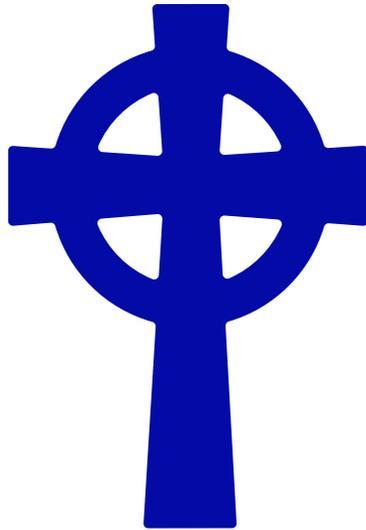


ST PATRICK'S CHURCH OF IRELAND CATHEDRAL, ARMAGH

THE CHURCH LEADERS GROUP
(IRELAND)



A SERVICE OF

REFLECTION & HOPE

*to mark the Centenary of the partition of Ireland
& the formation of Northern Ireland*

THURSDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2021
AT 11.00AM

THE CHURCH LEADERS GROUP
(IRELAND)

The Church Leaders Group (Ireland) comprises the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Primates of All Ireland, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the President of the Irish Council of Churches. All of these represent churches across the whole island of Ireland. The Group came into existence in the late 1960s when the Church Leaders recognised the value in working together in light of the urgency of political developments of the time. Since then, those holding these Offices have met frequently, united in their identity as disciples of Jesus and their shared commitment to work together for the common good.

BEFORE THE SERVICE



At 10.30 AM

*The Assistant Organist, the Reverend Canon Dr Peter Thompson,
will play*

Irish Cantilena

Tim Knight (b. 1959)

Psalm Prelude Set 1, no. 1

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Prelude on an old Irish Church Melody

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

St Patrick's Breastplate, from 'Sonata Celtica'

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Meditation on the Irish tune 'Slane'

Eric Thiman (1900-1975)

At 10.58 AM

the Cathedral bell will ring.

At 11.00 AM

*upon the arrival of Her Majesty The Queen, members of the
congregation are asked to stand as the assistant organist plays*

Solemn March from Joshua

George Frederic Handel (1685-1750)



HYMN

O Christ the same through all our story's pages,
our loves and hopes, our failures and our fears;
eternal Lord, the King of all the ages,
unchanging still, amid the passing years -
O living Word, the source of all creation,
who spread the skies, and set the stars ablaze,
O Christ the same, who wrought our whole salvation,
we bring our thanks to you for all our yesterdays.

O Christ the same, the friend of sinners sharing
our inmost thoughts, the secrets none can hide,
still as of old upon your body bearing
the marks of love, in triumph glorified -
O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heaven,
O Prince of life, in all your saving power,
O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are given,
we bring our thanks to you for this the present hour.

O Christ the same, secure within whose keeping
our lives and loves, our days and years remain,
our work and rest, our waking and our sleeping,
our calm and storm, our pleasure and our pain -
O Lord of love, for all our joys and sorrows,
for all our hopes, when earth shall fade and flee,
O Christ the same, for all our brief tomorrows,
we bring our thanks to you for all that is to be.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith (b.1926) based on Hebrews 13:8
Irish traditional melody: Londonderry Air



The Dean of Armagh, the Very Reverend Shane Forster, says

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

THE GATHERING

We gather here today on this ancient hill of Armagh, where St Patrick established a faith community and church over fifteen hundred years ago, to reflect on the significance of this centenary year and the long road we have travelled which also stretches out before us. In this the ecclesiastical capital of this island, a centuries old place of learning and outreach, we meet together at this time, people from diverse backgrounds and traditions, with different beliefs and aspirations, to pray for the healing of past hurts and to seek God's guidance and hope for the future.

Our past has shaped us and scarred us, it has divided us, and yet it has also on occasion brought us together. As we lament our failures, sorrows and pain, and recognise our wounded yet living history, may we with a united voice commit ourselves to work together for the common good, in mutual respect and with shared hope for a light filled, prosperous and peaceful future.



Let us pray

God of time and eternity we worship you.
In Christ you have given us the light of your incarnate Word
and shown us the fullness of your love.
Help us to walk in that light and serve together in that love
that the fullness of Christ's presence may be seen in us.

Lord, we confess to you and to each other, that we have
wounded each other and our communities in the past. We
are sorry and ashamed and ask for your forgiveness, so that
together we may move forward in faith, grow together in love,
and faithfully serve you all our days. We ask this through our
Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

May Almighty God forgive us, heal us and help us and give us
his peace now and in the days to come, through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.



