



Dear Eco-Congregation Friends

Welcome to the January/February 2020 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. A new Earth-centred year and decade is ahead of us!

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.

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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Save the Date!

Eco-Congregation Ireland is holding a day conference! The theme is ***Planetary Emergency: How to Have Hope*** and the date is Saturday 21 March 2020 from 11.00am to 4.00pm. The conference will take place in G16, The Loyola Institute, ISE/Loyola Building, Trinity College, Dublin 2. Coffee/tea served from 10.30am. Light lunch provided. Speakers include Professor John Barry, Rev Dr Johnston McMaster and Fr Dermot Lane. You can register via our [Eventbrite link](#) or send an email to info@ecocongregationireland.com.

Would you like to volunteer with Eco-Congregation Ireland?

We are recruiting volunteers! Are you committed to promoting the message of climate justice? Due to the popularity of our [ECI Climate Justice Candle Project](#), we are expanding the project to include four candles to cover each of the four provinces of Ireland – Ulster, Munster, Connacht and Leinster. Our hope is to recruit volunteers in each province. The volunteer role will include:

- Contacting churches or groups in your area to host the Climate Justice Candle
- Organising the delivery and collection of the candle to and from each church
- Keeping in touch with ECI with updates

For further information please contact info@ecocongregationireland.com.



Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues!

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. 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. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits Parish of Maghera, Co Down

At the end of 2019 the ECI Climate Justice Candle visited the Parish of Maghera in beautiful Co Down. Here it is 'where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'! Finbarr Keaveney sent ECI [his meditation which was used to accompany the candle in the Parish](#).



ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits South Belfast Quaker Meeting

On Sunday 12th January the ECI Climate Justice Candle was hosted by South Belfast Quaker Meeting. This photo shows members of the South Belfast Quaker Meeting Eco Group. [At this link](#) you can read the text that was read in Meeting for Worship to mark the event.



Some notable dates in 2020!

- Earth Hour 2020 – Saturday 28 March, 8.30pm – 9.30pm. [All information at this link!](#)
- [Earth Day 50th anniversary](#) – 22 April 2020.
- 5th anniversary of publication of Laudatory Si' – the Global Catholic Climate Movement has all events associated with this [on their website here](#).
- Season of Creation 2020 – 1 September – 4 October 2020 – [visit here for more information](#).
- [COP26 in Glasgow](#)

Visit of Prof. Katharine Hayhoe to Ireland

Prof. Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist and a leading science communicator, will be touring Ireland to deliver secular and faith-based talks on the topic of climate change. Katharine is a professor in the Department of Political Science, a director of the Climate Center, and an associate in the Public Health Program of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Texas Tech University. A remarkable communicator about climate change (as in [her widely viewed TED talk](#), for example), she is also an impassioned advocate for Christian engagement with climate.



Katharine has received numerous and diverse accolades for her work in communicating the science of climate change. Among others, she has been named to Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People (2014), Foreign Policy's 100 Leading Thinkers (2014 & 2019), Huffington Post's 20 Climate Champions (2015), and FORTUNE magazine's World's Greatest Leaders (2017). She was named a United Nation's Champion of the Earth (2019) and one of Christianity Today's 50 Women to Watch (2012). Her talks are listed below. [For more information please contact the relevant organisation.](#)

Monday 9th March

University College Cork

5.00 – 6.00 pm – Mitigate, Adapt, or Suffer, Room G10, Brookfield Health Science Complex, UCC.

8.00pm – 9.00pm – Christians, Climate, and our Culture around the World, Walton Lecture, <https://www.cis.org.uk/ireland/walton/>, West Wing 6 Lecture theatre, Main Quadrangle, UCC.

Wednesday 11th March

Queens University Belfast

10:00am – 12:00pm, Katharine to give an academic seminar in the School of Geography.

6.00pm – Co-Sponsored Church of Ireland Theological Lecture and Religious Studies Forum public lecture, Talking climate: Why facts are not enough <https://www.thehubbelfast.org/theological-lecture-2020/>

Thursday 12th March

Morning – Research Scholar Workshop – with Katharine and academic staff from QUB.

