



Ecclesiastical
Law
Society

NEWSLETTER
of
THE ECCLESIASTICAL LAW SOCIETY

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**With all good wishes for Holy Week
and a happy and blessed Easter**



*Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro) 'The Crucifixion' ca. 1420–23
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA)*

NEWS & NOTICES

BOOKING NOW OPEN FOR THE ELS CONFERENCE !

NICAEA RECEIVED: 1700 YEARS OF CANONS, COUNCILS AND ECUMENISM



The annual conference of the Ecclesiastical Law Society for 2025 will take place between 20th - 22nd June 2025 at Chichester Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace. This year marks the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, an event of the highest significance in world history.

The full programme and list of speakers can be viewed [here](#).

It is not only the Nicene creed which Christians today still receive from the Council of 325. For the field of ecclesiastical law, Nicaea left its mark indelibly on the centuries that followed, not least in canons – a species of legislation pioneered at Nicaea – in the involvement of the Emperor and the secular powers, and in conciliarity itself.

The Conference will explore the effects of Nicaea on ecclesiastical and canon law over the past 1700 years and up to the present day. There will be a particular focus on how reception of the first Ecumenical Council can shape the ecumenical endeavour today, and on the emerging field of juridical ecumenism. The Society is honoured to welcome speakers who contribute on the world stage, and the conference promises to be a landmark event for ecclesiastical lawyers, church historians, and ecumenists.



Please note that this is ***not*** a residential conference. Attendees will arrange their own accommodation and breakfast. [Registration is now open to all on our website: click here to register.](#)

Ticket prices are £395 for members, £475 for non-members. No payment is taken at the moment of registering. Within 10 days of registering, you will receive an invoice by email and, separately, a participant information form to indicate which seminars you will attend and other information. Clergy are encouraged to access CMD and other grants to facilitate attendance.

Delegates are encouraged to book as soon as possible, since numbers at the Conference are strictly limited and accommodation in the area is likely to be in high demand. There are many hotels, guesthouses, and Airbnb venues in the City and nearby.

The Keynote addresses will be delivered in the cathedral nave. Some of the other seminars will be held in venues with limited capacity, and places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. On registering, participants will be able to register for the seminars they wish to attend.

The conference fee will cover keynote addresses, choice of workshops and seminars, meals (including the Conference Dinner) and coffee and tea. There will be a cash bar at the Conference venue.



We will be proud to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to deliver the keynote address. Other distinguished speakers include Professor Myriam Wijlens, Professor of Canon Law at the University of Erfurt, and the Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Dean of Windsor.

The Society is very grateful to the Bishop of Chichester and the Cathedral Chapter for hosting the our Conference this year.

The Conference is being generously sponsored by:

- The Bishop of Chichester
- The Archbishop of York
- The Dean and Chapter of Chichester Cathedral
- Stone King
- Chichester Theological Trust
- Anglican and Eastern Churches Association

The Society is seeking further sponsors for this Conference. If you or your company are interested in sponsoring this historic event, please get in touch with the Rt Revd John Ford, Executive Secretary for a conversation via execsec@ecclawsoc.org.uk.

1700TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAIA: CELEBRATORY SERVICE TO BE HELD AT TEMPLE CHURCH

The Reverend Mark Hatcher, Reader of the Temple, writes:

In advance of the Ecclesiastical Law Society Conference on the Council of Nicaea: Chichester, 20-22 June, members of the Society may wish to learn about the ecumenical service that the Temple Church and The Friends of the Holy Land are organising on **20 May 2025** which is the 1,700th Anniversary of the Start of the Council of Nicaea, on 20 May 325.

As ELS members will know, the Council formulated, agreed and promulgated the Nicene Creed, which are still foundational to all Churches West and East. This Creed makes the great confession of Christ as of the same substance [homoousious] as the Father; whatever our divisions may be, this confession unites us all.