TIME OF REFLECTION

'The Deer's Cry'

Soloist: Helena Hendron

with the gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir

I arise today through the strength of heaven.
Light of sun, radiance of moon,
splendour of fire, speed of lightning,
swiftness of wind, depth of the sea,
stability of earth, firmness of rock.

I arise today through God's strength to pilot me.
God's eye to look before me, God's wisdom to guide me,
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me
from all who shall wish me ill afar and anear,
alone and in a multitude.
Against every cruel merciless power
that may oppose my body and soul.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me.
I arise today.

Words from an old Irish text, 'St Patrick's Breastplate'

translated into English by Kuno Meyer

Music: Shaun Davey



OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 40:28-31, Read by Rebecca Morris

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

All remain seated.

SONG OF HOPE

'We're the Future of Tomorrow'

Words and Music by Patsy Ford Simms

Sung by a children's choir drawn from the local area.



NEW TESTAMENT READING

St Matthew 5:1-9, Read by Oisín Walsh

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks to be to God.

All remain seated.

VOICES OF HOPE

The hope, dreams and aspirations of the next generation.

Lucy Addis

Sean McCourt-Kelly

Andrea Andrews



PRAYERS

*The opening prayer in Irish will be led by
Linda Ervine and Seán Coll.*

*Intercessions will be offered by Professor Mary Hannon-Fletcher
and Robert Barfoot, both of whom were injured in the conflict on this
island.*

Let us pray.

A Dhia uilechumhachtaigh, thaispeáin tú bealach an
mhaithiúnais agus an ghrá dúinn trí do mhac, ár slánaitheoir,
Íosa Críost: Cuidigh linn ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar achan
rud maith agus dílis inár saolta féin. Beannaigh an obair a
dhéanann iad siúd atá ag iarraidh scoilteanna ón am a chuaigh
thart a réiteach, agus gach duine a chaitheann a saol ar
mhaithe leis an chothromas agus an tsíocháin. Impímid seo in
ainm Íosa Críost ár dTiarna. **Áiméan.**

*Almighty God, in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ you have shown
us the way of forgiveness and love: Help us to celebrate all that is
good and true in our common life. Bless the work of all who seek to
reconcile past divisions and all who dedicate themselves to the causes
of justice and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.*

Let us give thanks to God, our Creator, Redeemer
and Sustainer:

For all your blessings of love, peace and joy in this world and
for the work of peacemakers, negotiators and arbitrators,
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For all agencies of reconciliation and those who heal divided
communities and nations. For opportunities in our own lives
to bring an end to hatred and division,
We give you thanks, O Lord.



For all peace accords, treaties and peaceful ends to conflict.
For the richness of diversity. For all that opens our hearts
towards our neighbour and enables us to work together for
the common good,
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For all that brings release to those with memories of hurt and
injury, for the healing of those memories and the restoration
to wholeness of life, and for the comfort, strength and courage
which you bring to those suffering the pain of bereavement
and loss,
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For the commandment to love one another as you love us
and for your call to the world to live in peace and harmony.
For the justice, freedom and peace we enjoy today and for
opportunities to share them with others,
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For our ability to give refuge to those who are displaced, to
bind up the broken-hearted and to share with those who are
in need. For all the blessings of this life, for the gift of peace,
the joy of harmony, and the strength and resolve which we
know when hope is rooted in our hearts,
We give you thanks, O Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for one another in the words of the grace.
**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and
evermore. Amen.**



THE JOURNEY

Reflections by the Church Leaders

The Most Reverend Eamon Martin
*Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh &
Primate of All Ireland*

The Right Reverend Dr David Bruce
*Moderator of the General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

The Very Reverend Dr Ivan Patterson
President of the Irish Council of Churches

The Most Reverend John McDowell
*Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh &
Primate of All Ireland*

All stand to sing

HYMN

In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all,
here in the love of Christ I stand



In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
'till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine -
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
'till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Text and music: Stuart Townend (b.1963) and Keith Getty (b.1974)

All sit.



SERMON

The Reverend Dr Sahr Yambasu
President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

All remain seated.

ACT OF COMMITMENT

Led by Rosa McCloskey and James Chamberlain

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will we strive for all that makes for peace in our communities, towns and cities on this island and beyond?

With the help of God, we will.

Will we seek to heal the wounds of the past, and work for a hopeful and peaceful future?

With the help of God, we will.

Will we work for a just future for all humanity?

With the help of God, we will.

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love. May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, light and mercy; through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen**



We have chosen to walk in the light of Christ's forgiveness and healing. As children of the light we pray together in the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE LIGHT OF HOPE

Two young people will carry a lantern, symbolising the light of hope, through the Cathedral where it will be received in the sanctuary by the Church Leaders.

In the light of hope may we set aside divisions of the past, celebrate our shared present and re-commit ourselves to working for a future of common understanding, respect and peace in this land, in these islands and throughout the world.

