



February 2016

NEWSLINK

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

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Romanesque archway of St. Brigid's Church,
St. Caimin's Church and round tower in the background



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Bishop Kenneth writes

1916 – the year has such resonance throughout Ireland. For most in the Republic it means the year of the Easter Rising – events focussed on the G.P.O. in Dublin which triggered a rebellion and a series of events over the next few years which established an Irish Republic and laid the foundations for the ideology which shaped our nation.

The names of the executed rebellion leaders are part of the folklore of Ireland – Pearse, Connolly, Ceannt, Colbert, and so on, names commemorated in the names of the railway stations of our cities. Stories abound about acts of heroism and atrocities.

What really happened? Were Church of Ireland people involved? What was it like to be a member of the Church of Ireland at that time? It's a story which has never been told, and it is likely to be a story as complex and complicated as any other in Irish history.

Here in our diocese we will begin to address this at a talk in St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday afternoon 20th February next. The speaker will be Canon Patrick Comerford, lecturer at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, and former Irish Times journalist. He will speak on the subject "1916: Finding a Voice for the Church of Ireland." The lecture will be at 3.00 p.m. There will be tea and coffee afterwards in the Cathedral, and then at 4.30p.m. there will be a special service of Evensong, during which we will install two new Canons into our Joint Chapter – Canon Jane Galbraith, Rector of Roscrea, and Canon Ruth Gill, Priest-in-charge of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane. All clergy and diocesan Lay Readers are invited to robe at this special service.

So, an important Saturday afternoon for the whole diocese – please do note the time and date in your diary, and try to be present – you

will be very welcome. Saturday 20th February – talk at 3.00 p.m. followed by Evensong at 4.30 p.m.

It was with very mixed feelings that I learnt that Revd Dr Keith Scott, Priest-in-Charge in Askeaton and Rathkeale, and his wife Lynn, have decided to return to missionary work with C.M.S. Most of you will know that they had previously served the church overseas in Zambia in the Church of the Province of Central Africa, and it is likely that that's where they will serve once more.

Obviously I'm very happy for them and wish them every blessing in the next chapter of their ministry, but I and the diocese will certainly miss them and their ministry in the United Diocese. While all details haven't been finalised, it's likely they will be with us until late summer/early autumn. Do please remember them in your prayers at this time of transition for them.

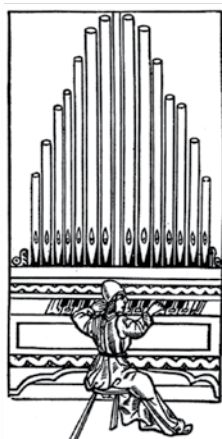
Sincerely,
+Kenneth

The Rt. Revd. Kenneth Kearon
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Diocesan Calendar

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

Wed 10th February Ash Wednesday – Lent begins
Wed 17th February, 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert, St Mary's Cathedral, Cathedral
Sat 20th Feb, 3–4.30pm Canon Patrick Comerford speaks on '1916: Finding a Voice for the Church of Ireland', St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick
Sat 20th February, 4.30–5.30pm Choral Evensong & Installation of Canons, St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick
Sat 20th February, 7.30–9.30pm UDYC Fellowship Group, Richmond Terrace, Henry St, Limerick City
Wed 24th February, 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert, St Mary's Cathedral, Cathedral
Thu 25th February, 7.30–9.30pm Diocesan Council
Sun 28th February, 7pm Choral Evensong (as part of Limerick Choral Festival), St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick
Fri 4th – Sun 6th March West Alive Junior Weekend, Carhue Centre, Bandon, Co Cork (10–13 yrs)
Sat 12th March, 7.30–9.30pm UDYC Fellowship Group, Richmond Terrace, Henry St, Limerick City
Fri 18th – Sun 20th March Spring Madness with Tuam Diocesan Youth Council, Kilfinnane Outdoor Education Centre, Kilfinnane, Co Limerick (Secondary upwards)
Wed 23rd March, 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert, St Mary's Cathedral, Cathedral
Wed 30th March, 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert, St Mary's Cathedral, Cathedral
Fri 1st – Sun 3rd April Taking a Leading Role – Part 3, Django's Hostel, Cloughjordan

Editorial - The River Shannon

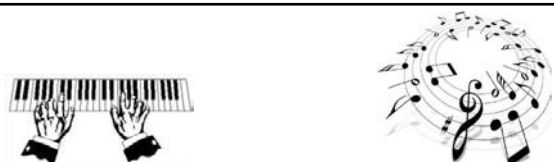
The River Shannon has been in the news lately for the worst of reasons – the extreme floods which have inundated so many houses and farms. Those living beside it are lucky that the great river is slow to rise, giving time to respond to inexorably rising water – elsewhere flash floods have caught many unaware. But everywhere good neighbours have rallied round to help, and it is good that the Bishops are encouraging us to contribute relief funds. The river is a wonderful gift from our generous God, but we need wisdom to use and manage it so we can both enjoy living, working and playing on its banks and protect ourselves from flood events, likely to become more frequent as the climate warms.

These days the Shannon is seen as dividing communities on either side, but it was not always so. Until recently it was more a great communications artery connecting communities together. That is what it was for early Irish Christians. In the 6th and 7th centuries Celtic saints established their monasteries along its banks, and travelled along it. Their names are like a litany, and their descendants have left us a great store of ancient holy sites: St Necessan at Mungret, St Munchin at Limerick, St Molua and St Flannan at Killaloe, St Colum and St Camain on Inis Cealtra (Holy Island in Lough Derg – see the front cover), St Columba at Terryglass, St Ruadhan at Lorrha, St Brendan at Clonfert and St Ciaran at Clonmacnoise.

The river could be like that again if we cultivate this spiritual heritage. Wouldn't it be marvellous if we joined with our neighbours to develop it as a pilgrimage corridor, an Irish Camino by road and water? We might call it the Saints' Way by analogy with the Wild Atlantic Way. Local communities would benefit from the visitors, and visitors would benefit from the spiritual experience.

Let us know if you would like to travel the Saints' Way up the Shannon this Summer!

God bless, Joc Sanders



Lunchtime Concerts at St Mary's

1.15pm in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Wednesday 17th February

Caoimhe de Paor (recorders), James Taylor (keyboards)

Music by J.S. Bach, Wilson and van Eyck

Wednesday 24th February

Edel O'Brien (mezzo soprano), Irina Dernova (piano)

Music by Dvorak, Milhaud and Ravel

Wednesday 23rd March

Peter Barley (organ)

Special recital for Holy Week, including music by J.S. Bach

Wednesday 30th March

Elisabeth Goell (soprano), Irina Dernova (piano)

Music by J.S. Bach

Wednesday 6th April

Students from Mary Immaculate College

Works by Mozart, Sammartini, Haydn and Irish traditional music

*Free admission - retiring collection in aid of
the Companions of St Mary's Cathedral Music*

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.

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Deadlines

The next issue will be for March 2016, published for Sunday 6th March.

All material must reach the Editor by Friday 19th February 2016 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

NEWSLINK ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2016

(UNCHANGED from 2015, for 10 issues February – December, part year pro-rata)

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(contact: Peter Schutz, Ardhu, Castletroy, Co. Limerick,

Email: peterschutz@gmail.com)

NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2016

(UNCHANGED from 2015, full page is A4 portrait, half page A5 landscape etc)

	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

February 2016

Each Sunday

Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Clogher and Bishop John McDowell.

Companion Dioceses: The five Dioceses of the Protestant Church of Anhalt, Germany.

7th February, Sunday before Lent (Transfiguration Sunday), White or Green

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Church of Canada and Most Revd Frederick Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Diocese: All those in our dioceses who work with children in schools and colleges, churches and sports clubs, that their work may be blessed.

10th February, Ash Wednesday, Purple.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Arkansas, in the Episcopal Church, USA and Rt Revd Larry Benfield, Bishop of Arkansas.

Diocese: That this Lent our fasting may be a hunger for justice, our alms may reveal God's love in the world, and our prayers may create in us humble and grateful hearts.

14th February, 1st Sunday of Lent, Purple.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Church of the Province of Central Africa and Most Revd Albert Chama, Archbishop of Central Africa & Bishop of Northern Zambia.

Diocese: The Chapter of our Diocesan Cathedrals, including Canon Jane Galbraith & Canon Ruth Gill to be installed in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick on Saturday 20th February.

21st February, 2nd Sunday of Lent, Purple.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America and Most Revd Sturdie Downs, Primate of IARCA & Bishop of Nicaragua.

Diocese: For those participating in Lenten courses and Bible studies across the diocese, that the Holy Spirit may inform their discussions.

28th February, 3rd Sunday of Lent, Purple.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo and Most Revd Kahwa Henri Isingoma, Archbishop of the Congo & Bishop of Kinshasa.

Diocese: Easter Vestries to be held in our parishes over coming weeks, that their business may be efficiently and faithfully conducted and parish resources properly husbanded.

6th March, 4th Sunday of Lent, Purple.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Church of England and Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Diocese: For those undertaking a Lenten fast or other discipline, that God may strengthen their resolve.

Disturb us, Lord

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

Attributed to Sir Francis Drake, 16th Century

A Collect for Environmental Justice

Almighty God,
you spoke creation into being
and in your Son Jesus Christ
you walked the earth
and dwelt in the midst of that creation.
Grant us hearts of thanksgiving
for the world you have given us,
give us the discernment
of your Holy Spirit
as we seek to better use
the resources of the earth;
and empower us to follow
the example of your Son
as we seek to be agents of justice
in all things;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Marshall Beresford & Church Fabric Funds

The Marshall Beresford Fund and Church Fabric Fund give grants for the building or repair of churches or chapels. They are allocated half-yearly in April and November.

Completed application forms must be returned to the Representative Church Body by either 1st March or 1st October for the relevant half-year. If a parish is awarded a grant, it will be allocated from either the Marshall Beresford Fund or the Church Fabric Fund and not from both funds.

Grants are usually not allocated towards a project until the half-year after the proposed completion date for the works relevant to the grant application.

Application Forms are available from: Mr Ian Walshe, Property Department, Representative Church Body, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, D06 CF67. (Tel. 00353-1-4125619, Email. ian.walshe@rcbdub.org)

The next deadline for receipt of applications is 1st March 2016.

Flood Relief Appeal

Extensive hardship is being experienced in many places across the island of Ireland as a result of recent floods. People have been left without food, shelter, warmth and clothing as a result of flooding and water damage.

The Archbishops and Bishops are leading a Church of Ireland response to this crisis to raise funds to provide small grants to help people with immediate needs. The Archbishops and Bishops are therefore asking members of the church to respond with generosity to the Church of Ireland Flood Relief Appeal. Funds will be administered with the help of Protestant Aid, a charity with extensive experience in providing welfare assistance and, where appropriate, through parishes or other local agencies and charities.

Individual donations may be made online at www.ireland.anglican.org/flood or by cheque (euro or sterling) to The Representative Church Body: Bishops' Flood Appeal at Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, D06 CF67. Parishes may also provide special collections at Sunday services over the next two weeks. Applications for assistance can be made to rectors or, in the case of parish vacancies, to rural deans or diocesan offices.

A View from the Pew - Young toughs, travelling truth-seekers, and the elderly faithful

by Salters Sterling



Warmed by the wonderful hospitality of our Methodist Friends we took repossession of St. Brendan's Church of Ireland, Birr on the Sunday before Christmas and what a delight it was to find the Church elegantly pristine after its twelve week make-over, freshly painted and its flaking stucco work restored. That Sunday evening had the body of the Church almost half-full for the annual ecumenical Carol Service. It was an inspiring occasion with tea and chat at the back of the Church afterwards.

What a difference to get back to normal on the 2nd Sunday of the Epiphany. Twenty seven people including children in the body of a building seated to accommodate some four hundred. That twenty seven is a bit short of our average of somewhere in the late thirties, early forties except for High Days and Holy Days. Setting aside scale I imagine that the picture I am painting is one appropriate to many Parishes in our Diocese and much farther afield in rural Ireland.

Such a condition cannot be attributed to the current incumbents. An analysis of the Birr attendance figures takes us back over many decades of decline and the Select Vestry Minute Book records in the early 1920s, following the withdrawal of the military from the Barracks in Crinkle, that the process of installing electric light in the Church should not include the gallery because it is no longer needed. It is over a period of almost one hundred years that for a variety of reasons our numbers have been declining, until the view from the pew today is of a scattering of worshippers normally occupying not more than 10% of the available seating in the ground floor area.

Do we leave it like that with the graph line running downhill for another couple of decades until it runs off the page? I think not and

this is where we link in to the view from the pew in the December/January issue of Newslink.

In the last issue we left the great Advent-ure of God in a baby at Bethlehem. There are three sets of witnesses; a group of young toughs, a set of truth-seekers and the elderly faithful. It is no coincidence that these are the God-chosen witnesses. God desperately wants to have as his friends and partners those who are up for the challenge of adventure - the young toughs - the marginalised shepherds in Luke's account of the birth of Jesus. God wants as another set of friends and partners those who seek the truth, follow it and do it with minds open to change - they went back by a different route - the wise men in Mathew's narrative. And again God wants as a set of friends and partners those who having kept the faith have not succumbed to a stereotype of religion, but with the eyes of living faith are still able to recognise the form in which God is currently at work in his world - Simeon and Anna in the Temple.

These three complementary group-profiles, the young toughs, the travelling truth-seekers, the elderly faithful are the core components of the workers in and for the Kingdom and if they are around there is a chance that the Church may be renewed and may yet again prosper. So the question is, what do parishes like Birr and many others need to do to stop the graph line of numbers running down and then off the page? Are you giving that question serious attention? We all need to.

Or might it be the case that greater numbers of folk are not around whatever we do or however warm our welcome. In that circumstance what do we do? Keep going as we always have done? Or begin to ponder the possibilities of how to use our plant to the benefit of our communities and in the service of those who may never darken our doors for worship, but whose need for community is deep, whose need of space to be themselves is profound, whose need of healing and wholeness cries for help. Why spend money on buildings to be used not much more than two or three hours per week? Think about it and we will meet up with Jesus in the Wilderness next time.

The Bible Challenge – Reading the Bible in a year

by Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke

The Bible Challenge: compiled and edited by Marek Zabriskie. Published by Canterbury Press, ISBN 978 1 84825 291 2. Price £19.99 (Amazon, sterling).

I took up this challenge when I retired in February 2015 from full-time ministry. I reckoned I'd need some kind of spiritual discipline to hold onto as I moved into the new territory of being someone who, theoretically at least, would now have all day and every day in which to do something, many things, or no things!

