

## Finance & funding 2013

<b>Income:</b>	Church subs -	€1,250.00
	Trócaire grant -	3,000.00
	Robert & Kezia Stanley Chapman Trust grant -	1,200.00
	Irish Quaker Faith in Action grant -	1,000.00
	World Day of Prayer grant -	500.00
	Donations -	80.00
<b>Total:</b>		<b>€7,030.00</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>	Staff & office expenses -	€9,328.00
	Volunteers' expenses (travel & subsistence)	411.00
	Events & campaigns -	1,802.00
	Awards -	220.00
	Climate change module for website -	500.00
	Technology & web support -	252.00
	Stop Climate Chaos sub -	200.00
<b>Total:</b>		<b>€12,713.00</b>

At the end of 2013, our closing balance was **€10,270**. We have been grateful to receive grants from a variety of sources over the years and we are urgently working to identify new funding streams in order to further the work of ECI. As well as those named above, we have received grants in the past from Christian Aid, the Franciscans of Ireland, the Home Mission Department of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Association Foundation & the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund.

Most ECI work is carried out by a committee of volunteers, each of whom has been officially appointed by their Church. The representatives are:

Church of Ireland—Rev Andrew Orr [andreworr1234@gmail.com](mailto:andreworr1234@gmail.com)  
 Roman Catholic—Catherine Brennan SSL [catherinebrennanssl@eircom.net](mailto:catherinebrennanssl@eircom.net)  
 Methodist Church in Ireland—Rev John Purdy [john.purdy@irishmethodist.org](mailto:john.purdy@irishmethodist.org)  
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland—Joe Furphy [jfurphy@aol.com](mailto:jfurphy@aol.com)  
 Religious Society of Friends in Ireland - Gillian Armstrong [garmsq@gmail.com](mailto:garmsq@gmail.com)

### Get in touch!

**Email** Communications Officer Fiona Murdoch if you would like more info, would like to receive our monthly email newsletter, or would like to tell us your eco news ~ [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com). Or contact any of the Church reps at their email addresses (listed above). *We'd love to hear from you!*

**Write to us** at Eco-Congregation Ireland, c/o 18 Hermitage Downs, Dublin 16.

**Telephone** Fiona Murdoch +353 (0)86 1706923.

**Visit our website** ~ [www.ecocongregationireland.com](http://www.ecocongregationireland.com)



~ [www.facebook.com/ecocongregationireland](http://www.facebook.com/ecocongregationireland)

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**TROCAIRE**  
Working for a Just World



### About us:

We encourage Christians to reflect on the beauty of God's world & to consider what practical steps can be taken to prevent further damage to the environment. At this time of growing awareness of the effects of climate change, we ask people to pray for our wounded planet, for people in the developing world already affected by climate change & for future generations. We promote the work & campaigns of development organisations eg. Trócaire, Christian Aid. We are active members of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition which is working to prevent runaway climate change.

*ECI was initiated by the Church in Society Forum of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting in 2005. It is supported by the Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian & Methodist Churches & the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ireland.*

# Eco-Congregation Ireland

annual review 2013

### Vision:

To see churches celebrate the gift of God's Creation, recognise the inter-dependence of all Creation & care for it in their life and mission

**Mission:** To encourage churches in Ireland to adopt an eco-friendly approach to worship, lifestyle, property & finance management, youth & children's work, community outreach & contact with the developing world

## A message from our Chairperson

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Eco-Congregation Ireland's annual report, which highlights the work that we have been doing over the last year.

I'm writing this introduction as Ireland is in the midst of a series of devastating storms, which have brought destruction to much of our coastline and low-lying areas. While we cannot relate individual events directly to climate change, this is exactly the kind of weather event that climate scientists have predicted will happen with increasing frequency, as a direct result of our failure to take action.

Christians believe that this is God's world and our calling and responsibility is to protect the planet. Eco-Congregation believes that the Churches should be at the forefront of the environmental movement, calling for action on climate change and modelling best practice. We want to make it as straightforward as possible for parishes and congregations to reduce their carbon footprint, reuse and recycle, and live sustainably: and to encourage families and individuals to do the same.

In our report you will get some idea of the resources and support we can offer churches, and see inspiring examples of how that has been put into practice by different congregations across Ireland.

We would like to thank the Churches and church organisations that sponsor our work and the support we receive from individual members. I would also personally like to thank our Communications Officer, Fiona Murdoch, who brings her professionalism to the position and puts an enormous amount of work into everything that we do and organise.

Thanks are due too to the members of the Committee for their commitment and dedication. I would especially like to pay tribute to Catherine Brennan SSL, who retired as Chairperson in 2013 after more than five years of dedicated service, and who did so much to inspire, develop and grow the organisation.

I trust you will find in the report much to enthuse and inspire you!

Andrew Orr  
Chairperson



### Donations

We are always happy to receive donations! These can be made by sending a cheque payable to the 'Representative Church Body' to the ECI Treasurer, 10 Upper Beechwood Avenue, Dublin 6, enclosing a note saying it is for the Eco-Congregation Ireland account. Thank you!



'Respect for & protection of the natural environment is not a luxury for Christian churches today but an essential aspect of their life & mission.'  
~ Catherine Brennan SSL,  
ECI Chairperson 2008-2013

### Resources

ECI supports faith communities & individuals as they seek to pursue an environmental dimension to church life. The wide range of resources on our website include sections on worship, teaching, Bible studies, youth work, property & finance management, personal lifestyles, working with the local community & thinking (& acting) globally.



## Highlights 2013

Following on from the success of our inaugural conference in 2012, ECI decided to host a series of events in different parts of the country.

