

## Eco-Congregation Ireland 2019 Awards

### Parish of Tuam

The Parish of Tuam Eco-Congregation Award was presented at the 10.30am Mass in the Cathedral by Eco-Congregation Ireland's Catholic representative Catherine Brennan SSL. The Mass was concelebrated by Archbishop Michael Neary, Fr Pat Farragher and Fr. Brian Grogan.

Archbishop Michael Neary in his homily spoke of climate change and our role as a wealthier nation in its prevention as it is often the poorer nations that suffer most. The necessity to change lifestyle and behaviour in order to protect the environment for future generations and the importance of work being done by Tuam Tidy Towns. He praised the young people in the schools including their reps from the Mercy and Presentation and their teachers and Youth Reach Tuam.

Catherine Brennan SSL praised the co-operation of the various organisations in the parish as a true Eco-Congregation, mentioned the various events which raised awareness and valuable work being done to protect the environment.

Delighted to Accept the award on behalf of Tuam Parish, Anne Quinn stressed the need for a combination of prayer and action, the ideals of an Eco-Congregation, as the basis for a solution to our mother Earth's current problems. The award while acknowledging work done will also encourage further action.

Parishioners felt honoured and blessed to have received this award and be part of the Eco-Congregation Ireland community, working with all to protect all God's creation.



### Holy Faith Sisters

At a missioning ritual in their chapel in Glasnevin, the Holy Faith Sisters were presented with an Eco-Congregation Ireland award by Catherine Brennan SSL. As a region of the Holy Faith Congregation, the sisters had been intensifying their efforts over the past few



years to be more mindful of caring for the environment in their daily lives. Catherine spoke of the astonishing energy, enthusiasm and knowledge demonstrated by the committee members. "Their desire to make a difference is matched by their numerous actions". In particular, she commented on their eco-spirituality as exemplified in two books of collected prayers and reflections, with creation themes, put together by the sisters.

She also noted that many of the sisters were involved in the day to day commitment to good environmental practice, as reflected in their report. One community received a certificate from City Bin as one of the top ten recyclers. The comprehensive guide "Taking Steps to Care for our Common Home" is another highlight as it offers a range of simple steps anyone can take to safeguard the planet. Sisters have also initiated and supported efforts to take care of God's creation in three parishes where they live. Those sisters who are able were also involved in the biodiversity garden with its half-acre wildflower meadow on the site of the Margaret Aylward Centre. The centre itself uses an eco-friendly source of energy and has a beautiful green roof.



## ECI Climate Justice Candle Project Grows

Due to the popularity of the ECI Climate Justice Candle Project, in 2019 the ECI committee decided to expand the project to include four candles to cover each of the four provinces of Ireland – Ulster, Munster, Connacht and Leinster. ECI also started the process of recruiting climate justice volunteers in each province to contact local churches or groups to host the Climate Justice Candle and organise the delivery and collection of the candle to and from each church.

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[www.facebook.com/ecocongregationireland](https://www.facebook.com/ecocongregationireland)

## Eco-Congregation Ireland continues to Shine a Light on Climate Justice in 2019!

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. It continued its journey in 2019 and visited 17 different churches and parishes. It is proving to be a popular focus for worship amongst Christians of all traditions and a resource for awareness-raising of climate change and its impact on our world. Inspirational stories of churches that hosted the Climate Justice Candle in 2019, using it in many different and creative ways include:

### South Belfast Quaker Meeting

"The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age." John Woolman, 1772. Members of South Belfast Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends were delighted to be able to host the Climate Justice Candle on Sunday 27th January 2019 as part of the Shine a Light on Climate Justice Project.

As a meeting of people, they have a number of members very active in various eco and climate justice initiatives at home, in their meeting and in wider society, but the candle was a great reminder to them that they are part of a bigger picture of lots of people working together for a common goal. In the words of Desmond Tutu: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."



### Cabra West Parish

The Church of the Most Precious Blood, Cabra West was delighted to host the candle for a long week-end 21st – 24th March, 2019. It spent its first day in the 'Prayer Room' of St Catherine's Senior School. In preparation for its visit the children prepared 'footprints' where they wrote their promise on how they would reduce their carbon footprint to protect our common home. The Candle then took more 'steps' to the Church for weekend Masses. Some of the children's footprints were on display – highlighting the steps they are taking to protect our earth.



