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DEC. 2024/JAN. 2025

# CLOSE NEWS



## BROADCAST

The Cathedral in the spotlight on *Ireland AM* broadcast. *Pg14*

## AWARDS

Choristers recognised with awards. *Pg19*

## CHRISTMAS

Details of festive Christmas services and concerts. *Pg12*



## 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*)

**G**od has been worshipped in this place through the prayers and praises of countless generations. Worship lies at the heart of our life as Christians and we express our theology and belief through our liturgy. It is through these liturgical patterns of words and actions that we are formed and transformed.

We invite you to join us for any of the services here this month. If you are unable to join us in person, you can tune in to the online live stream of all services: [spcd.ie/live](https://spcd.ie/live)

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*Cover image: The choristers with presenter Deric Ó h'Artagáin after being featured on a broadcast of Ireland AM on November 26th.*

## **THE CLOSE NEWS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

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The Revd Canon Charles Mullen (DEAN'S VICAR)

Mr Gavan Woods (ADMINISTRATOR)

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Mr Ed Coleman (MARKETING MANAGER)

Ms Kryzel Bonifacio (SCHOOLS OFFICER)

Ms Melissa Carton (MARKETING ASSISTANT)

**T**he publication of *Close News* is made possible only as a result of the dedication of a number of people within the Cathedral Community. The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all those who have submitted content for publication. If you would like an item to be featured in the next edition of *Close News*, please contact Mrs Elizabeth Lowrie.



## THE DEAN WRITES...

THE VERY REVD DR WILLIAM MORTON

**I**n these days of fewer hours of daylight, and lower temperatures, it is heartening and encouraging that the number of worshippers and visitors to Saint Patrick's is actually greater than this time last year. Many of those who are attending worship, or who have come to see the Cathedral and learn of its ancient past, speak about how they feel a wonderful sense of belonging. It's a sentiment which is always good to hear. For centuries the strong tower and soaring spire of Saint Patrick's, together with its resounding arches and sacred spaces, have embraced people of all nationalities, cultures and traditions who have been greeted with not only a welcome, but with friendship, openness,

acceptance, tolerance, and inclusivity.

When one thinks about it, this spirit of inclusivity echoes the message of Christmas - when the Prince of Peace was born in humble surroundings to bring hope and love to all humanity. At Christmas, the Cathedral's attraction and charm, not least through its excellence in music and singing, remind us that its enterprise is not just one of grandeur but of grace—a place where tolerance, acceptance, and inclusivity come alive. It is here that strangers become friends, and divisions melt into the shared beauty of community and faith. We welcome worshippers and visitors of all nationalities, backgrounds and cultures from across the world. Those who come

through our doors – whether members of the various branches of Christianity, of world religions, or of no faith in any deity whatsoever – are all equally welcome as members of humanity, the human race.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we are invited to reflect on his message of peace—a call to open our hearts and lives to others. In doing so, Saint Patrick's Cathedral becomes

not just a place of worship but a living embodiment of the love and harmony that Christmas inspires.

May its doors always remain open to welcome all, just as the manger welcomed the Prince of Peace on that holy night.

I wish you a holy, blessed and peaceful Christmas,  
Yours ever,  
*William*

## CONDOLENCES

The many friends in Saint Patrick's Cathedral of the Reverend Canon Brian McKay, one of our œcumenical Canons on the Chapter of The National Cathedral, wish to express to him their sincere condolences and prayerful support on the death of his dear sister, Patricia Josephine (Pat), to whom Canon Brian was so loyal and caring down the years.

Late of Seapark Drive, Clontarf, and Kildoon, Co Kildare, Pat died peacefully at Naas General Hospital on November 10th 2024, after a long illness. Her funeral mass was held in the Carmelite Church White Abbey, Kildare on Thursday 14th, which was followed by a service in Glasnevin Crematorium. The Dean's Vicar, Canon Charles Mullen, and Canon David Oxley, together with some members of staff from Saint Patrick's, were glad to be with Canon Brian for the funeral, having availed of transport using the

Cathedral mini-bus, driven by Kelley Bermingham. The Dean considered it an honour to be invited by Canon Brian to read from Holy Scripture at the service in Glasnevin.

