

Dear Eco-Congregation friends

Welcome to the September 2017 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. We hope everyone is enjoying autumn with its beautiful colours!



Are you interested in learning more about Eco-Congregation Ireland?

Perhaps your congregation or parish has an interest in the environment and has thought about becoming an Eco-Congregation? The Eco-Congregation Committee has Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Quaker representatives on it and they are happy to come to speak to your group no matter how small! The contact details are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Do you know we are on Facebook? You can access the Eco-Congregation Ireland Facebook profile [here](#) or just go to facebook.com and search 'Eco-Congregation Ireland'. It's a great place to keep up to date with ECI's activities and access current news and information from other NGOs and faith organisations.

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Our Climate Justice Candle – the journey continues!

Since our last newsletter and after a short summer break, ECI's Climate Justice Candle has visited **St Francis Xavier, Gardiner Street, Dublin, the Church of The Three Patrons, Rathgar Parish and is weaving its way to Clonakilty Methodist and Carrigaline Union of Parishes.** It is still continuing on its ecumenical and climate justice journey! If you would like to be part of this initiative, simply drop us an email to info@ecocongregationireland.com.

Climate Justice Candle Inspiration!

The [Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle](#) can be used in many different ways in a church or parish.

St Francis Xavier, Gardiner Street, Dublin hosts ECI Climate Justice Candle!

Gardiner Street Parish is located in the heart of Dublin's inner city, and only this year, made the decision to embark on the Eco-Congregation journey. As part of the Season of Creation, the parish hosted the climate justice candle during its weekend mass celebrations (September 17-18th). Wrapped in white and surrounded by flowers and green foliage, the candle was lit and processed up the church aisle. The celebrant Fr. Gerry Clarke referred to the candle and the importance of climate justice and earth-care during the homily and the mass. [Read more here.](#)



ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits Co Longford!

The ECI Climate Justice Candle visited the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Parishes of Tashinny and Carrickredmond-Abbeyshrule, Co Longford on 17-24 June. Parishioners spread the word about the candle in the local area to the Parish Pastoral Council, Select Vestry, two primary schools, five Tidy Towns Committees, the Longford Leader, Shannonside-Northern Sound Radio, Local Representatives and TDs! The candle brought people together in an ecumenical prayer services. Rev Andrew Orr, Chair of the ECI committee was interviewed on local radio about the Climate Justice Candle initiative. The candle visited local schools and was the focal point of many faith gatherings. You can read the report of the visit in full by Carmel Nally on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#) and get ideas on how you can use the candle in your area!



Cloughjordan Ecovillage hosts the ECI Climate Justice Candle!

[Cloughjordan Ecovillage](#) held a Biodiversity Week Celebration in May. The week culminated with a Community Eco-Service held at St Kieran's Church Green on the 28th of May. This was an ecumenical gathering with local Churches, to close Biodiversity Week and celebrate the natural world around us. The service included the ECI Climate Justice Candle. The candle was hosted by St Michael's and St. John's Church. The ecumenical gathering helped parishioners recognise their responsibility to both care for and nurture the environment of which we are a part. Read a full report on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#).



Poem for Creation Time by Joe Furphy, ECI Presbyterian Representative

Joe Furphy, Presbyterian representative on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland committee](#) has composed a beautiful poem which can be used during Creation Time. You can read Joe's poem on the Eco-Congregation Ireland website [here](#). If you need to print this poem for use in worship, please visit this link - [My Walk - Creation Time Poem by Joe Furphy](#).



Eco-Congregation Ireland Makes Submission to the Citizens' Assembly



Eco-Congregation Ireland joined with many other organisations and to make a submission to the Citizens' Assembly process on *How Can the State Make Ireland a Leader in Tackling Climate Change?* GreenNews.ie reported that The Citizens' Assembly received over 1,200 submissions from the public, as well as environmental and civil society coalitions, farming groups and politicians ahead of its session on tackling climate change.

