



# NEWSLINK

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

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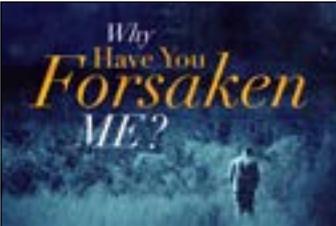
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**Castletown Church, Pallaskenry, Co Limerick  
in the Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes  
(photo: Patrick Comerford)**



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# Bishop Kenneth writes – a Lent Challenge!

As a child I was always very careful about my words during Lent. Like everyone else I gave up sweets for Lent, but that didn't mean I couldn't take sweets when offered. I always took the sweets during Lent, kept them in a shoebox, ready for a feast on Easter Day. There were two days off during Lent, St Patrick's Day and Mother's Day, when I could indulge myself in the hoard of sweets!

Our observance of Lent has changed. Some years ago Lent was the time when Bible Studies or a series of Lent Talks were organised in the parish, and happily that still continues in many parishes in the diocese.

As part of our observance of Lent this year, I'm posing a Lent Challenge to each and every one of you! The Challenge is to commit yourself to a short act of prayer and Bible Reading every weekday during Lent (Monday to Saturday).

Elsewhere in Newslink you will find a short act of worship (based on Morning Prayer) and a list of daily Bible readings and Collects for each week, beginning on Ash Wednesday (1st March). The readings for March will be in the next issue of Newslink.

Daily prayer and Bible reading has been part of the church's life since the earliest time of the apostles. So are you up for the challenge? A few minutes every day, anytime of the day or evening, quietly by yourself. And if you keep the challenge you can reward yourself with some sweets on Easter Day!!

We value and celebrate the important ministry of our Diocesan Lay Readers who contribute so much to our worshipping life. This month we will commission two new Readers – Mrs Norma-Jean Carney (Birr) and Mr Jerome Phair (Clonfert) at a special Evensong in St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 19th February at 5.00 p.m. Do please note the date in your diary and support them with your prayers and presence if possible. At the same service Dr Steven Ellis, a diocesan Lay Reader in the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry,

who often serves in Drumcliffe (Ennis) parish and elsewhere in the diocese, will be commissioned for this diocese.

The diocesan report "Forward Together" recommended that we have a Diocesan Guild of Lay Readers, and this has been warmly welcomed by our Readers and they have elected Mrs Audrey Clarke-Gordon as their chair. At the same service we will inaugurate that Guild.

Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry will be the preacher. I hope to see many of you there to celebrate this important ministry in our diocese.

With all good wishes

+Kenneth

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## St Matthias the Apostle - remembered on 24th February

Have you ever been in the position where someone is desperately needed – and you fit the bill perfectly? It is almost as if all your miscellaneous qualifications that never made much sense before now make PERFECT sense. And you sense that you have been chosen by God for the task....

If so, then Matthias is definitely the patron saint for you! Matthias came into the picture shortly after the suicide of Judas. The early church was missing an apostle, and so the remaining 11 apostles prayed for guidance on who to choose as a replacement for this key role.

The qualifications for the job were specialised: the person had to have been a follower of Christ from his Baptism to his Ascension, and a witness of the Resurrection. There were two possibilities: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. How to choose?

Again, Matthias' experience may mirror yours: the decision was out of his hands, and up to others. In this case, the apostles drew straws – and the 'lot' fell to Matthias. He had been chosen to replace Judas! The tragedy of Judas' betrayal had led to an opportunity for service by Matthias – and he was well prepared for the task. Are you prepared for any task that God might suddenly open before you?

Like the other apostles, Matthias had been in Jerusalem and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he went on to do a good job. It is said he preached the Good News first in Judea, and then maybe in Cappadocia and by the Caspian Sea. It is thought he was martyred by the axe or halberd, and his relics eventually ended up being taken to Rome by the empress Helen.

Matthias is an encouragement to us to be faithful in small things – because you never know what the future might hold!

## Diocesan Calendar

(for updates see Diocesan web site – [www.limerick.anglican.org](http://www.limerick.anglican.org))

**Wed 8th February, 8pm** Mission Evening – Overseas Humanitarian Aid Work & Christianity, with John Reid, Shinrone, at Cloughjordan Parish Hall

**Sun 19th February, 5pm** Sung Evensong with Diocesan Reader Commissioning & Inauguration of the Diocesan Guild of Readers, St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

**Sun 12th Feb, 7.30pm** Methodist District Global Vision Worship, Roscrea Methodist Church

**Sat 25th Feb, 8pm** National Chamber Choir & Irish Chamber Orchestra in concert, St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

**Wed 1st March** Ash Wednesday – Lent begins

**Sat 1st April** GFS Diocesan Service & Prize Day, Borrisokane Church

## Newslink Subscribers

We thank those who have renewed their subscriptions. Those who have not, please do so as soon as possible.

# Editorial - What a difference a year makes...

This time last year, I felt optimistic for the future of our country and the world. The Paris agreement seemed to offer a chance to slow, even reverse, the climate change which so threatens the delicate web of life on earth, including the lives of our children and grandchildren. With falling unemployment and returning economic growth it seemed Ireland was emerging from the pain of the great recession, even if many had yet to feel the benefit, and Irish people still unfairly bore the cost of bailing out bank debts to bold-holders.

Now, most if not all of us feel fearful for the future.

The British people voted narrowly last June to withdraw from the European Union, the British political system is in melt down, and the United Kingdom itself is in question. Prime Minister Theresa May has just confirmed that the UK will leave the single market, and probably the customs union. The likely result is tariffs on trade between the Republic and Britain including Northern Ireland, which will severely damage the Irish economy, and require a return to border controls between North and South. Things will be more complicated for the Church of Ireland and for those, like me, with a foot either side of the Irish Sea. I also grieve for the end of the dream of ever deepening union between the peoples of Europe, shared by so many.

Elected in November, by a majority of the electoral college but a minority of the popular vote, Donald Trump has just been inaugurated as President of the USA. He has begun his term by stuffing his cabinet with billionaires like himself, attacking the press and antagonising his security services. It is quite uncertain how he will follow through on his wild campaign promises, but it looks as if the world is in for a bumpy ride. Will he withdraw from the Paris agreement? Will he tear up the trade agreements underpinning global trade? Will he dump the EU and NATO, and ally himself with Russia against China? Shades of George Orwell's 1984...

There is nothing new in bad news, uncertainty and fear of course. Jesus knew all about it and reassures us (Matthew: 24:3-14):

*'You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs... But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations.'*

We would do well to reflect on Jesus's words. Whatever tribulations may befall us, it is our Christian duty to stand up for the values of God's kingdom, to proclaim the good news. By enduring we will be saved. We must speak truth to power, not disengage from the world of politics and economics. And we must act in Christian hope, not fear.

God bless, Joc Sanders

# Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe Et 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](http://www.limerick.anglican.org).

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

## Editor

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

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

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## Deadlines

The next issue will be for March 2017, published for Sunday 5th March 2017.

**All material must reach the Editor by Friday 17th January 2017 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.**

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

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## NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2017

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	10 x Colour	10 x B&W	Colour	B&W
Full Page	1193	1069	154	143
Half Page	596	534	77	71
Quarter Page	299	268	39	36
Eighth Page	149	133	19	18

# Prayer Corner

## Partners in Prayer - February 2017

Each Sunday in February

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

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

**5th February, 4th Sunday before Lent, Proper 0, Green**

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.

**12th February, 3rd Sunday before Lent, Proper 1, Green**

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Lusaka, Zambia and The Rt Revd David Njovu, Bishop of Lusaka.

Diocese: For the Diocesan Property Committee, Glebe Wardens and all charged with responsibility for the care and maintenance of cathedrals, churches, rectories and other church property, that their work may be blessed.

**19th February, 2nd Sunday before Lent, Green**

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Mahajanga, Madagascar and Rt Revd Jean Claude Andrianjafimanana, Bishop of Mahajanga.

Diocese: For Mrs Norma-Jean Carney, Mr Jerome Phair and Dr Steven Ellis, to be commissioned as Diocesan Readers in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick at 5pm this Sunday, that their ministry among us may be blessed.

**26th February, Last Sunday before Lent (Transfiguration Sunday), Green or White**

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Malek, Sudan and Rt Revd Peter Joh Mayom, Bishop of Malek.

Diocese: For the Long Term Church Committee and all those working to implement the findings of our Diocesan Review Report 'Forward Together', that the Holy Spirit may guide their work.

**1st March, Ash Wednesday (Lent begins), Violet**

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Mandalay, Myanmar and Rt Revd David Nyi Nyi Naing, Bishop of Mandalay.

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

**5th March, 1st Sunday in Lent, Violet**

Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Derry & Raphoe and Bishop Kenneth Good.

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

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Marathwada, North India and Rt Revd Madhukar Kasab, Bishop of Marathwada.

Diocese: For those committing themselves to Bishop Kenneth's Lent Challenge with a short act of prayer and Bible reading every weekday during Lent.

## Candlemas 2 February (Luke 2:22-40)

February snowdrops we welcome you!

Candlemas Bells,  
winter's half-way markers,  
symbols of hope and light to come,  
creation's reminders of the Creator  
revealed in the child in Simeon's arms.

Jesus -  
fulfilment of God's promise  
to save and illuminate.

Jesus -  
who overcame darkness and death  
to live for us and in us.

At the snowdrops' prompting,  
Lord Jesus, we welcome you afresh,  
Hope and Light in person.



By Daphne Kitching

## Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer - Retreats in June 2017

The Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer, Ireland, has organised two Retreats at The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Braemor Park, Chuchtown, Dublin 14, next June. The Witness will be Carol Casey.

- The first Retreat will be the weekend Friday 16th - Sunday 18th June, beginning at 6pm on Friday and concluding at 3pm on Sunday.
- The second Retreat will be Monday 19th - Wednesday 21st, beginning at 6pm on Monday and concluding after Lunch on Wednesday.

Members of all Churches, lay and ordained, are welcome to attend these Retreats. Silence is observed.

The Purpose of The Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer is to encourage silent and contemplative prayer according to the method and pattern which has been learnt from the writings and example of its founder, Robert Coulson. Where two or three are gathered together, the Lord is in their midst, and the work is to hear, to receive and to do the Word of God; in this way the Word is incarnated in us. The important attitude is that of Listening to God or to Jesus speaking.

Anyone interested in attending one of the Retreats should contact The Revd. J. Leslie Crampton: Tel 053-9232589; Email [cramptonjl41@gmail.com](mailto:cramptonjl41@gmail.com) 41 Beech Ave. The Paddock, Enniscorthy, Co. WEXFORD. Y21 Y6H9.

**Above all,  
trust in the slow  
work of God.**

- Teilhard de Chardin



# Bishop Kenneth's Lent Challenge

The Challenge is to use a form of daily prayer every weekday during Lent. An Order for Daily Prayer, together with daily Readings and Collects is provided. Find a quiet time each day in a comfortable chair to pray and to read a Bible reading, either alone or with someone else. It should take about 15 minutes. You will need a Bible.

## AN ORDER FOR DAILY PRAYER

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4.24).

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Psalm 95.1-5

O come let us sing out to the Lord;  
Let us shout in triumph to the rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before his face with thanksgiving  
And cry out to him joyfully in psalms.  
For the Lord is a great God  
And a great king above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth  
And the peaks of the mountains are his also.  
The sea is his and he made it,  
His hands moulded dry land.

### A Bible Reading (see Daily Readings)

Pause for Reflection on the reading.

### Canticle (Te Deum Part 2)

You, Christ, are the king of glory,  
The eternal Son of the Father.  
When you took our flesh to set us free,  
You humbly chose the Virgin's womb.  
You overcame the sting of death  
And opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
You are seated at God's right hand in glory:  
We believe that you will come to be our judge.  
Come then, Lord, and help your people,  
Bought with the price of your own blood,  
And bring us with your saints  
To glory everlasting.

### Prayers: *For Family and Friends*

*For the Church*

*For the World*

*For those who are sick or in need*

### Collect of the Day (See Collects)

### The Lord's Prayer

**The Ending:** The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen

## Week 1 (Collect)

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made  
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:  
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts  
that we, worthily lamenting our sins  
and acknowledging our wretchedness,  
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
perfect remission and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Readings:

Wednesday 1st March.	Matt 6: 1 - 6, 16 - 21
Thursday 2nd March.	John 1: 29 - 34
Friday 3rd March.	John 1: 35 - 42
Saturday 4th March.	John 1: 43 - 51

## Week 2 (Collect)

Almighty God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,  
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:  
Give us grace to discipline ourselves  
in obedience to your Spirit;  
and, as you know our weakness,  
so may we know your power to save;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Readings:

Monday 6th March.	John 2: 1 - 12
Tuesday 7th March.	John 2: 13 - 22
Wednesday 8th March.	John 2: 23 - 3: 15
Thursday 9th March.	John 3: 16 - 21
Friday 10th March.	John 3: 22 - 36
Saturday 11th March.	John 4: 1 - 26

(More Collects and Readings in next month's Newslink)

# A View from the Pew - Journeying together into God's future

by Salters Sterling



Handel's Messiah was a spectacular way to end the Bi-Centenary celebrations of and in St. Brendan's, Birr. The view from the pew in the gallery was of a packed ground floor of the Church. In addition to the Guinness Choir and their orchestra who together numbered 105 there was an audience of some 430. So more than 500 persons in a church which apart from funerals and high days and holy days has only normally around 40 present. It

was a challenge to start to grow our congregation again. But how, you ask. The answer is where we left off in our last View from the Pew, to lay hold of the enlightenment and determination which we find in Anna and Simeon as we begin the process of reflecting on and finding the appropriate response to the wealth of issues raised in Forward Together.

