May 2015

NEWSLINK

The Magazine of the Church of Ireland United Dioceses of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert

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Primroses grace Spring with their presence

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.

Matthew 6:28-29

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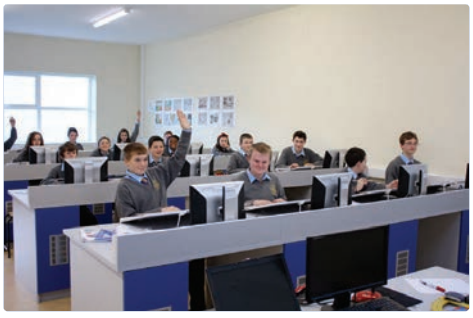

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Bishop Kenneth writes

The season for Confirmation is well under way in the diocese. Though there is no special time when confirmations have to take place, it is very appropriate that they take place in the time after Easter when we focus on the meaning of Christ's resurrection and celebrate the completion of his earthly ministry on Ascension Day, the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the foundation of the church as the way in which this special salvation message is to be proclaimed into the future.

Confirmation is one of the oldest rites of the Christian church, dating back to the 3rd century. At that time Christianity had spread to the main towns and cities. These were quite small and often close together and so it was possible for the bishop to visit several times a year. New members of the church were welcomed into fellowship by baptism and the laying on of hands, both performed by the bishop on his visit.

Gradually over the years as the church grew and spread more widely into the countryside, visits from the bishop became more infrequent and so the practice began of baptising each new Christian whether adult or child as soon as they joined the church, and this was normally performed by the priest. The laying on of hands by the bishop came later when the bishop next visited. This evolved further into the current practice of infant or adult baptism by the priest (or deacon) followed often years later by the individual 'confirming' the promises made at baptism, together with the laying on of hands by the bishop.

For me, these will be my first confirmation services, and I'm looking forward to them. Each one is unique to that parish and special to the candidate and his or her family. It's also important to the diocese as each confirmation service is a diocesan event.

If I have a concern it's that a candidate will see his or her preparation for confirmation a bit like preparing for an exam, and then after the service the recently confirmed will feel 'glad that's over'. All too often that's the case. Clergy do their part in the work of preparation for confirmation and in reaching out to young members of the church. It is, however, very difficult to change attitudes, and clergy on their own can't do that – attitudes to confirmation and post-confirmation are the responsibility of us all, laity and clergy.

Confirmations then are not just diocesan occasions, they are diocesan responsibilities. Each of us, whether we know some candidates or not, has a responsibility to create an environment which fosters young people's engagement with the church, and that will do far more for the future of the church than all the post-confirmation and youth work, however excellent that may be. So as we pray for confirmation candidates in our diocese at this time, let us also remember and pray for our own responsibilities to these young people.

On a very different note, I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Anne Donegan as bishop's secretary. Some of you will know Anne from Villiers School. She will be in the office at the See House in Adare each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning, 9.30 am to 1 pm. Her email is bishopsecretary@limerick.anglican.org and her phone number is (061) 396244. I warmly welcome Anne to the diocesan team and look forward to working with her.

Sincerely,
+Kenneth.

The Rt. Revd. Kenneth Kearon
Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe
Rian Roe, Adare, Co. Limerick
Tel: + 353 (0)61 396244
Email: bishop@limerick.anglican.org

Diocesan Calendar

(for updates see Diocesan web site – www.limerick.anglican.org)

Thu 7th May, 8pm	Garden Chat with Lawlor's Florist and Garden Centre Durrow, Abbey Hall, Roscrea. Small entrance fee in aid of St. Cronan's Church Funds.
Sat 16th May, 11am-4pm	CIYD Connect Training Day, Church of Ireland House, Rathmines, Dublin 6
Sat 16th May, 7.30pm	UDYC Fellowship Group meeting, Kilmurry Church, Castletroy, Limerick (secondary upwards)
Sun 17th May, 11.15am	Confirmation, St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick.
Sat 23rd May, 10-12am, 2-5pm	Garden Coffee Day, in aid of 'Share a Dream', at Stephen & Heather Kenny's (086 346 5232)
Sat 23rd May, 8.15pm	Table Quiz, Aghancon Hall, details from Ina Blackwell (0579 131253)
Sun 24th May, 11.30am	Confirmation, St Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe
Sun 24th May, 3-4pm	Mothers' Union Diocesan Thanksgiving Service, Eyrecourt, Co. Galway
Thu 28th May, 7.30pm	Diocesan Council, Woodlands Hotel, Adare
Fri 29th May – Mon 1st June	Diocesan Confirmation Weekend, Muckross, Killarney (2014 & 2015 Confirmation Candidates)
Sun 7th June	Birr Summer Fete, Oxmantown School, Birr
Fri 12th – Sun 14th June	GFS Diocesan Camp, Castledaly Manor, Athlone
Sat 13th June	Shinrone Sale & Dog Show
Sat 20th June	**Diocesan Synod, Aghancon Community Hall, Aghancon, Co. Offaly**
Sat 20th June, 7.30pm	UDYC Fellowship Group meeting, Kilmurry Church, Castletroy, Limerick (secondary upwards)
Sun 21st June, 3pm	Confirmation for Birr, Shinrone & Clonfert Groups, St Brendan's Church, Birr
Sun 28th June, 11am	Confirmation for Nenagh Union, St Mary's Church, Nenagh

Editorial

We are witnessing a manmade disaster in the Mediterranean Sea. Untold thousands of migrants are setting off from Libya in overcrowded, unseaworthy boats to seek sanctuary and better lives in Europe. All too many drown on the passage and the survivors face an uncertain future in refugee camps or as undocumented migrants. The numbers are staggering: in 2014 more than 150,000 migrants reached Italy and more than 3,000 drowned on the way. In the first 4 months of 2015 more than 1,500 migrants have drowned, including some 900 in the last week.

The migrants - men, women and children - come from many different countries. Many are genuine refugees, fleeing from wars, persecution or hunger in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Others are economic migrants looking for a better life, just as Irish emigrants have done over the centuries. They are desperate, prepared to take risks. Since the collapse of Gadhafi's state, Libya's borders are uncontrolled. Unscrupulous human traffickers are making fortunes from would-be migrants to bring them to Libya, load them onto boats and ship them across the sea to Europe, with little regard for safety once they've been paid. And maritime rescue operations have been scandalously scaled down to discourage crossings and save money.

Each one of these migrants is a person made in the image of God, just as we are – they are our brothers and sisters, and we cannot as Christians turn our backs on them in their suffering. But what can we do for them?

We must of course pray for them, and for the rescue and accommodation services – but those prayers must lead to action. Let us take inspiration from the "unusual kindness" the people of Malta showed to St Paul when he was shipwrecked there (Acts 28:2).

The problem is complex, but elements of a solution must surely include:

a) Accessible means and safe routes for would-be migrants to enter Europe;

b) Providing more maritime rescue and migrant accommodation resources;

c) Sharing the burden fairly across European states – we cannot expect Mediterranean Europe to shoulder the whole burden.

Pope Francis has led the way, calling on the European Union and the international community to act. Irish Churches should call on the Irish Government to do its bit through the European Council, in particular to accept our share of migrants. And we can reinforce this as individuals through our public representatives.

Notice of Diocesan Synod

In accordance with Standing Orders, please note that the Annual Ordinary Meeting of the Diocesan Synod of Limerick, Killaloe and Ardfert will be held in Aghancon Community Hall, Aghancon, Co. Offaly on Saturday 20th June 2015. Registration from 10am; Synod Eucharist at 10.30am.

Yvonne Blennerhassett
Diocesan Secretary

Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert, which also includes the historic dioceses of Aghadoe, Clonfert, Emly, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh. For further information about the United Dioceses see the diocesan web site: www.limerick.anglican.org.
Newslink also covers Methodist Midlands and Southern District Circuits within the boundaries of the Church of Ireland Diocese.

Editor
In addition to news from parishes, schools and diocesan organisations, the Editor is delighted to receive articles and letters for publication, as well as suggestions as to how Newslink may be improved.
Please note: names and addresses of contributors must be given, and all letters printed will include name and address unless otherwise agreed with the Editor. All material dealing with parish/ circuit matters must first be cleared with the Minister concerned.

Contact details:
Joc Sanders
Turravagaun, Dromineer,
Nenagh, Co Tipperary
Tel: 067 24987 Mob: 087 699 6775
Email: newslink@limerick.anglican.org

Newslink is printed by **Davis Printers,**
Unit 6, Crossagala Enterprise Centre, Ballysimon Rd, Limerick

Deadlines

The next issue will be for June 2015, published for Sunday 7th June.

All material must reach the Editor by Friday 22nd May 2015 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

NEWSLINK ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2015
(unchanged from 2014,for 10 issues, new subscriptions pro rata)
Delivered to pew in bulk €37
Individual copy by post €45
Collected from printer in bulk €30
(contact: Peter Schutz, Ardhu, Castletroy, Co. Limerick,
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NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2015
(unchanged from 2013)

	Rate per annum (Euro) (payable in advance)		Rate per single issue (Euro)	
	10 x Colour	10 x B&W	Colour	B&W
Full Page	1193	1069	154	143
Half Page	596	534	77	71
Quarter Page	299	268	39	36
Eighth Page	149	133	19	18

Prayer Corner

Partners in Prayer – May 2015

Each Sunday
Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Connor and Bishop Alan Abernethy
Companion Dioceses: The five Dioceses of the Protestant Church of Anhalt, Germany.

3rd May, Easter 5, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Diocese of Ngbo, Enugu, Nigeria and Rt Revd Christian Ebisike, Bishop of Ngbo
Diocese: Diocesan representatives attending General Synod in Armagh Thursday 7th - Saturday 9th May

10th May, Easter 6, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Diocese of Nike, Enugu, Nigeria and Rt Revd Evans Jonathan Ibeagha, Bishop of Nike
Diocese: Clergy and Readers providing support to parishes in times of vacancy and illness

17th May, Easter 7, the Sunday after Ascension, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Diocese of the North Eastern Caribbean & Aruba, West Indies and Rt Revd Leroy Brooks, Bishop of the North Eastern Caribbean & Aruba
Diocese: The Mothers' Union within the diocese, meeting for the MU Diocesan Thanksgiving Service at Eyrecourt on 24th May

24th May, Pentecost (Whit Sunday), Red
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Diocese of Northern Luzon, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, presently Vacant
Diocese: Confirmation candidates attending the Diocesan Confirmation Weekend 29th May – 1st June

31st May, Trinity Sunday, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The work of the Anglican Centre in Rome. Also the Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island, Canada and Rt Revd Ronald Wayne Cutler, Bishop of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island
Diocese: Diocesan and parochial nominators in their work to fill parish vacancies

7th June, Trinity 1, Green
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Ogbomoso, Ibadan, Nigeria and Rt Revd Matthew Osunade, Bishop of Ogbomoso. Also the Diocese of Ogoni, Niger Delta, Nigeria and Rt Revd Solomon Gberegbara, Bishop of Ogoni
Diocese: The Girls' Friendly Society in the diocese, preparing for the GFS Diocesan Camp at Castledaly Manor, Athlone, 12th-14th June

The Christian is in a different position from other people who are trying to be good. They hope, by being good, to please God if there is one; or — if they think there is not — at least they hope to deserve approval from good men. But the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us; just as the roof of a greenhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it.

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

What is Prayer?

By Rev Edna Wakely, Curate Assistant, Limerick City Parish

Bono once asked Desmond Tutu, retired Archbishop of Cape Town, if he ever got any time for prayer and meditation. 'What are you talking about?' shrieked Tutu with a broad grin. 'Do you think we'd be able to do this stuff if we didn't?'

Prayer then is not another thing to add to our busy lives - it is something indispensable which helps us in our busy lives.

Prayer is asking God to help us trust him with the things that happen in our lives. Prayer is not simply to help us understand God, or to help us in our needs, or a long shopping list of wants - but to make us more like God. It is not about trying to change God, or asking him to change our circumstances, for often great blessings lie hidden in circumstances that appeared disastrous at the time. "The purpose of prayer is to get us to change and want what our loving God wants to give us". (Ronald Knott).

Prayer changes things and changes us as we go deeper in faith and closer to God, while it also helps us to know the heart of God, and what He wants us to do, both personally and in the world. "Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God's point of view." (Philip Yancey)

Through prayer we have an opportunity to respond to God who is always present. God longs to be in relationship with each one of us. We were created to live in relationship with our Creator – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and it is through prayer that we can establish, strengthen and develop that relationship. In prayer we begin to share in the mind of God: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, and to will the things he wills.

Real prayer that reveals to us the will of God, is something we have to learn to do – something we have to persevere in. We need to train ourselves and we need to practise. God always meets us where we are and walks with us where He wants us to go.

"Prayer and converse with God is a partnership and union with God - not the prayer of outward observance, but prayer from the heart, not confined to fixed times or periods, but continuous throughout the day and night.... Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness". (Saint John Chrysostom)

When we pray, do we ask God to change and conform to our will, or do we ask God to change us to conform to his will? This change of focus can radically change our prayer life for the better.

Loving God, we thank you that you long to be in close relationship with us, and that we can come to you with our deepest needs and yearnings, knowing that you always hear our prayers. Give us a longing to communicate with you. Teach us your will for our lives and the desire to do it, ever trusting in your loving mercy and grace. We praise you that your love could not be defeated. May that truth turn our doubt to faith. Help us to live each day as your Easter people, to the glory of your name, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

A View from the Pew – Surprise, and again I say surprise!

The 4th in the series by Salters Sterling

I hope that the celebration of Easter has been an occasion of great joy for all of us in the United Dioceses of Limerick, Killaloe and Ardfert. JOY is the consequence of the presence of the real Jesus; the one who knows where to find his alarmed and frightened friends; the one whose traditional greeting of "peace be with you" is not sufficient to assure them they are not encountering a ghost, but the one whose crucified hands and feet are the evidence that he is for real. Yet it is very particularly when he asks for and eats food that they are able to realise that they are in the real presence. It is that request for food and the eating of it that takes them into the joy of knowing and believing.

When this short article appears we will still be in the fifty days of Easter heading for Pentecost with Ascension Day coming in between. THE VIEW FROM THE PEW on Easter Day was of a congregation larger than usual. No doubt, as at Christmas, there were those present who were home for Easter. They are most welcome. There were those, too, who do not come regularly. They, too, are most welcome. Then there were those who were away. I hope they celebrated the Resurrection wherever they were.

And then there were those who never come. They too are embraced in the Easter message which is found in this glimpse of Jesus which Luke, alone of the Evangelists gives us.

