



Eco
Congregation
Ireland



Dear Friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter! As the season changes, read on for stories of creation care! The ECI Committee hopes that everyone had a blessed and inspiring Season of Creation. If you have any information or stories you would like to share in our future newsletters, we would love to hear from YOU! Please send them to info@ecocongregationireland.com.

ECI Climate Justice Candles on the Move!

Did you know that ECI has four Climate Justice Candles? One for each historic province of Ireland – Ulster, Munster, Connacht and Leinster! This means that we can get a candle to your church or parish when you need it. If your church or faith community would like to host the candle all you have to do is drop a line to info@ecocongregationireland.com and we will arrange to get the candle safely to you. We are looking forward to seeing the candle in different locations around the country and hearing about how you use it to raise awareness of climate justice!

ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits ...

Ireland Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)



Castlebar Parish

Mary Connell sent us this report: I Collected the Climate Justice Candle from Galway and we are delighted to have it here in Castlebar Parish. The Candle has been launched and blessed. We are asking parishioners to grow flowers for the various liturgical seasons and also plan on growing flowers and plants ourselves here in the parish. I am sure we will come up with many other initiatives when we resume our parish meetings in October.





Holy Family Parish, Kill of the Grange, Dun Laoghaire

Nora Mary sent us this report: We here in Holy Family Church, Kill of the Grange were so happy to have the Climate Justice Candle for the Season of Creation. We organized a Holy Hour for every Friday throughout the Season. The Holy Hour was interspersed with a liturgy focusing on the environment and the effects of Global warming. The terrible floods in Pakistan, the result of climate change, just happened as the Season of Creation started so it was easy to focus the minds on the danger to our planet and in particular to the poor. Another activity that is ongoing is collecting stamps. The proceeds go towards an environmental charity for peatland preservation.

ECI Awareness and Endeavour Certificates 2022: **The Grouped Parishes of Sandford and St Philip's, Milltown** have received their ECI Awareness Certificates and **Church of St Therese, Mount Merrion, Dublin, Castlebar Parish, Enniscorthy and Monart Union and Church of the Immaculate Conception, Roundfort / Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Robeen / St. Joseph's Church, Carras, Co Mayo** have received their Endeavour Certificates! Well done everyone!

Latest Season of Creation News from ...



St Anne's, Shankill

Kathy Davey sent us this latest news: For the Season of Creation we took part in several meetings with neighbouring parishes, Mount Merrion and Milltown and a larger meeting of Laudato Si and ECI parishes in Glasnevin. Here there was fruitful networking with sister groups. In our own parish, we shared a "Woodland Walk" through the village and its surrounds with our very active Tidy Towns group, further cementing links with them.

In the church itself, we continued to have prayers and hymns focussing on the beauty and vulnerability of Creation during the Mass, culminating for the Feast of St Francis with the praying of his Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister

Moon before the Offertory. See photo above left of the Altar on the Feast Day with the Symbols of WATER, FIRE, EARTH and AIR in front of the globe. These symbols had also been presented singly on Sundays during the Season of Creation with special prayers to remember them as gifts of God reminding us of our need to protect and respect them.



A further action, prompted by a member of Mount Merrion parish, was to distribute sprigs of rosemary after Masses with a little plea to remind us to "tread gently on our Common Home". Quite a number of people were surprised and pleased by the gesture! We will start a series of evenings being guided through Pope Francis' book "Dare to Dream" in the resource centre. The weeks will alternate between the book and our reflections on the previous week's material.

Blessington and Lacken

Carmel O'Neill sent us this latest news: Throughout the month of September, a sacred space was set up in front of the altar displaying aspects of creation. As the weeks went by seasonal berries and fruits were added along with a prayer for the Earth and a photo of Pope Francis. In mid Sept the children who are preparing for First Holy Communion took part in a tree planting ceremony in the carpark area of Blessington church. To mark the feast of St Francis of Assisi a ceremony was



held in the carpark of Blessington church to bless the pets of our parishioners. Fr Noel Campbell, who is passionate about animals performed the ceremony.

On October 3rd, a celebration to mark the feast of St Francis of Assisi was held in Blessington church. Members of the Pastoral councils took part in the service, recalling the example of St Francis, reading his canticle of the Sun and meditating on the gift of our natural resources. We also reflected on our lifestyle and how we can return to the earth the sustenance we receive from it.



Recently a new men's shed group was established in Vallemount parish. Deacon Gerry is liaising with the group who are meeting twice weekly in the stables at the back of the Parochial House Vallemount.