Canon Brian, whom we assure of our continued thoughts and prayers, has asked that his sincere thanks be conveyed to all who expressed their condolences.

Sincere condolences are expressed as well to Ms Judith Lyons, classroom music teacher at Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir School, and Choir supervisor, on the death of her mother, Denise Murnane Lyons. We remember also Damian and Vicky Bowers, on the death of Vicky's father, Michael Kealy; also Melissa Carton, a member of the Cathedral office staff in the Deanery basement, on the death of her father.

All who mourn are assured of our thoughts and prayers.

## A FRIENDLY CONVERSATION BEARS FRUIT

A well-known face and voice in Ireland, who died in October, was the former TD and Government Minister, Mary O'Rourke. Her death prompted me to tell the story of the one and only time I met the lady, and quite by chance at that. It was about 1999, just about two years after I had been appointed Dean of Saint Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry. I should point out that I inherited a situation whereby, just before Christmas in 1994, the cathedral was broken into and vandalized, the cross stolen from the altar, the bible from the lectern, and entry gained to the inside of the organ where those responsible trampled upon and smashed the pipes, and wrecked the instrument, leaving it totally unplayable.

No one was ever apprehended for the crime, and compensation was never forthcoming as the insurers insisted that the organ should have been insured on a separate policy (which would have been at excessive cost to the Cathedral) – just as in the case of an expensive ring or some other piece of jewellery.

For the last three years of his ministry before he retired, my predecessor, Dean Cecil Orr, strove valiantly to raise money to repair, restore, and - as they were advised at the time – to enlarge the organ. Disappointingly, it was to no avail whatsoever. Every application drew a blank.

One morning, however, when I walked into the cathedral who was standing there in a group of about six



or more people but the local MP for Foyle, Mark Durkan. Stepping out from the group, he came forward to greet me explaining that he had with him some politicians and officials from Dublin. He asked if I would like to meet them, and, when I said I would love to meet them, he beckoned them to come over. The first person to whom I was introduced was Minister Mary O'Rourke who was interested in finding out some information about the cathedral, and visitor numbers, and other relevant points. Mark then began to explain to her the dilemma I, and the Select Vestry of Saint Columb's, faced with regard to funding for the organ.

"You poor thing," she said, "that's a real worry for you." "Will you hold on a moment until I speak with my adviser?" When the young lady came over, the Minister, having re-iterated the problem to her: "Roisin, could we not help Dean Morton through the Department of Foreign Affairs? He has been saying to me that they have tours coming in here from Dublin, from Galway, Limerick, and other places too. Surely when it's cross-border, and bringing people into Northern Ireland, we could try and help him find a source of funding, particularly since the organ is being used for loads of musical events?" She went on: "Would you be able to meet with me when we're back in Dublin at the beginning of next week?"

The conversation with the Minister continued in which she assured me she would talk with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and get his department to make contact. I thanked her profusely, and we parted. I was heartened, but

unsure how it would turn out. After a few weeks an official from the Department of Foreign Affairs rang to arrange a visit and to meet with a small number of us from Saint Columb's. There was a great sense of enthusiasm on the part of the Irish Government to help us. Within the year we received a cheque for £100,000 Irish punts towards the organ restoration. This was an unbelievable response and one for which we shall be eternally grateful. The person who saw most of the process carried through was a gentleman called Ray Bassett who some years later was appointed as Irish Ambassador to Canada.

That magnificent donation, which was truly a major indication of confidence in the project, served as a catalyst towards other funding bodies contributing as well. The entire cost of repairs, restoration, and enlarging of the organ by the firm of Wells Kennedy from Lisburn, County Antrim was in the region of £550,000 and within little over a few years the entire sum was raised. The refurbished and enlarged organ, which started bring used for events for lots of cross-community, cross-border and cross-cultural events, in a remarkable way became an instrument of reconciliation.

