

Dear Eco-Congregation friends

Welcome to the July/August 2018 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. We hope all friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland are having a lovely summer!



### 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 and at the above link.

Do 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.

Would you like to start your journey towards an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award? A good way to get started is by completing our [Environmental Check Up for Your Church!](#) Send us your completed Checklist and one of our committee will be in touch to help you move towards an application for an Eco-Congregation Ireland award.

**Don't forget!** ECI will award two certificates in the earlier stages of your journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award to mark stages on the way - the Awareness Certificate and the Endeavour Certificate. [Learn more on the ECI website here.](#)



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## Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues with the New ECI Candle!

The Eco-Congregation Ireland [Climate Justice Candle](#) has been weaving its ecumenical and climate justice journey around Ireland since the launch of the project in 2015. Our new candle has headed off on its ecumenical and climate justice journey again!

[St Mary's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Limerick](#) was the first church to host our new candle on Sunday 3 June. The visit of the candle also coincided with a special service in the Cathedral which saw the launch of a Community Awards Scheme. Among those present for the service was Deputy Mayor of Limerick, Marian Hurley; Senator Maria Byrne and Councillors from Limerick City & County Council. The preacher at the service was the Bishop of Limerick, the Most Rev Dr Brendan Leahy, who highlighted and commended, during his sermon, the contribution of so many volunteers to the city of Limerick and its Citizens. [Read more on the ECI website.](#)



On 1 July the candle was present in [St Mary's Church of Ireland, Killarney](#) where parishioners used it in their Family Service. During this service they focussed on their young people's sunflower growing project and on nautical plastics.



On Sunday 22nd July the candle visited Kenmare & Dromod Union, Co Kerry. The Church of the Transfiguration, Sneem and St Patrick's, Kenmare hosted the Climate Justice Candle in special services as part of their progress towards the objectives of Eco-Congregation Ireland. The regular congregation was joined by visitors from the US, Germany, England, Greece and Limerick, illustrating the fact that we are one family under God, all with an equal share in the responsibility to nurture and protect His beautiful creation. The Rt. Rev'd Kenneth Kearon Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe was present. [Read more on the ECI website and view their photos.](#)



If you would like to be part of this initiative and use the new candle in a future event, simply drop us an email to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com). We look forward to hearing from YOU!

## ECI Climate Justice Candle @ World Meeting of Families 2018

The [Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle](#) will be present at the World Meeting of Families in the Prayer Marque for the duration of the pastoral congress in the RDS from Wednesday 22nd - Friday 24th August 2018. At 6.00pm on Friday 24th August the Candle will leave the final RDS liturgy and pilgrims hope

to walk with the candle from the RDS to Christ Church Cathedral. Jane Mellett, 'Our Common Home' Project Co-ordinator would like some Eco-Congregation Ireland volunteers to help organise this walk and carry the candle along the way! If you would like to get involved please contact Jane Mellett directly on [jane.mellett@worldmeeting2018.ie](mailto:jane.mellett@worldmeeting2018.ie).

## Resources for Creation Time 2018

Eco-Congregation Ireland is preparing resources for Creation Time 2018 and they will be available on our website soon. If you are holding an event or worship service to celebrate Creation Time we would love to receive a report and a photo or two for our next newsletter! [Read how Season of Creation is being supported across Christian traditions](#).



There are some very helpful resources which can be downloaded from the following websites: [European Christian Environmental Network](#); [World Council of Churches](#); [CAFOD](#); [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#); [Churches Together in Britain and Ireland](#); [Season of Creation](#); [Tearfund](#); [Church of England](#).

There is an array of resources available on the [Pray and Fast or the Climate website](#) including complete services, prayers and prayer collections, sermon notes, reflections, presentations and study materials and resource collections from many different countries, traditions and organisations. [Visit this link to read more](#).

## Update on the World Meeting of Families – 21-26 August 2018

"In the family too, we can rethink our habits of consumption and join in caring for the environment as our common home." (Amoris Laetitia, 277). Jane Mellett, 'Our Common Home' Project Co-ordinator is tasked with 'greening' the [WMOF event](#). She sent ECI an update on this event. Participants at the [WMOF2018](#) Pastoral Congress in the RDS will be able to access 'Our Common Home' spaces throughout the festival in prayer, discussion and action and one of these involves visiting the Eco-Congregation Ireland's Climate Justice Candle and Photo Exhibition.