Have you anything to eat? - Is there any food in house? This is not the question of a hungry ghost but of the risen Jesus. Why did Luke include it and is there a message here for us? Coming as it does after the familiar greeting and then the evidence of flesh and bones, Luke certainly means his readers to understand that he is writing about a living, for real, person who like the rest of us needs nourishment. Then again there could be a hidden meaning in the portrayal of a hungry Jesus who died for the salvation of the whole world and whose aliveness God has restored to witnessed reality. Luke's Gospel is written so that a Lover of God can learn of the wonderful works of God. Luke wants us to understand that the hungry Jesus wants his friends to be sure to share the good news that he is alive and well and most particularly present when they meet to celebrate his memorial meal. That's the significance of the fish rather than bread. The fish is the symbol of Jesus and his friends. Where they are celebrating him, there he is.

And maybe the request for something to eat is a reminder by Jesus to his friends to mind their manners. So filled with Joy had they become when they realised who it was/is that they forgot to offer hospitality. And how like them we are. So there is much to be learned from this apparently incidental glimpse of Jesus. The offering of hospitality is the essence of the mission of the Kingdom.

We are not finished quite yet. Luke concludes his Gospel with the event of the Ascension which he locates not far from Bethany. Important for Luke's message, because there is the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and in Luke the women were not believed when they told the men that they had found the tomb empty and had received the resurrection message that he had risen according to the Scriptures. Now Jesus takes his friends to the neighbourhood of the home of some of his best friends and there withdraws from them having himself reinforced the message of the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Luke completes the picture in the opening paragraphs of his second essay to the Lover of God, the Acts of the Apostles. There Jesus deflects their questions about when the Kingdom might be coming by referencing that matter to be in the hands of God and promising his friends the gift of the Holy Spirit with whom they will be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. The withdrawal occurs and his friends stand gazing up into the sky. If we had been them wouldn't we have done the same!

And equally non-comprehending we would have been! It takes the two men messengers who are a recurring feature of Luke's account of these days to point out that the place of his friends is down here where the work is, where they already are. This faith journey on which they are about to embark is not about pie in the sky. Rather it is about bread on the planet. For them Jerusalem, the place of their greatest danger. For us we need to ask ourselves where or how we are being called to risk all for HIM as we celebrate his dying and rising, his ascending and his coming again, for which we hope and for which we pray. Next time Pentecost.

I haven't finished yet - there is more to come. Surprised?

Sunday 24th May

We thank our advertisers for their support - please quote Newslink when contacting them.

Diocesan Organisations

Girls Friendly Society

NEW OFFICERS
Diocesan Council Office Holders 2015
President – Norma Jean Carney
Vice Presidents – Diane Dagg, Rose Langley, Jean Blackwell, Yvonne Shaw
Secretary – Michelle Armitage
Treasurer –Linda Gill
Badge Secretary – Grace Healy
Publicity Officer – Rose Langley
Central Council Reps – June Wallace & Florence Reid
Training Secretary – Betty Delahunt

DIOCESAN SERVICE & PRIZEGIVING
See the report on page 19

CLOUGHJORDAN BRANCH
We used spring garden flowers and foliage to make lovely bouquets and had great fun while doing so. We also made and decorated cards for Easter.

Leaders and girls in the branch enjoyed a lovely day in Killaloe at the Annual Diocesan Service & Prizegiving. A special mention goes to our Branch leader Mrs. Grace Healy and to Michelle Armitage, Lorraine Armitage, Hazel Young, Robyn Fitzgerald and Molly Grace whose entries go to Dublin.

NENAGH BRANCH
Girls enjoyed working on their Environment Badge on Saturday, 18th April. They learnt about the importance of bees in our world and how the growing of strawberry plants is of benefit to bees and ultimately of benefit to the survival of humans on this earth. They also made bird feeders from recycled plastic bottles and garden twigs. We hope the birds and bees enjoy the work of the girls.

Nenagh girls enjoyed the lovely sunny day as they worked on their Nature badge

ROSCREA BRANCH
A big thank you to all the parents who brought their girls to Killaloe. The girls and leaders really appreciate your support. Well done to the girls who did so well in the competitions and who took part in the service. All the Roscrea girls present had a job!

We will complete the Badge work and prepare for our service this term. Rev Jane is working on the service. An outing is planned to finish off the year.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Camp – Castledaly Manor, Athlone, 12-14 June – full details will be available after Camp Meeting on Monday 27th April, or contact your Branch Leaders for further information.

25th Year of Camp Celebrations – Sunday, 14 June in Castledaly

Boys' Brigade

NENAGH 1ST COMPANY
The light nights are back! It's great to be making the most of the fantastic outdoor play areas at the school with rounders (look out for some of our Anchors in the Irish cricket team in years to come!), soccer and basketball. Team games like this give a great opportunity for the boys to practice teamwork, support and friendship and we were delighted to see our Anchors demonstrating just that. I wasn't in the Juniors' group but I hope they behaved as impressively as their younger colleagues!

Before Easter, Ann Powell kindly gave her time and ran a craft evening for us, so a big thank you to her – and also to Eve Mooney for her help!

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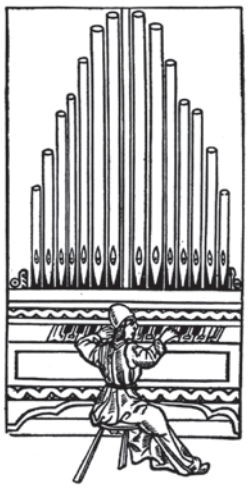

Recent works include: Rathkeale Parish Church, Buttevant Parish Church, Former Jesuit Church Limerick.

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Coming up we have a visit to the fire station and a soccer night with Roscrea but in the meantime we are praying for good weather and a successful event for our Midlands Region Activity Day on Saturday 25th April!

At the craft evening in Nenagh

Mothers' Union

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

On Sunday 17th May there will be a Thanksgiving Service for Mothers' Union in St Mary's Cathedral at 3.30pm and the Preacher will be Dean Sandra Pragnell.

On Sunday 24th May there will also be a Thanksgiving Service in Eyrecourt Church at 3.30pm and the Preacher will be the Very Rev Patrick Towers.

We are looking forward to a good numbers at both services. There will be light refreshments after both Services and a contribution of a cake per car would be much appreciated.

By the time you receive these notes I am sure you will be having your "Mums in May" Tea Parties and will be selling your "Grace and Flavours" Recipe books. Please remember that some of the income raised will be coming back to the Diocese to help fund some of our events or projects.

LIMERICK CITY BRANCH

The ladies of the Limerick City Branch of Mothers' Union were joined by several members of Adare Branch for their outing to D & M Garden Centre and Restaurant on the 13th April. We had a lovely lunch followed by a browse around the centre which has a very interesting aquatic centre and a fabulous selection of pots, plants and shrubs of all shapes and sizes. The sun shone and it was a really enjoyable day for a get together. Limerick City Branch AGM will be hosted by Margaret Schutz on 11th May when we will have a pot luck supper followed by our meeting. A Tea Party in aid of Mums in May will take place at a later date with details to follow

BALLINASLOE MOTHERS' UNION

The members of St. John's Ballinasloe welcomed local historian Gerry Devlin to their April meeting. He spoke of the involvement of large numbers of Ballinasloe men in the World War 1. It was a very informative talk and was well received and enjoyed. Interesting questions were asked and Gerry showed us replica memorabilia and many photographs and service records of that period. At the conclusion of a very pleasant evening Gerry was invited to come back again.

Members now look forward to their outing in May to Parker's Restaurant in Birr for dinner followed by a visit to the theatre.

Our ongoing projects are proceeding as always. Muriel Cobban brought two beautiful hand knit blankets to the meeting. These are for the Women's Refuge in Athlone. If any readers have leftover balls of DK wool, St. John's MU would be very pleased to use them for this project.

Freda Kenny (Eyrecourt) & Muriel Cobban (St. John's Ballinasloe)

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

St. Michael's Church, Ballinasloe hosted this year's World Day of Prayer Service which was prepared by the Christian women of the Bahamas. The Theme was **"Do you know what I have done to you?"** and was based on the story of the festival of the Passover. Music, prayers and a dramatisation based on the "washing of the feet" formed part of the service.

Sr. Mary Corcoran of the Sisters of Mercy, Ballinasloe led this ecumenical service which was well supported by members from the Mothers' Union. This service takes place every year in one of the churches in Ballinasloe. The congregation and participants joined together for tea and refreshments in Gullane's Hotel after the service.

Next year's service will be compiled by the Christian women of Cuba.

United Diocesan Youth Council

TAKING A LEADING ROLE – PART 1

The first part of our Basic Youth Leadership Course took place from Friday 10th – Sunday 12th April 2015 at Clarecare Lahinch. We were delighted to have seven participants on the weekend who are keen to get involved in parish and diocesan youth leadership in the future. The participants were as follows: Kate O'Brien (Castleconnell), Laura Cooke (Kilpeacon), Charlie Brickenden (Limerick City), Jordan Lewis (Roscrea), Lucy Gardiner (Adare), Carol Millar (Limerick City) & Sophia Levie (Mountshannon).

The following are some of the topics which were included on the first weekend: Who am I? What are my personal skills? Why do I want to do youth work? What are the responsibilities and roles of a youth leader? What are the qualities needed by youth leaders/helpers? How important is working as a team? What are the expectations of youth leaders? Who has expectations of youth leaders? What are those expectations?

Damian Shorten led a number of worship times over the weekend. Maud Eadie brought the group from and to Limerick. Damian & Maud assisted with leadership over the weekend also. The group enjoyed a surfing session with Lahinch Surf School on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning enjoyed some time at swimming pool in Seaworld Lahinch. The next weekend for the group will take place from Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th October again in Lahinch.

CIYD CONNECT RETREAT WEEKEND

Maud Eadie, Emma Gardiner, Boyce Claxton and Edward Hardy from our United Diocese joined youth leaders from throughout Ireland for just over 24 hours in the lovely Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise for a retreat weekend. Canon Roly Heaney from Redcross Parish in Co. Wicklow facilitated a number of sessions sharing some reflections with us on Saturday afternoon. The group were joined by Bishop Burrows for dinner on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning the group joined Portlaoise parish for Holy Eucharist on Sunday morning. There were also plenty of chances to relax, spend time with other leaders, eat excellent food throughout the weekend, opportunities to make use of the hotel leisure centre and swimming pool and to explore Portlaoise.

FUTURE EVENTS

Church of Ireland Youth Department – Connect Day "Big Issues"

This event for youth leaders, parents, teachers , clergy and anyone else that cares for young people takes place at Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Braemor Park, Dublin 14 from 11am to 4 pm on Saturday 16th May 2015 with lunch included and is free!

During the day participants will learn about and discuss issues relating to mental health including self- harm, eating disorders and bereavement. The session will be led by Katherine Dickson (The Big House Ireland) and Dr. Cathy Bell (Regional Co- Ordinator with the Independent Counselling Service for Northern Ireland). For more information and to book your place please contact amy@ciyd.org

U.D.Y.C. Fellowship Group

A small group continue to meet on a monthly basis on a Saturday evening each month on the third Saturday. We would encourage all those in Secondary School and upwards to come along. The next meeting of the group is scheduled Saturday 16th May at Kilmurry Church Arts & Community Centre, Castletroy, Limerick from 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm The group is open to all persons attending secondary school and upwards.

Diocesan Confirmation Weekend

Please note that our Diocesan Confirmation weekend will take place from Fri 29th May – Mon 1st June at Muckross Youth Centre, Muckross Killarney, Co. Kerry. This weekend will be for all 2014 & 2015 Confirmation Canidates. It is hope that all clergy and parishes will receive booking forms for the weekend by the time of publication of Newslink.

As well as a number of confirmation training sessions, over the weekend the group will enjoy some time at Killarney High Ropes Challenge, Outdoor Adventure Activities at Star Outdoors in Kenmare, Aquadome in Tralee, Muckross Traditional Farm and Hiking in Killarney National Park. There will be transport to and from the event from Roscrea, Moneygall, Nenagh, Limerick & Adare. The cost of the weekend will be €80 and €20 extra for transport. We do hope that as many as possible will join us for this special weekend.

For more information on any of our events or activities, please contact Edward (087) 2907553 or Damian on 087/2274663, Email: udyc@limerick.anglican.org or visit our website (http://udyc.ie/) or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month, Maud, Mobile: 087 9959581

SCHOOL NEWS

St. Nicholas' National School, Adare

CREDIT UNION QUIZ FINAL

This was a first for our school, the first time in the National Finals of the Schools' Credit Union Quiz. There was great excitement as Aiyuni, Leah, Arthur and Katie arrived at the RDS, Dublin on April 12th. There were 100 teams present in the Main Hall, fifty in the under 13 group and 50 in the under 11 group. These teams represented the 25 Credit Union Chapters from all over Ireland. There was a great buzz around the hall as the teams along with parents and teachers crowded in, had photographs taken and settled down for the quiz. The team had prepared well and did their very best on the day. There were twelve rounds of six questions, some of which were extremely difficult. A team from Co. Galway was the early leader and they went on to win the competition. Congratulations to our four pupils on such a wonderful achievement, we are very proud of them.

St Nicholas' Quiz Team

BOOK WEEK

Just before Easter break we held a very successful Book Week which included a Book Fair. Our "We Are Writers" book was on sale during the Book Fair and it was lovely to see everybody's story or poem in print. We ended the week with a Dress Up Day when pupils and staff dressed up as their favourite book character.

Some Book Characters!

LISTOWEL WRITERS COMPETITION
Congratulations to Katie Purser on winning third prize in the Listowel Writers Competition for her poem. We look forward to seeing it in print and hope that she has a lovely evening in Listowel at the end of May.

5-A-SIDE SOCCER
Pupils in 3rd to 6th classes went to the soccer grounds in Rathkeale on April 14th to take part in a schools' 5-a-side soccer competition. We had four teams competing on the day, two girls' teams and two boys' teams. All the teams had some tough but exciting matches with the senior boys' team coming third in the competition. Well done to all the players.

FESTIVAL OF FAITH AND FLOWERS
Pupils and staff look forward to the 700th anniversary of the Augustinian Abbey at St. Nicholas' Church at the end of May. The school has had a long association with the abbey as the school itself was housed in the refectory until we moved into our new school building in 2008. The old school is now used for P.E. and Drama. We look forward to being part of this wonderful celebration.

Rathkeale No. 2 National School

Limerick Education Centre's second annual Junior Scientist Fair took place in LIT on the evening of Monday 9th March. Budding scientists from several schools around County Limerick took part in the exhibition including the pupils from Rathkeale No 2. Once again this was a fantastic evening where pupils were given the opportunity to demonstrate their scientific investigations to an audience of adults and children. Over 200 children packed the hall at LIT for the evening and there was a tremendous buzz about the place. Those who took part were rewarded with a rosette each and the school received a plaque for the wall.

Budding scientists

We held our open hour for new pupils on Thursday 12th March and were delighted to welcome some new families to the school. The closing date for applications for September 2015 is 30th April.