How the book is structured:

For each day there is a selection of readings, comprising a couple of chapters from the Old Testament, a Psalm and a chapter from the New Testament. Although I write 'selection', actually one begins at the beginning (Genesis, Psalm 1 and Matthew) and reads straight through. This means that one goes through the Psalms twice, and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and part of Luke twice in order to

keep pace with the OT readings. There is a short commentary on the passages, followed by a couple of questions for reflection, and a short prayer. The cycle allows for a break on Sundays as it's presumed one will be hearing Scripture read in worship, although I generally read it on Sundays as well. The book can be started at any time during the year, and any translation of the Bible can be used.

103 Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Bible scholars and priests were invited to contribute, drawn from the worldwide Anglican communion, each commentator tackling three successive days of readings. The majority were from the United States; to be expected since this is where the book had its gestation. That means of course that the distinctive voice of the commentators had an American Episcopalian tone. The 'rest of the world' included contributors from England and Wales, though strangely none from Ireland or Scotland. Overall the fact that most of the commentators are/were

senior clerics perhaps meant that a very 'steady state' commentary was to be expected! Also, of the 103 commentators only 20 were women, which was of course unbalanced.

Most of the commentators skillfully plaited the three readings together; some ignored one or other of the readings (mainly the violent Old Testament passages where they occurred) and concentrated on the New Testament reading. There was a fascination in studying the different approach of each commentator; their nuances and interpretations often subtle, their questions often challenging:

"Do you think that churches today are distracted from their main task?"

"Martin Luther once said that every morning was like an Easter morning, an experience of resurrection. What are the first words you say in the morning?"

I guess it would take most people about half an hour to work through the day's Bible reading schedule. The best benefit of course is to allow the questions and the prayers to dwell with one during the course of the day. There is a supporting website – www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org – but the book stands alone and visiting the website is not necessary.

For me there were three major benefits, or 'blessings' from this year of readings.

Firstly I came to really admire and appreciate the skill of those who arranged our Lectionary structure, which over a three year (A, B and C) cycle gives us all the big stories in Scripture: the stories

that really matter, not the lengthy and often toxic texts of violence. However, reading through these toxic texts has reminded me that all 'holy' writings (not just Jewish or Christian scriptures) are culturally conditioned and tied to the social mores of the period in which they were written. Our Scriptures are, we believe, 'God-breathed', not 'God-dictated'.

Secondly, my love of the Psalms was greatly enhanced and deepened; in particular the way they offered words that enabled a relationship with God and the way they spoke to all the challenges that individuals face in their lives.

Thirdly, engaging with The Bible Challenge has offered a different spiritual discipline that has proved enriching and challenging. It has affirmed my love and respect for Scriptures as one of the sources of the Word of God – the other of course being Jesus Christ himself, the living Word.

I think I'll take The Bible Challenge again this year, but use a different translation – possibly the excellent 'The Message' translation by Eugene Peterson.



The Limerick Protestant Orphan and Childcare Society

by Mrs Beverley Callender

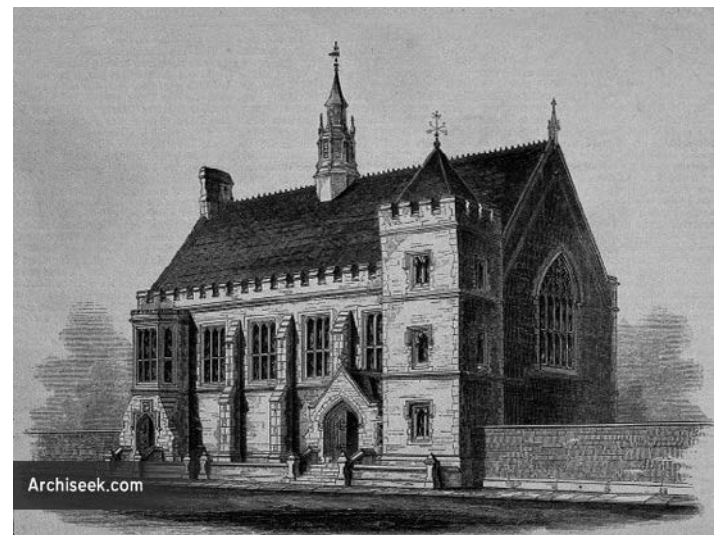
The Society was established on February 12th, 1833 by Rev. W. Maunsell, then Rector of Kilmurry, and Rev. J.C. Fitzgerald to support 'some poor children whom the cholera outbreak had bereaved of parents'. This quickly extended to a shelter for destitute orphans of Limerick. In 1832 the Dublin Society had been asked to take under their care 93 Protestant Orphans from Limerick but they had been unable to grant the request.

As the Famine followed the cholera outbreak by 1849 there were 333 orphans under the care of the Society. In 1848 a Training School for Girls was opened in St. John's Square in the city and a Training Farm was established in Ballyorgan, Co. Limerick to teach young boys gardening and general farm work. In 1854 an Apprentice Home for boys was opened in the city but did not continue for very long. The girl's training school moved to Nelson Street (now Reeves Path) in 1863 to a house formerly owned by Mr. Massy Ryves and over the years became the orphanage until it was closed in 1922.

Fortunately nowadays there are very few children left without at least one parent and so the focus of our work changed to assisting families who are suffering hardship due to unemployment, health problems or family break up. To help meet this need the rules and regulations of the Society had to be changed and this involved applying to the High Court in July 2003 for permission to add the word 'Childcare' to our title.

For many years the Society has been an Endowed Society and has not needed to call on the generosity of the public for support but due to the necessity of using investments to fund our work over the last number of years we are, like so many other Orphan Societies, again in a position of asking for donations.

If anyone would like to contribute to our work, donations may be sent to Mrs. Beverley Callender, Rathuard, Ballysheedy, Co. Limerick. These will be received with grateful thanks. A Form of Bequest to the Society is also available from Beverley.



The Orphan Society Hall built in 1856 in Pery St, now converted to offices

Diocesan Organisations

Girls Friendly Society

GFS Christmas Craft Day was held on Saturday, 28th November in Oxmanstown School, Birr. We thank Diane Dagg and all the leaders of Birr Branch for hosting this event. As always, it was a great start to the Christmas season. All proceeds from this event go towards Diocesan Camp in June – the more money we raise from events like the Craft Day the less parents will be asked to pay in June. Many thanks to leaders and girls in Birr for a wonderful supper which we enjoyed after a busy afternoon of crafts.

At the Craft Day girls made lots of Christmas crafts – flower baskets, Christmas tree decorations, Christmas hairbands and cards. Girls also made super decorations for the GFS entry into the Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival.



Happy faces with their halos

The GFS tree and lots of other trees were on display at the Christmas Tree Festival in St. Mary's Church, Nenagh (13-20 December). The GFS Snowman Tree was voted 2nd most popular tree in the Festival – well done to all the girls who helped create this wonderful masterpiece.



GFS 'Snowman Tree'

CLOUGHJORDAN BRANCH

Cloughjordan girls enjoyed a wonderful Christmas party on Wednesday, 9th December. They had delicious food, lively music and great singing not to mention a visit from Santa! It was a lovely way to finish for 2015.

Meetings for 2016 began on 6th January. They have been busy working on their crafts and on Bible Study too for competitions.

The branch Mini-Market has started and takes place weekly. They welcome contributions to the stall and appreciate the support. Proceeds from the Mini-Market will go to Mission Money and World Project.

The branch is looking forward to hosting the Diocesan Service and Prizegiving which takes place in St. Kieran's Church, Cloughjordan on Saturday, 12th March.

Everyone was very sorry to hear of the death of Lorna Allen (nee Henderson) on 23rd December. Deepest sympathy is extended to her husband, Cecil; her parents Ramsey and Miriam; her brother Brian and family. Mrs. Miriam Henderson was very involved in Borrisokane Branch.

NENAGH BRANCH

Crafts continue on Saturdays in St. Mary Church, from 11am to 1pm.

Enrolment Service will take place on Sunday, 21st February in St. Mary's Church as part of Family Service at 11am.

BIRR BRANCH

Birr Branch is working on their crafts and have been preparing for their enrolment service on Sunday, 31st January. The branch enjoyed great fun and games prior to Christmas at the Christmas party.

ROSCREA BRANCH

The girls created a 'festive table' in the porch in St. Cronan's Church Roscrea for Christmas. It displayed many of the crafts created during our first term and also teddy bears were left available for during services or indeed to take home and return when next attending service. A sign 'BEAR HUGS' stood beside the table and the bears were also a symbol of sharing love at Christmas.

For their Christmas outing they travelled to The Christmas Tree Festival in Nenagh Church. This was of great interest to the Branch as many members had been involved in making the GFS entry at the Craft Day in Birr.

Due to freezing weather conditions they had to cancel their first meeting of the year. The Branch will meet every Friday until the end of February at 7.00 pm in St Cronan's National School. Badge work is ongoing – music badge at the moment and plan to do Nature and PE later on in the year.

LEADERS NIGHT OUT

Leaders and Helpers of GFS enjoyed a wonderful evening at Parkers Restaurant, Birr on Saturday night, 23 January. The meal was great and the company even better. We thank Norma Jean Carney for organising this annual get together for Leaders.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Craft Judging will take place in the Methodist Hall, Cloughjordan at 11am on Saturday, 27th February.

Diocesan Service & Prizeday will take place in St. Kieran's Church, Cloughjordan on Saturday 12th March.

All Ireland Camp – It's been proposed by Central Council that an All-Ireland camp will take place in March / early April 2016.

Diocesan Council Meeting will take place in Roscrea on Tuesday, 19th April, at 8 pm.

Camp will take place in June (10-12) at the Faith Mission Centre, Durrow

PRESENTATION TO MRS INA BLACKWELL

On November 21st at our Mothers' Union Diocesan Council meeting in Aghancon Mrs Ina Blackwell, our Diocesan President, was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers along with a pendant and a weekend away for herself and her husband, Leslie, to mark the end of her term as Diocesan President. Ina has worked tirelessly and steadfastly for the last six years as DP in the Limerick and Killaloe Diocese and she will be sorely missed. Ina's passion for Mothers' Union is very evident in everything she undertakes and her experience and knowledge is vast. We all wish Ina and her husband Leslie a wonderful retirement!



From the left, Mrs Jean Talbot, former DP, Mrs Ina Blackwell, DP and Mrs Lucy Kavanagh, incoming Diocesan President.

ADARE MU

Our opening service was held in St Nicholas's Church in Adare in September and was very well attended. Refreshments were enjoyed afterwards. Rev Liz led the service and the sermon was preached by the Rev Alison Seymore Whitley.

A joint harvest supper was held in Richmond Terrace in October and €400 was raised for overseas.

Our AGM and Christmas Party was held in Adare on the 8th December. A presentation was made to Irene Weir in thanks for many years of service as branch secretary. Phoebe Barrett was elected secretary and the other officers were returned. A great night was had by all.



Phyllis and Margaret with the MU tree at Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival

Diocesan Board of Mission

Schedule of Mission Evenings for the remainder of 2015/16

No 3 Mission from a Methodist perspective

Speaker: to be arranged
On: Wed 6th April 2016
In: Cloughjordan Parish Centre
At: 8 pm

No 4 A progress report on developments at Luyengo Farm, Swaziland & Living in Gaza City with particular reference to Al Ahli Hospital

Speaker: Ms Linda Chambers, CEO Us. Ireland
On: Wed 8th June 2016
In: The Woodlands House Hotel, Adare
At: 8 pm

Everyone, irrespective of Christian denomination, with an interest in mission both within their local community and overseas, is very welcome to attend.

Refreshments will be served both before and after the meetings.

Children's Ministry Network



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY RESOURCES

Lent is almost upon us... This year Easter falls almost as early as it can - perhaps for the last time?! -so this year there is little space between Candlemas and Lent. Here are a few sites to help you in planning. Just type into Google or your search engine any of the following titles:

- A Pinterest Board of Lent ideas ... just take a look at catholicicing.com and be wowed!
- Carolyn C Brown ... is always worth a look even for an ordinary Sunday. Clergy will find her article on 'preaching to children' ... interesting.
- Lent Ideas from Barnabas in Churches
- Roots on the Web
- Engage Worship ... add ideas each week in Lent and offers excellent home resource worship books for families. Great site for all ages.
- Messy Church ... is a must for developing your ideas.

All these ideas and more articles on aspects of ministry with children are available from Child in the Midst ... Church of England website. Lots more on our own www.cm.ireland.anglican.org ... or log in www.ireland.anglican.org scroll down the Welcome page on left-hand side column called 'Pages of Interest', down to 'Useful links', click on it and find children's ministry.

DAY OF PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Many Church of Ireland parishes will be holding a Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry across the island on Sunday, 7th February, though it may be held on any convenient Sunday.

Last year's day of prayer was the first of its kind and a number of dioceses featured prayer spaces, worship services and 'prayer and

pancake' parties which were attended by people of all ages. At each of these events, the focus was on praying for the needs of young people and for the youth leaders and ministries that serve them. The event has been pioneered by the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) and is supported by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church.

Parishes are encouraged to use CIYD's resource pack to organise their events. The pack contains a selection of prayer ideas that can be used during a service, with some for praying aloud and others as a stimulus for silent prayer or a more interactive form of prayer, including writing and drawing. These can be used during the Prayers of the People or in any other way that those leading services may consider appropriate. The aim is that the prayers would simply slot in and be part of the rhythm of the worship on that day.

Resource packs are available from Amy McCrea, Youth Ministry Development Officer, at amy@ciyd.org

SCHOOL NEWS

St. Nicholas' National School, Adare

As usual, December proved to be a very busy month in school. All classes prepared for our end of term performances at the Christmas Party on December 18th. This year families and friends were entertained by three great mini-productions, with wonderful performances from all the pupils. Many thanks to all the teachers for their hard work in preparing the pupils for the stage and to Michael Ramendik who filmed the event. The Parents' Association committee prepared and served the lovely refreshments and later in the afternoon we had a visit from Santa who brought some large sacks of gifts with him, much to the delight of all assembled in the hall. The pupils also performed at Adare's annual Live Crib and many of our pupils sang at St. Nicholas' Carol Service. The senior pupils had a lovely visit to Embury Close to sing carols for the residents just before the Christmas holidays.

School re-opened on Wednesday 6th January and since then pupils have been practising their football skills with coach Tony. These sessions will continue for the rest of this term.

The pupils in 4th to 6th classes have also been practising their spikeball skills and they will participate in the Limerick Schools Spikeball Competition at the end of January.

For the next six weeks some senior pupils will take part in sewing classes as an after school activity and chess club resumes at the beginning of February.

We had a lovely visit to Adare Manor during January before it closes for renovations. Pupils were treated to a tour of the Manor and learned of its history. We were also given a peek at some of the luxurious rooms upstairs. According to many of the pupils following the visit, the most memorable feature of the visit - the fabulous bathrooms!

We look forward to welcoming some of our past pupils back to school this term. Valerie Walker, a second year student in the Church of Ireland College of Education will spend a week with our support teachers as part of her training and Hazel Alfred, Lauren Ryan and Jeffrey Alfred will gain some work experience in the school as part

of their Transition Year programme. We are always delighted to welcome back past pupils.

