



NEWSLINK

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

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After offering the child gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, the wise men from the East returned to their own country by another road (Matthew 2:11-12)



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Bishop Kenneth writes on Being Welcoming People

I have a number of friends in the United States, two of whom are bishops, so I looked at their websites to see how they and their parishioners were responding to the election of Donald Trump. Imagine my horror to find a news story on one of the websites saying that an episcopal (Anglican) church had been vandalised, and a poster with details of a Spanish language church service had had the words "Trump Nation – Whites Only" scrawled over it.

The episcopal bishops' letters and messages gave a different message; they spoke of the need for reconciliation. They recognised that the very bitter election campaign had not only created division and hatred in the United States – it had uncovered decades of bitterness and resentment which had, up to then, lain dormant in society.

For decades now, the Episcopal Church (which is the Anglican Church in the United States) has taken a strong stance on being a welcoming church, and they have consciously made efforts to include black and white, Mexican immigrants (which is why they were holding a Spanish language service), gay and lesbian and other minority groups in society who often experience church as unwelcoming. That Episcopal Church welcome has also extended to the Muslim community who have been finding life in the U.S. to be difficult in recent years. So it's not surprising that as a church they have been targeted for hate messages and vandalism in the current political climate.

We live in very fragile societies, and we must be careful to treasure the freedom and ideals of our nation. The Irish reputation for being a welcoming people can't be just a tourism slogan – we have to mean it, and to be prepared to welcome all to our communities and our churches, even those we may initially find uncomfortable to be with.

That welcome to each of our churches and communities is rooted in the welcome Jesus extends to all who seek him, a welcome especially to those who are finding life difficult – "Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest."

Over the next few weeks, we will begin the walk in faith to Bethlehem, reminding ourselves in readings and music of the long journey in faith told through the Old Testament and into the opening pages of the New Testament – stories of creation and redemption, of hope and expectation. Advent tells these stories, and leads us

to the fulfilment of long held hopes for transformation which is at the heart of Christmas.

In the end the hope for society, all society, will be found in a world under God's reign, a world where hatred and division will disappear, to be replaced by a world transformed under God.



I wish you all a meaningful Advent, and a peaceful Christmas.

Sincerely,
+Kenneth

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

I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Diocesan Calendar

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

Sat 10th December, 5.30pm 'Come & Sing Carols', St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Sat 10th December, 7.30pm Handel's Messiah, with the Guinness Choir & orchestra, St Brendan's Church, Birr – tickets €20

Sat 10th–Sun 11th December UDYC Secondary School Overnight Trip to Dublin, with CIYD service & party

Sun 11th – Sun 18th December 2016 Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Church, Nenagh

Sat 17th December, 7.30–9.30pm UDYC Fellowship Group, Richmond Terrace, Henry St, Limerick City (2nd level students)

Thu 29th December UDYC Mega Christmas Day Trip to Dublin (10+)

Thu 26th January, 7.30pm GFS Leader / Helper Training, Oxmantown School, Birr



Editorial

The Newslink team is once again delighted to announce that both subscription and advertising rates for 2017 will remain the same as for 2016 – they are in fact unchanged since 2014!

Newslink treasurer Peter Schutz intends to retire as treasurer, but has kindly agreed to continue until 31st March 2017. He will shortly be writing to ask subscribers and pew distributors to forward subscriptions, which are due in January. He will also contact our annual advertisers to ask them to renew. On behalf of us all I thank him for his careful stewardship of finances and the gathering of subscriptions and fees. His departure will leave a vacancy for a treasurer. Is this a ministry you could offer to our United Dioceses? If so, please contact me direct to discuss it.

But as one leaves, another joins – I ask you to welcome Lawson Kirkpatrick from Ennis to the Newslink team. He has volunteered to serve as a second assistant editor alongside Deborah Powell – he will greatly strengthen the team into the future.

I thank you all – subscribers, advertisers and contributors – for your continuing support of Newslink. But special thanks are due to our pew distributors – it is a difficult task asking others for money, and we should all help them by paying promptly when asked. Some Select Vestries help them by writing a cheque for the promised number of subscriptions for later reimbursement, so that their distributor does not have to write a personal cheque – others might like to do the same.

A very happy and blessed Advent, Christmas and Epiphany to you all from the Newslink team:

Editor – Joc Sanders, Assistant Editors – Deborah Powell & Lawson Kirkpatrick, Treasurer – Peter Schutz.

God bless, Joc Sanders

Letter to the Editor – New Percy French Biography

Dear Editor,
Those who have an interest in Percy French, might like to know that a very nice book about Percy French, "Tones that are Tender", was published and launched earlier this year. The author is Berrie O'Neill, who came from near Eyrecourt, Co. Galway and now lives with his wife, Gladys, in Belfast and, no doubt, would be remembered by Eyrecourt parishioners. Berrie is President of the North Down Percy French Society.

Yours etc., Georgina Jones, Nenagh Union of Parishes.

Editor: The book is published by Lilliput Press, ISBN 9781843516675, price £25/€30

Bishop Laura J Ahrens Visit

The suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Connecticut in the Episcopal Church, will make a brief visit to the diocese in December as guest of the bishop, and will be the preacher at Choral Matins in St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 11 December at 11.15 am.



Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert, which also includes the historic dioceses of Aghadoe, Clonfert, Emlly, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh. For further information about the United Dioceses see the diocesan web site: www.limerick.anglican.org.

Newslink also covers Methodist Midlands and Southern District Circuits within the boundaries of the Church of Ireland Diocese.

Editor

In addition to news from parishes, schools and diocesan organisations, the Editor is delighted to receive articles and letters for publication, as well as suggestions as to how Newslink may be improved.

Please note: names and addresses of contributors must be given, and all letters printed will include name and address unless otherwise agreed with the Editor. All material dealing with parish/circuit matters must first be cleared with the Minister concerned.

Contact details:

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

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All material must reach the Editor by Friday 20th January 2017 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

NEWSLINK ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2017

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(contact: Peter Schutz, Ardhu, Castletroy, Co. Limerick,
Email: peterschuetz@gmail.com)

NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2017

(UNCHANGED from 2016, 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 - December 2016

Each Sunday in December

Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardferit and Bishop Kenneth Kearon.

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

4th December, 2nd Sunday of Advent, Violet

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Karnataka North in the United Church of South India and Rt Revd Mohan Manoraj, Bishop of Karnataka North.

Diocese: For those in poverty in our communities and for agencies such as Protestant Aid and St Vincent de Paul who work to ease their distress.

11th December, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Violet

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kericho, Kenya, currently vacant.

Diocese: For the Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes as they begin a period of vacancy, and for Priest-in-Charge Very Rev Maurice Sirr.

18th December, 4th Sunday of Advent, Violet

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh in the Church of Ireland and Rt Revd Ferran Glenfield.

Diocese: The lonely, isolated and bereaved in our communities for whom the Christmas season is difficult, that we may help them to feel loved and supported.

25th December, Christmas Day, White or Gold

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kitale, Kenya and Rt Revd Stephen Kewasis.

Diocese: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people.

January 2017

Each Sunday in January

Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Armagh and Archbishop Richard Clarke.

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

1st January, 1st Sunday of Christmas, White or Gold

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kolhapur, United Church of North India and Rt Revd Bathuel Tiwade, Bishop of Kolhapur.

Diocese: At this time when our Methodist brothers and sisters in Christ express their commitment to God in the Methodist Covenant Prayer, let us give thanks for them and pray that we may share their commitment.

8th January, 1st Sunday after Epiphany, White

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kuching, South East Asia, Rt Revd Bolly Lapok, Bishop of Kuching & Rt Revd Solomon Cheong Sung Voon, Assistant Bishop of Kuching.

Diocese: For Rev Keith and Lyn Scott as they begin their ministry as Mission Partners in Kitwe in the Diocese of Northern Zambia.

15th January, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, White

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Kyoto, Japan and Rt Revd Stephen Takashi Kochi, Bishop of Kyoto and the Diocese of Kyushu, Japan and Rt Revd Luke Ken-ichi Muto, Bishop of Kyushu.

Diocese: That Services of Prayer for Christian Unity in our parishes may be grace-filled, as we begin the Week of Prayer, 18th – 25th January.

22nd January, 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, White

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Lake Rukwa, Tanzania and Rt Revd Mathayo Kasagara, Bishop of Lake Rukwa.

Diocese: For those who work to maintain public safety, in An Garda Siochana, the Defence Forces, Civil Defence, the Coastguard and RNLI, that as they keep us safe they may be safe themselves.

29th January, 4th Sunday after Epiphany, White

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Lichfield, England), Rt Revd

Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield and Suffragan Bishops, Rt Revd Mark James Rylands, Bishop of Shrewsbury, Rt Revd Geoffrey Peter Annas, Bishop of Stafford, and Rt Revd Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton.

Diocese: For those who care for, heal and comfort the sick in hospitals, nursing homes and at home, that their work may be blessed.

5th February, 4th Sunday before Lent, Ordinary Time, Green

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

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

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Lomega, Sudan and Rt Revd Paul Yugusuk, Bishop of Lomega.

Diocese: For those who work with children and young people in schools, colleges, churches and sports clubs, that their work may be blessed.

The Methodist Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

exalted for you or brought low for you;

let me be full, let me be empty;

let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things

to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine, and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

On Prayer



When we are not able to do any other thing for men's behoof*, when though maliciousness or unkindness they vouchsafe not to accept any other good at our hands, prayer is that which we always have in our power to bestow, and they never in theirs to refuse.

*benefit

Richard Hooker (1554-1600), Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, V.23.1

A Prayer of Saint Benedict:

Gracious and Holy Father,

please give me:

intellect to understand you;

reason to discern you;

diligence to seek you;

wisdom to find you;

a spirit to know you;

a heart to meditate upon you;

ears to hear you;

eyes to see you;

a tongue to proclaim you;

a way of life pleasing to you;

patience to wait for you;

and perseverance to look for you.

Grant me:

a perfect end,

your holy presence.

A blessed resurrection,

And life everlasting. Amen.

(From the SPCK website)

What's that you say, Salters?

The common sense of the Incarnation! Are you out of your tiny mind? Have you never heard of Angel Choruses and Wise Men with Gold and Frankincense and Myrrh? Or Shepherds leaving their Flocks to the ravages of Wolves at night on the hillside.

And Salters replies indeed I have heard about all those things but they are not what is important. It is a baby who is important, and a young woman and a middle-aged man, whose journey circumstances puts them with the under privileged of our world, and whose need to seek secure refuge identifies them with the child refugees and indeed the adults who undertake the most perilous of journeys to escape war and hunger, and who find borders and doors

increasingly shut in their faces. Herod didn't know he was dealing with the fullest possible disclosure of God. But he was. Let us not dismiss FORWARD TOGETHER precisely because it is doable. Let's do it. And let's do it with the kind of enlightenment and determination that we find in Anna and Simeon.

It isn't easy to write a column for the issue of a magazine that will be in the pews in Advent and has to serve until Candlemas. This time it has been easy for the advent of FORWARD TOGETHER gives us nourishment for the time of waiting, food for the Feast of receiving and giving and much to share with a bewildered and increasingly bewildering world.

Diocesan Organisations

Girls Friendly Society

CLOUGHJORDAN BRANCH

Everybody enjoyed Bible Study and the girls completed their booklets enthusiastically. We are now working on our competition crafts. Hand-made Christmas cards were also made for family and friends. The girls painted and decorated little wooden boxes which may be used as small jewellery boxes or trinket boxes. The boxes looked very colourful when they were finished and the girls were delighted with them. You did a great job girls. Well done!

The Branch is looking forward to their Christmas Party on Wednesday, 7th December.

BIRR BRANCH

Birr branch is continuing to make progress on crafts and bible study competition work. All are looking forward to the upcoming Christmas Craft day in Cloughjordan. There will be a Christmas Surprise on December 6th before the Christmas break. Branch meetings will restart on January 17th.

NENAGH BRANCH

GFS Branch was represented at Family Worship on Sunday, 20th November by Ciara Drummond who beautifully read one of the lessons. Well done Ciara.

Nenagh Enrolment Service will take place in St. Mary's Church on Sunday 19th February 2017 at 11 am Service. Please contact Rose Langley 087-6758896 for further details of branch work and upcoming meetings.

ROSCREA BRANCH

Meetings are held fortnightly. The venue may change to facilitate crafts and badge work. For further information please contact Karen St Leger 0872302791.

Diocesan Council Meeting took place in the Back Vestry of St. Mary's Church, Nenagh on Wednesday, 9th November at 8pm. A large number of leaders attended the meeting. Many thanks to Nenagh leaders for refreshments

Christmas Craft took place, 26th November hosted by Cloughjordan Branch. This was a great opportunity to meet up with friends from all the branches for an afternoon of exciting Christmas craft making and a great start to the Christmas season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cloughjordan Christmas Party, 7th December in St. Kieran's Hall.

Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival

GFS will provide an entry again this year. Girls worked on their entry at the Christmas Craft Day. Please come along to the Festival and vote for the GFS tree 11-18th December in St. Mary's Church, Nenagh

Leader/Helper Training will take place in Oxmantown School, Birr on Thursday, 26th January at 7.30pm. As part of the Diocesan 50th Anniversary celebrations leaders and helpers are coming together to create a Wall Hanging which will be displayed at the Diocesan Service & Prize day. No experience of sewing is necessary; all you need is enthusiasm. Please let your Branch Leader know if you wish to attend.

Leaders Night Out will take place in The Thatched Cottage Restaurant, Ballycommon, Nenagh on Saturday, 28th January 2017 at 7pm. All leaders/Helpers past and present are welcome to attend. Please contact either your Branch leader or Rose Langley (tel. 087-6758896) to book a place at this annual fun night out for leaders and helpers of GFS in the Diocese.

CRAFT JUDGING

All Ireland crafts will be judged in Dublin on the 18th April and results will be available at All Ireland Council Meeting on 13th May. The date and venue for Diocesan crafts judging to be confirmed by Diocesan Secretary.

DIOCESAN SERVICE & PRIZE DAY 2017

The Annual Diocesan Service & Prize day will be on Saturday, 1st April 2017 in Borrisokane Church. This will be a very special occasion as this year GFS celebrates 50 years since it was restarted in the Diocese. In 1967 the opening service was held in Borrisokane Church so this year GFS will return there for the Diocesan Service & Prize Day which will also be a celebration of the 50th Anniversary. We look forward to welcoming members past and present to renew old friendships and celebrate together. Please note this date in your diary for next year. A committee is currently compiling a short history of GFS in the Dioceses which will be available on the day. More details will follow in the coming months.

UPCOMING DUBLIN MEETINGS

World Council in Australia - Closing date for receipt of Booking Deposit and registration forms is 30th November.

SAT 21ST JAN 17 Finance Meeting Oak House 10.45 a.m.
House Meeting Oak House 1.30 p.m.

SaT 4 FEB Procedures Meeting Oak House 10.45 a.m.

SAT 18TH FEB Central Council Meeting Oak House 11.00 a.m.

