffering, and care for those in need.

The Ascension is not Christ's disappearance. It is his enthronement. It is not the loss of his presence, but its

fulfilment. So, we need not stand gazing up into heaven, for he has not left us.

He is with us still — among us, within us, before us, and beyond us — until the end of the age. That is the mystery of the Ascension. It is not that Christ has gone. It is that he is no longer bound by where he was.

Yours, in the power of the risen, ascended and glorified Lord,

*William*

*Photo (below): The Ascension of Christ (1513) by Hans Süß von Kulmbach.*



# Services & Preachers

## Daily Services

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

## Sunday Services

DAY	SERVICES	CANON IN RESIDENCE
<b>THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD P. K. McDOWELL</b> <i>Prebendary of Clonmethan</i>
<b>THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Matins 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>REVD S. E. DOOGAN</b> <i>Prebendary of Wicklow</i>
<b>THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>THE REVD P. A. HARVEY</b> <i>Prebendary of Stagonil</i>
<b>PENTECOST / WHITSUN</b> Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> May	09:15 – Eucharist ( <i>said</i> ) 11:15 – Choral Eucharist 15:15 – Choral Evensong	<b>VERY REVD K. R. J. HALL</b> <i>Prebendary of Tassagard</i>
<b>TRINITY SUNDAY</b> Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> May	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>

## Sermons in Music

**D**URING MAY, THE sermon at Sunday Evensong will be replaced by a longer anthem, selected in relation to the appointed readings and the themes of the Lectionary. This approach reflects a long-standing element of the Anglican choral tradition, in which scripture is not only read and preached but also interpreted through music.

Many of the larger anthems set biblical texts or closely related devotional material, often with a depth and structure that rewards sustained attention. By extending this part of the service, the intention is to offer a different mode of hearing the same scriptural themes. To learn more about each Sunday's music, please consult the Music List.



# A Shot from the Canon

THE REVD CANON  
CHARLES MULLEN

**F**OR ME, EASTER can never come soon enough. Lent's austerity, and Holy Week's intensity, are released by that high-decibel greeting and response at the Easter Eucharist, enhanced by the arrival of spring's brighter daylight. Nevertheless, we do well to retain something of the journey that brings us to Easter, because life is a series of contrasts of darknesses with light. We press on by following the light, however dim, at the end of the tunnel. The flickering Easter candle encapsulates our need to hold fast in the darkness to the rays of resurrection light, which lead and draw us upward.

## Rays Eternal of Resurrection Light

'Tis the spring of souls today;  
Christ hath burst his prison,  
And from three days' sleep in death  
As a sun hath risen;  
All the winter of our sins,  
Long and dark, is flying  
From his light, to whom we give  
Laud and praise undying.

*from a hymn by  
Saint John of Damascus (c.750)*

Lead, kindly Light,  
amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead thou me on.  
The night is dark,  
and I am far from home,  
Lead thou me on.  
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene;  
one step enough for me.

*from a hymn  
by Saint John Henry Newman (1801-90)*

## 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.*



# Saints & Celebrations



## What are Ember Days?

**E**MBER DAYS ARE easily missed in the Church's liturgical year. They do not carry the weight of the great festivals, nor even the familiarity of the saints' days. Yet they represent one of the older and more practical rhythms of Anglican life: a set of days given over to prayer, fasting, and attention to vocation.

They fall four times a year — after the First Sunday in Lent, at Pentecost, in September, and in Advent — on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of those weeks. This month, they fall on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. Historically, they were linked to the agricultural cycle, marking the changing seasons and inviting prayer for the fruits of the earth. That instinct still has something to teach. Even in a largely urban Church, the recognition that we depend on what is given, rather than what we manufacture, is no bad place to begin.

In the Church of Ireland today, however, Ember Days are most commonly associated with ministry. They have long been traditional times for ordination, and they remain set aside for prayer for those preparing for ordained ministry, and for those discerning a vocation — whether lay or ordained.