In Birr we, the Select Vestry, received the Report in October and began a general consideration of its contents in later November and we have continued that consideration at our January meeting. Our intention is to respond positively to those sections of the Report which seem to us to relate most immediately to our experience as a Parish seeking to discover God's will for us and to live out that will. Already changes are being put in place in which pre-confirmation and post-confirmation young people begin to participate actively in the Celebration of Holy Communion. They are part of the procession of light for the reading of the Gospel. They help with the setting and clearing of the Table. They bring forward the Bread and Wine at the beginning of the Offertory. In so ordering things we are hoping that there will be a seamless transition between Sunday School, Confirmation and adult membership of the worshipping community and as a result our congregational life will achieve a profile of all generations rather than exhibiting the lost generation gap as is the current situation in our own and so many other Parishes.

It would be presumptuous to go much further into where our consideration of Forward Together has taken us in Birr and it would break the confidence of the Select Vestry. Nevertheless it may be of some value to others to indicate some of the directions our discussion has taken. Ministry in the context of Tourism has caught our imagination and there is considerable enthusiasm to open the Church to Tourist Visitors during Birr Vintage Week and Heritage Week. To open thus would be to revive a practice of some years ago and would, in addition, respond to the superb sermon delivered by Archbishop Clarke at our Bi-Centenary Eucharist when he designated the importance of church buildings as representing Shrine, Symbol and space for Seeking God. We are also considering having information sessions on the design, building and decoration of the church during these two weeks.

Reflecting on this tourism possibility has led us to consider two other closely related ideas. For what, in addition to worship, can our church be used. We have discovered that it is an ideal concert venue. So the question is, have we the physical stamina and organising ability to develop an annual series of events that make use of its capacity and its acoustics and which will complement the existing cultural offerings in the town and district?

Alongside this is a developing desire to learn more about our Christian Roots in Ireland. We have become aware of the wealth of history encompassed within our united dioceses particularly in parts from which in large measure the Church of Ireland has disappeared and yet within which are centres where Christian work and worship was alive and flourishing and associated with Anglicanism post the Reformation. Can understanding our history deepen our faith and enrich our ecumenical understanding?

Vestry meetings have become occasions of much more purposeful exchanges and that is in itself renewing. We have a much longer agenda to work through and it is our intention to prioritise our endeavours so that we roll out a programme of what we think we can successfully manage rather than biting off more than we can successfully chew. So watch this space and create your own journeys into God's Future.

working away at their Crafts. We meet at the Swimming Pool at Roscrea Leisure Centre on 10th & 17th February to commence the Swimming Badge. The Pool are supplying an instructor that will take 8 years and under for 1/2 hour coaching followed by 8 + for 1/2 hour. Each girl will have the opportunity for 1/2 hour leisurely swim also.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Craft Judging

Diocesan Craft Judging will take place 18th March in the Methodist Hall, Cloughjordan.

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.

### 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 in held in Borrisokane

## Diocesan Organisations

### Girls Friendly Society

#### NENAGH BRANCH

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

Bible Study for Competition is now complete and the Girls are

Church so GFS returns 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. 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.

Camp Meeting will take place on 11th May in the Rectory, Birr at 8pm. All leaders attending camp are welcome to attend.

**CAMP**

Diocesan Camp has been confirmed to take place 23-25 June in Bandon. Further details to follow.

**UPCOMING DUBLIN MEETINGS**

Sat 4 Feb            Procedures Meeting Oak House 10.45 a.m.  
 Sat 18th Feb        Central Council Meeting Oak House 11.00 a.m.

At Christmas we made timber snowmen which the boys loved hammering and sticking - they were so proud they even posed for a picture! We are back on February 10th for another fun filled term, Wishing you all a happy new year and look forward to seeing you all.



*Roscrea boys with their snowmen*



*'A Star is Born' - GFS Christmas Tree at the Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival*

**Boys' Brigade**



**ROSCREA 1ST COMPANY**

Our first term back saw loads of group activities, a lot of new faces and lots of fun. Our junior group took part in Roll 'n Bowl regional activity in October. The Anchors had their night in early November. We had a beautiful enrollment service where all boys received an enrolment certificate. All family members were invited to attend with light refreshments after in the Methodist Hall. Many thanks to our chaplain Rev Shannon Delaureal for all her hard work .



*Library Tree and Boys' Brigade Tree.*

**Mothers' Union** Mothers UNION  
Christian care for families

**LIMERICK CITY BRANCH**

This Christmas the Limerick City Branch put out it's usual appeal for items for their hamper and we were absolutely amazed at the response! We were able to fill two large hampers, one for St. Patrick's Men's Hostel and one for Thomond House Women's Hostel, and we were also able to wrap up 25 individual gifts for the women to receive on Christmas Day. The thank you letter we received from Thomond House states *"You probably don't realise how much your gifts are appreciated, but believe me we are so grateful to be able to make Christmas special as it should be for everyone who comes through our door".*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who supported us this year, and indeed in previous years. It makes such a difference to those who, for whatever reason, have no permanent home of their own and who rely on these facilities.



*Some of the items donated for the Limerick City Branch annual hamper appeal.*

## ADAPT SERVICES - A WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S REFUGE

Following your very generous donations from our Vigil raising awareness on Gender Based Violence in St. Brendan's Church in Birr in November I received this lovely thank you letter from Adapt Services, a Women and Children's Refuge. Again, a huge thank you to all who attended and donated. Lucy Kavanagh, DP



where we spent some time in the pool, and on the water slides. Next up we headed to Jumpzone (an indoor trampolining park), where we had a good time bouncing off the walls and playing dodge ball. From there we travelled to Kylemore for some fast paced karting on a great indoor track. A quick stop at McDonald's for a bite to eat, and then we headed on to our final stop of the night, Funderland at the RDS. Here we went ice skating on the outdoor rink, before splitting into groups and enjoying the thrill of some of the rides. There was just time to buy a hot chocolate, before we headed home, after a fantastic fun filled day.



*Dodgeball @ Jumpzone on Day trip to Dublin*



*Happy faces on Mega Day Trip to Dublin*



*The Gang at Funderland on Mega Day Trip to Dublin*

## United Diocesan Youth Council

### PAST EVENTS

#### Annual Christmas Dinner Dance (Oscar Egbulam – Limerick)

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> of November UDYC started off the Christmas season with some Christmas dinner and an evening of dance. After a festive feast the fundraising raffle was held. This was followed by a disco by DJ Dave where people danced into the early morning. It was a night enjoyed by all who were present.

#### Fundraising Draw

Very many thanks to very many people that assisted by selling and buying tickets for UDYC fundraising draw. The draw was once again a successful fundraising venture for Youth Council. The winners were as follows: 1st Prize €150 – Ailish Cleary (Nenagh, Co. Tipperary), 2nd Prize Euro Monospace 100 – Sam Wilson (Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary), 3rd Prize Euro Monospace 50 – Robert Millar (Quin, Co. Clare). We congratulate our winners and do express our sincere thanks to Robert for donating his prize back to Youth Council.

#### Mega Christmas Day Trip to Dublin (Laura Cooke – Kilpeacon)

A great day was had by all at the day trip to Dublin this year, when 39 of us headed off bright and early on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> of December. First stop was the National Aquatic Centre to wake us up,

### FUTURE EVENTS

The committee met recently to bring together plans for 2017 programme of events and we look forward to sharing plans in the very near future but at the time of Newlink deadline we were not in a position to confirm for definite our plans.

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](mailto:udyc@limerick.anglican.org) or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month,  
Sophia  
Mobile: 087 1339996

# Diocesan Board of Mission

*Church of Ireland*  
LIMERICK AND KILLALOE  
DIOCESAN BOARD OF MISSION  
\*\*\*\*\*

AN INVITATION TO A MISSION EVENING

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

IN

CLOUGHJORDAN PARISH HALL

at 8.00 P.M.

**OVERSEAS HUMANITARIAN  
AID WORK & CHRISTIANITY**  
*(a personal perspective  
from an aid worker).*

**SPEAKER: John Reid, Shinrone**

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

Refreshments will be served after the meeting

One of the highlights of the school year is our Christmas party when each classroom puts on a play or musical. This year families and friends were entertained by three great mini-productions, with wonderful performances from all the pupils. The Infants entertained us with 'Oops a Daisy Angel' and although some of the young actors had been sick, no-one would have guessed.



*Some of the angels prepare for their performance*

Pupils from 1st 2nd and 3rd classes gave us a great show with 'Snow White' and finally 4th 5th and 6th classes performed 'Hoodwinked', a musical version of Robin Hood.



*On stage in Adare at Christmas*

## SCHOOL NEWS

### St. Nicholas' National School, Adare

As usual, December proved to be a very busy month in school. It began with lots of rehearsals for our Christmas plays and ended with some wonderful performances. At the end of November we said good-bye to Mrs Emma Doherty, who had been teaching in the Infant classroom since September, and we wished her well in her new job as assistant teacher in St. John's N.S. Shannon. Ms Katie Lordan stepped in for December and just before the holidays Ms Trish O'Shea was appointed to teach in the classroom until the end of June.

During December the pupils, teachers and parents spent an evening carol-singing in the Crescent Shopping Centre and we also performed at the Live Crib in Adare. Pupils also sang "I Will Rejoice" at the carol service in St. Nicholas' Church on Sunday 18th December.



*The Wise Men are ready for the stage*

Many thanks to all the teachers for their hard work in preparing the pupils for the stage and to Michael Ramendik who filmed the event. The Parents' Association committee prepared and served the lovely refreshments and later in the afternoon we had a visit from Santa who brought some large sacks of gifts with him, much to the delight of all assembled in the hall.

We were delighted to hear the good news that Ms Brown had a baby boy just after Christmas. We look forward to meeting Danny when he is a little older.

School re-opened on Monday 9th January and since then pupils in 4th to 6th classes have been practising for a spikeball tournament which takes place in Villiers later this month. We welcomed Tony Dunne back to school again this year as he begins coaching in football and hurling skills.

For the next six weeks some pupils will take part in sewing classes as an after school activity and chess club resumes in a few weeks' time.

The school will hold an open afternoon on Wednesday 1st March at 4.00pm. Enrolment forms and school booklets are available from the school secretary.

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

It was wonderful to come back to school in January to see the fruits of our autumn planting. The green shoots have peeped above ground early, no doubt as a result of the unseasonably mild winter. It will be interesting for the students to assess the effects of the season on their continuing projects related to Biodiversity for the Green Flag award.

We have plenty of fun and work ahead of us this term. Our coaching programme continues with Dance Class, run by Claire Neelin. We have a variety of coaching programmes to take place between now and the end of the year.

This is also the term for festivals and celebrations with St. Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, St Brigid's Day, Pancake Tuesday, Lent and St. Patrick's Day in close succession. Each celebration brings its own unique stories, dances or songs, and provide a rich source of learning for children.

We extend a warm welcome to our new students Jessica and Erika Murphy. We hope you'll be very happy in our school.

We are delighted to extend hearty congratulations to Mrs Slattery and her husband, Shane, on the birth of their baby girl in December. Best wishes to you both.

In further good news, we welcomed Mrs Maher back to school after her maternity leave. Tá fáilte romhat ar ais. Many thanks to Mrs Whiteford for her kind and inspiring leadership during this time.

## **St Michael's National School, Limerick**

In pursuit of our Active School Flag, we have been very active in school. We launched our Twelve Runs of Christmas, which involved the whole school congregating to sing our own activity version of the well-known song The Twelve Days of Christmas. We then proceeded into the park next door and according to age, everyone ran at least one lap. Many managed two! The obvious improvement in fitness levels as our days progressed, was exciting for all. In order to help maintain this increased level of fitness, we are now busy practising skipping on a daily basis in the school yard. To help enthuse everyone, we look forward to having the expertise of a specialist trainer come to St Michael's NS on January 24th.

A much-wanted item on our wish list was purchased just in time for our Christmas Assembly and carol-singing. The school bought a portable stereo system which allows us much greater flexibility, in terms of bringing music outside of the classroom. The quality of the sound enhanced the beautiful singing of which we are very proud. Our senior classes paid their annual visit to the Milk Market and entertained the many shoppers with a wide variety of carols.

January is Spike-ball time of the year for Fifth and Sixth classes so they are busy practising the skills needed to partake in a tournament in February. Spike-ball is a very inclusive game of junior Volleyball. It offers a wonderful opportunity for students to work as a team, encouraging those who sometimes are reluctant to participate in sporting activities.

We are delighted to welcome Samantha Shorten come join the school for her 4th year final Teaching Practice. She will be with us for ten weeks in several classrooms. This offers us a lovely chance to see new ideas in action.

## **St John's Parochial School, Tralee**

The School and Board of Management would like to thank Yvonne Blennerhassett for all her work, as school secretary, over the past four years. We wish her all the best for her retirement and we hope to have an opportunity to mark this occasion at the school later. We welcome Colette Price to our staff as Secretary

Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their "Trick or Treat for Temple Street" party, and brought in some beautifully wrapped shoe boxes for the Team Hope Christmas Shoe Box appeal. Many thanks to parents and pupils for these lovely presents. They were much appreciated by the children who received them at Christmas.

Many thanks to Eleanor, Janet and the parents association for organizing the Cheerios Childline breakfast. It was a lovely start to the day and the photos are on the school website.

The pupils of the Junior Classroom did some activities for Maths week. They decorated their Christmas tree and enjoyed a trip to the festive hall at the museum where they met Santa! The senior class also went to Siamsa Tire to see Fidget Feet perform Cinder and her Ellas.