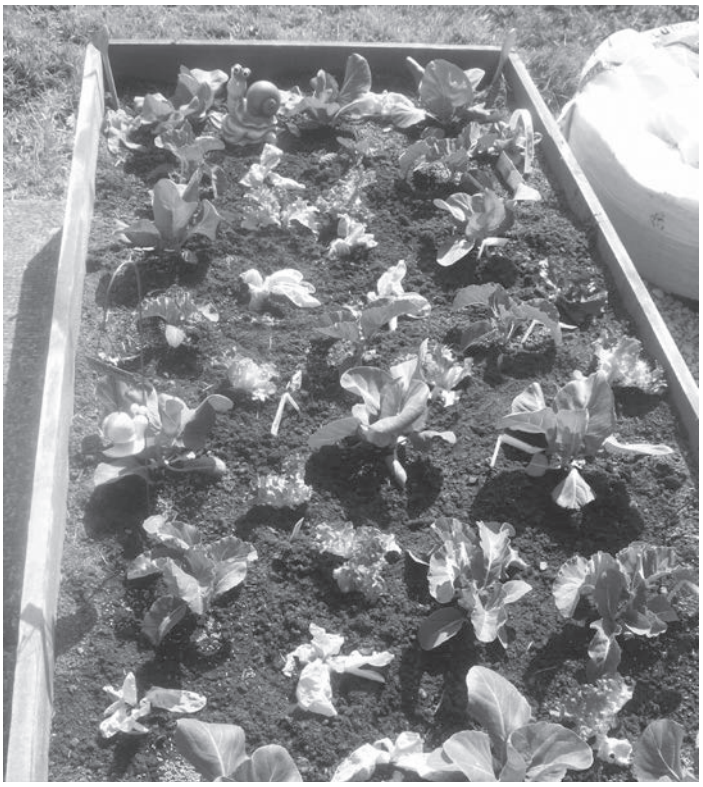
We welcomed Noel and Liza from the Postal Bible School on 24th March. We had a wonderful morning of singing and listened intently to a Bible story told by Noel. The pupils were rewarded with prizes for their BibleTime Worksheets.

Bible School Presentation

School closed for Easter on Friday 27th March with a cake sale and coffee afternoon. We were delighted to see so many people attend. The pupils raised €416 towards school funds. During Lent the pupils took up a collection at Wednesday assemblies and decided to donate the funds to the Irish Cancer Society.
With the wonderful weather our final term got off to a busy start and we look forward to many exciting events still to come, a visit from Rosie of Animal Magic, Villiers School Sports Day and our school tour to name a few.

St John's National School, Shannon

Spring has sprung well and truly here at St. John's NS with the creation of our new school garden. All pupils have been busy sowing vegetables , herbs and flowers . Flagpoles have already been erected in anticipation of our Green Flag, Active school flag and Health Promoting Flag. We welcome the Ministers change of retention figures and are enrolling now for September 2015.



Veggies galore!

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

Villiers School

BOYS HOCKEY PAST PUPILS MATCH

A big thank you to all the past pupils who turned up at Villiers last Wednesday 15th April. It was a beautiful sunny evening and an entertaining game of top-class hockey was enjoyed by all. The final score was 2-2, the first time in many years we had a draw. As a result the cup is retained by our senior boys.

Scorers for the past pupils were Prince Bossman and Mark Holmes (from a last minute short corner), both playing their first games as past pupils. Special thanks to Mark, who took time from his schedule to travel from Cork. Other first time past-pupils were Jonny Powell and Ian Gibson. The match was followed by dinner and speeches. Many thanks to Kieron Brislane who organises the past pupils in this annual fixture which has now been ongoing since 1987.

PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORTS DAY WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY

We again look forward to hosting this annual event for all the Diocesan primary schools on Wednesday 13th May. All students will get the opportunity to play soccer, tag rugby, basketball, orienteering and fun games throughout the day. Our TY's are busy organising and preparing for the event.

ACHILL ISLAND

Again we look forward to our annual TY Outdoor Pursuits trip to Achill Island next week. All students will take part in a wide range of activities which include, surfing, kayaking, rock climbing, coasteering,, archery and their gaisce adventure hike and overnight camp.

THOMOND HOUSE FUNDRAISER

Many thanks to many volunteers from our Transition Year who helped fundraise for Thomond House in Limerick. Thomond House provides a shelter for homeless women in Limerick and our students helped in Dunnes Stores in Jetland shopping centre bag packing last Friday.

JUNIOR AND LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

Best of luck to all our Junior and Leaving Certificate students who are revising hard for their written state examinations in June. Deadlines are coming and going for project work and oral examinations, with Spanish this week and Irish last week.

NEWS FROM THE VILLIERS SANCTUARY

The Leaving and Junior Certificate practical and orals are all well under way here in Villiers which always creates a bit of tension in the air. Good luck to all involved!! This is always a stressful time for all, pupils, parents and teachers so try to remember to take some time just for you at this difficult period.

Speaking of time, I was asked a very interesting question recently, namely, 'how long does Easter last?' This may sound strange to some because we live in an increasingly secular world where Easter Sunday is when we get chocolate and lasts for a single day. You may be done with Easter Sunday services and Easter egg hunts. You may have put away your fancy new Easter dress and your bunny decorations. But Easter isn't over, at least not for millions of Christians throughout history and throughout the world today. The Easter season or Eastertide lasts for fifty days, until Pentecost, and goes from the 5th April to 24th May this year. The Fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday." These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia.

On the fortieth day after Easter the Ascension is celebrated. This solemnity directs our attention to Christ, who ascended into heaven and who is now seated at the right hand of the Father. The weekdays after the Ascension until the Saturday before Pentecost inclusive are a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

This sacred season of fifty days comes to an end on Pentecost Sunday, which commemorates the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the beginnings of the Church and its mission to every people and nation. In what is considered to be the season of Easter, I want to write about how we might let this be a time of spiritual growth, a season of deeper intimacy with God. I've come to believe that, in many ways, Easter gets short shrift in our churches. As a result, we miss out on some of the richness and joy of a full Easter celebration. But I believe that if we extend our celebrations of Easter to a yearly season, the result can be a more vital and jubilant faith. If you're not in a place to impact your corporate worship, you can still do things to celebrate the resurrection. For example, if Lent is a season for fasting or giving up something positive, Easter is a season for feasting or adding something positive to your life.

So, if you gave up something for Lent, in Eastertide you might intentionally enjoy the goodness of life and remember that joy of the life to come. Easter is a time to affirm the delight of God-given life. So Happy Easter to one and all!!!

Blessings and peace, Chaplain Jackie McNair

Killaloe Diocese

Killaloe & Stradbally Union of Parishes

Killaloe, Castleconnell, Clonlara, Mountshannon and Tuamgraney.
Rector & Dean: The Very Rev. Gary Paulsen
The Deanery, Abbey Road, Killaloe, Co. Clare
Tel: 061-374 779
Mob: 085-764 0533
Email: abbeydean2@gmail.com

This year we had services in four of the churches during Holy Week. The Monday in Holy Week we were in Mountshannon with the service of Evening Prayer. Tuesday Majella and Mossy led us in Taize worship at Tuamgraney. As they are familiar with Taize and have visited it in France we managed to sing one of the chants in French as well. This was quite a moving service where people could place a stone at the cross representing a burden or anything they wanted to place at the cross.

Wednesday we did the Tenebrae service at Castleconnell. Tenebrae comes from the Latin for darkness. The service begins with the church fully lit and the colour a blaze of candlelight. During the service, which consists of a set of readings and hymns, candles are extinguished at given intervals and the church lights are also gradually switched off. At the end, the entire church is in darkness for a while. Then a single candle is lit just before the people leave the church. The purpose is to represent the movement from light to darkness of the events of the Passion, and our Lord's descent into the darkness of the New Fire and the Paschal Candle on Easter Day, which represents our Lord's resurrection and the light of the Easter hope. At Killaloe Cathedral on Thursday the emphasis was on the Eucharist and then the stripping of the altar for Good Friday. Good Friday we were back at Cathedral with a Good Friday liturgy. We had Eucharist services then on the Sunday and the Reverend Dennis Sandes kindly helped in the union on Easter Day.

As we journey through the fifty days of Easter, it highlights that belonging to a faith community is the way of being in one another's company. Doing the work of faith together is where we all encounter the healing, loving, breathing spirit of Christ. No matter how humble or reserved our character, we were never meant to tip-toe through life keeping our faith a closely guarded secret. In word and deed our faith must be proclaimed. And not just on Easter, Christmas or the occasional Sunday... that's not faith. That's casual observance of tradition. True Christian faith is all-pervasive. It shapes our personality. It governs our conduct. In all things, we must put faith first. We support each other in prayer and fellowship. We instil and reinforce the habits of faith in our loved ones. We share our faith and we see it flower all around us. Faith builds on faith ... it is the ultimate virtuous cycle.

We hold our confirmation candidates in prayer as they make an adult commitment to be part of a faith community. The bishop lays his hands upon their heads, that wonderful act of apostolic succession, as they move forward as the new generation of bearers of the Christ torch. So we remember Fiona Stapleton, Elena Kearns, Holly Sturton, and Jennifer Daly as they prepare for confirmation, significantly on Pentecost Sunday 24 May. We will have one service on this day at the Cathedral and I trust you will make the effort to be together as church. May we be the church gathered and receive the Holy Spirit and be enthused to be church together. Alleluia, Christ is risen indeed.

Birr Group of Parishes

Birr, Lorrha, Lockeen, and Dorrha
Rector: The Venerable R. Wayne Carney
Archdeacon of Killaloe & Clonfert
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 912 0021 Mob: 087 786 5234
Email: mapleire@eircom.net
Parish Facebook: www.facebook.com/BirrGroupOfParishes

CONGRATULATIONS

Whitten and Linda Gill have a new grandson: Baby Tiernan is a gift from God to Andrew and Deirdre in Australia. Heartfelt congratulations to them all!

BEREAVEMENTS

John and Audrey Godlington moved from England to live in Ireland seventeen years ago having spent holidays fishing around Shannonbridge and developing a love for the midlands. They set up home at Lissyard, Rathcabbin and became part of the local community there. Sadly, John died in 2008 and Audrey died on the 17th March this year. Her funeral service was held in Dorrha church on the 21st March, conducted by the Revd Ruth Gill, with the interment in Bonagham Cemetery. We offer sincere sympathy to her family who all live in England: sons, Michael, Paul and Andrew and her daughter Tracey, their spouses and children.

Charlie Warren was a well-known figure either sitting at the window of his house on Compton Place, Birr or going for a walk with his dog in Camcor Park or visiting the family grave in Clonoghill. His health deteriorated quickly from last autumn and after spending time attending hospitals in Dublin and Tullamore, he just made it back to Birr where he died on the 26th March in Elmgrove Nursing Home. He was an open, knowledgeable, straight-talking man with definite opinions and it was impossible not to like him. Sincere sympathy is offered to his friend and companion, Ronnie Donnelly who cared so wonderfully for him and to her family. Also to all those who got to know him as they passed by. Charlie has been reunited with his family. His funeral service was held on the 28th March in St Brendan's Church and the church was well filled for the occasion. The wonderful singing was led by members of the Roman Catholic Church choir and friends. Dana Donnelly sang a song, "Heaven Knows" which she had written on the death of her grandfather. The service was conducted by the Revd Ruth Gill, assisted by the Ven. Wayne Carney and Fr. Michael Redden.

BIRR SUMMER FETE

The Summer Fete is set for Oxmantown School on Sunday afternoon, 7th June. Details will be announced.

CONFIRMATION

Bishop Kenneth will be in Birr for Confirmation for the Birr, Shinrone, and Clonfert Groups of Parishes on Sunday, 21st June at 3:00 pm. Confirmation Classes will start soon; please contact the Archdeacon if your children desire to be confirmed this year.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Can you spare an hour a month? Volunteers are needed to help with the Special Olympics in the areas of swimming and bowling. If you'd like more information, please call Sandra Edge on 087-248-3165.

BICENTENARY
The year 2016 is the 200th anniversary of the present church in Birr. A number of events are already planned; if you have any ideas for ways to celebrate the Bicentenary, please contact the Archdeacon.

Roscrea Group of Parishes

Roscrea, Bourney, Corbally and Kyle
Rector: Rev Jane Galbraith
St. Cronan's Rectory, Rosemount, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 21725 Mob: 087 382 5336
Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com

Holy Week and Easter A full week of services were held throughout the group leading up to Easter Saturday when a beautiful moon lit a warm evening outside St.Molua's Church Kyle and introduced Paschal candles for all the Group's churches on Easter Day. The children having enjoyed a Good Friday service in Christ Church Corbally went into Easter Day with an action driven reading of the Easter Story.

The Ecumenical Witness of the Carrying of the Cross from St.Cronan's Roman Catholic Church through to The Methodist Church and on to our St.Cronan's was very well supported. Over 150 people heard various parts of the Passion Narrative. The Side Chapel in St.Cronan's was put to good use through the week culminating in a Tennebrae service on Good Friday. Very many thanks to Marjorie Mc Corduck for her availability to play the organ every evening.

We were delighted to welcome Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke to St. Cronan's for Easter Day, thus enabling Holy Communion services take place at the designated times in our other churches.

From the Registers It was with great sadness that we record the death of our oldest parishioner; Alice Isobella Harvey, neé Pratt. Born May 1920. We extend our deepest sympathy to her daughter Myra and her husband George and their daughter Wendy. Alice died on April 1st 2015, her funeral service was held in St. Cronan's Church and her final resting place was in Killermogh Churchyard, Abbeyleix, the Revd. Chancellor Patrick Harvey assisting.

Alice Harvey was a small slight person with boundless energy. It is true to say everyone enjoyed seeing her coming. Born in Camross, Alice moved to England where she pursued a career in nursing. She met her husband Arthur there, who was from Ballacolla and they moved back to Ireland, eventually settling in Bloomville House, Cloneygowan.

Alice was a dedicated member of the Healer Prayer group and Mothers ' Union. Up to a year ago she loved to walk in Golden Grove beside the bluebells. When not involved in all things church, Alice loved handcrafts and her garden which to this day bears the fruits of her labours.

Garden Chat May 7th. Lawlor's Florist and Garden Centre Durrow, are coming to talk things horticultural with a Q&A session on general garden topics. All are welcome to support this fund raising event on Thursday May 7th. in Abbey Hall, Roscrea at 8.00p.m. Small entry fee entitles light refreshments and the chance of a prize. Armchair Garden Quiz and Colouring Competition prizes will be awarded on the night.

MUSICAL EVENT
We greatly look forward to welcoming to St.Cronan's Church, The Ballyclare Male Voice Choir, May 3rd. at 8.00p.m. Proceeds to benefit The Methodist Church Funds and Pieta House, Roscrea. Tickets €15 and €10.