That is perhaps where Ember Days feel most relevant today. Conversations about ministry can easily become functional: how many clergy are needed, where they should be placed, how selection structures might be reshaped. Those questions matter, but they are not the starting point. Ember Days insist on something more fundamental: that the Church pauses to pray that God will call, and that people will respond.

To pray for vocations is not only to pray for someone else to step forward. It is

to place oneself under the same question. What is being asked of me? Where am I being called to serve? Ember Days create just enough space for that question to be heard.

The older disciplines attached to these days — fasting, simplicity, intentional prayer — are not always widely observed

now, but their purpose is clear enough. In a Church that can be busy and occasionally anxious about its future, Ember Days offer a time to stop, pray, and listen. They remind the Church that ministry is not generated by strategy or secured by effort. It is given. And like all gifts, it is first received in prayer:

### A PRAYER TO BE SAID EVERY DAY, FOR THOSE WHO ARE TO BE ADMITTED INTO HOLY ORDERS

**A**LMIGHTY GOD, OUR heavenly Father who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son; Mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A PRAYER FOR THE INCREASE OF THE MINISTRY

**O**ALMIGHTY GOD, LOOK mercifully upon the world, redeemed by the blood of thy dear Son, and send forth many more to do the work of the ministry, that perishing souls may be rescued, and thy glorious triumph may be hastened by the perfecting of thine elect through the same thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*from the Book of Common Prayer*

## Saints' Days & Feast Days in May

**C**OMGALL OF BANGOR (10<sup>th</sup> May), Abbot, stands amongst the great founders of Irish monasticism, shaping Bangor into a centre of learning, discipline, and missionary zeal whose influence extended far beyond Ireland. **THE ASCENSION**, forty days after Easter, is kept on 14<sup>th</sup> May. **CARTHAGH** (14<sup>th</sup> May), Bishop of Lismore, is remembered for his pastoral leadership and the establishment of Lismore as a place of prayer and scholarship. On the same day, the Church keeps the feast of **SAINT MATTHIAS**, chosen to take the place of Judas amongst the Twelve, a sign of the Church's continuity and trust in God's calling. **BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR** (16<sup>th</sup> May), associated with Ardfert and Clonfert, evokes the spirit of peregrinatio, the missionary journey undertaken in faith and dependence on God. May concludes with the **VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY** (31<sup>st</sup> May), a meeting marked by the recognition of Christ's presence, even before his birth.



# The Administrator Writes...

MR GAVAN WOODS

As I WRITE, the weather has certainly improved and the Cathedral grounds are looking very spring like. The visitors are out in force and, to date, the numbers are holding up well, despite the challenging international news.

This summer we will continue last year's innovation of opening the south east churchyard to visitors, and providing

information panels for them on the interesting features of this area, including Marsh's Library and the fascinating array of historic figures who rest outside the Cathedral. My thanks go to the Interpretation Committee for their work on this.

The 'Culture Date with Dublin 8' festival occurs every year in May and,



once again, the Cathedral is delighted to take part with an array of guided tours and family workshops for the community around us to enjoy. This year, with the focus on the 300th anniversary of Gulliver's Travels, children will be making tiny books in the south transept with our education facilitators, which they will, no doubt, enjoy whilst learning about this extraordinary character from the world of fiction.

We are determined to extend our hospitality and welcome to as wide a cohort as possible and, with this in mind, an expert from the organisation *Ability Focus* conducted accessibility training in the Mews for both volunteers and staff in the last week of April. This is important as a little thought and understanding can make a big difference to someone with mobility or other additional needs during their visit here. Throughout my years in the Cathedral, I have seen consistent kindness and thoughtfulness shown by colleagues to those who may exhibit an extra challenge when they come to us, and this training can only build on this strong foundation.

Schools continue to arrive in numbers as we approach the end of term. The final totals are not yet available but every indication is that 2025/26 will prove to be the busiest year yet on this important front. The team includes a part-time Schools Officer, external facilitators, and volunteers, and they have proved most effective in delivering a wonderful experience to the many young pupils who now come to visit.