Fr Richard has generously made the ground beside the stables available for the purpose of setting up a market garden. Members of Lacken Tidy Village group and Eco-Congregation attended a talk in Luggala organised by West Wicklow Environment Network. [You can read Carmel's report in full and view their more photos on the ECI website here.](#)



Diocese of Limerick

Rose O'Connor sent us a report on the following activities: a meeting of the Inter-diocesan Laudato Si' Group, incorporating the Dioceses of Cashel & Emlly, Kerry, Killaloe, Limerick and Ossory as well as the FCJ Spirituality Centre; the Salesian Sisters Cosmology and the Limerick Diocese pastoral outreach team Outdoor Prayer Workshop; the Biodiversity Conference in Limerick on the 21st and 22nd of September; a prayer moment on 'Listen to the Voice of Creation' on Facebook Live on Monday 26th September, hosted by Bishop Brendan Leahy, involving a mixture of scripture, poetry, music, song, and images; a Reflective workshop with Dr Niamh Brennan on 'Listen to the Voice of Creation'; Con Buckley, a

member of the Limerick Laudato Si' team, organised a Blessing of Pets on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi with the support of Fr Pat Seaver, and Linda, Alice, Laura, and volunteers from St Munchin's Community Centre; the culmination of this year's Season of Creation was marked by a liturgy of "Celebration, Thanksgiving and Prayer for Planet Earth" in St. Nessian's Church, Raheen on Oct.4th, the feast of St Francis of Assisi. [You can read Rose's report in full on the ECI website here.](#)

Prosperous Eco Parish, Kildare

Bríd óg Norrby sent us this news: To launch the Season of Creation, we helped to set up a Climate Justice table on the altar with Laudato Si Animator member Anna Mc Hugh. The table with a globe, candle and symbols of Creation highlighted the suffering of people and animals around the world as a result of climate change. We invited children to draw their interpretation of the "Burning Bush" and asking them to name three things they could do for the environment. We also invited people to do something in their own homes to acknowledge this special season and to make a special commitment to carry out at least action by signing cards on the table.



We have organised a talk after Mass in October by Nuala Madigan, CEO of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. Nuala will talk about our boglands and the role they can play in the biodiversity and Climate change crisis. This is very relevant to our Parish as we have a number of bogs surrounding the village including a Special Area of Conservation. We are going to have a community planting day to plant pollinator friendly

Spring bulbs in our Parish Eco garden beside the Church. Our group has collected yellow rattle seeds locally and plan to sow them into the eco garden meadow. We also hope to donate bulbs to the children of our National School to plant. We are also planning a handout to new residents of the newly build housing estates with advice for nature friendly planting and another one for developers to create better native landscaping plans.



Wilton Justice Group

Kathleen O'Connor sent us this latest update: Prayer Service to mark the International day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the beginning of the Season of Creation. The neighbouring parishes were invited and each local parish was represented. We also had a representative from the Church of Ireland and the Quaker community. The ecumenical dimension was much appreciated. We had singing, readings from Laudato Si, reflections and prayers. The theme was listening to the Voice of Creation. We were suitably placed to do that as we had our prayer

service in Fr. Tom's garden, part of the grounds belonging to the SMA Fathers. The symbol of the Burning Bush reminded us of the sacredness of our earth. After the Service we gathered for a cup of tea in the parish centre.

Parish of Our Lady and St John, Carrigaline

Janet Twomey sent us this latest news: We started the month of September by preparing a Season of Creation display in the church. We created a burning bush to represent this year's theme of Listen to the Voice of Creation. We thought it was important to include the word 'hope' in the display. So much of what people are listening to and hearing about the environment these days is so very worrying and almost overwhelming. There is always something that can be done, even if it is a small action! We included some leaflets next to the display and also placed bundles at the back of the church so that parishioners had something to take home after Mass or a visit to the church and read over a cup of tea. We also highlighted some resources and events relating to creation on the parish Facebook page.



Orlagh-in-the-City

Lorcan McDermott sent us this latest news: We are planning to show and discuss the film The Letter which tells the story of Laudato Si' and the impact of the climate crisis. It features Pope Francis, climate activists, refugees and scientists. Available on YouTube, it should provide very useful background to the UN Climate Change Conference later this year. Book club members have just finished reading and discussing Every Bush Aflame: Science God and the Natural World. The author John Feehan, a scientist with wide ranging interests, examines the progress in scientific understanding of the natural world and how this facilitates the development of a new spiritual understanding of that world. At one of our Masses for the Season of Creation we were amused by a quirky but insightful poem by Rob Bell entitled Walk Don't Run. The following is an extract:

Efficiency is not God's highest goal for your life,
neither is busyness,
or how many things you can get done in one day,
or speed, or even success.
But walking, which leads to seeing,
now that's something.
That's the invitation for every one of us today,
and every day, in every conversation, interaction, event,
and moment: to walk, not run.
And in doing so,
to see a whole world right here within this one



Westport Eco-Congregation



Bríd McAuley sent us this latest news: Westport Eco-Congregation created a sacred space at the rear of St Marys Church Westport for the Season of Creation. We displayed the climate justice candle and some plants, water feature, and sand, shells and seaweed. The Laudate Si prayer was on display as was the narrative from this year's theme of the Burning Bush. There was a positive reaction to our space and many visitors to the church stopped to read the posters on display – our posters encouraged the public to take on board many eco suggestions.