Merry Christmas from all in GFS - We wish all our members and their families a peaceful and a happy Christmas with good health and happiness for the coming year.

Mothers' Union

FAREWELL

We are very sad to be saying "goodbye" to Lyn Scott, Branch Leader Kilcornan/Rathkeale, and to her husband Keith, who are about to leave Ireland to become Mission Partners with CMSI in Northern Zambia. Lyn is passionate about Mothers' Union and hopes to become involved in supporting the work of MU in Kitwe. Their gain is definitely our loss but we wish Lyn and Keith all our good wishes and blessings in their new life. We look forward to hearing all about MU in Kitwe in the future. Lucy Kavanagh, Diocesan President

KENMARE MOTHERS' UNION SERVICE

Rev Michael and Marjorie Cavanagh invited us all to a wonderful Mothers' Union service in St. Patrick's Church to meet the Kenmare Branch members. We heard about the origins of Mothers' Union which was founded 140 years ago by Mary Sumner who had a vision for vulnerable young women and girls to be properly cared for both physically and spiritually. Her vision has evolved into a wonderful organisation with over 4 million members worldwide who work tirelessly for the disadvantaged both at home and abroad. Today Mothers' Union runs many projects, including literacy, prison visits, baby care, supporting communities to become self-sufficient and many more.

After the service we were treated to a lovely afternoon tea and chat and, as you can see, a lovely cake baked by one of the members!



Mothers' Union Kenmare



Mothers' Union Kenmare

LIMERICK MOTHERS' UNION HAMPER APPEAL

Once again as part of the Mothers' Union appeal to parishioners, the Mothers' Union are looking for donations of non-perishable food items for the kitchens in the men's and women's hostels. Also donations of toiletries for both men and women are welcome. Individually wrapped gifts of toiletries are prepared for the women so that each of them has at least one present to open on Christmas morning. Hamper Baskets are in the Cathedral and St. Michael's or items can be given to Margaret Schutz (St. Michael's) and to Betty McGlone (The Cathedral)

United Diocesan Youth Council

ANOIS 2016

This splendid Church of Ireland Youth Department event once again took place at Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath over the October Bank Holiday Weekend. The group from Diocese of Limerick & Killaloe joined with many young people from a large number of dioceses throughout the Church of Ireland - about 180 in total. It was wonderful to have a number of young people from our Diocese involved in leadership for the event again this year. The theme for the weekend was "Legends of the Faith" and Rev Alan Breen (Curate - St Patrick's Parish Greystones- Diocese of Dublin & Glendalough) was the main speaker. The Mark Ferguson Band returned to lead worship again this year. Many returned home from the event this year tired and exhausted but with happy memories of a wonderful weekend.



Sacred Space at ANOIS 2016

JUNIOR WEEKEND

Our Junior Weekend for 10 - 13 year olds took place from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th November at Durrow Centre, Knocknagrally, Durrow, Co. Laois. Workshops during the weekend were led by Emma & Lara from Tearfund with a number of UDYC leaders leading worship. We are truly grateful to Michelle Hales and her sister Pamela for providing everyone with splendid food throughout the weekend. There was no doubt that everyone loved the splendid facilities that the centre had to offer. The trip to Kilkenny Activity Centre which included Splatball, Bubble Soccer & Hell's Kitchen Assault Course was certainly a huge highlight for everyone.



Happy faces at Junior Weekend 2016

CIYD STAFF MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome Steve Gresham as Youth Ministry Development Officer (South) & Simon Henry to the post of National Youth Officer working with Church of Ireland Youth Department. Steve and Simon were both present at Anois and we look forward to having both involved at a number of UDYC events next year.

FUTURE EVENTS

Secondary School Overnight Trip to Dublin

On Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th December, UDYC hope that as many as possible in secondary school and upwards will travel firstly to Ashbourne to visit TAYTO THEME PARK. In the evening the group will travel to Clontarf Church to join the CIYD Christmas Worship Service & Party with Disco. The group will stay overnight in parish centre in Clontarf and after church on Sunday will return to home. The bus will travel from/to Limerick, Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea & Portlaoise. The cost for transport, activities, food and accommodation is €60 or €50 each if two or more from same family attending or if joining both day trips. The closing date for bookings is Monday 5th December 2016.

Mega Christmas Day Trip to Dublin

On Thursday 29th December UDYC will again return to Dublin for a full day for exciting fun to include Swimming at National Aquatic Centre Aquazone, Jumpzone Sandyford Indoor Trampoline Park, Funderland & Ice skating at RDS, Karting at Kylemore Indoor Karting and Fast Food at McDonald's. This event is open to everyone from 10 years and upwards. The bus will travel from/to Limerick, Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea & Portlaoise. The cost for transport, activities, food and accommodation is €60, or €50 each if two or more from same family attend, or if joining both day trips. The closing date for bookings is Thursday 22nd December 2016.

For more information on any of our events or activities, please contact Edward (087) 2907553 or Oscar on (086) 2476327, Email: udyc@limerick.anglican.org or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month, Sophia, Mobile: 087 1339996

Diocesan Board of Mission

MISSION EVENING REPORT by Joc Sanders

Fr Tom O'Halloran, PP of Borrisokane and Killaloe Diocesan Director of Mission, treated us to an interesting overview of Mission as seen from the Roman Catholic tradition on 9th November in the Woodlands House Hotel, Adare.

He told us how in 1991-97 he had served in Zimbabwe with the Killaloe Diocesan Mission in partnership with the Irish Carmelite Fathers. The link between colonialism and mission has left an uncomfortable legacy. One significant aspect of his work was to set up in an area the size of Munster about 60 reflective prayer groups – small Christian communities with a focus on action in the local community.

He drew attention to the tension between evangelisation and humanitarian work in the mission field, quoting from Pope Paul VI's encyclical 'Evangeli Nuntiandi'. In his time the emphasis was on education and health services, which Paul VI called 'a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one'. On the other hand, Paul VI also forcefully made the point that, 'Witness will prove ineffective without proclamation of the Gospel... There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God are not proclaimed!'

Pope Francis has been inspirational, bringing the cause of the poor and the environment centre stage in his encyclical Laudato 'Si. He has also said, 'Jesus did not tell his disciples to share the Gospel, if you would like to or you have time. Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits. He sends us to everyone.'

It is wonderful, he said, that Archbishop Justin Welby and Pope Francis should exchange symbols and sign an agreement to work in a concrete way on justice and peace issues. It is his dream, he said, that support groups focussed on justice and care for the earth should be formed in clusters of parishes – to achieve critical mass – and that these groups would involve members of all churches.

Discussion focussed on Fr Tom's impressions of Zimbabwe in the 1970s and his dream of forming ecumenical groups around justice and care for the earth. The evening concluded with thanks to Fr Tom and a round of applause.

MISSION EVENINGS FOR 2017

1. Mission from a Methodist perspective, Cloughjordan Parish Centre at 8pm, Wed 8th Feb.
2. Tourism & Hospitality from a spiritual perspective, Tralee Parish Centre, at 8pm, Wed 5th April.
3. Mission within the local community, Woodland's Hotel, Adare, at 8pm on Wed 8th June.

MISSION SUNDAY

For many years, the Sunday next before Advent has been designated as Mission Sunday in our Diocese. This year, the Diocesan Board of Mission wants to spend some time in research and consultation to find the best way for our Diocese to learn about and support mission in our communities, our country, and the world. Therefore, Mission Sunday has been postponed to a date in early 2017 to be announced.

Archdeacon Wayne Carney
Chairman, Diocesan Board of Mission

Table Tennis News

The 2016/17 season is well underway. Borrisokane, Cloughjordan and Moneygall have teams in Division1 of the joint Ossory/Midland league. Cloughjordan also have a team in Division2.

The Midland league continues with two Cloughjordan teams, Borrisokane, Shinrone, Banagher and Aghancon in the B Section. While the C Section has two Cloughjordan, two Shinrone and a Borrisokane team.

Hope all enjoy the matches.

Safeguarding Trust

The Church of Ireland has appointed Mr Gabriel Chrystal as Child Protection Officer for the Republic of Ireland. Reporting to Dr Ken Fennelly, Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education, Gabriel will be based in Church of Ireland House Dublin. His role will be to provide advice and support to the Church in the implementation and development of its child protection policy Safeguarding Trust.

Originally from Sligo, Gabriel has been in police work since 2002 and has been part of the child protection team within both the Metropolitan Police in London and Thames Valley Police. He brings a broad range of experience in the field of family support and child

protection, including case management and investigation, and has also specialised in the provision of training programmes.

Archbishop Michael Jackson said: 'I am delighted to welcome Gabriel Chrystal to work with the dioceses and parishes in the Republic of Ireland in the area of child protection. The Church's work in the area of child protection is very important to our life as a church community and helps to provide a safe environment in which ministry with children can be creatively and effectively explored. I congratulate Gabriel and know that he will be welcomed by the wider Church as he begins his work with us.'



SCHOOL NEWS

St. Nicholas' National School, Adare

The school celebrated Book Week just before mid-term break with visits to Adare Library, lots of reading and book reports and a wonderful Dress-Up Day. Everyone got involved in this special day, pupils, teachers and SNAs and there was great excitement as we all gathered in the senior classroom to hear about each book character. There was a mixture of costumes and home-made outfits and everyone shared a little of their character with the rest of the school. Well done to all involved.



6th class as their favourite Book characters



3rd class as their favourite Book characters

We had a different Dress-Up Day in November when the Parents' Association organised a Mad Hair & Pyjamas Day. Once again pupils and teachers made a great effort to come up with some creative hair dos. Who knew there was such an array of onesies, pyjamas and dressing gowns available!



Mad Hair & Pyjamas day

We must take Safeguarding Trust seriously

The importance of this has been underlined by the case of Patrick O'Brien. He was jailed for 13 years in November for rape and molestation of young boys over some 40 years in various places, including St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, where he worked as a volunteer.

Following his sentencing the Church of Ireland issued the following statement:

'St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and the wider Church of Ireland community have been deeply dismayed at the nature and extent of the offences which have been brought to light in the case involving Patrick O'Brien, who was sentenced today. The Church commends the courage of Patrick O'Brien's victims in coming forward.'



"Of all the cheek! Rides up on his sleigh in his flashy red suit, pushes to the front of the queue to the stable shouting 'Ho! Ho! Ho!'... who DOES he think he is?!"

Science Week was celebrated in school with lots of experiments at all class levels.

We said farewell to Ms Brown as she began her maternity leave and welcomed Ms Lisa Anglim to the staff in her absence. We look forward to working with Lisa in the coming months and hearing Ms Brown's good news in the near future.

As we prepare for the Christmas season the pupils have begun to rehearse their Christmas plays and the Christmas song books have been dusted off once again! It is such an exciting time in school as we prepare for this special time of the year. This year we will take part in some carol-singing at the Crescent Shopping Centre, the Live Crib in Adare and the carol service in St. Nicholas' Church. It will be a busy month!

St. Mary's No. 2 National School, Nenagh

Our return to school after mid-term break was a subdued one. It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our dear Dennis Croft. He will be remembered with great respect and gratitude for his tireless work and selfless contribution to our school. Dennis gifted us with his experience, intelligence and his lovely manner. Future generations of students will learn, play and celebrate in the Croft Hall because of his hard work. It was an honour to know you, Dennis. Our thoughts are with his family.

As autumn slipped into winter we were gratified to know that the children of St Mary's raised €145 for Temple Street Children's Hospital through their fundraising.

The Junior and Senior Infants recently had a field trip to Nenagh Library to meet the author Julian Gough. It is great to have this wonderful resource for learning on our doorstep.

Our formal parent and teacher consultations took place over two evenings in November. We had a great turnout and our thanks to our dedicated and caring partners in education.

Drama lessons with coach Ms Carmel Mc Loughlin will commence on 22nd November for all students. The four week programme will cover many parts of the Drama curriculum. The performance element of the programme will come in very handy as we begin preparations for our Christmas Nativity on December 16th.

Finally, the Scholastic Book Fair came for a week in November. A great selection of books was offered across three age-based libraries. The children greatly enjoy this event each year.

We will round off the term with a trip to the Pantomime in UCH Limerick on 20th December, and with our Christmas Service on 22nd December.

May we wish everyone a peaceful and warm Christmas-break. Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir!

Oxmantown National School, Birr

HALLOWE'EN DRESS UP-DAY FOR CHARITY

Our pupils paid €1 each to dress in Hallowe'en costumes on Friday 27th October. The €100 raised was given to the Offaly Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (O.S.P.C.A)



Welcome to Mrs. Browne who will be teaching Junior and Senior Infants replacing Ms. Lynch until next June.

SUPER TROOPERS

All classes visited Supervalu to learn about a healthy nutritious diet with a visiting dietician.

GUYS AND DOLLS

Our 5th and 6th class attended the Show in the St. Brendan's Community School. This year's production was "Guys and Dolls" Congratulations to Sabina Kozalka who came second in the poster competition to advertise the show.

NATIVITY

This year, we will be having a Nativity Play at St. Brendan's Church at 7.00pm. All parents, family members and friends are welcome.

St Michael's National School, Limerick

This year we are endeavouring to achieve the Active School Flag. There are many aspects to obtaining this, one of them being new activities not previously enjoyed. To this end, we have just had our first experience of cross-country running at the racecourse in Patrickswell. Somewhat daunted by the large number of participants on the day (in the region of 1,000 pupils), and the rather inclement weather, we all enjoyed the experience. Many of our children had never run such long distances before so were rightly proud of themselves, to have got to the finish line in what were wet and muddy conditions. It was a very valuable lesson for character-building! 4th, 5th & 6th classes enjoyed a three-weeks of Rugby coaching and hope to play in a primary school tournament. Our aim is that every child will increase the amount of daily exercise.



The cross-country run

Our trip to the Burren and Coole Park, which also included Caherconnell Fort and Poulabrone, was all the more memorable as we travelled there during the bright dry days of October. 3rd and 4th Classes thoroughly enjoyed the visit, particularly getting a glimpse of what life was like in the late 19th century for those privileged to live in houses such as Coole Park.



A trip to the Burren

As we write we are in the middle of Science Week and have been to visit Mary Immaculate College to participate in exciting Science and Maths activities. Our older students certainly derive great appreciation and understanding from science-related activities, such as have been taking place daily in 5th and 6th Classes.

Our PTA planned an International evening with foods, music, customs and Christmas crafts from different countries on 1st December. We have such a wide variety of nationalities in St Michael's NS. It proved to be a most enjoyable evening.