We are delighted to be working together again, on an ecumenical service to celebrate this anniversary. The service will bring us all together in unity to pray for peace in the midst of the current troubles in the Holy Land and in our shared concern for the founding communities of our faith. The Temple's Round Church was built in 1162 to recreate the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre / Anastasis in Jerusalem, commissioned by Constantine soon after the Council of 325.

**Temple Church, London and the
Roman Catholic Co-Cathedral of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, Jerusalem**

Simultaneous Service and Simulcast

Tuesday 20 May 2025, 12.00 noon (London time), and available on the Temple Church website

In London:

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster,
and Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Archbishop in Jerusalem for the Episcopal Church
in Jerusalem and the Middle East

In Jerusalem:

His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzabella, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem

Music in London by the Temple Singers, Temple Church
Contributions in English, Latin, Aramaic, Arabic and Old Church Slavonic

Among those joining us at the Temple Church will be HE Archbishop Miguel Buendia, Papal Nuncio to UK; The Rt Rev. Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark; Bishop James Curry, Auxiliary Bishop, Westminster Archdiocese; HE Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Armenian Orthodox Church; HE Bishop Silouan, Metropolitan of the British Isles and Ireland (Antiochian Orthodox Church); Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary, Churches Together in England; The Revd Helen Cameron President of the Methodist Conference 2024/2025 and President of Churches Together in England; and The Revd Deacon Dr George Tsourous, Archdeacon of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain representing HE Archbishop Nikitas (Greek Orthodox Church).

To register interest in attending the service:

We will be delighted if ELS members can join us here in the Temple Church. We plan a service of one hour, followed by a reception in Inner Temple. To help us with numbers would those who wish to attend kindly let me know: reader@templechurch.com

We will provide an update nearer the time with the various practical and liturgical details.

NORTHERN PROVINCE LECTURES RELAUNCHED

It was a great joy for the ELS to relaunch the Northern Province lecture series on 20 March 2025! The first lecturer was His Honour the Right Worshipful Canon Peter Collier KC, speaking on "Safeguarding and the law – a lecture in which their historic and current relationship will be explored". Canon Collier is Vicar General of the Province of York, a Canon of York Minster, Senior Non-Exec Member of the York Chapter, and a Lay Reader. It was very good for Peter to speak to the Society on such an important topic. The ELS is grateful to Wrigleys Solicitors LLP for their sponsorship of the 2025 Northern Province lectures.



Among those at the lecture were ELS President, the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, and former chair Elizabeth Wilson (pictured). We welcomed members and guests old and new and enjoyed the opportunity for collegiality and friendship. Links to the text of the lecture and to a recording of it are available [here](#).

NEW MASTERS IN CHURCH LAW: DEGREE APPROVED AT ST PADARN'S INSTITUTE, CARDIFF



A new postgraduate canon law programme with an Anglican focus has been approved, and teaching will begin this September. St Padarn's Institute in Cardiff will offer the MA Church Law, validated by Durham University. (This follows an initial transitional period this academic year, in which MA Theology has been taught with a canon law focus.)

Teaching takes place at 3 residentials per year, and for the full MA the course lasts 3 years. The programme is suitable for clergy, lawyers, church administrators and others wishing to develop their ministry or professional practice in the field of canon law, or to deepen their understanding of the way in which church communities are regulated. Although the main focus of the teaching is Anglican canon law, this is delivered alongside a comparative element, and students wishing to write on the law of other churches in their assessed essays and dissertation are encouraged to do so.



The approval of this new course follows on from the resolution of support unanimously passed by the ELS at our AGM last year: "This Society would welcome the introduction of a postgraduate qualification in canon law as part of the Common Awards partnership between the Church of England, the Church in Wales, Theological Education Institutions, and Durham University."

To find out more information about the course visit www.stpadarns.ac.uk/machurchlaw
The closing date for applications this year is at the end of July.