It all started with a friendly conversation with Minister Mary O'Rourke. I had never met the lady before; and I never met her again. As President Mary McAleese wrote of her at the time of her passing, "Mary O'Rourke was an iconic politician, a lady who had a great capacity for friendship, kindness and encouragement." May she rest in peace and be raised in glory.

*WWM*



## A SHOT FROM THE CANON

THE REVD CANON  
CHARLES MULLEN

**S**cripture readings in Advent put us on notice to stay awake and alert. Those who do are rewarded, those who don't are left behind. My difficulty is that I find myself in the left-behind category. Yikes! I do, though, have a widely-shared human sense of longing and expectation, and I'm (sometimes) good at making preparations. These might be my best springboard, and maybe yours too, for looking beyond the coming of Christ at Christmas to his coming on the day of the kingdom. Then will come our release, freedom and healing: promises that call for longing, expectation, and some preparation.

CM

## HARK! A HERALD VOICE IS CALLING

Christ comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure;  
And with the treasures of his grace  
To enrich the humble poor.

*From a hymn by Philip Doddridge  
(1702–51)*

So when next Christ comes in glory,  
And earth's final hour draws near,  
May he then as our defender  
On the clouds of heaven appear.

*From a hymn by Edward Caswall  
(1814–78)*



# SUNDAY SERVICES & PREACHERS

## SUNDAY 8TH DEC 2024

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE VERY REVD K. R. J. HALL**

*Prebendary of Tassagard*

## SUNDAY 12TH JAN 2025

11:15 – Choral Matins

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD J. E. T. YENDALL**

*Prebendary of Mulhuddart*

## SUNDAY 15TH DEC 2024

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Carols for All

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD P. I. ARBUTHNOT**

*Prebendary of Castleknock*

## SUNDAY 19TH JAN 2025

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE VEN P. THOMPSON**

*Prebendary of Donaghmore*

## SUNDAY 22ND DEC 2024

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Nine Lessons & Carols

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD C. W. MULLEN**

*Prebendary of Rathmichael*

## SUNDAY 26TH JAN 2025

11:15 – Choral Matins

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD S. J. YAMBASU**

*Prebendary of Finglas*

## SUNDAY 29TH DEC 2024

11:15 – Eucharist

\*No afternoon service

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE VERY REVD W. W. MORTON**

*Dean and Ordinary*

## SUNDAY SAID SERVICE

Eucharist at 09:15 (Lady Chapel).

## FORTHCOMING FEAST DAYS

The Feast of Saint Stephen is celebrated on Thursday 26 Dec 2024.

The Feast of Saint John the Evangelist is celebrated on Friday 27 Dec 2024.

The Feast of the Holy Innocents is celebrated on Saturday 28 Dec 2024.

## SUNDAY 5TH JAN 2025

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Epiphany Carols

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD C. W. L. McCAULEY**

*Prebendary of Tipperkevin*

## SERVICES & MUSIC LIST

For an up-to-date and comprehensive list of forthcoming services, please visit the monthly Services & Music List on the website.





## THE ADMINISTRATOR WRITES...

MR GAVAN WOODS

Very recently I returned from a trip to India. During my brief time there I visited many landscapes and buildings, including palaces, mosques, Jain, Hindu and Buddhist temples, sites and forts. To experience these things as a visitor is always a rewarding experience and never more so than in India, where the extraordinary beauty and scale of so many of their historic structures has to be seen to be believed.

Everywhere evident is the disorienting force and complexity of belief systems, often with millennia of tradition behind them, expressed by dress, actions and language at every turn, seeming so different to our own. Though religious strife occurs, it does so as an aberration within a broadly tolerant and non-violent society.