Examples of some other activities include: a visit to 'Our Common Home' Garden (St. Damian's Monastery, Simonscourt Rd); joining Fr. Sean McDonagh and the Laudato Si' team as they reflect on the vast biodiversity of our world; visiting 'The Beehive Cell' by world renowned sculptor Imogen Stuart, an interactive piece of art connecting us deeply to nature and our Irish Christian heritage; Eye in the sky: Look out for 'Our Common Home' Globe. From WMOF2018 Dublin it will go to World Youth Day in Panama! There are many more inspirational activities to visit. Read Jane's update in full [on the ECI website for information](#). You can contact Jane if you have any questions on tel: +353 1 567 6800 or email: [jane.mellett@worldmeeting2018.ie](mailto:jane.mellett@worldmeeting2018.ie). Read the WMOF2018 blog - [The World Meeting of Families 2018 is going green with the 'Our Common Home' project](#).

## Friends Burial Ground in South Belfast has gone bee-friendly!

[South Belfast Quakers](#) have recently been exploring the idea of providing some space for a beekeeper to host their bees. They approached the committee in charge of the burial ground, located in south Belfast, who were very positive about the idea of having bees



in the space. The burial ground is a walled garden with lots of grass and trees. In June Karen, the beekeeper, set up her hive with a growing colony who have been thriving and expanding. She is getting assistance from Sylvia, a member of South Belfast Quaker Meeting. Karen hopes to be able to harvest some honey next summer. If there is enough, she hopes to donate some to the Quaker Care shop on the Lisburn Road to raise funds for Quaker Service - so eco-friendly and socially-inclusive too!

### **RCB and CITI receive their bee hives!**

The Representative Body of the Church of Ireland has recently taken delivery of three hives of honey-bees to its offices in Rathmines, and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute has received four hives to situate on its grounds. Ms Fern Jolley, Property Officer, worked with the Dublin County Beekeepers' Association to choose suitable spots for the hives to be placed, so that the bee keeper can care for them during the year as they settle in to their new homes. The RCB has also signed up as a business member of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.



The RCB's actions are part of an on-going and growing movement across the Church of Ireland to protect the environment and its creatures – from graveyards in Myross, Co. Cork ([Eco approach to rural churchyard in West Cork](#)) to churchyards in Co. Wicklow ([Project to turn church yards into wildlife havens](#)). These projects and initiatives are part of the Church of Ireland's Environmental Charter, passed by the General Synod in 2015, which calls all members of the Church to the duty of environmental stewardship of God's creation, locally, nationally and internationally.

### **Update from Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish, Dennehy's Cross, Cork**

The Faith in Action Group in Ballineaspig Parish has shared an update with us of their latest activities. On 'Seed Sunday' the group distributed free seeds of easy to grow vegetables, herbs and flowering plants after all the Masses. They hope as a follow up to this to invite parishioners to celebrate a special Harvest Thanksgiving Mass and Festival and to bring some of their home-grown produce to a Bring and Buy event on Sunday, 23rd September.



On the 7th June, Dr Tom Kelly led a walk for the group. Tom is a Zoologist based in University College Cork, who has a particular interest in birds. The group enjoyed learning to identify the birds from sight or from song. Faith in Action Ballineaspig have joined the national 'Sustainable Energy Community' (SEC) Network as the first step in promoting energy efficiency and wider use of renewable energy and were delighted to receive a Letter of Offer from SEAI confirming approval for funding to develop their proposal to commission comprehensive Building Energy Ratings on a number of houses in the parish. [You can read their report in full on the ECI website.](#)

### **ECI Endeavour Certificate presented to Daughters of Charity**

On Thursday 28th June, Sr Catherine Brennan, Catholic representative on the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee, addressed the Daughters of Charity at their Provincial meeting in Dunardagh Blackrock. The Sisters have been working on aspects of Laudato Si in relation to awareness raising, reading and sharing on the encyclical and sharing on the small practical steps they have been engaged in. Just before their Provincial Meeting this year, Sr. Catherine was in contact to say that she would like to present the Daughters of Charity with an ECI Endeavour Certificate. This is another step in their journey to becoming a



member of Eco-Congregation Ireland, a goal which they set at their Province Day on Saturday 28th June 2017. [Read more and view photos on the ECI website here.](#)