The new office, multisensory room and support room are a fantastic addition to the school.

An Healthy Eating Policy has been implemented in our school. Details can be found on the school website.

The Christmas concert was a wonderful success on Sunday 18th Dec. The children enjoyed singing Christmas hymns and carols for parents, families and friends in St. John's Church. The Parents Association organised a party in Teach an tSolais afterwards where the children enjoyed a visit to Santa's Grotto.

Thanks to all who helped to collect money during our Christmas carolling. Not only did we raise funds for the school but we had great fun singing, dancing and spreading some Christmas cheer! We also performed for children from local crèches, Montessori schools, and playschools.

The senior class participated in "The Mannequin Challenge" and a video has been uploaded to the schools Twitter account.

The Parents Association organised a successful "Christmas Themed Floral Demonstration" night in November, where they raised much needed funds for the School. Well done to Eleanor, Isabelle and the rest of the Parents Association for their wonderful efforts.

## **Rathkeale No. 2 National School**

Our Christmas Concert next door in Holy Trinity Church was very well attended and a great celebration to begin the Christmas season. As well as our musical interlude the pupils were delighted to show off some of the folk dances they learned during the dance workshops.

With a slight lengthening in the evenings and the first daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops beginning to show we wait patiently for the arrival of spring. Our Green School Committee is busily planning an extension to our wild flower garden which we sowed last year. We extend our congratulations to teacher Ciara Looney on the birth of her daughter, Fiadh.

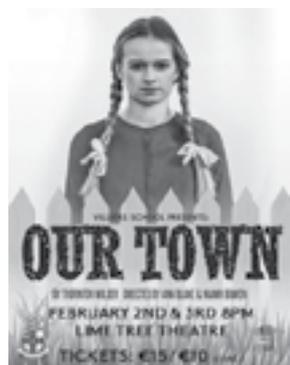
Swimming lessons have commenced in Askeaton Pool and Leisure once again, and as always are proving to be very popular amongst the pupils.

We look forward to welcoming our new priest in charge, the Rev'd Patrick Comerford on Friday 20th January

## Villiers School

### TY DRAMA – 'OUR TOWN'

Rehearsals are well underway for this year's TY Drama Production 'Our Town' which will see over 80 students take to the Lime Tree stage in a classic play by Thornton Wilder.



Two families, the Gibbs and the Webbs, living in adjacent houses, are the focus of the play. However, underlying the everyday events of their lives – marriages, births, and deaths – is a hope for something more, a transcendental experience unique to the human condition. 'Our Town' is a play in three acts that follows the lives of George and Emily as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Both heart-warming and ground-breaking,

Wilder's 'all American play' is a classic that will have the audience both laughing and crying.

Directed by Ann Blake and Niamh Bowen, Our Town will be brought to the stage by Villiers Transition Year students performing and working on all aspects of production.



*Some of the 'Our Town' cast.*

Director, Ann Blake stated, "This is a unique and wonderful opportunity for Transition Year students, who experience all aspects of production through mentorship and apprenticeship. I'm particularly excited about this year's show! I would have loved an opportunity like this when I was in Transition Year."

Co-director Niamh Bowen is equally enthused, "They are a great group to work with, this year's show is going to offer audiences a unique experience!"

### JUNIOR AND LEAVING CERTIFICATE MOCK EXAMS

Best of luck to both our Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate students who are busily preparing for their mock exams in early February. The year is flying by and we wish them well in their studies and examinations.

### TRANSITION YEAR WORK EXPERIENCE

We wish our TY's well as they head out to the workplace for two weeks after their Drama production to experience the daily and weekly responsibilities that come with the workplace. A wide variety of placements are evident from Euro Disney in Paris to local based industries.

### VILLIERS GOT TALENT

Best of luck to all participants in this year's competition. Forms 1 – 6 are represented and talents include singing, dancing, gymnastics, piano, saxophone, a teacher's band and karaoke. We look forward

to the night. Judges are Reece Creed, Mr. Griffin and Ms. Woods.

### BOYS RUGBY

Congratulations to both the senior boys and 1st year boys on their recent successes. Our seniors won the Mungret league and have now qualified for the Mungret cup. Our 1st years have just won their blitz section of the North Munster league.

### GIRLS HOCKEY

Congratulation to our junior girls who won their cup quarter final against Crescent Comprehensive 2-1. Scorers were Bea Silva and Rachel Vallely. Our senior girls fought hard and were narrowly beaten in their recent cup game against Crescent Comprehensive 2-3. Our scorers were Taine Amedeo and Robyn Stanley.

## News from the Villiers Sanctuary

The rush of life over the Christmas period has finally settled down and everyone is getting back to the rhythm of school life here in Villiers. There is always that sense of expectation and anticipation at this time of year as the mock exams are just around the corner. Our 6th formers can almost see the finish line and a new horizon stretching out in front of them and our 3rd form is about to embark on the transition from junior cycle to senior student. There is a lot of work to do in the coming months for all concerned and there can be a lot of pressure. I just want to this opportunity to encourage people to take a breath, do your best and leave the rest to God!

I had the wonderful pleasure of bringing the Community Group to the Cycle Against Suicide Student Leader Congress in the University of Limerick. The Congress focused on raising awareness of the message 'It's OK not to feel OK; and it's absolutely OK to ask for help', and promoting help-seeking behaviour in young people. This year's Congress was the biggest to date, with over 6,000 students and teachers attending over two days in UL. The Congress brings together young adults and teachers from all over the island of Ireland in an inspiring and energetic forum comprising live entertainment, discussion, celebrity guests, and much more. This year's guests included former Connaught rugby coach, Pat Lam and Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Helen McEntee. The theme for this year's congress was 'Share the Journey' and the Community Group made a highly inspirational film outlining the struggles young people face in the modern world. The Congress demonstrates in an incredibly special way the value to students of appreciating their mental well-being and highlights the importance of reaching out and asking for help. A truly worthwhile endeavour.

I have recently been caught up thinking about discipleship and the call of Jesus to come and follow him. Being called to come and see and abide in Jesus as a disciple is only the beginning of the journey, because we are very quickly told to go and be that disciple in the world. The Twelve were sent out "to proclaim the message" and we are to continue that mission today. This led to me a wonderful quote from Saint Teresa who said, 'Christ has no arms but ours; no hands, no legs but ours.' As Christ sent out the apostles then, so too today Christ invites us to use our hands and arms and legs to proclaim and live out his message. The Apostles were given a special calling, a particular vocation. But I believe that God has a purpose for every one of us, for every human life no matter what the exam results are! I am extremely blessed to be in position where my calling is to encourage young people to explore their faith and to listen for the voice of Jesus calling their name. What about you? Have you heard the voice of Jesus and if so how do you see your own calling?

Until next time,  
Blessings and peace  
Chaplain Jackie McNair

# Killaloe Diocese

## Killaloe & Stradbally Union of Parishes

*Killaloe, Castleconnell, Clonlara, Mountshannon and Tuamgraney.*

Rector & Dean: The Very Rev. Gary Paulsen

The Deanery, Abbey Road, Killaloe, Co. Clare

Tel: 061-374 779

Mob: 085-764 0533

Email: abbeydean2@gmail.com

It was a joyous time up to Christmas and beyond and a busy but pleasant time of the year in the church's calendar. Advent carols service started off the new liturgical year for us as is usually done at the Cathedral. Christmas carols at Clonlara were well attended with not a seat left in the church and our local choir under the directorship of Rhonwen Hayes led the signing and their pieces of music that they did were to their usual high standards. Thanks to Fr Pat Greed the local parish priest for his presence and for doing the final prayer and blessing with Dean Gary. Lessons and Carols took place as well at Mountshannon, Stradbally Castleconnell and Killaloe

A community carol and music afternoon was once again put together by Sadie Scanlon as we have done over the last three years. The choirs were Voices of Dergh, Killaloe Male Voice Choir, Boru Singers, The Hunka family led by Diana and Boris on stringed instruments as well as Jack Mac Partlin on the uilleann pipes. We had about a hundred people who had to stand at the back of the Cathedral for lack of seating for everyone. The retiring collection went to the local SVP. A big thank you to everyone in the community who attended and contributed in the singing. A very pleasant afternoon indeed.

The weather was reasonably good and dry for the time of year for the two weddings in December. David Madigan and Emily Gayle were married at St Flannan's Cathedral on 16 December with the reception in the Bunratty Castle Hotel. Our very good wishes to them as they embark on this new part of their life's journey. Edward Powell and Tamsin Barclay were married at All Saints Castleconnell with the reception conveniently across the road at the Castleoaks hotel; we wish them well as they make their life together in Vancouver.



*Emily Gale & David Madigan*



*Edward Powell & Tamsin Barclay*

Sophia Lefroy was baptised at the Cathedral on 18 December and our good wishes to parents Peter and Cara and both families who were well represented at the service. The Lefroy grandparents have been part of the fabric of the cathedral now for many years with John serving as Diocesan reader in the parish.

The Christmas services were as usual all well attended with visitors, family and friends. It is always nice to have our annual pilgrims who may be living elsewhere returning home and to have families all together in church. Bishop Kenneth was the celebrant and preacher at the Cathedral in Killaloe on Christmas Day. The bishop reminded us to have pauses in our life and highlighted the RTE angelus bells ringing on television at 6 in the evening, a gentle reminder to pause and to connect with mystery and ourselves.

On New Year's Eve we gathered in the Cathedral for prayers thanking God for the past year and asking God's blessing on the year ahead. We all then make our way up to the bell tower and Bryan Brislane rang in the New Year with the Westminster Chime and then after that everyone had a go ringing the bells. This year we had about 25 people attend and ring. It is also a time that the locals who would not attend church services wander into the cathedral and up the tower. The bells ringing across Killaloe reminds all that we are here and saying a prayer.

## 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](http://www.facebook.com/BirrGroupOfParishes)

### MESSIAH CONCERT

On Saturday, 10th December, our Bicentenary celebrations in Birr concluded with a beautiful and inspiring performance of Handel's Messiah by the Guinness Choir and Orchestra, with the Birr Choral Society joining in the 'Hallelujah Chorus'. With some 500 people in attendance (including choir and orchestra) this was a momentous occasion for the parish and the community. Many thanks to all who contributed in so many ways to this evening, and to the Bicentenary year.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Best wishes to Andrew and Deirdre Gill, on the birth of their daughter, Saoirse, granddaughter for Whitten and Linda Gill; and to Dermot and Lorraine Burke on the birth of their son, Cian, a brother for Ava, and grandson for Henry and Anne Gill.

### BAPTISMS

On the 29th of December, Toby James Gill, son of Bronwyn and David Gill, and grandson of Whitten and Linda, was baptized in Dorrha Church by Archdeacon Carney. On the 14th of January, Ruby Gill, daughter of Roy and Claire Gill, and granddaughter of Henry and Anne Gill, was baptized in Dorrha Church by the Revd Ruth Gill. Congratulations to both families.



*Canon Ruth Gill, Roy and Claire Gill with their daughter Ruby, and Godparents, Deirdre and David Gill.*

#### PRAYERS

We keep Henry Gill and Betty Delahunty in our prayers after recent illnesses, and Pat Alexander after a motor vehicle accident.

#### CONDOLENCES

Sincere condolences to Nancy White in Lorrha, on the death of her husband Terry; to the Revd Clodagh Yambasu, Methodist minister in Birr, on the death of her father, and to Lord Rosse on the death of his brother, Lord Snowden. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

#### MISSION EVENING

On Wednesday, 8th February, we will have another Mission Evening in Cloughjordan Parish Hall, starting at 8:00 pm. John Reid, from Lockeen Parish, will be speaking on "Overseas humanitarian aid work and Christianity; a personal perspective from an aid worker." John has been working with the aid agency 'Concern' in a number of countries around the world. All are welcome.

#### MOTHERS' UNION

The Mothers Union Dinner is on Friday 10th February in Parker's Restaurant, Riverstown. Those interested in going please contact Joan Fairbrother or Rose Harding by Sunday, 5th February.

#### COMMISSIONING

On Sunday, 19th February, in St Mary's Cathedral in Limerick, Norma-Jean Carney from Birr and Jerome Phair from Banagher will be commissioned as Diocesan Readers. At the same time, the Diocesan Guild of Lay Readers will be inaugurated. The Right Reverend Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala, and Achonry will be the preacher. All are welcome.

#### CONFIRMATION

Bishop Kenneth has advised us that the Confirmation Service will be held in Birr on Sunday, 18th June at 11:30 am. Any young people of at least 12 years old who want to confirm their Baptismal vows and make a sincere commitment to follow Jesus should contact the Archdeacon. Time and place for Confirmation classes will be announced at a later date.

### 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

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES: Christ Church Corbally 9.30 ; St. Cronan's 10.45; St.Burchin Bourney. 12.noon. St.Molua Kyle 12. noon 1st and 3rd.

FROM THE REGISTERS: We offer our deepest condolences on the death of Deirdre Luttrell to Amanda and her daughter Robyn and their family. Deirdre slipped into God's nearer presence on St. Stephen's Day 2016. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

Congratulations to Andrew and Kate Connor on the birth of Maggie , a sister for Rebecca and Harry.

Home again! Welcome home to Myra Hodgins. For the second year running Myra has spent Christmas in hospital in Dublin and long weeks both before and after Christmas too. We wish Myra a continued recovery with the hope that next December it will be a homely one.