The senior pupils have been very busy preparing their ideas for the Junior Entrepreneur Project and we will welcome three 'Dragons' to our 'Dragon's Den' this term. They will select the best idea and then everyone will work together to develop that idea.

The school will hold an open afternoon/evening on Wednesday 10th February. The afternoon session will take place at 3.30pm and the evening session will begin at 8.00pm. Enrolment forms and school booklets are available from the school secretary.



A very wet hockey training session in Adare.



Some of the young cast of 'The Three Little Pigs' in St. Nicholas



St. Nicholas' pupils on a tour of Adare Manor.

St. Marys No. 2 National School, Nenagh

Spring is here! We enjoy the brighter days and we hope for some better weather.

The term commenced this year with dance classes taught by Ms Stephanie Brown. The children have been thoroughly enjoying these classes as they are based on a hive of activity and focus on music from musical theatre.

It is hoped that we all smile for the camera as school photographs take place on the 10th of February.

During the month of March, a number of extra activities will take place. Our school Mini Fair will take place on the 11th March. A cake stall, book stall, some game stalls are just a few of the activities which will comprise our mini Fair. Monies raised will be used to purchase science equipment and some will be given towards a trip to Uganda by a past pupil who will be completing some charity work. We look forward to an enjoyable afternoon and we hope that both causes will greatly benefit from the monies raised.

We will also be partaking in our annual Spring Clean as part of our Green School Project.

Congratulations to Ms Niamh McConville, our Learning Support Teacher, who recently married Mr Shane Slattery. We wish them every happiness in their future together.

St Michael's National School, Limerick

As part of our Christmas activities, we were invited to sing at the Milk Market when the Minister of Education, Jan O'Sullivan, was present along with other dignitaries. This was a prize-giving ceremony for Transition Year students who had developed enterprises and business ideas into commercial propositions. This year, unbeknownst to us, there was a choir competition and much to our surprise, St Michael's NS was awarded first prize with a bonus cheque of €500! We were complimented on how happy and animated our pupils were while they were singing. The inclusion of some new and lively Christmas carols from around the world enthused everyone.



St Michael's NS Senior Choir

Fifth and Sixth Classes will be participating in a two-day film-making workshop here in school in February. This should prove to be of great interest this year as one of the films will depict life as it was in Limerick one hundred years ago. This is part of our remembering Ireland in 1916.

The school was presented with its own national flag in late November, and the pupils learned many fascinating facts about the flag from the members of the Irish Defence Forces who visited.

We are fortunate to have amongst our past and present parents, several Dads who have a keen and knowledgeable interest in History and have offered their expertise. Jerome Aan De Wiel gave two fascinating talks to our Senior Classes on the history of the First

World War. For those of us who would like to hear more, Jerome is giving another talk in Number One, Pery Square Hotel on February 22. Randel Hodkinson, current President of the Thomond Archaeological and Historical Society, has very kindly offered to bring Senior pupils and teachers on a walking tour of places of local historical interest.



Presentation of the Irish flag

Congratulations to Lorraine Moran, (Senior Infants and 1st Class Teacher) on the birth of Thomas in December. We welcome Ciara Fleming who will be with us till the summer in Lorraine's classroom.

As always, it was a pleasure to have a teaching student in school at the beginning of the term. Joelle Fitzgibbon, from Mary Immaculate College, was with us for a fortnight. Joelle's Dad, Pastor Kevin Fitzgibbon, comes regularly to help us with our Wednesday morning Assemblies.



"But look", said Martin, "Maltesers have hardly any chocolate on"

Cloughjordan No. 1 National School

Thank you very much to everybody who supported our "Parts of the Body" fundraising quiz. Once again, we are very grateful to Mrs. Miriam Henderson for setting the quiz. The prize winners and answers will be in next month's edition of Newslink.

Well done to everybody who participated in our school Carol Service. The children were wonderful! It was tremendous to see a packed church on the night and to have so many present with us at this special event. The collection on the night amounted to €766 and was donated to the local conference of St. Vincent de Paul (€383) and Suaimhneas Cancer Support Centre, Nenagh (€383)

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Lorna Allen (née Henderson) on 23rd December, 2015 and send our deepest sympathy to her husband, Cecil, her parents Ramsey and Miriam, to her brother Brian and family. We were very saddened, also, to hear of the death of Ms Aimee Ryan's younger brother, Jack, at the beginning of January and send our deepest sympathy to Aimee, her parents and family at this very sad time. Both families are very much in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

Well done to Hannah Austin who won a prize in the Art Competition organized by Borrisokane Community College as part of their Christmas Concert. Thank you to Borrisokane Community College, once again, for the kind invitation to their wonderful Christmas Concert which our 3rd – 6th class pupils and their teachers, really enjoyed.

Well done to Andrew Austin, Ella Dann, Stephanie Manley, Alfonso Galera Kleboe, Josh Caplice and Alex Chadwick who won prizes in the Borrisokane Credit Union 2015 Poster Competition. Thank you very much to Borrisokane Credit Union for the very generous prizes awarded, and for the treats which were greatly enjoyed by all pupils!

Congratulations to John Cavanagh and Diane Clarke on the birth of their daughter, Chloe. We were delighted to hear this great news and send John, Diane and all the family our best wishes.

As our Artist in School Project on "The Life and Times of Thomas MacDonagh" draws to a close we thank Joanna Parkes, most sincerely, for her commitment to this project over the last few months. It was a very inspiring and meaningful project for those involved and offered deep insight into a time in our history which is very relevant today. We are hugely indebted to Tipperary County Council for making this opportunity available to our school.

We welcome Ms. Claire Nealon to teach traditional dance to Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First & Second Class and are delighted to welcome Sophie Platt back to our school from Romania and the family back to Borrisokane.

Enrolment application forms for September 2016 enrolment in Cloughjordan No.1 N.S. are now available from the school. If you would like an application form please contact the school on 0505 42318 or email principal.cloughjordan.no1.ns@gmail.com

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

Happy New Year from all in Kiltallagh!

And what a busy start to 2016 we've had here in our school. Here's a little glimpse into our vibrant school life in Kiltallagh.

Children in the senior classroom had been practising really hard for the recent Credit Union Quiz. Sarah Flaherty, Charlotte Orme and Clara Wharton, Natasha Griffin and Kate Moroney on the

Senior Team and David Scally, Richard Boyle, Patrick Sheehy, Alazne Sertutxa and Cathal Moroney for the Juniors

CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK

The children of Kiltallagh School joined with the pupils from Ballyfinnane School in a service as part of Christian Unity Week in Kiltallagh Church.. Rev. Jim and Fr. Luke Roche led us in prayer. All children returned to Kiltallagh School afterwards for some light refreshments and play time.

ASH WEDNESDAY-

Rev. Jim will lead our Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday February 10th at 12.30 in Kiltallagh Church. All families are welcome to join us.

Our senior room pupils are busy practising for their up- coming Talent Show on Wednesday February 17th 2016. Both pupils and staff are really looking forward to seeing all the performances. Who needs The X Factor when we have Kiltallagh's Got Talent!

PANCAKE DAY

We are all looking forward to Pancake Day on Tuesday February 9th. All the children will get the chance to cook their very own pancake. Pupils may bring in their own fillings. Last year we had some delicious fillings including ice cream, strawberries, nutella, banana, jam and golden syrup.

I'M HUNGRY ALREADY !!

JEP SHOWCASE

It's full steam ahead for our sixth class pupils with their Kiltallagh Cards and Cookies ! The girls are busy putting their finishing touches to their JEP product- Kiltallagh Cards, under the watchful eye of our artist in residence-Kate Landers. Our JEP National Coordinator, Linda Twomey, will visit us this week to help us explore the area of marketing.

We will then progress on to our 'Cookie Dough' production, with Ciara Orme ensuring that our entrepreneurs are observing the highest possible hygiene and health /safety standards.

You are all invited to our show case day in Kiltallagh School on Friday March 4th where we hope you will be enticed to purchase our wonderful products.

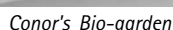
Our annual Table Quiz will take place on Thursday February 25th at The Fishery. As this is a school fundraiser, we appeal to you all to come along and support us on the night. This is always a fun social occasion too with lots of questions to be answered and many super prizes to be won. Our Parents Association will once again be organising some wonderful hampers for prizes, so we would encourage you to place any perishable items in the basket which will be located inside the front door of the school from February 1st 2016.

Rathkeale No. 2 National School

With 2016 well under way now and the Christmas Holidays a distant memory the pupils in Rathkeale Number Two have settled down again to the school routine. Swimming lessons have recommenced in Askeaton Pool on Tuesday afternoons. Swimming is always a highlight of our second term.

We extend our congratulations to Nina and Kenny on the birth of Hugo, a brother for Suzel and Babette.

Our Green School Committee is continuing to work on the next theme, Biodiversity and is currently coming up with some exciting activities for us all to get involved in over the course of the next year or so. They have already held a competition to design a bio diverse garden. Congratulations to Ella and Conor on their winning designs.



Villiers School

Williers School has had an Alumni Group in existence since 1934 and we are pleased to relaunch it.



The mission of the Villiers School Alumni and Friends Association is to help nurture lifelong relationships amongst the Alumni and Friends and School (i.e. the extended Villiers family), and to sustain the influence and values of the School into the wider society.

Membership of the Villiers Alumni and Friends Association is open to parents, staff, past pupils and other interested adults with an established link to the School.

Please see our website for further details on our plans. If you would like to register your interest in the Alumni and Friends Association, we would love to hear from you, either through the website, or email us directly at alumni@villiers-school.com

BOYS HOCKEY

Our senior boys have reached the Cup Final after beating Ashton School 4-3 - after extra time. They were 3-1 down with just over two minutes remaining & came out winners in extra-time. An unbelievable match. Scorers - Carl Williams, Luke Cardy x 2 & Calum Morrow. We await the result of the other semi-final between Newtown School v Bandon Grammar. The final will be in Villiers - sometime after mid-term. Our juniors are through to the semi-final of the Cup v Middleton College next Wed after beating Ashton School 5-1 last week. Scores

- Gerard & James Hodgkinson, Marcus Ryan x 2 & Jannis Von Maydel.
Well done to one and all.

BOYS RUGBY

Our seniors were recently knocked out of the Barry Cup at the semi-final stage by St. Munchin's College 26-12. Our juniors were also beaten by Crescent Comprehensive school in their semi-final of the Kidney cup.

On a more positive note our u15's recently won the 1st round of the Cleary Cup v Abbeyfeale and face Croom next. Our first year boys also beat St. Munchin's in a recent friendly. Well done to all teams on their continued progress.

GIRL'S HOCKEY

Both our senior and junior girls remain unbeaten in their respective leagues. Our seniors are due to play Crescent Comprehensive in the Senior B Cup semi-final and our juniors play Laurel Hill Colaiste in the quarter final of the Munster A Cup. Best of luck to both squads in their preparation.

NEWS FROM THE VILLIERS SANCTUARY

There is a sense of quiet anticipation around Villiers at the moment as everyone waits patiently for the dreaded mock exams to begin. This is always a nervous time as the 6th years begin to see an end in sight and a new horizon stretching out in front of them. Of course the 3rd years also see a change in their life as they enter that transition from junior to senior cycle. I am always struck by the speed of the passage of time in school. It only seems like yesterday that the current 6th form were being welcomed as the new 1st form. Good luck to all.

I had the great pleasure of once again bringing the Community Group to the 'Cycle Against Suicide' student leader congress in the RDS in Dublin. This year we not only participated in a carefully choreographed, high energy experience, but also showcased our project work which our students designed and created around the event's theme of 'together we can'. The Congress demonstrates, in a very special way, the value to students of appreciating their own mental wellbeing. The Community Group made a film highlighting the importance of reaching out and asking for help and were honoured to be interviewed live at the event. This is a wonderful occasion with an incredible message of, 'It's okay not to be okay but it's absolutely okay to ask for help.'

Our Uganda trip is coming upon us very quickly - flights are booked and the itinerary is fixed so it is becoming a reality. This is such an incredible opportunity for the Community Group to work alongside the charity Zest4kidz and to visit the hospital built by the charity and visit the local schools. We fly out in March so there will be lots of stories and photos when we come back.

I had the privilege of preaching in St Mary's Cathedral recently and the question that I asked has stayed with me somewhat recently. I asked, 'if you were in court and charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to find you guilty?' Do people look at you, and me, and know by our words, actions and the way we live our lives that we are Christian? "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another as I have loved you." Seems rather simple; sounds pretty easy to do; but yet it is a near impossible task that Jesus has set before those who would follow him. What exactly is love? How do you define it? How do you know you've given it or received it? "Love one another as I have loved you". Well, it's easy for Jesus to say, a great commandment to impart. But what does it mean for us? What does it mean to love as Christ loves? My prayer for all is that we will come to know the love of God and that our lives will be given in service to Him. Peace be with you...

Until next time, 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

Advent and Christmas are now in the background as we face a new year with the challenges and prospects that lie ahead. However there was a great deal of activity in the Union of Parishes during December and this article reports on some of what happened.

In Killaloe we had community carol singing led by the Boru Singers on 6 December which was a sing-a-long of carols and the collection taken up goes to a local community organisation. The 20 December the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols took place at the cathedral. This year we were fortunate to have the Nenagh Union Choir lead our singing and we were extremely grateful to them and to Bryan Brislane who is their choir director. We also had Bishop Kenneth present at the service.

The church at Mountshannon had Lessons and Carols on 16 December and thank you to Jantien Van der Berg and Fiona Levie for getting the children involved in the evening with the singing and playing of their musical instruments. As with these services it is always so nice to have the local community and parents of the children visiting and being part of the service. The cup of tea with its treats afterward is also a good time to get acquainted. We also had the sad death of Jo Ischner on 18 December after a long illness, we continue to hold the family in our prayers. The church service took place at Mountshannon on the 27th December.

Clonlara Church had its carol singing and there were no seats vacant thanks to Rhonwen Hayes and the Kiltanen Lae Voices for an amazing evening of beautiful singing. A big thank you to Denis McKeon for arranging a fundraiser at Clonlara on 15 December which was highly successful.

Castleconnell had their Lessons and Carols of on 20 December. A memorial service was held at Castleconnell on 21 December for Edward Richardson who died suddenly around Christmas time the previous year. His sister Mary and John her husband travelled to be with us as we gave thanks for his life among us. The parish also arranged to have a plaque put up at the back of the church in memory of Edward. There was great community representation as Edward was well liked in the community. Fr Ger, a good friend of Edward's, wrote a lovely tribute to Edward, which was read out on the night as he was otherwise engaged on that particular evening.

William Birdthistle was baptised at Castleconnell and a wonderful gathering of family including Maya's family from Lebanon. A lovely lunch and celebrations was held at the Castleoaks Hotel. Ralph Bird has found work in Australia and Ralph, Maya and William are to make their home there this year so we wish them well for the future.