As part of our Season of Creation events We organised a walking meditation through Westport House woods – this event was a positive experience and very well supported. Our members have been supporting other eco groups in Westport by joining in town clean and beach clean ups throughout the summer. We continue to supply the local newspaper and parish newsletter with news, views and ideas in our eco congregation news piece weekly.

Holy trinity Church of Ireland had a combined Harvest and 150 years celebration during the Season of Creation. Bishop Michael Burrows spoke of what the world and the church looked at 150, 100 and 50 years ago. He then challenged us to consider how the next generation will consider us. He reported that he has had conversations with African Bishops who have outlined how their countries and their people are suffering due to Climate Change. Bishop Burrows said we need to respond with generosity and guts to Climate Change and the choices we make now will deeply affect our future and our children's future.



Carrigaline Union of Parishes Eco Group

John Andrew sent us this update: Green Matters: Young people in the parish grew some spectacular sun-flowers this year. What does the sunflower represent in Christianity? It symbolizes faith and adoration for all that is, the true faith and loyalty to something that is much bigger and brighter than themselves.



Feed birds with Sunflower seeds – rather than throw away sunflower seed heads hang them on a tree or simply take out the seeds and place on a bird feeder. Sunflower seeds have all the good fats birds need to regulate their body temperature as well as all the protein that needs to stay strong and healthy. These proteins are especially useful when birds need to keep their strength up, especially if they are flying, hunting, or nesting. Pollinator friendly garden – Autumn is a time for harvesting and we have been collecting seeds from the pollinator garden in the church grounds. They will be used when we enlarge the garden next spring.



We celebrated the Season of Creation during September which included a Blessing of the Animals service on September 27th and our Harvest Festival on October 2nd, when we were delighted to welcome Canon Andrew Orr as the guest speaker.



Church of St Thérèse, Mount Merrion

Clodagh O'Reilly sent us this latest news: In addition to the news of receiving our Eco-Congregation Ireland Endeavour Certificate, we had two Season of Creation events: 'Creation Hour' featuring readings by author Brian Grogan SJ, and 'Laudato Si – Inspiring the Parishes' with Jane Mellett and SAGE (Shankill Action for a Green Earth).



St Joseph the Artisan Parish, Bonnybrook

Margo Delaney sent us this latest news: In our parish we began our celebrations of the Season of Creation by focusing on the three areas of spirituality, collaboration and outreach. The liturgy of the weekend leading up to September 1st was drawn from the resources provided by Laudato Si' Movement. The opening prayer, penitential rite, prayers of the faithful, sermon, closing prayer and music were all adapted from this rich resource.

Our sacred space which will be in place in the church for the duration of the Season of Creation, seeks to remind us that we are all connected, each a unique gift in God's creation, each to be treasured and respected. Our Season of Creation 2022 flyer, distributed to all who attended our liturgies on the weekend leading up to 1st September, conveys the theme of this year's Season of Creation, and challenges us to take concrete steps to cherish this precious gift.

At the suggestion of members of our Parish Pastoral Council, and availing of their expertise in technology to reach out to youth in our local St Joseph's School and the wider Coolock area, we issued an invitation to "create a piece of art with your FAMILY (a painting, drawing, poem, etc.) that tells US why caring for our earth is important to you". Our parish Care for the Earth Ministry group began their celebration of the Season of Creation by visiting the Santry Community Garden. The transformation of what was formerly a derelict site into an extensive, many faceted, flourishing community garden shows what can be achieved when a community of volunteers work together, and link in with local authority's funding and resources. [View more of their photos on the ECI website here.](#)

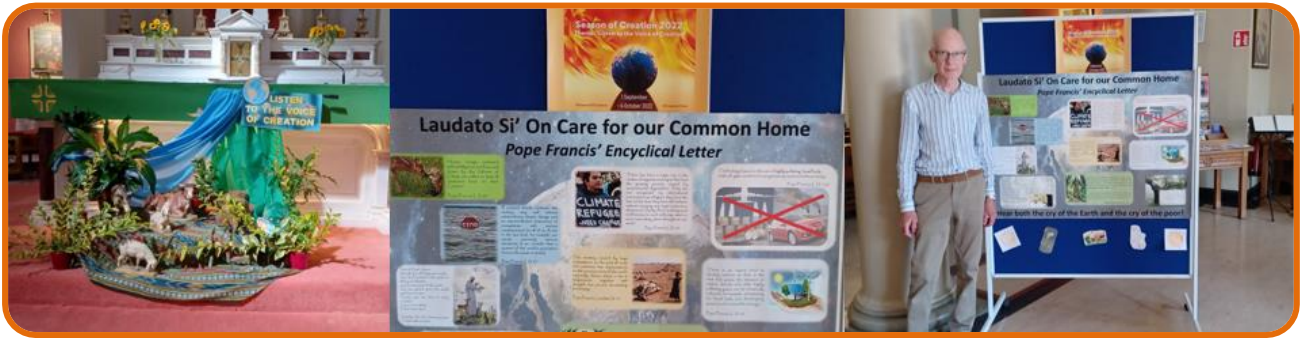
Cabra West Sacred Space

Philomena Neary sent us this news: We have been very busy here in the parish over the past few weeks. However, we did celebrate Creation time in the church and at our Masses. During the time it was included in the homilies and prayer of the faithful. We also have a sacred space in the church for these weeks and many people have complemented on it. It grew during the weeks.