CHRISTMAS 2016 A full slate of carol services and Christmas services were marked widely throughout the Group of Parishes. Thanks are due to Corbally parishioners who allowed an earlier start to the first celebration on Christmas Day, this helped St. Cronan's service keep to time. And to St. Burchin's people who had a later service this time bringing them into Christmas Day. To all the busy people, especially the quiet ones, whose contribution is often unknown in all four churches who contributed to decorating beautifying and tidying up afterwards: It was worth it. It encouraged our praise and thanks to God. It was all beautiful. On behalf of the witnesses: Thank you.

'HUMAN STORIES' was the title of our contribution to National Heritage week 2016. It was an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia with a floral display commemorating World War 1 and the Easter Rising 1916.

A 55 page, very colourful booklet entitled 'Human Stories' is now available which covers almost all the happenings in St.Cronan's Church during those glorious four days last August. It costs €5.00 plus postage and can be ordered from Adrian Hewson 085-1108659.

OUR OUTREACH EXPLORATIONS We took our Blue Christmas Service into the White House Pub this time. We were made most welcome there by Paul, John and Kevin. We had a back room with a cosy fire, in fact a very comfortable and intimate space in which to worship. We incorporated our healer prayer service on the night and enjoyed a cup of tea with biscuits afterwards.

Our next venture in conjunction with the newly created Roscrea Churches Together which merely formalises the excellent ecumenical yearly agenda, a little bit more, is Christian Unity Week. This year it will comprise a Family Fun Day working with Messy Church Unity Week material and rounding this and other activities up with a short act of worship based on the material offered for Christian Unity Week. All will take place in the Abbey Hall Jan 29th.

Fifth Sundays 2017 are arranged to be joint services with our Methodist friends. Fixing these dates will hopefully lessen confusion for people as to when they take place. The venue will continue to alternate. We look forward to welcoming our covenantal partners with Revd. Tom Kingston to share Candlemas with us on the first 'fifth' in January.

Special Thank you to our Newslink and Church of Ireland Gazette subscription collector and distributor Florence Reid, who appears to work effortlessly making sure the job is done. But job it is and work it must be! For making it all fall into place and keeping subscribers supplied thanks are due to Florence.

Congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Revd. Canon Patrick Comerford on his appointment as Priest-in-Charge to Rathkeale and Kilnoughtin Group of Parishes.

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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

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## CHRISTMAS

Christmas now seems but a distant memory as we enter the somewhat dreary days of January. However, Christmas was both an exciting time but also a very busy time in the Nenagh Union. For seven days between 11th and 18th of December St Mary's in Nenagh was the place to be. Yes, the now famous Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival was in full swing. Over eighty trees exhibited by schools, businesses and charitable organisations lent a festive atmosphere to the church which was bustling with people from 1pm to 7pm every day! Hundreds of people came to admire the creativity shown by the many exhibitors, to enjoy the scrumptious afternoon teas, to make new acquaintances and renew old ones. Supported by an army of parish workers the whole festival was a huge success, providing, as it did, a means of reaching out to the local community. More than one person told me that, although brought up in Nenagh, they had never been in St Mary's before, and what a lovely experience they had had. The whole venture was rounded off with a community carol service on the evening of Sunday 18th December at which the readers were drawn, not only from the three parishes of the Union, but also from the local community, represented by St Vincent de Paul, Aras Follain, members of the parish of St Mary of the Holy Rosary and Father Des Hillery PP. There was standing room only as the whole community celebrated the Nativity in word and song.



On Thursday 22nd December the children from St Mary's No2 National School came to St Mary's to hold their annual carol service as they marked the end of the school term. Clearly excited by it all, the enthusiasm of their singing and reading was infectious and everyone who came to support them, parents, grandparents and friends; everyone, left feeling ready for Christmas.

On Christmas Eve there was a Eucharist of the Nativity in Templederry at 7pm. There was a very special Christmas atmosphere as we gathered in the darkness of the countryside to celebrate the birth of Christ. Eve Mooney added to the atmosphere with a beautiful solo. What else would one sing on Christmas Eve as a solo but, 'O Holy Night! Spontaneous applause burst out as she finished her solo, from a very appreciative congregation. The traditional midnight Eucharist of the Nativity was held in St Mary's at 11pm. So many families came to the Family Service early on Christmas Day that the wardens ran out of service papers ten minutes before the service began! Oops! At 12.15pm in Killodiernan Parish Church there was a celebration of the Eucharist of the Nativity for Christmas morning, again attended by a large congregation.

*Nenagh notes continued on pg. 21*



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# Stalwart of St. Mary's Cathedral honoured

On the 27 November, Advent Sunday, at the end of the Advent Carol service in St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, Bishop Kenneth paid tribute to Peggy Carey, a stalwart of St. Mary's Cathedral for most of her life.

Peggy was presented with a large floral bouquet and a gift voucher from Limerick City Parish.

In addition, in recognition of Peggy's 77 years of unbroken service to St. Mary's Cathedral choir, Peter Barley (choir director and organist) on behalf of the choir, presented Peggy with a framed photo of the choir, in an engraved silver frame. Peggy has sung in the St. Mary's Cathedral choir since the age of 5 years!

Peggy has been honorary secretary of Limerick City Parish for most of her adult life, and honorary secretary of the Select Vestry for many years. She acts as secretary of the Leamy Board of Education and is extremely helpful and supportive to those who need grants. She is also the honorary cathedral secretary, and in that role she has an amazing, encyclopaedic memory for people and dates, addresses and telephone numbers – a veritable mine of helpful information. She also sits on the committee of Limerick Protestant Aid Society and attends all their meetings. She is treasurer of The Companions of St Mary's Cathedral music, and a member of the Friends of the Cathedral. Peggy is also long-time editor of the weekly Newsletter and is treasurer of the Restoration Projects Committee (RPC). Peggy has supported the Wednesday lunch-time concerts since their inception in 2004, looking after the money baskets, counting the takings and lodging the money to The Companions of St. Mary's Cathedral music account, as well as welcoming and looking after all who attend.

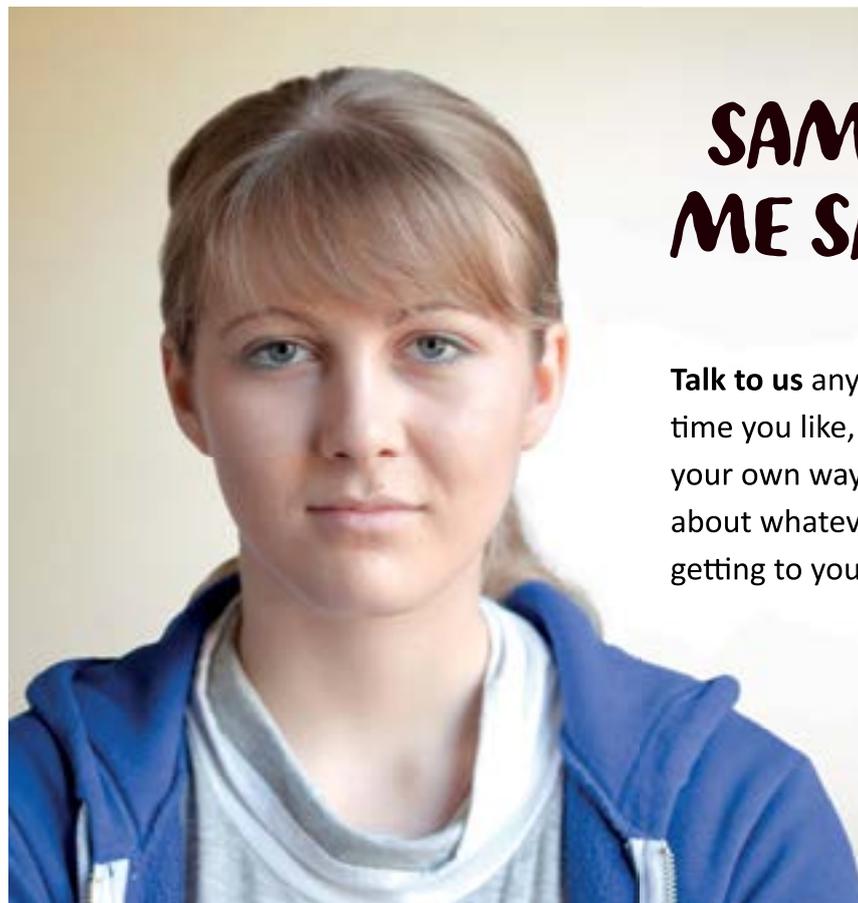
Peggy's work is always meticulous and she is never prepared to compromise on her standard of work, maintaining that she was trained in the 'old school'!

In addition to all of the above, Peggy helps innumerable people along the way, with her countless acts of kindness and thoughtfulness – supporting, encouraging and assisting in any way she can. She is an excellent ambassador for the cathedral, going out of her way to help all those who cross her path.

In all, "I have survived 9 bishops and 6 Deans!" comments Peggy wryly.



*Peggy Carey receiving her gifts, with Peter Barley and Rev Edna Wakely*



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# Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal – New Website



*Editor: The new Bishops' Appeal website at [www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org) contains all the information anyone could need about Bishops' Appeal, including the projects funded, fundraising ideas and how to donate. Do have a look at it!*

Bishops' Appeal is the Church's World Aid and Development Programme. It was set up by the Bishops of the Church of Ireland in response to the commands in the Bible to bring good news to the poor and relief to the suffering.

## AIMS

- To educate the Church at home about the needs and concerns of people in the less developed world and the causes of poverty;
- To encourage Church members to examine the reasons for the problems facing the less fortunate in the world and to consider what we can do to change conditions;
- To reach out in God's name to those who need our help;
- To encourage informed prayer and prayerful action aimed at strengthening the poor; to raise the funds needed to allow Bishops' Appeal to support development projects and alleviate the suffering caused by disasters, both natural and man-made.

Bishops' Appeal works through partner Non-Governmental Organisations and Mission Agencies to implement Christ's "Mission Statement" to feed the hungry, lift the burden of poverty from the poor and bring freedom and hope to the oppressed. It does not fund development and emergency work directly. Our partners have the local knowledge and resources to ensure that projects for which they apply for funding are of maximum benefit to the peoples and areas in which they work.

Bishops' Appeal contributes to relief of suffering in time of emergencies whether natural or man-made. However, our main concern is to support ongoing development in the fields of sustainable agriculture, health, including HIV/AIDS, and education in many parts of the world. We aim to enable people to have more control over their own lives and futures so that they are less dependent on others than they are today.

Half the world's population live on less than two dollars a day; indeed, over 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live on less than one dollar a day. It is estimated that 30,000 people die every day from poverty related diseases. The Christian Church cannot remain silent in the face of this ongoing tragedy and injustice. Bishops' Appeal is the Church of Ireland's voice calling for an end to this suffering and working with others to make a difference where it can.

+Patrick Rooke, Chair, Bishops' Appeal



*As of June 2016, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has raised €76,070 & £41,284 for the Syrian and Refugee crisis appeals*

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# MU Prayer Vigil against Gender Violence – “It’s not OK!”

By Lucy Kavanagh, Diocesan President

Members from many Mothers' Union branches in the Limerick & Killaloe Diocese came together on 26th November in St. Brendan's Church, Birr for a Prayer Vigil as part of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence and in solidarity with those who experience it. Our vigil, led by Canon Jane Galbraith and Archdeacon Wayne Carney, took the form of prayer interspersed with times of quiet, reflective music and lighting of candles. We also listened to some very powerful stories of abuse and how Mothers' Union is fighting the battle through prayer, very practical support, advocacy and campaigns. We used the bold colours of yellow and purple to highlight a bold campaign with a bold mission.

The impact of the work of Mothers' Union is wide reaching. In many dioceses, including our own, members provide women's shelters with food, toiletries and clothes. Mothers' Union is also involved in lobbying governments and policy makers at local, national and international levels.

One worldwide example is Kenya, where Mothers' Union have carried out extensive work in different communities to raise awareness and support for those who have experienced, or who are at the risk of genital mutilation. Following this work, coupled with other organisations, the Female Genital Mutilation Act outlawing the practice was introduced in Kenya.

Speaking recently, Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President said that "This is work that is at the very heart of Mothers' Union, as we hear the voices of weeping and respond. We are offering a space where we bring before God those who are suffering from simply being. It is one of the most vital pieces of outreach we can offer. There are so many lobby groups around that, having built our campaign on God's command, to love our neighbour as ourselves, the highlighting of our active praying through the Vigils is a wonderful opportunity to do this."

Lakshmi Puri – Acting Head of UN Women writes "It is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights in the world, one of the

least prosecuted crimes, and one of the greatest threats to lasting peace and development. It is time for action when up to 70 per cent of women in some countries face physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. When one in three girls in developing countries is likely to be married as a child bride; when some 140 million girls and women have suffered female genital mutilation; when millions of women and girls are trafficked in modern-day slavery; and when women's bodies are a battleground and rape is used as a tactic of war – it is time for action."

In our own Diocese last September Bishop Kenneth invited Revd Terrie Robinson, Director for Women in Church and Society in the Anglican Communion, to lead a workshop to explore the role of the Church in ensuring that our being gendered is experienced as a gift rather than a danger.

It seems like small steps and just a few drops in the ocean, but with prayer and commitment and a growing awareness of something that is all around us, but still hidden, we will make progress in the fight to end gender based violence.



*At the Prayer Vigil against Gender Violence in St Brendan's, Birr*

## Lego Church Builder

Kilnasoolagh Parish Reader Eckhart (Ecki) Wurm's hobby and skill as a Lego model builder is well known among parishioners, who enjoy his annual treat over drinks after Christmas Eve Communion.