Easter General Vestries have taken place. Thanks were recorded to all out-going members for their careful work carried out during the year, especial during the vacancy. While many experienced members continue in harness a welcome is extended to new members to serve as select vestry members. Details of lists to follow. 507 words

Nenagh Union of Parishes

Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killodiernan
Vacant
Priest-in-Charge: Rev Lucy Green
Tel: 062 79941 Mob: 087 667 0425
Email: lucygreen06ie@yahoo.co.uk

Diocesan Readers:
Joc Sanders 087 699 6775, joc_sanders@iol.ie
Audrey Clarke Gordon
087 742 8901, audreyclarkegordon@hotmail.com

GOOD FRIDAY & EASTER
Good Friday was busy for Rev Lucy. It began with the Children's Easter Workshop, at which over 20 kids made Easter crafts. Each child made a cross, and these were joined together to make a big cross which was displayed in St Mary's on Easter Day. This was followed by the Three Hours devotion on the theme of the Seven Deadly Sins, and not one but two Ecumenical walks, in Nenagh and Templederry. On Easter Day Rev Lucy presided at well attended Holy Communion in all three churches.

Some of the children with the Easter Cross they made

CONGRATULATIONS
... to Ger and Hilary Mulligan on the birth of their son Harry

WEDDING BELLS

Congratulations also to Sarah Powell and Tom Bradbury, who were wed in Glasson Country House Hotel, Athlone on 4th April. Sarah's mother Deborah Powell is the Newslink Assistant Editor.

Sarah Powell & Tom Bradbury, at their wedding reception in Glasson

BEREAVEMENT

The parish was saddened by the death of Mrs Ruby Wallace on 9th April. Her funeral in St Mary's, Nenagh on Sunday 12th April was conducted by Canon Marie at the family's request, and was very well attended by family, friends and those who knew Ruby. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband Willie and her family at this time.

TEMPLEDERRY

There was a large gathering at the ecumenical "Walk of Witness" in Templederry on Good Friday with prayers in both churches led by Rev. Lucy Green and Fr. Willie Teehan.

At the Easter Sunday service it was such a pleasure to have a solo sung by Eve, and an appropriate play for Easter, acted by Luke, Robert, Aongus and Scott under the guidance of Ann and Jean. So nice to see the young parishioners taking part - after service they enjoyed a well-deserved Easter egg hunt and sweets for the young and old.

EASTER VESTRY

The Easter Vestry for the Union was held on Tuesday 14th April, with Rev Lucy in the chair. The following were appointed/elected:
St Mary's Church Wardens:
Rector's – Dennis Croft, People's – Jane Coman
Templederry Church Wardens:
Rector's - Hilary Lewis, People's – Melvyn Mooney
Killodiernan Church Wardens:
Rector's – Mary Ryan, People's – Caleb Clarke
Glebe Wardens: Deborah Powell, Leslie Dagg
Elected members of Select Vestry: Jack Bayly, Jean Blackwell, Norman Hayes, Joc Sanders, Catherine Lidwill, William Jones, Deborah Powell, Lisa Drummond, William Wallace, Anne McKee, Olive Powell and Rae Croft.
The Select Vestry subsequently re-appointed Jack Bayly as Treasurer and Rae Croft as Secretary.

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The World Is Our Host

A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice

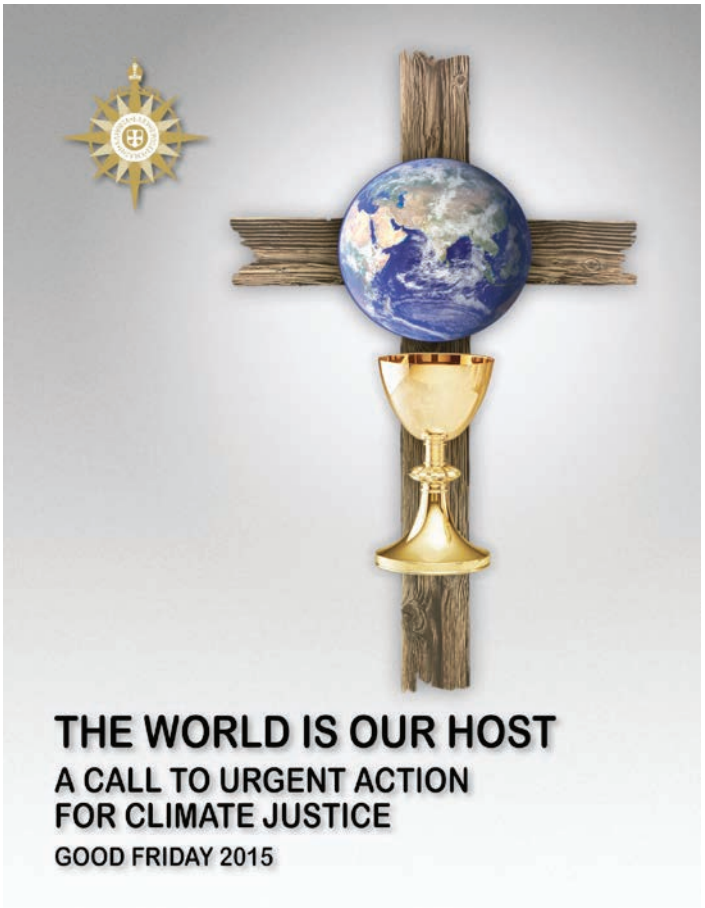
Seventeen Bishops from around the Anglican Communion met at the Volmoed Conference and Retreat Centre in South Africa in February 2015. They issued a Good Friday call to urgent action for climate justice entitled 'The World is our Host'. In committing themselves to this work they encourage Anglicans everywhere to:

- Join in prayer and fasting for climate justice on the first day of each month as an integral part of life and worship.
- Implement energy conservation measures in church buildings and moving to renewable energy sources as quickly as possible.
- Take measures to conserve, recycle and collect water around church buildings and properties.
- Nurture biodiversity on church land by creating safe habitat for indigenous species.
- Support local communities by sharing water, energy and arable land resources for local food production.
- Support sustainable land use initiatives, including a halt to the clearing of native forests.
- Advocate for sustainable water, food, and agricultural practices in our communities. It is imperative to take into account the interwoven relationship of food, water and energy systems.

They also call upon political, economic, social and religious leaders to address the climate change crisis as the most urgent moral issue of our day, urging them to:

- Work with all possible commitment and speed toward fair, ambitious, accountable and binding climate change agreements at national and international levels.
- Develop policies that genuinely assist environmental and climate refugees and promote mechanisms of intergovernmental co-operation that ensure their human rights, safety and resettlement

'The World is our Host' can be downloaded free from the web site of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network at acen.anglicancommunion.org.



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Headmaster: John D. Rafter
B.A.(Mod), B.Sc., HDipEd.

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www.kingshospital.ie

Creation - God is Love

The 3rd of 7 articles on Creation by Rev Simon J Lumby, Rector of Killarney Union

St John famously states "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" [1 John 4:16 NRSV]. St Paul is equally emphatic; listing the characteristics of Love [1 Cor 13:4-7] he concludes "Love never ends".

In the previous article I used the somewhat technical terms con/de-structive. By con-struction I mean "having a viable relationship". By de-struction I mean "having a non-viable relationship" (This is very different from "destroy". The word "struction" comes from the Latin struere 'to build'). I want now to show how these work in the grand scheme of Creation.

These qualities that define the love of God—that "abide" in the Children of God—are con-structive; they define sustainable relationships. St Paul's "is not" list excludes all de-structive attributes; they define relationships that are unsustainable. The former are harmonic, the latter are inharmonic.

Something is harmonic when it shares attributes with another. Most obviously, in music; harmonies are most pleasing to the ear. In simpler terms: the number 6 is harmonic with 2 and with 3. But 2 and 3 are prime numbers, they are inharmonic to each other.

This implies—if God were a number—that God would have to be the product of all prime numbers. But, since there can never be an end to the list of prime numbers, their product can never be finally determined. More importantly, this shows that God is pure harmony, (all numbers are represented in that unknowable product). This implies that God has no choice but to be harmonic!

Since God is the unlimited totality of everything, Creation cannot also be the total; neither can Humanity! However, Creation has to be consistent. So Creation contains the quality of harmony; we call it evolution (viable relationships). However, inharmony is also innate in Creation, purely because of this lack of totality. This can only be the case if some parts of Creation's harmonic behaviour are inharmonic with some other parts: eg 14 is harmonic with 2,7 and 15 is harmonic with 3,5 yet 14,15 share nothing. Natural disasters occur because of this inharmony.

Creation has no option but to cooperate in the great cosmic dance of Love; it can't suddenly decide not to! Neither has it the option not to be inharmonic! It will explore every opportunity for interaction—it'll meet non-viable relationships on the way—and, discovering viable ones, it will grow. Those non-viable relationships will fail to survive.

But Humanity is a part of Creation; albeit a unique part. It shares with Creation that ability to pro-create, to share in harmonic, viable relationships (ie to love). However, only Humanity has the ability to make choices about what it creates. In order for us to choose there must be credible options to choose from. Animals can choose, but only humans can invent. However, given that God has no choice but to love, where does this "ability to choose" come from; God doesn't have it! Unless ...

... God cannot contain inharmony but Creation must.

So is Humanity's ability to choose (which God cannot have) the exact thing required to balance out Creation's ability to have non-viable relationships? This cannot imply that Creation + Humanity = God; because Humanity can't all operate as one. However, it does imply we can strive to make viable some of those non-viable relationships in our moment and place.

Since Humanity is made in the Imago Dei it will only express those innate qualities of God—harmony/love—if and when it deploys all its skills and attributes in harmony with God, within Creation. This is the role of the Children of God. Choice has no eternal value if it is not consonant with that Imago. It is self-evidently the case that Humanity can act inconsistently with Creation. Choice is the partner of opportunity. Only Humanity has the opportunity to make things that Creation can't invent. Choice comes, therefore, in two forms: Do we create something? How do we use what we create?

To be Children of God is to be in harmony with God, ie with a Creation that has no choice in the matter. So our choices must be predicated on the notion that our aim is to grow harmonic, viable relationships within Creation. The moral question is this: will we create something that benefits all of Creation, or will it serve only one part and thus introduce a non-viable relationship with the other part? Therefore for Children of God wealth and technology become tools for harmony and not for disharmony.

CAPPADOCIA – A SPRING VISIT

by Hugh Weir, Mountshannon Parish

This March (2015) I revisited Turkey, having only experienced the Istanbul and Ankara areas when I drove from home some years ago and as a soldier in Cyprus. When I read a newspaper advertisement indicating an eight day trip from Dublin to Antalya by air and from thence by bus to Cappadocia, staying in five star hotels, I jumped at it. The cost of further activities was extra but, otherwise unseasonal empty seats were filled and beds occupied for about half the normal costs, due to clever co-ordination between governments, tourist, hotel, travel and other interests. Accompanied by my carer, I am glad to have accepted this fantastic opportunity.

From Antalya with its startlingly long beach and snow clad mountain backdrop, we bussed for eight hours each way to Cappadocia, crossing the magnificent wide almost three thousand metre high Taurus Mountain Range, and huge almost lifeless plains, on eight hundred kilometres of smooth newly-surfaced roads. We were with a group of well informed and much travelled Irish companions, with whom we shared deep discussions about religion, international places, history and, of course, Turkey. Few of us, though, knew much about Cappadocia and why "The land of thoroughbred horses" was deeply embedded in our minds. Suffice to say that the area reeks in Christian and religious history, having been influenced by Cimmerians, Hittites, Greeks, Persians, Romans, the Ottoman Empire and, in the mid twentieth century, Kemal Ataturk and his republic, being on or near major trade routes between Asia and Europe.

The undelineated area, considered to be about four hundred kilometres by three hundred, consists of fertile land suitable for breeding sheep and horses of good bone, and through it flows one of Turkey's few permanently water-filled rivers, the Kizilirmac. A tributary of the Euphrates borders the east.

Roman theatre in Aspendos, preserved remarkably well

Between Paul's Tarsus and Ephesus, this area attracted large communities to some of the earliest towns, mostly underground, some peculiarly and uniquely in rock formations above. Many became Christian and produced such early saints as the two Gregorys and, at the capital Caesarea, Basil the Great. Their origins and influences have been partly Semitic and partly Iranian. In the eighth century though, controversies regarding idolatry arose and sacred images forbidden. The communities had been plundered and destroyed by raiding Arabs and Byzantines from the sixth century, yet they survived by taking to the adjoining hills.

Here over a thousand churches and vast multi storied cities were created in the three million year old carveable Tuff-stone cliffs and unique chimney-like piles. Many of these cavernous churches still sport magnificent frescoes which, although many faces have been mutilated still retain their natural colours created mostly from different rocks but also of vegetable dyes. Amongst the natural rock formations are huge pillars on top of which perch roof-like caps of darker stone with a lighter layer between, left after their softer surrounds were eroded by weather conditions. They look just like toadstools growing in Ireland, also in clusters. Other similar but different natural fascinating rock features also abound in the area.

Pillars of rock like toadstools, many hollowed out as churches

Having risen at five a.m. one morning, we silently travelled over the area in a hot air balloon. This brought the scene alive as we glided for perhaps twenty kilometres between cliff bordered valleys and the adjoining plains. Ancient citizens acted wisely as one could hardly identify many of the entrances to the cave cities. As the tours of churches allowed us glimpses of the centuries old frescoes, I linked my spirituality with that of Paul, who reputedly visited several times, and the earliest Christians as they made their way from Palestine to Constantinople and further by foot, horse or camel.

Those were simple uncluttered times as yet untainted by man's greed, and it is interesting that Ataturk's modern Turkish republic is open minded, even accepting all faiths, whether Moslem, Jew or Christian equally, in spite of its Islamic majority. Indeed I was to learn that the crowd gathered at some of our shared sites were Iraqi, Syrian and other refugees, many of them Christian, who are given equal rights as Turkish citizens; a touching perpetuation of the area's traditional, generosity of spirit where there is almost perpetual conflict. There is, of course, the problem of the Kurds in the East of the country, but as guests, it would have been unwise for us to comment. We had an incredible eight days with temperatures up to twenty two degrees, snow capped volcanic mountains and a new awareness of early Christian life and places associated with the New Testament. I would recommend a visit to anyone.

GFS Diocesan Service & Prizegiving

Girls & Leaders pose for official photo in St. Flannan's Cathedral

The GFS Diocesan Service & Prizegiving was held on 21st March in St. Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe. The Very Rev'd Gary Paulsen, Dean of Killaloe Cathedral invited GFS to Killaloe for this event. It was a most wonderful day with great atmosphere. The Dean reminded us that we all have two churches, our Parish Church and our Cathedral. The sun was shining and Killaloe looked beautiful. We all felt like we were on holidays. The occasion was extra special as it is many years since GFS had a service in Killaloe. We are very thankful that our new Bishop, Bishop Kenneth Kearon; GFS All Ireland President, Sylvia Quinn; Archdeacon Wayne Carney; Rev. Jane Galbraith and Adrian Hewson could join us. Thanks to all the clergy, organist, leaders and girls who played a full and active part in the Service.