ECI offered the following recommendations to the Assembly on the State's role: targets and goals; community involvement; transport; electricity generation; farming and food production. You can read ECI's submission in full on the [ECI website](#). ECI is a member of Stop Climate Chaos and you can read the submission of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition and the Environmental Pillar to The Citizens' Assembly [here](#). All submissions received can be read in full [here](#). The Irish Times published an article on the Citizens' Assembly process entitled *Call for Constitutionally-Protected Right to a Healthy Environment* and you can read this article [here](#).

Update on Global Webinar held by Trócaire and the Global Catholic Climate Movement



The next global ecumenical fossil fuel divestment announcement will take place on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, 4th October. In preparation for this, Trócaire, together with the Global Catholic Climate Movement, held a global webinar on the topic of 'prophetic voices for climate justice'. The webinar was addressed by Professor Luigino Bruni, a leading scholar in the field of civil economy, with expertise on religion and economics. Lorna Gold of Trócaire also gave an overview of a new handbook for Catholic institutions to support divestment decisions which is currently under preparation. The webinar was well attended, with over 120 registrations, 30 of which were from Ireland. The webinar and accompanying resources can be downloaded the [GCCM divestment hub](#). You will also find the link to the 'fossil free pledge' on that page.

For those interested in exploring financial divestment and climate change further, please SAVE THE DATE for an address by Rev. Fletcher Harper, CEO of GreenFaith.org at the Loyola Institute, Trinity College, 16th November, 6.30pm. Please contact Lorna Gold to register your interest. Lorna.gold@trocaire.org. Details in next story.

SAVE THE DATE! Debate on Laudato Sí Two Years On: A Springboard for Ambitious Climate Action



[Trócaire](#), [JCFJ](#) and [Loyola Institute](#), [TDC](#) invite you to an evening debate on *Laudato Sí Two Years On: A Springboard for Ambitious Climate Action* featuring keynote address by Rev. Fletcher Harper, CEO of [Green Faith](#), followed by a panel debate. Date: 16/17 November 2017. 7pm registration. More speakers to be announced. Places limited, so please reserve a place by contacting Susan Cullen susan.cullen@trocaire.org.

Ecology in the Context of the Church's Mission Explored by the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland

Rev. Trevor Sargent, (deacon), Tullow Group of Parishes, Leighlin is a member of the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee. He has provided us with this report from a presentation on Wednesday, 16th September in Castleknock Parish Centre in west Dublin. The

"The five marks of mission"



Anglican Communion worldwide, between 1984 and 1990, agreed a five point summary of the Church's mission, known as 'The Five Marks of Mission'.

The Five Marks of Mission are: to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. The Fifth Mark is of interest to anyone involved with Eco-Congregation Ireland, but as ecology is the study of the interconnectedness of all life and all disciplines, each Mark of Mission has a bearing on the others. Trevor has provided us with a very interesting report which you can read on the [ECI website](#).

European Christian Environmental Network releases its first online newsletter!

The aims of the European Christian Environmental Network are to share information, experiences in environmental work among widely varied Christian traditions and to encourage a united witness in caring for God's creation. ECEN has a very useful [website](#) that contains environmental news and updates on their activities.



On 14th September 2017 ECEN released its first online newsletter! With this product ECEN wants to improve the flow of information about interesting environmental projects and growing number of activities and initiatives in churches across the continent on care for creation. The newsletter will be followed very soon by the new design of the ECEN website, which will be another step ahead following the same objective. The newsletter will be published every 3-4 months and will deliver good-quality content and Christian environmental event announcements straight to your email box. [Read and subscribe to it here](#).

Update from Loving Sister Earth!

Brian Grogan SJ has provided Eco-Congregation Ireland an update from [Loving Sister Earth](#). During Season of Creation they focussed on ecumenical Harvest Festivals, taking part in rituals such as thanksgiving for the gifts of the earth; prayers for the hungry of the world; action to show commitment to eliminate hunger and waste from the world, and to ensure fair distribution of harvests, amongst others. You can read the report in full on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#).



Eco-Congregation South Belfast Quaker Meeting Celebrates its 60th Anniversary!