Season of Creation at Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar

Miriam Mooney sent us these photos:



Autumn Update from Our Lady of Good Counsel, Johnstown, Killiney

Geraldine Murphy sent us this update: In the last few years, we have endeavoured to raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss in the parish. We often include creation in our Prayers of the Faithful and Fr. John Sinnott, PP includes creation regularly in his homilies and in our parish newsletter. We have 4 members in our Parish Eco Group. With the help of horticulturist and parishioner, Máire Uí Scolaí, we have very recently established a gardening group of 10 volunteers.



A short history: In February, 2020, thanks to Sr. Catherine Brennan, we registered with Eco-Congregation Ireland. Sr. Catherine kindly spoke at our weekend Masses encouraging us all to take small steps in caring for God's creation. On her advice, in October 2020, we invited Justin Kilcullen of SAGE (Shankill action for a Green Earth) to speak on the subject of biodiversity. We gave pollinator friendly bulbs, mainly grape hyacinth, to parishioners to encourage bees and insects in our gardens the following Spring. We met with Justin and Kathy and Patrick Davey of SAGE who spoke to us of their work to reduce the carbon footprint of their church and to increase biodiversity in their locality.

In January 2021, we hosted the Climate Action Candle in our parish. Sr. Margo Delaney of Bonnybrook Parish spoke at our Masses the same weekend. We were very encouraged once again by her talk and work in Bonnybrook Parish. In December, 2021, we placed a Climate Action Tree beside the altar and invited parishioners to write a promise and hang it on the tree. Examples: to pick up one piece of litter in our area every day; to walk more and use the car less.

On Valentine's Day 2022, we sent a Green Heart postcard to our local Dun Laoire/Rathdown Co. Councillors thanking them for their work encouraging pollination and biodiversity in our local parks and green areas. One weekend in March, 2022, we sold Fairtrade items, such as tea, coffee, chocolate, bananas, etc., after all Masses, having first purchased these items in local supermarkets. Between March and June 2022, we included quotations from Laudato Si in our parish newsletter. On 12th October, we plan to meet with the volunteers to brainstorm on how best to organise ourselves and the work in our church gardens.

Magheralin Graveyard Bioblitz

A recent event by Magheralin Parish, Diocese of Down and Dromore attracted many families to explore nature and learn about caring for creation. The bioblitz in Magheralin Old Graveyard on Saturday 24 September was a huge success with around 50 parents and children counting all the plants, trees, insects, birds and fungi they could find. The project was an initiative of Magheralin Parish Church assisted by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.

Children used the free gift of a bug box to explore the undergrowth for mini beasts finding millipedes, ants, wood louse, earwigs, snails and slugs. Red admiral and common tortoiseshell butterflies fluttered amongst the gravestones and hover flies buzzed near the bushes. Plenty of fungi were found in dark corners.

The yew trees in the graveyard offered perfect cover for wrens and robins while jackdaws called from the tall plane and witch elm trees. Many children filled their pockets with conkers from the horse chestnuts. Delighted parents commented that it was a wonderful idea to explore nature in a site they often pass by but never have visited.

Staff from the Council Biodiversity Education team – James and Sandra – provided expertise on minibeasts, and Maeve Foley, the council’s Natural Heritage Officer, identified trees and plants. Sorrel Lyall, the British Trust for Ornithology Engagement Officer shared her excellent knowledge of bird identification.

Stephen Trew, the project organiser from Magheralin Parish said, “It was wonderful to see families caring so much about nature. The Old Graveyard church goes back to 1307 and it reminds us that the world around us has been passed down by the generations before us. We need to look after and restore nature that is groaning because of our harmful actions. Thankfully, churches are starting to treasure biodiversity and act on climate change. Counting nature in this tranquil and beautiful site is a fine example of how churches can engage families to learn about local habitats and care for creation.” Read more <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2022/09/magheralin-graveyard-bioblitz>



Autumn Forest Bathing Walk at Castletown House

Your guide Rosalinde from Walk of Leaf will lead a forest bathing walk in the lovely grounds of Castletown House, Celbridge, on Sunday 16 October. [More info can be found and you can register here.](#) A forest bathing walk is a walk that enables you to slow down and (re)connect with nature. You will use all your senses to fully appreciate what is around you. The walk covers a short distance (about 2kms) and includes a few optional nature-based activities and refreshments. A basic level of fitness and comfortable shoes are recommended.