The theme of the service was taken from the Bible Study syllabus. Many thanks to Dean Gary and Archdeacon Wayne for preparing the Service. The girls took an active part - they carried banners, read prayers, lit the GFS candle, acted out the readings and took up the collection. The commissioning of our incoming President, Secretary and Treasurer also took place. After the service prizes were awarded for Bible Study and Crafts. Congratulations to all who won prizes.

As host branch, Nenagh was responsible for organising the refreshments. The branch could not have done this without the assistance of Betty Brislane and Betty Lewis at the Cathedral who helped with all the preparations and teas. Thank you to leaders and parents of girls in all the branches for the lovely cakes they provided.

Our stalls were well supported and provide much needed funds to GFS. Thanks to all Leaders who organised the stalls.

The whole day was truly one of those occasions when you just knew it was special and you felt glad to be there. Well done to everyone involved.

Bishop Kenneth presenting girls with Bible Study Medals

All Ireland President presenting girls with prizes for Crafts

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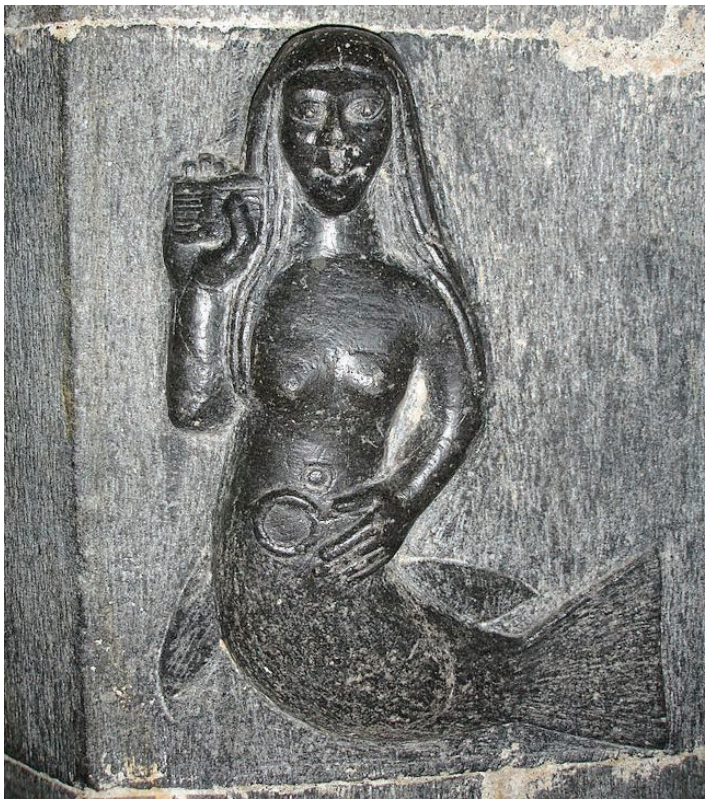
Brendan the Navigator

By Adrian Hewson, Roscrea Group of Parishes



Clonfert Cathedral's intricately carved mermaid

History and tradition suggest that the Golden Age saints of this United Diocese are as numerous as the pebbles on a Kerry beach, so it is appropriate to begin this occasional series on Diocesan saints and scholars with a profile of Brendan the Navigator, perhaps the best known because of his association with both the southern and northern diocesan landscapes.

Co. Kerry was his alleged birthplace, with the ancient cathedral of Ardfert dedicated to him, while Clonfert Cathedral in Co. Galway also bears his name and marks his burial place. Furthermore, this month celebrates his feast day, May 16th. His name has been on the lips of every Irish school child because of his early courageous expeditions to a 'Land of Promise' across the unknown Atlantic Ocean, possibly replacing Columbus as the 'real discoverer' of the New World. Due to his overseas adventures he became the hero of a 10th century legend, while his biography was one of the first books published after the printing press was invented in 1476. In the 20th century, explorer Tim Severn retraced his Atlantic voyage and added credibility to the tale, while locally, former Diocesan Bishop, Walton Empey, retraced his footsteps in 1984, walking from Ardfert to Clonfert as a fund-raising project in aid of Clonfert Cathedral. So, who was this 5th century navigator-monk who turned into a 10th century legendary hero and a 15th century idol of the printing press?

Son of the unknown Findluch, Brendan was reputedly born in the Tralee vicinity in 485 AD. Soon after his birth, he was placed in the care of St. Ita whose affection spiritually influenced his formative years. Also a protégé of St. Ita was her nephew, St. Mochoemog, who had monastic foundations near Kinnitty and in Eltagh parish, thus giving Brendan the Navigator loose association with Killaloe Diocese. Brendan was consecrated a bishop by St. Erc in 512 AD, but the principal centre of his education was at St. Finnian's renowned monastic centre of learning in Clonard, Co. Meath. There he and eleven other fellow monk-students became so famous for their learning that they were known as 'The Twelve Apostles of Ireland'. Equipped with such a scholarly background, it was easy for Brendan to uphold the primary characteristics of the early Celtic church to create an atmosphere of learning and to spread the Gospel overseas.

He is accredited with founding four monastic centres of learning in Ireland, with Ardfert and Clonfert the principal sites. The ancient annals of Innisfallen, compiled close to Ardfert, suggest that Ardfert's original name was 'Hyferte', meaning 'the territory of miracles' due to Brendan's labours there. Another source describes the site as 'sumptuous', while yet another source recalls Brendan's 'wonderful' work there. His final foundation at Clonfert records a similar chronicle. Founded in 560 AD, in his 75th year, tradition suggests that the rule for Clonfert monastery was dictated to Brendan by an angel. Such was the legacy of scholarship bestowed upon Clonfert by Brendan that some ten centuries later the place was considered as a site for the location of the newly emerging Trinity College. So important were Ardfert and Clonfert as religious centres that they both became dioceses with their own elaborate cathedrals. Clonfert's intricately carved mermaid in salute to Brendan the Navigator still guards its walls, while tradition suggests that its adjacent yew walk may have been planted by Brendan and his monks.

Such was Brendan the Navigator's missionary zeal that he also founded monasteries and spread the Gospel message in Scotland, Wales and France. However, his most renowned exploit was to sail the Atlantic in an Irish traditional boat made of leather and wicker. This voyage has become the stuff of legends! One such 10th century legend recalls how while at sea he set up camp on the back of a whale and cooked his fish supper there! (Ed. See page 33 for an account of his experience on the Island of Birds.) While this is the stuff of legend, the fact that such stories were built up around him serves to remind us of his fame and glory as an ecclesiastic even in medieval times.

Brendan ended his days in retirement in a convent on the shores of Loch Corrib and died there in 578 AD. His mortal body was returned to Clonfert and buried there in an unmarked grave. However, fifteen hundred years later, his spirit still lives, as the Clonfert Cathedral mermaid still holds a mirror in her hand, reflecting his past Clonfert glories, while his spirit of adventure and invention must surely have invaded Tralee in recent years as a new carrot washing machine was dedicated for missionary work across the seas in far away Swaziland.

Ardfert Cathedral

Association of Irish Floral Artists

National Flower Festival

'In Praise & Thanksgiving'

at

Cathedral of Saints Peter & Paul

&

St. Columba's Church of Ireland

Ennis, Co. Clare

19th - 21st June 2015

Supporting Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

Festival Admission : €10

Concert: **'Ceiliúradh na hInse'**

at

Cathedral of Saints Peter & Paul, Ennis

Saturday 20th June at 8:00pm

Concert Admission: €10

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Friday 19th June at 8:00pm

Closing Ceremony : St. Columba's Church of Ireland, Ennis
Sunday 21st June at 4:30pm

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Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes

Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry.
Vacant
Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Ruth Gill
Kilgolan House, Kilcormac, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 913 5341 Mob: 087 948 4402
Email: ruth_gill40@hotmail.com

EASTER GENERAL VESTRIES
Welcome to those who are newly registered as vestry members and many thanks to those who attended the Easter Vestry meetings. A sincere word of thanks to those who have served on Select Vestries and who are taking a short break - no doubt there will always be ways where you will still be involved in parish life.

The main topic for discussion this year has obviously been making preparations for a new rector and plans are well in hand for a visit from the Ministry & Resources group at the end of April. Also, work to be done on the rectory has been identified and this will be seen to over the next couple of months.

PASTORAL
The whole community was numbed by the sudden death of Richard Nevin. Deepest sympathy is extended to his mother Hazel, his sister Louise and brother Shane, also to his father, Tommy and to Reggie Neil. The large number of people, friends and neighbours, who attended his funeral service on the 2nd April bore testament to the communal outpouring of support and depth of feeling at the family's loss. Louise spoke very movingly of Richard, paying tribute to a much loved brother. Fr. Tom O'Halloran and Fr. Clooney attended the funeral service. Richard's body was laid to rest after having been accompanied by the congregation walking from the church to the new cemetery on the Nenagh road and with the Borrisokane Lord Mayor leading the way.

Others who have been bereaved are the relatives of the late Bernie Hobbs. Also sympathy is extended to Mrs. Maud Powell on the death of her sister-in-law, Ruby Wallace.

If there are parishioners who are ill and would like a pastoral visit, the Revd. Ruth is available.

THANKS
Mr. Aussie Dennison ran a Poker Classic at Nenagh Golf Club on the 27th March in aid of Borrisokane parish funds and the wonderful sum of €1,690 was raised on the night. He would like to thank all the people who bought tickets and gave spot prizes. Thanks to Aussie for once again organising this.

GOOD NEWS!
Congratulations to Millie and Robbie Sheils on the birth of their baby girl – a granddaughter for Des and Vera Larke.

Little Billy Goulding has been able to come home from a long stay in hospital in Dublin. The family are adjusting to having him home and look forward to life taking on some routine as time goes on.

Shinrone Group of Parishes

Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin
Rector: Canon Michael Johnston (on sick leave)
Priest-in-Charge: Archdeacon Wayne Carney
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 912 0021 Mob: 087 786 5234
Email: mapleire@eircom.net

Our thanks to Archdeacon Wayne Carney for his pastoral care of the parish and for chairing the General Easter Vestry meetings, all of which have now been held.

In Kinnitty all officers were re-elected, as they also were in Dunkerrin. In Aghancon Joe Dempsey took on the roll of Peoples Churchwarden, but will draw up a rota so that the duties are shared. This will also happen in Shinrone, where Heather Kenny agreed to remain as Peoples Churchwarden. The vestrymen were re-elected en bloc. In Shinrone Keith Mooney has taken on the office of People's Glebe Warden. Thank you to everyone for continuing with the work you do so well, especially the treasurers and secretaries. No easy job, but much appreciated.

As part of 'Any other business' in Shinrone, Mrs Mabel Wallace and Rev'd Janet presented a framed original Seating Plan of the church from 1882! This had originally been in the vestry and at some point, probably in the 50's in a 'clean up and out' was rescued by Major Tony Atkinson. He took it to Cloughmoyle and then to Laughton Cottage and after her mother, Anne's death, Antonia, now married to Dr Andrew Orr took it to Scotland! About 4 years ago Mabel and Janet stayed with the Orrs in Scotland and Andrew and Antonia decided to return it to Shinrone. Andrew has lovingly and carefully restored this historic document and we are very grateful to both Andrew and Antonia, not only for donating it back to the church but for looking after it for so many years. It is intended to hang it in the church at eye level where people can see who's seat they are sitting in!!!

Please continue to remember the Rector, Canon Michael, in your prayers, that he may be restored to fullness of health.

Easter was celebrated in all four churches, with Dunkerrin having their service on Easter Eve. Thank you to everyone who decorated the churches. Spring flowers are so beautiful.

Shinrone's Daffodil Day collection was very well supported and raised the amazing sum of €950 Especial thanks to all who picked and donated daffodils, to Richard Abraham for organising the coffee morning and sale in Cloughmoyle school and to Centra supermarket, Shinrone who allowed us to sell daffodils and collect in the shop. Olivia Whitten was there from 9am to 5pm. Truly a marathon effort!!

The Mothers' Union closing service was held in Aghancon church on the 24th March, it was followed by a sale and tea in Aghancon Hall. An enjoyable evening.
The regular Thursday Coffee Morning in Cloughmoyle School will be part of the Mothers Union Initiative 'Mum's in May' on the 14th May. Hopefully MU members will be able to be there and bring their friends.

Shinrone parish has held a pre-sale meeting and another will take place on the 11th May. We hope as many parishioners as possible will be able to attend so that the sale on Saturday June 13th will be more successful than ever. There will be a Fun Dog Show at this event. Get making those fancy dress outfits!! and teaching tricks to your canine friends!

Congratulations to Hazel Greene. At a prestigious ceremony in Galway for The Irish Fashion Innovation Awards, she won the Accessory Designer of the year category with her beautiful silk scarves. Very well done Hazel.

Another date for your diary. Heather and Stephen Kenny are hosting a Garden Coffee Day at their home, Domakeenan, Brosna, Birr on Saturday 23rd May from 10am - 12 noon and 2pm - 5pm They are raising funds for the Share A Dream Foundation, who organise wonderful treats for seriously ill and disabled children. Details from Stephen 086 3465252

Aghancon Hall held their AGM and Trevor Cole is the new chairman, taking over from Joe Dempsey. We wish him well in his new office.

Ina Blackwell is organising a quiz in aid of Aghancon church funds. Sheets are available at €2 each and the draw will take place at a Table Quiz in Aghancon Hall on Saturday 23rd May starting at 8.15pm Tables of 4 are €20 Details from Ina 0579131253

In Kinnitty, the Slieve Bloom Association celebrated their 40th anniversary. Reverend Janet was invited to the unveiling of a plaque to the late Paddy Lowry, a founder member, and dinner in the Community Centre. The Association has done wonderful work over the years in organising events and generally making the beauty of the Slieve Bloom mountains better known and more accessible to the general public.

Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh

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Email: bobhanna@eircom.net
Parish website: www.churchofirelandclare.com

MUSIC TOUR

Re', a Group of top Irish Trad musicians appear in St Columba's on Friday 8th May as part of their "Tunes in the Church " Tour throughout Ireland. The group is made up of Liam Ó Maonlaí (singer, piano and bodhrán), Cormac Begley (bass, baritone, treble and piccolo concertinas), Maitiú Ó Casaide (whistle, uilleann pipes), Eithne Ní Chatháin (singer, fiddle player, shruti box), Peter O Toole (singer, guitar and bouzouki).

SWITCH.

Another of the musical evenings organised by Clare Youth Service is on Friday15th In St Columba's.

FLOWERS

Flower Festival in St Columba's organised through the National Flower Festival who use our Church and Ennis Cathedral. Theme of flower displays is "In Praise and Thanksgiving". Date is June 19-21.