ENROLMENT

School places for the school year 2017/2018 will be decided by the Board of Management in January, 2017. Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's place in February. If you have not completed an "Information Form A", for your child, please do so as soon as possible. The demand for places in the school in September, 2017, has exceeded all previous years. Parents/guardians of pupils who would have traditionally attended St Michael's NS, are asked to contact the school office to request an "Information Form A" by December, 2016. The Principal/Staff Representative to BOM meets every new family, who wishes to enrol a pupil for the following September, in December and January. Parishioners and other parents/guardians, who have a right of entry to the school, should note that there are a large number of names on the list requesting a place for September, 2017. (Right of entry includes pupils who belong to one of the Reformed Christian denominations in Limerick City & immediate suburbs, and those living in areas where their nearest Church of Ireland School was closed many years ago, eg. Killaloe, Castleconnell, Newport, etc.) It is important that parents/guardians with children in these categories, apply in good time if their child requires a place for next September.

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemine

What a tremendously busy but wonderful term it has been in Kiltallagh National School.

On September 1st we welcomed our new junior infants Adrian Wharton, Erin Davitt, Solanna O' Sullivan, and Ciara Clendennen. We also welcomed Ellen O' Sullivan who has joined us in 5th class.



Our new junior infants with class teacher Caroline Cronin

We are delighted to have you in our school and hope you will have many happy days with us.

We are also delighted to welcome Miss Shirley Corcoran—our new Learning Support/Resource Teacher to the staff of Kiltallagh N.S.

We wish Shirley and her family every happiness in their new home in Kerry.

This term we have enjoyed...

1. Participating in our Healthy Eating Programme—Food Dudes
2. A trip to an exciting Maths Workshop to Tralee, I.T. to celebrate Maths Week.
3. A guided tour of the Pauline Bewick Art Exhibition in Killorglin by our Artist in Residence, Kate Landers.
4. Creating our uniquely designed Christmas Cards in conjunction with Listowel Printing Company.
5. A wonderful day in Ballyfinnane N.S. watching the West Midlands Theatre Company's performance of 'Legend of the Dragon'
6. Rehearsing for our Christmas Performance of Whoops—A-Daisy—Angel' in St. Michael's Church, Killorglin on Sunday December 4th.

WELL DONE

Well done to our past pupils— Ali, Luke and Ben in their recent Leaving Cert results.

OPEN AFTERNOON IN KILLTALAGH

Our Open Afternoon will be on Wednesday January 25th 2017 from 1.30 pm to 2.45 pm. This will be a lovely opportunity for our prospective new junior infants to come in and sample some of the atmosphere and the many wonderful activities and facilities of our school here in Kiltallagh. There will be a further open afternoon in June 2017, for all junior infants enrolled, where they will get to know their new classmates and class teacher ahead of commencing in September 2017.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

St. Cronan's National School, Roscrea

We were delighted to hear of Caoimhe's safe arrival – a daughter for Jennifer and Andrew, and a little sister for Oisin. Huge congratulations and good wishes to the Hogan family from the whole School Community.

3rd to 6th pupils enjoyed a fantastic day at The Soccer Blitz with St. Mary's N.S., in Nenagh. A great atmosphere, high spirits, good sportsmanship and lots of fun dominated the day. Many thanks to the very professional Sylvia Gee who coordinated the event and ensured that everything ran smoothly on the day. Thanks too to Karen O'Donnell, Principal, for the use of the CBS field and to the parents who drove our pupils there.

Half-term ended with a Harvest Service in the church.

Pupils in the Senior Room enjoyed 8 weeks of Tag Rugby with Mark Lown.

Many thanks to all who participated in The Christmas Shoebox Appeal again this year. We look forward to our Carol Service in St. Cronan's Church on Thursday 15th December and to joining in as the town celebrates another Taste of Roscrea festival.

Pupils enjoyed Transition Year Musical "Wizard of Oz" in Coláiste Phobal.

We had a visit from local Firemen and Guards to advise on Safety at Halloween.

5th & 6th Class pupils are looking forward to Round 1 of the Debating Competition against St. Mary's Templemore.

Rathkeale No. 2 National School

October was a busy month in Rathkeale No 2. We had a visit from local guard, Lesley to talk about safety around Hallowe'en. We also had a visit from two members of the fire service who spoke about the dangers of fire and how to keep safe. All pupils went home with the intention of devising an escape plan for their homes. Thanks to Yvonne from Limerick City and County Council for organising these visits for us. She also organised a first aid lesson and the pupils got the opportunity to try CPR as well as learn about some simple bandages, slings and the recovery position.



First Aid & CPR

The first half of term one came to a close with our now annual fancy dress parade. This year's costumes were fantastic with all pupils putting in a great effort to be creative. It was very difficult for the judges to choose winners. Congratulations to Ella (Avatar), Jack (Upside man), Jodie (Scary Bride), Kirill (Elf on the shelf) and Suzel (Angry Bird).



Unexpected creatures: Fancy Dress winner

We welcomed Ms Rachelle Robbins to school following the midterm break. Ms Robbins is the substitute teacher covering for Ms Looney's maternity break and we all look forward to working with her. As I write we're still waiting to hear news from Ms Looney.

During Science Week the pupils from 1st to 6th class attended a science show in St Anne's National School. The show was all about the science of bubbles. We were all amazed by the huge bubbles created and also be the simple equipment used.

Our folk dancing workshops have just commenced and have proven to be very popular so far. We've learned some folk dances from around the world and look forward to learning some more over the coming weeks.

We were all sad to say farewell to our rector and chairperson of the board of management, Rev Dr Keith Scott and his wife, Lyn at the end of November. We wish them well as they prepare to return to Zambia in the New Year. We thank them for all the support they have given us in No 2 over the years.

Pupils have designed Christmas cards again this year and our music group is busy rehearsing for the Christmas show on 21st December. We hope Santa will be able to attend after the show again this Christmas. School will close on Thursday 22nd December and reopen on Monday 9th January.

Cloughjordan No.1 National School

Congratulations to the Gaelic Football team, made up of pupils from both national schools in Cloughjordan which won the North Tipperary Football Final, the County Semi-Final and went on to play in the County Final in Littleton last month. Despite their valiant effort in the final they were defeated by Cappawhite N.S. It is a long time since our team reached a County Final. The final was a great occasion with wonderful support from both schools on the sideline. We are very proud of our heroes. It is a particular delight to see, once again, the close unity between both schools and to see the close bond between the players. We are especially grateful to Mr Casey for training the boys for their matches and to Mr Dooley for kindly inviting us to participate again this year.

It is wonderful to see our school extension underway after a very long period of negotiating with the Department of Education and Skills. Patience is a virtue and was certainly much needed as we waited for a favourable response from the Department! We are very grateful to it for the funding made available to make the extension possible. We look forward to its completion early in 2017 and to benefiting from the extra facilities.

Pupils from 3rd & 4th Classes enjoyed participating in the FAI Schools Futsall Tournament in Peake Villa FC, Thurles last month. This was a non competitive event and much enjoyed by those who participated.

We are delighted to welcome coaches from Kilruane MacDonaghs, who are teaching Camogie to girls in our school. This is proving very popular, despite some inclement rainfall.

Once again we are hugely indebted to the generosity of Cassandra Kenny who is very kindly teaching dancing to all classes in preparation for our Christmas Concert. This is an amazingly kind gesture and means so much to us. We are privileged to learn from Cassandra's expertise. Excitement is mounting as our concert approaches while children and staff are very busily practicing for the show.

It was our privilege to once again generously support the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal, with a greater number of filled shoeboxes sent from our school than ever before. We hope that these shoeboxes will bring joy and hope to those will receive them abroad this Christmastime.

Wishing everybody a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year from all at Cloughjordan No.1 N.S.

Villiers School

ALL IRELAND SCHOOLS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Congratulations to our senior-boys hockey squad who did themselves proud at the recent All Ireland Schools tournament in Dublin.

On Wednesday 26th October they played a formidable High School side in High school. After a close contest went down 2-1 in the final minutes.

The Thursday brought two matches in Three Rock Rovers hockey club. The morning match was against the reigning champions Banbridge Academy. 0-0 at half time, we were playing very well and very much in the game. They scored a well worked short corner early in the second half and a scrappy second towards the end of the match. The final score a 2-0 loss but a very competent and good performance.

Our final group match was against Methodist College, Belfast. We started well and raced into a 3-0 lead with some excellent hockey. Methodist came out fighting in the second half and reduced the score to a deserved 3-2 victory for us.

Overall three close and hard fought games against formidable opposition. We already look forward to next year's competition to be held in Munster.



TRANSITION YEAR FASHION SHOW

This year's TY students took part in the 27th annual Villiers fashion show in the Radisson Blu Hotel on Tuesday 25th October, under the guidance and support of the esteemed model agent and close friend of Villiers, Hilary Thompson. Hilary's team of assistants included Grace Sheehan, Sally Anne Hartigan and Kayleigh Yeoman who coached the students and rehearsed the routines for the catwalk.

The show was organised by a committee of TY students who linked with over twenty shops from Limerick, Killaloe and the surrounding areas. Hair was done by the Hugh Campbell hair group, make-up by Charlene Hurley and Kate O'Brien.

Ms Janet Woods did an excellent job as MC and our raffle, in aid of both the Gift of Life charity and zest4kidz, raised in excess of €600. It was a huge success, a very enjoyable night and a new challenge for all our TY students.

NEWS FROM THE VILLIERS SANCTUARY

Warmest greetings from the Villiers Sanctuary. The Community Group has been as busy as ever raising awareness about positive mental health as well as continuing the fund raising effort for Zest4kidz and Uganda. We no sooner had our Antiques Fair when we hosted Limerick City Parish with the Parish Fair. This was a very successful event not only in terms of much needed funds for the Parish but possibly more importantly it brings people together as a community in the Body of Christ. Congratulations to all involved for a wonderful event. It's at this time of the year that we have the wonderful opportunity to invite people to our annual service of thanksgiving and remembrance for all in our community who have experienced a loss. This is always a poignant occasion where time and space is at the heart of our worship and hopefully a measure of peace and acceptance can be found as we hand over our loss into the palm of God. The service will take place on the 30th November at 7pm in St Marys Cathedral. This is quickly followed by the joy that is to be found in our glorious Carol Service which is once again in St Marys Cathedral on the 22nd December. A packed few weeks ahead for all who take part in the Sanctuary. Because of course alongside these events there is also the ebb and flow of our everyday worship and spirituality. The Christian Union is still going from strength to strength and the sanctuary Sunday is growing as well as the prayer group which is now a feature very Thursday after school. Feeling very blessed and privileged

to share prayer and faith with these wonderful young people. Last year the Sanctuary held confirmation classes and this is now the time to prepare for once again offering this ministry. The plan is to begin classes in January so if there is anyone out there considering confirmation and would like to know more please get in touch at 061451447 or jmcnair@villiers-school.com.

In assembly I talked about this as being the time of waiting and preparation that is Advent. Here in Villiers we wait and prepare for exams as well as Christmas. However, I wanted to remind everyone that we also have the opportunity to to prepare ourselves to be better people, to be closer to God in our hearts and our minds. So perhaps we should all try to find some time of quiet, when we can think about how we can be ready in our hearts for Jesus to come.

Until next time
Blessing 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

Kevin and Sarah Sullivan (nee Holmes) were married in Castleconnell church in August 2015 and to continue their story, we had a good news that a precious baby girl, Jessica Rose, born Wednesday 2nd November 2016, at Haywards Heath, West Sussex, UK and they are now very proud parents. The grandparents Stephen and Jane Holmes who live in Castleconnell are off to visit with new grandchild in the UK not forgetting grandmother Kathleen Savage. Stephen is the churchwarden at Castleconnell and we all extend our congratulations to all of them.

Celia Keegan died a year ago in the Galapagos whilst on a visit to her son Sean, who lives there with his family. They travelled back to Ireland with Celia's ashes and a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Celia was held at Kilodiernan Church in Puckane on 5th November, Dean Gary Paulsen was the officiant. The church was filled and chairs were squeezed in where it was possible. So many friends, parishioners and neighbours came to give thanks and celebrate a wonderful and colourful life. Refreshments were served at the Lough Derg Yacht Club in Dromineer after the church service. A big thank you to all who organised and had a role to play before and on the day.



At the Service of Thanksgiving for Celia Keegan in Killodiernan Church

Lyn Von Lintzgy died in Milford Hospice after a long illness and funeral service was held at St Flannan's Cathedral on 23rd October and we give God thanks for her life and our prayers and thoughts are with Martin at this time.

The service of Nine Lessons and Carols will take place at St Flannan's Cathedral on 18th December at 4.30 pm. Lessons and carols at Mountshannon and Castleconnell at 9.30 am on 18th December. Carol singing will take place in Clonlara Church on Thursday 8th December at 8.00pm.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Mountshannon - Christmas Eve (24th December) at 11.30pm.
Castleconnell - Christmas Day (25th December) at 9.30am
Killaloe Cathedral - Christmas Day (25th December) at 11.30 am when Bishop Kenneth will preside and preach.

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

CONGRATULATIONS!

On Sunday, 23rd October, there was a large gathering of family and well-wishers at Birr Castle to celebrate the 80th birthday of Brendan, Earl of Rosse. May he enjoy health and happiness!

BIRR BICENTENARY SERVICE

Congratulations and many thanks to all who were a part of the planning, preparation, and presentation of our Bicentenary Service on the 6th of November. People from all over the Diocese and beyond commented on how much they appreciated the music, the liturgy, and the Archbishop's sermon. Special thanks to the Birr Choral Society and special guests from Tullamore, who led our singing with talent and grace. And to members of the Select Vestry, who looked after stewarding the congregation for Communion, and from the church down the street and into Birr Castle. To Archbishop Richard Clarke, for his challenging sermon, and Bishop Kenneth, for his thoughtful and inclusive celebration of the Eucharist. And to the Earl and Countess of Rosse, and volunteers from the parish, who opened the Castle to the congregation and provided a superb reception. And then there was the cake! All a fitting tribute to our Bicentenary year! See page 22 for a report and photos.

THE LEINSTER REGIMENT

On Remembrance Sunday, 13th November, members of Leinster Regiment Ireland came to the service in Birr and unveiled a plaque to commemorate the Bicentenary, and the parish's connection with the Leinster Regiment and the Crinkill Barracks.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

On Saturday, 10th December, there will be a performance of Handel's Messiah with the Guinness Choir and the Birr Choral Society, beginning at 7:30 pm. Tickets at €20 are available from Trax, Tullamore, and the County Arms, R.J. Barber and Son, and Mulholland's Pharmacy in Birr. This will be a beautiful and fitting way to conclude our Bicentenary Year

CAROLS IN THE RECTORY

We will have our traditional evening of Carols in the Rectory on Tuesday, 13th December from 7.30 to 9.00 pm. You are invited to

bring a 'Kris Kringle' gift (value €7 or less) for the gift exchange. All are welcome.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thursday, 15th December

Lorrha 8:00 pm Lorrha Ecumenical Carol Service

SUNDAY, 18TH DECEMBER-ADVENT 4

Dorrha 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

Lorrha 10.00 am Morning Prayer

Birr 11.30 am traditional Holy Eucharist & Sunday School

Birr RC Church 7.30 pm Birr Ecumenical Carol Service

MONDAY, 19TH DECEMBER

Birr 7.00 pm Oxmantown School Nativity Play (in the church)

SATURDAY, 24TH DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

Lockeen 7.00 pm Pageant & Family Eucharist

Birr 11.30 pm traditional Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY, 25TH DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

Dorrha 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

Lorrha 10.00 am Holy Eucharist

Birr 11.30 am Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY, 1ST JANUARY – THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Birr 11.30 am Holy Eucharist

FRIDAY, 6TH JANUARY – THE EPIPHANY

Birr 11.30 am Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY, 8TH JANUARY – THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Dorrha 9.30 am Morning Prayer

Lorrha 10.00 am Holy Eucharist

Birr 11.30 am Holy Eucharist

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 welcomed Caroline Sophie Hodgins into the family of the Church in St Burchin's, Bourney. Baby Caroline is the daughter of Lorraine and Thomas and is sister to Rachel and to John.



