

Dear Eco Congregation friends

Welcome to the September 2016 edition of the Eco Congregation Ireland newsletter. Autumn is here with its beautiful colours and frosty mornings! We hope you have had a blessed and inspirational Creation Time 2016.



If you have any information or stories from your congregation, parish, meeting or Eco Congregation we would love to hear from you! Please forward your news to us at info@ecocongregationireland.com. Don't forget, if you hold an event or meeting, please take some photos and we can include them on our website and our bi-monthly newsletter. If you want your event promoted in our bi-monthly newsletter, please email us about 3 weeks before the next newsletter is due out to ensure inclusion. Our next newsletters will be sent out at the end of November, January, March and May.

Are you interested in learning more about Eco-Congregation Ireland? Perhaps your congregation or parish has an interest in the environment and has thought about becoming an eco-congregation? The Eco-Congregation Committee has Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Quaker representatives on it and they are happy to come to speak to your group no matter how small! The contact details are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Did you know we are on Facebook? You can access the Eco-Congregation Ireland Facebook profile [here](#) or just go to facebook.com and search 'Eco-Congregation Ireland'. It's a great place to keep up to date with ECI's activities and access current news and information from other NGOs and faith organisations.

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Our Climate Justice Candle – the journey continues!

Since our last newsletter, ECI's Climate Justice Candle has spent the summer in the Brigidine Retreat Centre, Tullow, Co Carlow being enjoyed by people on retreat and visitors passing through the centre. In the month of September it was used in worship in Tullow Church of Ireland, Dun Laoghaire Methodist and Bray Methodist and is slowly continuing its journey through Co Wicklow and on to Co Wexford. If you would like to be part of this initiative, simply drop us an email to info@ecocongregationireland.com.



Our [Shine a Light on Climate Justice](#) Initiative sees our specially commissioned climate justice candle visiting one church each week over the next 12 months. During that time, each church is asked to light the candle and to incorporate a climate justice theme into their services. Some churches may choose to use the

[services](#) that accompany the candle while others might want to adapt the service in a way that suits them; others may choose to simply include a few environmental prayers in their prayers of intercession.

Next Meeting of the Creation Care Network in Northern Ireland

The next meeting of the Creation Care Network in Northern Ireland is Saturday 15 October 2016 at 10.00am in Abbey Presbyterian Church, 99-101 Monkstown Road, Newtownabbey BT37 0LG. Read the reports from the group's meetings held on [19 March 2016](#) and [16 May 2015](#). The gathering will be an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas on how each church is progressing on their environmental journey. New members are always welcome!



Gathering for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation by Parishes in Diocese of Kerry

Two parishes in the Diocese of Kerry initiated a Gathering for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on 1 September and to mark Creation Time. Sylvia Thompson, a member of the Diocese of Kerry Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee provided us with a [report](#) of the event.

The participants ended their event with the words of the Prayer for the Earth from *Laudato Si*:

'All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

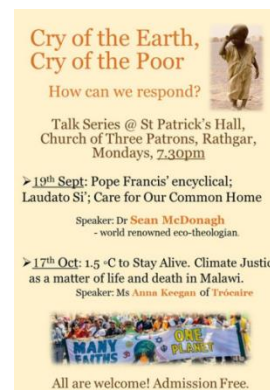
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.'



'Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor: How Can We Respond?'

This is an ecumenical lecture and discussion series at St Patrick's Hall, Church of Three Patrons, Rathgar. On Mon 19th Sept, world renowned eco-theologian, Fr Sean McDonagh, spoke on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. *Laudato Si* deals with issues such as the relationship between poverty and environmental damage, climate change, social responsibility, the beauty of creation, biodiversity loss, and the Christian duty to care for the earth.



Fr McDonagh has written and lectured extensively on the relationship between faith, justice and ecology. He has worked with the World Council of Churches on these issues and advised the Vatican on the first draft of *Laudato Si*.

On Mon 17th Oct, Anna Keegan of Trócaire will speak on the impacts of climate change in Malawi and will examine how Irish citizens and parishes can promote climate justice. Both events will commence at 7.30pm. All are welcome and admission is free!

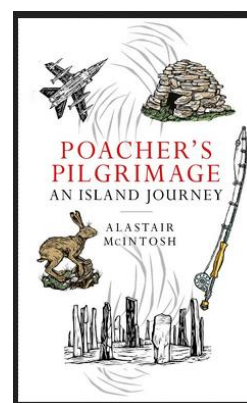
Small Change Cinema

Small Change Cinema is a monthly community cinema that screens documentaries focused on environmental and social issues. Their first screening kicked off on 19 September in St. Finian's Lutheran Church, 24 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 with *Just Eat It - A Food Waste Story*, followed by *Passive House A Building Revolution* on 17 October and *Dirt The Movie* on 7 November. Tickets cost €5 per film. All screenings are at 7.30pm. A season ticket will give you admission to all 3 screenings at the Small Change Cinema and will save €5 on paying for them individually. Small Change Cinema is on [Facebook](#) where you can read more about each film.



'Poacher's Pilgrimage: An Island Journey' – new book from Alastair McIntosh!

Alastair McIntosh has published a new book! 'Poacher's Pilgrimage: An Island Journey' is available from Birlinn. A [video](#) is available of Alastair talking about his new publication. Read more about his publication [here](#). Alastair has his own [website](#) with information on his previous publications. Alastair has been a great supporter of the work of Eco-Congregation Ireland over the years.