The Cathedral's support of the Irish language, an *príomhtheanga*, predates the First World War. In light of this, we now host in the Mews 'Cad é an scéal?' a monthly Irish-language gathering, offering a friendly, informal space for people of all levels to practise Irish through conversation, tea, music, and poetry. It runs on the first Saturday of each month from 11:30 until 13:00, is free to attend, but registration is encouraged. Please check our website for further details.

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)



## Condolences

SINCERE CONDOLENCES ARE expressed to the family of the late Mr Thomas (Tom) Drury who died on 22nd March. A native of County Cavan, Tom was a regular and frequent worshipper in Saint Patrick's where he will be missed by his friends in the Cathedral. He also served as a member of the Friends of the Cathedral. As a faithful Churchman, Tom died in the hope of the Resurrection, which brings consolation and reassurance. All who mourn are assured of our thoughts and prayers.

WWM



## New Book on Benjamin Culme

**B**ENJAMIN CULME WAS Dean of Saint Patrick's for 32 years in the 1600s and yet, until now, there was little known about him. A new book by Revd Robert Kingston aims to put this right and documents the life of Benjamin Culme and the turbulent times he lived in.

*Benjamin Culme, D.D.: Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin 1625–1657 – An Overlooked Dean* will be launched by the current Dean, The Very Revd William Morton, in the Deanery Mews on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 18:30.

Revd Robert Kingston is Chaplain to the Mageough in Dublin having served as Rector in a number of parishes. When he became Rector of Virginia in County Cavan, he discovered that one of his predecessors, Culme, had gone on to be Dean of Saint Patrick's. When he went to learn more about him he found that no

biography had been written and that began many years of fascinating research.

'This is a personal rather than an academic account but hopefully doing justice to the available information we have about him and as interesting in the reading as it was in the writing,' Mr Kingston commented.

As an amateur in this area, the author was led down all sorts of interesting byways, which highlighted many of the issues of the time in church and state matters which affected Culme personally.

Mr Kingston visited the Cathedral with residents from the Mageough and spoke with the Dean.

The new book is published by Hinds Publishing and will be available at the launch and online: [hinds.ie](http://hinds.ie)

*Story: Diocese of Dublin & Glendalough*



## Sandi Toksvig Visits the Cathedral

**S**ANDI TOKSVIG, DANISH-BRITISH broadcaster, author, and comedian, visited the Cathedral on 13<sup>th</sup> April to film part of a new documentary for Channel 4, called *Sandi Toksvig's Irish Odyssey*.

The series will see Ms Toksvig — a lifelong lover of literature, theatre and music — follow in the footsteps of some of Ireland's literary greats, exploring the landscapes, places and people that have inspired some of the country's greatest writers, poets, and storytellers.

No such journey would be complete without Jonathan Swift, and Ms Toksvig spent the morning in conversation with Swift expert Dr Brendan Twomey, exploring the life and legacy of the Cathedral's most famous Dean.