All remain seated.



IRISH BLESSING

Sung by the gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir

May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be ever at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
and the rain fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again,
may God hold you ever in the palm of his hand.

Traditional words

Music: Bob Chilcott

THE BLESSING

The Church Leaders

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the Word of God direct us.
May your salvation, O Lord, be always ours.

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

Based on words attributed to St Patrick

All stand to sing



HYMN

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought in the day and the night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, and I thy true heir;
thou in me dwelling, and I in thy care.

Be thou my breast-plate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my armour, and be thou my might;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower,
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance through all my days;
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art!

High King of heaven, when the battle is done,
grant heaven's joy to me, O bright heaven's sun,
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Words: Early Irish
tr. Mary Byrne (1880-1931)
versified Eleanor Hull (1860-1935) altd.
Irish traditional melody: Slane
harm. George H.P. Hewson (1881-1972)

Members of the Congregation are requested to remain in their places until invited by the Cathedral Stewards to leave the Cathedral via the West door.



CENTENARY PRAYER

Sovereign, wise and gracious God, in whose hands lie the past, present and future, we acknowledge before you our failures, our divisions, and the hurt we have caused you and one another. Forgive, restore, and heal us. The events of partition and formation, which took place one hundred years ago on this island, changed, shaped, and determined the outlook for this place which we all call home. As we reflect upon those times and bring to mind what happened then and in the years since, we acknowledge before you our different and often polarised interpretations of history. As we travel onwards in our journey, may we learn from the experiences of the past and from those who trod these roads before us, so that the inheritance we pass on to the next generation is the gift of understanding, peace, and hope. In faith we pray, and humbly ask, in the name of him who is the light of the world and giver of all hope, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CENTENARY

by Francis John McDowell



The past is the dead time we have held above our future.
A hundred years of yesterdays, in which we lived
In parallel lines; deep dug, and comfortably divided.
Enclosing no space; too far apart to use a suture,
Too near to wholly separate.

We failed to seek one common object of love.
Not one. Petty difference our favourite parlour game.
Men built upon our dividedness, leading people, lame,
Up never-ending hills - imaginary summits clear above:
Too high ever to be reached; too close ever to yield.

But, here and now, on Ard Mhacha, we'll not divide
The indivisible God. Nor can we hide from his searching eyes
Our petty hatreds and the kindnesses we so casually despised.
We will not make large promises which tomorrow could deride.
Lame people cannot run. There is no shame in limping.

With each sore step we'll strengthen the wasted muscles
that kept us
In this pattern of small comfort, this weary maze.
Straightening our stride, we will see the many other ways
Of facing the road before; we'll lean forward against fear for the
Climbs that lie ahead. Almost together.



CHURCH LEADERS ST PATRICK'S DAY MESSAGE 2021

As disciples of Jesus Christ, sharing in the grace of his redemption, and in the Father's unshakeable love for his creation, we have been reflecting together on the events of 1921 on this island. We wish to share some of our thoughts as we continue these conversations and as we journey together through the year.

Every generation of leaders, civil and political, is called to make choices about the structures that govern our life in community, now and in the future, in circumstances that will always be less than ideal. Significant anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect on our trajectory, exploring what can be learned for today through a re-examination of the contrasting and intertwined narratives of conflict and compromise that surround these pivotal points in our history.

Some may struggle with the concept of a shared history when it comes to the centenary of the partition of Ireland, the establishment of Northern Ireland and the resulting reconfiguration of British-Irish relationships. What is undeniable, however, is the reality that we have to live in a shared space on these islands, and to make them a place of belonging and welcome for all. In our approach to the past we have a moral responsibility to acknowledge the corrosive impact of violence and words that can lead to violence, and a duty of care to those still living with the trauma of its aftermath.



There are insights from Christian social ethics that may offer a helpful perspective, alongside others, as we seek to navigate our contested past in a way that will contribute to healing of relationships in the present and a hopeful vision for the future. Christ's teaching, ministry and sacrifice were offered in the context of a society that was politically divided, wounded by conflict and injustice. His call to 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things of God' (Mark 12:17) conveyed the reassurance that beneath these societal fractures lay a deeper source of connection because all things belong to God.

Jesus lived out this message of hope by repeatedly and intentionally crossing social boundaries to affirm the dignity of those who had been marginalised or excluded by his own people and by society. In these encounters, as exemplified in the meeting with the Woman of Samaria (John 4:1-42), we see that Christ does not seek to minimise differences, but rather to establish connection through gracious listening, replacing exclusion and shame with the hope of new beginnings.