NEIGHBOURS

St John's, Cratloe, near Bunratty, a restored Barn Church from Penal Times, now in its beauty a popular wedding venue as well as a community church in the Limerick-Clare commuter area was the setting for a post Easter ecumenical venture for Christians on the edge of Shannon Town.

A small gathering of Anglicans and Methodists joined their Roman Catholic hosts for the evening prayer service built around the theme of Christian Unity, with the guest speaker being the Bishop of Limerick, the Rt Rev Brendan Leahy.

Host for the evening was Parish Priest Fr Liam Enright who led the liturgy with layfolk participating fully. Leading the small team who planned the event was Mr Jackie McNair (C of I) and Mr Martin Golden (RC) and Rev Vicki Lynch (Methodist). Canon Bob Hanna was also involved in the ceremony from the original conception last year. It is hoped to reciprocate the hospitality in Kilnasoolagh Church, Newmarket later in the year.

A heart-warming evening of Christian fellowship in the light of the Easter celebration included Hymn singing led by the St John's Choir and a children's Trad orchestra.

OLD FRIEND

The death of Mr Ken Hastie after a period of illness robs our parish of a great friend and popular figure who loved to join us every year for a couple of Sundays as a relief diocesan reader, staying usually with his lovely wife Evelyn at the church mobile home in Spanish Point. Former bank manager Ken hails from Middleton, Cork originally but in recent years had moved to Wicklow to be near a daughter and grandchildren. Ken's connections go back to Kilkee when the Clar Ellagh holiday community generously patronised the weekly worship among the few locals and summer holidaymakers. Since his death on Palm Sunday he has been in the thoughts of those of us who have been enriched by Ken's and Evelyn's enthusiasm in the faith and kindness.

FUNERAL

Mr James Briton Marsh, a key employee as an electrical engineer and project manager at Moneypoint coal-fired power station, over a 40 year career, who died from dementia, was buried in Kilrush. Canon Bob Hanna took the funeral in St Senan's Parish Church, Kilrush, kindly offered by Canon Michael Sheedy who along with curate Fr Raymond Stewart, assisted in the Anglican rite. Mr Marsh grew up in Carrickfergus, Co Antrim . His late wife Una, deceased for much of his marriage came from Mayo. They have two children.

Mr Marsh, an enthusiastic club cyclist in his day, was given a guard of honour by cycling colleagues. He was committed alongside his wife's remains at Shanakyle Cemetery, overlooking Inisscattery Isle.

GOOD FRIDAY

The testimony and reflection at the foot of the cross on Good Friday by sculptress Ms Holly Mullarkey amply completed Holy Week lunchtime devotions around the Passion Narratives. We are grateful to Holly who returned among us having set up her memorial World War 1 skull collection during Remembrance tide 2014. The Select Vestry are considering the possibility of mounting a small permanent exhibition of the skulls in St Columba's. Soup lunches completing the Narratives and prayers were provided most generously by Mrs Jennie Shaw and Mrs Anharad Harding with the collection going to charity. Thanks to them.

READERS

Thanks to our newest parish readers, Tim O Connell and Lawson Kirkpatrick for their efforts in Kilnasoolagh and Drumcliffe respectively, on Low Sunday after Easter.

Clonfert Diocese

Aughrim & Creagh Unions of Parishes

Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Ahascragh, Ardrahan, Clontuskert and Woodlawn

Vacant
Priest-in-charge: Very Rev. Maurice Sirr,
Tel: (061) 277372. Mob: (087) 2541121
Email: msirr@iol.ie
Parish website: www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org

GLEBE SCHOOL.
The Parents Association at the Glebe School Aughrim would like to thank all who supported their recent clothes collection and raffle.

Congratulations to a former pupil of the Glebe, Lionel Newton son of Robin and Kathleen on achieving his PHD at the European Monocular Biology Laboratory, Heidelberg, Germany. In his academic career he researched the mechanism through which tissues migrate as the embryo develops to rise to organ structure and function. He has now decided to move into a business role to work as a technology consultant at Accenture, London. We wish him well in his career.

COMMISSION OF MINISTRY AND RESOURCES
On the 16th of April the commission visited all six churches in our group, [something that had not occurred before] and they then sat down with parishioners to discuss our hopes and needs for the future of the group. It was felt by everyone that this was a very constructive exercise and we await the commission's report in due course.

BEREAVEMENT
The death occurred of Freeman Bigo Dreaper-Eyre of Eyreville Kiltormer on 21st March 2015. Freeman was a native of Norville, Abbeyleix, Co. Laoise. His funeral service which was conducted by Rev Maurice Sirr assisted by Rev Trevor Sullivan and Fr Bernie Costello was held in St. Matthew's Church Clontuskert and the interment took place in St. Michael and All Angel's churchyard, Abbeyleix. We extend our sympathy to his wife Charity, son George, daughter in law Elaine and grand- daughters Cloe and Aimee.

Children with their Sunday School prizes

Clonfert Group of Parishes

Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna

Vacant
Priest in Charge: Very Rev. Patrick L. Towers
Tel: (090) 9684547. Mob: (086) 8140649
Email: towers.patrick@gmail.com

CLONFERT
It has been announced that The Rev'd Alan Nevin who has been Rector of the Clonfert Group of Parishes since 2004 has resigned. We all wish him well for a future of good health and wish to record our appreciation of his ministry amongst us.

At the time of writing these notes we are looking forward to the Sunday visit of Bishop Kenneth to the three churches of Portumna, Eyrecourt and Banagher.

On Mayday Christopher Bourns and Sarah Harte will be married in Eyrecourt. We send them our warmest congratulations and best wishes. Sarah is a member of the Garda Siochana whilst Christopher is a local farmer. My only experience of a female law enforcement officer dressed in a white dress was watching several times the film Miss Congeniality where Sandra Bullock played the FBI agent Gracie Harte who goes undercover in a beauty pageant. I am wondering if the wedding will have any action similar to that in the film! Will let you know next month.

On the first Sunday of May we are looking forward in Banagher to the Baptisms of Samantha and Olivia O'Neill the twin daughters of Liga and Albert.

On the second Sunday in May in Banagher we return to baptismal joy with the Baptism of David Fallon, son of Gerard Fallon and Jill Cunningham Fallon.

On the third Sunday in May in Clonfert Cathedral we look forward to the Baptism of Cathal, son of Helen Kenny & Jonathan, and grandson of Freda Kenny.

On the fourth Sunday in May in the afternoon we, of different genders and states, celebrate motherhood with the Mothers Union Diocesan Service in Eyrecourt.

On the fifth Sunday (Trinity Sunday) in May at 11am we shall have the Clonfert Group Service Eucharist in Clonfert Cathedral with a reflection on the renowned Andrei Rublev icon which depicts the Holy Trinity. Maybe we shall say the Nicene Creed in the original form by omitting the words "and the Son" as a reflection on the filioque controversy in deference to members of the Orthodox community whom we hope to be present with us.

ANOTHER OMISSION (The Pilicrepus Mensa controversy)
Last month I forgot to include the report of the considerable successes of Banagher Parish Table Tennis Team under the captaincy of Ken Hardy. It was made worse because I attached the table tennis news to the wrong report. I duly apologise to the Suck Valley Beekeepers for an erroneous inclusion to their Newsletter and to the winning Table Tennis players for their exclusion from last month's Newslink.

PARISH READER
I would like to thank Mr Jerome Phair for all his invaluable help in taking Services within the group as a Parish Reader. We are blessed with several good readers within the parish and I am sure we could advance the role of reading to the role of leading the worship. I shall suggest this advancement of participation to some of you.

VISUAL ARTS
My wife Anne held an exhibition of her Paintings and Ceramic works in the Library in Eyrecourt as part of the East Galway Library Trail exhibitions co- ordinated by Jackie Eastwood (Ballinasloe Parish). The library used to be the Parochial School. It was a lovely evening with Anne being introduced by fellow artist Nessa Porter Kelly (Ahascragh Parish).

Anne wishes to thank very much those who came to the opening from the Clonfert Group of Parishes with their friends.

Limerick Diocese

Limerick City Parish

St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Michael's Pery Sq. and Abington
Dean: The Very Rev. Sandra Pragnell
The Deanery, 7 Kilbane,
Castletroy, Limerick
Tel: 061-338697 Mob: 087-2658592
Email: sandrapragnell@eircom.net

Curate Assistant: Rev Edna Wakely
50 Ballinvoher, Fr. Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick
Tel: 061-302038 Mob: 086-3574917
Email: ednawakely@hotmail.com

EASTER EVE EGG HUNT
Easter Eve 2015 was a glorious day for our now annual Easter Egg Hunt in the grounds of St Mary's Cathedral. It is one of the special occasions for the children of the parish. After all the eggs have been found, we all go into the cathedral and look at what God did for us in Creation, and the story of Noah and the ark. Then we wait for the fire of Easter lit outside by one of the churchwardens, and our new Paschal Candle is lit – Greg Ramendik carefully carried it up the nave, stopping three times as we said, The Light of Christ. Once placed safely on the candle stand, we had prayers and some singing, which some visitors who were looking round the cathedral decided to join in with. The final part of the little ceremony was to gather around the font, where Rev'd Edna blessed the water, and we all sprinkled or splashed each other with the water, to remind us of our important baptism promises. And then we had a lovely tea party in the consistorial court.

Easter Egg hunters ready to go on Easter Eve at St Mary's Cathedral.jpg

BEREAVEMENT
It was with deep regret we learned of the death of Dennis Gale who died on the 21st of April. We extend very sincere sympathy to his wife Phyllis and their families and relatives.

CONGRATULATIONS to Betty McGlone, founder member of the Limerick/Tipperary branch of the Samaritans, who so far has given 40 years' service as a volunteer.

CONFIRMATION 2015 is taking place in St. Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 17th May at 11.15am. We pray for those preparing for Confirmation – Anna, Amy, Ellen, Grainne, Lucy, Teresa and Tracey. Confirmation Classes take place in Villiers School on Wednesdays at 4pm.

LAUNCH OF MUNGRET MONASTIC COMPLEX INTERPRETATIVE PANELS
The historic Mungret church complex in west Limerick has been undergoing restoration, and with the help of the City and Council archaeologist and a hardworking team of local people, the area is now well sign-posted and has new permanent interpretative signs, full of information and attractively presented. The Dean of Limerick was invited to attend on 10th April and she and Fr Richie Davern, a member of the heritage team, together blessed the latest sign. An area rich in history, dedicated to St Nessan, this site ought to be better known.

CATHEDRAL TOWER NEWS
The RR Cherry Cup competition and South District AGM were held on Sunday last 12th April in St Mary's, Doneraile. Cutting to the chase, 5 teams participated with the Cup being won by the home team, Doneraile, who rang exceptionally well! Runners-up were St Mary's Cathedral, with the following team:- 1. Alan Hegarty, 2. Mike Pomeroy (c), 3. Gerry O'Shea, 4. Stephen Jordan, 5. Pat Mulcahy, Tenor Kieron Brislane. St Mary's Ringers have qualified to participate in the Murphy Cup competition, scheduled for 16th May. Venue, though not yet confirmed, is likely to be Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Congratulations to St Mary's Ringers and very best wishes to them for continued success.

SUPPORTING ST VINCENT DE PAUL IN LIMERICK CITY
Don't forget that items of toiletries or non-perishable foodstuffs can be left in St. Mary's Cathedral.

Please keep in your prayers all those who are preparing for exams, especially the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert.

Adare and Kilmallock Group of Parishes

Adare, Croom, Kilmallock & Kilpeacon
Rector: Canon Liz Beasley
The Rectory, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061 396227 Mob: 087-7199750
Email: revlizadare@gmail.com

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER
It has been a full month in our churches, with more on the horizon. Our full slate of Holy Week services allowed people to worship and remember the events leading up to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion (and subsequent resurrection!) in a number of different ways. Highlights were the family Good Friday service in Kilpeacon and the Easter Vigil in Kilmallock on Saturday night. By candlelight, we heard the Scriptural stories of salvation history, of God's continuing presence with God's people, before renewing our baptismal vows and proclaiming Christ as risen, and then joining in Eucharist together.

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION
Another highlight on Easter Sunday was the baptism of Alexander Murphy at the Kilpeacon Church. Alex is the son of Dominic and Lucy Murphy and grandson of Callie Deakin, a member of Kilpeacon.

Alex's two older siblings and the children of the church looked on as he was baptized and welcomed into the Church.

Dominic and Lucy Murphy look on as Rev Liz Beasley prepares to baptise their son, Alex, on Easter Sunday.

On 26 April, we look forward to Bishop Kenneth Kearon being in Adare to confirm our nine candidates. The candidates did a great job of reading the Passion Gospel, in parts, on Palm Sunday in Adare. We continue to pray for them as they prepare for confirmation: Adam, Heather, Jessica (who will also be baptized), Jon, Leah, Lucy, Robyn, Robyn (yes, there are two), and Sam.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

At the other end of the spectrum of life, a memorial service for Anne Patricia Ryan was held at the Knockainey Church on Saturday, 18 April. The beautiful St. John's Church was packed to overflowing as people came from near and far to remember Anne and pay their respects. Anne, originally from New Zealand, had lived most of her adult life in Ireland, at Scarteen, Knocklong, before returning to New Zealand in her retirement years. She was nearly 90 when she died. A funeral, and burial, was held in New Zealand after her death on 11 March. May she rest in peace.

MOTHERS' UNION

Two Mothers' Union events have been held in the past month. On 25 March, we gathered at St. Nicholas, Adare, to celebrate Mother's Union Lady Day (the Feast of the Annunciation). Rev. Liz Beasley, Rector, was the preacher and celebrant at this service of Holy Communion. On 14 April, the Adare group gathered at Embury Close, Adare, for a presentation by Hazel Sherlock, the all-Ireland vice-president of Mothers' Union. The branch from Templemore, Co. Tipperary, joined in the meeting also.

FESTIVAL OF FAITH & FLOWERS

And finally, we are getting close to our 700th anniversary celebration of St. Nicholas, Adare, with the Festival of Faith & Flowers on 22-24 May. The history of St. Nicholas will be told in 21 flower arrangements throughout the church, by some expert arrangers. Please come! For enquiries and group bookings, please email faithandflowers700@gmail.com.

As a preliminary event to the Festival, we will be holding a book launch celebrating the publication of "Billy's Adare: In His Own Words," by Bill Overton, a long-time resident of Adare. The launch will be held on Thursday, 7 May, at 7.00pm in Adare, with Lady Geraldine Dunraven speaking.

Janet Bray, Rev. Liz Beasley, and Meriel Clarke pose in the cloisters of St. Nicholas with a small sampling of the treats that await visitors to the Festival of Faith & Flowers, the church's 700th anniversary celebration.

Rev. Liz Beasley and three children of the church get some flowers ready for the 700th anniversary celebration of St. Nicholas Church.