Corrymeela Community Climate Justice Group – Latest News

Representatives of the Climate Justice group led a talk and Q&A session on the Environment at a recent weekend gathering of the Dublin, Ballyhackamore and Ballycastle Cell groups at our Centre. We spoke about our ambition to raise the issue of climate change, climate justice and protection of the environment, within and outside the Corrymeela community, as well as highlighting practical projects at the Centre. The discussion was well attended and well received. Visitors took away some ideas for changing their individual behaviour, acknowledging the ripple effect on friends and family, as well as engaging with community and political leaders on relevant campaigns.

Padraig Swann, leader of the Dublin Group, has subsequently proposed a weekend visit to Dublin (January 13-15, 2023) with an exciting programme that includes: the showing of the documentary film of the Pope's Laudato Si, The Letter, at Belvedere College, a leader in high-tech environmental technology; a panel discussion that would include high profile members of the church, government and young environmental activists; and a visit to their well-known Urban Farm.

Several members of our group have also met to begin the organisation of a presentation and performance by about 30 pupils from Mullingar Church of Ireland parish. The young people's project, Lighten Our Darkness by Numbers is a "visionary initiative to repair God's world". Under the guidance of the Rev. Alastair Graham, it has been endorsed by Bishop Pat Storey and Sir David Attenborough. The performance involves musical entertainment as well as readings and some "challenges"! The group will stay at Corrymeela over the weekend but the performance, followed by a Q&A session, will take place on the afternoon of 15th April 2023 in the main hall at the Sheskburn Recreation Centre in Ballycastle. We are inviting key community leaders/groups, clergy, business people and young people from the schools and youth leaders to this important local event.

Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire – Climate and Conflict

Christian Aid is running an event on Zoom on Monday 17th October at 7:30pm looking at the links between the incidence of violent conflict and the climate crisis globally. Participants will hear from Joseph Ansumana from the Network Movement for Justice and Development and Dr Paul Quinn Christian Aid Ireland's Head of 'From Violence to Peace'. The

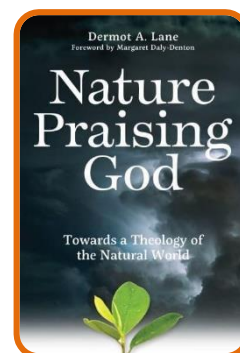
discussion will be chaired by Dr. Amanda Slevin Co-Director of QUB's Centre for Sustainability, Equality and Climate Action. The event is being held online as part of the Belfast One World Festival. You can find out more and register at: [out of the frying pan into the fire | One World Festival \(oneworldfestivalni.com\)](https://www.oneworldfestivalni.com) You can find out more via the event on Facebook: [Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/outofthefryingpan)



Publications and Resources

Invitation to Book Launch – 'Nature Praising God: Towards a Theology of the Natural World' by Dermot A. Lane

Balally Parish Pastoral Council invites you to the launch of Nature Praising God: Towards a Theology of the Natural World by Dermot A. Lane, 7:00pm, Thursday 13 October 2022, Church of the Ascension of the Lord, Balally, Cedar Road, D16 E032. Special Guest: Minister Catherine Martin TD, Deputy Leader, The Green Party. Followed by light refreshments in the Parish Centre. Parking available in the grounds Queen of Angels NS beside the church. For those unable to attend, the event will be streamed live on <https://www.balallyparish.ie/live/>



The Letter Movie

On 4 October 2022, YouTube Originals will release the feature documentary The Letter, produced by Oscar-winning Off the Fence Productions in collaboration with Laudato Si' Movement and the Vatican. The film will bring to life the transformative vision of Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical letter on climate change and ecology, to inspire lasting action for our common home. The Letter features frontline environmental champions from around the world, including scientists Greg Asner and Robin Martin. Each person highlighted



in the film represents a voice that is not being heard—the voice of wildlife, the voice of the Indigenous, the voice of the young, and the voice of the poor. The film follows these people coming together in dialogue with each other and with Pope Francis as they find unity in their distinct worldviews and strength in the common values we all share.

Immediately after the global premiere of October 4 in Vatican City, the film will be released globally on YouTube. A massive global audience is expected. An impact campaign will accompany the release of the *Laudato Si'* film to share the messages of The Letter, broaden the universe of actors on climate and nature, shift narratives around the protection of our planet and encourage better policies. As part of the impact campaign the film will be screened at high-level events, including COP27 and COP15, and in communities across the world. To deliver the impact campaign, *Laudato Si'* Movement is working with a diverse coalition of hundreds of partners, who will activate their grassroots networks to share The Letter with new audiences through screenings and other activities. A film website launching before the premiere will become the hub for audiences wanting to take action after watching the film. The website will be available in 6 languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Polish) and host nearly 30 resources with information to support screening hosts to run impact-driven events. The site will also feature a schedule of live training sessions related to event planning and advocacy, and an interactive screenings map to showcase events happening across the world.