6:30pm-8.00pm – Trinity College Dublin Long Room Hub

Friday 13th of March

11.00am-12:30pm, Neill/Hoey Lecture Theatre in the Trinity Long Room Hub Institute for Arts and the Humanities, Talking Climate: Why Facts are Not Enough, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/talking-climate-why-facts-are-not-enough-dr-katharine-hayhoe-tickets-86967083889>

Maynooth, 7:30pm – Climate Change: Facts, Fictions, and our Faith, for the Walton Lecture in Maynooth, <https://www.cis.org.uk/ireland/walton/>

Archbishops of Armagh promote Great Green Wall

The recent RTÉ Christmas message from Archbishops Richard Clarke and Eamon Martin looked at our shared responsibility for our environment and climate. The Archbishops highlighted the Great Green Wall and Laudato



Tree initiatives, to prevent desertification across 8,000 km (5,000 miles) in the Sahel and encourage people in Ireland to plant trees here and sponsor the planting of more trees in this part of Africa. The initiative is improving food security and creating jobs and a better quality of life in communities for millions of people who live along its path. The broadcast is an annual opportunity provided by RTÉ to communicate a Christian message to viewers and listeners. Many thanks to the teachers and students of the Royal School Armagh, St Catherine's College, Armagh, and St Paul's High School, Bessbrook, who contributed to the broadcast through music and a discussion with the Archbishops. For more information, please visit www.greatgreenwall.org

Ballynature Day, Co Antrim – 29th Feb 2020

Eco-congregation Ireland will have a stand at the next Ballynature Day on 29th Feb 2020. Come along and say hello. The event is growing year on year and is a great opportunity to engage the public. There will be over 60 stands in 2020, some come along and join in the environmental fun. [All information on the ECI website here.](#)



Margaret Aylward Centre Conference 2020 'Finding Good Eco-Questions for Our Faith Communities'

The [Margaret Aylward Centre for Faith and Dialogue](#) is holding a conference as part of its commitment to engaging with the bigger questions and supporting faith leaders on Saturday, 29 February 2020 10am – 5pm entitled 'Beyond A Throwaway Culture – Finding Good Eco-Questions for our Faith Communities'. We are all aware that climate change and the call to environmental justice is a central matter for Christians, but how does that translate for urban communities in Dublin today?

This conference looks at how our economic and justice issues are often deeply connected with environmental concerns. It aims to join the dots between hospital waiting lists, or access to housing and work with issues like quality of air, public transport, and access to green space. The goal is to invite those in faith leadership to search for good questions rather than easy answers to these matters.

As well as offering questions, the organisers want to share some ideas that have worked in local communities – from walking to planting to learning about nature. The conference welcomes Dr Ciara Murphy, Environmental Policy Officer with the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Dr Eoin O'Mahony, UCD School of Geography, Brenda Farrell, environmental activist and liturgy leader and a host of others to lead participants in this reflection. Places are limited so please book immediately to avoid disappointment. E: info@macfd.ie. This conference is supported by the Holy Faith Sisters as part of their commitment to faith and dialogue.



Church of Ireland Environmental Policies

The Church of Ireland's central trustee, the Representative Body, approved its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy and Policy on Climate Change for 2020 at its most recent meeting in December. The Church has divested from companies involved in the extraction of thermal coal and tar sands and has sought to increase its exposure to renewable energy assets. Additional restrictions have been implemented for companies involved in oil and gas extraction – especially those whose activities are incompatible with seeking to limit a global temperature increase to 2°C under the Paris Agreement; the RCB seeks to be fully divested from these stocks by 2022. The Investment Committee, which presented the reports, commended the Church's Investment Portfolio and ESG Manager, Ms Sarah Dunne, on her work in this area.



Latest News from Carrigaline Union of Parishes

Latest news – the boiler in the Rectory was replaced, resulting in 30% more efficiency, lowering carbon emissions and saving costs. A campaign promoting the use of recyclable gift wrapping was run during the weeks before Christmas. Having recently received a generous donation of 150 oak saplings, parishioners have launched a campaign in the parish and the wider community called Plant for Our Planet. Trees are free of charge! If interested contact John Andrew 0872556147.