All the Churches were beautifully decorated for Christmas services and a big thank you to those who work so hard in the background and give of their time and resources. The churches as is custom at

Christmas were all full houses and it is always so good to be able to welcome visitors and those who travelled to be with family at Christmas time. Bishop Kenneth was the celebrant and preacher at St Flannan's Cathedral and it was good to have him and his family with us on Christmas Day.

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@gmail.com

Parish Facebook: www.facebook.com/BirrGroupOfParishes

WORSHIPPING WITH THE METHODISTS

We are well and truly back home in St Brendan's Church, after our three-month visit with the Methodist congregation in Birr. Many thanks to the Revd Clodagh, and all the Methodist folk for their warm welcome. We are pledged to find new ways to work together in the future. The first of these will be a joint Lenten study, to be held on Tuesday evenings starting on the 16th of February. Details of time and location will be announced.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS

Many thanks to all who helped with the various services and other events in the Christmas season. Our annual 'Carols in the Rectory' was well-attended, and we had a full church in Lockeen for the Christmas Eve Pageant and Family Eucharist.

BABIES! SO MANY BABIES!

On the 29th of November, Jasmine Grace Coburn, daughter of Jane and Robert, was baptized in St Ruadhan's Church in Lorrha. And on



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the 14th of January, India Rose Vivienne Jackson, daughter of Lucinda and Ross, was baptized in Lockeen Church. And congratulations to parents Caroline and Kevin Morgan, and grandparents Helen and Peter Whyte, on the birth of Annie Helen.

RECTORY GATES

Following the sale of part of the rectory lands to the Offaly County Council, work has begun on creating a new access to the area. The first stage has been completed, removing the gates and part of the wall to widen the entrance. The gates will be re-installed further up the drive, and the stones taken out from the old wall will be used to build a new wall from the gate lodge to the gates.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will be held on Sunday, 17th April at 11:30 in Birr. Any young people or adults interested in being confirmed should contact the Archdeacon as soon as possible. Candidates should be at least 12 years old, and have a sincere desire to make a firm declaration of their faith in Christ. Classes will start in early February.

Roscrea Group of Parishes

Roscrea, Bourney, Corbally and Kyle

Rector: Canon Jane Galbraith

St. Cronan's Rectory, Rosemount, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, E53X466

Tel: 0505 21725 Mob: 087 382 5336

Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com

FROM THE REGISTERS

We record the death of Alicia Sarah (Alice) Jackson. Alice died on Christmas Day 2015 aged 92. To her daughters Sadie and Mary and to her cousin Eddie Clarke and all her family we offer our deepest sympathy.

We record the death of Florence Ruth (Florrie) Roe. Florrie died on January 3rd. 2016 aged 84. To Florrie's son Lester and her daughters Stephanie and Janice and Florrie's whole extended family we offer our deepest sympathy.

Congratulations to Mr Nevin Alton who was honoured during the 29th Awards Evening of 'Roscrea People of the Year 2015'. Nevin's citation read that from 1959 he moved from Cloughjordan to Roscrea as manager of Mahon's Grocery Store. He worked there till retirement in 1988. Nevin has always been active in church and community, particularly as sexton of St Cronan's Church and especially as a founder member of Roscrea Citizens' Information Centre. Nevin insisted that the photo for the award booklet should be one of himself with Daisy, to whom he has been married for 53 years.

THE PAROCHIAL HALL ROSCREA has been sold! It began its life as a gaol, and then a temperance hall before becoming a hugely successful community hall offering all kinds of classes and engaging in various enterprises not least the many parish 'Socials'. It will continue as a small and select brewery and also house an e-technology enterprise.

Thanks are due to Keith Stanley, who not without moments of frustration and anxiety, liaised with the excellent R.C.B. personnel to steer the process to a successful conclusion. It is hoped to arrange a reminiscence party later.

THE RECTORY ROSCREA. Work began at the end of August to rid the house of the latest outbreak of dry rot. The work was set to by eradication experts, builders, painters, plumbers, and decorators was completed on December 23rd. Very many thanks are due to glebes wardens, and the assistance of Bourney Parish and other generous

Continued on page 20



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Christian Aid says 'Count your Blessings'!

For Christians around the world, Lent is a time of reflection, thanksgiving and thinking of others who are less fortunate. Christian Aid's Lent resource, Count Your Blessings, is a great inspirational calendar with daily thought-provoking reflections. Each day brings an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for our blessings as well as to give, act and pray for communities in need.

This year Count Your Blessings features stories from Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated nations in the world, with 160 million people. 80% of the Bangladeshi population live on less than \$2 a day. Most of the population live in rural areas, and depend largely on agriculture to make ends meet. Efforts to fight poverty in Bangladesh are increasingly frustrated by the disastrous effects of climate change, such as rising temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall. The country is prone to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts, which, with poor environmental management, as well as corruption and poor governance, make life for most very hard indeed. For communities whose homes perch precariously on the bank of the Brahmaputra – known locally as 'the whimsical river' – life is an ongoing battle with increased, and often catastrophic, flooding. Year after year, they have been forced to uproot, dismantle and carry their bamboo-built homes further inland to avoid the rising waters.



The Chars in Bangladesh are liable to flood

Nearly five years ago, a riverside location on a Char – a sand island – became home to Joynal and his family after they fled their former home on another Char, which flooded. Joynal's wife and three children arrived in the Char with next to nothing – just their single-roomed bamboo house and a goat – and set up home on the sandy,

low-lying plain. Without fertile soil, they failed to grow food to eat and survived on just €1 per day. Without a means to earn a living in their rural neighbourhood, Joynal was forced to leave his loved ones behind for a year and undertake back-breaking work in Dhaka as a day labourer, earning €2.20 for 16 hours work. In one month he saved just €16. Joynal slept on the side of the road, often phoning his wife in tears and unable to send much-needed money home to buy food to feed his children.

Throughout Lent, we are asking you to reflect each day on the blessings in your life through Count Your Blessings, inspired by daily opportunities to give, act and pray for communities like Joynal's.



Joynal in front of his house

Christian Aid local partner GUK is working with the people on the Chars to help transform their lives, increasing their resilience to the increasingly unpredictable weather and floods, and helping them to become self-sufficient and prosper in the toughest of environments. With the support of GUK, Joynal and his family are now thriving. Joynal no longer works away in Dhaka and now works on his own land with his wife. They have learned to grow new, resilient crops, providing much-needed nutritious food for their family. Their house and land has been raised, so they are no longer forced to leave when the flood waters get too high. They were given enough money so they could buy a cow and another goat, as well as training in how to care for livestock. With new assets, home-grown vegetables from their own land and new found respect within the community, Joynal can think more positively about the future.

Visit christianaid.ie/lent to get your 'Count Your Blessings' calendar or other lent resources for you, your family or church.

Damian Shorten commissioned as Pastoral Assistant

Damian Shorten was commissioned by Bishop Ferran Glenfield on Advent Sunday, November 29th 2015 as Pastoral Assistant in Calry Church and Sligo Grammar School. He is teaching at the Grammar School, is a duty master in the boys' boarding house and regularly assists in leading worship in Calry.

He is pictured with Bishop Ferran Glenfield, Rev. Patrick Bamber (Rector of Calry Church), Michael Hall (Headmaster of Sligo Grammar School) and his parents Niall and Jennifer.




Care for Creation - Now the hard work begins!

In December we prayed for a successful outcome to the COP21 Climate Change negotiations in Paris – and our prayers have in large measure been answered! The agreement reached at COP21 will go down in history as the moment the world reached a consensus on tackling climate change. For the first time in history 195 countries have made a public commitment to keep temperature rise 'well below 2°C' and to 'pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°'. Each country has promised actions it will take to achieve this. Climate scientists say that when they are all added up they are not enough – but they are a good start, and the agreement includes regular reviews of progress and adjustments to plans to achieve the targets.

But this is only the start – now we need to make sure the COP21 agreements are implemented, and that will require each one of us to change the way we live. As Anglican Christians we are committed to the 5th Mark of Mission – to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa are leading the way by calling us to 'Fast for Change' this Lent.



	<p>What is a carbon fast for Lent? For Anglicans, Catholics and many others, Lent is the time when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, facing challenge and temptation. It is a time when we reflect on God's purpose for our life. This year we challenge you to take a carbon fast - to reduce the actions which damage God's Creation. Find more details of each day's action, as well as a daily scripture and prayer here - www.greenanglicans.org or on www.facebook.com/GreenAnglicans</p>						
FOOD ENERGY WASTE WATER PLANTS	<p>14th Feb  How is your church showing LOVE for the Environment? Job 12:7-10 <i>Earth Keepers Day</i></p>	<p>15th Feb Reduce your meat consumption, starting with a Meat Free Monday</p>	<p>16th Feb Local is lekker! Buy only local products this week.</p>	<p>17th Feb Aim for zero waste! Look at your food this week, what are you wasting?</p>	<p>18th Feb Fix your fridge! Set the temperature around 3°C (38°F).</p>	<p>19th Feb Fish Friday: Commit to weekly fish bought from sustainable stock.</p>	<p>20th Feb Share a favourite Vegetarian recipe with friends and neighbours.</p>
	<p>21st Feb How is your church saving energy? Are the globes energy saving, what kind of heating is used? 2 Sam 22:29</p>	<p>22nd Feb Visualise the millions of people taking action for our Earth - together we have Power! <i>(Meat Free Monday)</i></p>	<p>23rd Feb Map your movement - when can you share a lift/take public transport/or walk?</p>	<p>24th Feb Analyse your clothes washing - what can you do to save water and energy?</p>	<p>25th Feb Save your cents - Switch off appliances at the wall to save electricity.</p>	<p>26th Feb Have dinner by candlelight, talk, play games and enjoy! <i>(Fish Friday)</i></p>	<p>27th Feb No electronics day! Challenge yourself to not use any electronics.</p>
	<p>28th Feb Does your church recycle? What happens to your church's waste? John 6:12-14</p>	<p>29th Feb Gratitude is the attitude - Write down the 20 things you are most grateful for. <i>(Meat Free Monday)</i></p>	<p>1st March #fastfortheclimate - Join people around the world fasting for the planet on the 1st of every month.</p>	<p>2nd March Reduce rubbish! On bin day, look at the size of your rubbish and commit to reducing it by half.</p>	<p>3rd March Clean Green! Create your own green cleaning spray with water and white vinegar solution.</p>	<p>4th March Plastic Free! Begin your plastic free journey - what can you reduce? <i>(Fish Friday)</i></p>	<p>5th March Clear your closet of unused clothes, give them away or host a second hand sale.</p>
	<p>6th March Water is sacred: How 'water-savvy' is your church? Look at the bathrooms and kitchens. John 4:7-15</p>	<p>7th March Think about the Christian rituals of baptisms and Eucharist - how is water sacred? <i>(Meat Free Monday)</i></p>	<p>8th March Ban the Bottle! Commit to no bottled water from today onwards. Buy a strong bottle and drink tap water.</p>	<p>9th March Turn off taps: Do you ever leave a tap running? Brushing teeth? Rinsing veggies? Washing up?</p>	<p>10th March Water wise - Only fill the kettle with as much water as you need.</p>	<p>11th March Fix leaks at home & report public water leaks to the Municipality. <i>(Fish Friday)</i></p>	<p>12th March Find out where you were baptised and which river that water came from. Give thanks to God for the river!</p>
	<p>13th March How Green is your Church? Walk around & dream of what could be grown. Genesis 1:11-12</p>	<p>14th March Ponder this: What does it mean to be "of the Earth?" <i>(Meat Free Monday)</i></p>	<p>15th March Create a natural weed-killer with vinegar and a squirt of dishwashing liquid.</p>	<p>16th March Plant a tree! Think of a place to plant a tree and make it happen this month!</p>	<p>17th March Green Gifts - Choose plants as birthday or other gifts this year.</p>	<p>18th March Be a Gardener - Grow herbs, veggies or plants in your home. <i>(Fish Friday)</i></p>	<p>19th March Commit to 5 lifestyle changes of your carbon fast to continue in the future.</p>

Looking Anew at Church Success: The Most Important Thing We Do

by the Rev. Canon Liz Beasley

Some years ago, I participated in an ecumenical training program for clergy of small churches. I enjoyed hearing a number of good speakers and sharing with the other participants' stories of our congregations. But one speaker and her book has stayed with me more than anything else I experienced. The speaker was Shannon Jung, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and she was the co-author (with David Poling-Goldenne) of a book called *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*.

The book grew out of a study of rural Lutheran congregations throughout the States that had been dying and had experienced a renewal, a turnaround. The study wanted to find out what these congregations had done to bring about the turnaround. *Discovering Hope* combines a report of their "best practices" with a workbook for those who seek renewal in their own rural congregations.

After some introductory chapters, the very first chapter on the best practices focuses on prayer. The authors say it is no coincidence that this is so: throughout their study, they say, "the practice of prayer rose to the surface as the critical piece to the ministry transformation puzzle." Congregations might do everything else well, but "if a God-centred focus brought alive through active prayer is not present, healthy growth simply does not happen" (pp. 26–27).



A church group praying together

I was intrigued to learn this. I had long believed, from early in ordained ministry, that the most important thing I did as a clergy person was to pray. I had experienced situations – some troublesome, some routine – in which I did not have a clue what to do. And so I prayed, both before and even silently during the situation, and left whatever might happen in God's hands. And everything would turn out okay, or better than okay, as though a blessing had touched the situation to bring about something I had not foreseen or even imagined possible. I saw that praying is essential, even when I think I have a clue what to do! Whatever God has in mind, so to speak, is far better than anything I could come up with.

I had not applied this learning about prayer to a congregation in general. But this is exactly one of the points made by the authors of *Discovering Hope*. "A key to congregational turnaround, it seems,

is getting out of the way: inviting God deep into the planning and conversation process, seeking God's insight, will, and guidance in all facets of the ministry.... God becomes real, tangible, and expressible through the regular practice of prayer" (p. 27, 28). The authors say that prayer of all sorts is central to the life of these vital congregations: prayer at meetings, prayer partners, prayer groups, prayer chains – basically making prayer a central part of parish life. I believe a parish, and its leaders, have to do this intentionally, since it is easy to think that prayer is not really doing anything, and I challenge myself to abide by this statement more than I do.

Prayers can be simple or elaborate. The Book of Common Prayer offers prayers we can use, as do other books of prayers. But they can spur our own prayers. As my parishes have heard me say in a sermon, "God, help me" may be short, but it is still a prayer, if said sincerely.