In addition, a number of short videos on topics related to the film and high quality still images will be available to share through social media. This package of materials will be available to share from October 4th. *Laudato Si'* Movement can provide the assets and any other material needed such as social copy.

We would be incredibly grateful for any screening event organised locally re: The Letter – particularly a diocesan screening event followed by smaller parish / community screenings. For information or support and for those interested in hosting local screening in their parish, schools, community centres etc, you can contact jane.mellett@trocaire.org. [View the trailer here.](#)

The Communion Forest

The Communion Forest was first conceived in late 2019 when the Lambeth Conference Design Group asked for ideas for a lasting legacy of the forthcoming Conference. An Anglican Communion eco group including 'Eco-Bishops', the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN), Christian Aid, the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN) and the Anglican Alliance suggested a "Lambeth Forest". This formed the basis for the Communion Forest initiative we have today. The Communion Forest builds on a history of creation care, tree growing in particular, within Anglican Communion around the world.



The Communion Forest will significantly increase Anglican tree growing and landscape protection around the world and deepen care for creation within the life of the Church. The Communion Forest is a global act of hope which involves a wide range of creation care activities. Together, these projects will form a virtual, global "forest". Over time, these will be made visible through the sharing of initiatives on this website. The forestation activities will be determined locally (by provinces, dioceses and individual parishes) so that they are geographically, culturally and environmentally appropriate. The "forest" will therefore look very different in different parts of the Communion. Local expressions might be about trees but could equally be about grasslands, wetlands or coastal habitats. Churches might choose to take up a project that involves:

- Protection – advocating and taking action to stop deforestation or prevent the destruction of other habitats.

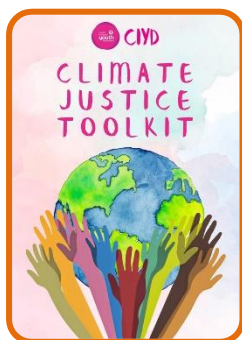
- Restoration – restoring a piece of waste land or other degraded environment.
- Creation – starting a forest initiative on church land or support a project in the wider community.
- Growing – protection and restoration should be considered ahead of establishing something new. Where something new is set up, the emphasis should be on growing, not just planting. It is about growing the right kind of tree in the right place.
- Multiplying – helping others get involved. Churches or diocese can be a ‘multiplier’ by setting up a tree or plant nursery to enable wider participation in afforestation. Read more and get involved here – <https://www.communionforest.org/>

tUrn Climate Action Project

Ciara Murphy and Kevin Hargaden from JCFJ will be doing an online webinar with Santa Clara University’s “tUrn Climate Action” project on Thursday 13th October promoting the content of our book “Parish as Oasis” which is out later this year. The link to register for this event is here (<https://www.scu.edu/turn/headliners/thursday/>)



Church of Ireland Youth Department Launches Climate Justice Toolkit



The Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) is delighted to launch its Climate Justice Toolkit – a resource pack which explores climate change from a global justice perspective. This has been adapted from materials produced in association with the Girls Friendly Society.

Steve Grasham, CIYD’s Youth Ministry Development Officer for the Southern Region, says: “Climate change presents the single biggest threat to sustainable development everywhere. Its widespread and unprecedented effects disproportionately impact the poorest and most vulnerable people in our world. The aim of this toolkit is to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes of young people as they explore the impact of climate change on our planet, the inequality of its consequences on people, and why this is unjust.”

This toolkit uses a ‘development education’ approach – an interactive and creative learning process that seeks to increase awareness and understanding of the world we live in. It challenges perceptions and stereotypes by encouraging optimism, participation and action for a just world. Through a process of exploration, reflection and action, the activities seek to support young people to make connections between their own lives and climate justice issues, and to empower them to make a positive difference in our world.



The resource is available in a PDF document format. Clergy, youth workers and youth leaders can contact their Diocesan Youth Officer or Steve Grasham at steve@ciyd.org for a copy. In due course, it will also be downloadable from the CIYD website: www.ciyd.org

The above photo shows left to right: Simon Henry, National Youth Officer; Emma Lynch, Church and Supporter Relations Co-ordinator, Tearfund Ireland; Steve Grasham, CIYD Youth Ministry Development Officer (Southern Region); Bishop Pat Storey, CIYD President; and Mrs Brigid Barrett, CIYD Chairperson.

Latest News from Climate Stewards



We may have had opportunities to go on holiday and travel this past summer. Even with facing our own cost of living crisis we can help others whose lives and livelihoods are already being affected by climate change and/or loss of biodiversity through offsetting the carbon emissions of our trips. Go to Climate Stewards' carbon calculator for individuals to do this: [Offset – Climate Stewards](#). Here's the calculated amounts required to offset travelling from Belfast to London - as a foot passenger by ferry and rail via Liverpool - £0.40 one way, by plane from Belfast City to Heathrow - £2.75 one way. This is with CO2 being costed at £20/tonne. The most recent, [September, newsletter from Climate Stewards](#) includes a moving account of how seafarers around the world are being affected by climate change. There is also exciting news of the latest business to be supported through Climate Stewards off-setting programme, Eco Brixs in Uganda, who recycle plastic, providing employment locally.