Here's what the publisher writes about this book: 'The islands of the Outer Hebrides are home to some of the most remote and spectacular scenery in the world. They host an astonishing range of mysterious structures – stone circles, beehive dwellings, holy wells and 'temples' from the Celtic era. Over a twelve-day pilgrimage, often in appalling conditions, Alastair McIntosh returns to the islands of his childhood and explores the meaning of these places. Traversing moors and mountains, struggling through torrential rivers, he walks from the most southerly tip of Harris to the northerly Butt of Lewis. The book is a walk through space and time, across a physical landscape and into a spiritual one.'

Sarx – Christian Animal Welfare

Sarx is a UK based charity founded on the belief that Creation is the very outpouring of God's love. It exists for the benefit of Christians and their animal kin in order to promote animal welfare amongst Christians in the UK and beyond through encouraging prayer and Biblical reflection, raising awareness of animal theology, the promotion of ethical and meat-free lifestyles, political advocacy and providing information, talks and organising conferences. The aim of Sarx is to respond and witness to this divine love by striving towards a world where Christians lead the way in enabling all animals to live with dignity, freedom and peace. If you are interested in learning more visit the Sarx [website](#) where you will find helpful and interesting information and you can sign up for their newsletter. You can also find Sarx on [Facebook](#).



Irish Independent Climate Change Special

Recently the *Irish Independent* ran a special report on climate change encouraging us to act now, not sometime in the future. In her [blog](#) Heather Mason of Friends of the Earth Ireland, has produced a very helpful summary of the articles and ideas in this special report.



Some of the articles include [Climate Change and You: 10 ways you can help](#) and [20 influencers who will shape our response to climate change](#), included on this list are Dr Cara Augustenborg from Friends of the Earth, Prof John Sweeney and Dr Lorna Gold from Trócaire. The *Irish Independent* and Friends of the Earth are also encouraging us to tweet [#onegoodidea](#) to tackle climate change. Friends of the Earth has provided a handy [link](#) to make it easy for us to submit our ideas. Let's get involved!

Northern Ireland's Environment ... Good News and Bad News

Some stories from the BBC NI that made environmental headlines during Creation Time:



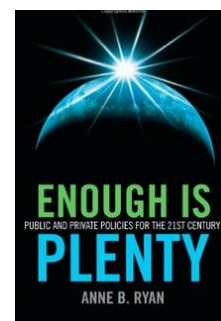
[BBC: State of Nature: One-in-five species studied at risk of extinction on island of Ireland](#) - One-in-five species studied for a nature report is at risk of extinction in Ireland. The State of Nature report 2016 assesses the health of Northern Ireland's habitats and species.

[Lough Neagh scheme launched to improve habitat for protected birds](#) - A fresh attempt is to be made to improve the habitat for protected birds around Lough Neagh.

[Portadown sewage ponds to be reborn as wildflower meadows](#) - More than 15 acres of former sewage lagoons are being transformed into a wildflower meadow in a unique project in County Armagh.

'Enough is Plenty – Reclaiming the Common Good' organised by South Belfast Quakers and Methodists

On Saturday 24th September, a conference took place that explored what makes for a society where 'enough is plenty' – addressing contemporary moral, economic and theological issues in our affluent and waste-prone society.



The presenters, Anne Ryan (author of the book *Enough is Plenty*), Tony Weekes ([South Belfast Quaker Meeting](#) and [Basic Income Ireland](#)) and James Orr ([Friends of the Earth NI](#)), are well-informed social and economic commentators, who opened up general discussion on our contemporary society, including the environment, economy and the common good. Double the number of people expected, attended the afternoon conference. The event was sponsored jointly by South Belfast Quaker Meeting (an Eco-Congregation Ireland award winner) and [Belfast South Methodist Church](#) who were hosting this at their centre on the Lisburn Road as part of a weekend of Harvest Celebrations. There will be a full report of this event in our next newsletter.

Eco challenge!

Every day hundreds of thousands of people throw away disposable coffee cups creating a mountain of waste which ends up in landfill



and polluting the planet. Have you ever thought about encouraging your household, church or parish to use an alternative type of cup for their caffeine fix? Our friends at Eco-Congregation Scotland recommend a Scottish company called Vegware. Their award winning catering disposables are low carbon, made from renewable or recycled materials, and all can be recycled along with food waste. Perhaps we could consider using their compostable/ biodegradable cups, plates and dishes for catering in our church functions? They even make festive cups for Christmas! To find out more visit their website: www.vegware.com.

Prayer for the Earth

The Feast of St Francis on 4 October brings Creation Time to an end until next year. Let us continue to care for and bring healing to the earth and all her creatures.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

With kindest regards

Karen Nicholson
Administrative Officer

info@ecocongregationireland.com
+353 (0) 89 974 0744

Rev Andrew Orr
Chair and Church of Ireland representative

andreworr1234@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 419 6051

Catherine Brennan SSL
Roman Catholic representative

catherinebrennanssl38@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 259 9071

Rev John Corrie
Methodist representative

jscmethodist@gmail.com
+44 (0) 28 9209 1559

Joe Furphy
Presbyterian representative

jfurphy@aol.com
+44 (0) 28 9061 2311

Gillian Armstrong
Religious Society of Friends representative

garmsg@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 952 6929