### Watch the EcoQuakers film!

'[Quakers: The Spiritual Journey of Earthcare](#)' – a film by EcoQuakers Ireland – premiered during Ireland Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends at the Millennium Theatre, Limerick, on 19th July 2018. The film features Friends from around Ireland talking about the spiritual challenges around sustainability, where they find joy in the sustainability journey and what their one wish for change in Ireland would be in relation to sustainability. Friends were invited to send in short filmed pieces around three questions:

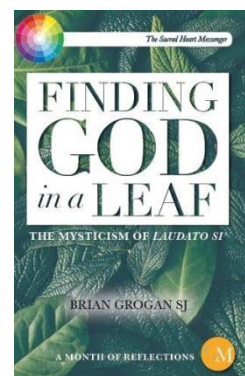
- 1 For you, what appear to be the main spiritual challenges around sustainability?
- 2 Where do you find joy in the journey with sustainability?
- 3 If you had one wish for change in Ireland, what would it be?

Many responses were received and Brian O'Suilleabhain edited them into the film entitled "Quakers: The Spiritual Journey of Earthcare" which is about 7 minutes long. You can view this inspirational film on the Ireland Yearly Meeting's [brand new You Tube channel here](#). EcoQuakers Ireland is a committee of Ireland Yearly Meeting that supports Quaker Meetings in their efforts to live peacefully and sustainably. [You can learn more about EcoQuakers here.](#)



### New Publication! 'Finding God in a Leaf: The Mysticism of Laudato Si' by Brian Grogan SJ

Brian Grogan brings the background of Ignatian spirituality and a lived appreciation of God's creation to his book of meditations on Pope Francis' Encyclical, Laudato Si. Rather than an exhaustive explanation of the encyclical, this book serves as a daily invitation to notice in ordinary creation the invitation of God to love and care for all God's creation. Read slowly each morning, it could give a focus for living the day in recognising God in all things, and the call of God to be a co-creator of his beautiful world each day. [Read more about this publication.](#)



### Tearfund Ireland's Renew our World Campaign

The impact of climate change can be felt in every country in the world and the poorest nations are the most effected. [Tearfund Ireland](#) is part of the Renew our World Campaign and is inviting you to join them as they embark on a mission to mobilise and take action on issues of sustainability and climate justice. Renew our World is bringing people together from all the over the world to unite their voices in a global worship campaign. This campaign will culminate with the delivery of a song petition representing the voices of Christians all over the world, asking our global leaders to keep their commitments on tackling climate change. Tearfund is looking for people to follow the journey, learn the new worship anthem and then record it and post to social media. Learn more by contacting [gemma.kelly@tearfund.ie](mailto:gemma.kelly@tearfund.ie) or [emma.lynn@tearfund.ie](mailto:emma.lynn@tearfund.ie). You can read Tearfund's [Renew our World Campaign flier here](#).



## Reflection on a Bee Orchid by Fr Hugh O'Donnell

Fr Hugh O'Donnell is a poet and ministers with the Salesian community in the parish of Sean McDermott Street in Dublin. He completed the MA course in Religion and Ecology in 2004 at the Columban Ecological Centre at Dalgan. Out of that experience came his written reflection on the intimate relationship between worship and the earth, namely, [Eucharist and the Living Earth](#) (Columba), which was revised in 2012.



Fr Hugh has shared a reflection on a bee orchid with us. You can read his reflection in full [on the ECI website here](#). He says 'Our footprint grows heavier upon the earth. Maybe wild flowers can heal us if we let them. Jesus understood as much when he said, 'attend to them' for in their beauty is revealed a glimpse of Original Love. In their presence we are invited to be still.'

## Connect2Earth Stories

Caroline Goucher from [Westport Eco-Congregation](#) provided ECI with an update on their work. [Earth Hour](#) has featured County Mayo's, newly awarded Care of Creation Group 'Westport Eco-Congregation' following on from their success over the last few years of activities for this event. [#Connect2Earth](#) was created to organise the efforts, to shed light on topics impacting our planet's well-being and to feature the personal stories of people involved in Earth Hour activism.