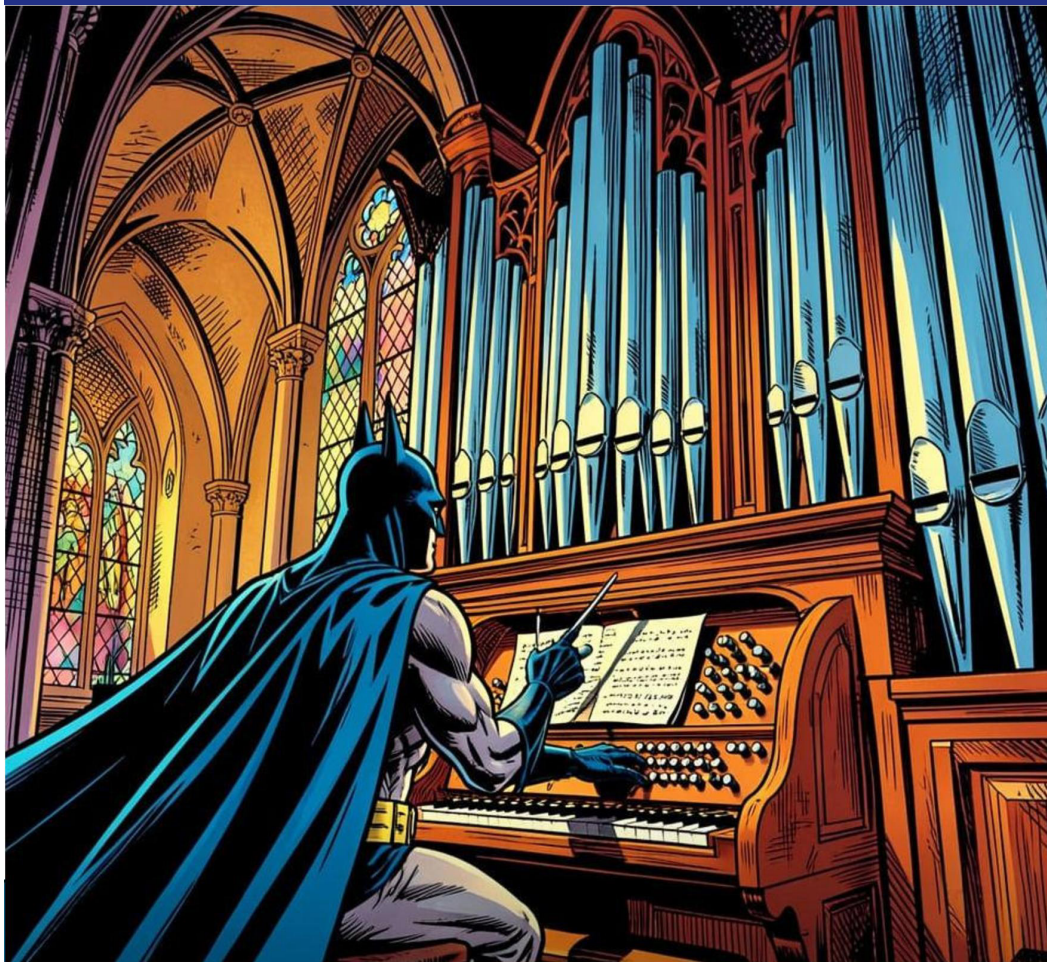
She spoke warmly of her visit, praising the beauty and atmosphere of

the Cathedral, and remarked that she is looking forward to returning with her partner to explore it more fully. She even found time to pose for a selfie with one delighted fan!

The series, produced by Cornelia Street Productions, will air later this year.

*Photo (left): Sandi Toksvig with Ed Coleman, the Cathedral's Marketing Manager.*

*Photo (right): Dr Brendan Twomey and Ms Toksvig filming at the burial site of Jonathan Swift in the Cathedral.*



# SAVE THE DATE

## THE WONDROUS MACHINE: COMIC CON SPECIAL!

Saturday 4 July at 7.30pm | St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

ICONIC SCORES FROM THE *MARVEL*, *DC* & *STAR WARS* UNIVERSES  
and much more performed on the Cathedral's mighty Willis Organ

[WWW.STPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.IE/COMIC](http://WWW.STPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.IE/COMIC)

# Inspector Organ



## ‘Inspector Organ’ Instagram Feature

**Q**UIRKY INSTAGRAM CREATOR ‘Inspector Organ’ — known simply as Harry to friends — has been building a niche following through his humorous and slightly irreverent explorations of pipe organs across Britain and beyond. His account brands him as ‘unauthorised, untrained, unstoppable’, documenting visits to cathedrals and churches where he inspects organs.

In April, Inspector Organ visited Dublin and featured the Cathedral and its organ in a short series of posts. He was shown around the Cathedral and its roof spaces by Clark Brydon.

Although light-hearted, his videos introduce audiences — many of whom may never attend a service or recital — to the craftsmanship and beauty of cathedral organs.

Through short-form video and informal narration, figures like Harry offer an accessible entry point (especially for younger audiences) into places that can otherwise feel distant or overly formal.