Last Christmas his superb model of the Newmarket-on-Fergus church was not only his best yet – with a three-dimensional cross section of the inside including worshippers – it was also a source of fun. Parishioners chuckled as they discovered themselves or their pew neighbours! Even Rector Bob Hanna featured, complete with surplice and identifiable Lego beard!

Ecki, married to Cork-born Michelle, grew up with Lego in his native Bavaria. He naturally grew out of it, but rediscovered it again for his two daughters—now young women Alanna and F'ina—and caught the bug again. His loft is filled with his annual models which are all taken down and make up the household Christmas décor. 'I worked off the Legoland theme "Winter Christmas" but I noticed

their format was missing the Church, so I began to build my own design', says Ecki.



*EckiWurm with his lego model church*

# Responding to Suffering - Part 3: Transforming Lament

The 3rd and final part of the series by Rev John Godfrey

How do we as Christians respond in faith when we suffer? Over this series of articles, I have suggested that the response of faith begins by recognising that God did not want our suffering to befall us. Once we stop trying to explain our suffering as somehow being part of God's will, we can seek to believe in the goodness of God in spite of our suffering.

Our faith gives us permission to lament our suffering instead of minimising it, and to turn that lament into a complaint against God. That is a pattern which is modelled for us time and time again in the Bible's psalms of lament, in which people of faith find the courage to let out their pain and disorientation for an accusation against God, as they ask: 'Lord, why did you let this happen?'

That is something that the Gospel writers understood only too well. In Mark's Gospel, for example, the description of the increasing forsakenness which Jesus felt, on his journey from the Last Supper to the cross, is presented in a way that connects his experiences with those described in the psalms of lament.

Jesus' betrayal at the Last Supper echoes Psalm 41:9 *'Even my bosom friend, whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.'*

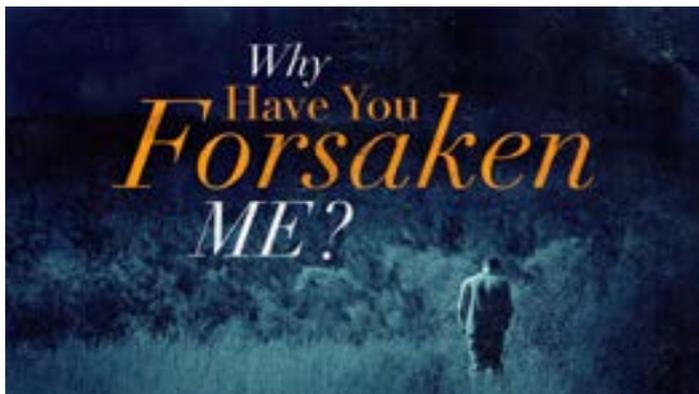
The anguish of Jesus' prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane resonates with the lament in Psalm 42:6 *'Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, and why are you so disquieted within me?'*

The injustice of Jesus' trial and the false accusations levelled against him find parallels in Psalm 37:33, Psalm 35:11, Psalm 69:4-5 and Psalm 27:12 *'false witnesses have risen up against me, and they are breathing out violence.'*

The description of Jesus' crucifixion in Mark's Gospel draws a number of direct parallels to the plight of the victim who laments in Psalm 22. Both describe God's faithful servants who watch their enemies cast lots for their clothing (Psalm 22:18); who are mocked, scorned

and taunted by their enemies for their apparently misplaced trust in God (Psalm 22:6-8); and who cry out to God in their desolation: *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* (Psalm 22:1).

The repeated allusions to the psalms of lament in Jesus' passion show us how our own experiences of suffering, which find expression in those psalms, were gathered up by Jesus in his own experience of abandonment to death by God. On the cross, Jesus uses his last breath to align his cry with all who lament: *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* His voice protests on their behalf against the experience of godforsakenness which they share. In doing so, Jesus communicates his own voluntary identification with others in their experience of godforsakenness.



It is in response to Jesus' cry of lament that the centurion at the foot of the cross declares *'Truly this man was God's Son'*. (Mark 15:39). Jesus' self-identification with those whose suffering leads them to lament the apparent absence of God, became in itself the climactic revelation of God's self-emptying love in the Incarnation.

On the cross we can say that God too voluntarily suffers, with us, the horrors of human suffering in all its dimensions. As such, Jesus' dying lament transforms the character of all human lament.

Our lament and complaint have now gained new meaning. Our lament of our own suffering now also expresses the suffering that God has already shared with us in Christ. Through Jesus' cry on the cross, our own complaint is now already aligned with God's own protest against all innocent

suffering. Our experiences of godforsakenness now also convey the assurance of God's presence with us in the very moments of forsakenness.

Recognising that Jesus has already lovingly shared those experiences with us does not make our own pain go away, but it does remove the lack of love which is the true suffering in suffering.



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# Service of Welcome in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale

The parishioners of Rathkeale and Kilnaughtin heartily welcomed Canon Patrick Comerford as their new priest-in-charge at a service in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale. The service was conducted by Bishop Kenneth Kearon and the preacher was the Most Rev. Dr John Neill retired Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough. The hymns for the occasion were specially chosen by the new priest-in-charge and the lovely church was filled with joyful singing. Patrick's appointment to this part time ministry is a great encouragement to a widely dispersed congregation, from Tarbert/Listowel to the borders of Adare parish. He will be sharing this ministry as he also undertakes a part time role as director of education throughout the diocese.



(l to r) Niall Collins TD; Cllr Adam Teskey, Chairperson Adare and Rathkeale; Most Rev. Dr. John Neill, (Preacher); Reverend Patrick Comerford; Bishop Kenneth Kearon; Cllr Stephen Keary; Patrick Donovan TD Junior Minister for Sport

Editor: The Newslink team extends a very warm welcome to Canon Patrick in his ministry among us, and to his wife Barbara.

Patrick will see through his teaching and supervision responsibilities within CITI for both residential and non-residential programmes in a part-time capacity over the remainder of this academic year and will leave CITI in the spring of 2017 to commence as Director of Education and Training in the United Dioceses in April.

Bishop John Neill reflected in his sermon on the changing role of ministry: new patterns must emerge, and one size does not fit all. Ordained priests have a vital role to play, both as enablers – discerning the gifts of others, rather than doing everything themselves, and as icons – drawing people into the mystery of faith and encounter with the divine. Patrick, as a man of the Gospel brings to his ministry wide and unusual gifts, among them profound knowledge of the Church of Ireland, Anglicanism, journalism, the Orthodox tradition, and Islam, as well as concern for the poor, marginalised and suffering.

We look forward to welcoming Patrick to the pages of Newslink in due course, and heartily recommend a visit to his prize winning blog at [www.patrickcomerford.com](http://www.patrickcomerford.com).

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Nenagh notes cont. from pg. 15



Blake Richardson & Amy Hamilton after their marriage with newly baptised Cooper

## MARRIAGE & BAPTISM

Katie Hamilton and Blake Richardson were joined in marriage in Killodiernan Church on Friday 30th December 2017, after which their baby son Cooper was baptised into the family of the Church, in a church packed with family and friends. The officiant was Rev John Marchant from the Donnybrook and Irishtown group of parishes, Katie's home parish, though her father Stuart is also an accustomed

member of the Killodiernan congregation. Blake is from New Zealand, where the new family will live. We wish the new family every blessing for their future life together.

## ADAM HODGINS

It was with great sadness that the people of the Nenagh Union learned of the death one of the pillars of Templederry Parish Church, Adam Noel Hodgins, at the beginning of December. Adam was a loyal and devoted churchman all his life. Indeed he was at church the Sunday before he died, and he was, in fact, the last person I, as Rector, spoke to at the front gate of the church as I left for St Mary's. Adam was blessed with a long and retentive memory and there was little that he didn't know about local history. Having eased off from farming in recent years, he like nothing more than to sit at his fire and contemplate his world. He was a popular soul and a real gentleman who will be sadly missed in Templederry.

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## 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: [terrym438@gmail.com](mailto:terrym438@gmail.com)

On behalf of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes we extend our condolences to Brian and Mona England on the death of Lil Armitage, who passed away peacefully at the age of 80. The funeral service was held in the Methodist Church in Cloughjordan on the 18th of December. We also remember the Hodgins family on the death of Adam who passed away peacefully at the age of 86. The funeral service was held at Templederry on the 3rd of December. Dick Culbert's brother Ted passed away peacefully at the age of 86. The funeral service was held in Kiltegan. On the 15th of November Annie Thomas passed away peacefully and the funeral service was held at St Brigid's in Tullamore. Our thoughts and prayers are with Emma Browne and her family at this time, indeed all who mourned loved ones over the Christmas season.

'May their souls rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thank you to Revd. Denis and Lesley Sandes who produced an Armchair Christmas Quiz for Bishops' Appeal/Christian Aid. Bishops' Appeal is a charity which provides emergency and long term aid wherever it is most needed in the world, and works almost exclusively through Christian Aid. This year the proceeds are specifically for hurricane relief in Haiti, and the Refugee Crisis, both of which are causing tremendous hardship.

The parishes all held successful Whist Drives over the Christmas season and thank you for all who supported the events, the sponsors and those who helped with the teas.

A number of ecumenical Church events were also held at this time and included an Advent Bible Study, as well as a number of Carol Services. Thank you also for the support of the Cloughjordan Community Choir for sharing in the Carol Service at St Kieran's in Cloughjordan.

Thank you also to all who helped to decorate the churches over Christmas. It was wonderful to see all the churches packed to the rafters on Christmas Day – may you all have a blessed and prosperous 2017.

Cloughjordan Number 1 National School held a successful Concert on the night of the 15th December. It was well attended by family



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and friends. All the children at the school were involved in the productions in a variety of different roles. It was a most enjoyable evening of entertainment and fun and good to see just how much the children enjoyed themselves, a testament to the hard work of their teachers.

Congratulations to Alison and Leslie Austin upon the occasion of the baptism of Lily on the 18th December. It was a lovely opportunity for all of us at St Kieran's to share in this service with them. Congratulations also to Colin Fogarty and Olivia Harding on the baptism of their daughter Charlotte on the 18th December at Borrisokane.



*Lily with her parents - Alison and Leslie Austin*

We also extend our best wishes to Michael Harding and Louise O'Donnell who were married on the 16th of December. We wish them a happy and fulfilling life together.

## Shinrone Group of Parishes

*Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin*

Rector: Canon Michael Johnston (On sick leave)

Parish Website: [shinrone.blogspot.ie](http://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](mailto:ruth_gill40@outlook.ie)

### MOTHERS' UNION

Tuesday, 7th February, there will be a Home Baking Evening in Aghancon Hall with Mrs. Gladys Drought. Members attended the Vigil in Birr on the 26th November and there was a great turnout of members and friends on the 1st December, who joined with residents of Clover Lodge to sing Christmas carols and songs. A collection of non-perishable food donated by members was delivered to Roscrea Lyons Club afterwards.



*Members of the Mothers' Union visited Clover Lodge Nursing Home in Shinrone and joined residents in carol singing, accompanied by John Armitage.*

### CHRISTMAS

The united Carol Service in Shinrone on the 18th December was a

wonderful occasion. It was made possible by the contribution of so many people in different ways. Many thanks to readers, musicians, children and parents, church wardens and all who attended. Refreshments were provided afterwards when everyone could get together for a chat. The services over Christmas were also well attended and many thanks to the Revd. Denis Sandes for coming to Dunkerrin on Christmas morning.

#### PASTORAL

Our thoughts are with all those who have been bereaved. Betty Fagan, formerly of Kinnitty and latterly of London, died in September and her ashes were buried in Kinnitty on the 8th December 2016. We were very sorry to hear that Lil Armitage died suddenly at home on the 15th December. She came to the Holy Communion services in Clover Lodge on Thursday mornings and often stayed for a cup of coffee afterwards in Cloughmoyle School. Herbie Whyte died on the 22nd December and his funeral service was held in Dunkerrin on the 30th December with burial in the churchyard. Sincere sympathy is extended to his brother Sydney, relatives and friends. Sydney was in poor health at the time of the funeral and he is wished a speedy recovery. Ivan Alexander died in Nenagh hospital on the 11th January 2017 shortly after his 91st birthday. He shared a wonderful life with the Mulqueen family, Kilcommon. Deepest sympathy is offered to the Mulqueens and his relatives and many friends. His funeral service took place in Shinrone on the 13th January 2017 with burial in the adjoining churchyard. A word of thanks to the Revd. Rod Smyth who provided pastoral care in Nenagh hospital.

Quite a few people have been ill over the winter months with some needing to stay in hospital. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and with those who care for them, that they may find strength with God's healing power to sustain them.

#### FRIENDS OF ST. LUKE'S

The funds raised at the Musical Evening in Aghancon on the 30th September were handed over to Yvonne Boland of the Friends of St. Luke's on the 14th January 2017, where she spoke about some of the projects they have on hand at the moment. Many thanks again to Ina Blackwell and friends for a wonderful evening which raised €1,200.



*Presentation to the Friends of St. Luke's left to right: Jean Talbot, Ruth McCarthy (Roscrea Community Choir), Dorothy Dempsey, Ray Dempsey and Ruth Gill. Front row, left to right: Billy Jackson, Ina Blackwell, Yvonne Boland (Friends of St. Luke's) and Leslie Blackwell.*

#### CONFIRMATION

There will be a service this year on the 18th June for those who wish to confirm their baptismal vows. It will take place in Birr at 11.30 a.m. and Archdeacon Carney will prepare candidates beforehand. If you haven't already given your name to Canon Ruth, would you do so as soon as possible please?

#### RATHKEALE

The Revd. Canon Patrick Commerford will have been introduced to the Rathkeale & Kilnaughton Group of Parishes on the 20th January and we extend a warm welcome to him and Barbara.