Caroline Goucher from Westport Eco-Congregation has been featured in these personal stories and you can read her story and the stories from people all over the world on the [Earth Hour stories website](#). Caroline says: 'In County Mayo, we hope to raise the profile of #EarthHour in 2019 and unite the Call to Action. Get involved now by starting conversations, sharing your thoughts, and spreading the word about our connection to this place, we call home. Earth Hour 2019 will take place on March 23rd, it's never too early to start thinking of ideas and integrate it into your congregation's gathering.' You can read Caroline's report in greater detail [on the ECI website here](#).

## Westport Eco-Congregation pays tribute to the late Fr Patrick Burke

[Westport Eco-Congregation](#) wishes to honour, remember and pay tribute to the late Fr Patrick Burke, member of their committee. On Monday 26th June 2018, the news of his sudden death struck them all, the loss of one of their flock. Fr Patrick Burke (38) had been a curate in Westport for two years. He was pivotal in their congregation achieving their Eco-Congregation Award in April and was celebrant at Sr. Catherine Brennan's presentation of the award to the churches in Westport. You can read Westport Eco-Congregation's tribute to Fr Patrick [in full on the ECI website](#).



## Suaimhneas – A Place of Peace

[Suaimhneas](#) is situated in Cappakeel, Emo, Co. Laois and is a non-residential centre, offering opportunities to explore Life's Journey, in the context of New Cosmology, Ecology and the Universe Story. The centre is run by Sr Mai Finlay and Sr Ann Lynch, both of whom are members of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary. At Suaimhneas they endeavour to live in a way that is respectful and mindful of our shared existence with all of creation and they facilitate workshops and weekly events which focus on our interconnection and oneness with each other and all of creation. [You can learn more here.](#)



## Update from Future We Need Group

The Future We Need Group is a group of religious from different congregations who meet regularly around issues pertaining to sustainable living and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Currently the group is establishing some creative input for the Season of Creation beginning September 1st – October 4th.



At a meeting on July 25th it was decided to write up a statement for Intercom which would assist the clergy in disseminating some useful information for this precious time and to make contact with the CEO's of the variety of supermarkets throughout our country encouraging them to continue the battle against single-use plastic and useless packaging which ends up in landfills around the country. [More on the ECI website.](#)

## Cool Planet Experience

The [Cool Planet Experience](#) is a registered Irish charity on a mission to motivate the people of Ireland to take climate action. They believe that making smart, sustainable choices can enrich your life and save the planet. Through their interactive exhibition in Powerscourt House, Enniskerry, Co Wicklow, their touring workshops and champion programme - they want to involve the country in the story of climate change. Cool Planet Experience has a team of Cool Planet Champions based all over the country. They can come to your business, group, school, church or organisation to offer a free interactive presentation on climate change this will include a brief overview of what climate change is, what causes it and what Ireland is doing to address it, and how individuals can change habits for the better. [Learn more here.](#)



## Latest European Christian Environmental Network newsletter available

[The European Christian Environmental Network](#) describes its vision as 'Recognising and celebrating the gifts of creation is challenged by growing environmental risks and increasing climate change. Our vision of the ecology of life calls us to radically review how we now live as individuals and communities. ECEN, working closely with the Conference of European Churches, promotes

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[european christian environmental network](#)

sharing, cooperation, action and theological reflection across our different countries and traditions in caring for creation.'

You can sign up to receive their newsletters [by email here](#). Their latest newsletter contains information on the CEC General Assembly 2018 on Economic and Climate Justice; reflections on the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly; Creation Time 2018; a letter of support for Season of Creation; the 12th ECEN Assembly, 6-10 October 2018, Katowice, Poland; new staff member Kinga Szűcs; WCC Climate Change Meeting Explores "Just Transitions", Plans for COP 24. [Read the newsletter here](#).

## Eco Challenge!

Ditching the disposable for reuse! [The Conscious Cup Campaign](#), was started in late 2016 by a group of concerned individuals who, inspired by similar initiatives of cafes and citizens around the world, are aiming to reduce and eventually eliminate single use cups in Ireland. Those involved met through the [Zero Waste Ireland Facebook Group](#), and now have the support of [VOICE - Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment](#). Are we prepared to highlight the incredible volume of single use coffee cup waste, especially in our churches? No matter what the cup is made of - single use is not acceptable! Join the [Conscious Cup Campaign](#) and be part of the transition! [Check out VOICE's recent conversation on bio-plastics](#). It's time to put a lid on it!



## Prayer for the Earth

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. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.



We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

*Pope Francis, Laudato Si' 246*

With kindest regards,

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