The Cathedral’s feature videos can be seen on his Instagram account, *@inspector.organ*.



## Do Dublin Visit

**I**N APRIL, THE Cathedral was delighted to welcome the newest cohort of driver guides from Do Dublin, who visited the Cathedral as part of their training and orientation.

Do Dublin operates the city's well-known hop-on, hop-off bus tours, and plays a significant role in introducing visitors to Dublin's principal landmarks and stories.

During their visit, the group spent time exploring the building and learning more about its rich history, architecture, and liturgical life. This forms an important part of their preparation, equipping them to speak with confidence and accuracy as they guide visitors through the city.

Particular attention was given to the Cathedral's historical development, its place within the life of the Church, and its ongoing role as a place of worship and welcome.

The group were notably struck by the scale of the building, as well as the depth and variety of its heritage.

Such visits are an important way of strengthening connections with those who present Dublin to the wider world, and we look forward to welcoming their passengers in the months ahead.



## Autism Awareness Month

**I**N APRIL, AS part of Autism Awareness Month, the Cathedral offered a series of specially-designed Quiet Evening Visits, welcoming individuals with neurodivergent needs alongside their families and friends.

Held on Tuesday evenings, these visits provided a calm and sensory-considerate experience within the Cathedral, with reduced noise levels and fewer visitors creating a more relaxed atmosphere.

A dedicated arts facilitator was present in the South Transept, supporting creative engagement and helping visitors to explore the space in more accessible ways.

Following each visit, guests were invited to The Mews for tea and coffee. The initiative formed part of the Cathedral's ongoing commitment to ensuring that its doors remain open and welcoming to all.



## Cathedral Music Department features in Church of Ireland Gazette

*The Cathedral regularly features in each month's issue of the Church of Ireland Gazette, which is edited by Clark Brydon (Vicar Choral and Sustainability & Engagement Coordinator here). This is an opportunity for the Church's National Cathedral to tell its story to a wider audience. The following piece was written by Stuart Nicholson about the choristers, and was published in April's issue of the Gazette.*

There is an old piece of advice, commonly attributed to the American comedian WC Fields, which goes: 'Never work with children or animals'.

Admittedly, I have had very little experience with the latter. I have, however, spent more than 30 years of my working life ignoring the advice regarding the former. And whilst it may at times be easier to herd cats than to get a fresh cohort of choristers to process in a straight line, I still relish the challenges of working with them in all their unpredictable glory. It is amazing what these young musicians are capable of — with a little time and guidance.

Our choristers at Saint Patrick's

Cathedral are educated in the Cathedral Choir School, which is just six years shy of its 600th anniversary. Six centuries on, and its mission hasn't changed from when it was founded by Archbishop Richard Talbot in 1432, even if the staff, students, and buildings have, many times over.

### WORSHIP

The choristers continue to lead much of the worship in the Cathedral, including the daily offices of Matins and Evensong on weekdays, as well as the Choral Eucharist (alternating with Matins) and Choral Evensong on a Sunday.

In addition to their school education, chorister training, and liturgical duties, the children enjoy a vast array of performance opportunities both in and out of the choir stalls.

### BROADCASTS

The choristers are often heard singing over the airwaves; our annual broadcast of Nine Lessons and Carols for RTÉ Radio One has been a staple part of Christmas in Ireland for many years.

## CONCERTS

The choristers regularly give concert performances, often appearing as guests with groups such as the Irish Baroque Orchestra, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra.

## RECORDINGS

Over the last few years, the choristers have made six commercial recordings with Regent Records, an award-winning specialist choral and organ record label. These recordings have done much to help raise the profile of the choir across the globe, and garnered some extremely favourable reviews.

## TOURS

Of all the experiences on offer to our choristers, it is the tours that get them most excited — with good reason. Just a few weeks ago, the choristers found themselves singing in the newly restored Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris. Last year they sang in Almudena Cathedral, Madrid, and Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and the year before that in the largest Gothic cathedral in the world, St John the Divine, New York.