On Saturday 16th September [South Belfast Friends' Meeting](#) held an Open Day to celebrate the meeting's 60th anniversary. Quakers (or the Religious Society of Friends) have held Meetings for Worship in Ireland since 1654. The first permanent Belfast Quaker Meeting was established in 1799 in North Belfast. In 1957 approval was given for a second Meeting for Friends who lived in Belfast, this time based in the south of the city. South Belfast Quakers have a very strong commitment to eco issues with lots of practical recycling going on in the meeting house - recycling printer cartridges, clothing, bric a brac, spectacles, through Quaker Care charity shop, composting, low watt LED lights, etc, as well as eco issues featuring quite regularly in Meetings for Worship. You can read a report of the 60th anniversary celebrations and see photos of the event on the [ECI website](#). South Belfast Quaker Meeting received their Eco-Congregation Ireland award in 2014. South Belfast Quaker Meeting's 60th celebrations were reported in the Newsletter here - [Biggest Quaker Congregation Marking 60 Years in Existence](#).



Castleblayney Laudato Si Study Group

Castleblayney Laudato Si Study Group meets every Monday at 7.30pm in Iontas Castleblayney. The members read one chapter of Laudato Si each week in preparation for their Monday sharing and discussions. The group hopes that their coming together will lead to an increased awareness among members of their responsibility for Our Common Home and that they will be encouraged to take some positive action to shape the future of our planet as a more healthy and equal home for all. All are welcome! If you would like to learn more contact Margaret on 086 364 2183.



Mercy International Association Resources for Season of Creation

Mercy International Association has prepared excellent resources for Season of Creation. Their [Facebook profile](#) has inspired readers with daily photographic meditations and prayers during the Season. Their website contains [wonderful resources](#) for all to use. There you can access their key documents on environmental issues, updates on all their eco justice work, resources for Season of Creation, prayers, campaigning resources and information on how to change our own personal behaviour and attitudes. MIA has also prepared a beautiful [Season of Creation Perennial Calendar](#) which is truly inspiring.



An Invitation to the Walled Community Garden at Ards Friary!

If you happen to be in County Donegal, on Saturday 7th of October between 2pm and 4.30pm, you are invited to visit and make yourself at home in the fantastic Walled Community Garden at Ards Friary, Creeslough. The allotment holders and children of Creeslough's National School will show off their allotments. Of course, there will be tea and scones! So, join with the friends at [Ards Friary](#) and celebrate God's beautiful creation! [Check them out on Facebook!](#)



Update from Northern Ireland Creation Care Network

Grace Davin, a member of the Northern Ireland Creation Care Network and a member of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, provided us with the report of the latest meeting of the group held on 23 September 2017 in Hillsborough Presbyterian Church. Sr Nellie McLaughlin, Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Donegal, gave an excellent presentation to the group on Pope Francis' encyclical: Laudato Si, focusing on what and how, we, as individuals and Churches, could, and should, do to be better stewards of Creation. You can read Grace's report in full on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#) where you can read a summary of Sr Nellie's presentation and see the group's suggested follow up actions along with some recommended reading.



Diocese of Kerry Celebrates World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation!

Parishioners from the Diocese of Kerry celebrated the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the first day of the Season of Creation on 1 September with a specially decorated space in Tralee Town Park, with colourful cloths from Peru, fruit grown locally: damsons, blackberries, apples, a jug of water from the nearby fountain. Their prayer service drew on Pope Francis' letter *Laudato Si* and readers included representatives from Tralee Tidy Towns, Kerry Astronomy Club and the Diocese of Kerry JPIC Committee. Those who attended were encouraged to take the [Laudato Si pledge](#). You can read the full report of their event written by Sylvia Thompson on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#). You can also access a copy of their [Prayer Service Leaflet](#) and view lots of their [wonderful photos!](#)



Harvest Thanksgiving and Sharing Celebration in Ballineaspig Parish, Cork

As a response to the beautiful landscape they live in and the bountiful harvest they get from the land, the Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish, Cork threw themselves into their Harvest Thanksgiving and Sharing Celebrations on 24 September. Parishioners were conscious of conditions in other places – floods in Donegal, wars and migration further afield, with hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and are aware they have so much to be grateful for at this Creation Time. After mass everyone was invited to bring and buy: to bring some of their harvest from garden or kitchen, or produce from the seeds which were distributed in June, or some local produce, and to buy some produce to take home. You can read this report in [full here](#) and see more photos of this wonderful celebration!