We have an opportunity, in marking these events from our past, to be intentional in creating the spaces for encounter with those who are different from us, and those who may feel marginalised in the narratives that have shaped our community identity. This will require us to face difficult truths about failings in our own leadership in the work of peace and reconciliation.



As Christian churches we acknowledge and lament the times that we failed to bring to a fearful and divided society that message of the deeper connection that binds us, despite our different identities, as children of God, made in His image and likeness. We have often been captive churches; not captive to the Word of God, but to the idols of state and nation.

We find inspiration and encouragement in the progress that has been made through our peace process in building relationships of mutual respect and trust across these islands. These relationships are often tested, and will at times be found wanting, but our communities have also demonstrated great resilience, solidarity and compassion, evident most recently in the response to Covid-19.

There has been considerable progress too in addressing unjust structures that excluded people and unfairly limited their life chances. The power of institutions has diminished, leading to greater accountability for those in leadership. This helps create an environment where we can value our different identities in a pluralist public square, conscious of both our rights and responsibilities. Yet there is much work still to do. With so much of our lives now being lived in the digital space there can be a temptation to retreat into spaces where our definition of community is limited to those who agree with us. This leads to an increasingly fragmented society in which too many people fall through the cracks.



Churches, alongside other civic leaders, have a role to play in providing spaces outside political structures that give expression to our inter-connectedness and shared concern for the common good. It is our hope that shared reflection on our past will support and strengthen this engagement, inspiring us to renew our commitment to the work of building peace for the future. As the Apostle Paul said, “So then let us pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another”

Romans 14:19

The Most Reverend Eamon Martin
*Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh &
Primate of All Ireland*

The Most Reverend John McDowell
*Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh &
Primate of All Ireland*

The Right Reverend Dr David Bruce
*Moderator of the General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

The Reverend Dr Thomas McKnight
*President of the Methodist Church in Ireland
(June 2020 - June 2021)*

The Very Reverend Dr Ivan Patterson
President of the Irish Council of Churches



ST PATRICK'S CHURCH OF IRELAND CATHEDRAL, ARMAGH

In the fifth century St Patrick came to Armagh, and the local chieftain, Daire, gave him this hilltop, where we gather today, on which to build a Church. Completed in 445AD that Church became known as Damhliag Mór or Great Stone Church. It was this Church that was mentioned in the Annals of Ireland in the ninth century, yet by the seventh century, Armagh was already recognized as St Patrick's see and the pre-eminent church in Ireland.

The first biographies of Patrick by Muirchú and Tírechán, written at that time, supported this claim. Subsequently Brian Boroimhe (Boru), the High King of Ireland, confirmed Armagh's supremacy when in 1005 he laid a gift of gold on the High Altar of the church and, on his death in the battlefield at Clontarf, his remains were brought to the hill of Armagh for interment in a spot indicated today by a stone inscription on the exterior west wall of the north transept of the Cathedral.

The story of the hill of Armagh and the church buildings upon it is one of recurring destruction and restoration across the centuries. The Irish Annals record constant plunderings and burnings. The Danish incursions of the ninth and tenth centuries brought repeated destruction and during the Anglo-Norman conquest in the twelfth century the Church was twice burned by crown forces.



In 1268 Archbishop O'Scannell built the Cathedral in its present form. His ground plan remains unchanged, but little of his actual building survives. This building survives, because in 1566 it was burned by Shane O'Neill in his rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I. It suffered the same fate in the rebellion of 1641 by Sir Phelim O'Neill. These burnings were particularly deplorable inasmuch as all medieval archives, documents and plate perished in them leaving little to show of anything earlier than 1661 - the year of its restoration.

A further restoration of the Cathedral was carried out between 1834 and 1840 when Archbishop John George Beresford engaged the architect, Lewis Nockalls Cottingham. More alterations were made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries including the moving of the choir screen to the south transept, the raising of the tower arches between the nave and the choir and the installation of the reredos in 1913. The most recent renovation was completed in 2004.

The skyline in Armagh is dominated by two Cathedrals as across the valley and on another hill sits the great French Gothic twin-spired St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral. Over the years, a spirit of shared witness between the cathedrals has developed and along with the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and others of many different traditions, the proclamation of the Gospel today in Armagh is as strong as it was in the days when St Patrick first walked here.



THANKS ARE EXTENDED TO

*The Dean and Chapter of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral,
Armagh, for the use of the Cathedral*

*The Director of Music, Dr Stephen Timpany, and the gentlemen of
the Cathedral Choir*

The Assistant Organist, the Reverend Canon Dr Peter Thompson

The musicians from the Education Authority Music Service

All who participated in this service of Reflection and Hope.

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Irish Church Hymnal, Fifth Edition 2000
Thanks & Praise 2015
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THE CHURCH LEADERS GROUP
(IRELAND)