Caroline Sophie in the arms of her mum's dad, William Grant.

Templeberry Marriage Register has the recorded details 30th. October 1963 the marriage of Fan to Harry Hodgins. Heartiest congratulations to the couple who were married at 11.00 a.m. and retired to the Carmel Hotel for the reception. Sixty years later a family party marked their Diamond Anniversary.

CHRISTMASTIDE SERVICE TIMES

Carol Services Sunday 18th December

9.30 a.m. Christ Church, Corbally.

10.45 a.m St Cronan's Roscrea.

12 noon St Molua's Kyle.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE Dec. 21st at which our Methodist friends will join us. This service is scheduled to take place in a secular venue and is designed for those who may not appreciate the full festive celebration this time around. Time and place to be arranged.

CHRISTMAS EVE HOLY COMMUNION St.Burchin's, Bourney... time to be arranged

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.15.a.m. Please note the earlier time for Christ Church,Corbally:

HOLY COMMUNION

10.45 a.m. St.Cronan's, Roscrea: Holy Communion.

TEAM HOPE ROSCREA This year 400 boxes have been delivered to the Team Hope depot in Nenagh, making a total of 6,395 boxes sent from this parish over the last 15 years. This project is only possible due to the generosity of parishioners and the wider community, as apart from filling each box a sum of €4 per box is required for transportation, storage, administration, etc. The co-ordinators, Vivienne Wallace and Heather Evans would like to thank everyone involved especially Shaws Department Store, Roscrea who supply the empty boxes all year round, and Valerie St.Leger who collects the empty shoeboxes, covers and stores same until they are required.



Left to Right, Vivienne Wallace, Heather Evans Et Valerie St Leger loading boxes for transportation to depot

Congratulations to our parishioners and the whole Roscrea Community Choir who received a standing ovation after their concert on Sunday Nov 13th. Proceeds to the well deserved Simon Community (Midlands) and Plan Int. Ireland.

SUNDAY CLUB has sprung into life again with seven members. Thanks are due to leaders Clare Drought and Linda Dreaper. Room for more leaders! For our children are precious in the Lord's sight and need to be nourished in the faith.

ALL AGE SERVICE St Cronan's went well with children leading most of the Service of the Word. Experimenting will continue towards a more fully integrative act of worship becoming a staple part of our worship pattern.

The Sale, Abbey Hall was a lot of hard work for some few hard and tired workers. Their efforts make such a valuable contribution to the on going funding of the parish. They got organised up and running at very short notice. Thanks are due also to those who supported the sale.

Christian Family Fun Day Sat. 21st .January 2017 3.00p.m. till 5.00 p.m. Venue to be arranged. An ecumenical extravaganza rounded off with a short act of worship marking Christian Unity Week using material from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Mothers' Union January meeting Wednesday 25th January 2017 the rectory. Come along for some hymn singing with refreshments. There will also be a Bring and Buy Sale for Overseas Funds. 2.00 till 4.30 pm.



...relax Miss Pugh... he's not introducing incense - he's just got a new phone with a faulty battery!



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Commissioning of Rev Keith & Lynn Scott

On Sunday 13th November 2016, CMSI staff Jenny Smyth, Gillian Maganda and Roger Thompson, local clergy and readers, friends and supporters joined worshippers at St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick for a special service of commissioning for Rev Keith and Lyn Scott. The service of choral evensong was led by the Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe, the Rt Revd. Kenneth Kearon, and instead of a sermon included an interview with Jenny (CMSI Mission Director). Jenny talked about the 3 ways in which CMSI work – supporting the global church, supporting the church in Ireland and supporting individuals coming to and from Ireland in a two-way exchange with our global partners overseas.

Keith and Lyn are preparing to return to Kitwe in the Diocese of Northern Zambia to help with clergy training, and the Bishop asked about the church in Zambia. Jenny explained that it is lively and growing, and very involved in social action projects such as medical care, pre-school nurseries and education. Bishop Kenneth agreed with this, commenting on the impressive breadth of social involvement he had seen there himself, and how this was a challenge to the Church here in Ireland.

In the act of commissioning Keith and Lyn responded to questions asked by Roger Thompson (CMSI Partnership Coordinator for Zambia) and the Bishop, committing themselves to serve as Mission Partners in a spirit of love. Bishop Kenneth then led us in prayers of blessing, before congratulating them on their faithfulness in following God's call.

The evening concluded with refreshments and a chance for all the congregation to mingle, passing on their good wishes to the Scotts

in person. Please continue to pray for the Scotts as they prepare to move from their home in Askeaton at the end of November, and then fly out to Kitwe on 6th January

Editor: The Newslink team wish Keith and Lyn every blessing in this new phase of their ministry. We trust they will keep in touch, so that we can bring readers news from Kitwe from time to time in these columns.



Rev Keith & Lynn Scott commit themselves to serve as mission partners



Good luck, farewell and God's blessing upon Rev Keith & Lyn



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Memorial Service at St. Michael and All Angels, Waterville.

by Rev Michael Cavanagh, Kenmare Dromond Union

On the 24th of November 1916 through driving rain and gale force winds an unknown ship entered Ballinskelligs Bay. All was not well. The Eliezer, a 119 ton, Danish three-mast schooner had left the Canadian port of Miramichi on October 16th with a cargo of timber bound for Limerick, but now was far from her intended course. An Atlantic winter storm centred off southern Iceland had brought her to the coast of South Kerry. Despite the five-man crew struggling to keep the ship afloat in the violent gale the efforts were in vain, and the ship capsized. Spilling some of her timber cargo into the bay the upturned Eliezer drifted towards the shore. Local man Batty O'Connell remembers his father telling the story. "It was a night of fierce gales; the timber was piled high on the deck making it top-heavy and caused the ship to capsize. Horses and carts came from all over South Kerry to collect timber. There was so much timber floating on the sea you could almost walk from Rineen to Ballinskelligs on the sea." All five crewmen were drowned.



The Eliezer in 1914

Earlier that year, at about 3 p.m. on 13th August 1916 four Iveragh men left Rineen Pier in Ballinskelligs Bay in a four-oar boat. They were rowing to Waterville and intended to leave it there until next day when they would transport it by road to Cuas Crom Harbour, Cahersiveen, where it would be used for fishing. Their boat overturned in rough seas off Waterville. The men were seen from the shore and a young girl who worked in a bank in Waterville and who was a very strong swimmer had to be dissuaded from swimming out to their assistance because of the bad weather conditions. One of the crew tried to swim ashore with another on his back but a large wave hit them, which, according to the subsequent inquest, broke the swimmer's spine. All four were drowned.

In more modern times, on 26 July 1989, Paddy Seán Fogarty of Murreagh went to the aid of his friend Fr. Willie Murphy who was in difficulty in a heavy swell in the water at the Inny Strand, Waterville. They both lost their lives.

Many others of various nationalities died in Ballinskelligs Bay and the nearby Lough Currane. The names of those who died in earlier centuries will never be known. However, while the names and details of their ships and accidents can sometimes be found in public records the names of crew members were rarely recorded. Likewise, names and details of deaths not involving shipping were seldom recorded at the time.

It was therefore appropriate and a mark of respect that on a beautiful Autumn day, after visiting the remains of the wreckage at low tide, relatives of all those who died, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren from Denmark and Canada as well as locals, members of the Emergency Services plus the Mayors of both Kerry and the Eliezer's home town of Marstal attended a special ecumenical service in St Michael and all Angels, Waterville, ending with a visit to the newly-restored graves of the crew in the churchyard. A commemorative plaque was then unveiled at the waterside on the head of the Bay, where the Valentia Lifeboat and RIBs from the local inshore rescue were in attendance; the Shannon-based Coastguard helicopter added to the occasion with a fly past.

It would only be right to thank local historian Sheila Burns and others plus Heritage Iveragh/Oidhreachta Uíbh Ráthaigh for the work put in to make the day a fitting tribute to 'Those who go down to the sea in ships, who ply their trade in great waters'



The ribs of the Eliezer on Inny Strand



St Michael And All Angels, Waterville

Responding to Suffering - Part 2: Catharsis of Complaint

By Rev John Godfrey, Rector of Aughrim & Creagh Unions

The experience of suffering can be completely disorienting: the landscape of our lives is utterly changed by the traumas that we go through, including our relationship with God. Responding to suffering involves a process of re-orienting ourselves in that new landscape. That process begins with lament. As we emerge from the rubble that suffering leaves in our lives, our faith invites us to come into God's presence and name the awful things that we have suffered. To lament is in some way to have been driven by suffering into the spiritual wilderness; feeling far from God and yearning for that relationship to be restored. Lament expresses a profound sense of disorientation: that this is not supposed to happen, that this is not the way things are supposed to be. Learning to articulate our lament helps us to go one step further and turn them into a complaint against God. Lament gives us the courage to accuse God: "Why did you let this happen?"



Even though it does not feel like it, our complaints against God are themselves an act of faith. Complaint is cathartic because it sets up a dialogue with God, who is perfectly good, about the scandal of our suffering. In that candid prayer-conversation we learn to see that our suffering is scandalous precisely because we believe in a God who is the source of everything good in creation. The goodness of God is the source of our protest against God for the suffering that befalls us.

When we learn to look for them, we can find in our scriptures countless examples of that sort of complaint against God – particularly in the psalms. Psalms presume permission for an intimacy with God that allows us to be utterly frank. So as we turn to the psalms in the middle of our own suffering, we can find there a framework for the kind of frank, intimate dialogue with God that can help us to express an enormous range of emotions in God's presence: including agonising lament, fierce complaint, incandescent anger and vitriolic curses, crises of faith and deep longing for deliverance, side by side with professions of trust in God's faithfulness and outpourings of thanksgiving and praise.



There is a great cathartic value in praying with the psalms of lament. They give both permission and shape for bringing our honest expressions of suffering uncensored into God's presence. They teach us that you don't have to make sure that your heart is ready to pray, but instead that it is OK to stumble into God's presence broken-hearted and to take the risk of being completely honest with God. The psalms record as scripture the way in which the crises of our lives leave us feeling vulnerable, scared and disoriented. They present us with the dissonant, contradictory struggles in prayer of our ancestors in faith, and in doing so they give permission for us to voice our own desperate, fear-filled thoughts in the crisis-points of our own lives. Furthermore, they give us permission to do that in our public worship as well as in private.

In the psalms of lament, the sufferer cries out to God in their distressed state, cataloguing the details of their unjust afflictions in the form of a complaint. Such accusations presume that God's own justice is affronted by the suffering that has befallen them. That is why, in the very act of accusing God, the person praying is able to express their trust that God will act to restore justice. It is that trust which transforms the complaint into a prayer-request.

Through the psalms, God continues to sanction and sustain our own lament and complaint. God uses those scriptures to give permission for all who suffer to honestly question, accuse, curse and grieve in his presence, as a means by which they may start to become re-oriented in the new landscape created by their suffering. If we allow ourselves to follow their pattern of blunt prayer-dialogue we can start to rediscover God's faithfulness, in spite of the suffering that has befallen us.



What Epiphany means to me

by Rev Rod Smyth, Rector of Nenagh Union

It's a dark time of the year, Epiphany. One which I always associate with our attempts to place light in the darkness. Candles, warm fires, and, of course, my favourite seasonal poem, T S Eliot's Journey of the Magi. Candles flickering in the darkness as the Prince of peace is encountered by the mystical three Kings of the east.



A cold coming they had of it

I'm always somewhat taken aback by people who seem to think that religion provides all the answers. The feast of the Epiphany, the visit of the Wise Men, celebrated on 6th January, as recorded in the Gospel according to St Matthew, provides little by way of answers. They don't really know where they are going – why go to Jerusalem if they know they should be in Bethlehem? With the confusion sorted out with Herod, he sends them to Bethlehem. Somehow on entering the house they seem to instinctively know the child is unique, they fall on their knees, pay him homage and offer their gifts, rich in symbolism. The account ends, 'And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.' So, they disappear from the narrative just as quickly as they had appeared, and we know nothing of them after this. What effect had the experience had on them; were they transformed by it? We are not told.

T S Eliot's wonderful poem, The Journey of the Magi, provides a theological reflection on the meaning of their appearance. The poem is shot through with symbolism, some of it based on a Christmas sermon by Lancelot Andrews, Elizabethan Prelate and Divine. 'A cold coming they had of it at this time of year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey.'

Yes, the Gospel reading poses many questions but provides little by way of answers. What effect had the child on the wise men? Something gives them the confidence to 'kneel down and pay him homage,' and to offer their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Something in the encounter with the child gives them wisdom in a dream. Did they all have the same dream? 'And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.' Their ability as astrologers to read the night sky had taken them to the wrong place, and surely therefore, something which is beyond themselves gives them the confidence to take 'another road.'

Eliot's reflective poem goes on to suggest that the wise men are indeed transformed by their experience, and not necessarily for the better. 'We returned to our places, these Kingdoms, but no longer at

ease here, in the old dispensation, with alien people clutching their gods. I should be glad of another death! The wise men seem to be if anything, less at ease as a result of their encounter with the child.



They kneel down and pay him homage

So, what? What does it mean for all of us? The Magi are surely a composite symbol of the spiritual quest. The journey of the Magi reflects the Christian pilgrimage, it is an allegory of the spiritual journey, a long hazardous journey taken in the 'very dead of winter,' which at various stages encounters the Christ child, and although transforming in nature, does not offer a panacea for all that life throws at us. Sometimes it doesn't even give us many answers, but what it does do is give us 'another road.' We too, each time we come to the Eucharist, kneel with the wise men before the Christ child, and we too are transformed by the experience. And what he gives us back is another way, 'another road,' A road on which we are accompanied by him. A road which will inevitably be difficult, perhaps more so than before. But nonetheless a road which he has travelled before us, one which is emblazoned with 'the true light which enlightens everyone.'

It is in the darkest moments of the cross, our own Golgotha moments in life, that we discover the dawn of Christ's light in the darkness. As Rowan Williams, has written, 'the light is at the heart of the dark; the dawn breaks when we have entered fully into the night!' It is then that so often we experience our own moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. Our own Epiphany. The Church, and every person of faith, has been entrusted with that same light and we are called to carry that light in the dark places of the world in our prayer, words, and actions.