In the church in Adare, we have a "prayer corner," which is an alcove under the tower, dedicated years ago to this purpose. It is simple, with a bench, a lectern with a Bible, and a small bookcase with some books of prayer. Above the bookcase is a small bulletin board with an invitation to write a prayer request on slips of paper provided and post it there on the board. The board fills up mostly in the summer months, when Adare is full of visitors from around the world. I am always moved by the prayers that people put there: they are heartfelt and cover all sorts of requests. A few months ago, when we started having Morning Prayer on Thursday mornings, we decided to include the posted prayers in our intercessions. We do not know the people we are praying for, but it is a powerful experience to offer prayers on their behalf to the Lord, as part of the ministry of our church.



A simple prayer corner at the church in Adare

It seems appropriate to close with a prayer: God, may you look with favour upon the parishes of our United Dioceses. Bless Bishop Kenneth, our clergy, and our people to hear you and follow you in all that we do, that the light of Christ might shine forth in our ministries and in our lives, to your glory. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

New Christian Comic Series Opens World of 'Wunder' for Kids

A whole new world of 'wunder' has been opened up for children with the launch of the Wunderland series of story trails. The stories are written by the Rector of Bray, the Revd Baden Stanley, and animated by artist Darren Nesbitt of Taney parish.

The Wunderland comics – spelt with a 'u' because the stories are for 'you' – are aimed primarily at children aged from eight to 12 years. They will be published monthly and the first edition (published for Advent 2015) is a bumper issue. The words and artwork combine to bring wonder and enchantment to children and help them engage with familiar Bible stories.

Launching Wunderland, Baden explained that the stories were born in the parish rectory over 16 years ago when he, during an illness, started to come up with stories for his sons Jonathan and Luke which gave life to forgotten toys. Apart from the toys, the central character is Nicholas who walked the streets alone until God called him to a new mission.

"These stories have been birthed here in Bray, in the rectory," he told parishioners. "You have walked these stories with us. This is where Wunderland began. God has put these stories in my heart to inspire children of all ages... These stories are for everyone and I hope you join us in their journey."

Officially launching Wunderland, Archbishop Michael Jackson said the spelling of the word with a 'u' brought about incorporation, inclusion and involvement. "Wunderland in many ways breaks fresh ground. At its heart there is the reality of what it is to be human and at its core is that God is at the heart of humanity," he stated.

Orders for the first issue can be placed by contacting the Revd Baden Stanley at wunderlandtrust@gmail.com or (087) 9484407. Subsequent issues will be available through the website www.wunderlandtrust.com. They will also be available through schools, churches and Sunday Clubs.

The high quality production will cost €5 per issue. Schools that become distribution centres get 10 percent discount.

Anyone who would like to support the project to bring wonder to a new generation can contribute to Wunderland's GoFundMe campaign at www.gofundme.com/wunderlandtrust.

Keep up to date with all the Wunderland happenings at <https://www.facebook.com/WunderlandTrust>



The 1st issue of Wunderland on display – it will surely become a collectors item

Continued from page 14 – Roscrea Group of Parishes

contributors to this urgent project. We fervently hope the house is now free from the problem of dry rot.

Confirmation classes will take place in the rectory leading to the service in St.Brendan's Church Birr. Please hold in your prayers Adam, Aoibhe and Joshua as they prepare to commit to becoming members of the Church through this rite.

Bible Conversation Group with the Methodists begins again on Thursdays 8.00p.m. in the Church Vestry, The Mall. We intend to delve into 'pilgrimage' for some weeks.

The Lions Club Roscrea Spectacles Collection Box is situated in St.Cronan's Church for all kinds of disused reading glasses...Even 'misused' spectacles, e.g. with arms missing, are acceptable.

SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR ROSCREA GROUP OF PARISHES

St.Burchin's Church, Bourney:

1st.&3rd. Sunday: Morning Prayer

2nd.&4th. Sunday: Holy Communion, all at 12.00. noon

Christ Church, Corbally:

1st.&3rd. Sunday: Morning Prayer

2nd.&4th. Sunday: Holy Communion, all at 9.30.a.m.

St.Molua's Church, Kyle:

1st. Sunday: Holy Communion

3rd. Sunday: Morning Prayer, all at 12.00 noon.

St. Cronan's Church Roscrea:

1st.&3rd. Sunday: Holy Communion

2nd.&4th. Sunday: Morning Prayer, all at 10.45.a.m.

Nenagh Union of Parishes

Nenagh, Templeberry, 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

SERVICES

St. Mary's Nenagh: 11am 1st, 2nd, 3rd (Family Service) & 4th Sundays

Templeberry: 9.30am 1st, 2nd & 4th Sundays

Killodiernan: 12.15pm 2nd & 4th Sundays

5th Sundays: 11am United Service, rotating between churches

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The Christmas Tree Festival Week in St Mary's was a tremendous success. We have received many, many complimentary comments about the wonderful Christmas display – 88 exhibits – all beautifully decorated by the people of Nenagh, its retail outlets, schools and organisations. Congratulations to the Art Department of Nenagh College whose tree was voted the best – beautifully “up-cycled” with computer keyboard letters and mosaics. The afternoon teas once again were a major contribution towards the success of the Festival and sincere thanks to Cindy and her team for all the delicious teatime treats, and also to all who assisted with the set-up, baking, dismantling and being on duty each day to welcome our visitors, together with all those who kindly donated gifts for the raffle.



Nenagh College's Silver Mosaic Tree – First prizewinner

Áras Folláin's presence each day during the Festival was greatly appreciated and it was so humbling to us all to see those who themselves have been helped came along to help others. Nenagh Union has donated €2,000 from the proceeds of the Festival to Áras Folláin.



Presentation of cheque to Kevin Whelan, Chairman, Áras Folláin with Annagh Roche and Sadie, Deborah Powell, Marty Sanders, Audrey Clarke-Gordon and Sylvia Crawford.

BEREAVEMENTS

We extend our sincerest sympathies to Miriam and Ramsey Henderson and their son in law, Cecil Allen, on the sudden death of their daughter Lorna just before Christmas, to the Browne Family, on the death of Billy just after Christmas, and to the family of Mary Ryan-Butler on the death of her nephew Jack, also just after Christmas. We keep them all in our prayers and thoughts at this time.

BAPTISM


We welcomed into our Christian family Andrew Kenneth Clarke, son of Natasha and Peter, who was baptised on 16th January.



Andrew with his parents, Natasha and Peter, sisters Hollie and Eve and Godfather Eugene Clarke.

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WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Fr Des Hillary PP invited Rev Lucy to preach in St Mary's of the Rosary RC church at the vigil mass on Saturday 23rd January. She and members of the Nenagh Union who were present received a great welcome in the beautifully redecorated church at a packed service. What a blessing it is for Christians of different traditions to worship together.

ST MARY'S GATEWAYS AND PIERS

As part of the refurbishment work to the Rectory it has been necessary to have some of the piers dismantled to be re-installed in a more permanent way. Over the years these piers have received many knocks and biffs from vehicles coming in and out of the gate built in the days of horses and carriages! Considerable work and finance was spent on the gateways a number of years ago, but still the piers have become dislodged and a bit of a danger. So we are ever hopeful that the job being undertaken at the moment will keep the piers firmly in place.

NEWSLINK

The New Year marks the start of another Newslink Year and subscriptions are once again due to our Parish Distributor – Betty Powell. Please do help her by paying your subscriptions promptly – and many thanks to Betty for all her work with the distribution of Newslink in the Parish.

AND

Choir practices will take place on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month and we thank Brian Brislane for his continued support and assistance.

Whist Drives take place on the first Friday of the month – the next one being on Friday, 4th March

Please keep in your prayers all those who are elderly, either at home or in our nursing homes, and also those who are not enjoying the best of health at this time.

Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes

Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry.

Vacant

Priest-in-Charge: Canon Ruth Gill

Kilgolan House, Kilcormac, Co. Offaly

Tel: 057 913 5341 Mob: 087 948 4402

Email: ruth_gill40@outlook.ie

LOOKING BACK

CHRISTMAS

There was a great turnout at the Christmas services. As always, it's good to meet up with those who come home for the celebrations. Many thanks to those who contributed in so many ways by doing the readings, decorating the churches and providing the music. A special word of thanks must go to the children from the Sunday Schools in Borrisokane and Cloughjordan and the leaders, for the preparation and wonderful participation by the children. Following Christmas Holy Communion, a group of carol singers came to Bushy Park Nursing Home to sing for the residents there and then went up the road to Cronly House. We were given such a warm welcome in both places and we are very grateful to them for their kind hospitality. The children gave a hand-made Christmas card to each resident – a lovely touch.

PASTORAL

Lorna Allen (nee Henderson), Mountrath, and late of Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary, died 23rd December 2015 (unexpectedly) at the Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise. Deepest sympathy is extended to her

husband Cecil, parents Ramsey and Miriam, her brother Brien, her extended family and her neighbours and friends. Her funeral service was held on St. Stephen's Day in Roskelton followed by burial in Borrisokane.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with those who are ill and to those who care for them. Geraldine Burn is wished a speedy recovery after hip surgery.

BAPTISMS

Henry Ian Dennison was baptised in Borrisokane on the 22nd November. He is the son of Emma and George.

Saoirse Hayley Stanley was baptised in SS Peter and Paul's church, Borrisokane on the 9th January. She is the daughter of Gemma and Brian. Thank you to Fr. Tom O'Halloran for his kind hospitality. Every good wish, welcome and blessing to these babies and their families as they begin their journey in the Christian faith.



Saoirse and her Mum Gemma, following her baptism

MOTHERS' UNION

Members along with the Thursday Club and friends got together for a Christmas lunch in Parker's of Riverstown on the 10th December. It's always good to have a chat and when the food is excellent then everything is perfect! Thank you for the kind invitation. At the monthly meeting, Ollie Hayes gave a talk on First Aid and resuscitation.

TABLE TENNIS

Eleven junior members attended the All-Ireland ranking event in Cork recently where they did well. There will be a challenger event in Cloughjordan on the 27th February.

ST KIERAN'S CHURCH

Work on the emergency exit door has been completed! It's good to have the job finished and the church wheelchair accessible. Many thanks to the Select Vestry, Architect Brian Grubb and the builder Donal Corrigan for seeing this through.



Brian Grubb and Donal Corrigan outside St Kieran's Church

LOOKING AHEAD

We look forward to the baptism of Noah Foley in Borrisokane on the 24th January.

BORRISOKANE METHODIST CHURCH

A united service for the congregations of both the Methodist Church and Church of Ireland was arranged for the 31st January with a return visit in Cloughjordan by the Methodist congregation to the Church of Ireland in March.

LENT

Lent begins this year on Wednesday, 10th February. During Lent, we will be exploring the questions raised by the Long Term Church group at one of their meetings. "To do traditional church 'better'. What does this mean to us in terms of the following: (1) Liturgy; (2) Engaging with people within the parish; and (3) engaging with people outside the parish in the community. Further details will be available in the parish newsletter at the end of January.

COOKERY DEMONSTRATION

Edward Hayden will give a cookery demonstration in the Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh, on Thursday 7th April. Tickets at €15 will be available from Borrisokane parishioners.

Shinrone Group of Parishes

Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin

Rector: Canon Michael Johnston (on sick leave)

Priest-in-charge: Rev Denis Sandes

Ballyhasty, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.

Mob: 086 647 5056

Email: revdlsandes@gmail.com

SHINRONE GROUP OF PARISHES

Christmas seems a long time ago already, and the New Year well under way. The Christmas season starts earlier every year, in a commercial sense anyway! In the group it started on 3rd Dec. There was an excellent turn out for Carol Singing at Clover Lodge Nursing Home, organised by the Mothers' Union, and greatly enjoyed by all present. The next event was our Carol Service at Shinrone. This was a traditional service of Carols and Readings, following St Luke's version of events. It was followed by mulled wine, and biscuits, which were most welcome. The singing was led with great gusto by the Cloughjordan Community Choir. John Armitage and the choir are a great resource for the area, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude for the time and effort they put in. John played for the carol singing at Clover Lodge, and also provides hymns weekly for the Communion Service there. Thank you John.

Christmas Day was busy with services in all four churches, albeit two on Christmas Eve, with mulled wine following the service in Kinnitty. It is lovely to see the Churches so beautifully decorated for Christmas. We are now back to our routine of services, Dunkerrin 9.00am, Kinnitty 10.00am, Shinrone 10.30 and Aghancon 11.30. Dunkerrin and Shinrone have H.C. on the first and third Sunday in the month. Kinnitty and Aghancon on the second and fourth. On fifth Sundays there will be one service each end of the parish, as announced. It is only due to the time and effort put in by our lay and parish readers that enables us to have services every Sunday in all the churches. Thank you: Derek and Amanda Grant, Jean Talbot, Iris Peavoy, Alan Armstrong and Paul Fitzpatrick. There will be a monthly newsletter, called the "Shinrone Star."

On The Mothers' Union front, the meeting with John Reid of Concern was held on 19th January at Aghancon, (not 19th Dec. As

announced!) His enthusiasm for his work, the people involved, and the problems solved made for a most interesting meeting, followed by the usual delicious tea, and chat. Next month, there will be a novel meeting, held jointly with Cloughjordan MU, entitled "A fashion Show with a difference" I am really looking forward to finding out what that means! Put the date in your Diary! Mon 29th February, 8.00pm in Moneygall Hall.

BEREAVEMENTS

George Patterson died just before Christmas, a lifelong farmer, in Northern Ireland, renowned table tennis player, and faithful communicant member of the parish, when his health allowed. We extend our prayerful sympathy to Eileen, Robert and Primrose, with Willie, Tommy and the wider family circle.

William Williams, better known as Billy died after Christmas. Like George he spent his life farming, but near Roscrea. Billy was well known for his skill with cattle and his sense of humour. We extend our prayerful sympathy to Bobby, Teddy, Iris, Arthur, Charles and the wider family circle.

Both men will be greatly missed.

IVAN ALEXANDER'S 90TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Rev Janet attended Ivan's party on the 8th of January and sent the following before heading off to the Galápagos:

Ivan has lived for the past 27 years in the home of Patsy and Geraldine Mulqueen, and their daughter Helen was born after he came to live with them. They hosted the most wonderful party for him with all his friends and neighbours invited, including his brother Tom and his wife, who travelled a distance to be there. Unfortunately his other brother, Bert, was in Tullamore hospital, we wish him God's blessings for a full and speedy recovery.

Ivan has been like a grandfather to Helen. As a baby he pushed her pram for long walks, and now she will drive him

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to Shinrone Church, and as you can see from the photo, he still likes to help around the farm, as he's always done.

Congratulations Ivan. I enjoyed your 80th birthday party, your 90th was even better! Can't imagine how good the 100th will be!! God bless you Ivan, Patsy, Geraldine and Helen, and God bless your home.



Ivan still busy at work!

Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh

Ennis, Kilfenora, Kilkee, Spanish Point, Kilnasoolagh and Shannon

Rector: Rev. Chancellor Robert Charles Hanna

The Rectory, Bindon Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Tel: 065 – 6820109 Mob: 086 2167040

Email: bobhanna@eircom.net

Parish website: www.churchofirelandclare.com

UNITY

St Columba's was the venue for the ecumenical act of worship to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, when music was led by Ennis Cathedral Choir and the Foundation Ministries Pentecostal Church Choir. Galway sculpture artist Mrs Holly Mullarkey, no stranger to her roots town and St Columba's, gave an inspiring reflective testimony of faith. Proceeds from the Collection go to the Irish School of Ecumenics who wrote the Service.

Our thanks to Sr Betty Curtin for co-ordinating the preparations and Mary Curley for leading on the night, and also to Nigel Bridge on organ. Rev Vicky Lynch and Fr Ger Fitzgerald, joined the Rector among the clergy as well as Dr Taiwo Matthew of the Redeemed Church and Revs Albert and Chinwey Obadeyi of Foundation Ministries.



Holly Mullarkey

*Jenny Shaw
& Angharad
Harding*

*Pastor Chinwey
Obadeyi &
Sister Pascal*

*Rev Taiwo
Matthew*

*Rev Vicky
Lynch & Fr Ger
Fitzgerald*

BOOK LAUNCH

Canon Reuben Butler, Parish Priest of Newmarket has been a background presence of quiet support to this Church of Ireland incumbent for almost 22 years, so when his history of the parish was launched in mid- Advent it had much significance to this writer. Our Kilnasoolagh Parish, with its old O'Brien (Dromoland) and Fitzgerald (Carrigoran) family connections, is intricately entwined in the social history of the area embracing Shannon Airport (Rineanna) and its islands, plus Bunratty and Craggaunowen.

We congratulate Canon Butler, former Principal of St Flannan's College, and his associate on the book *Maire Ni Ghruagain*. Amongst the fascinating material researched with scholarly rigour is the Tudor imposition of central government and the adoption by leading families such as the O'Briens of the new official religion of Protestantism to keep their lands intact, accepting English titles, like Murrough O'Brien who in 1593 became Earl of Thomond.

FESTIVAL

The Rector wishes to express his profound gratitude to those friends without and within the Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh who generously volunteered wheels over the busy Advent-Christmas-Epiphany period when he was lacking mobility. They were a great source of strength and encouragement, allowing almost a full ministry to prevail, difficult as it was. Glad to say the liturgical moments proved a source of delight and enrichment (to the Incumbent certainly, but I believe to more!).

Worship took place at Kilfenora (Christingle), Kilnasoolagh, Christ Church Kilfarboy (Spanish Point) and Drumcliffe (Ennis) with the usual special enrichment of enhanced congregations, despite the appalling wet and stormy weather.

Festive fare included a rich programme of music at St Columba's with soprano Helen Houlihan and baritone Owen Gilhooley plus the Ennis Brass Band Carol Concert and a Youth Music Night hosted by Clare Youth Service. Soprano Regina Nathan opened Advent and the whole month with her annual festive classic.

Over at the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul the town Carol Service pulled in the usual large and enthusiastic congregation which sang carols led by the massed choir from the parish cluster of churches (but not a Protestant singer in sight!)

SANTA

Kilnasoolagh Christmas Lunch was all the more joyful for the presence of senior parishioner Sadie Blake (chauffeured through the rough weather by granddaughter Sarah Lynch), and Jackie Reid who was – and still is – recovering from a debilitating back complaint. Thanks to Pascal Sage for supplying Santa and Edwin and Frances Bailey for organising the lunch, which had new face as a guest, Steve Fletcher from St Alban's.

Thanks to readers Steve Fletcher, Steven Ellis, Tim O'Connell, Eckhart Wurm, Edwin Bailey and Rev Dr Patricia McKee Hanna for their ministry over Christmas-New Year.



Parish Reader Eckhart Wurm seen with his Lego model of Kilnasoolagh Church, Newmarket-on-Fergus. By background German and Lutheran, he is married to Michelle a language teacher (originally from Cork). They have two daughters, both third level students.

Clonfert Diocese

Aughrim & Creagh Unions of Parishes

Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Ahascragh, Ardrahan, Clontuskert and Woodlawn

Rector: Rev. John Godfrey

The Rectory, Aughrim, Co. Galway.

Tel: 090 967 3735 Mob: 087 900 8085

Email: reverendjohngodfrey@gmail.com

Parish website: www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org

It was a great joy and privilege to celebrate my first Christmas as Rector of the Aughrim and Creagh parish unions. May I offer my sincere thanks to all who showered our family with such goodwill over the festive season. Our Christmas services were full of such joy, life and colour – they were truly uplifting! I am grateful to all who worked so hard to make those services so special, and for the support throughout the unions for the shared services were held over the festive period. I am most grateful to the collegiality shown by Dean Maurice Sirr and Canon Trevor Sullivan who provided the cover that allowed our family to take a welcome break over the New Year.



Rev John with some members of the Ballinasloe MU

For some homes and farms in this area, Christmas and New Year brought the distress of severe flooding. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who were affected. The people of this parish showed their solidarity in recent weeks by supporting the bishops' Flood Relief Appeal most generously. This will now give me the opportunity to apply for practical support on behalf of affected families in this region.

The start of this New Year brings with it a number of rich opportunities to come together. On January 19th, St Joseph's Carmelite monastery hosted a service of prayer for Christian Unity, led by Bishop John Kirby, Fr Willy Moran, Fr Raymond McSweeney and me. It was an uplifting and well-supported event, which did much to strengthen the bonds of friendship amongst our churches here. Many thanks to Mrs Claire Besnyoe who worked so hard to make it a success.

On January 31st we celebrated the feast of Candlemas with a united service in St Catherine's Ahascragh at 11am.

On February 1st Portiuncula Hospital hosted an ecumenical service of remembrance at 7.30pm. This service offered the chance for families to name their grief and honour the memory of their children who died, either before or after birth.

Bishop Kenneth will lead a special memorial service for Canon George Flynn on Saturday 6th February at midday in St John's Ballinasloe. We hope that that will offer our diocesan and parish family a chance to join with the wider community in celebrating the life and ministry of Reverend George here.

On March 3rd, St John's Ballinasloe will host an ecumenical service for World Day of Prayer, at 7pm. In preparation for that event an inter-church Bible-study group is now meeting weekly on Tuesdays in Gullane's Hotel at 8pm – all are welcome.

Bishop Kenneth will be leading a service of confirmation in our parish on April 10th. The number of candidates who have already expressed an interest in preparing for confirmation is most encouraging. If you or your children would like to find out more about confirmation, please do get in touch with me.

Blessing and best wishes to you all, John



Presentation of gifts to Esker House women's refuge

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

SERVICE TIMES FOR FEBRUARY:

February 7th United Service @ 11.00 in Banagher St Paul's Church.

February 10th: Parish Ash Wednesday Eucharist @ 11am in Eliza Lodge in Banagher

February 14th: Eyrecourt (HC) @ 10.30. Banagher (HC) @ 12noon. Portumna @ 3pm (Evensong)

February 21st: Portumna (HC), 10.30 Banagher (MP) @ 12noon

February 28th: Eyrecourt (MP) @ 10.30. Banagher (HC) @ 12noon.

Select Vestries Meeting with Bishop Kenneth: Tuesday February 16th 2016 in St Paul's Hall, Banagher.

Easter Vestries: Portumna @ 6pm on March 3rd 2016. Eyrecourt @ 8pm on March 3rd 2016. Banagher to be announced. It will be within the 27 days preceding Easter Sunday which falls on March 27th.

FLOODS

The floods that came in the wake of Storm Frank and the subsequent exceedingly high rainfalls led to much damage and disruption in the parish and surrounding parishes. Our sympathies and the sum of our Flood collections go to so many whose lives and homes have been devastated and, with even a small amount of water entering their homes, irretrievably spoilt. Whilst there was no apparent damage to our churches nonetheless many parishioners were not able to get to church or felt that it was not safe to attempt the journey.

'FOR FINE WEATHER'

January has not been a month of cheer though our 1662 prayer 'For Fine Weather' were greeted by enthusiastic "Amens". At the direction of the prayer we did acknowledge our iniquities and were indeed comforted that thereby God lifted the plague of rain and waters that he had sent upon us as a punishment so that we would amend our lives. Those who saw no connection between our sins and the plague of rain and waters were unmoved by the ceasing of the rains. Others, notably the eight persons of the parish who steadfastly amended their lives in the wake of New Year "Frank", are so much the better for it.

The Valentine's Day "Love & Hope" Ball is on hold at the moment due to the arrest of our sponsor.

More news on that and all other breaking news next month!

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 Ballinvohar, Fr. Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick

Tel: 061-302038 Mob: 086-3574917

Email: ednawakely@hotmail.com

BEREAVEMENTS

4th December – Gladys Blackledge in the UK –

18th December – Jo Ischner in Mountshannon –

24th December – James (Jimmy) Clancy – Jimmy carved a magnificent wooden seat from an Irish oak tree which has carvings of the various symbols of the fishermen's craft and biblical quotations and donated it to St. Mary's Cathedral.

9th January 2016 – Valentina Dernova who died suddenly in Russia (mother of Irina Dernova, organist of St. Michael's Church and Organ Scholar at St Mary's Cathedral).

17th January 2016 – Malcolm Santley Dilley in Doon –

Our sincerest sympathies to all their families and friends.

ST. MICHAEL'S CAROL SERVICE AND NATIVITY PLAY

On 20th December, St. Michael's Sunday School children performed their Nativity play during the Carol Service. The play was called 'The Grumpy Innkeeper'. Well done to all involved, especially to the children who obviously worked very hard to deliver such an impressive performance.



The cast of The Grumpy Innkeeper



The Grumpy Innkeeper

THE PINK STOLE

The coloured stole that a priest wears for Eucharistic worship denotes the liturgical season e.g. green for ordinary time; purple for lent. Very occasionally you might see a priest wear a rose or pink stole. There are only two days in the Church calendar when this is worn – the 3rd Sunday of Advent and the 4th Sunday in Advent. These two Sundays in the penitential seasons give us a glimpse of colour in the sombre season and points to the light ahead and to the place where all is ready for us as our saviour has promised.

A BIG THANK YOU to all who made the whole season from Advent through to Christmas so special – our choirs, the organist, and organ scholar, readers, flower arrangers, those who provided refreshments, cleaned our churches, prepared newsletters and service sheets, helped decorate and/or supplied materials. The results of their talents and ability were much admired and appreciated in all our churches. Thank you to the Brickenden family who once again donated a lovely Christmas Tree to the Cathedral.

ST. MICHAEL'S WHIST DRIVE

The Christmas drive was held on Saturday 12th December – The Raffle Prize winners were 1st Valerie Shire (Hamper kindly sponsored by Niall Johnston); other winners – Colin Marsden, Bertie Alfred, & Bernie Hally. Many thanks all the ladies who supplied the delicious eats and donated many lovely prizes. On 9th of January the Raffle winners were Stephen Cheatley, Bernie Hally, Catherine Mulcahy & Susi Eckhardt. Next whist Drive in St. Michael's is on Sat 6th Feb and Villiers Square Sat 20th February St. Michael's is on Sat 5th March and Villiers Square Sat 12th March all at 7.30pm and charge of €6.

MOTHERS' UNION

Lucy Kavanagh would again like to thank most sincerely everyone who donated items for our hampers this year. They made up two hampers, one for Clare Street Men's Hostel and, as usual, one for Thomond House Women's Hostel and also they had enough to make up individual gifts for the women's hostel. She has received thank you letters from both and they were delighted. They also gave items of clothing and toiletries to Adapt House following their MU vigil and thank all those who donated. Women and children arrive to Adapt House with nothing and really appreciate these items. Thank you for your huge generosity.

40 THOMAS ST
LIMERICK

TEL: 061 ~ 414967
FAX: 061 ~ 415365

Thompson Undertakers
Limerick

Congratulations to Lucy Kavanagh who has taken office as Mothers' Union Diocesan President. We wish her every blessing and success.

CATHEDRAL NEWS

Advent and Christmas saw the usual busy round of carol services in the cathedral. We are blessed at St Mary's in having such an atmospheric building for these annual services – all three carol services have their own particular resonance and appeal, but are very much heightened by taking place in the darkened medieval cathedral, lit mainly by the great candelabra chandeliers. The Advent and Christmas Carol Services as ever were very well attended, and it was pleasing to see numbers up for the most recent service, the Epiphany Carols.

Now the choir is busy preparing some special music for the Choral Evensong and Installation of Canons on Saturday 20th February at 4.30pm in St Mary's Cathedral, which we look forward to greatly. It is preceded by a talk at 3pm to be given by Canon Patrick Comerford. Please see Bishop Kenneth's introduction to this month's Newslink.

It is very satisfying to see numbers also growing for our Wednesday lunchtime concerts. We are delighted to welcome home a distinguished young recorder player, Caoimhe de Paor, on Wednesday 17th February at 1.15pm. Caoimhe studied with Maria O'Brien here in Limerick – do come to this free concert if you are in Limerick that day. Please see advertisement on page 4.

THANK YOU

Dean Sandra and Rev'd Edna wish to thank all who sent good wishes, cards and gifts – this is much appreciated, and wish all a healthy, happy and prosperous new year.

CONFIRMATION 2016

Confirmation takes place on Sunday 22nd of May in St. Michael's Church. It is essential that all candidates hoping to be confirmed in 2016 attend all classes from the very beginning. Application forms for those considering Confirmation are available in the churches – completed forms should be returned to Dean Sandra. Please contact Dean Sandra if you would like to be confirmed.

BEST WISHES

LCP sends best wishes to Rev. Edna Wakely and wish her a speedy recovery.

United Service Sunday 6th March 2016 will be a United Service at 10.30am (please note time) in St Michael's Church (Mothering Sunday).

LENT HUNGER LUNCH

On Saturdays during Lent there will be soup and bread lunch in St Mary's Cathedral (12.30pm to 1.30pm). Donations to St. Vincent de Paul, Limerick. Offers of homemade soup welcome. Please contact Dean Sandra.



Bishop Kenneth photographed with confirmation candidate Ellen Beamish, her mum Elizabeth Beamish. Ellen's grandmother Rita Harris and Ellen's sister Lily on 17th May last year.

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

SERVICE OF DEDICATION

We closed our last Newslink notes with mention of an upcoming special service in Kilmallock, with Bishop Kenneth Kearon, on the First Sunday of Advent, 29th November. It was a good day, with members from throughout the Group joining for worship in Kilmallock to witness Bishop Kenneth bless and dedicate a number of items in the church. Newly refurbished stained glass windows were dedicated to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for rectors and parishioners of the Kilmallock Union, past and present. Two items were given in memory of long-time member Alan Lillingston, of Mount Coote Stud, who died in July 2014: a new sign outside the church, given by the Lillingston family, and a lectionary book for the church's worship, given by the Mount Coote staff. Copies of the new hymnal, *Thanks & Praise*, were donated by member Jessie Griffin in memory of her uncle, Brooklyn Roe, who died this past year. Following the service, we gathered for refreshments and conversation.