Eco-Congregation Ireland in Irish Times!

Gordon Linney, in his *Thinking Anew* column in the Irish Times on 9 September 2017 focussed on Creation Time. He says: 'At this time each year churches East and West celebrate and promote the care of the natural world. Time for Creation is observed annually between September 1st, the day the Orthodox liturgical year begins and. 4th October, when churches of the West commemorate St Francis of Assisi, a friend of nature. The event is promoted in Ireland by Eco-Congregation Ireland [ECI] a project of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Their vision is "to see churches celebrate the gift of God's Creation, recognise the inter-dependence of all Creation and care for it in their life and mission.'" You can read Gordon's text in full on the [ECI website](#) or on the [Irish Times website](#).



Parishioner from Carrigaline Union of Parishes is First in Ireland to send Dairy Herd to Retirement in Sanctuary in England!

In an act of kindness, Jill Smith, a parishioner in the Carrigaline Union of Parishes (an Eco-Congregation) decided that, after years of service and providing an income, her working dairy herd of 70 cows, who have all bonded over the years in their own unique way, deserved a life in retirement where they could continue to live as a herd together. Rector of Carrigaline, the Rev Elaine Murray, said prayers before they were loaded onto the roomy transporter to travel to their final home. The cows will live out their days in Hillside Sanctuary in



Norfolk. A lovely way to thank our fellow creatures for what they give us! You can read this story in full on the [Church of Ireland Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross website](#).

Salesian Cosmology Team hosts a day in Limerick on The New Cosmology: Birthing a New Theology with Diarmuid O'Murchu

The Salesian Cosmology Team hosted a day in MI College Limerick - *The New Cosmology: Birthing a New Theology* with Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC as presenter. The team were delighted to report a large attendance and striking energy around all the topics touched up by Diarmuid. He put tremendous energy into the entire day and the participants engaged completely with the topics. He dealt with the significance of the New Story and guided the group to consider many aspects of what has been 'handed down' to us. The challenge is always to integrate the knowledge in the way we live our daily lives! You can read more on this story and view more photos on the [Eco-Congregation Ireland website](#).



Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey Parish September Celebration of God's Creation!

Nun's Cross Church, Church of Ireland Killiskey Parish celebrated God's creation this September by holding a festival of flowers, an animal blessing service and Select Vestry member, Anne Newton, supplied Eco Tips for their September monthly announcements sheet. Their festival formed part of the celebrations for their bi-centenary and was held on 1st to 3rd September. The church had approximately 30 arrangements, including some by parishioners and arrangers from counties Wicklow, Dublin and Wexford. [You can read an article on their festival here](#). This year's Animal Blessing Service took place on Sunday 24th September. Everyone was encouraged to bring dogs, cats, sheep, cows or other animals to church! Lots more photos of Killiskey's events can be [viewed on their website](#). Read more on the [ECI website](#).



Eco challenge!

The Last Straw!

Millions of straws are used every day around the world. Many of these are used for just a few minutes then are simply thrown away. In fact plastic straws are one of the top 10 items found in beach clean ups. In the ocean, plastic does not biodegrade. Instead it just breaks down into smaller pieces over hundreds of years, and it's impossible to clean up. With up to 12 million tonnes of plastic clogging up the oceans every year, it's no wonder wildlife is facing the brunt of the impacts. Lots of environmental organisations are now campaigning against the use of plastic straws. So the next time we are in a café or pub let's pledge to ditch the straw! Learn more: [One Less Straw](#), [Strawless Ocean](#), [The Last Straw](#), [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#).



Prayer for the Earth

The Feast of St Francis on 4 October brings Creation Time to an end until next year. Let us continue to care for and bring healing to the earth and all her creatures.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

With kindest regards,

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