

AUTUMN



WELCOME

The transitioning seasons are my favourite, Autumn and Spring. They both herald change and, unlike Winter and Summer, there's no disappointment - there's never enough/too much sun in the summer and never enough/too much snow in the winter!

Autumn in particular never promises anything other than change, and I love that. There's no pressure to live up to anyone's expectations; it just "is what it is". Maybe we need to take a leaf out of Autumn's book (pun intended!) and learn to just "be" for a season?

So, to help you start that process, take a few moments, maybe grab yourself a pumpkin latte and take a gander through our Autumn newsletter!

As always we continue to pray for you and would love to hear what you are up to. Feel free to contact us with any news, questions or events by emailing:

cfm@ireland.anglican.org

Many Blessings.
Rachael.



Church of Ireland ✠
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Children & Families



Back in the wonderful heat of Summer, Laura Steerman, one of the Children and Families team in Taney Church Dublin, attended the Messy Church Conference for BCFM. Here's how it went!



Messy Church Adventures

Little did I think when Taney Parish started running 'Messy Churches' in 2024 that I'd now be the Church of Ireland's unofficial Messy correspondent who still has glitter in their shoes from a conference back in June!

As an arty person and CFM worker, with an open mind and heart, I said 'yes' to an invitation to represent COI CFM at the BRF Ministries Messy Church conference 2025 in England. Messy Church Conferences happen every three years – or 'triennially' – so I jumped at the chance to try it out and hopped on a plane to London.

Before I begin, in case you are not familiar with Messy Church – it's a wonderfully different way to worship designed for people of all ages—especially those who might not feel at home in traditional Sunday services (often called tidy church!).

In my experience Messy Church is all about connection and creativity over convention, though it's not just about paint and glue (though there's plenty of that). The "mess" reflects:

- Creative expression: Messy Church reflects the creativity of God in its imaginative hands-on approach to being church together. We do crafts, games, and activities that explore Bible stories in tactile, imaginative ways.
- Christ Centered Intergenerational worship: Children, parents, grandparents — all ages worship together to encounter Jesus in new ways.
- Hospitality: Every session includes shared food, laughter, and community.
- Celebration: Joyful storytelling, songs, and prayer that welcome everyone, wherever they are on their faith journey.



Whether there are curious newcomers, a family looking for spiritual connection, or someone who hasn't stepped inside a church in years, Messy Church is designed to be open, engaging, and non-judgmental. It is a way to help everyone encounter Jesus in a way that's joyful and deeply relational.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

The Messy Church Conference 2025 at High Leigh was a vibrant, joyfully chaotic celebration of creativity, inclusion, and intergenerational worship. Held from June 20–22 at the beautiful High Leigh rural retreat center in Hertfordshire, the theme was “All Together”, and it truly lived up to its name. I knew nobody at first but from arrival, I was welcomed warmly into an international community of Messy Church enthusiasts.



Lorraine Prince and Dr. Sam Richards delivered inspiring keynotes on inclusion, how we can make people feel safe and welcomed into our ministries. We learned from workshop leaders from all over the globe about how to survive a Messy Church session without losing your sanity or your shoes. Sara and Sam Hargreaves of Engage Worship led music sessions which ranged from deeply moving to action filled antics.

If there was one key take away I learned we are fully supported by the Messy Church literature and training to follow guided workshops and ideas, but equally empowered to tailor a messy church to any Bible theme, time or location, audience and budget. The theme “All Together” wasn't just a slogan—it was a lived experience of joyful chaos, radical hospitality, and the kind of spiritual messiness that makes room for everyone.

Just follow the trail of sequins to the [Messy Church website](#) and social media pages – there are so many resources, training and ideas there you may like to try in your own church. They'll lead you straight to the heart of Messy Church and I am here to support anyone who would like to try running a Messy Church. In fact, I will be sharing the learnings in detail at an Online Winter Workshop on October 9th and look forward to inspiring and supporting you and your Parish to set up a Messy Church.

Messy[®] Church Chat!