FAREWELL IN CHRIST

On 30th November, the Adare Church said farewell to member Olive Thornburgh, who died peacefully on 26 November. Originally from Clonmel, Olive had moved to Adare over two decades ago when she was in her mid-70s and had been a reader and a substitute organist until a few years ago. When she died, Olive was just a few months short of turning 100 years old.

CHRISTMAS

We enjoyed our usual round of Advent and Christmas services, beginning on 13th December with a play offered by the Kilpeacon Sunday School, on the theme of where we might find the Baby Jesus if he were being born nowadays. The following Sunday saw carol services in Kilmallock and Adare. The Sunday school children read the lessons in the Kilmallock service, while in Adare the readers were members of the local community. The Kilmallock service was followed by a Christmas dinner in the Deebert House Hotel, with about 60 in attendance, complete with entertainment and a visit from a certain person in a red suit offering gifts.



The cast of Kilpeacon Sunday School's Nativity Play

Following Christmas services in each of the parishes, we had another carol service in Kilpeacon on the First Sunday of Christmas. A stalwart group of about 15 braved the wet weather on St. Stephen's Day to take the traditional walk in Curraghchase – and then the weather cleared! The walk was followed by the traditional gathering in a local pub for mulled wine and mince pies. The numbers seemed to increase at the pub... The final event of the season was the second annual Epiphany party at the Rectory on the Sunday closest to the Epiphany.



Adare Group, and their canine friends, on the traditional St. Stephen's Day walk in Curraghchase.

LOOKING AHEAD

Now we are looking ahead to Lent — coming very soon! We will have a Lenten class, as well as a confirmation class for at least four youth. On the Vestry level, we are preparing for changes made necessary by the new charity registration regulations. And because Easter comes so soon this year, we plan to have the Easter Vestry meetings after Easter.

Wishing all a holy Lenten season.

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

Our parishes had the usual Christmas rush of carols and Christmas services. It is not just a busy time for the priest, but a busy time for everyone and many thanks are due to those who cleaned and decorated our churches for the season and tidied up afterwards.

Christmas might well be over but life goes on in our group of parishes and we rejoiced to celebrate the baptism of Ruby Maria Teskey, daughter of Garrett and Sandra and granddaughter to Raye and John.



Ruby Maria's baptism

Easter is early this year and even as you read this Lent is coming like the proverbial express train and soon we will be busy again. There will be a service for Ash Wednesday on Wednesday 10th February in St. Mary's Askeaton at 8:00 p.m. Come along and begin Lent, as you mean to go on, in prayer and reflection.

Many people will already know that Rev'd Keith and Lyn have announced their intention to leave the parish towards the end of 2016. Not everything has been settled yet, but all things being well (including Keith and Lyn as they have to go through the rigours of a medical examination) they will be going back to Zambia sometime around September.

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

Rev Phyllis Jones,

The Rectory, Camp, Co. Kerry.

Tel: 066 713 0767 Mob: 085 855 8594

Email: phyllisjones@eircom.net

The Holy Communion is celebrated in the West Room of St. John's, Tralee every Wednesday at 11.00am.

On Ash Wednesday February 10th there will also be a Communion Service in Ballymacelligott at 8pm, these Wednesday evening Services will continue throughout Lent.

For details of Lenten events in Camp and Dingle please refer to the Parish Newsletter.



Donations from the annual ecumenical carol service at Saint James' Church, Dingle were presented by Eleanor and Eric Prestage to Ursula O'Connell, from Kerry Hospice and Rev Phyllis Jones for the much needed work of the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and Kids4peace – a Palestinian programme to bring young people of all faiths together. See photo above.

Recommended reading for Lent – Lent is one of the three forty-day 'seasons' in the Church's year, besides Advent and the period from Easter to Pentecost. The name itself, Lent, derives from an ancient word meaning 'spring' or 'long', referring to the time of year when days are beginning to lengthen and the world is turning from winter cold and dark to the warmth and promise of spring. During this time, the Church calls us to a special period of prayer, self-examination and teaching – and this book has been written to accompany you through that period, a time of turning from winter to spring, from death to life.

Dust and Glory by David Runcorn ranges across the whole business of living and believing, where the questions are as important as the answers, and may call us to deep heart-searching. The goal is always to draw us to authentic faith; a way of living and believing that is real and vulnerable, strong in knowing its limits, rooted in joy and wonder, blessed with the healing and merciful presence of God. Such faith acknowledges both the dust of our mortality and the glory that keeps breaking in with unexpected life, hope and new beginnings.

On Sunday February 14th it has been suggested that we hold a service where couples may renew their marriage vows. The service

will be held in St John's Tralee at the usual time of 10.45am and all are welcome.

Our sincere sympathies are with Nancy Keane and the whole family at this time, on the death of Peter. Peter was a beloved husband, father and grandfather – and served the Tralee and Dingle Group for over 25 years as dedicated and gifted Diocesan Reader. May Peter rest in peace and rise in Glory.

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

CHRISTMAS:

All Christmas and New Year services were well attended and the church decorations looked fantastic – thanks to all involved.

THE RAILINGS:

As mentioned in earlier editions of Newslink, the decision to renew the railings has been taken and the work has commenced. This work is multifaceted and whereas the physical removal and replacement is fairly simple and will be completed on time, the fund raising associated with paying for it is far more complex. A huge effort is being put in to this aspect and confidence is high that the huge costs will be met, but every donation is critical. If readers are in a position to help out in this manner please contact Rev. Simon.



St Mary's Railing

LIME TREES:

Unfortunately, because of the nature of the works being undertaken, the lime (or linden) trees, which were synonymous with the appearance of the much photographed building, have had to be removed as they were showing signs of rot. These will be replaced and I hear mention of yew being the preferred choice, although I cannot for the life of me see why we should plant such potent symbols of pre-Christian worship. I'm for replacing like-for-like because if we're to believe the story of Joseph of Arimathea in Glastonbury his staff which took root was a humble blackthorn – known as the Holy Thorn – and the lime tree is a humble tree loved by all forms of nature unlike the poisonous yew.

A PLACE OF WORSHIP:

Of course when we think about the foregoing we realise that it's easy to get caught up in the politics of collecting money or squabbling over peripheral asides such as what trees we should plant and we

can lose sight of what the church is all about in the first place. If we consider Matthew 18:20 Jesus has given us a clear insight into what He wants when He says "Wherever two or three gather in my name, there I am with them." He wasn't talking about buildings at all and one feels that He didn't have much time for symbolism but urged His followers to gather together in the act of worshipping wherever that may be. So in the midst of all of the stress surrounding the works at St Mary's it is critical that we remain united and focussed on His word.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

The numbers are building and for that we are grateful to Lynda and her helpers, but it is important as well to take time to thank and praise the commitment of the parents of the children who make such huge sacrifices to bring them along each Sunday. It's not easy at the best of times to wake, feed and dress youngsters, so we salute you for the efforts you put in!

CONCERTS:

The "season" will be getting underway in the next couple of months and Andrew will be the perennial nuisance he always is at this time of year trying to gather up volunteers. He will be organising a meeting shortly to cover the first half of the year and we all owe it to him to ensure we attend.

PETER KEANE RIP:

The congregation at St Mary's were grieved to hear of the passing of Pater Keane, a lay reader from Camp, who gave several inspiring sermons at St Mary's over the years. Peter will be sorely missed, not just in Killarney, but throughout the entire diocese; may he rest in peace.

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

Killorglin 11.00 pm

HC 2nd & 4th

MP 1st & 3rd

CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

The Christmas services were well attended and I would like to thank all those who participated and read at the various services. Many thanks to those who so generously decorated and prepared our churches with Christmas Trees, Cribs, Advent candles and other seasonal decorations.

CONFIRMATION:

Confirmation preparation will begin with a meeting with the parents and children on the 7th of February in Killorglin before the morning service. Classes will begin on the following weekend.

The Confirmation service will be held on the 24th April in Killorglin.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Two services are planned as we go to print.

The first in Kiltallagh Church on the 26th January, a schools service between Ballyfinnane and Kiltallagh National Schools.

The second in St Michaels Killorglin on the 31st Jan at 6.30pm, the area service between the churches in mid Kerry which it is our turn to host.

BAPTISMS

We had two baptism in January and they are always wonderful occasions.

Katie Stephens Daughter of David and Sharon was baptized in Killorglin Church on the 16th January while Denis Daly son of Hazel and Gerard was baptized in Killorglin Church on the 17th January. Congratulations to all the families and we wish them well as they raise their children within the family of the Church.

ENGAGEMENTS

Congratulations to Nicole Boyle, Daughter of Adrian and Colette who announced her engagement to Leon Seidler over the Christmas and to Ashley Casey, daughter of Jane and Pat who announced her engagement to Barry Fitzgerald in the Autumn.

SYMPATHY

As a parish we extend our sympathy to Nancy Keane and her family of Ballmacelligott on the death of her husband Peter who served as a Diocesan Lay Reader. Peter led morning prayer in our parish on occasions. As a parish we are grateful for his ministry to us.

LENTEN SERVICES:

It is hoped to continue evening prayer in Killorglin on Tuesdays at 8pm, A short discussion on selected biblical texts will be part of these devotions.

ENVELOPE SCHEME:

The parish is introducing an envelope scheme to help parishioners to plan their giving and to make it easier to make their donation on a phased basis through the year rather than once a year.

It will also make it easier for the parish to claim tax back from the Revenue on all donations made over €250, and we ask for the patience of our fellow parishioners as we try to get this scheme up and running.

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

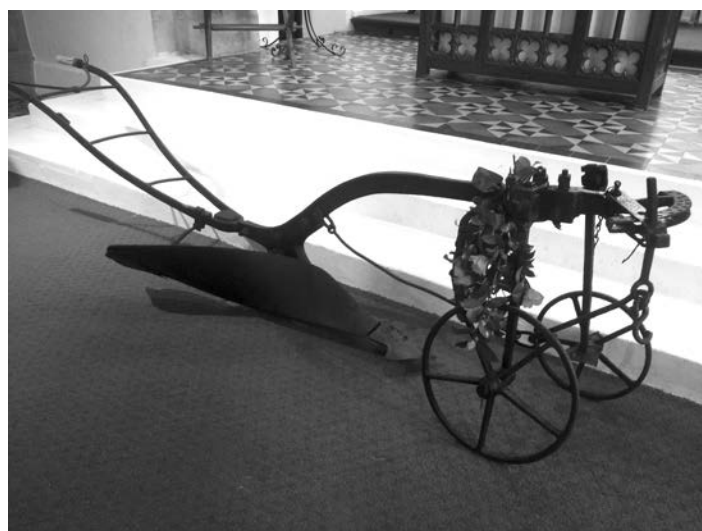
Back to 'normal' now – but looking back over a very busy but satisfying couple of months.

The Ecumenical Carol Service in St John the Baptist Church, Knightstown has become very much an established tradition. The service which took place on Tuesday 8th December was the 22nd to be held there. The pretty Neo-Gothic Church had been tastefully decorated with Christmas flowers and candles. This was much admired by a congregation of 180 who filled the pews to hear again the Christmas story in bible readings and carols. It had been many years since two Bishops attended this event together. This year, however, making his first official visit to Valentia, was our new Bishop Kenneth, and the RC Bishop of Kerry, Raymond Browne.

A retiring collection raised €675 for Christian Aid Ireland, to help them in their work with Syrian refugees. After the service which was much enjoyed by all, the clergy and congregation were treated to traditional Christmas hospitality at Boston's Bar.

In addition to the usual Carol Services and Christmas Concerts, we celebrated on Christmas Eve with a 'Live action' Crib service, with a real baby – 5 week old Svetlana – a two-legged donkey, several shepherds, quite a few Magi (n.b. the Bible doesn't say there were only three!), an angel or two who had joined us from the Realms of Glory, and a couple of extras from Frozen.

This was followed in mid-January by our now traditional Plough Service, in which we ask God to bless all those who provide the food we eat, their animal helpers, and the land we plough. It's all very well saying 'Thanks' at our Harvest Festival – but it's just as important to say 'Please' at the beginning of the year.



The Plough

And to cap it all, the Mothers' Union lunch in Sneem gave 20 or so members (and fellow travellers) the chance to eat the freshest and best cooked fish in the country at the Riverside Café in Sneem.



MU luncheon

Methodist News

Adare & Ballingrane Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Bill Olmsted (on sick leave)

Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Rd,

Adare, Co. Limerick.

Tel: 061 396236

Email: william@olmsteds.net

During Rev Bill's Absence, Rev. Shannon DeLaurel is Acting Superintendent for Adare and Ballingrane. She is the superintendent minister on the North Tipperary circuit, and as well as general responsibility for our circuit, is also available for emergencies. Her address is: The Manse, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary. Telephone: 0505 21670

E-mail: shannon.delaueal@irishmethodist.org

We are very appreciative of the ministers and local preachers who have come to take services each week and of Rev. Shannon's oversight.

Rev. Bill is still in hospital; please continue to hold him and his family in the USA in your thoughts and prayers.

Adare and Ballingrane circuit Executive will meet in Adare at 8.00 p.m. on 24 February.

SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY:

7 February, Rev. Tom Kingston

Adare 10.15 a.m.

Ballingrane 11.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at both services

14 February, Josephine Masawi

United circuit service in Ballingrane at 11.00 a.m.

21 February, Rev. Tom Kingston

Adare 10.15 a.m.

Ballingrane 11.45 a.m.

28 February, Siobhan Wheeler

United circuit service in Adare at 11.00 a.m.

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

2016 will no doubt be seeing some changes as of course each year does! Our first change is saying 'goodbye' – reluctantly – to the Surf Project. Jono and Beth and the crew have moved their ministry base up to Portrush. Recently Jono wrote to the District –

We are working in partnership with the Portrush, Portstewart, Coleraine and Ballymoney circuit. We will still be working across the connexion and hope to develop on last year's 3 events in Cork. We did 22 events last year 16 of which were in the North West District, 3 in Cork, 1 in Clare and 2 in Dublin. So it makes sense for us to be where the majority of our work is and get the support and ownership from a local Church. We are excited about this next stage for the project as we come up on 3 years this June.

Thank you to those who have supported the Surf Project while we were on the district over the last few years and hopefully we'll hear from more of you on the district as to how the project can work with your Churches and in particular young people.

Yours in Christ & Surfing! Jono

Patrick has joined us in Central Buildings Community Project. A graduate of Limerick School of Art and Design, Patrick will bring some much needed expertise to our project. He's written a piece about our most recent exhibitions and will be working on a website in the coming months to keep us 'out there.'

December saw the launch of Life Lines, an exhibition of life drawings created by the Limerick Figure Drawing Society. The society, founded by accomplished caricaturist and illustrator Mark Heng, comprises of local artists who meet to work side by side, observing and exalting the human form through art, and we were delighted to have their varied collection of pictures on the walls in CB1. During Life Lines, two portrait-drawing sessions were held and were open to the public, free of charge. This is the second time we have held a Limerick Figure Drawing Society exhibition and, once again, it was received with great interest by our visitors.