*Eliza with:- Revd. Janet White Spinner, Ian Sheppard, Colm Hammersley (God Parent), Eliza Sheppard, Sarah Sheppard, Trudy Sheppard (God Parent), Harry Sheppard (Proud Brother)*

## Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh

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**Rector: Rev. Chancellor Robert Charles Hanna**

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

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**Email: bobhanna@eircom.net**

**Parish website: [www.churchofirelandclare.com](http://www.churchofirelandclare.com)**

#### LENT

In response to the Bishop's "Lent Challenge" for the diocese – the challenge is for each person to take some time each Day to pray and to read a passage from the Bible. The Rector invites parishioners of the Group Parishes to join a joint Bible Study each Tuesday evening 7.30 during Lent.

This would take the form of a series of studies for Lent from the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland entitled "God's Heart for Migrants: Biblical Wisdom for a world in Turmoil". More details in next days.

#### COMMISSIONING

Drumcliffe Group welcome the inclusion of Galway based Lay Reader Dr Steven Ellis by Bishop Kenneth in the Commissioning of Lay Readers in St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 19th February at 5.00 p.m. The preacher on that occasion will be Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam. Dr Steven has become an accepted figure as visiting preacher to the Group. (Steve Fletcher, another regular visitor to our pulpits from London will have a separate commissioning by Bishop Kenneth in the early Summer when he will be accompanied by friends in St Alban's Diocese).

#### HEATHER

The death of Mrs Heather Halton over the New Year was a shock and a real loss to the Shannon Town community where she was a long-standing, creative and generous activist in so many activities including Shannon Radio. The popular mother of two young women, Megan (working in Vancouver) and Meadh, wife to Paddy, was also a member of the St John's N.S. Board and a worshipper at Kilnasoolagh. Her father was one of the original industrial workers to settle in Shannon and her mother Joyce a pivotal and much loved figure in the new Christ Church, Shannon Protestant community. After ceremonies in Mary Immaculate Church, Shannon and Kilnasoolagh, led by Fr Tom Ryan and Canon Bob Hanna, Heather was buried at sea off the Aran Islands in a private ceremony.

## FRANCES

We pray a speedy and strong healing to Mrs Frances Bailey following an accident at home which has left her with a serious shoulder injury. A little relief comes from the fact that her painting arm was not affected, but she is in considerable discomfort. Married to Edwin Bailey, Frances is heavily involved in work with the elderly and disadvantaged where her art proves a wonderful therapy to so many.

## SADIE

Our best wishes to Mrs Sadie Blake of Kilnasoolagh Parish who celebrated her 91st Birthday quietly at her Dromoland home with her family. However, no lack of excitement was present over the festive period since her son Ivan married Louise Lally from near Gort during Advent and we wish them and Sadie much happiness in 2017. Sadie made it to the annual Kilnasoolagh Christmas dinner in Dromoland Inn for which thanks to Edwin and Frances Bailey are due. Sadly missed was the late Jackie Reid, a regular with husband Douglas at the lunch. It was so good to have Douglas, son Nicky and sister of Jackie Evelyn Mayston join us for the meal. And of course, Santa who was rather underworked this year (missing children but a lovely lunch and gathering). Thanks as always Santa Pascal.

Ever special Christmas liturgies in Kilfenora, Kilnasoolagh, Spanish Pt and Drumcliffe followed on from two beautiful concerts by Regina Nathan and Helen Houlihan and friends.



*Caption: (l-r) Rev Chancellor Bob Hanna, Rev Edna Wakely & Nigel Bridge - Rev Edna preached at the ecumenical service for Christian Unity in St Columba's on 25th Feb,*

# 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](mailto:reverendjohngodfrey@gmail.com)

Parish website: [www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org](http://www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org)

Christmas was a time of rich blessing in the parish. Sincere thanks to all who did so much to make those celebrations so joyful, through their careful preparation for and prayerful participation in those festive services. Well done to the hard working team in Ahascragh who, in the middle of carol services and festivities, also made time to run a fundraising stall for St Catherine's Church at the Caltra Christmas Market.

Congratulations to Damian and Niamh Sheppard on the birth of their son Jack, just two weeks before Christmas. Congratulations also to the family of Sophie Thorington, whose baptism took place in St Catherine's, Ahascragh on New Year's Eve.

Our deepest sympathies are with the family and friends of Isabel Jean McCloud, whose funeral was held in Ardrahan Church on January 8th, followed by cremation in Mount Jerome.

The Sisters of the Carmelite community in Loughrea hosted an ecumenical service of prayer for Christian unity at Mount Carmel Chapel, Loughrea on January 23rd. This year's service, led by Father Willie Moeran ODC, was on the theme of 'Crossing Barriers.' The preacher was Salters Sterling, of Birr parish. On January 29th St Catherine's Church Ahascragh held a united service, marking the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

Portiuncular Hospital will hold its annual Children's Remembrance Service on February 6th at 7.30pm. This poignant service offers an important opportunity for families to honour the memories of their children who have died, either before or after birth. At the invitation of the Redemptorist Community, the Rector will be preaching at the Novena in Galway Cathedral throughout the day on February 15th.

Following the encouraging response to the 'Praying into Advent' group, there will be a Lenten study group in the Rectory Coach House at 8pm on Tuesday evenings in Lent, from March 7th to April 4th. There will also be special services of Holy Communion in Holy Trinity Aughrim on St Brigid's Day (February 1st), Ash Wednesday (March 1st) and on St Patrick's Day (March 17th) at 11am. Our next monthly healing services will be held on February 1st and March 8th in St John's Ballinasloe at 3pm.

Following the publication of the diocesan review, we are actively reflecting on ways in which our parish may best move 'Forward Together,' as we strive to worship God, help each other grow in faith, build each other up in fellowship and serve others. As part of this process, a group of parishioners will join the Rector in attending the Church 21 Conference in Swords on March 25th. Led by Reverend Ian Coffey, Director of Leadership Training at Moorlands College, we hope that this will offer us an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other parishes, as we seek to develop a clearer sense of direction, gain a better clarity of focus on priorities and discover increased confidence for the future.

## 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](mailto:towers.patrick@gmail.com)

### RECTORY

2017: a squishy start. We flew through flu and struggled with a variety of tiresomenesses to please, to placate and to deliver hard news of the progress on the 'Rectory Restoration'. Honours are due to Caroline and Fay on splendid work: had I been trying to escape from Stalag Luft III in 1943 I would bet on those two great ladies in getting me out...alive.

But we got held up! I blame it on the Germans or rather Lidl and Aldi and all those unaffordable Christmas treats that made the season of cheer go on and on when we puritan business types just wanted to get on and restore the Rectory back to its former glory. SAD. SAD. SAD.

I want to make Clonfert great again. And so does our very special Rural Dean and so do all these wonderful parishioners for whom I have the highest regard. And I must mention the massive contribution of our world class neighbour John Godfrey... I am a great fan of John's... who interrupted his hard working schedule in his own domain to forward us.

Next month, and I am serious, I intend to report on the massive progress we, that is all the hard working and wonderful people here in Clonfert Parishes, have made. I will tweet you.

#### CHURCHES

Very Special: We had a glorious Christmas season in all the Churches. Incredibly generous was everyone. Serious singing, great decorations, magical flower arrangements and inventive liturgical choreography.

And the incredible Family Service: special thanks for all those hard working Mums and Dads who came with their lovely children. Happiness reigned. "I came defeated and demoralised" said Willie, aged 3 years. "And now I am so happy" he chuckled as left the church clutching one of the three wise men he had captured from the crib and refused to surrender despite his father's special pleading. A determined young Herod.

We had a steely message from The Bishop of Nearby about giving money to the Bishop's Appeal. We paid up and up and up. I am a great fan of his.

An incredibly reliable source tells me that Jerome Phair is to be commissioned a Diocesan Reader next month. Well done Jerome. You are great. Tom Gordon and I are great fans of yours!

#### FEBRUARY 2017

Valentine's Day. The most-overrated celebration. Real squishy.

Will pass on to Shrove Tuesday. We will do a race...a classy race. Everyone gets to eat their pancake and we will crown the Queen of the Mardi Gras. It will be so smart. It will be much less expensive than Valentine's Day and FAR BETTER.

Then on to Lent. Get ready for that. More in next month's Newlink.

#### APOLOGIES

Its Friday evening: I am trying to write these Newlink notes by the deadline of Friday. The Friday of the incredible inauguration of President Donald Trump. Keep getting distracted by the amazing and very impressive show from Washington. The man inspires me.

We are going to make Clonfert great again with all you tremendous folks from the curvaceous slopes of Eyrecourt to the waters of the mighty Shannon, from the hilltop of Banagher to the charms of the ancient Cathedral of Clonfert and through to the bridges of Portumna.

I have three Balls to attend tonight: I must go.

# 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

Since the last double edition of Newlink we have all been progressing through three of the major liturgical seasons in the Church's year - Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

For us in the Limerick City Parish Advent Sunday began, as always, with the wonderful Candlelit Procession of Advent carols and readings held in the Cathedral. This year it was filmed as part of an ongoing project to engage with an interactive touchscreen 'experience' for tourists in the Cathedral. A welcome guest preacher in the Cathedral during Advent was The Rt Rev'd Laura Ahrens, Suffragan Bishop of Connecticut, who now holds the distinction of being the first woman Bishop to preach in the Cathedral's 850 year history! Canon Marie offered a series of four lunchtime Advent meditations, on the theme of 'Hospitality'. We were all grateful that the calendar fell the way it did, so that we actually had four full weeks of Advent! Then we had three wonderful Carol Services, in Abington, St Michael's and the Cathedral where we welcomed strangers, friends and relatives to join with us to celebrate in music and words the wonderful story of the Babe of Bethlehem. And as we recalled the story of that homeless couple we remembered and collected for local charities that support those in need - St Vincent de Paul and Novas. Hampers and gifts were organised for distribution by the Mothers' Union. The first Eucharist was celebrated on Christmas Eve by our Bishop Kenneth in the Cathedral, and then on Christmas Day in all three churches.

Then on to Epiphany! A lovely Epiphany Carol Service in the Cathedral, and straight into preparations for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Christ Church Limerick and the LCP prepared an event entitled 'They who sing, pray twice' (cf St Augustine), and some 12 choirs and music groups will have gathered on Tuesday 24th January in St Michael's Church to each sing a couple of the hymns/worship songs that are important and meaningful to the worshipping community they serve.

40 THOMAS ST  
LIMERICK

TEL: 061 - 414967  
FAX: 061 - 415365

*Thompson Undertakers*  
*Limerick*

It's easy to forget, but the season of Epiphany only finishes at Candlemas, and we shall be celebrating this at a United Service in the Cathedral on 29th January, where we shall be saying 'Farewell' to our Dean, Sandra. During this service we shall be dedicating the new Columbarium, the restoration work and new stairway for the pulpit, and the work done to date in the restoration of St Mark's Chapel. There will be a full report in the March Newslink.

THANK YOU... to everyone who worked so hard and gave so generously of their time and talents to enable worship during the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons. Those who read lessons, led worship, sang, played piano and organs, cleaned brasses, decorated, donated Christmas trees, wrestled with Christmas tree lights, cleaned, rang bells, prepared copied, folded and stapled service sheets, made tea and coffee, brought mince pies and other refreshments and welcomed strangers and friends into our churches. Congratulations to Terry (Cathedral Treasurer) & Sheila Cusack on the birth of their first granddaughter, Effie born to Aisling and Ryan on the 26th of December 2016 and to Pip & Anne Cullen on the birth of their first granddaughter, Cleo born to Kate and Tim on the 20th of January (her mum's birthday)

ST. MICHAEL'S WHIST DRIVE - The Christmas drive was held on Saturday 10th December. Many thanks all who supplied the lovely mince pies and tray bakes and donated prizes for the Christmas and January whist Drives. Next whist Drive in Villiers Square - Sat 18th February; St. Michael's - Sat 4th March (Raffle) and Villiers Square Sat 25th March all at 7.30pm and Admission € to include supper. The launch of the Limerick and Killaloe Diocese Guild of Lay Readers, along with the Commissioning of three new Diocesan Readers, will take place during the Service of Choral Evensong in St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 19th February, 5.00 pm. The new Diocesan readers are Norma-Jean Carney, Jerome Phair and Dr. Steven Ellis. The Right Reverend Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala & Achonry will be preaching.

#### CATHEDRAL NEWS - VISIT BY NATIONAL CHAMBER CHOIR and IRISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

On Saturday 25th February at 8pm St Mary's Cathedral is privileged to be the chosen venue for a special concert by two of Ireland's leading classical music ensembles. Residents and music lovers from Limerick will be no strangers to the excellence of the Irish Chamber Orchestra. The ICO has won numerous plaudits for its work, from the international touring to the imaginative schools outreach programme that they run, and not least for all their wonderful concerts on our doorstep here in Limerick! The programme includes Handel's stunning religious work Dixit Dominus and a new piece by leading contemporary composer Tarik O'Regan written to commemorate the recent 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta (2015).

We ask you all to remember our Dean, Sandra, in your prayers, and also Peggy Carey, who is now in Milford Care Centre.

Limerick City Parish would like to wish Canon Marie well as she departs at the end of January. We thank her for coming into Limerick and actively and positively engaging in all aspects of the parish. We would also like to thank Patrick for his contribution and for acting as Editor of the Newsletter for the Month of January. We wish them both well.

## 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

We begin our notes by wishing all a Happy New Year.