Of course India has its towering challenges which I do not need to enumerate here, but, even though my stay was short, I feel confident when I say that its glory are its people, manifest in

the openness and welcome extended by even the very poor. My trip helped me contextualise what it is that we do and why we are doing it. It has underlined to me the importance of our Cathedral, the community here, the story we tell and the faith we maintain.

As 2024 draws to an end, we in Saint Patrick's can reflect on a year of progress, and broadly, of success. Choral worship, offering hope, solace and peace, was delivered through the year. The work of our education and community departments brought assistance, encouragement and fun to many. We continued the work of caring for our buildings, structures of national importance, funded through the support of the faithful, our friends and our visitors.

As we journey through the season of advent I thank all who work and volunteer with me at Saint Patrick's and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a joyful New Year.

*GHW*



*Coservation Indian style. Photo courtesy of Gavvan Woods.*

## 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)



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

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER AT 18.00  
ADVENT PROCESSION BY CANDLELIGHT

SUNDAY 15TH DECEMBER AT 15.15  
CAROLS FOR ALL

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER AT 15.15  
TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER AT 16.00 (ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY)  
NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER AT 11.15  
FESTIVAL CHORAL EUCHARIST

SUNDAY 5TH JANUARY AT 15.15 AND 16.30\*  
EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE  
\*OLIVIER MESSIAEN: LA NATIVITÉ DU SEIGNEUR

SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY AT 15.15  
BENJAMIN BRITTEN: A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

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

# REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENSONG

On November 10th the Cathedral held the annual Remembrance Sunday Evensong, honouring those who have served and given their lives in times of conflict.

Among those in attendance were His Excellency Michael D. Higgins, representatives of Dáil Éireann, and representatives of the

judiciary and defence forces, all of whom were welcomed by the Dean. The preacher was Canon David Oxley, Prebendary of St Audoen's.

It is a privilege to host the Remembrance Evensong, and we are grateful to everyone who attended and contributed. Together, we remembered, reflected, and renewed our commitment to peace.



*Photo courtesy of Patrick Hugh Lynch.*

# THE DEAN'S CHRISTMAS BLESSING

THE DEAN AND MRS MORTON WISH EVERYONE  
ASSOCIATED WITH SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL  
EVERY BLESSING FOR CHRISTMAS,  
AND ALL GOOD WISHES FOR 2025.

## CATHEDRAL FEATURED ON IRELAND AM

On Tuesday the 26th of November, the Jonathan Swift Festival got a moment in the spotlight as *Ireland AM* broadcasted live from Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Presenter Deric Ó h'Artagáin joined us bright and early at 8am, bringing viewers a glimpse into the magic of the festival and the Cathedral.

Deric began by chatting to Mr Ed Coleman about the Jonathan Swift Festival, followed by a conversation with Ms Kryzel Bonifacio about the Education Department's work in connecting people of all ages with the Cathedral's history. The Dean then shared his personal journey to becoming Dean of Saint Patrick's.

Deric also ventured up to the Minot tower, where Mr Louis Parminter gave him a hands-on lesson in bell-ringing. Watching the bells chime live on air was a real treat!

And let's not forget the show-stopping performances by the Cathedral choristers under the direction of Mr Stuart Nicholson. Their voices filled the



Cathedral and impressed viewers across the country—a proud moment for everyone involved.

It was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the Jonathan Swift Festival and the amazing work happening at the Cathedral. Thanks to everyone who helped make this happen.

# SPONSOR A CHORISTER



**T**he Cathedral Choirs will be embarking on trips next year. In February 2025, the Choristers will be travelling to Madrid to sing. In the summer, members of Schola Patricii (the Cathedral's senior girls' choir) and the Lay Vicars will be travelling to Winchester Cathedral to sing services and a concert. For both of these trips, we would very much appreciate any help and support that members of the Cathedral Community can give; they are wonderful experiences and offer great boosts of confidence, especially given the last couple of years.