They returned by another road

What Christmas means for me

by Rev Terry Mitchell, Rector of Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group

Christmas is a time of celebration when family comes together, when we exchange gifts, when we remember the birth of Christ.

As a child, growing up in South Africa, Christmas invariably involved the annual exodus to the sea or to the mountains. It was a time when those who had been working in the cities, in mines and factories and shops would return to their homes. It was the annual summer holiday and so the roads were always very busy over the Christmas season.

Christmas was a time to 'braai' (barbecue), to relax, to swim, to walk, to catch up with one another and to rest. Some of my memories as a child include longing for Christmas to come, to be able to open the presents under the tree, after days of guessing what these gifts were that Santa had kindly brought for us to enjoy.



A South African Christmas Braai

It is this theme of gifts associated with Christmas that I wish to reflect on and in particular God's gift to us of His Son. Christmas is about giving and sharing, of family and friends coming together, of sharing in meals and exchanging gifts, but it is more than that. As we look below the surface of Christmas and reflect on its meaning we see the Incarnation of Christ.

This Incarnation is the great and wonderful mystery of God made flesh, who comes to us full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Christ is God's gift to us, to all humankind, as above all it reveals the extent of God's generosity – For God so loved the world that he gave to us His one and only Son (John 3:16).



The Incarnation of Christ is God's supreme gift to us

To give gifts to one another is important, for we are saying we recognise you, we acknowledge you, we value you, we want to

share this gift with you, and that it might be something for you to enjoy and cherish. These gifts are not necessarily material, for it is as much the gift of faith, of friendship, of fellowship that is equally important.

The Incarnation of Christ is God's supreme gift to us, which we receive with gratitude and great joy, for it is above all the gift of life, of love, of joy and peace. This gift is then to be shared with others.

It is exciting to see others open gifts at Christmas, in the spirit of generosity, particularly children. However as we grow into adulthood, we recognise that we are to look increasingly at how we can share our gifts with one another, and the wider community of which we are a part.

This is the challenge of the Incarnation, for Christ's material gift of his life to us, was not just for us but for the world. We are to then consider how we can share this gift of life that we have been freely given, both individually and through the life and witness of the Church.

One way, in this season of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, is to share again the mystery, the hope of Christ's birth in our services of worship, to enjoy again the great hymns and carols of our faith. As the churches are filled to overflowing on Christmas day, to announce again to all people the Good News that Christ has come to make his dwelling amongst us and to make himself known to – this is His gift to us and our gift to one another.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
star and angel gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Christina Rossetti



Christina Rossetti



Love came down at Christmas

St Brendan's, Birr Bicentenary Service with Archbishop of Armagh

Report by Michael Hanna, Birr Group

On Sunday afternoon, November 6th, St Brendan's Church welcomed Archbishop Richard Clarke and Bishop Kenneth Kearon, parishioners and the people of Birr to a celebratory Eucharist to mark its bicentenary year in what was a joyful and ecumenical occasion. Some 300 people attended including many from the Methodist and Roman Catholic communities in the town. Father David Carroll and Reverend Clodagh Yambasu joined Archdeacon Wayne, Bishop Kenneth and Archbishop Richard in the sanctuary and 8 diocesan clergy robed for the occasion. The Birr Choral Society were joined by friends from Tullamore town and sang Wood's Jubilate as the clergy processed, led by Lord Rosse carrying the Cross of Adamnán. Lord Rosse, reading the second reading (1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-10) from the lectern bible, informed us that the bible he was reading from was published in March 1816, in all probability presented to the Church to mark its opening and consecration. Bishop Kenneth issued a gracious invitation to all to communicate or receive a blessing with the result that virtually all responded.

Some weeks before, a group of the older members of the church had met at Salters Sterling's house on several occasions to pour over the Parish Registers and issue invitations to all of those who had been baptised in the church. These were fascinating and merry occasions of remembrance and recall that resulted in at least one visitor confiding that the last time he was in the church was when he was six weeks old!

The Archbishop gave a deeply thoughtful sermon in which he challenged us to think about the church as SHRINE and SYMBOL and a place for SEEKING God.



Processing in behind the Cross of Adamnán



The Birr Choral Society sang magnificently under the baton of Morgan Crowley



Handel

Messiah

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There were many comments about the church from those who had been absent through time and space, for indeed it was wearing its age very lightly having just had the benefit of a good coat of paint and loving attention to its plaster work.

Many remarked on the music led by the Birr Choral Society and organist Charles Marshall with Morgan Crowley conducting. Musical highlights included a new Agnus Dei written by Peter Whyte, which enjoyed its premiere performance, and the beautiful Evening Hymn by Patrick Little. The clergy recessed to 'For all the Saints who from their labours rest' (CH: 459). It was a fitting end to a wonderful service, expressing gratitude to those who have gone before us and confidence in those who will come after us.

At the end of the service all were invited to a reception in Birr Castle hosted by Lord and Lady Rosse during which a bicentenary birthday cake was cut by the Primate and all relaxed in an atmosphere of great conviviality and informality.

During the reception, more copies of Heart and Soul – A History of St Brendan's Graveyard in Birr, by Stephen Callaghan and Caimin O'Brien were sold. This new book was launched in the church the evening before to coincide with our celebrations. It is beautifully illustrated and explores the history, the stories and the stonework to be found in this old graveyard hidden in the heart of the town, almost certainly built on the site of the original monastic foundation of St Brendan the Elder. A memorable weekend.



St Brendan's is looking splendid after the redecoration



Archbishop Richard Clarke



The Bicentenary Cake

Come and Sing Carols



St Mary's Cathedral
Saturday December 10th
2016 at 5:30pm

In Aid of Limerick City Parish
Free admission - retiring collection

Do come and join us for this popular annual singalong of all the favourite carols. With special guests St Mary's Prize Band (dir. Derek Mulcahy) and Limerick Choral Union (dir. Malcolm Green).



NENAGH CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Sunday 11th December - Sunday 18th December, 1-7 pm
at St Mary's Church, Nenagh

*Admire the trees,
enjoy the amazing Afternoon Tea (€5)
purchase seasonal produce & craft items
enjoy scheduled events & prize raffle*

Admission €3 (accompanied children free)

Carol Service on Sunday 18th at 6 pm – all welcome

Groups of 8 or more welcome – pre-booking helpful for catering

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Nenagh Union of Parishes

Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killodiernan

Rector: Rev Rod Smyth

The Rectory, Church Rd, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

Tel: 067 32598, Mob: 087 970 6479

Email: rsmyth6582@btinternet.com

THE NENAGH UNION

At the beginning of November, the Union lost one of its pillars. Dennis Croft, who had been Rector's Church Warden for many years in St Mary's Nenagh, passed away after an illness bravely borne. I had only known Dennis for a few short months, but we shared many moments together during his stay in hospital and at his home during his last days. I was always struck by his grasp of all that was going on in the parish and his attention to detail. It is only when we lose parishioners such as Dennis that we begin to see the gaps and realise just how much he did about the parish. His presence will be sadly missed by all and our thoughts, prayers and support are with his widow Rae, daughters Wendy and Nicky, son in law Derek and sister Barbara.

Remembrance services were held in all the parishes in the Union on Sunday 13th November and, on Saturday 12th November, an ecumenical act of remembrance was held at the Nenagh Town war memorial with members of the British Legion in attendance. About thirty people attended including ex – servicemen and women and a wreath was laid at the memorial by Jane Coman on behalf of the British Legion.

On Sunday 20th November, the last Sunday of the liturgical year, 'The Kingship of Christ,' there was a united service in St Mary's which took the form of a Family Eucharist. Members of the Boys' Brigade and the Girls' Friendly Society played their part in the service, reading the lesson, leading intercessions, carrying the Gospel book and helping with the children's address which was entitled 'The back to front King and the baking bowl.' Much fun was had by all, and much was learned about 'Christ the King' and 'Stir Up Sunday.' It was a good opportunity to have a teaching Eucharist for both young and old alike.

On Sunday 27th, Advent Sunday, we lit the first Advent candle in all three churches in the Nenagh Union. In the evening, there was An Advent Procession with Carols in St Mary's. The Church was bathed in candlelight as the service concentrated on the theme 'from darkness to light' – a meditation in readings and carols on the season of Advent and our looking towards the Incarnation at Christmas.

Things are really gearing up for the Christmas Tree Festival which runs from 11th-18th December in St Mary's. Do plan to come along and soak up the Christmas atmosphere! Why not organise a party to come from your parish? The Festival finishes with the Community Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at 6pm on Sunday 18th December.



On the last Sunday in January 29th there will be a Eucharist of wholeness and healing (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 458). The Bishop has given his permission for this service to be used in the Nenagh Union on an occasional basis. At the end of the service there will be the opportunity, for those who wish it, to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil for the sick.

The laying on of hands and anointing is the means by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind and body – to restore a person to physical, emotional and spiritual wholeness.

Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes

Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry.

Rector: Rev Terry Mitchell

Modreeny Rectory, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary

Tel: 0505 42183

Mob: 087 203 9333

Email: terry438@gmail.com

On behalf of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes we extend our condolences to Dick Culbert on the death of his brother Ted Culbert, who passed away peacefully at the age of 86. The funeral service was held in Kiltegan. We also remember the Brown family on the death of Annie Thomas who passed away peacefully on the 15th of November. The funeral service was held at St Brigid's Church in Tullamore.

May their souls rest in peace and rise in glory.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION Revd Dr Patricia Hanna led an interesting workshop on 'Metaphors as Spiritual Direction' in the St Kieran's Hall Cloughjordan on the 10th November. She looked at how we can use metaphors to talk about and describe our interior lives, as well as what animates and gives purpose to our lives. Those who attended found the day rewarding, enlightening and uplifting.

In the afternoon a number of the clergy discussed, in particular, aspects of rural ministry, resources that are available and some practical advice from those experienced in this area of ministry. Thank you to Patricia for facilitating both discussions.

MOTHERS, UNION The November meeting was a joint meeting at St Kieran's Hall Cloughjordan where Skin Consultant Brigid Doorley spoke about ailments of the skin and skin care in general. It was well attended and enjoyed by all.

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CLOUGHJORDAN GFS meets on Wednesday afternoons. On the 30th of November there was a presentation on Christmas flower decorating and the Christmas party on Wednesday the 7th of December.

THE THURSDAY VARIETY CLUB will hold its Christmas party at the Tipperary Inn, Toomevara on Thursday the 1st December at 1:30pm. All are welcome. Names to Adelaide 0873103033 or Betty 0863480631.

Thank you to Revd. Janet White Spinner and her doggy, for an interesting talk at the November meeting.

A four week ecumenical ADVENT COURSE, with the Methodist Church, started on the 23rd November at 8pm in the St Kieran's Rectory, Cloughjordan. All our welcome as we reflect again on the events leading up to the birth of Christ and our response of faith.

A CHRISTMAS MARKET will be held at St Kieran's Hall, Cloughjordan on the 3rd December between 9am and 2pm. A wonderful treat of music is in store as John Armitage's choir performs Christmas songs at 11am. The Cloughjordan Women's Choir will perform at 12pm and the Ukulele Group will perform at 1pm. There will be the usual stalls as well as Christmas Fayre.

CAROL SERVICES will be held at Ballingarry on the 4th of December at 7:0pm, at St Kieran's on the 11th December at 7:00pm (with the Methodist Church Choir), at Borrisokane on the 18th December at 10:15am and Borrisnafarney at 10:15 on the 18th December. Please join us for these services.

CHRISTMAS WHIST DRIVES will be held at Cloughjordan at 8:15pm on the 7th December, at Borrisokane at 8:15pm on the 9th December, at Borrisnafaney at 8.15pm on the 16th December, and Ballingarry at 8:15pm on the 19th December.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES will be held at Borrisnafarney on the 24th December at 7:00pm, at Ballingarry on the 24th December at 8:30 pm, at Borrisokane on the 25th December at 10:15pm and at St Kieran's Cloughjordan on the 25th December at 11:30pm. All are welcome.

Shinrone Group of Parishes

Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin

Rector: Canon Michael Johnston (On sick leave)

Parish Website: shinrone.blogspot.ie

Priest-in-Charge: The Revd. Canon Ruth Gill

Kilgolán House, Kilcormac, Birr, Co. Offaly

Phone: 05791 35341: email: ruth_gill40@outlook.ie

BAPTISM

Eliza Kitty, infant daughter of Ian and Sarah Sheppard, and grand daughter of Ivan and Dorothy Sheppard, was baptised in St. Finian's Church, Kinnitty on the 30th September by the Revd. Janet White Spinner. She is welcomed into the world wide Christian family and God's blessing on her and her parents.

AGHANCON PARISH LUNCH

The lunch was a tremendous success when parishioners and friends from a wide area gathered together on the 13th November. Everything went like clockwork, the food was delicious and the service was second to none! Well done to all concerned.

MOTHERS' UNION

After a busy and varied schedule before Christmas, the Branch will meet for dinner in Parkers' Restaurant, Riverstown at 7 p.m. on Thursday, 26th January 2017. Tuesday, 7th February, there will be a Home Baking Evening in Aghancon Hall with Mrs. Gladys Drought.

CLOVER LODGE NURSING HOME

Mr. John Armitage attends the weekly Holy Communion service to play the hymns. We offer him and his family our deepest sympathy on the death in Galway of his sister-in-law Brenda Auchmuty, just barely a year after Pamela's death.

"FORWARD TOGETHER"

The joint meeting was held on Tuesday, 15th November in Cloughmoyle School. There was a good turnout with very useful contributions from the floor and a lively conversation. Let's see how God is working his purposes out through you, dear reader!



"Forward Together" meeting

CHRISTMAS

There will be a united Carol Service in St. Mary's Church, Shinrone on Sunday, 18th December at 7 p.m. Notice of services for Christmastide and the New Year will be included in the December Newsletter. Please let Canon Ruth know of those who are housebound so that Holy Communion may be brought to them over the festive season.

KEITH AND LYN SCOTT

The commissioning service for Keith and Lyn held in St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, was a very moving occasion. They will be leaving Ireland in January to travel to Kitwe in Northern Zambia. They and those they will be working with, are wished every blessing.

GREETINGS!

When Newslink appears, we will still be in the Season of Advent. Once Hallowe'en was over (and barely over) huge pressure has been put on the public to spend so much hard-earned money on Christmas. Most of it isn't necessary. The true meaning of Christmas is being lost. Please remember that it's your presence which is the most important gift you can offer to those you love - your families, neighbours and friends. For those who really need it - give what you can afford.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a truly blessed Christmas and every good wish for the New Year? Thank you for your love and support.

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

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS EVE services will take place as follows:

4pm - Kilfenora Cathedral, Family Christingle;

8pm - Kilnasoolagh Christmas Eucharist.

CHRISTMAS DAY :

10.00am - Spanish Pt Christmas Eucharist;

11.30am - Drumcliffe Christmas Eucharist.