ECCLESIASTICAL MOOT 2025 AT NLS



Jack Stuart, Barrister at Ropewalk Chambers, writes:

It is my great pleasure to report the success of this year's annual Ecclesiastical Moot, taking place again at Nottingham Law School.

The event was started in 2021 by myself, when I was working at the law school. From there, it has gone from strength to strength and since joining my Chambers I am consistently asked back to host the event, which is a real privilege. A keen following has developed amongst the local student body and this year was no exception. The courtroom boasted a packed viewing gallery this year, which itself bears testament to the popularity of this event, both for competitors and spectators.

Pictured (left to right): Beatrice Munro (runner-up); Lydia Crawford (winner); Jack Stuart (judge); Matthew wShouler; Tina Eftekhari rKhansari

Each year the competitors are faced with a fictitious legal problem, based in ecclesiastical law. This year saw a dispute between Crown and Cathedral Chapter on the appointment of a new dean, with Chapter disapproving of the monarch's controversial choice. The Cathedral's constitution, historical practices and the effect of Section 5(9) of the Cathedrals Measure 2021 all featured heavily in the arguments.

The standard of advocacy and legal research was exceptional. The only disadvantage was that the advocates made it incredibly difficult to choose a winner from such a strong collective! A winner, nonetheless, emerged. The top spot, and accompanying cash prize, was deservedly secured by Lydia Crawford. Coming in as runner-up was Beatrice Munro, whose efforts won her a free year's membership of the Society.

Congratulations go to our winner and runner-up, and to their competitors, all of whom put up a hefty fight and made for a thrilling watch.

Our sincerest thanks to go the Society, and in particular to Russell Dewhurst and Olamide Olajide, for kindly sponsoring the event, providing the prizes, and for keenly supporting the event throughout. I am similarly most grateful to Nottingham Law School for asking me back to host this wonderful event. Next year holds great potential for growth and expansion of this event. All are encouraged to watch this space!

GEOFFREY TATTERSALL RIP

The Society was sad to receive news of the death on 5th January 2025 of Geoffrey Tattersall KC at the age of 77. Geoffrey was a distinguished Chancellor of Manchester, and Carlisle, and Vicar-General of Sodor and Man. He was a chair of clergy discipline tribunals and a member of the Society's Working Party on Clergy Discipline, much of whose work was incorporated in the Clergy Conduct Measure, which is due to receive final approval in February, having been through a Revision Committee chaired by him. Geoffrey was a valued and loved member of Synod, chairing many difficult long debates. We send our love and prayers to Hazel and his family. May he rest in peace.



RESPONSE TO THE LAW COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION ON BURIAL AND CREMATION

Lee Coley, our Chair, writes:

Ecclesiastical Law Society is pleased to announce the publication of a response to the Law Commission's October 2024 consultation on Burial and Cremation which has been submitted by a working party of the Ecclesiastical Law Society. I am most grateful to the members of our Society who have made up the working party: they are all specialist practitioners in this field of ecclesiastical law, and their expertise is readily apparent in the very high quality of this consultation response.

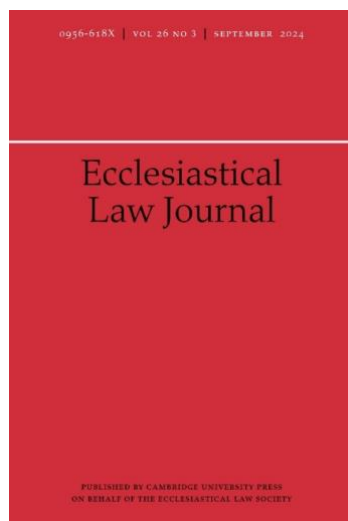
As always with ELS working parties, the views expressed are those of the working party, and not necessarily those of the Society's Trustees or members, individually or collectively. Nonetheless, I hope very much that the Response will be well-received by the Law Commission, and that, by being made available here, it may contribute to the wider debate.



Law
Commission
Reforming the law

Click [here](#) to download the Working Party's response.