### CHRISTMAS

Our Christmas celebrations were joyous. In addition to our worship services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, we had a few other special events. During Advent, the Kilpeacon Sunday School put on a play called "Waiting for Christmas." It helped us all think about what we were waiting for and hoping for at Christmas.

We had several carol services throughout our parishes, each a bit different. The one in Kilmallock has become a well-loved tradition. The children of the parish read the lessons, and as we sing the carols after each reading, a child brings forward a figure or figures from the nativity scene to build the crèche. The carol service is followed by a dinner in the Deebert House Hotel. It is great to have people there from all of our parishes.



*Kilpeacon AdventPlay.*

I reported in the last issue that the games at the Mothers' Union Christmas party at the Rectory usually produce gales of laughter. That was true this year, too, and our thanks to the young mothers for their creativity in coming up with such fun. We also enjoyed refreshments, and exchanged gifts with prayer partners.

One of the long-standing traditions for St. Stephen's Day in our parishes is a walk in Curragh Chase. This year the weather was beautiful and the walk well-attended. The walk is followed by warming up in a local pub with mulled wine and mince pies.



*Curraghchase 2016.*

## FAREWELL IN CHRIST

Our condolences to the Hales family in Kilmallock, on the death of Frank Hales on 31st December, at the age of 90. His funeral was on 3rd January, and he was buried afterwards in the church's cemetery. Originally from County Cork, Frank was a long-time member of the Kilmallock parish and served as the People's Churchwarden for many years. People remember him standing at the church door on Sunday mornings greeting everyone as they arrived. His wife, Emily; son, Henry; and daughter-in-law, Michelle, and grandchildren are all active members of the parish. Our condolences to them and to all of the family.

## LENT

It seems strange that with Christmas barely over, and still in the season after Epiphany, that we are already planning for Lent. This year, Lent starts on 1st March, which is Ash Wednesday. We are encouraging everyone to participate in Bishop Kenneth's Lent Challenge to the Diocese (see information elsewhere in this issue, I believe!).

We will also have a Lenten class as part of the season. This year it will be a class on the Psalms, which will include a daily reading and reflection. The class will deal with the Psalms in several ways: we will learn what biblical scholars say about them (for example, what the different types of psalms are and how they were used when they were written); we will also look at them as religious literature and as passages for devotion, to learn how they might enrich our own lives and faith.

Because the class is seven weeks, we will start a week early, on 22nd February with the introductory class, so that we finish before Easter. If you would like to participate, please contact Rev. Liz so that she can order a study book for you.

## Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes

*Rathkeale, Askeaton, Kilcornan & Kilnaughtin*

Priest-in-Charge: Rev Canon Patrick Comerford

The Rectory, Askeaton, Co. Limerick.

Tel: 061 398647, Mob: 087 663 5116

Email: revpatrickcomerford@gmail.com

## FAREWELL

On Sunday, 27th November 2016 a service of farewell was held for Rev Keith Scott and his wife Lyn. They are moving back to Zambia where Keith will be working at the Anglican Seminary in Kitwe and Lyn will be teaching English for third level education and study skills. She may also be helping out in the Archbishop's Office and will be involved with work of the Mothers' Union at a Diocesan level. Refreshments were served in the school after the service where gifts were presented to both Keith and Lyn. We wish them every happiness for the work in Zambia.

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Many thanks to those who decorated and prepared our churches for Christmas and all our services were well attended. It was lovely to see many families welcoming home loved ones at this festive season.

## SYMPATHY

The death has occurred in December of Kenneth Chapman, Ballylongford, Co. Kerry. His funeral took place from O'Carrols Funeral Home in Listowel followed by cremation at Ringaskiddy crematorium. Deepest sympathy to his wife Pam and the whole family circle.

## THANK YOU

Many thanks to Dean Maurice Sirr for taking care of our parishes during our vacancy. We all enjoyed having him amongst us.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Nicola White, daughter of Simon and Hilary White, Nantenan, Askeaton graduated recently with first class honours in nursing. Nicola is now working at Mercy Hospital, Cork.

Congratulations also to Ciara Looney, who teaches at Rathkeale No. 2 school who gave birth to a baby girl, Fladh.

## MINISTRY AND RESOURCES

The Committee visited our parish on Tuesday 17th January. They began their day at St. Brendan's Church in Tarbert and then came to St. Mary's, Askeaton. They had a break at the Rectory in Askeaton for lunch which was prepared by ladies of the parish. They then proceeded to Holy Trinity, Rathkeale and the school and then Castletown Church. The committee got together with the parishioners who had gathered at the Rectory and some discussion took place about each parish. In all it was a very successful day.

## WELCOME

A Service of Welcome for Revd. Canon. Patrick Comerford as Priest-in-Charge took place in Holy Trinity, Rathkeale on Friday 20th January (see report on page 21). The preacher was the Most Rev Dr John Neill and was very well attended. Refreshments were held in Cappagh Community Centre where the tables were laden with plenty of tempting treats prepared by the parishioners. We look forward to having Patrick and his wife Barbara living in the Rectory and to his ministry among us.

# 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

Date	Bally-seedy 9.45 am	Tralee 10.45 am	Ballymac 12 noon	Kilgobbin 10.00 am	Dingle 12 noon
5th February	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
12th February	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
19th February	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
26th February	No Service	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion

**MID-WEEK SERVICES:** The services continue every Wednesday at 11.00am in St. John's followed by coffee and fellowship.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES:** We have enjoyed some lovely services over Christmas and, as always, our Carol Services have been well attended. On 18th December in St. John's we particularly enjoyed listening to the Children from St. John's Parochial School as they portrayed the Christmas story through song and dance. Our grateful thanks to their teachers for all the hard work and to the children for the joy they brought to our service.

In the afternoon we enjoyed an Ecumenical Carol Service at Kilgobbin with our friends from St. Mary's RC Church, Camp. Their choir helped enormously with the singing and we enjoyed lovely solos from Nora Rice and our very own Sam and Newland from St. Johns. There were welcome refreshments after the service in the Community Rooms. The collection from this service was given to the Bishop's Appeal for the suffering of the people in Yemen.

In the evening it was off to St. James, Dingle for another Ecumenical Carol Service when we were joined by our friends from St. Mary's RC Church, Dingle and the Gospel Choir. It was lovely to welcome Father Joe Begley and through the generosity of those who attended, we have been able to give €350 to Kerry Hospice and a total of €325 was sent to the Bishop's Appeal for Yemen.

Christmas Eve saw another very special service in St. James Church, Dingle. It was decided to make the service on Christmas Eve the main Christmas Service and to make it a special time for the children. The Eucharist was combined with the children learning about the meaning of Christmas by making their own Christingles. It was a joy to see all the children holding their lit Christingles and singing Away in a Manger.



*Christmas Eve at Dingle 2016*

**MEET THE NEIGHBOURS.** We have met with our friends from St. John's Roman Catholic Church, Tralee for a number of years. On Wednesday 30th November, we were delighted to welcome Father Thaigh Fitzgerald. The meeting was well attended and Sister Frances led us in a time of reflection of all that lifted our hearts and gave us hope over the past year. This was followed by a chat over a welcome cup of tea or coffee. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 22nd February in Teach an tSolais – all very welcome.

## **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.

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Email: [killarney@ardfert.anglican.org](mailto:killarney@ardfert.anglican.org)

### **CHRISTMAS:**

All Christmas and New Year services were well attended and the church decorations looked fantastic. We had a lot of fun doing the decorating as can be seen from the photograph below showing Clara, Sarah Lynn and Kayla Wharton instructing the bigger children Lynda, Noleen and Daphne on the intricacies of balancing our Christmas tree. Thanks to all involved in decorating and assisting with the various services.



### **CONCERTS:**

Having completed the 2016 series of concerts with our annual Christmas Carol Service, we are looking forward to the commencement of the 2017 series shortly. Although it is a financial Godsend, organisation and preparation for the concert season is very time consuming and this year we hope to spread the work a little wider. Andrew Eadie will be absolutely delighted to hear from any parishioners who feel they have an extra hour or two to give this year.

### **INTER-FAITH SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK:**

St Mary's was well attended for the Service for Christian Unity on January 22nd last. The Service was led by Archdeacon Simon assisted by Rev. Karen Spence from the Methodist Church and Fr Kieran O'Brien from our Roman Catholic neighbours.

In his sermon Simon explained the concept of Christian Unity was often misinterpreted in the modern world. Those who think it will be a bonding and joining together between churches in a return to a re-unified pre-Reformation single entity are mistaken as that's never going to happen. Such an outcome is as unlikely as a re-unification of the eastern and western churches prior to the Great Schism of 1054. Rather, Christian Unity is about creating a greater understanding and acceptance of our differences; it is about

building tolerance between the Christian faiths. Simon stated that if we could move to a point where all Christian Churches would welcome each other's parishioners to receive holy Communion at all churches that would be a hugely positive step towards long-sought reconciliation.

The shared prayers and shared space at St Mary's, even if only for an hour, only marks the beginning of a long journey. That said, every journey begins with a first step. The symbolic block wall which was built at the crossing of the church represented all the obstacles and blockers and for each a prayer was shared that one-by-one they could be taken down and removed. Together we can take down the walls of ignorance, self-righteousness, ambivalence and downright awkwardness. It's a journey we have begun; let's help each other to maintain the momentum and pray for a quickening of our steps.



Rev. Karen Spence, Methodist Church Killarney; Fr. Kieran O'Brien, Diocese of Kerry & Venerable Archdeacon Simon Lumby; St Mary's Church, Killarney

## 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](mailto:stephens.j@temmler.eu) or [stiofain.s@gmail.com](mailto:stiofain.s@gmail.com)

Web: [kilcolman.ardfert.anglican.org](http://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 1st & 3rd

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES,

Both Churches looked so well for our Advent and Christmas services. Many thanks to those who prepared the Advent wreaths and decorated the churches for Christmas. The Churches were full for all the ceremonies and it was wonderful to have the Men's Social Club Choir with us for our Carol Service in Killorglin. They certainly gave a lift to our praise and added to the sense of celebration. Many thanks to all those who read and to the children who prepared the crib during the service.

### ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF LIGHT.

An ecumenical service of light was held in Library Place on the 16th December to remember loved ones from whom we are separated at Christmas time. While Christmas is a time of celebration it can also be a very difficult time for those whose loved ones died during the year or for those whose family live far away.

A live crib was organised and Library Place looked so well with all the candles and white lights.

After the service we were treated to mulled wine and mince pies courtesy of some of the local businesses. Many thanks to Trudi O Sullivan and the Killorglin Chamber of Alliance who organised the event.

### KILTALLAGH SCHOOL OPEN DAY.

An open day for parents and potential students was held on Wednesday the 25th January at the School.

The Principal is always available meet any parents who could not make the open day.

### CONFIRMATION,

Bishop Kenneth has confirmed that he will be with us for confirmation on the 7th May. I am looking forward to beginning classes in the next few weeks. It will be our third year in a row to have confirmation in the parish. Confirmation provides all of us with the opportunity to look at our faith and examine what we believe.

### WELCOME.

Welcome to the Revd. Canon Patrick Comerford who has joined the diocesan team of clergy. Patrick is a man of many parts. He writes a very interesting blog, which is most helpful to those of us who have attended his classes in the Theological Institute. It has a whole range of educational and thought provoking articles and information on many issues, particularly on Anglicanism. Please check it out @ [www.patrickcomerford.com](http://www.patrickcomerford.com)

### THOUGHT AND GOAL FOR THE MONTH

'Sometimes you have to forget about all the things that are upsetting you, and focus on things that make you happy.' ~Author Unknown

## 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](mailto:michael.cavanagh@eircom.net)

The annual Plough Service was held in St Patrick's Church, Kenmare on the first Sunday after Epiphany, A plough was brought into church and decorated; the whole congregation stood together, asking for God's Blessing on all those who work in agriculture in the year to come.



The decorated plough

This traditional service, with its wonderful poetic liturgy, is the 'Please' that balances the 'Thank You' of the Autumnal Harvest Celebrations. We remember that food doesn't just arrive in SuperValu of its own accord - if a farmer doesn't grow it, we don't eat it.

This year, we also asked a special blessing on those who 'plough, plant, feed and nurture' our children - in a time when it seems that the world appears more interested in being clothed with self rather than clothed with Christ, we have a grave responsibility to keep Jesus' little ones from being choked with the weeds of consumerism and prejudice, so that they will blossom as a harvest that knows justice, service and love.



*Blessing those who plough, plant, feed & nurture our children.*

On Christmas Eve, nearly three hundred knitted Angels flew from St Patrick, Holy Cross and the Gateway Methodist Christians Together group in Kenmare, arriving on doorsteps to the surprise and delight of local people in the town, bearing the message of Joy to the World.



*A few of the 300 knitted angels*

(If anyone would like the knitting pattern, contact marjorie.cavanagh@eircom.net )

Throughout the year, we shall pray a special collect to remind us of that responsibility:

Heavenly Father, you have created and nurtured us, forgiven our wilfulness and healed our hurt, loving us as only a parent can love their child, allowing us to grow to be your body on earth; give us now the strength and commitment to use the gifts you have given us to show that love in turn to the children of the world. Amen.

# 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

In the Methodist church in Ireland February is traditionally the month when we take time to hear about and from our brothers and sisters throughout the world. We hear about those who struggle materially and yet still have so much to teach us about the importance of a living and deep relationship with our God and Father. In the prosperous west (and even with as little as we have we are very prosperous here in Ireland in comparison to large parts of the world) we often act as if prosperity is a sign of God's blessing and when things get hard, as they so often do, we sometimes believe that God has deserted us. As we hear stories from the materially poor parts of the world we are reminded that God is very much at work in the world, and that He is indeed close when things are difficult, and that He will never leave us or forsake us. He will carry us, comfort us, give us peace, and challenge us if we turn to Him and let Him give us His strength.