**Please make your cheques payable to Saint Patrick's Cathedral, marking the reverse "Sponsor a Chorister". Thank you for all your generosity both now and over the years, it is always very much appreciated!**

## VOLUNTEERS' RECEPTION

**O**n Saturday, November 16th, a reception was held in appreciation for the Cathedral's dedicated volunteers.

The volunteers were warmly welcomed into a festively decorated Deanery by the Dean and Rosemary. Many thanks were given for the volunteers' hard work throughout the year.

From bellringing to stewarding to tour guiding, our volunteers contribute to the Cathedral in a variety of important roles. We appreciate all the ways they have given their time and effort into



making the Cathedral the best it can be.

Thanks as well to everyone who helped organise the reception including the Dean, Rosemary, Kelley, Colette and Marta.

*KOB*

## MOVEMBER UPDATE



*Members of the group sporting their mustaches.  
Photo courtesy of Aaron Hoey.*

Last month, Cathedral and security staff members Aaron Hoey, Andrew Stokes, Jack Cassidy, Thomas McTague, Noel Maher and James O'Brien participated in Movember, an annual fundraiser where they grow mustaches over the course of a month for a charitable cause. This year, they were able to raise €675 for men's health issues. Many thanks to everyone who supported this year's efforts!

## STORM DAMAGE ON THE CLOSE

Strong winds from Storm Darragh caused great damage to trees around the Cathedral recently.

A large cherry tree on the east side of the Cathedral just outside the churchyard was felled, along with another tree on Saint Patrick's Close.

No one was hurt, nor was there damage to any Cathedral structures. Dublin City Council workers were busy on the morning of December 9th repairing the upturned pavement on The Close.

*Photos courtesy of Rowena Janota.*







## JONATHAN SWIFT FESTIVAL RECAP

The Jonathan Swift Festival 2024 wrapped up in style last week, and what a success it was! Held from November 22nd to 27th at the Cathedral, every single event was a sell-out, making this fifth annual celebration of Saint Patrick's former Dean one to remember.

We began with *Jonathan Swift: Savage Indignation*, a stunning mix of drama, music, and expert insights that brought Swift's life to the stage. The Cathedral Choir, directed by Mr Stuart Nicholson performed, adding a magical touch to an unforgettable opening night.

Saturday was all about fun for everyone. The Gulliver's Travels bookmaking workshop let children create their own adventures, while Jonathan and the Jest offered an interactive literary tour

that had guests laughing and learning as they explored Swift's inspirations.

A standout moment? The Swift Festival Cathedral Night Tour. Walking through the Cathedral by candlelight on Tuesday was nothing short of breathtaking, as guests soaked up the stories and history of the Cathedral.

We concluded with Swiftly into a Culwick Christmas, a festive concert that blended Swift-era music with holiday favorites. The Culwick Choral Society and Cathedral Schola gave a performance that left everyone buzzing with holiday cheer.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the festival such a success. Here's to an even bigger and better celebration in 2025.

# FAREWELL TO CHOIR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

On Friday 29th November members of the Board of Management, together with staff, pupils and parents, and colleagues from the Music Department met to bid farewell to Ms Jennifer McCormack, who has accepted the offer of a deputy principal's post in her native County Mayo.

Dean Morton, who is Chairman of the Board of Management, expressed appreciation to Ms McCormack for her contribution as Principal for the last ten years, and for molding and shaping the journey of the school and its pupils.

"The challenge of teaching over that period of time was exacerbated by the pandemic which beset us from March of 2020, but I'm glad to say we weathered it, although it did cause us, and society at large, many problems," said the Dean.

He went on: "Every teacher brings something unique to the classroom, and Ms McCormack has been part of many of our shared experiences. We'll

remember the times spent together, and, as she moves on to new opportunities, we wish her all the best and hope she finds fulfilment in her future endeavours. We hope her next chapter brings her success and happiness."