LATEST ELJ PUBLISHED: A ROUND-UP



The most recent edition of the Ecclesiastical Law Journal has recently been hitting our doormats, just in time for the long Easter weekend. It includes stimulating articles on the law relating to trees in churchyards by Philip Petchey, the canon law of the Old Catholic Churches (Utrecht Union) by Jan Hallebeek, and Colin Podmore considers why the *provisio* to Canon 113 of 1603 remains in force.

Further comment comes from Bishop Martin Warner who sets out a theological context to the law of liturgy, Neil Patterson considers the origins of liturgical lawlessness, Moira Astin considers liturgy, law and the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and Robert Atwell considers the future of liturgy and law. Those who attended our day conference last year will find some of this content familiar.

Regular pieces in terms of parliamentary and conference reports supplement the above, along with this season's book reviews and case notes.

The latest edition has been published and sent to members of the Society who receive it without additional charge. Members have access to the entire run of Journal back issues online.

To use this facility, go to www.ecclawsoc.org.uk and click Login. If you aren't sure of your password, click "Forgot Password" enter your email address. When you have logged in, click on the "Members" menu title, then "Journal Archive" and follow the link.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 14 May 2025

This year's AGM will be held virtually on 14 May 2025 at 5pm. The formal notice of the AGM with supporting papers will be distributed as required by the Constitution on or about 24th April 2024. A zoom link will be provided for those wishing to attend.

The Agenda will require the election of a Treasurer of the Society. After several years as a Trustee, the last four as Treasurer, The Rev'd Paul Benfield has decided to stand down. The Trustees have had notice of this for a while and, from amongst their number, The Ven Moira Astin has emerged as a candidate to succeed Paul as Treasurer. She will be nominated for election alongside any other nominations from members.

The Agenda will also include an item to elect three Charity Trustees. Please do attend, and take part, if you are able.

CHRISTMAS PUZZLE ANSWERED

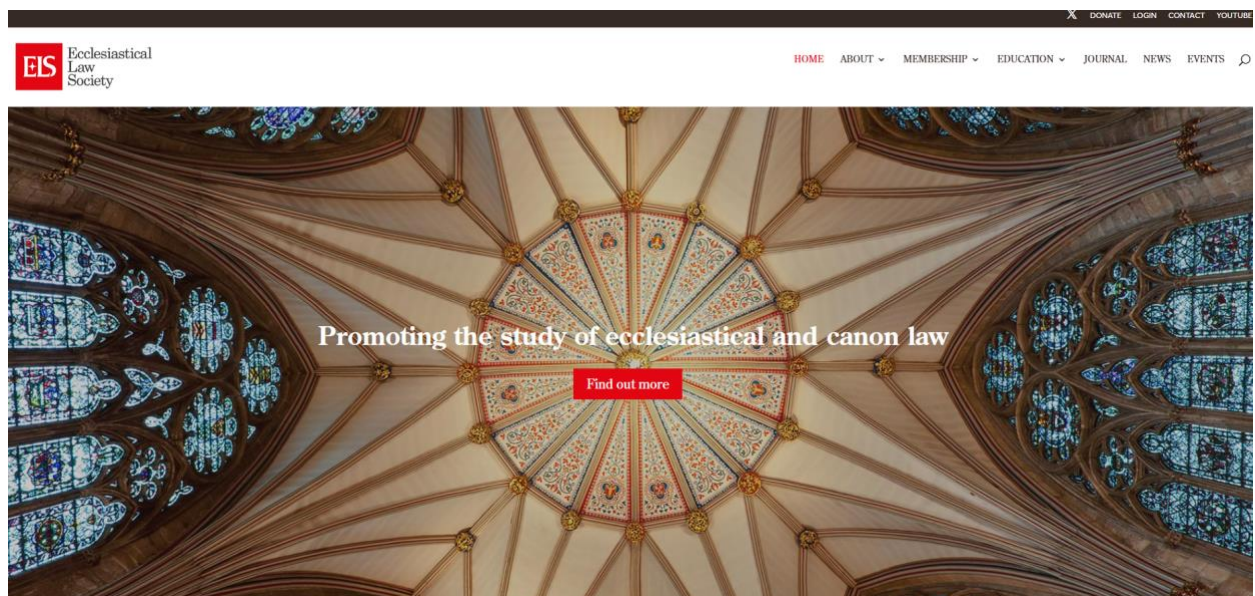
We apologise that there was a misprint in the Christmas puzzle in last year's final newsletter! The last letter at the bottom of the tree trunk should have been 'm' instead of 'e'.