### Corrymeela Community

Corrymeela is Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation centre. They are an ecumenical Christian community with a mission of transforming division through human encounter. Corrymeela hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle for the entire month of February 2019 at their Ballycastle centre. They held worship twice a day in the Croí (their space for prayer and reflection) and throughout the month they focused on the issues of climate



justice and ecological sustainability. Among the strong themes that arose from these sessions was the sense of gratitude participants had for what is available to them.

### Dromantine Eco-Spirituality Group, Newry

In August 2017, Fr. Paddy O'Rourke SMA formed this

group at Dromantine. This group is a gathering of people who are interested in how to best live their relationship with God, each other and with Creation. Members meet on a monthly basis with an opening prayer and reflection. With hosting the ECI Climate Justice Candle the group is showing that they support and encourage others to shine a light on climate justice.



### Laudato Si Day, Dromantine Retreat Centre, Newry

The ECI Climate Justice Candle took centre-stage at the 'Our Parish, Our Common Home' Laudato Si' Day on 12 April 2019, hosted by the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs and the Council for Justice and Peace, both initiatives of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. A wide range of speakers presented, including those from the Council for Justice and Peace, the Laudato Si' Group of the Council for Catechetics of the Bishops' Conference, the SMA laity officer and those involved with Eco-Congregation Ireland in the North who could speak about the practical experience of incorporating Laudato Si' into the life of their community. The event was open to parishioners from dioceses across the North and the aim was to inspire attendees to take up the message of Laudato Si' in their own homes, communities and parishes.



### Cork Ecumenical Bible Week

The theme of the week was *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it*. During the week, four speakers addressed the theme from very different perspectives. The ECI Climate Justice Candle was lit at each event where it was admired and its meaning discussed. Participants were reminded that environmental protection is not just the responsibility of any one particular religious persuasion but is the responsibility of everyone, a realisation that could lead to dialogue and action between Christians and those of other faiths and none.



### Carrigaline Parish, Co Cork

The candle was welcomed at Mass in Carrigaline by the Parish Priest, Fr Patrick Fogarty and by the boys and the girls of St John's National School. Fr Pat made a huge effort to include mention of the candle in





the liturgies of each of the Masses throughout the week. The candle was also included at the liturgy of the Corpus Christi Procession. Parishioners held a closing ceremony at Mass to bid the candle goodbye as it left on its next journey!

### Selesian Cosmology Group

The ECI Climate Justice Candle travelled around the members of the Salesian Cosmology Group throughout the month of July and beginning of August 2019. In July it visited Caherdavin Community, Limerick, FCJ Community, Limerick, Raheen Parish, Limerick, Good Shepherd Community, St. Lelia's Church Limerick, Augustinian Church, O'Connell Street, Limerick and Blanchardstown Oratory. In August it visited the Capuchin Community gathering in Clane, Co. Kildare and the Salesian Sisters community, Donnybrook & Provincial gathering Dublin.



### Dundrum Methodist Church, Dublin

Many members of Dundrum Methodist Church are environmentally active and a great challenge has been making the link between the environment and their faith, so hosting the ECI candle was a reminder that climate action is first and foremost a Gospel imperative and therefore a justice issue. The candle generated some interesting discussion and follow up after the services!



### Westport Eco-Congregation

Westport Eco-Congregation hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle for Season of Creation with Holy Trinity and in St Mary's Parish Churches, with celebration and awareness of Care for our Common Home at numerous events. On the 24th of September, their main event was held in Westport Townhall, where Lorna Gold and Saoirse McHugh addressed a full house and inspired the parish on the hope we can have for the advocacy and protection of our planet and the actions we can take in this time of turbulence and uncertainty.



### Sligo Grammar School

On Friday 27th September the ECI candle was lit in Calry Church at a Special Assembly focussing on climate change. During the service led by Canon Patrick Bamber, the Headmaster, Mr Michael Hall, addressed



the students on the challenges of reversing climate change, and the responsibility of each individual to make the small changes needed to do this. The school choir sang the lovely hymn "Morning has Broken" as the candle was lit and prayers were read by students. The Grammar School is very proud to be part of this initiative as it is beyond doubt that climate change and global warming are the greatest challenges facing their students as they look towards the future. The candle's visit proved to be instrumental in reinvigorating the school's Green School Policy and climate strategy.

### Glaslough

The candle came to Glaslough being present at the Ecumenical Harvest in St Mary's Roman Catholic Church; then it traveled to Errigal Traugh Harvest followed by St Salvator's Harvest in Glaslough and finally it visited at Glennan Presbyterian Church. The candle also went to the local Primary School, Biliis, the local Girls' Brigade in Glaslough and it was present at a special assembly in the Collegiate Grammar School in Monaghan.