**Thursday
October 9th
@7.30pm**

**Join us online Thursday 9th October at 7.30 pm
as we chat all things Messy Church!**

**Discover new seasonal resources, hear
inspirational stories, ask all the questions
you've ever wondered about Messy Church!**

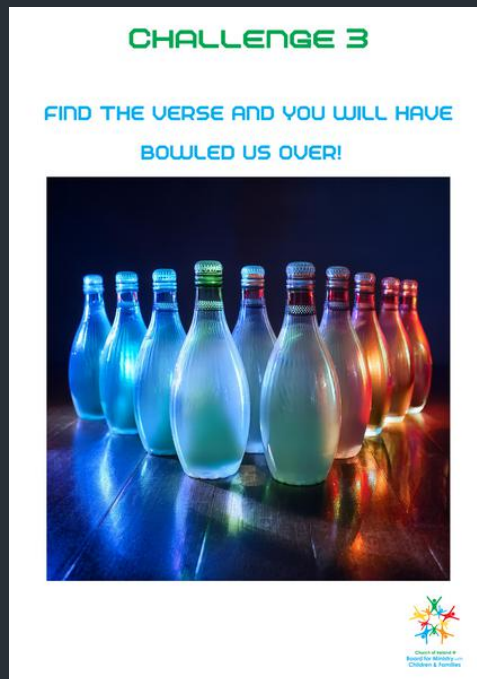
**We are delighted to welcome Aike Kennet-
Brown, Ministry Lead for Messy Church, and our
very own uber talented Laura Steerman!**

Click the [link](#) to book your place free NOW 



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Escape into the light

Halloween can be a tricky time to navigate in the Church, but we believe that it is a prime opportunity to speak light and life into the lives of our Children and Families. Holding a Light Party gives your church family the opportunity to stand out from the rest of the community and provide an alternative to the fear that dominates other parties and events at the end of October.

Light Party Escape Room

To assist you, we've developed a Light Party Escape Room (click [HERE](#) to download). This is a series of challenges for children and families to tackle, culminating in party food and fun as a reward. These challenges are designed for children aged 7 to 12, but family groups can also participate. Just be sure to inform adults that their role is to provide support and guidance if children are stuck, rather than giving away answers!

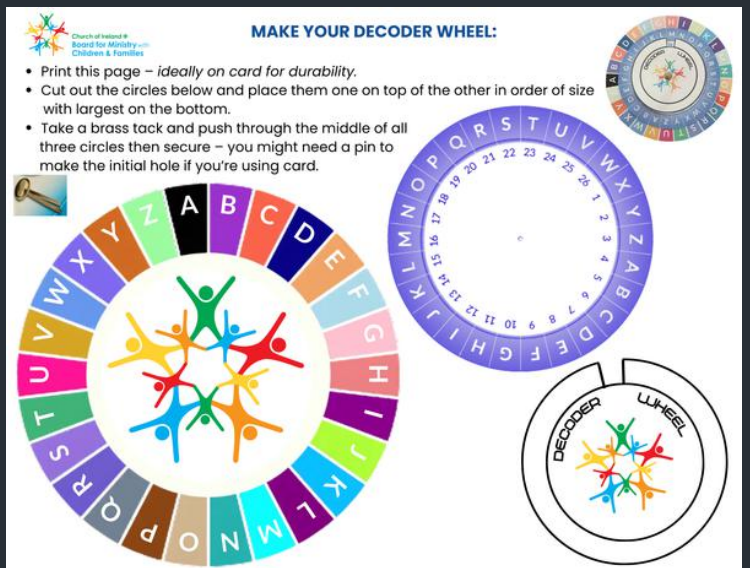
The Message

The central theme of this escape room is our calling to illuminate the world with God's love. Participants will engage with Bible verses that highlight Jesus as the Light of the World, the importance of trusting in God, and the triumph over darkness.

The Practical Approach

The goal is to gradually light up a dim room. Each time a team successfully completes a challenge, they should be instructed to turn on a light source—such as a battery-powered candle. The type of light you choose will depend on your location and budget.

We would love to see photos of the escape room in action! If you use this resource, please share your images with us at cfm@ireland.anglican.org.



CHALLENGE 2

Then ... said,
"Let there be light!" And there
was light.

... saw that the light was
good. So he divided the light
from the darkness.

... named the light "day" and
the darkness "night." Evening
passed, and morning came.

This was the first day.