Taking the middle letter from all the answers (lAw / sEe / viCar / caNOn / facUlTy / staTute / episCopal / ecumENism) and adding 'h' and 'm' gives 'heaecnutcm' which is an anagram of catechumen.

Bonus points for anyone who managed to get the solution despite the misprint!

ELS WEBSITE

A reminder to readers that the ELS website, www.ecclawsoc.org.uk has a wealth of resources dedicated to advancing our charitable objects, which are to promote education in ecclesiastical law. In particular do have a look at our [Education](#) page, and be sure to check back regularly for upcoming talks and events!



LEGISLATION UPDATE

Thanks as ever go to Frank Cranmer for these useful contributions.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Act 2025](#) (otherwise known as ‘Martyn’s Law’) was given Royal Assent on 3 April. It is intended to improve protective security and organisational preparedness across the UK, by requiring organisations operating premises and events to prepare for potential attacks and to be ready to keep people safe in the event of an attack. The law applies to places of worship which will fall under the ‘standard tier’ requirements regardless of capacity. A free webinar hosted by Stone King LLP and Alan Baldwin (former counter terrorism police officer) outlining the new law and practical tips for preparing can be watched [here](#) (the password is: Stoneking2025).

Church of Scotland (Lord High Commissioner) Act 2025

The [Church of Scotland \(Lord High Commissioner\) Act 2025](#) was given Royal Assent on 3 April. Its purpose is to permit Lady Elish Angiolini LT, a Roman Catholic who is currently Lord Clerk Register and who was previously Lord Advocate, to assume the office of His Majesty’s Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May. The Act removes the bar in the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829 on Roman Catholics holding the office.

Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 (Extension) Act 2025

The [Lords Spiritual \(Women\) Act 2015 \(Extension\) Act 2025](#) was given Royal Assent on 16 January. It extends the provisions of the 2015 Act until 18 May 2030.

Church Measures

The [Chancel Repair \(Church Commissioners’ Liability\) Measure 2025](#) and the [Church Funds Investment Measure 2025](#) were given Royal Assent on 3 April.

Crime and Policing Bill

In January, the Home Secretary made a [statement](#) in the Commons in which she confirmed that the Government would introduce mandatory reporting: “we will put measures in the Crime and Policing Bill—to be put before Parliament this spring—to make it an offence, with professional and criminal sanctions, to fail to report or to cover up child sexual abuse”. The amendments to the Bill were subsequently published: see the [Explanatory Notes](#) to the Bill [67 & 68].

In March, she announced two further amendments to the Bill:

- to give the police an explicit new power to prevent intimidating protests outside places of worship, so that where a protest has an intimidating effect that prevents people from accessing or attending their place of worship, “the full range of public order conditions will be available for the police to use”; and
- to extend the maximum penalty of three months’ imprisonment and a £1,000 fine for climbing a “significant memorial” to include the Holocaust Memorial in Westminster.

Defining “Islamophobia”

At the end of February, the Government announced that it had established [a new working group](#) to produce a “working definition” of Anti-Muslim Hatred and Islamophobia. It will advise government on how best to understand, quantify and define prejudice, discrimination, and hate crime targeted against Muslims. It is to be chaired by Dominic Grieve KC, a former Conservative Attorney General. The Working Group subsequently published its [Terms of Reference](#): they include a declaration that “Any proposed definition must be compatible with the unchanging right of British citizens to exercise freedom of speech and expression – which includes the right to criticise, express dislike of, or insult religions and/or the beliefs and practices of adherents.”