### St Gall's, Carnalea, Co Down

The Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle was present at the St Gall's morning and evening services on Sunday 27th October – it also went to their Scout service in the afternoon.



### St Patrick's Parish, Mayobridge, Co Down

A celebration of the Season of Creation from 1<sup>st</sup> September – 4<sup>th</sup> October served as a prelude to the arrival of the Climate Justice candle in St Patrick's Parish on 30<sup>th</sup> October. The candle was lit for the first time in the parish that evening at the beginning of Mass. Following on from that, a prayer service was held around the candle which incorporated a discussion on the practical steps that could be taken to live with more eco-awareness.



### Maghera Parish, 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'!



ECI is grateful for the financial support of Trócaire

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## Certificates Awarded by Eco-Congregation Ireland in 2019

In 2017 the ECI Committee decided to issue two certificates in the earlier stages of the journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award marking stages on the way - the **Awareness Certificate** and the **Endeavour Certificate**. For more information please get in touch with ECI at [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com)

In 2019 the following churches were awarded certificates:

### Awareness Certificate:

- Cloonclare Church of Ireland, Manorhamilton
- St Joseph, Mary and Benildus Parish, Waterford
- Kilnamanagh-Castleview Parish, Tallaght
- Theology Study Group, Parish of Maghera, Newcastle, Co Down
- Douglas Union
- St John the Baptist Parish, Clontarf, Dublin
- St Finbarr's South Parish, Cork
- St Joseph's Parish, Bonnybrook, Dublin
- Parish of Tullow
- Orlagh in the City
- Holy Family Parish, Belfast
- St Gall's, Carnalea
- Eco-Congregation Cloughjordan - An ecumenical initiative of the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church and Roman Catholic Church in Cloughjordan
- Holy Rosary Parish Midleton
- Church of the Immaculate Conception, Roundfort / Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Robeen / St Joseph's Church, Carras, Co Mayo
- St Patrick's Church, Mayobridge



### Endeavour Certificate:

- Blackpool/The Glen, Ballyvolane, The Cathedral, Sunday's Well Parishes, Cork
- Hillsborough Presbyterian
- St Mary's Church, Carlow
- Dublin Unitarian Church
- The Parish of Our Lady and St Joseph, Prosperous
- Presentation Sisters



## New Faces at ECI

In 2019 two new Methodist colleagues joined the Eco-Congregation Ireland team.

- **Stephen Johnston** is a member of Gorey Methodist Church, Co Wexford.
- **Bill Patterson** is a member of Queen's Parade Methodist Church in Bangor, Co Down.



## Chairperson's Remarks

Rev Andrew Orr



2019 was the year in which the climate crisis arrived in a catastrophic way. The Australian bushfires, flooding in Southern Africa and Indonesia and many other events showed that the effects of what we have done to our planet, have become all too real. So too the damage that has been wreaked on habits and biodiversity.

In the face of such problems, it is easy to despair, and indeed grief for what has been lost is a completely natural response. But we also have to look for the signs of hope: those who are making a difference, those who seek live out the Gospel values of care for God's creation. Eco-Congregation Ireland is at the forefront of practical work undertaken in Christian communities on the ground. We are here to advise, support and encourage. Through our eco justice candles we are being the message of care for Creation from one end of the island to the other.

We want this report to tell you of signs of hope, and a real record of all that is being done. Thank you to you all for your support and commitment. May we always "abound in hope" (Romans 15:13).

## Eco-Congregation Ireland has a New Website!



In 2019 ECI developed a new website. The new website is still full of our news and resources but now presented in a much more colourful and contemporary way. [www.ecocongregationireland.com](http://www.ecocongregationireland.com)

## FINANCES

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>€10,221.95</b>
<b>INCOME:</b>	
Church Subscriptions	€2,920.80
Trócaire Grant	€2,000.00
Donations	€1,933.04
<b>Total:</b>	<b>€6,853.84</b>
	<b>+ €10,221.95</b>
	<b>= €17,075.79</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>	
Staff, office & IT expenses	€6,784.15
Printing	€338.00
Award Plaques	€751.65
Climate Justice Candle	€127.09
<b>Total:</b>	<b>€8,000.89</b>
<b>Closing balance at the end of 2019:</b>	<b>€9,074.90</b>