40 THOMAS ST
LIMERICK

TEL: 061 ~ 414967
FAX: 061 ~ 415365

Thompson Undertakers
Limerick

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes

Rathkeale, Askeaton, Kilcornan & Kilnaughtin
Rector: Rev. Dr. Keith Scott
The Rectory, Askeaton, Co. Limerick
Tel: 061 – 398647 Mob: 087-2885169
Email: rathkeale@limerick.anglican.org

After a busy few Holy Week and Easter one would think it time for a rest, but the Kilcornan Mothers' Union is still working hard. Their AGM will take place at 8:00 p.m. on 11th May in the Rectory, so come along one and all to join in this important event. On Tuesday 19th May there will be a 'Mums in May' coffee morning at the Rectory from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. This is open to all. There will be a 'guess the mum' competition for which people are invited to bring along a picture of their own mother for an Identity competition.

Sunday 31st May is Trinity Sunday, it is also a fifth Sunday, and it is St. Brendan's Tarbert turn for the joint service at 11:00 a.m. Do come along and join in our worship of the one Holy and undivided Trinity. We are planning to have confirmations this year, and our Bishop will join us on Sunday September 7th for that event. If there is anyone who would like to be confirmed then please contact Rev'd Keith. Classes will be beginning soon.

"Our parishes extend prayerful sympathy to the friends and family of Baron Henry Schaffalinsky who died in Denmark recently. Known as "Schaffy", Baron Shaffalinsky lived for a number of years in west Limerick and was a member of Rathkeale parish."

Ardfert Diocese

Tralee & Dingle Unions of Parishes

Tralee, Ballymacelligott, Ballyseedy, Dingle, Kilgobbin and Killiney

Rector Archdeacon Susan Watterson,
Teach an tSolais, Ashe St, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066 719 5416 Mob: 087 689 2025
Email: tralee@ireland.anglican.org

The Churches were beautifully decorated for Easter, the flowers were lovely and so welcome after Lent. Thank you to all who cleaned and decorated the churches, to our Diocesan Readers for their part in leading the Holy week and Easter Services, to Tom and Yvonne Blennerhassett for providing the 'fire' for the Easter Vigil and to all who contributed in any way toward making Easter so special. The Easter Vigil in Ballyseedy was well attended again this year, our next evening service in Ballyseedy will be on Saturday May 24th at 7pm.

Thank you to all who organised, supported and donated to our Easter Sale. We are most grateful to the co-ordinator who helped everything run so smoothly. A total of €1,620 was raised on what was a lovely occasion.

For some time we have been considering forming a Book Club, and now that the busy time during April has finished we have decided to hold the first meeting in Stoker's Lodge at 8pm on Thursday 14 May (Ascension Day). If you are interested, the book to be read in advance so that it can be discussed at this first meeting is 'Miss Garnet's Angel' by Sally Vickers, a must of all lovers of Venice. If you can't get it through our local bookshops it is available on Amazon; kindle users will obviously find it more quickly and easily. At future meetings, members will take it in turns to recommend a book, preferably one they have read and are familiar with, and then lead the discussion of it at the following meeting so it is no harm to have a few ideas in hand. The day and time for future meetings can be discussed during this first meeting. Happy reading.

Kingdom County Fair will be held at Ballybeggan Racecourse on Sunday 10 May. Volunteers are needed for stewarding etc. during the course of the day. Anyone who is free to help should contact Robert Groves.

The Links Group. The annual outing will be to the Beara Peninsula. The ladies will set out on Saturday 16 May, heading towards Kenmare and pausing for a wander around Derreen Gardens in Lauragh, before staying overnight in Allihies. As usual they hope to attend a local church service on Sunday before visiting the Copper Mine Museum. All this, combined with good food, hopefully some sunshine, and the usual hilarity along the way, should make for a great weekend. Enjoy ladies, enjoy, before entering your Summer hibernation.

On Thursday May 14th Ascension Day, there will be a service of Holy Communion in St. John's Tralee at 11am, this will replace the usual Wednesday Communion that week.

TRALEE & BALLYMACELLIGOTT UNION EASTER VESTRY RESULTS.
Select Vestry Members
Mark Boyle; David Blennerhassett; Godfrey Blennerhassett; Maraquita Blennerhassett; Mona Butler; Olive Flynn; Margaret Groves; Winnie Knightly; Michael Latchford; Phyllis Mason; George Poff; Sara Ronan.
Rector's Wardens
St. John's: Susan Keating Ballymacelligott: Ann Shanahan
Ballyseedy: Gill Slye
People's Wardens
St. John's: Niall Groves Ballymacelligott: Trevor West
Ballyseedy: Eileen Peevers
Treasurer; Phyllis Mason assisted by Sara Ronan
Secretary; Olive Flynn

FROM THE WEST
Please remember Anna Jauch and Max von Senger in your prayers as they prepare for the Blessing of their Marriage in St James Dingle on Thursday 14th May. Anna and Max will be married in Germany and fly to Kerry for their Blessing in order to be with family and friends.

The beautiful West Kerry weather has brought many visitors to Dingle. St. James' welcomed First Year students from The Church of Ireland College of Education, swelling the Easter Sunday congregation 75. The service was ably lead by Diocesan Readers Barbara Buckley and David Frizelle. Thank you both.

The next big event in St. James' will be the service in Irish in conjunction with Féile na Bealtaine at 10.30am on Sunday 3 May. Everyone with a cúpla focal will be welcome!

St. James' will host an exhibition of the work of The Irish Patchwork Society on Saturday and Sunday 6th and 7th of June. The exhibition will be open from 11am to 5pm on both days. There is no charge for admission but donations to church funds will be appreciated.

The Irish Patchwork Society (IPS)
South Western Branch
will hold an exhibition of their work in
St James' Church of Ireland
Main St, Dingle, Co. Kerry
Saturday & Sunday, 6th & 7th June
11am-5pm
coinciding with National Quilting Week

Killarney and Aghadoe Union of Parishes

Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross

Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Simon J Lumby
The Rectory, Rookery Road, Ballycasheen, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 66 31832 Mob:086-8703997
Email: killarney@ardfert.anglican.org

SPRING

With the extraordinary good weather we've had in the last month it's no wonder people are feeling positive. Easter has come and gone and we're all looking forward to a long hot summer. But for some of our congregation it has got a little bit too hot already. The annual wild fire outbreaks in Killarney National Park are becoming more and more threatening with each year that passes. The view from Hilda and Bob Harmon's house in Muckross during early April was certainly intimidating, especially at night time, as the flames and smoke drew closer. Thankfully, an unexpected bout of rain brought an end to the inferno.

The reason for these wild fires is very simple. Farmers who live on marginal unproductive land have little option other than to provide grass for sheep grazing. However, in order to achieve this they need to burn off ling and bell heather every year on their farms adjacent to the park. The law of the land prohibits them from doing this after the end of March. Unfortunately, with 225 rain days on average annually, the chances of getting a match alight during the winter months are few and far between, let alone setting fire to gorse and scrub. So, when the weather dries out, they are left with no option other than to break the law and scarper before they're seen and their grants are withdrawn.

So, is it the law or the farmers that's wrong? And if it's the law, why have we the imminent prospect of having one of the biggest outdoor concerts in the country in the middle of our national park this month, despite the fact that that is in direct contravention of park policy? The answer to that is very simple and can be summed up in a single word – greed! Big business is back. The bean counters living in our town see an opportunity to make a killing and they're going for it. If the ethos of national parks globally has to be sacrificed, so be it. Duran Duran will certainly be a big draw and the money's going to roll in. But the local farmers are probably not going to make a cent out of it. Meanwhile, listening to the rhetoric from park management, TDs and councillors on Radio Kerry lambasting farmers during the fire season was sickening – double standards all the way.

Is this something new? Not really; there was a certain incident in the temple in Jerusalem a while ago where Jesus took on the bean counters because they took advantage of an opportunity to the detriment of what was good and honest. We need to get back to putting people and sustainable livelihoods first and set the law right around them. With such an outlook, fires threatening the park and the people living in its vicinity will quickly become a thing of the past. As for proper management of the park with regard to its near neighbours, now that is a long way off!

EXHIBITION

On Sunday April 19th our Sunday School children had their first day "out of" the church this year when Lynda took them on a wildlife walk. All of the children got the chance to photograph what they saw as a beautiful flower, bush or tree. And the results are spectacular! The results are so good that they will be going on display during the month at the back of the church with a profile of each young photographer along with a bit of background on their subject. This is an exhibition not to be missed.

CONCERTS

We are always stretched at this time of year with concerts and this year is particularly busy. Unlike other churches who have to be extremely innovative in their fundraising efforts, we are lucky enough to have landed a cash cow simply because of where we live. That said, everyone works extremely hard to maximise the visitor experience and little is left to chance for the visiting choirs and punters. Our concerts during May include:

May 4th Mon	Cormac Begley
May 18th Mon	MTSU Scholar Cantorum (Witte Travel)
May 20th Wed	Eastern Kentucky University Choir (Alison Moore)
May 23rd Sat	Imperial Male Voice Choir (Bob Hawkes)
May 30th Sat	Anne Farrelly

Kilcolman Union of Parishes

Kilcolman, Kiltallagh and Glenbeigh

Vacant
Priest-in-Charge: The Rev Jim Stephens
Kilderry, Milltown, Co. Kerry
Mob: 087 052 9107
Email: stephens.j@temmler.eu or stiofain.s@gmail.com

SERVICES

Kiltallagh 9.45 am (except the 1st Sunday HC at 7pm)
HC 1st & 3rd
MP 2nd & 4th

Kilorglin 11.00 pm
HC 2nd & 4th
MP 1st & 3rd

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER DAY SERVICES

Many thanks to all who attended the various services during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday morning, especially to all who read and sung at the Tenebrae service, and to all who sung at the Easter Morning service in Killorglin - you certainly gave a lift to our worship.

Thanks also to Linda, John and Pam who organized the egg hunt at St Michael's after the morning service.

Thanks to all who prepared and decorated our churches.
'Christ is Risen!'

EASTER VESTRY.

The Easter vestry was held in St Michaels Church on Wednesday the 15th April. I would like to thank the outgoing vestry and church wardens.

Matt Murphy and Ivan Stephens in Killorglin, Peter Glendenning and Nigel Boyle in Castlemaine and to the out-going Glebe Wardens John Flynn and Kenneth O'Neill.

The Following wardens were appointed:
Pauline Dobbins and Matt Murphy in Killorglin
Shirley Day and Mervyn Boyle in Castlemaine
John Flynn and Kenneth O Neill remain as Glebe Wardens.

Those elected to the serve on the select vestry are:
Barbara Buckley, Nigel Boyle, Eric Champ, Maureen Corcoran, Shirley Day, Peter Evans, Peter Clendenning, Shauna Moroney, Karen Murphy, Linda Spillane, Ivan Stephens & Lesley West.

SAFEGUARDING TRUST
Safeguarding trust training will be hosted by Killarney parish for the Ardfert area on Saturday the 18th April.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES
These have begun in Killorglin Church and are held each Tuseday evening at 7.30pm. It is hoped that the confirmation class will take part in the evening service in Kiltallagh on the 3rd of May.

LUTHERAN SERVICE
A service according to the Lutheran rite will be held in St Michaels Church on Saturday at 1.00pm.Pastor Martin Wielepp who is based in Dublin will preside.

After the ecumenical Lenten walk from St Michael's to St James'.

Kenmare & Dromod Union of Parishes

Kenmare, Sneem, Waterville and Valentia
Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Michael Cavanagh
St Patrick's Rectory, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 664 8566 Mob: 087 1606312
Email: michael.cavanagh@eircom.net

Our Easter services were again very well attended – from the sadness of parting, following the cross into the garden and then recoiling as we heard the sound of the nails hammered in, through to the joy of Resurrection, beginning with breakfast by the side of the Atlantic on a perfect spring morning and then the celebrations at services not just in Kenmare and Sneem as normal, but in St Michael's Waterville as well. Even though we know the story, it comes to us fresh every year. As do the Easter bonnets.

Two of our Kid's Shedders have been up to remarkable things lately - Morgan Thomas climbed the 3406 ft of Carrantuohill on St Patrick's Day - hard enough for anyone, but when you're only five years old, quite an achievement! The look on the faces of the grown-ups struggling to put one foot in front of the other when they saw Morgan powering up must have been quite a sight.

And congratulations too to Laura Pototzki - not content with winning 5 competitions in her age group in November 2014 in the all Ireland competition in Athlone, in Düsseldorf in the European grade feis held on 10th April this year, she came third in 2 competitions despite being the youngest competitor in her age group.

Laura Pototzki

Dominic Odanga is the first-ever graduate from Cheryl's Children's home in Nairobi, the street-orphan charity that our union of churches support. We received the following just this week.

Hello I believe by God grace you and your family are doing great, it has been ages since we heard from each other. As for me am really doing well both academically and physically and I thank God for His grace and favor upon my life. Eventually this being my final year, I would like to take this opportunity to place on record of my heartfelt gratitude for the support you and your church extended to me. I was able to attend may internship program for 4 months this being my last month at Sarova Panafric Hotel, what I can say is that I have really learned a lot getting the experience and exposure of how the industry works it has been a learning experience for me since the hotel is located in the middle of the city it's a busy hotel. And this year will be my final year in school. Am really short of words of how I can express myself my heartfelt gratitude, I can't compare myself how I was in the past and how i am today I am becoming better day by day and I believe God has greater plans for me. I have learned that people will forget what you did, people will forget what you said, but people will never forget how you made them feel. You made feel that I have a family who touched my life and changed my past know I Can see a brighter future ahead of me, I do still love that old saying that say, when you are down to nothing, God is up to something. Pass my love and gratitude to the church tell them how grateful I am for the support I received my God bless you All.
Love you all Dominic Odanga.

Methodist News

Adare & Ballingrane Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Bill Olmsted
Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Rd,
Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061 396236
Email: william@olmsteds.net

As we look back on Easter we rejoice in the wonderful season past. We had a great Bible study and some wonderful Holy week services. On Palm Sunday we had a great exchange with Rev Keith Scott who preached here, while Rev Bill was in Askeaton in the Church of Ireland. Easter Sunday morning at 6am saw many people from the churches in Adare celebrate Dawn Mass at the Franciscan Abbey ruins. Later in the morning we had powerful worship at both Churches.

At the decoration of Adare Church on Easter Sunday

On the Sunday after Easter we had a Lay preacher---this is a Methodist tradition for that Sunday as there are Lay Preachers in every Methodist Church in Ireland. Mr Clifford Guest from the Roscrea Circuit was in both Churches.

Sunday, 19th we welcomed a young man named Damian Shorten---active in Church of Ireland Youth work and the Grandson of Methodists in both churches--as our guest preacher. It has been a great season to remember our Covenant with the Church of Ireland.