The fact that none of these experiences seem to faze them is a constant source of amazement. Whether it's singing in a packed Notre Dame, staring down the red light prior to a live radio broadcast, or performing with the Irish Baroque Orchestra for a concert that is likely to feature in the Irish Times reviews the next day, they approach all of it without fear.

Sadly for us, we never get to keep our choristers for long. Boys' voices in particular have an unfortunately short

shelf life. This means that we must rely on a constant stream of new children coming through the choir.

Every September, a new intake joins us, often with little to no experience of singing in choirs. They follow the example and lead of the more experienced choristers and progress through the choir over the next few years, at which point another new cohort arrives and learns from them, and so on...

Given the wealth of experiences on offer, you might think that we would be inundated with musical parents knocking down our doors. Sadly, that isn't the case. Since the pandemic, we've noticed a gradual decline in numbers of choristers — in particular, boys. Choristerships offer so much, but they also come with the expectation of a large commitment on behalf of the parents, and includes the child moving schools at the end of second class.

Is it worth it? Well, most of the parents seem to think so. We have even had some commuting from Athlone so that their children can attend. If the Dublin commute isn't too much to dissuade you, then you receive all the benefits of a small school education, plus all the experiences and opportunities — funded by the Cathedral — and free instrumental and vocal tuition to boot.

We are always seeking the next cohort of choristers — ideally children about to head into third class. If you'd like to consider a choristership for your child, then get in touch. They don't have to be a musical genius to audition. If they enjoy singing — and can walk in a straight line! — we'll take it from there.

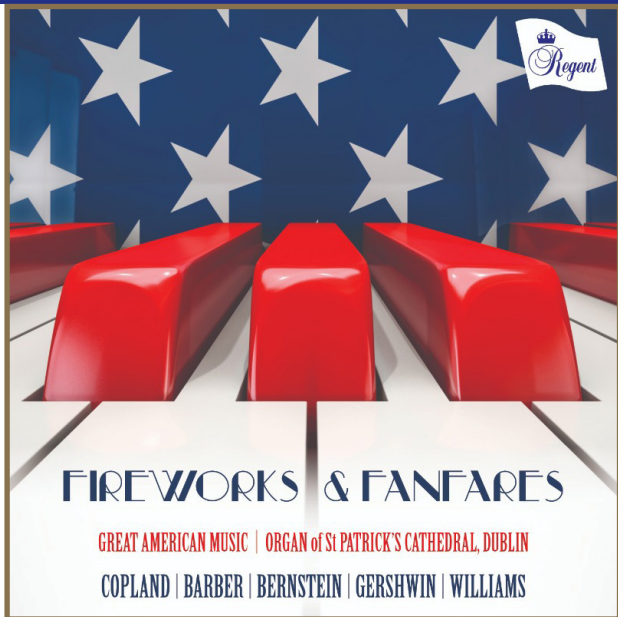
Read this month's *Gazette* online at [coigazette.ie](http://coigazette.ie)

## CD Review

The following review of *Fireworks & Fanfares: Great American Music Played On The Organ Of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin* was written by Andrew Palmer, Group Editor of *Chimeo* and published on their website. Reprinted with thanks.

THERE IS SOMETHING gloriously uninhibited about an organist who opens a recital disc with Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* — percussion hammering off the stone walls of one of Ireland's great Gothic cathedrals — and closes it with the full apocalyptic artillery of David Arnold's score for *Independence Day*. Stuart Nicholson, Director of Music at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, clearly enjoys a grand gesture. On this ebulliently programmed St Patrick's Day release on the Regent label, he deploys the historic Willis instrument — four manuals, eighty-one speaking stops, some four thousand pipes — as a kind of one-building orchestra, ranging freely from the Appalachians to the Super Bowl, from Tin Pan Alley to a galaxy far, far away.