We will also hear from those who have gone from Ireland to work in other parts of the world as God has called them. At present the Methodist church in Ireland supports, through giving and prayer, Barry and Gillian Sloan working with the United Methodist Church in Germany; Pat Jamison, who is coming to the end of her time working with the community health programme in Ghana; Mervyn and Raing McCullagh working with the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka; and Stephen McCann working with 24-7 Prayer in Ibiza. Please pray for them as well as for the many more who go from our churches and communities to do God's work far from their homes and families.

Our district World Church event, called 'Global Vision', will be held in Roscrea on Sunday 12th February at 7:00pm. Our speakers that evening will be Dr. Fergus O'Ferrall (Methodist Lay Leader), Rev. Laurence Graham (Chair of the World Church Committee), and Ms. Rhoda Baxter (Frontiers Ireland). And on the Adare and Ballingrane circuit we will celebrate the World Church on Sunday the 5th of February. All are very welcome.

### SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY:

Sun 5th	Rev. Ruth Watt	World Church Sunday
Sun 12th	Mrs. Siobhán Wheeler	Holy Communion (Rev. Ruth Watt)
Sat 18th	Rev. Ruth Watt	Saturday evening @ 8:00 p.m. in Ballingrane
Sun 19th	Rev. Ruth Watt	Baptism @ 11 a.m. in Adare
Sun 26th		To be confirmed

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

Naturally the beginning of the year gives all of us an opportunity to both look back at the previous twelve months and look forward to the twelve months ahead. One thing that struck me when I looked back was just how much our work relies on the gifts, skills and commitment of volunteers. So, firstly I'd like to take the opportunity to say an enormous heartfelt 'thank you' to every single one of our wonderful team.

Our volunteer group, both in Christ Church and Central Buildings Community Project, is extremely diverse which is great because the people who join us on our journey and take part in our programmes and events and are extremely diverse too. We're hoping that this creative match will continue to bear fruit in the coming months and that we'll spot and get involved with the next opportunities as they arise.

Taking opportunities as they arise can often mean being willing to be flexible which in turn can be both exciting and challenging. At the end of 2016 on a beautiful sunny December day we welcomed first year students from the School of Architecture at UL (SAUL) and friends from the direct provision centres around Limerick. This was a collaborative effort supported by SAUL lecturers Grainne Hassett and Jan Frohburg. In August 2015, Grainne founded The Calais Builds Project, and to date has designed, organised and built some of the major community infrastructure of the Calais Refugee Camp. In very difficult circumstances she and colleagues developed a way of building essential facilities at the camp such as the women and children's centre, youth centre, community centre and the vaccination centre. This became a story of architecture and building without budgets, without political will, without a future, but for people.



Grainne Hassett (on right)

The collaborative effort was to make lunch, serve it and eat it! We had great chefs from Zimbabwe organised by Donna, kitchen assistants from SAUL, strange and exotic tables built by the students and a very willing group of various folk to eat the food! Christ Church kitchen, CB1 and Fab Lab on Patrick Street were transformed into a kind of 'culture kitchen' experience. Any deadlines went out of the window pretty early on but it was great fun and the smell of cooking throughout the afternoon was delicious. The food was great and we're definitely going to do it again, especially as the washing up was done to perfection.



SAUL Tables

We have so many things to look forward to this coming year; we've got two new partners in our building, - the Public Participation Network have joined us and Elikya have moved in - lots of CB1 exhibitions, lots of exciting possibilities in the church, more World Music Cafes, as always great people to work with and lots of new people yet to meet. God is good!

## LIMERICK

- Sunday Service 11.30am - Holy Communion 1st Sunday, Family Service 3rd Sunday
- Sunday School/Youth Group 1st, 2nd & 4th Sundays
- 'Last Thursday' informal worship - last Thursday each month 8pm - UL Contemplative Centre
- Prayer before Sunday Service 11am Upper Room
- Youth Group Monday 7.30pm
- Music Group Friday evening 7.30pm
- Bible Study group Wednesday 7pm Meeting Room

## SHANNON & KILKEE

Contact Rev Vicki Lynch for details



## 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 followed by Drop-in lunch 12pm
- Parent and Toddler (term time) Tuesday 10am
- Kids Ministry Club 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.

During the Christmas season the children and some adults of Killarney Methodist visited a local Nursing Home and sang some carols to the residents and their families. Such a simple thing to do but an act that brought joy to those who were there and a children's choir has now been formed in the church and they look forward to other occasions when they can bring joy to others. Continuing on that theme of joy – a Christmas dinner was served on Christmas day in Killarney for those who were going to be on their own. The local press heard about this and did an article and from that there were many offers of help and turkeys, showing the goodness of people within the community.

The ladies in Kenmare were busy before Christmas knitting angels which were given out in the town on behalf of the 3 churches in the town. This was a gesture that was appreciated by all who received them. See photo page 30.

We saw out the old year and saw in the new year by having a time of fellowship and food followed by worship to bring in the new year. As Methodist people we began the new year with the covenant service praying the covenant prayer! We look forward to seeing what God will do in his churches in this area.

## 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

We are well into the New Year and entering into the month of February, which some say is the season of Love with Valentine's Day. It can be argued that Christmas and Easter are also the seasons of Love, made known to us in Christ Jesus. If we reflect more on God's love, presence, and power in our daily lives, then every day is part of God's season of love. For it never ends!

Weddings are events which focus on the sharing of love as two people speak ordinary but sacred, life-changing words in order become husband and wife. Back in November we shared the good news of the wedding of Fayth Armitage and Alex Fullarton. This month we have a picture from their wedding; they are happy to share this with the readers of Newlink. 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.



*Wedding of Fayth and Alex*

I want to thank all those on the North Tipperary circuit who went beyond the norm to share God's love with others through the ministries and events we had in December. With your time, presence, and talents, you have decorated our churches for carol services and a special "Christmas Sharing event;" you have baked buns and made tea/coffee to welcome friends and strangers to sit at our tables; you've helped lead worship and provided angelic music for folks to hear once again the story of Christ's divine birth; you collected a car-load of gifts and party food for children, teenagers and adults in Galway's Direct Provision services; you attended a special service which acknowledged the "blue-ness" or sadness that folks can still have during what's known as the "happiest time of the year;" you've attended carol services in other denominations to show ecumenical and community support; you've greeted the stranger and made him feel welcome; you have surrounded a bereaved family with God's love and care. In all these things and many more, thank you for shining the light of the love of Christ into many lives here on our circuit.



*Candlelit Carols - Roscrea Methodist Church*

We offer our deepest sympathies to the family of Lil Armitage of Towra, Cloughjordan who passed away on 15th December. Please remember in prayer her children and their spouses (John and Gillian, Trevor and George, Brian and Carol, and Mona and Brian), her 11 grandchildren, and Lil's siblings Bertha Hastings of Roscrea, Adelaide Chadwick of Cloughjordan, Dick Allen in Portlaoise, and Mona Auttersson and Betty White who both reside in Australia.

Especially during dark times, it is good to share with others the light of Christ. At both of our carol services, we concluded the service with the hymn Silent Night. We sung this in candle light where everyone had a small candle to hold; the church and our faces were all aglow. The candle light and music had a way of filling us with awe as we celebrated Christ's birth. As we now journey into 2017, may we continue to hold the light of Christ as we bear witness to his love and grace and as we strive to serve him in all that we do.

With Christ's love,  
~ Rev. Shannon

ST. CRONAN'S YOUTH CLUB - Please contact Rosie Gee at 086 1973311 re the next meeting or if you have any questions.

ST. CRONAN'S BOYS' BRIGADE -Our Company will meet next on

Friday 10th February in Roscrea Methodist Church Hall from 7-8:15pm.

MWI - CLOUGHJORDAN/BORRISOKANE- Everyone is welcome to attend our next meeting on Tuesday 21st February at 8pm in Cloughjordan. Our guest speaker will be Karen Gillespie who will share with us about her South African adventures with the MCI's World Development and Relief Fund mission trip.

GLOBAL VISION WORSHIP SERVICE- All are welcome to attend this district worship event on Sunday 12th February at 7:30pm in Roscrea Methodist Church. We will hear about God's mission around the globe. Guest speakers are Dr. Fergus O'Farrell, our lay president of the MCI, Rev. Dr. Laurence Graham, the president-designate of the MCI, and Rhoda Baxter of Frontiers Ireland. We hope you plan to attend.

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES will begin on Wednesday 8th March at 8pm in Roscrea Methodist Church, we will host 5 ecumenical services which address social issues that are prevalent in our communities. The topics will include: homelessness in rural areas, concerns of the elderly, suicide, addictions, and cyber-bullying in the teenage years. A tea reception will follow in the Hall. All are welcome. Save these dates in your diary: Wednesdays 8th March, 15th March, 22nd March, 29th March, and 5th April.

## Offering Hope in South Sudan this Lent



*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)*

For Christians around the world, Lent is a time of reflection, self-examination and thinking of others who are less fortunate. It is a journey, a time for us to think about how we follow the Jesus who calls his disciples to sacrificial love that breaks down barriers, builds bridges and demands justice for those who find themselves living in poverty.

### PEOPLE LIKE MICHAEL

Michael lives in South Sudan, where 6.1 million people urgently need humanitarian aid as a result of the conflict that erupted in December 2013. Ongoing fighting has displaced 2.4 million people, and up to 5.3 million people are at risk of severe food shortages.

Michael, who is in his 70s and has gradually lost his sight during the past five years, fled alongside his family when government forces came to his village. Soldiers killed people and stole cattle, forcing Michael to flee to the swamp where he resided with his family for two months. When they returned, most of their belongings were gone, and they were left with next to nothing.

Thankfully, they had some fishing hooks and nets from Christian Aid. Already a skilled fisherman, now he can take the younger generation to the swamp to teach them how to fish, so they can continue to feed their community.

Throughout Lent, we are reflecting on the hymn written for us, 'When I needed a neighbour, were you there'. We are asking you to reflect each day on the blessings in your life through Count Your Blessings, inspired by daily opportunities to give, act and pray for communities like Michael's, helping them to find a safe place to call home.

Christian Aid is working with people displaced within South Sudan, who are living in some of the hardest to reach places, to provide much-needed food, safe water and sanitation facilities and essential household items, including sheeting for temporary shelters, as well as fish hooks and nets so they can start to rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient. Just €17 could provide fishing gear for a family like Michael's; €9.50 could provide two cooking pots so they can eat a hot meal; and €3.50 could pay for two plastic jerry cans so they can store safe drinking water.

For 70 years, Christian Aid and its supporters have been there, making a difference and helping to transform the lives of people living in poverty. With your support we are restoring dignity to people in desperate situations and offering hope to brothers and sisters who have no safe place to call home. Thanks to your help, we will be there tomorrow.

For more information or to support the work of Christian Aid Ireland visit [www.christianaid.ie/lent](http://www.christianaid.ie/lent) or call 01 496 7040.



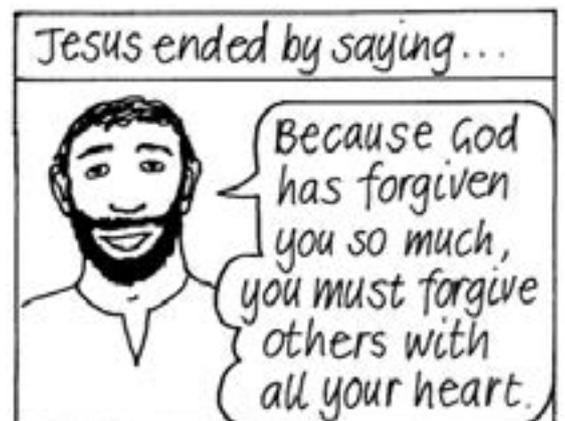
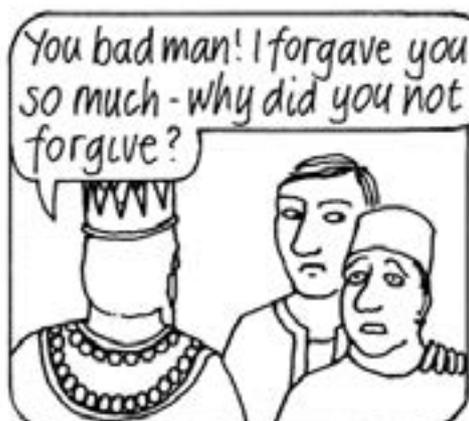
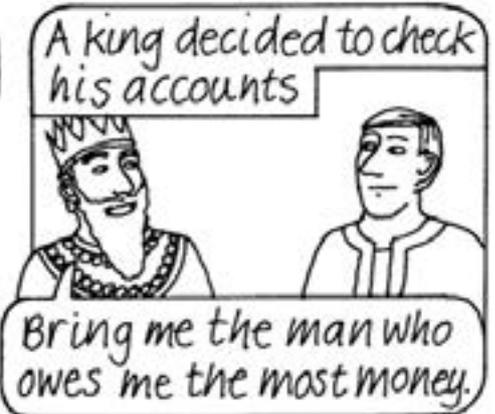
Michael with his grandson & family

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Matthew chapter 18 verses 21-35

Jewish teachers used to say you only had to forgive people three times before before getting revenge, so Peter asked Jesus..



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### Prompt Payment Draw

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

**Weekend bus service - Killaloe, Ballina, Nenagh, Borrisokane, Birr, Roscrea.**



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