Adding to the good wishes extended to Ms McCormack was Ms Fiona Fitzsimons, a member of the Board of Management of the Choir School, and former Chair of the Parents' Association. Fiona said that the Choir School is "a unique learning environment," and that Ms McCormack always put the children's welfare first.

She went on: "It was Ms McCormack who brought sports into the school. In 2017-2019 the school took part in Marathon Kids - four running sessions every week over eight weeks. As I work nearby, I found myself 'dragged in' to the training session. Jennifer, always with a smile on her face and a laugh in her voice, doesn't take no for an answer. That tenacity was evident when she negotiated



with the DCC Sports Officer so that students in the Choir School learned to row and to kayak.”

Mr Pearce Maloney, deputy principal, added his thanks to Ms McCormack, and wished her well for the future, as did Mr Gavan Woods, CEO of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, and also a member of the Choir School’s Board of Management.

Mr Stuart Nicholson, Master of the Music, then directed the choristers in a very fitting musical and choral tribute to Ms McCormack who, in replying to the speeches, and presentations, spoke of the emotion of leaving the pupils, her colleagues, and the school where she had spent ten happy years, and wished everyone every blessing for the future.

WWM

## CHORISTER AWARDS

**C**horister awards were distributed at a Sunday Evensong last month. The following awards were given:

*The Gordon Medal presented to the boy with the most progress since entering the choir*  
James Richard Tennant-Gough

*The Roger Medal presented for punctuality, good attendance and reliability*  
Ailbe Heenan

*The Saint Peter’s Medal presented to an all-round musician, combining good singing and instrumental playing*  
Hart O’Connor

*The Marchant Medal for good enunciation*  
David Pugna

*The Mullen Medal awarded for deputy head boy*  
Nathan Scott

*The Reed Medal for Head Chorister*  
Guss Hannon Young

*The Winstanley Medal for the Senior Solo Chorister*  
Sam Osborne



*Head Girl*  
Nour Fady Anwar Ayad

*Head Girl*  
Zemphira Akoka Connolly

*Deputy Head Girl*  
Charlotte Nolan



## COMMUNITY NEWS

### DELGANY PARISH VISIT: THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE IN DUBLIN

**S**aint Patrick's Cathedral sponsors a number of local outreach projects and initiatives in Dublin 8. They have given away more than a million euro in the last few years. This has been raised from visitors' donations while lighting prayer candles - not a particularly Anglican tradition but it obviously strikes a chord with visitors and it yields an impressive result for good causes.

The Cathedral is a landmark in the city and is visited by more than 600,000 visitors each year, not counting those who come to daily or Sunday services. 94% of these are international visitors and tourists. The other 6% are more local but, of these, how many are members of the Church of Ireland parishes to whom, in a sense, this cathedral of the Church of Ireland belongs?

To make the parishes more aware of what the Cathedral has to offer,

the Cathedral Board came up with a brilliant idea. They offer a guided tour to parish groups, Mothers' Union branches or other organisations, collect them from the Dart or other convenient starting point and give them VIP access to the Cathedral and its attractions. Then they will bring you home or back to your starting point. No worries about traffic or parking or security - and no entry fee. It is all free of charge!

On a Tuesday afternoon in October, a group organised by Delgany Parish Mothers' Union took the Cathedral up on its offer. A Dart from Greystones to Tara Street, collection by minibus and an escort into the Cathedral.

There is plenty to see. Even if you have been before, many years ago, you will be surprised by how bright the Cathedral has become. The regimental flags are still there, deteriorating gently year by year. The beautiful altar frontals and fine statues of aristocracy and Church dignitaries are still there but so too are

more recent additions, prayer trees and a fine sculpture of St Patrick by Melanie Le Brocquy.

We saw the boar's head and the cannonball, the 'chance your arm' door and we looked for the deliberate mistake in the floor tiling. (Only God makes everything perfectly).