ECUMENICAL Carols, with Drumcliffe as host take place (ironically) for special reasons in Ennis Pro-Cathedral on Sunday 18th December at 7pm. Massed Cluster choirs and orchestra lead this outstanding event attended by over 600 worshippers.

UNITY WEEK

An ecumenical gathering for Ennis-Clare will take place in St Columba's, Ennis to mark The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in the third week of January. Details later

MARRIAGE

A Christmas wedding is in store for inter-Church couple Laura Harrison, Presbyterian by upbringing in County Down and Trevor Sexton from near Lahinch, Co Clare, of the Roman Catholic tradition. The couple presently work in Australia and have decided to marry in Clare, hence a wedding of the Reformed genre in St Columba's Ennis led by the Rev Vicki Lynch, assisted by Fr Seanie Murphy, PP Miltown Malbay. No reflection on the happy couple (save the very best), they marry on the Feast of the Holy Innocents !! And nothing bad from above can come down on them....Trevor's dad PJ is a tradesman responsible for maintenance of the roof tiling in St Columba's !!



Trevor and Rhena Giles dropped in at St Columba's for worship when celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They are seen with the Rector, Mrs Catherine Doherty Louer, Nigel Bridge and Lawson Kirkpatrick.

CONCERTS

Soprano Regina Nathan was to hold her now annual and much anticipated concert on the lip of Advent while another soprano Helen Houlihan likewise returned with her carol evening including tenor Owen Gilhooley in Christmas week, Wednesday 21st December. St Columba's the venue for both evenings.

MEMORIAL

Unfortunate timing means we go to press before offering a photo and reflections on the unveiling ceremony of the new World War 1 Memorial commemorating the 700 war dead from Clare among 7,000 (approx.) who served. It takes place in the recently designated Peace Park near the town centre on Advent Sunday 27th November 2016.

Civic dignitaries plus military and former military personnel including the Royal British Legion and the Munster Fusiliers Association are to be part of the event (2pm) with West Clare born retired U.N. Irish Troop Commander and peacekeeper-consultant Col Mike Shannon giving the keynote address. The Clare World War 1 Dead Committee are responsible for the building of the glass Memorial in this year of the Somme with special tribute due to Dr Kier McNamara its chairperson for fulfilling his late father Peadar's vision for such a monument. More funds need to be raised to cover the cost of this work of art and the appeal to the public for support is ongoing. Meanwhile the McNamara family are generously embracing the shortfall.

Drumcliffe Group with Kilnasoolagh were to present their own wreath on the day in memory of our Church of Ireland fallen. Donations are invited and should be processed through the parish treasurer.

GRADUATION

Congratulations to Sophie Hanna on graduating in late October in Arts from University College Cork.

NEIGHBOUR VISIT

New Roman Catholic bishop, Rt Rev Fintan Monahan graced the late Harvest which ran into All Saints Tide. We thank him for his warm and rich message on faith and look for more days to come in his fellowship. The Forever Young Choir led by Mr Michael Hennessy and soprano Edel O'Brien led the music with, of course, Nigel Bridge on Organ. Thanks to tea makers as well as decorators for making it the happy and rich Community worship event it was.



Bishop Fintan Monahan chats with Edwin Bailey at the Harvest Thanksgiving in St Columba's.

Likewise devoted worker-artists were active the previous weekend for Kilnasoolagh Harvest when Rev Dr Keith Scott, Rector of Rathkeale and Askeaton shared the Missionary vision which is taking him and his wife Lyn back to the Mission Field in Zambia. Our Group has already begun the support it promises for Keith and Lyn's work with CMS among African pastors.

Ennis flautist Orianna O'Dwyer brought new richness to the Harvest music. Thanks to the faithful from Ennis who gave up their Sunday worship there and boosted the singing. (For the first time in years Ciaran O'Gorman's Clare Music Circle did not lead the singing, but it was wonderful to have the presence nevertheless of Ciaran and Brid O'Gorman)

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

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Redemptorist Community in Esker, on the death of Father Tommy Byrne C.Ss.R, who had done so much in recent times to nurture a strong bond of friendship with our own parish. It a humbling gesture of Christian unity our rector was invited to lead the committal at Fr Tommy's funeral on October 26th. Our deepest sympathies are also with Florence Fahy, on the death of her brother Edward, and with Mary Sinclair, on the death of her sister Elizabeth.

Our six churches, along with The Glebe National School, each held an Act of Remembrance in memory of all those whose lives were lost or scarred in armed conflicts. On Remembrance Day, Ardahan Church held a concert of Music and Musings, which included a recital of the war poems of Francis Ledwidge, Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats and local resident poet Roger Phillimore, alongside music from The Mezzo Quartet, harpist Francesca Lundvall, vocalists Maeve Cairney and Caroline Bradley, songs on piano and flute by Siobhan Burke and Yvonne Crooke, and a blues trad set from John Faulkner and Stuart Cowell. Tom Seale, of Woodlawn Church, is helping to bring to light untold stories of World War One in a special exhibition on December 3rd in the Irish Museum of Country Life, Castlebar. 'From Woodlawn to Maily Wood' is a glimpse at the short life of one man who classed himself as Irish, and died serving God, King and Country: Frederick Trench, first son to 3rd Baron Ashtown, Frederick Oliver Trench & Lady Violet Grace (nee Cosby), who died in the Battle of the Somme in 1916.



Maeve Cairney & Caroline Bradley at Music & Musings in Ardahan Church



Stuart Cowell & John Faulkner at Music & Musings in Ardahan Church

November is also a time for remembering our own loved ones who have died. The rector was involved in a special remembrance service on November 6th marking the 30th anniversary of the Galway Hospice. As part of the ongoing fundraising efforts which support the Galway Hospice, Norman Sinclair, of Glan Church, will be doing a sponsored cycle from Oranmore to Cappataggle on December 4th. The rector was also involved in ecumenical remembrance services for Soroptimists International, Ballinasloe & District on November 21st; for the families of Portiuncular Hospital staff on November 22nd; and for the Portumna Active Retirement group on December 1st.



Lieutenant Frederick Trench Memorial Window in Woodlawn Church

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The Rectory Coach House, Aughrim: Praying into Advent
A chance to mull over the Advent Bible readings together, with a mince pies & coffee. Tuesdays at 8pm: November 22nd to December 13th

- St Catherine's Ahascragh: An Evening of Christmas Music Friday 2nd December, 7.30pm
- Ballydugan House: Ecumenical Advent Eucharist Dec 5th at 7pm
- St John's Church Ballinasloe: Lessons and Carols Sunday 11th December at 10am.
- Holy Trinity Aughrim: Christmas Carol Service Sunday 18th December at 5.30pm. (NB. No morning service in Aughrim)
- Ardahan Church: Christmas Eve Eucharist Saturday 24th December at 3pm
- Woodlawn Church: Christmas Eve Eucharist Saturday 24th December at 6pm
- St John's Church Ballinasloe: Christmas Day Eucharist Sunday 25th December at 11am



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

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday December 11th Gaudete Sunday Advent III

10.30am Portumna (HC)

12noon Banagher (Family Eucharist with Hymns)

Wednesday December 15th

11am: Eliza Lodge (HC) (To join with the residents of the Home and to be refreshed in word and sacrament during the week.)

Sunday 18th December 18th Advent IV

7pm: Eyrecourt. A Candlelit Service of Eight Lessons & Carols

Saturday 24th December CHRISTMAS EVE

7pm Portumna (Christmas Eve: 1st Eucharist of Christmas with Carol Singing)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.00am Eyrecourt (Morning Service with Procession to the Crib)

This short service is particularly suitable for children

11am Banagher (Holy Eucharist)

SUNDAY JANUARY 1ST 2017

11am Eyrecourt (MP for The Sunday after Christmas)

SUNDAY JANUARY 8TH 2017

10.30am Portumna (The First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of our Lord. MP)

12noon: Banagher (The First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of our Lord. HC)

BAPTISMS:

We welcome very warmly into Christ's Church LAURA MARIE KENNY baptised in Clonfert Cathedral on October 30th 2016. Laura's parents are David and Bronagh Kenny of Fynagh, Laurencetown, Ballinasloe. The godparents were Jennifer Banoub, Susan Kenny and, Jonathan Burke. Laura's grandmother, Mrs Freda Kenny whom many know in the Diocese was present along with many worshippers in the ancient Cathedral on a fine Sunday morning.



At the christening of Laura Kenny in Clonfert Cathedral on 30th October

We welcome into Christ's Church LUKE BRACKEN, son of Kenneth Bracken and Andrea Eades in the Birr Methodist Church on Sunday, November 20th. The Rev'd Clodagh Yambasu, Minister of the Church led the worship and the Church of Ireland priest, the Reverend Patrick Towers, assisted.

(This Baptism of Luke has not taken place at the time for the submitting of The Newslink notes. However I feel deeply that it will and as such it is what might be called 'a post-truth' statement.)

PHOTOGRAPHS:

I hope to be able to attach with this edition some actual pictures of real events. Should I not be lucky I will send post-truth photos that might convince you that real events have happened in this Parish but will in fact be edited pictures of the Kardashians, the Trumps and other people of varying degrees of loveliness in posture and play.

One distinguished picture and 100% real is that of William Phair who graduated with the distinction of being the student with the second highest Leaving Certificate results in his School, Banagher College. Fine student and a fine picture showing William receiving his award. William is the son of Heather and Jerome Phair. Well done and congratulations. The picture was taken by Canon Ruth Gill who was at the Award Ceremony. Insert photograph of William here



William Phair graduated with distinction from Banagher College

HARVEST

The Eyrecourt Harvest was memorably addressed by the Minister of the 1st Congregational Church in Gorham, Maine, The Rev'd David Butler. David was a student in days past at the famed ecumenical Union Theological Seminary in New York. David's inspirational sermon recounted the story of the early settlers who shortly after the arrival of Mayflower built a church against the odds in the forest lands of Maine facing not only the struggle to establish sustainable small holdings but also survive against raids by the French and Native American Indians in the long period of the Indian Wars.

PURITAN INFLUENCES

These notes are now in excess of the Editor's word limit. My apologies. May you all have a very happy Christmas and a New Year of no excess whatever!

Limerick Diocese

Limerick City Parish

St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Michael's and Abington Churches

Dean: The Very Rev. Sandra Pragnell (on sick leave)

Curate Assistant: Rev Edna Wakely

50 Ballinvoher, Fr Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick

Tel: 061 302 038, Mob: 086 357 4917

Email: ednawakely@hotmail.com

Priest-in-Charge: Rev Marie Rowley-Brooke

Mob: 085-147 4792 Email: canonmarie@me.com

Congratulations to Sarah Ryan (daughter of Lindy Farmer and Kevin Ryan) and Mark Williams, who were married in Wesley's Chapel, London by Rev. Dr. Leslie Griffiths on, 5 November 2016. The happy couple are pictured here with bridesmaids Rachel Ryan and Joanna Harrison.

AND TO Vaughn Bezuidenhout and Noreen O'Sullivan who were married in the Cathedral on Saturday, 19 November. We wish both couples every blessing.



Sara and Mark with their Bridesmaids

LIMERICK CITY PARISH CHRISTMAS FAIR

The annual LCP Christmas Fair was held on Saturday 12 November in Villiers School, and we thank the school for their hospitality in enabling this big event to take place in it's hall. It was a great day, not only with the huge variety of stalls which included plants, preserves, bric-a-brac, jewellery, gifts, cake stall, toys, books, and a wide range of refreshments on offer from cakes to soup and hot dogs, but also a great social day as many people enjoyed catching up with each other and chatting over a cup of tea at the beautifully decorated tables. There was a wonderful atmosphere. And of course, there was money made! €8,860 at the latest count, both from the stalls and the big raffle. Huge thanks to all who worked so hard to make all this happen, and to all who so generously donated raffle prizes, and items for the various stalls.

WHIST DRIVES

10 December @ 7.30pm – St. Michael's with Raffle

7 January 2017 @ 7.30pm – St. Michael's

21 January 2017 @ 7.30pm – Villiers Square

Admission €6 to include supper.

'Pray, love, remember' – as always, November was the season for remembrance. A joyful United Service on 30 October celebrated All Saints in the LCP, welcoming Victor Brown into the Church of Ireland family, whilst at the same time RTE broadcast a service for All Saints previously recorded in the Cathedral. In these services we remembered and gave thanks for those who in their lives brought about a little more of the kingdom of God, and whose witness and action strengthened the Church. In the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls) on 3 November in the Cathedral we remembered and gave thanks for those in our lives whom we loved and who loved us. The theme of memory, both corporate and individual, continued in the Act of Remembrance in Kings

Island Military Ceremony on 6th November, followed by Parade Remembrance in the Cathedral and then the official Remembrance Sunday ceremonies, on 13 November, both in the Cathedral and St Michael's Church, when we confronted issues of war and peace, loss and self-gift, memory and forgetting.

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL NEWS

The final lunchtime concert in the Cathedral was held on Wednesday 9 November, and after this Peter Barley presented a thank-you bouquet to Peggy Carey in appreciation of all the work she had done over the past season in enabling these concerts to take place. They continue to grow in popularity, both with musicians wishing to perform, and audiences wishing to attend.



Peggy Carey and Peter Barley

On Sunday 13 November, Bishop Kenneth commissioned Rev'd Dr Keith and Mrs Lyn Scott as CMSI Mission partners at Choral Evensong in the Cathedral. See page 17.

There was another great celebration when Maurice Sirr celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination at a Choral Eucharist in the Cathedral on 20 November. Bishop Edward Darling was the guest preacher, with Maurice celebrating and Bishop Kenneth presiding. A presentation was made to Maurice and Paddy, and Emma Melin baked a wonderful cake for refreshments afterwards!

We wish all Newslink readers, their families and friends, a holy, blessed and merry Christmas!

40 THOMAS ST
LIMERICK

TEL: 061 - 414967
FAX: 061 - 415365

Thompson Undertakers
Limerick

LIMERICK CITY CAROL & CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND CONCERTS

- Wed 7 @ 1.15pm - Cathedral - 2nd Advent Reflection on the theme of hospitality.
- Thurs 8 @ 8pm - Cathedral - Irish Chamber Orchestra.
- Sat 10 @ 5.30pm - Cathedral - Come and Sing Carols.
@ 8pm - Cathedral - Sarah Dolan in Concert.
- Tues 13 @ 8pm - Cathedral - Catherine McAuley Benefit Concert.
- Wed 14 @ 9am - St. Michael's Church - St. Michael's School Carol Service.
@ 1.15pm - Cathedral - 3rd Advent Reflection.
- Thurs 15 @ 8pm - Cathedral - An Cor Christmas Concert.
- Sun 18 @ 10 a.m. - St. Michael's Church - Carol Service/ Children's Nativity.
@ 8pm - Cathedral - Carols for the City.
- Mon 19 @ 8pm - Abington - Carol Service.
- Wed 21 @ 1.15pm - Cathedral - 4th Advent Reflection.
- Thurs 22 @ 12 noon - Cathedral - Villiers School Carol Service.
- Sat 24 @ 11pm - Cathedral - First Eucharist of Christmas.
- Christmas Day @ 10am - St. Michael's - Communion & Carols.
@ 11.15am - Cathedral - Sung Eucharist.
@ 12 noon - Abington - Communion & Carols.
- Fri 30 @ 6pm - Cathedral - Launch of "Strung" Album.
- January 2017
- Sun 8 @ 7pm - Cathedral - Epiphany Carol Service.
- Sun 22 @ 5pm - Cathedral - Thanksgiving Choral Evensong.
- Tues 24 @ 8pm - St Michael's - WPCU event 'They who sing, pray twice!'