The UK and the ECHR

The [Annual Report of the European Court of Human Rights for 2024](#) was published at the end of January. In 2024, there were three cases against the UK in total, of which one was struck out, one was settled, and in the third the UK was found to be in breach of Article 10 (freedom of expression). For comparison, Turkey was found guilty of violations in 67 cases.

In which connexion, on 20 March there was a debate in the House of Lords on a motion to take note of the 75th anniversary of the ECHR. The takeaway was a declaration by Baroness Chapman of Darlington, Minister of State for International Development, that “this Government are firmly committed to the European Convention on Human Rights, and we will never leave it”.

DATES FOR THE DIARY 2025

Our full programme for the rest of 2025 will include lectures, conferences, and training events both in person and online.

Details and dates will be published on our website as soon as details become available. Events open for booking so far include our hit ELS Bitesize series!

ELS Bitesize is a new series of introductory sessions to ecclesiastical law in an accessible and digestible format.

These consist of monthly 30-minute discussions between The Revd Russell Dewhurst and the Ven Moira Astin about the basics of ecclesiastical law, in a monthly series of accessible ‘bitesize’ discussions.

The introductory discussion between the hosts is recorded and posted to our Youtube channel. In the second half, the discussion is opened up to all attending the seminar, and this part is not recorded. The Zoom discussions are open to members and non-members and is free of charge.

Future sessions include:

Bitesize Ecclesiastical Law #10

“What is a Diocesan Registrar?”

20 May 2025 5.30 – 6pm

We talk with Jon Baldwin, Registrar of Southwark, about the office of Registrar in the Church of England.

Book [here](#) .

Bitesize Ecclesiastical Law #11

“What is a Diocesan Chancellor?”

24 June 2025 5.30 – 6pm

We talk with Worshipful Ruth Arlow, Chancellor of Salisbury and Deputy Chancellor for the Diocese of London, about the office of Chancellor in the Church of England.

Book [here](#).

Bitesize Ecclesiastical Law #12

“What is a Diocesan Bishop?”

15 July 2025 5.30 – 6pm

We talk with the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, President of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, about the office of Diocesan Bishop in the Church of England.

Book [here](#).

We would welcome comments and suggestions for future discussions!

Our series of **LONDON LECTURES is currently being finalised and details will be announced on our website when they become available.**

ELS Lectures are free of charge and are open to members and non-members save where otherwise stated. Where held in person, spaces are limited and prior booking (through the website) is essential. Booking closes 48 hours before the event (or when the event is full), but please contact the Executive Secretary execsec@ecclawsoc.org.uk for late availability requests. If you find you can no longer attend, please cancel your booking to make the space available for someone else.

And, in case you missed it...

The *Ecclesiastical Law Society* has its own dedicated YouTube channel – you can sign up to subscribe and view past recordings of lectures and interviews [here](#).

Recent additions include:

Bitesize Ecclesiastical Law:

#7 What is an incumbent?

- The Ven Moira Astin asks Fr Christopher Smith SSC, "What is an Incumbent?" In the Church of England, incumbent is a term that encompasses vicars and rectors.

#8 What is an Archdeacon?

- The Revd Russell Dewhurst asks the Ven Moira Astin "What is an archdeacon?" In the Church of England, archdeacons have an important role in each diocese, as we discover in the video.

#9 What is an APCM?

- The Revd Russell Dewhurst asks Jon Baldwin, Registrar of Southwark Diocese, "What is an APCM?" In the Church of England, each parish must hold an Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), as we discover in the video.



*Detail from Jacopo di Cione and workshop, 'The Resurrection' (upper tier panel) 1370 – 1
(The National Gallery, London, UK)*