Haumea Ecovercity Earth Charter: Vision and Values Online, 24 Oct – 12 Dec 2022

Join Cathy Fitzgerald with philosopher Nikos Patedakis, with other learners from Ireland and across the world– to understand why integrated ecosocial values are crucial to guide us all in the SYSTEM CHANGE needed to transition to a just, equitable and sustainable world. Becoming fluent in more expansive values is essential for: cultural institutions' sustainability communications, programming or education outreach, to guide individuals' creative practice, teaching, curating, to communicate the vision and values for inclusive community ecosystem restoration endeavours, to broaden sustainability and social justice understanding for science, law, industry, politics, faith communities and business.



Building on the popular 'Values module' of the Haumea Ecoliteracy course, learn with Cathy Fitzgerald about why the holistic eco-social values of the Earth Charter, advanced by peoples' from diverse cultures from across Earth over two decades–have crucial relevance to us all. [Learn more and register here](#).

Eco Notes for Autumn

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for October 2022 – The Barn Owl: An Ethereal Beauty and Ace Predator of Rodents

The Barn Owl, is known as the 'farmer's friend'. It has traditionally nested in old buildings, often within the farmyard. However, it has struggled in recent decades and, due to declines in population and range, it is now a Red-listed Bird of Conservation Concern in Ireland.



REPORT FROM ENNISCORTHY LIBRARY TALK ABOUT BARN OWLS

On Saturday, 13th August last, **John Lusby**, from **Birdwatch Ireland**, gave some facts about Barn Owls, for example:

- **Diet:** mainly rats and mice. On any one night, 28 rodents can be brought to a nest.
- **Preferred nest sites:** Old barns, but also, ruins of abbeys and castles, especially buildings with large disused chimneys. Also old trees with hollows, or well positioned nest boxes.
- **How is Barn Owl flight almost silent?** All flight feathers are edged with fine soft barbules. However, this makes plumage not very watertight, so they can't hunt in heavy rain.
- **How Barn Owls hunt:** Their ears are off-set, allowing the pin pointing of prey, even on a dark night. Their long legs can snatch a rodent out of long grass.

- **Where do Barn Owls hunt?** Mainly along hedgerows, but the scarcity of hedges forces hunting along roadside edges, leading to Barn Owls being killed by traffic.

WHY HAVE BARN OWL NUMBERS DROPPED IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

The result of tests carried out on 69 Barn Owls killed on Irish roads showed that 88.4% of them had significant levels of rodenticide in their bodies. In addition to eating poisoned prey, Barn Owls have lost traditional nest sites and habitats. Roadside hedges which are less than 4 metres high make Barn Owl road deaths more likely. Owls flying over low roadside hedges are vulnerable to being struck by vehicles.

TIME TO TAKE HEART FROM THE 'A.C.R.E.S.' SCHEME

Barn Owls, as well as farmers, will benefit from **ACRES** (the **Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme**) which is part of Ireland's draft CAP Strategic Plan. This new €1.5 billion flagship agri-environment scheme is a farmer-friendly scheme to help address biodiversity decline while delivering income support for up to 50,000 farm families in Ireland. Aspects of ACRES which benefit Barn Owls include:

- Subsidies for farmers who install Barn Owl nest boxes
- Alternatives to the use of rodenticides
- Encouraging more appropriate hedgerow management

WHAT ONE COUNTY CAN DO – THE WEXFORD BARN OWL PROJECT

The **Wexford Barn Owl Project** grew out of a conversation in 2020 between **Will Warham**, farmer and member of the **Wexford Union of Parishes**, and **Mark Stanley**. They teamed up with friends and **Birdwatch Ireland** and the national Barn Owl monitoring programme. As a result the project now has a very impressive nest box scheme, bringing together volunteers, landowners and local sponsors. By 2021, over 50 nestboxes had been installed, with thanks to **Wexford Men's Shed**, **Chadwicks**, **Wexford County Council** and others. Now there are over 180 occupied nest sites in County Wexford. The project has a dedicated education programme for schools and a Facebook page **@wexfordbarnowl**.