Lifelines Exhibition

Following the detail and muted tones of the life drawings came 'Silhouette', a solo exhibition by prolific artist Jean Ryan Hakizimana, filling the gallery with paintings of explosive colour and dramatic scenes of nature. Jean Ryan attended his exhibition to guide visitors through his work and give them insight to his inspirations and experiences as a local artist.

Our current solo exhibition is entitled 'K9' and displays the work of pop artist, Thady Hynes. As one may guess from the title, the work in the exhibition draws attention to man's—and woman's—best friend, the dog. Thady has rendered dogs in a range of painting styles, varying from bright and comical to dark and moody.



KP Exhibition with artist Thady Hynes

In CB1, we are always looking to adorn our walls with the hard work and imagination of local artists. In our aim to provide a calm space for the public, we hope also to provide a calm space for artists to share their work with visitors in a friendly environment. We have held a variety of exhibitions and we have often been surprised by observations of artists and visitors alike. If you would like to exhibit work in CB1, contact Anna-Victoria on 086 0550213 or pop in and say hello!

Killarney, Kenmare & Millstreet Methodist Churches

[part of the Cork South & Kerry Circuit]

Minister: Rev. Karen Spence

10 Flesk Grove, Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Tel: 064 6631613

Email: karen.spence@irishmethodist.org

Web site: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry

Lay Pastoral Assistant: Suzie Gallagher

Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team: Ed and Jean Ritchie

Tel: 064 6620580

The Gateway KENMARE

Sunday Service 11am (preceded by tea/coffee)

Bible study Tuesday 8pm and Wednesday 10am

Drop in for coffee Wednesday 11am

Youth Club second and fourth Saturday 7pm – 8.30pm

The Lighthouse MILLSTREET

Sunday service 6.30pm

Bible Study Tuesday 7.30pm

Drop in Thursday 9.30am – 12.30pm

KILLARNEY

Sunday services 9am and 11am

Prayer meetings Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 8am – 9am

Bible Study Friday 10am

Drop in for coffee Friday 11am

Parent and Toddler (term time) Tuesday 10am

Youth Drop in Friday 4pm

The Giving Space monthly as arranged Saturday 3pm – 5pm

There are also fellowship groups in Dingle, Castleisland, Gneeveguilla and Ballyunion contact Karen for further information.

2016 began with a Watchnight service in Killarney as we gathered to look back on 2015 and look forward to the new year. On the first Sunday of January the Covenant Service, with the challenging covenant prayer, was celebrated across the three churches.



Carol Singers

December had been a busy month around all the churches: Kenmare's planned Carol service with Churches Together was cancelled due to flooding and was rearranged for later in December. The Millstreet congregation ventured out of the building to the Community Hospital in the town to sing Carols and perform a nativity penned by one of the members which was well received by the patients, families and staff. They then braved the cold and held their Carol service outside the Lighthouse! Killarney held their traditional Carol Service on the Saturday evening before Christmas which was preceded by a party for the children of Sunday School.

This year, in Killarney, we hosted a Christmas Day dinner for 32 people which was a huge success!

Plans are being put in place to help the congregations journey through Lent and to reach out to the various communities on St Patrick's Day!

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Shannon DeLaurel

The Manse, The Mall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary

Tel: 0505 21670 Mobile: 085 1920 808

Email: Shannon.delaurel@irishmethodist.org

Back in my home state of Louisiana in the Deep South of the United States, Mardi Gras is a season which begins after Epiphany (7th January) and lasts until the day before Ash Wednesday. This year that will be Tuesday 9th February. The French term "Mardi Gras" literally means "Fat Tuesday." It describes the feasting on rich food before the fasting of the Lenten season begins. Here in Ireland, we call this day Shrove Tuesday and the popular custom is to eat pancakes.

All throughout this much anticipated season of Mardi Gras in Louisiana, there are formal balls, parades, and plenty of great food. The most popular cake of the season is called "King Cake" which is named in honour of the three wise men or kings who brought gifts to baby Jesus. A small plastic baby is placed inside the cake after it is baked. The person who gets the baby in his/her cake slice, is the "King" for the day and gets to bring the next cake for the next party!

Many folks wear the Mardi Gras colours of purple (which represents justice), green (which represents faith), and gold (which represents power) to the celebrations. These festive Mardi Gras traditions began in the Catholic communities but many years ago extended to Protestants and the wider secular culture. Schools take a break for the people to participate in some form of celebration. Even though Mardi Gras is not a holy day or a church festivity, King Cake has been known to show up on the Communion Table in south Louisiana prior to Lent.

As I reflect on these traditions and celebrations, I am grateful for how they mark time through the year's seasons. The writer of Ecclesiastes pens, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance . . . a time to be silent and a time to speak." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4 & 7). We are preparing ourselves for the Lenten journey . . . which is a time to reflect, a time to pause, a time to be still in the presence of God. It's also a time to repent, to surrender our lives to God's ways . . . a time to embrace change in our lives for the sake of the Kingdom. May we do so with willing, open hearts and minds.

Faithfully,
~ Rev. Shannon

Ash Wednesday Prayer Service: 10 February – All are welcome to this prayer service in Shinrone Church at 8pm to begin the season of Lent, which is a season of fasting, reflection and repentance.

St. Cronan's Youth Club – This secondary school-aged youth club will meet next on Saturday 20 February from 7-9pm in Methodist Church Hall, Roscrea. €2/youth. Any questions, please contact Rosie Gee at 086 1973311.

Global Vision 2016 – Everyone's welcome to this district event on Saturday 20th February from 10:30am-4pm at Fir Grove Hotel in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork. We will have 4 guest speakers who will cover the following topics: "Understanding Islam in the Wake of ISIS-TBC," "World Church Relationships – Africa," "Frontiers Ireland – Mission among Muslims," and "City of Sanctuary Movement." The booking fee is €10. Lunch can be purchased at the Fir Grove Hotel

or you may bring your own, which must be eaten in your car or outside the hotel. If you are interested in attending, please let Rev. Shannon know.

Circuit Bible-studies:

Borrisokane/Cloughjordan – Group meets on Mondays at 7:30pm in Borrisokane vestry. Theme is the Book of Galatians.

Roscrea – Group meets on Thursdays at 8pm in the vestry. Theme will be on "Pilgrimage."

Everyone is welcome to these studies. Bring a friend!

Old Spectacles? – If you have old spectacles and would like to pass them on to someone else who could use them, please bring them to Roscrea Church. There will be a box in the front porch to collect them.

The Refugee Crisis: the Church of Ireland Response

The Rt Revd Ken Good, Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, and the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala & Achonry, outlined the Church of Ireland's response to the refugee crisis on 16th December. They chair the Church of Ireland's working groups on refugees in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland respectively. Bishop Rooke is also Chair of the Bishops' Appeal.

The plight of refugees crossing the Mediterranean over this year has moved hearts across the Church of Ireland and motivated a deep desire to help people fleeing conflict. The scale and speed of the crisis makes it one of the defining issues of our time. Fear of persecution has forced almost 20 million people across borders, of whom 4.3 million are fleeing civil war in Syria. As strangers in foreign lands, refugees and asylum seekers are people desiring a brighter future. It is surely our responsibility, as part of Christ's worldwide church, to serve and make them welcome and play our part in Ireland's broader response.

The Archbishops set out a three-fold response in September, which affirmed the compassion already expressed by many individuals and parishes. Prayer must be our starting point. As bishops, we continue to encourage members of the Church of Ireland to intercede for people who have been displaced, traumatised and bereaved, and also for empathy and wisdom for European governments as they decide their response. Parishioners are also encouraged to write to and meet with their respective TDs and MPs to encourage governments to offer more refuge and resettlement.

Generous giving to the Bishops' Appeal has to date provided €50,000 to Christian Aid and Tearfund as they respond to the needs of refugees, of which €10,000 has been allocated to the response within the European Union. The crisis fund is still open for donations and information on giving and gift aid is available at <http://bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/donate>

AID

Funding from Christian Aid has helped to provide food and fresh water on the Greek islands, clothes and boots for refugees and asylum seekers in Serbia, in addition to the existing practical support in the refugee camps of Iraq and Lebanon.

Tearfund's local partners within Syria have continued to reach thousands of people with emergency food supplies. Blankets, heating stoves and fuel subsidies will help displaced families to survive bitter winter conditions.

The Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland have recognised that the crisis presents a major challenge for governments and Churches alike – but also opens up opportunities to respond with generosity and in faith. The Church of Ireland has written to the

Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and Secretary of State to express our willingness to help. Two working groups – for the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively – have been established to co-ordinate our response. With a network of parishes across the island, the Church can swiftly offer goodwill and practical help to arriving refugees.

RESETTLEMENT

The Republic of Ireland has received 100 Syrian refugees in the year to date. A further 80 are due to arrive before Christmas, followed by another 100 in the New Year. A group of 51 refugees has now arrived in Northern Ireland.

Small acts of service will make a difference e.g. befriending people, introducing them to a doctor or dentist, or providing food, household supplies and toys to help them start a new life.

Even if peace returned in Syria in the coming months, it would take years for its displaced people to return home and decades for the country to return to normality. This crisis will be with us for the long term and we welcome commitments by the UK and Irish governments to resettle refugees – 20,000 and 4,000 respectively – over the next five years. Indeed, some refugees will build the rest of their lives here.

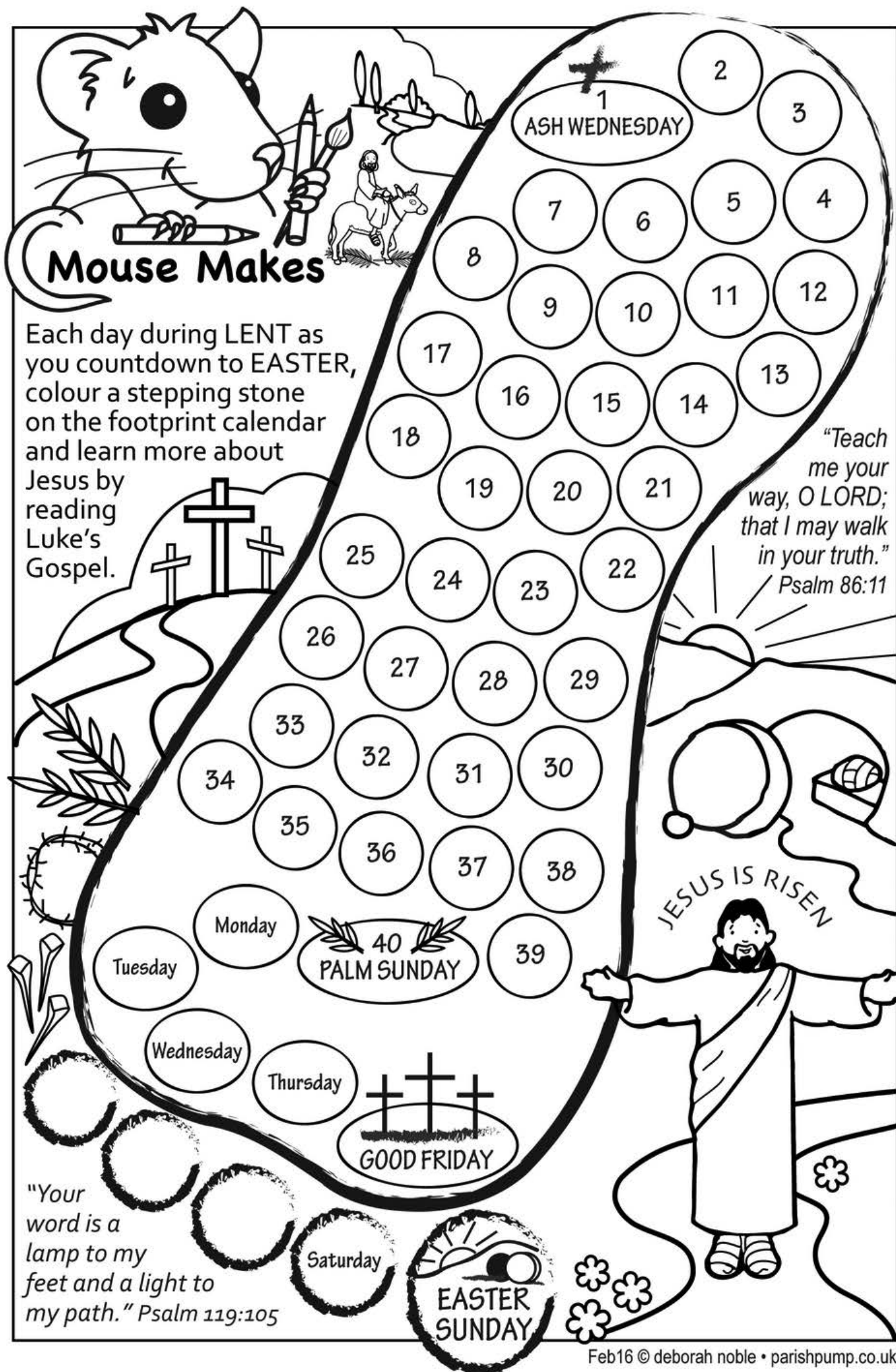
As our response develops, we will consider how we can work collaboratively with charities, NGOs and Churches to meet effectively the humanitarian needs of our new neighbours through further advocacy, research, training and practical support.

COMPASSION

Our Saviour was born into a world of fear and insecurity and, as a child, journeyed from Bethlehem to Egypt and Nazareth as a refugee. It is still the experience of many Christians today. Offering hope to the stranger in our midst is a profound example of how we follow Christ and love our neighbour in a turbulent and changing world.



Refugees from the war in Syria



Mouse Makes

Each day during LENT as you countdown to EASTER, colour a stepping stone on the footprint calendar and learn more about Jesus by reading Luke's Gospel.

1
ASH WEDNESDAY

2

3

7

6

5

4

8

9

10

11

12

17

16

15

14

13

18

19

20

21

"Teach me your way, O LORD; that I may walk in your truth."
Psalm 86:11

25

24

23

22

26

27

28

29

33

32

31

30

34

35

36

37

38

Monday

Tuesday

40
PALM SUNDAY

39

Wednesday

Thursday

GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS IS RISEN

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Saturday

EASTER SUNDAY

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Four Academic Scholarships, currently €1,000 per year, are awarded based on the results of the scholarships exams set each May for students entering Form I. These are awarded to the best Day Girl, Day Boy, Boarding Girl and Boarding Boy.

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All families who pay before a specified date each semester are entered into a draw for a refund of their net fees for that semester. Please contact our School Bursar for specific information on all our grants, scholarships and bursaries. All enquiries are dealt with in the strictest of confidence - bursar@villiers-school.com

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