Tree Planting in the Parish of Drumbo & Carryduff, Diocese of Down & Connor

On Friday 29th and Saturday 30th November 2019 some 200 enthusiastic volunteers turned up to plant 500 trees on the grounds of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Carryduff, Co Down. The trees were all native Irish species which will help to enrich biodiversity and sustain local wildlife. The trees were kindly donated by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) who also provided tools and expertise. The event was led by the Drumbo and Carryduff Environment Group and TCV. The large number of volunteers were mobilised through the support and collaboration between these and other many different people and organisations across the local Carryduff community. Participants also had support from wider afield with Trocaire playing a helpful role.



School children, parishioners, and local families all donated their time to contribute. From young kids to grandparents, everyone joined in. Feedback from the event was positive throughout. The benefits were:

- A strengthening of the community network
- Families and friends enjoying spending quality time together in nature
- Enabling participants to plant trees as celebration of a special landmark in their lives, or as a legacy for children and grandchildren
- Raising awareness of environmental issues and the benefits of tree planting and helping to mitigate the effects of climate change

The event was a success because of good communication through a variety of channels including personal contact, flyers, announcements, emails, newsletters, website and Facebook pages. It was also very useful to

have the tools and expertise for tree planting and a meeting space with refreshments while the planting took place. The trees will provide a visible reminder of a wonderful two days and lasting joy for many generations to come.

Creation Spirituality Events at Drumalis 2020

Drumalis has two events coming up in 2020 that are of particular interest to ECI friends. Firstly, the annual [Re-inhabiting the Earth Spring Conference](#) will take place at Drumalis from Friday, 14 – Sunday, 16 February 2020. The theme will be “Hope for the Planet”. It is a particularly significant weekend in the Re-inhabiting the Earth series as it will also see the launch of a new partnership between Drumalis and A Rocha – a venture in the journey of working together for the sake of our planet. This will take place on the afternoon of Saturday, 15 February during the conference. The keynote speaker for the weekend is Andy Lester, Head of Conservation for A Rocha UK. [Your invitation to Hope for the Planet: A New Partnership is here](#). Then, in the summer, Sr Margaret Rose, Sr Anne Harnett and team will lead their annual Creation Spirituality retreat from 6-11 July – the title of which is “[Dying to Live](#)”. All information at these links.



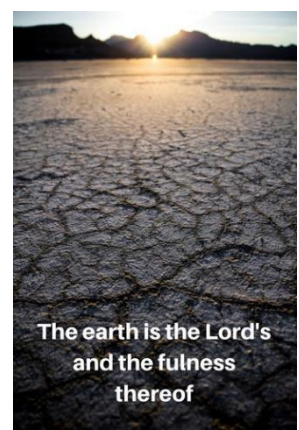
Next Meeting of the Northern Ireland Creation Care Network

The 15th meeting of the Creation Care Network will be on Saturday 14th March 2020 at 10.00am. This time the group will meet in Knock Methodist Church Centre, 17 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LA. There is parking at the centre. Anyone interested in using the metro: the 4d at 9.00am Donegall Square West, getting off at Knock Road or Knockdene or 4e at 9.20am Donegall Square West getting off at Knock Headquarters (5 min walk). All welcome!



Methodist Church in Ireland Council on Social Responsibility Carries Out Survey on Climate Change

The Methodist Church in Ireland Council on Social Responsibility carried out an online survey on climate change among Irish Methodists. CSR was pleased that Conference 2019 approved the resolution to direct every Circuit Executive to have Climate Change/environmental issues as a standing item on their agenda. CSR will work to support the Connexion and local churches to improve their green credentials and are developing an action plan for congregations



BirdWatch Ireland Publishes A Manifesto for Nature

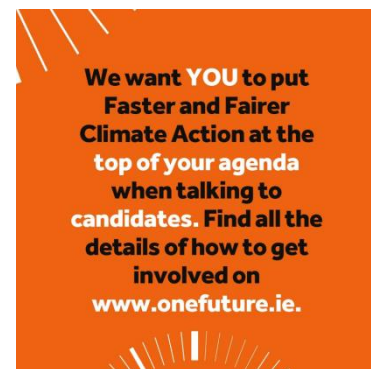
BirdWatch Ireland has published a [Manifesto for Nature](#): a set of proposals for the next government to restore nature in Ireland, to address declines in bird species, other wildlife and habitats, and to tackle climate change. BirdWatch Ireland calls on members of the public to put the issues of biodiversity loss and climate change front and centre with general election candidates. [Read more](#).