Our guide, Kryzel, told us the stories of Dean Jonathan Swift and translated the Latin epitaph which Swift modestly wrote for himself. He was a man who liked to have the last word! We saw his death masks and the very modest pulpit he used when preaching. His sermons were said to be 2 to 3 hours long which makes our modern clergy's preaching seem ridiculously brief! We asked questions, all of which were expertly answered.



What was the best bit? The magnificent architecture, superb needlework on frontals and beautiful stained-glass windows were all outstanding. The overall sense of a magnificent building that has been a house of prayer for more than 800 years, with its tombs of Norman archbishops and connections to every period of Irish history in that time, is impressive indeed. I liked the Dean's Chair, made from original Cathedral roof timbers, dating from 1190 but I suppose we all had our own favourites.

The person who really made the day special was Kelley Bermingham, who works as Community Officer for the Cathedral and was our driver and overall guide for the day. Kelley's local knowledge of the cathedral and surrounding area of Dublin 8 and her information and commentary on all the sights we saw from the minibus windows was truly outstanding. Her enthusiasm was infectious but she has worked in the area on various social projects and she is also realistic about the problems and deprivations of inner city life. She has an impressive track record for social action, both by her own efforts and in her family. Her father, Willie Bermingham, founded the charity 'Alone'.

I felt as if I was seeing the city and the Cathedral through her eyes, for the first time, almost like visiting a foreign city. And I am a Dubliner, born and bred.

So thank you Kelley and Cathedral staff for a great day out – the most fun you can have in Dublin.

*The Revd Nigel Waugh*

# A SAINT PATRICK'S CHRISTMAS

Join us on **Wednesday 18th Dec 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 & Orchestra, directed by Stuart Nicholson, with Jeffrey Ledwidge (bass) & RTÉCO Principal Harpist Geraldine O'Doherty.

The programme includes a veritable feast of Christmas classics including music from Handel's *Messiah*, Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. There will also be carols for the audience to join in and raise the roof with (accompanied by David Leigh on the Cathedral's mighty Willis organ, all 4,000 or so pipes of it), and seasonal readings from our very own Bryan Dobson.

So why not come and join us for a wonderful feast of festive music, performed with a seasonal dose of Christmas cheer by this renowned choir. *Tickets available at [stpatickscathedral.ie/events](http://stpatickscathedral.ie/events).*



# THE SNOWMAN

Monday 23 December at 4.00pm

Our last concert of the year, and the most popular, the choristers give their seasonal concert performance of Blake's THE SNOWMAN.

*"It was a cold, cold winter's night. In a cottage in the country,  
hidden away beneath the hills, a little boy lay sleeping.  
Snow began to fall, lightly at first and then with giant flakes,  
which started to settle on the ground.  
At first light of morning, the little boy turned over, yawned and sat up.  
He ran to the window and looked out.  
Everything was covered in snow..."*

**Admission is free with a retiring collection in aid of  
LauraLynn Children's Hospice.**



**This event is free of charge and registration is required.  
[www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/snowman24](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/snowman24)**

Further details of these and all events are  
available from our website [www.stpatrickscathedral.ie](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie)

2025

# TRADFEST

22-26 JAN



## **Women of Note with Aoife Scott and Friends**

*Wednesday 22nd January 2025*

This powerful evening showcases the best of Irish female voices. Aoife Scott and her talented friends promise a night filled with soulful songs and storytelling that celebrate the rich tapestry of women in traditional music.

## **Wallis Bird – Vision of Venus**

*Thursday 23rd January 2025*

Known for her dynamic performances and genre-defying sound, Wallis Bird brings her Vision of Venus tour to the Cathedral. Expect an evening of energy, emotion, and musical brilliance as Wallis takes the stage in this stunning venue.

## **Frankie Gavin and De Dannan with Special Guests**

*Friday 24th January 2025*

A legend of Irish traditional music, Frankie Gavin and his band De Dannan are joined by special guests for a night of electrifying melodies and unforgettable performances. This is trad. music at its very best.