The first was a workshop in Kilkenny co-hosted with local eco-churches. Columban theologian, author & former missionary, Fr Seán McDonagh SSC, and sustainability, energy and climate change consultant, Gavin Harte, both gave insightful & thought-provoking talks on the theme **'Live Simply, Live Well – why Christians should care about the environment'**.

Members of the Cashel & Ossory Diocese



(Church of Ireland) Eco Committee and of the Inchicore group of (Roman Catholic) parishes gave interesting presentations about the eco initiatives they have undertaken. It was hoped this would encourage members of other churches to start taking steps to 'green' their churches & their own lives.

Catherine Brennan SSL & members of Inchicore spent a day filming for a US television channel, which was interested to showcase the work of ECI.

A **Creation Care sharing network** has developed in Northern Ireland, which sees members of different eco-congregations meeting together to share ideas and encourage each other in their endeavours. Participants have been involved in activities ranging from recycling, bulb-planting, making nesting boxes, collecting and sowing wildflower seeds, growing fruit and vegetables, studying and monitoring birds, moths and butterflies, and taking part in anti-fracking demonstrations.

In Belfast ECI partnered with A Rocha UK & Christians in Science in an event on the theme **'How do we live well as Christians in a consumer culture?'** The keynote speaker was Christian author and eco-activist, Ruth Valerio, who has since been appointed Churches & Theology Director of A Rocha UK.

We encouraged churches around Ireland to mark **Creation Time** (September 1 to October 4) with special services and events. This year's theme was 'Water Justice' & ECI was once again involved in preparing Creation Time resources for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland ~ [www.ctbi.org.uk/295](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/295).

**Three Rock Churches' Environment Group** - an ECI initiative that sees eight churches working together on environmental issues in Dublin - held a prayer and meditation Harvest Time service, which enabled Christians with a concern for the environment to meet together to worship, pray & encourage each other in their endeavours.

We were delighted to share a stall with A Rocha at **New Horizons** in Coleraine where we encouraged conference partici-



pants to make the link between environment care & their Christian faith & to adopt an eco approach to their lives—at home, church & in their local communities.

While Eco-Congregation is designed primarily to help churches engage with environmental issues, churches frequently tell us that they find it stimulates church life & mission & encourages interaction between generations & cross-community building as well as helping them link to those suffering most from the degradation of our fragile planet ... and eco activities are enjoyable & fun!

## Awards, awards, awards!

We were delighted to present three well-deserved awards in 2013. Awards are made to churches or dioceses that have been working consistently on environmental issues for two years or more; they are judged by independent assessors. Award applicants are expected to demonstrate that they have undertaken eco initiatives in four areas—practical, spiritual, community & global.

The **Diocese of Cashel & Ossory** became the second diocese ever to win an ECI diocesan award. The diocesan eco committee produces a newsletter, organises seminars & runs a green award scheme. Many parishes have adopted eco initiatives, like planting trees, shrubs & bulbs, erecting bird & bat boxes & promoting biodiversity. Some have installed solar panels and made church land available for allotments. The diocese is to be particularly commended for its Green Charter, which has been adopted by all parishes. The eco committee has brought this to General Synod in the hopes that all parishes in the Church of Ireland will adopt a similar charter.



**Clonakilty Methodist Church** became the first church to receive a second ECI award. Since receiving recognition in 2008, the church has created a garden at the back

with trees and flowers and installed a new energy-efficient boiler as well as two solar lamps—one at the pulpit & one by the organ. They continue to recycle, promote Fairtrade and use eco-friendly cleaning products as well as posting a 'green suggestion' outside the church each week. They have raised funds for West Cork Animal Welfare Group and for overseas projects and their commitment to the welfare of the planet is regularly included in prayers & sermons. They hit the national newspaper & TV headlines with their award!



**Kilbride Presbyterian Church** was the recipient of ECI's 10th award. As well as its commitment to energy-saving practices & preserving the environs of its church building & grounds in a sustainable manner, this small rural congregation in Co Antrim has spearheaded a number of initiatives to benefit the local community, including litter picks, bulb-planting & the development of a local river walk. A stargazing night was held & a speaker from The Woodland Trust gave a talk. Hymns & prayers often include a Creation theme & prayer & meditation is sometimes held outside. Sunday School often includes an environmental dimension & the children have helped with bulb- and tree-planting. The congregation supports people in developing countries already impacted by climate change by holding Christian Aid lunches, quizzes & door-to-door collections & by volunteering overseas.

*Well done to our 2013 award winners!!!*



'We cannot underestimate the value of faith communities in promoting a more ecologically & socially just & sustainable future. This is living the scripture—giving praise to God for the gift of this world & treating it with love.'

~ Catherine Martin, teacher & environmentalist, speaking at Three Rock Churches' Environment Group's Harvest Time service



'The spirit of God has always been with the planet. We are entering a difficult period but that doesn't mean God has abandoned us. We have to live in a way that supports the planet into the future.'

~ Fr Seán McDonagh SSC, eco-theologian & author, speaking at ECI's 'Live Simply, Live Well' event



'At Kilbride we believe we are called to strive for the ideal of God's shalom in the community in which we live. We are delighted to receive this eco award today and pray that it will spur us on to hand on a land to the next generation that reflects more of Christ's kingdom goodness.'

~ Rev Karen Campbell, Minister of Kilbride Presbyterian Church



'We commit to keeping the momentum going & continuing to look for new ways to improve in our attempt to become a help rather than a burden to nature. We know it's a long journey with many steps to be taken.'

~ Mattia Leoni, Clonakilty Methodist Church eco champion