WHAT ONE KILKENNY FARMER CAN DO – NICKY MURPHY

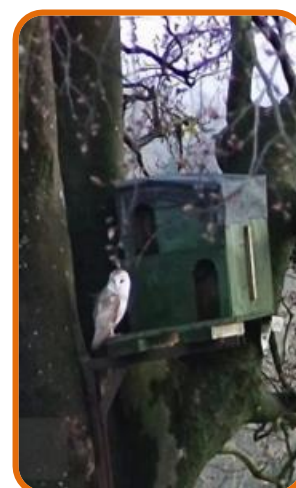
Nicky Murphy is a lifelong farmer from **Johnswell County Kilkenny** and features on the website of **Farming for Nature**, a not-for-profit initiative which aims to support high nature value farming in Ireland. Nicky manages a conventional dairy farm milking 70 cows. He has about 30 acres of mixed forestry. Three years ago, he discovered a pair of breeding Barn Owls in an old beech tree, and this awakened in him and his family a tremendous curiosity for biodiversity. As a result, he has eliminated the use of rat poison on the farm. He has made numerous nest boxes for the Barn Owls and other birds. He has planted trees and re-incorporated hedgerows.

Nicky fences off field corners to provide habitat for insects and birds. Nicky says he is proud of the simple changes he has made to protect wildlife, without compromising the productivity of his family farm.

RESOURCES

- <https://birdwatchireland.ie/barn-owl-action-acres/>
- www.facebook.com/pages/category/Farm/Jamestown-Nature-Reserve
- www.facebook.com/wexfordbarnowl/
- www.farmingfornature.ie
- www.barnowltrust.org.uk

YouTube – *Farming with Barn Owls, Nicky Murphy in Kilkenny*



Heavenly Father, may it be, that Barn Owls will become as common as they were in times past, so that the use of rat poison will no longer be required, as there'll be natural predators of rodents in the countryside once more. Amen.

Prayers/Reflections for the Earth

A Reflection by Fr Hugh O'Donnell – Let Us Stop to Admire an Apple

'Let it lie in the palm of your hand. Close your fingers slowly about it. Put it against your cheek and inhale its fragrance...for it holds the essence of the year and is in itself a thing of exquisite beauty.'

So writes Liberty Hyde Bailey in *The Holy Earth: Toward a New Environmental Ethic*. Even in 1915 he was worried that humans were losing touch with the earth and its produce, receiving the world, as it were, second-hand.

Today it all sounds a bit nostalgic like his longing to get back to 'a good munch of real apples under a tree or by the fireside'. But if we extend his appreciation of a 'good keeper' to an appreciation of the earth as our 'good keeper', we see how 'we cannot afford to lose this note from our lives'.



Often the best way to love the earth is to begin with an apple or a potato and the miracle of how this marvel was born in your garden soil. Let us have an apple day or an apple sabbath to express our gratitude, Bailey exhorts, for 'we are an apple-growing people'.

Furthermore, a deeper understanding of the earth becomes possible when we take our faith outdoors and greet the God of creation first hand! Then let the first reading be 'Let us Stop to Admire an Apple'. And the words crop and harvest, seed and season be a holy communion in our mouths.

Fr Hugh took the photo top right at the Apple Day in the Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co Leitrim.

Rev Allen Sleith – Reflections for PCI Climate Sunday



Rev Allen Sleith is minister of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian representative on the ECI committee. He has shared with us his reflections used on Climate Sunday 2022 throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. [You can download them here](#). Allen has written the following prayer:

God of creation, Lord of the cosmos, as the psalmist reminds us, your beloved creation renders praise. Since morning has broken, and darkness recedes, so our eyes are opened and our hearts awoken, to the wonder of your power, to the splendour of your love. Rivers and oceans clap their hands, hills and mountains sing for joy, valleys echo to the jubilation and celebration of a world that you cradle in the hollow of your hand. And joining this cosmic choir, we, your children, praise you gladly, voices raised in ancient psalm, in treasured hymn and in modern song.

Lord God, help us to better understand the intricate ways in which your good creation has been called into being, and continues to flourish, nourished by regular pattern and changing process. And as our knowledge grows, or older wisdom returns, may we come to realise our own part in our planet's peril. May we learn the pathos of lament, practice the necessity to confess and repent, for we have spent our time, our energy, our money, on dreams of plenty at earth's expense.

Heedless of the damage done to your precious creation with its delicate ecosystems: we ask for your forgiveness. Careless in our regard for the poorest of peoples, who are least to blame and yet most vulnerable, for the devastation we have done: we ask for your forgiveness. Mindless in our pursuit of self-concern for creature-comforts, impoverishing the dear gifts of our shared home: we ask for your forgiveness.

May the words of Jesus echo in our ears: to consider the world around us as freely given, and therefore not the object of greed, or avarice or exploitation. Let your rule reign in our lives, as Jesus lived it; and may your Spirit so empower us that the way of Christ may be the pattern of our lives and the path to a better future. Let us relearn that deep instinct to celebrate your goodness, to appreciate your providence, to practice some measure of Sabbath rest. May we slow down enough from the rush and fret of weekly worries to be in sync with a different rhythm, the rhythm of Jesus walking at a leisurely pace; the rhythm of unhurried conversation with the people we meet; the rhythm of taking the time to get to know ourselves better in the light of your love, and the gift of your grace. Amen.

With kindest regards,

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