## **Eric Bibb and Special Guests**

*Saturday 25th January 2025*

World-renowned blues and folk musician Eric Bibb brings his unique blend of heartfelt lyrics and soulful tunes to Dublin. Joined by special guests, this promises to be a performance to remember.

*Tickets are now available—  
visit [tradfest.ie](http://tradfest.ie) for details.*

January brings a musical treat as TradFest, Ireland's premier trad. and folk festival, celebrates its 20th anniversary. The Cathedral is proud to be one of the key venues for this iconic event, hosting an incredible lineup of concerts from January 22nd to 25th.

Whether you're a die-hard trad. fan or just dipping your toes into Irish culture, TradFest 2025 at Saint Patrick's Cathedral offers something for everyone. Here's what's in store:



# FIRST FORTNIGHT 2025

**W**e're thrilled to begin the new year by partnering with First Fortnight, a charity that challenges mental health stigma through arts and cultural action. For the first two weeks of January 2025, First Fortnight will bring incredible events to Dublin, and the Cathedral is delighted to host two events:

## **Dublin at Dawn**

*Wednesday, 8 January & Thursday, 9  
January 2025  
8:00 AM*

Start your day with a unique and unforgettable experience: a sunrise climb to the Minot tower. This small, intimate event offers a bird's-eye view of Dublin at dawn—a peaceful moment to reflect on, and connect with, the beauty of the city.

After the climb, all are invited to attend Sung Matins, featuring stunning performances by the choristers, followed by a warm cuppa to reflect on the experience. This serene event blends history, mindfulness, and community in a way that perfectly aligns with First Fortnight's message of mental wellness.

## **The Art of Mental Health**

*Thursday, 16 January 2025  
7:00 PM*

Join us for a powerful evening of music in partnership with Sing Ireland and the Centre for Contemporary Music. Composer Norah Walsh will debut a choral piece inspired by First Fortnight's mission to end mental health stigma. Performed by the Laetare Vocal Ensemble under the direction of Róisín Blunnie, this event celebrates the uplifting and healing power of group singing.



**FIRST FORTNIGHT**  
THE ART OF MENTAL HEALTH

*For more information and to book tickets,  
visit [firstfortnight.ie](http://firstfortnight.ie).*

## **CHRISTMAS OFFICE HOURS**

The Cathedral Office will be closed on Monday 23rd December until Thursday 2nd January. A telephone answering machine will be available for anyone wishing to leave a message.

# CATHEDRAL CONTACTS



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



**The Revd Canon  
Charles Mullen**  
DEAN'S VICAR  
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**Welcome Desk Supervisors**  
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Master of the Music**  
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**Senior Retail Assistant**  
Ms Violeta Dalmau  
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**Administrative Assistant**  
Mr James Phelps  
*info@stpatrikscathedral.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, at *adminstrator@stpatrikscathedral.ie*

## SAFEGUARDING

The 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@stpatrikscathedral.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.

# SUPPORT US



The ministry of Saint Patrick's Cathedral is made possible entirely through the support of individuals like you. The donations which we receive from people all over the world support our worship and music tradition, education programmes, and community outreach work, as well as contributing towards the vast cost of maintaining this historic building.

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)



# STAY IN TOUCH

You do not have to wait until the next edition of *Close News* to see the latest updates from the Cathedral! Why not follow us on social media or visit our website for up-to-date news and information? From our website, you can also sign up to our digital newsletter in order to receive news straight to your email.



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[/StPatricksCathedral1](https://www.youtube.com/StPatricksCathedral1)



[@StPatricksCath](https://twitter.com/StPatricksCath)



[stpatrickscathedral.ie](https://stpatrickscathedral.ie)



[@StPatricksCathedralDublin](https://www.instagram.com/StPatricksCathedralDublin)



The Deanery Office  
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**SAINT  
PATRICK'S  
CATHEDRAL**  
DUBLIN