Genesis 1 v3-4

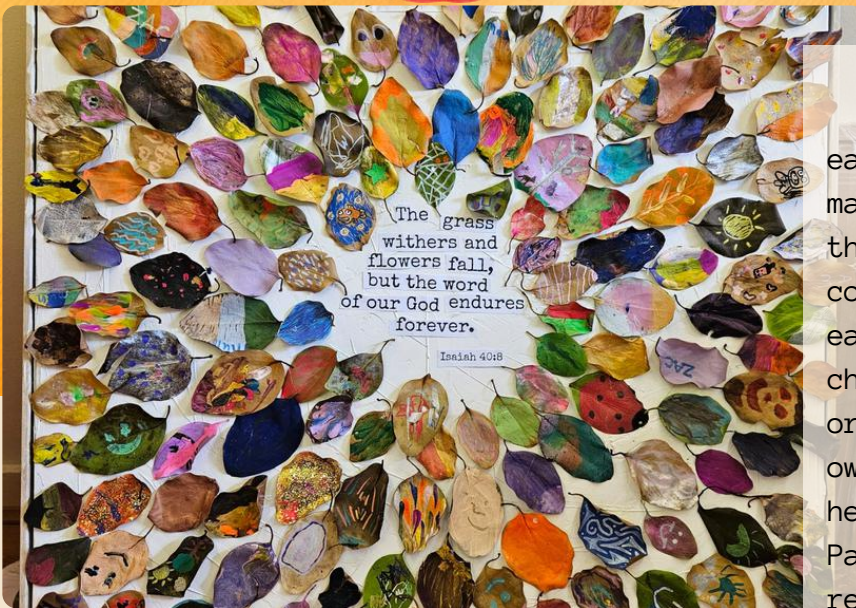
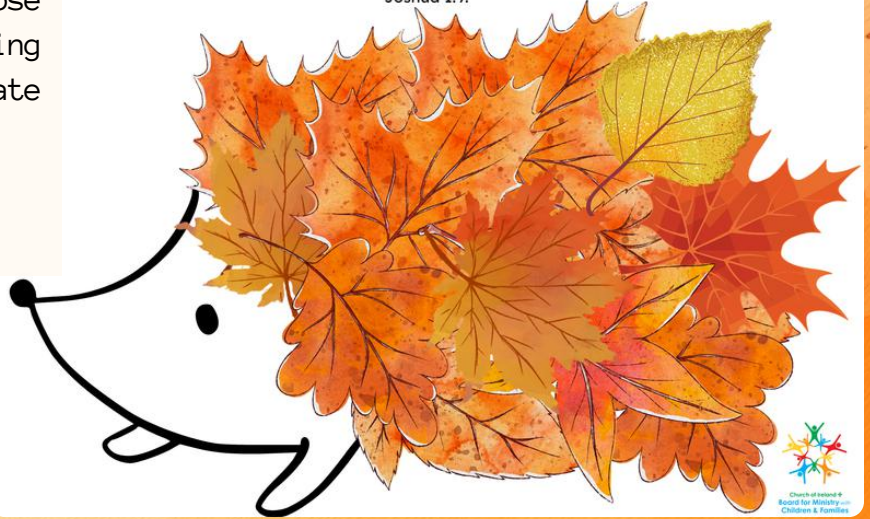
‘LEAF’ THE COLD OUTSIDE

Embrace the beauty of this season with all the colours and gifts it drops for us. This super-easy craft comes with a wonderful promise for all ages. Collect fallen autumn leaves or those that have transformed into stunning hues, and glue them together to create this charming Hedgehog of promise. Click [HERE](#) to download the blank PDF.



God will never **leave** me!

Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go
Joshua 1:9.



Leaves are beautifully unique, each with a different colour pattern, marks, shapes and sizes. Embracing these differences you could create a collage of decorated leaves which each person in your children's/toddler/sunday club group or congregation decorates with their own particular design. The example here was created by the team in Taney Parish and is a beautiful seasonal reminder of God's word.

Another way to showcase the beauty and uniqueness of leaves is by making prints in clay. Air-drying clay is user-friendly, and kids love exploring outdoors to find the ideal leaf to imprint onto tile shapes. Larger leaves, like those from the Sycamore tree, can also be pressed into rolled-out clay, cut into desired shapes, and then placed atop cling film in a bowl to dry. This creates a beautiful leaf bowl that can later be painted.





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