The Willis has a distinguished pedigree. Planned by 'Father' Henry Willis himself — who also advised on the instrument at St Paul's Cathedral, London — it was completed after his death by his son in 1902. The powerful reed stops, which Willis senior never lived to hear in situ, blaze magnificently here, and Nicholson's flair for kaleidoscopic registration change — swooping between manuals with the assurance of a conductor changing sections — ensures that the instrument's softer diapasons and luminous strings get their share of the limelight too.



He is joined throughout by a nimble ensemble of collaborators. His organ duet partner Harry Meehan shares the bench for dazzling arrangements of Bernstein's *Candide Overture* and Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, the balance between the two players immaculate. Victoria Green contributes suavely on alto saxophone and flute, and Áine Balfé on flute and piccolo, the latter pair being particularly characterful in Mancini's *Baby Elephant Walk* — music that has no business sounding this excellent on a cathedral organ, yet somehow does. Percussion propels the opening Copland with percussive authority and it returns for the bombastic finale.

Amidst the set-pieces, there is ample space for breathing. Barber's *Adagio* is given with quiet eloquence, and a wistful arrangement of the Londonderry Air, framed as an homage to Fritz Kreisler, offers one of the disc's more tender moments.

Paul Ayres's *Fantasy Sonata Over the Rainbow* — a seventeen-minute

behemoth in 7/8 that began life as a five-minute commission, but, as the composer cheerfully admits, things got somewhat out of hand. On this album we get the terrific five-minute finale, and by the time the Wizard of Oz's famous tune has been subjected to Ayres's pyrotechnic ingenuity, listeners and players alike will feel they have travelled considerably further than Kansas.

This is an exhilarating, warm-hearted disc with lots of Roman candles in this particular box of fireworks —

generous in its ambitions, accomplished in its execution, and irresistible in its sheer enjoyment of a magnificent instrument at full throttle.

*The CD is available to purchase in the Cathedral Shop or online at: [regent-records.co.uk](http://regent-records.co.uk)*

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](http://spcd.ie/support)



## Cathedral to Attend General Synod

A DELEGATION FROM the Cathedral — this year, including Louis Parminter, Clark Brydon, Albert Fenton, and Kryzel Bonifacio — will be attending the Church of Ireland's General Synod at Slieve Donard in Newcastle, County Down from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May. They will be operating a stall where synod representatives and guests can learn more about the ministry and work of the National Cathedral. If you are attending Synod, do visit the Cathedral's stall and say hello.

# What's On?

D8 Culture  
Date with  
Dublin 8



## PAULA MEEHAN IN CONVERSATION WITH STEPHEN JAMES SMITH

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May

12pm

The Deanery Mews at St Patrick's Cathedral



Book tickets at [stpattrickscathedral.ie/events](http://stpattrickscathedral.ie/events)

# Cad é an scéal? / What's the story?



## Monthly Irish-language gathering

On the first Saturday of each month enjoy conversation in Irish or English, along with music, song, poetry and plenty of craic.

Register at  
[stpatrikscathedral.ie/events](http://stpatrikscathedral.ie/events)



## Family Workshop – Foam Printing

MONDAY 4TH MAY | 11:00–13:00

Join us for a **foam printing workshop**, where children and families will design and create their own spring-inspired prints.

Using soft foam, participants will carve simple shapes and patterns (think flowers, leaves, and seasonal designs) before bringing them to life with ink pads and printing paint. Layer colours, experiment with textures, and watch your designs come to life on paper.

This workshop will run on a drop-in basis. Feel free to stop by the South Transept anytime between 11:00–13:00. Booking is recommended.



## JAM POT SESSIONS

Do you sing, play, or write music? Come and join a welcoming community of creatives at Jam Pot Sessions, a new monthly gathering celebrating music, song, and shared creativity.

Taking place on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 18:30** (and continuing on the **first Wednesday of each month**) at the Deanery Mews. This event is free but registration is required.

## CULTURE DATE WITH DUBLIN 8

9<sup>th</sup> May 2026 | VARIOUS TIMES

### Jonathan Swift Tour

Discover the life and legacy of one of Ireland's greatest writers with a special guided tour of Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the historic Deanery, once home to Jonathan Swift. This unique experience invites visitors to step into Swift's world, exploring the spaces where he lived, worked, and wrote, including the Cathedral where he served is now laid to rest.