One Future – the Campaign for Faster and Fairer Climate Action

One Future Campaign is the people's campaign aimed at reaching all political parties and candidates ahead of February 8th. One Future is calling for faster and fairer Climate Action from the next Government. [Visit their website and join the campaign.](#)

Give your politicians a doorstep challenge on climate change! Visit the Stop Climate Chaos website to download questions you can ask your candidates about climate change >> <https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/>



Update from Care for the Earth Ministry Group, Bonnybook Parish

With funding received from Dublin City Council, the Care for the Earth Ministry Group, Bonnybook Parish has begun to work on their sensory garden. Their aim is that this area will be a welcome place for people in the parish, especially those afflicted with dementia, for the children in the special class in their adjoining school and for all birds, bees and butterflies! Well done to all! The photo on the right shows the group who have planned the garden - Pauline; Kathleen, Margo, Ciarán and Paul, the Advisor.



Latest Publication from Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)

The latest publication from QUNO 'A Government Official's Toolkit: Inspiring Urgent Climate Action' can be [downloaded here](#). This publication is written to support government officials—at local, regional and national levels—who are concerned about the impact of climate change on their citizens, their country, and the planet. The publication is organized into 12 concise cases, with points quoted from, and linked to, peer-reviewed papers. The quotes include the latest science findings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) is approved by Governments. It offers a range of concise cases to help you engage with different concerns, and integrate scientific, rights-based, and indigenous knowledge and approaches throughout the Toolkit. It is meant to empower citizens and decision makers with the latest information coming from the international bodies.



Jubilee Church Partnership Scheme and February Events

Latest events from [Jubilee](#) in Co Antrim:

- NI Science Festival event at Jubilee Farm on 15th February, their 'Science Behind the Farm' tours with Dr Ethel White and Dr Jonny Hanson at 10, 12:30 and 3.00. Further details and booking are [here](#).
- Keynote talk by Dr Jonny Hanson (11-12) and stall at NI Science Festival Science Fair (10-4) on 22nd February. Booking [here](#).
- Jubilee's second tasting menu event, this time with award-winning Belfast eatery Bia Rebel at their new premises in Holywood. Info [here](#).
- Church partnership pilot programme - website info [here](#).



Save Money Save Energy Information Night

There is a public energy information evening in Holycross on Tuesday February 18th at 8pm in the Community Centre. Householders will learn about how to save money on energy costs and home heating, details of grants available for energy upgrades, finance options available through the Credit Union and community owned renewable energy projects.

The event is being organised in association with Domhan Glas Environmental Group. Speakers will include representatives from Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative, Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team, Thurles Credit Union and Community Power, Ireland's first community owned electricity supplier. All welcome.

Eco Challenge!

Plastic – something to give up for Lent – and for good!

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for February 2020 point out that we often have choices in whether to buy plastic or not. Ash Wednesday, later this month, begins Lent, a time of reflection and renewal. Trevor provides us with a very helpful and practical day-by-day guide to going plastic-free for Lent – and for good! Trevor is one of the Church of Ireland representatives on the ECI committee and ministers in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. [You can follow Trevor's Lenten plan to give up plastic on the ECI website.](#)



Prayer/Reflection for the Earth

Fr Hugh O'Donnell is a poet and ministers with the Salesian community in the parish of Sean McDermott Street in Dublin. He has taken the beautiful photo on the right – sunset at Lissadell. Fr Hugh shares the following poem with us:

BARNACLE GEESE AT LISSADELL
for Teresa and Maurice

Three fields away, you say, you can see something
as Maurice whips out binoculars then spreads
and tightens the legs of the telescope -
'it's them alright,
could be 300 stretched across the field feeding'.
From the hide we gaze out, awaiting our turn to see
close up their black and white bodies against the green.

'And when will they rise up together and return home
to the island?' you ask,
'against what tincture of dusk?' Suddenly a buzzard
sweeps over and they startle and scatter
in a great uproar about the sky. As we might do
if we knew how to raise ourselves out of the habitual,
offer something like a cry to the sunset before it dies.



With kindest regards,

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