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

At the time of this writing, winter has arrived with a bang, with cold temperatures and wintry mix, after our balmy autumn.

With winter, comes Advent and then Christmas, and we are getting ready for both. Our usual Sunday schedule always changes in December, as we make room for different special services. So here is the December schedule for Sundays:

Sun, 4 Dec (Advent 2): Holy Communion (HC) in Croom, Kilpeacon, and Adare; Morning Prayer (MP) in Kilmallock

Sun, 11 Dec (Advent 3): HC in Croom and Kilpeacon; MP in Kilmallock & Adare. The service in Kilpeacon will include a play offered by the Sunday School.

Sun, 18 Dec (Advent 4): MP in Croom & Kilpeacon at the usual times. No morning services in Adare & Kilmallock.

12.30pm - Family Carol Service in Kilmallock, followed by Christmas dinner at the Deebert House Hotel at 2.00pm.

7.00pm - Carol Service in Adare.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Sat, 24 Dec (Christmas Eve) - Croom, 7.00pm

Sun, 25 Dec (Christmas Day) - Kilmallock, 9.30am; Kilpeacon, 10.30am; Adare, 11.30am

The annual Carol Service held on the Sunday after Christmas will be on Sunday, 1 January, at 11.00am in Croom.

Another special event is the annual Mothers' Union Christmas party, to be on Tuesday, 13 December, at the Rectory at 8.00pm. The younger women arrange games (which usually produce gales of laughter), we enjoy mulled wine and mince pies, and we sing carols together.

We had a funeral in Kilmallock on Monday, 14 November, for Alan Nyst, a resident of the Beech Lodge Nursing Home in Bruree, with burial afterwards in the Tankardstown Cemetery. We offer condolences to his family. Also, the Rector joined in a remembrance service for all those who have died in the previous year at the Adare Nursing Home, in Croagh. Frank Penney, a member of St. Nicholas, Adare, had lived at the nursing home prior to his death a year ago.

Our new Singing Group has now met several times, with enthusiastic singing by all. We have been told to sing boldly, so we do! We are focusing on learning some songs well enough so that we can sing them without accompaniment, if needed. Rather than being a choir, the group is meant to be a support to congregational singing, a way to learn some new music, and also just a way to get together and sing. The group meets on the first and third Sundays at the Rectory.

In something a little different, on Thursday, 10 November, Kirk Beasley had a book launch for his new novel, *Parable of the Rich Man*. The launch was held at the shop of Michelina and George Stacpoole in Adare. Since that night was also the grand opening of a shop and art gallery in Adare, and a lecture at the Heritage Centre, the evening became a village-wide party.



George Stacpoole at the grand opening of a shop and art gallery and launch of his new novel.

During this season of Advent may we prepare our hearts, our minds, and our lives for Christ's presence. And a Happy Christmas to all!

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes

Rathkeale, Askeaton, Kilcornan & Kilnaughtin

Vacant

Priest-in-Charge: Very Rev Maurice Sirr

Tel: 061 - 277372, Mob: 087-2541121

Email: msirr@iol.ie

This is the last set of Newslink notes I shall write, at least for some considerable time. By the time the December edition reaches the pews Lyn and I will have moved on to our temporary home, waiting to launch out for Zambia in the New Year.

It has been a joy and privilege to walk this part of the Way of Jesus Christ with the people of the Rathkeale and Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes and this diocese. We are sad to leave behind so many good friends and good colleagues, but the God who calls us all to follow and journey "outside the city" has very clearly called us and we must follow, what else can any of us do?

Lyn and I were much moved by the presence of so many of our friends and colleagues at our Commissioning service on the 13th November and by the many gifts and cards that we have received. We deeply appreciate your support, even if we might be just a little bit preoccupied by the pile of boxes awaiting our attention in the house. Please accept our deepest gratitude. Please keep in touch with us, emails will reach us at: keithscott@cmsireland.org and lynscott@cmsireland.org and you will be able to follow our blogs and adventures at www.cmsireland.org

By the time this reaches the pews we will have taken part in our last service at Rathkeale on Sunday 27th November and Dean Maurice Sirr will have taken temporary charge of the Group of Parishes. We are confident that the parishes are in good hands, and have a bright future. We wish you all God's Blessings for the future. May the Spirit of the Living God enable and empower you all to keep the faith, rise to the challenges and be witnesses to Christ, here and to the ends of the earth.

Ardfert Diocese

Tralee & Dingle Unions of Parishes

Tralee, Ballymacelligott, Ballyseedy, Dingle, Kilgobbin and Killiney

Vacant

Email: tralee@ireland.anglican.org

Priest-in-Charge: Rev Phyllis Jones,
The Rectory, Camp, Co. Kerry.

Tel: 066 713 0767 Mob: 085 855 8594

Email: phyllisjones@eircom.net

	Ballyseedy	Tralee	Ballymac	Kilgobbin	Dingle
Date	9.45 am	10.45 am	12 noon	10.00 am	12 noon
4th Dec	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	No Service
11th Dec	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
18th Dec	Morning Prayer	Carol Service with School	Morning Prayer	Ecumenical Carol Service 3.00	Ecumenical Carol Service 7.00
24th Dec	-----	-----	10.00pm Holy Comm	-----	9.00pm Holy Comm
25th Dec	-----	Holy Communion		Holy Communion	
26th December	-----		11.00 am Holy Comm		
27th Dec	-----	11.00am Holy Communion			

Holy Communion is celebrated in St. John's Church Tralee at 11am every Wednesday, followed by a time of fellowship. All are welcome.

Remembrance Sunday 13th November. This year's Remembrance Service was very special. We had 3 flag-bearers; The National Colours were presented by Captain Roche, the UN Colours by Tony O'Carroll (Irish United Nations Veteran Army), and the Branch Standard presented by Sean McGrath, plus our own Boys Brigade. Bugler, Mark Brite, played the Last Post and the Reveille and John Sheehan a member of the Tralee Pipe Band, played at the beginning and end of the service.



Left to Right: Sean McGrath, Chairman of O.N.E. Local Branch, Tony O'Carroll (IUNVA) Irish United Nations Veteran Army, Michael Latchford - Member of St. Johns, Revd. Phyllis Jones, Niall Groves, Church Warden Gerald Landers, President of O.N.E. Local Branch, Mark Brite, Bugler (John Cleary.- photographer)



Observing a minute's silence in St. John The Evangelist Church, Tralee

The Organisation of Ex-Servicemen is led by Gerald Landers, retired Commandant, who was a great help in organising the Colour Parties, for which we are most grateful. We were pleased to welcome all Serving Personnel and Ex-Servicemen, it was an honour to have them with us.



Piper at the Service of Remembrance

We were also pleased to welcome Councillor Sam Locke, who was instrumental in gaining recognition for all soldiers from Tralee who were killed in the First World War. Two commemorative plaques bearing their names, were commemorated at Ballymullen, home of the Munster Fusiliers, in June 2016.

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the terrible battle of the Somme; we commemorated them and all who lost lives in WW1 and WW2, particularly the Irish men and women who fell at home and in Foreign Wars. Also remembered were the 86 members of the Defence Forces who lost lives serving under the UN Flag on Peacekeeping Missions, on behalf of the people of Ireland.

Following the service it was lovely to spend time with Soldiers and Guests, getting to know them over a welcome cup of coffee.

Killarney and Aghadoe Union of Parishes

Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross

Rector Ven Simon J. Lumby, Archdeacon of Limerick

The Rectory, Rookery Road, Ballycasheen, Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Tel: 064 66 31832 Mob: 086-8703997

Email: killarney@ardfert.anglican.org

CHRISTMAS CARROL SERVICE:

The annual Christmas Carrol Service will take place on December 18th at 3:30 pm and all are welcome to one of the highlights of the year. Before the Carrol Service – on December 15th – the Killarney Golf Club Choir and Ballycasheen School join forces for their Annual Concert at 8:00 pm.

OTHER CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Christmas Eve Holy Communion will take place at 11:00 pm followed by the main Christmas Day Holy Communion at 11:00 am on the big day itself. As New Year's Day falls on a Sunday there will be a Family Service – as there is every 1st Sunday – to celebrate greeting 2017 at 11:00 am.

NEW YEAR – NEW BEGINNINGS?

The week of January 18th-25th is being marked with a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and plans are already in place for a major ecumenical event at which the Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches will demonstrate their closer links and common purpose. Other events will be announced closer to the time, and their theme will be overcoming perceived historical deep rooted suspicion of each other. Hopefully the congregations of all the churches can mix and talk feely so that we can each get a better understanding of each other's beliefs and move forward together. In a way we're pre-empting things because February 6th-11th is World Interfaith Harmony Week.

ANOTHER GONG FOR ST MARY'S!

We were delighted to get the railings renewed earlier this year and felt rightly proud of our achievement of a task and fundraising which at times seemed impossible. However, with massive support from the local community and other Church of Ireland people across the country – not to mention the driving force that is Klaus Nolke – it was finished and we rested. Well we rested until news came to us in early November that the railings had been selected by the Killarney Looking Good Committee as being worthy of 1st place in their annual Preservation Award. And we rested some more until we discovered that we had not just won one of the 30 different categories, but the overall prize in the competition.

The reason the railings project was selected had a lot to do with Killarney holding on to its gold medal position in the national Tidy Towns Competition. Chairperson of the adjudicating committee for that said that "The railings and plinths at St Mary's Church have undergone an amazing restoration project. Now in bright red they

look very well in the central part of town. As your adjudicator first drove into Killarney they really stood out. This was a substantial project that involved a lot of time and money – well done." So once again, thank all of you who gave donations, support and encouragement – without your help we certainly would not be smiling like we are today



SEASON'S GREETINGS:

For all within the congregation, our many visitors and fellow Church of Ireland people across the country may I, on behalf of all in St Mary's, wish you a safe, peaceful, holy and happy Christmas and New Year.

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

Web: kilcolman.ardfert.anglican.org

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 1 st & 3 rd

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Kiltallagh National School Christmas Play 4th Dec in St Michaels @ 11am

Advent Service in St James Killorglin on the 4th @ 6pm all welcome
Lutheran Christmas Service 17th @ 12am in St Michaels Church
Christmas Carols: 18th Dec @ 7pm in St Michaels. No morning service.

Christmas Day Holy Communion:

Kiltallagh at 9.45am

Killorglin at 11 am.

SALE OF WORK.

The parish held its annual sale of work on a Saturday the 22nd October,

Its success is a credit to all those who give of their time, skills and resources so generously. Many thanks to those who moved tables and prepared the hall on Friday evening and again on Saturday morning, To all those who baked cakes and buns and all types of goodies such as Jams and Chutneys. To those manned stalls, served teas and especially to those who took time off work to help on the day, To those who counted the money and stayed back to dismantle and clean the hall and to all who helped in so many other ways.

Approximately €6,700 was raised for parish funds.

This was the second fundraising event this year and it followed the successful garden fete which was held in St Michaels Church grounds at the end of July.

CONFIRMATION.

Parents of children in sixth class or first year should contact me if they wish their child to be prepared for confirmation.

HISTORICAL EVENING

This evening was a success with displays of memorabilia from the past. The evening was introduced by Eric Champ who spoke about the 20th Anniversary of the building of the new Church. Andrew Eadie spoke about the work of the Board of First Fruits 200 years ago. Conor Joy spoke on the topic "Kerry Protestants and the Irish revolution 1916 to 1923", which may be published in due course. It is hoped that some of the material will be put on the parish web page at a later date.

CONGRATULATIONS:

To Richard West and to Sophie Stephens who were recently conferred with Degrees at the Autumn Conferings in UCC. Best wishes to them both, To Sophie as she continues in College and to Richard in the world of work.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

It is hoped that we will continue this tradition with a service some time in January in one of the Churches in Mid Kerry.

SHOEBOX SERVICE,

The parish gathered twenty six shoe boxes for the Christmas shoe box appeal. This was organised by the Sunday School Leaders in Killorglin and was supported by the parish. Many thanks to all who supported this appeal.



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

The first few days of November are a time when the media like to rehearse arguments about the validity of Remembrance Services, and in particular the wearing of a poppy, 'Lest we forget'. In Kenmare and Sneem, we choose to remember – neither to celebrate a 'victory' (for no-one ever 'really' wins through violent means), nor out of nationalism (for we remember all those irrespective of nation who died for what they believed would be the best for their children). The congregations of our churches are multinational, and while in the past our birth nations may have been at war against each other, today we share the common cup around the table of Jesus the Christ, Lord and Saviour of all. We remember those who have gone before, and we do so in order to make sure that history does not repeat itself.

So, in our church services, we concentrated on the future; the wars that we need to fight today – against homelessness, drugs, against greed, prejudice and hatred; perhaps most pressing of all, against hunger, thirst and nakedness in so many parts of the world. Our weapon is prayer – not prayer as a shopping list, but prayer as listening, the prayer that turns intercession into action. We often feel that there is little that we can do, that nothing will make much of a difference; but the story of the young Robin showed us that we can.

One day, a young Robin asked his Dad 'How much does a snowflake weigh?' His Dad replied 'Nothing – almost nothing at all'. 'Funny that', said the fledgling 'cos I was counting the snowflakes that landed on a branch of that old oak tree over there. I counted Three million, eight hundred and forty-three thousand, seven hundred and two, and nothing happened. When I got to Three million, eight hundred and forty-three thousand, seven hundred and three, the branch snapped!'



In this year of Commemoration, in addition to our traditional Remembrance Day services and as part of the Annual Sneem storytelling festival, a concert in Sneem church focussed on '1916 in Poetry and Song'. Local Seanchaí Batt Burns and the Rosen Choir introduced a mixture of contemporary and more recent elements, ending in everyone singing 'Abide with me'; the last verse of which declares the real and lasting triumph of life over death – the victory we claim and remember through all our sadness, and celebrate in our service.

Methodist News

Adare & Ballingrane Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Ruth Watt

Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Road, Adare, Co. Limerick.

Tel: 061 396 236 Email: watt_ruth@yahoo.ie

As we come to the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017 we are excited to see where God is working in us as individuals and as a congregation and circuit. Our first Saturday evening service drew in some people for whom Sunday morning is now seldom possible. It was wonderful to worship together with them. The Bible Study continues to challenge us in what it means to be a Christian in the early 21st Century. Already we hear of situations that were helped when the words of Jesus that we have been studying in the Sermon on the Mount are remembered.