### Gulliver's Travels Workshop

Step into a world of giants, tiny kingdoms, and incredible adventures at this fun and imaginative Gulliver's Travels workshop for children at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Through storytelling, creative activities, and hands-on crafts, young explorers will journey alongside Gulliver, discovering the strange lands he encounters whilst bringing their own ideas to life. Perfect for curious minds, this engaging workshop encourages creativity, imagination, and a love of stories in one of Dublin's most inspiring historic settings.

Book tickets at [stpatrickscathedral.ie/events](https://stpatrickscathedral.ie/events)

# Who's Who?



**The Very Revd Dr  
William Morton**  
DEAN  
*dean@stpatrickscathedral.ie*



**The Revd Canon  
Charles Mullen**  
DEAN'S VICAR  
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**Mr Gavan Woods**  
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**Ms Kelley Bermingham**  
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**Mr Louis Parminter**  
DEAN'S VERGER &  
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**Mrs Rowena Janota**  
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**Assistant Manager &  
Safety Officer**  
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Mr Derek Tobin  
Ms Colette Garry  
Mr John Reardon  
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*humanresources@stpatrickscathedral.ie*

## 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](mailto: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** [safeguarding@stpatrickscathedral.ie](mailto:safeguarding@stpatrickscathedral.ie)  
COMMUNITY & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER +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.



Formerly The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette | Est. 1856

**PRESIDENT CONNOLLY BUILDING AT NATIONAL**



RCB Missions  
Page 26

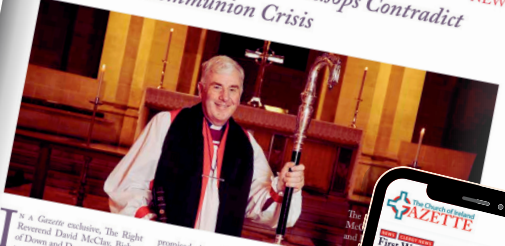
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The Rt Revd Ferran Clitheroe, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Athlone

**Public Rift Exposed: Archbishops Contradict Bishops in Communion Crisis**

NEWS



**I**n a Gazette exclusive, The Right Reverend David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore, responded to a question posed by the Editor of the Gazette regarding the Bishop's own stance on the GAFCON communiqué, given his status as a GAFCON communi- cated. The Bishop confirmed his approval of the rejection of the authority of the See of Canterbury, saying "There was nothing substantially new in the communiqué that GAFCON has not said on many occasions in recent years. GAFCON is not leaving the Anglican Communion, GAFCON is aligned in any way to GAFCON have not departed from historic Anglicanism as others have in recent decades. This is a time for all to prayerfully reflect on our calling to biblical truth. This for me is something that I believe I

promised when ordained a deacon, when ordained a priest, and when ordained a bishop and is, therefore, something always humbling and both a privilege and a priority. "Unity is precious and is something that Anglicans including the Church of Ireland have always treasured. The call is of God's Word and the Lordship of Jesus Christ." The Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Glenties, responded similarly to the Editor's question: "As to GAFCON, there is a realignment happening in the Anglican Communion. The centre of gravity is moving south from Canterbury. The emergence of GAFCON and the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches indicates the direction of the will evolve. It is not clear how this will evolve. It is a case of wait and see. As of now, I have no plans to attend the G26 conference in Nigeria." The Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and The Most Reverend Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, issued a joint statement in response to the GAFCON declaration, reaffirming the Church of Ireland's full participation in the Church

**First Woman Bishop Announces Retirement**



The woman who made history as the first female bishop in Ireland and the United Kingdom has announced her retirement. The Most Reverend Patricia Smyth, who became Bishop of the United Diocese of Meath and Kildare in 2013, will be retiring on 1 July 2026, after what she regards as the 'happiest privilege' of twelve years.



NEWS · OPINION · FEATURES · COMMENT · REVIEW · RECORD

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