Looking ahead for us we will have our annual Field meeting in the Adare Manor Golf Club by an old tree where John Wesley once preached. The traditional outdoor service will be June. We also look forward to Annual Conference in Belfast early in June.

At the Easter Egg hunt

Christ Church Limerick, united Presbyterian & Methodist and Christ Church Shannon, joint Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Ireland

Minister: Rev. Vicki Lynch
The Manse, 15 Aylesbury,
Clonmacken, Limerick.
Tel: 061 325325 Mobile: 086 8292073
Email: vickilynch@eircom.net

Anna-Victoria Lynch, Youth & Community Worker at Christ Church, contributes this month's notes

This month in Christ Church and Central Buildings, we've been getting into swing of spring with some joyful and celebratory events. We have had lots of different things happening, but have all been in the spirit of celebration and sharing.

Jane and Cephas Nzvaura celebrating renewal of their vows on their 25th wedding anniversary

At the end of March, we were host to a wonderful 25th wedding anniversary vow renewal service of a couple in our congregation, Jane and Cephas Nzvaura, who had invited all their friends, family, and also our congregation to join them in celebration. It was a colourful and joyous service, and the couple had decided to wear bridal clothing, and had a bridal party, to fully get into the wedding vow renewal spirit. There was also some Zimbabwean singing, praying, and dancing, which really reinforced the fact that we were all joined in vibrant celebration, and we were so blessed to witness the acknowledgement of the love shared by the couple.

On Easter Sunday we had a service that was highly attended by our children and young people, and it was great to see so many young and lively faces, all excited about the day ahead. In the week leading up to Easter, we were donated some very unique Happy Easter Eggs, which are high quality milk chocolate eggs in colourful packaging, which include a little leaflet about the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, so they are both tasty and educational. We had brought along 30 of them, the others having been donated to local churches, and we almost didn't have enough for all the children and young people....almost!

Each month in Central Buildings, I as the youth and community worker hold a bake and share Afternoon Tea Party, which is attended by a group of young women (and one young man) who all gather together to share their goodies with each other, and have chats about everything from what's happening in their own lives, to issues regarding politics and human rights. Each month is themed, and this month's theme was Indian cinema, and as such there was some lovely traditional Indian clothing worn, and delicious Indian style goodies on offer; even I tried my hand at wrapping a saree. It was a great evening of fellowship and sharing.

Last Friday, we were invited to an ecumenical service in Cratloe Church, which was organised by the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland. A group of us went representing Christ Church, and we got involved in the service, by volunteering for prayers and readings. It was a good opportunity to mix with members of other denomination's congregations, and to share worship together in the united Spirit of Christ, despite our different traditions. Even after the service, sharing and conversation continued during the tea and biscuits that had been prepared in the school hall.

St John's Church, Cratloe

This month has been a time of sharing and getting to know other people's traditions, and celebrating our own also. We celebrated with people from different denominations and, whether through celebrating with people from Zimbabwe, or learning how to enjoy Indian food and clothing, learned about other people's cultures. Even though we are all different, we are still all united through the Spirit, through celebrations of love and creativity. We look forward to upcoming opportunities to share with each other!

LIMERICK
Sunday Service 11.30 am.
Holy Communion 1st Sunday
Family Service 3rd Sunday
Sunday School 1st, 2nd & 4th Sundays
Youth Group 2nd & 4th Sundays
Youth Group Mondays 7.30 – 9pm – contact Rev Vicki Lynch
Prayer group Wednesdays 7.30pm, CB2

SHANNON
Contact Rev Vicki Lynch for details

KILKEE
Sunday Service 11am

Killarney, Kenmare & Millstreet Methodist Churches

[part of the Cork South & Kerry Circuit]
Minister: Rev. Laurence Graham
10 Flesk Grove, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 6631613 Mob: 087-2745044
Email: laurence.graham@irishmethodist.org
Web site: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry

Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team:
Ed & Jean Ritchie
Tel: 064 6620580

KILLARNEY Methodist Church East Avenue, Killarney
Sunday Services: 9 and 11 a.m. (inc. Children's' programme at 11)
Prayer meetings: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8.00 a.m. – 9.00 a.m.
Bible Study Meetings: Wednesday 7.30 p.m. Friday 10.00 a.m.
Drop in for coffee each Friday 11.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.
Parent and Toddler Group: Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Youth Club: Some Friday nights 8.00 p.m.

KENMARE "Gateway" Gortamullin, Killarney Road, Kenmare.
Sunday Service. 11a.m. (preceded by coffee inc. Children's programme)
Weekly Bible Study/Fellowship meetings. Tuesdays at 8.00 p.m.
Wednesdays at 10.00 a.m.
Drop in for coffee each Wednesday 11am – 12.00 p.m.
Youth Club second and fourth Friday 7.00-8.30 p. m.

MILLSTREET
Services every Sunday evening at 6.30 p. m. Meeting in "The Lighthouse, Town Square, Millstreet.
Bible study every Tuesday at 8 p.m. in "The Lighthouse" Centre on the town square. Entitled "Step by Step Bible Group" this group is open to anyone who wants to know more about the Bible and grow in their faith.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
Our meetings in Dingle for May are Gairdin Mhuire Day Care Centre, Green Street, Dingle on the 31st May at 7.30pm and at 14 Cluain Na Fiadh, Deerpark. Lispole on the 28th May at 7.30pm and BeenBawn Cottage, Binn Ban, Dingle on the 14th May at 7.30pm.

In Castleisland everyone is welcome to join us on the last Monday of each month meeting at 7.30pm in An Ríocht, Crageens, Castleisland. This is the health and leisure club located beside the athletics track in Castleisland. Our May meeting is scheduled for Monday 25th May.

"No Biscuits" ladies lifestyle group meet on the last Monday of the month. The May meeting is scheduled for Monday 25th at 11am.

Men's Breakfast meeting in Killarney at 8.30am on Saturday 30th May. We are hoping to have a tour of Muckross Gardens with Stephen Moore. We're hoping for better weather than last year!

OTHER NEWS
During May the Millstreet congregation is looking forward to sharing in weekly Bible studies for seven weeks with members of Kiskeam/Boherbue Roman Catholic parish. The meetings will be based on some of the content of the Alpha course and will take place in Kiskeam Community Centre at 8.00 p. m.

The June bank holiday weekend is again the BikeFest in Killarney when thousands of bikers will descend on the town. This year we're partnering again with the members of the Christian Motorcycle Association of Ireland and we'll be doing a family fun day at the church on Saturday 30th May. There will be bouncy castles, free refreshment and lots of music. If you're in Killarney that day make sure to come and visit. Please also pray that as we 'give' free refreshments, music and entertainment that it will also be a symbol of the free grace which God offers each of us.

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Shannon DeLaureal
The Manse, The Mall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 21670 Mobile: 085 1920 808
Email: Shannon.delaureal@irishmethodist.org

One of the things I love about Holy Week and the Easter season are the hymns we sing in worship. As a United Methodist clergywoman from Louisiana, I was not familiar with the hymn "I Will Sing the Wondrous Story." What a beautiful hymn . . . the words speak of a personal journey through many hardships in life . . . and yet, this hymn-writer continues to sing "the wondrous story of how Christ died for me" as a proclamation that through his death and resurrection Christ is present and offering guidance, no matter the circumstances. What assurance! What hope! And the tune entitled "HYFRYDOL" is a rolling melody which is rather sing-able and memorable. Can you tell this hymn is becoming one of my all-time favourites? There are others of course . . . "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord" for Good Friday and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" for Easter Sunday. If I don't sing these hymns, then Easter just hasn't happened for me. I connect the most glorious day for worship with song and music.

John Wesley strongly encouraged the Methodists to sing in worship. In fact, he offered them some instructions on how to sing!

"Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength . . . above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven." (From John Wesley's Select Hymns, 1761 as noted in The United Methodist Hymnal, 1989).

May we be encouraged to lift our voices to praise God in worship as well as in our everyday living.

SUNDAY SERVICES:
10:00am – Borrisokane
11:30am – Cloughjordan on 1st & 2nd Sundays
10:15am – Cloughjordan on 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays
11:45am – Roscrea
7:00pm – Shinrone

SPECIAL EVENTS:
St. Cronan's Youth Club: This group will meet next on Saturday 23rd May for a BBQ from 7pm-9pm. Please contact Rosie Gee for details concerning venue at 086 1973311.

"Living Together Well in a Culturally Diverse Society": Corrymeela is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with a Dublin weekend event. Friday 8th May – Sunday 10th May. Everyone is welcome to take part in the event. However registration is needed. For more info please go to https://corrymeela-dublin-event.eventbrite.ie.

Christian Aid Coffee Morning: All are welcome to a coffee morning on Friday 15 May from 10:30-12noon at Roscrea Methodist Hall in order to benefit Christian Aid.

Antique Victorian Tea Party: Everyone's invited to Roscrea Methodist Hall, Friday 5th June, from 7-9pm for an antique tea party. €5/ adult. Children are free. Antique items of interest on display. Cake stall & Bran dip. Tea/coffee and sweet treats served by people in costume! All are welcome to dress vintage style.

Easter blessings to all,
Rev. Shannon DeLaureal

Methodist Midlands & Southern District Spring Synod

Report by Rev Laurence Graham

Saturday 21st March turned out to be a lovely sunny day and the streets and squares of central Limerick looked really well as we all drove round and round looking for parking spaces! The Ministerial session met first and all Ministers reaffirmed their adherence to the doctrines and disciplines of the Methodist church. It was also decided to write a letter to Mrs. Loida McFarland, widow of Rev. George McFarland. After some years of illness we had been delighted to welcome George to the Ministerial session of the Spring Synod last year in Carlow but for most of us that would be the last time we'd see him on this earth. His life and ministry continues to be appreciated by us all.

After lunch, during which quite a few people had indigestion due to the number of points that Wales were scoring against Italy in the rugby, we reconvened for a service of Holy Communion. Rev. Laurence Graham preached at this, attending his last Synod on this District after thirteen years. As part of the business a number of elections took place with Mr. Ken McCormack being elected as our lay rep. on the General Committee and Rev. Dr. Sahr Yambasu elected as our new District Stationer. There then followed a long list of reports many of which we had read earlier but some of which we discussed.

YOUTH & CHILDREN

Particularly exciting was the report from the Youth and Children's committee describing several wonderful District events that had taken place for children and young people. At one of them, the Soul Mates House Party, "....we looked at the rhythm of our lives and the rhythm of each day and where we can connect with God." What a wonderful example for us all. An exciting development was an overnight event in Waterford which came about because of the large group that had come from there to the Soul Mates House Party. Another really exciting feature of all of these events was the fact that many young people who had attended events as children were now taking on responsibility as leaders. As Wanda Hogan our District Lay Youth Secretary said, "It was an encouragement to see them spreading their wings...."

HOME MISSION

In the Home Mission report we emphasized the importance of developing the Inspire programme around the District encouraging people to meet together in bands of three or four to foster spiritual growth, share in fellowship and stimulate mission. We also heard about the new initiative being encouraged across the Connexion called "Dwell". This is a challenge for churches to discern where God is at work and seek to join with Him by experimenting in mission in our local communities. We were also informed about an initiative of the Irish Refugee Council and encouraged to order postcards that people could sign in our churches lobbying the government to change the system by which asylum seekers are housed while waiting for their case to be decided and to clear the backlog which has left some families waiting for up to 10 years. Direct provision is debilitating and potentially dangerous especially for children living in hostels for many years at a time. Call 01 764 5854 to order these cards.

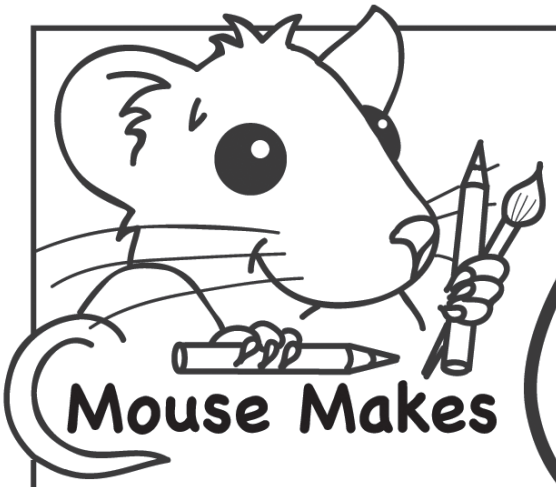
Some members of Synod were somewhat perturbed when they discovered that the thick walls of the wonderful facilities at Christ Church in Limerick meant that internet access was very limited even though it was good on the street outside. This made it difficult to keep up with the rugby scores on the day! However, although we didn't get to watch perhaps one of the greatest days of rugby ever, we nevertheless enjoyed an encouraging Synod.

On the Island of Birds

from The Navigatio of St Brendan, Chapter 11

The Navigatio is filled with fabulous tales which cannot be taken as history, but this extract beautifully illustrates the spirituality of the people Brendan inspired, in particular their attention to creation, which they relate to scripture, in this case the familiar psalms which they would chant every day.

On the approach of the hour of Vespers, all the birds, in unison, clapping their wings, began to sing 'A hymn, O Lord, becometh Thee in Sion, and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem' (Ps 65:1); and they alternately chanted the same psalm for an hour; and the melody of their warbling and the accompanying clapping of their wings, sounded like unto a delightful harmony of great sweetness. When supper was ended, and the divine office discharged, Brendan and his companions retired to rest until the third watch of the night, when he aroused them all from sleep, chanting the verse: 'Thou, O Lord, wilt open my lips' (Ps 51:16), whereupon all the birds, with voice and wing, warbled in response: 'Praise the Lord, all His angels, praise Him all His virtues' (Ps 103:20). Thus they sang for an hour every night; and when morning dawned, they chanted: 'May the splendour of the Lord God be upon us' (Ps 90:17) in the same melody and rhythm as their matins praises of God. Again, at Terce, they sang the verse: 'Sing to our God, sing; sing to our King, sing wisely' (Ps 47:6); at sext: 'The Lord hath caused the light of His countenance to shine upon us, and may He have mercy on us' (Ps 67:1); and at None they sang 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity' (Ps 133:1). Thus day and night those birds gave praise to God. St Brendan, seeing all this, made thanksgiving to the Lord for all His wonderful works; and the brethren were thus regaled with such spiritual viands until the octave of the Easter festival.



Mouse Makes

What happened when the Holy Spirit came at PENTECOST?

READ Acts 2:1-41

There was a sound like a blowing of a violent wind... and what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

HOLY SPIRIT teaches us about God

John 14:26

HOLY SPIRIT helps us to pray

Romans 8:26-27

HOLY SPIRIT is with us and in us

John 14:16-17

HOLY SPIRIT helps us to speak about God

Acts 1:8

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

EPHESIANS 5:18

How many believers were baptised that day?

Colour the flames, cut out and tie together to make a Pentecost mobile.

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E-mail: secretary@villiers-school.com Web Site: www.villiers-school.com