At we come to the end of this calendar year we begin our Christian year with Advent. In our services we seek to prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth not just of Baby Jesus, but of Jesus, the Son of God, who would become our Saviour and Lord, Brother and Friend. Part of the preparation and celebration will consist of a Saturday evening Carol Service (not sure what form it will take yet!), and a Sunday morning family Carol Service where the children will help to lead us in our celebration. With Christmas Day on a Sunday this year our service on that day will be at the earlier time of 10 am.

As we begin the New (Calendar) Year we pledge ourselves once again to our God and Maker in the Covenant service where we will say together and to God ...

"I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you; exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the Covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Pray that these will not just be words, but they will be a commitment we make to God and to His love.

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER:

4th	Rev. Ruth Watt	Holy Communion
13th	Rev. Ruth Watt	
Sat 17th	Christmas Carol Service	Saturday evening @ 8:00 p.m. in Adare
18th	Rev. Ruth Watt	Family Carol Service @ 11 a.m. in Ballingrane
25th	Rev. Ruth Watt	United Christmas Day @ 10 a.m. in Adare

SERVICES FOR JANUARY:

1st	Mrs. Siobhán Wheeler	United Service @ 11 a.m. in Ballingrane
8th	Rev. Ruth Watt	Covenant Service & Holy Communion
15th	Rev. Ruth Watt	
Sat 21st	Rev. Ruth Watt	Saturday evening service @ 8 p.m. in Ballingrane
22nd	Rev. Ruth Watt	United Service @ 11 a.m. in Adare
29th	Rev. Ruth Watt	

Unless otherwise stated services are in Adare @ 10:15am and in Ballingrane @ 11:45am

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

On Sunday November 20th a special Year of Mercy celebration, Mercy in Action in Limerick, took place in St John's Cathedral. A number of local and national organisations agreed to be part of the story of the liturgy.

Representatives from Novas, Trócaire, St Vincent de Paul, Simon community, Doras Luimni, Limerick Youth Service, Milford Care Centre, Children's Grief Centre, Bedford Row Family Project, and the diocese spoke from the heart, each in a very different way, presenting their reflections on works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, welcome the stranger, support good decision making, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowful, hold the suffering, forgive yourself; forgive others, bury the dead and pray for the living and the dead.



Kate Hennessey 2016

A representative from St Vincent de Paul shared: 'Clothing the naked challenges me to seek and find those who are naked in my very own community. As an SVP volunteer I am reminded that in every visitation I make to one in need I visit a person in their vulnerability and nakedness as they very often have been stripped of self esteem, dignity, belongingness, hope and of that basic affirmation which we all long for. "The Naked" are not an anonymous collection making up an homogenous group. "The Naked" is made up of many individuals each of whose nakedness is unique....In many cases their nakedness is a result of Social Injustice for which I too share collective responsibility....Yes, clothing the naked concerns me as it does everyone, and in clothing the naked I come to know myself in my own vulnerability and in my own nakedness.'

The service concluded with hope and encouragement from Bishop Brendan Leahy for mercy in action in our community and a beautifully sung Irish blessing by Fr Noel Kirwan. I left reflecting on all the thoughts and stories I had heard. From Doras Luimni, 'Welcome is such a powerful force. It can be unforgettable and reach people with incredible results.' From Bedford Row Family Project quoting Pope Francis, 'Christ comes to save us from the lie that says no one can change.' And I was strongly reminded of words that Fr Peter McVerry shared with us when he spoke

at the ecumenical Of One Heart service in Christ Church during the City of Culture year:

We are one people and one community. Reaching out to those who are homeless, poor and marginalised is not an act of charity, it is a demand of justice. A shared sense of solidarity, the solidarity that acknowledges the dignity of every human being, a solidarity that feels the pain of others as our pain, that sees the desires and hopes of others as our own desires and hopes is the fundamental requirement for building a more just society.

At times, I'm sure we could all agree, it can be challenging to keep going with the work we do and try to do; the projects, the volunteering, the giving, but hopefully the sense of doing it together and because each one of us is lovingly called by name will always be enough to encourage us to persist.

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
Website: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry

Lay Pastoral Assistant: Suzie Gallagher
Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team: Ed and Jean Ritchie
Tel: 064 6620580

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 Tuesday and Thursday 8am – 9am
Soul Food Bible Study Friday 11am
Drop-in lunch 12pm
Parent and Toddler (term time) Tuesday 10am
The Giving Space monthly as arranged on Saturdays

The Gateway KENMARE
Sunday Service 11am (preceded by tea/coffee)
Prayer Meeting Wednesday 9.15am
Bible study Wednesday 10am
Drop in for coffee Wednesday 11am
Youth Club second and fourth Saturday 7pm – 8.30pm

Contact Rev Karen Spence for further information.

SOME EVENTS THAT ARE PLANNED:

Christians Together in Kenmare will have an Advent Bible study on Wednesdays 30th November, 7th & 14th December. These will be led by leaders within the three main churches in Kenmare. They begin at 10am with coffee and will finish by noon.

In Killarney on Fridays during December there will be an Advent themed bible study with Holy Communion at 11am followed by lunch at noon. Saturday 10th December, a Christmas Fair in aid of the Women's refuge centre.

The annual Carols by Candlelight is planned for Wednesday 21st December at 7.30pm in Killarney

The Lighthouse, Millstreet, will have a Christmas service on Christmas eve at 6.30pm.

Kenmare and Killarney will have a service on Christmas Day.

Watchnight service on 31st December at 11.15pm preceded by a party from 9.15pm in Killarney

The annual Covenant Services will take place on 1st January in Killarney and Millstreet and on 8th January in Kenmare.

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit

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

SUNDAY SERVICES:

10:00am – Borrisokane
11:30am – Cloughjordan on 1st & 2nd Sunday's
10:15am – Cloughjordan on 3rd, 4th, & 5th Sunday's
11:45am – Roscrea
7:00pm – Shinrone

As we enter the season of Advent, it is good to keep counting our blessings here on the circuit. We give thanks to God for the birth of Sophia Rose Hastings, daughter of Michael and Fiona Hastings, who reside in Dublin. Proud grandparents are Ivan and Lynda Hastings and proud great-grandmother is Bertha Hastings all from Roscrea.

We also congratulate Fayth Armitage and Alex Fullarton on their wedding on 12th November in Borrisokane Methodist Church. We wish them God's richest blessings as they embark on this new phase of life's journey as husband and wife. Fayth is the daughter of Ronnie and Mary Armitage from Borrisokane. Fayth and Alex will reside in London.

We rejoice over the baptism of Arya Hannon, who is the infant daughter of Aoife (nee Christie) and Eugene Hannon of Roscrea. She was welcomed into the church on Sunday 30th October 2016.

As our winter nights get longer and the darkness seems to get blacker, let us continue counting our blessings. God has sent a gift for all of creation. This gift is a blessing; this gift is for our dark times; this gift is for our sunny days; this gift is the One who will never leave us and who will settle in right beside us when we are lonely or feel left out; this gift is the One who loves our souls unconditionally and will never forsake us. This gift is for you and me. Will we receive this gift? And will we share this gift? I hope we answer "Yes!" to both! You're invited to join us for our special events and services as we celebrate God's gift to the world, his son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Christmas Carol Service in Roscrea: Monday 12th December at 8pm (with Roscrea Community Choir)

"Christmas Sharing" – Come and see our decorated church & enjoy a cup of hot tea and a mince pie in Cloughjordan: Saturday 17th December from 10am-2pm/Donations for Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin for the homeless. Christmas Concert in Cloughjordan: Saturday 17th December at 5pm; the new Cloughjordan Female Choir will offer a performance of sacred and secular Christmas songs. All are welcome. Donations for charity.

Christmas Carol Service in Cloughjordan: Sunday 18 December at 7:30pm (with Cloughjordan Ecumenical Community Choir)

Blue Christmas Ecumenical Service in Roscrea: Wednesday 21st Dec. at 8pm. This service is for all folks who find Christmastime a difficult time and do not necessarily want to join in with all the happy festivities. Venue to be determined. Please contact Rev. Shannon for more details.

Christmas Eve Holy Communion Service: Saturday 24 Dec. in Shinrone at 9:30pm

Christmas Morning Services: Sunday 25th December at Borrisokane at 8:30am, Cloughjordan at 9:15am, and Roscrea at 10:30am

New Year's Eve Watch Night Service: Saturday 31st December at Shinrone at 11:15pm

Family Christian Unity Service : Saturday 21st January at 3pm at Abbey Hall, Roscrea.

May God's gift of his Son brighten the winter's darkness and warm our hearts. May you have a very, merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

With Christ's love,
~ Rev. Shannon

ST. CRONAN'S YOUTH CLUB – This youth club will have their annual Christmas dinner party on Saturday 17th December from 7-9pm in Roscrea Methodist Church Hall. Please contact Rosie Gee at 086 1973311 with any questions.

ST. CRONAN'S BOYS' BRIGADE –Our Company will meet once in December on Friday 9th December in Roscrea Methodist Church Hall from 7-8:15pm. It will be a fun night making Christmas crafts.

MWI – CLOUGHJORDAN/BORRISOKANE – All ladies are welcome to the next meeting on Tuesday 20th December in Borrisokane at 8pm with guest speaker, Gillian Kingston, District President of the MWI.

JOINT COI AND METHODIST 4 WEEK ADVENT BIBLE STUDY began on Wednesday 23 November at 8pm in Rev. Terry Mitchell's Rectory in Cloughjordan. All are welcome!

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE – For many people, Christmas is not a happy time. Many are living with difficult situations such as dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations. These life circumstances can make festive parties painful for many people in our congregations and communities. Increasing numbers of churches are creating sacred space for people living through dark times. Such services are reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope. Please join us for an ecumenical Blue Christmas Service on Wednesday 21 December at 8pm in Roscrea. Venue is still to be determined. Please contact Rev. Shannon for more details.

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Christian Aid Appeal - Light the Way for a displaced family this Christmas

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light' – Isaiah 9:2

In a few weeks, families, friends and churches will come together over Christmas to celebrate Jesus, the light who came into the world. Many of us fill our homes with light and laughter, family and friends. But for millions who are fleeing from conflict, a joyful home is a distant memory. More than 65 million people cannot be at home for Christmas this year. They have been forced out by the darkness of violence and fear, and are searching for safety and refuge.

In war-torn Syria, newlyweds Joudy and Mhealden were forced to flee just two weeks after they got married – they are now in Serbia. They joined millions of desperate people escaping conflict and violence in Iraq, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia, resulting in a large-scale movement of refugees within Europe.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Georgette and her family had been living in an area that had constant attacks from armed groups. She and her three-month-old son, Pierre, were captured and taken far away. What Georgette had to endure during that time is unimaginable. She managed to escape with Pierre after four days, running through the woods to safety. After a desperate hunt, Georgette found her children staying with a 'host' family. They were overjoyed to be reunited but they could not return home and had no money or possessions. It was only thanks to generous people like you that we could help them.

Please help light the way to a brighter future and bring hope to thousands of displaced families living in the darkness of conflict and fear this Christmas.

Support Christian Aid's 'Light the Way' Christmas appeal and help raise funds to provide displaced and refugee families with essentials such as clothes, boots, hygiene kits and food.

€6 could give an essential set of clothes to a person fleeing violence, like Georgette, in the DRC.

€3.50 could provide refugees in Serbia, like Joudy and Mhealden, with a full nutritious meal.

€13 could supply a week's worth of hygiene essentials to a family of five

€24 could provide a basic set of clothes and shoes.

For more information, visit christianaid.ie/christmas or call 028 9064 8133 or 01 496 7040.

You can also bring Christmas joy to refugee families by buying Present Aid Christmas gifts for your loved ones. Choose from a selection of great gifts at presentaid.ie.



Georgette in the DRC



Joudy & Mhealden in Serbia

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No Room? On the Contrary. Ven John Barton considers the Christmas story

All over the world, doors are being slammed shut this Christmas. The closure of the Calais Jungle in the Autumn, which dispersed thousands of asylum seekers and would-be immigrants, brought into sharp focus the story of Joseph and the pregnant teenager Mary, for whom there was no room in the Bethlehem Inn. Vast numbers of Christians forced to flee from their ancient homelands in Syria and Iraq today mirror the Holy Family's escape into Egypt. Every time yet another infant dies violently, it will be a reminder of the first century massacre of babies in the Bethlehem region.

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests" and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled,
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not*

*The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, you men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.*

The angels' goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God's all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven's doors are ever-open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: "On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it."

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God's kingdom is home for every race: "I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He reassured those anxious about the future: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms..."

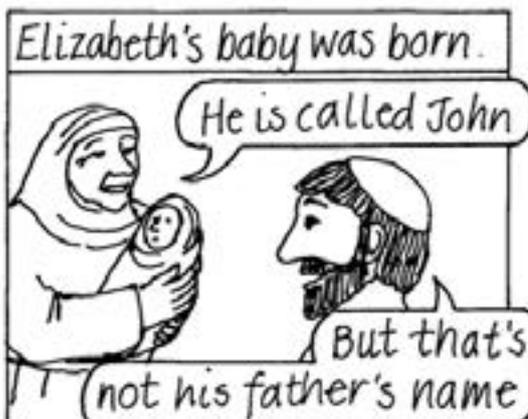
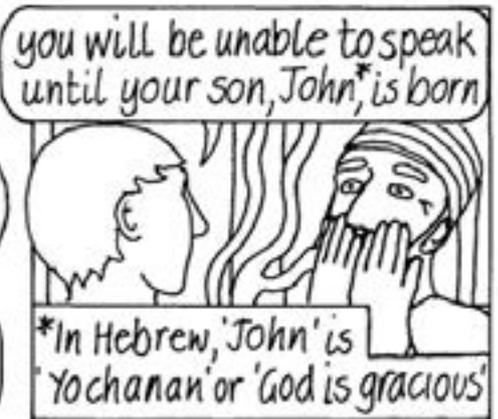
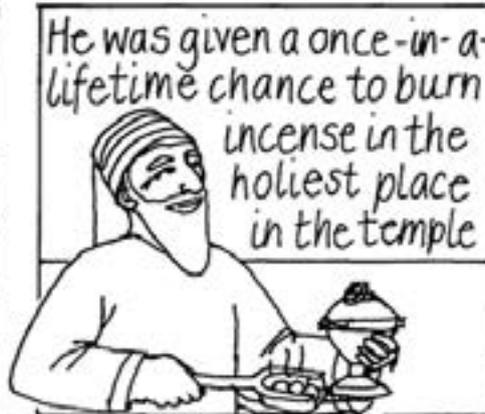
No room? Don't you believe it!

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke ch.1 verses 1-25 & 57-80

The Romans had invaded Israel and still ruled it. Zechariah and Elizabeth were an old childless couple living in the hill country.



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North Circular Road, Limerick

Telephone: (061) 451447 / 451400 Fax: (061) 455333

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