



Dear Friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland

Welcome to the Summer 2022 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter! The Eco-Congregation Ireland committee wishes everyone a peaceful and joyous summertime! If you have any information or stories you would like to share in our future newsletters, we would love to hear from YOU! Please send them to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com). The beautiful sunflower

on the left is growing in the Rathgar Laudato Si Group biodiversity garden in their church grounds.

## Awards! Awards! Kirkinriola Parish Ballymena Receives ECI Award!

Following the great example of Drumalis Retreat Centre Larne, Kirkinriola Parish Ballymena joined ECI in Autumn 2019. Recently they were awarded an ECI Award to acknowledge all the work the parish has undertaken towards Care for Creation, both locally with new pollinator gardens and home grown vegetables on church and parish grounds, wildlife habitat, Laudato Si notice boards and zoom lectures etc as well as supporting social justice projects in southern hemisphere countries which have been greatly affected by the ongoing climate crisis.



Kirkinriola is the first Catholic parish in Northern Ireland to receive this award. On Sunday 31st July, at the end of Mass, Paula McKeown from Living Church Belfast talked about the importance of being faithful and caring guardians of the world that God has given us, at St Patrick's Church Crebilly, and presented the plaque to the parish, it was received by Donna McCormick on behalf of all the groups concerned, including the 2 garden clubs, the All Saints Scouts club, all the Laudato Si groups and all who helped. The flowers were pretty in the bright sunshine and everyone was able to assemble on the new patio area of the church gardens. **Well done to all!** [View their photos here.](#)

## ECI Climate Justice Candles on the Move!

Did you know that ECI has four Climate Justice Candles? One for each historic province of Ireland – Ulster, Munster, Connacht and Leinster! This means that we can get a candle to your church or parish when you need it. If your church or faith community would like to host the candle all you have to do is drop a line to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com) and we will arrange to get the candle safely to you. We are looking forward to seeing the candle in different locations around the country and hearing about how you use it to raise awareness of climate justice!

## ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits ...

### Methodist Church, Cloughjordan and Methodist Local Preachers Meeting

On Thursday 2nd June 2022 the ECI Climate Justice Candle visited the Methodist Local Preachers meeting in Cloughjordan. The candle also visited the Methodist Church in Cloughjordan on Sunday 29th May 2022.



### St Michael & St John Church, Cloughjordan



### Bryansford Sacred Garden Official Opening, Co Down

Finbarr Keaveney sent ECI this report: After many months of community volunteering and gardening at St Patrick's Cemetery in Bryansford Village it was time for the Official Opening of the Sacred Garden. Many people had contributed charitable donations. Parishioners and community had been very generous with their time helping out with digging, planting and weeding. As every gardener knows, patience is needed for growth to take place and it was now time to celebrate the creation of this beautiful place of peace and reflection.



Fr Jim invited all to join him as he celebrated a special outdoor Mass in the Sacred Garden on Thursday

30th June at 5pm. Golf Links House had generously offered to provide an afternoon tea following the Mass. 'Walking in a garden can be a form of meditation and gardening itself is a way of acknowledging God as creator' added Fr Jim.

In November of 2021 the Parish set out to transform a green desert into a vibrant oasis full of biodiversity. There is a circle of blossom trees and in the centre a unique oak

leaf sculpture made of Cortensteel with wooden acorns carved from a fallen oak tree in Tollymore at the base created by local artist Alan Burke. A wild flower meadow and managed mowing will ensure that the pollinators, bees, butterflies and hover flies will be attracted and well fed. This in turn will attract bird species, and small animals increasing biodiversity in the immediate area. The ground has been prepared using purely organic methods of gardening with no pesticides, only peat free compost has been used, thus



honouring our responsibility to “care for our common home”. Aiming to upcycle and repurpose as much as possible water butts have been installed to collect rainwater off the roof of the hall and compost bins will recycle garden waste.

There is a firepit surrounded by log seats where one can sit peacefully and remember a loved one, or enjoy the awesome view of the Mourne mountains or gather in a group to connect with the sights, sounds and smells of nature and have a friendly conversation.



Across from the garden an avenue of native trees has been planted in the order of the letters of the ancient Ogham alphabet. In front of each tree stands a pillar of Kilkenny limestone carved with letter, leaf, fruit and ogham symbol of each tree by local artist Eilis O Baoill. On top of each post local man Cathal O Baoill has designed a musical feature linking sound with letter and tree. We are grateful to the Obaill family for researching this fascinating link which the ancient Celtic people shared between trees, writing and music. The Bryansford Ogham Tree Avenue is unique in this area and you are invited to come along and view this amazing feature and identify the different native trees by their leaf and fruit. Finally sincere thanks goes out to everyone who has contributed to this project.

### **Mercy International Centre in Dublin**

Elizabeth MacNeal sent us this report of the candle visit: Mercy International Centre in Dublin hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle on two separate occasions in May and June to raise awareness about our connectedness with Earth. In May, the candle was central to our prayer space as we hosted virtual meetings with the Mercy Global Action Ocean's Committee. Mercy Global Action is MIA's justice arm with offices at the United Nations in New York City, USA.



The ocean's committee met multiple times to reflect and plan how to celebrate both World Oceans Day on June 8 and the UN World Oceans Conference. The candle helped inspire the team to create an ocean's prayer service ([available here](#)) and an internationally focused campaign on the ocean. The campaign will run in tandem with the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon from June 27 – July 1 2022. This campaign urges each of us to reflect on and take action for the health and sustainability of the world's oceans. A Mercy Oceans Campaign toolkit is available for [download here](#).



The candle again returned to us here at MIC in June. This time to light the path for an in-person [Eco-Spirituality Retreat](#). Some of the participants are featured with the candle in the photo above right taken at the Chapel in MIC. The candle was a steady reminder to each of us on this retreat of our constant connection to the earth. Here at MIC, we feel a special connection to the 8th Work of Mercy and are mindful to seek new ways to deepen our connection with creation. The candle was also visited by multiple groups who entered the Centre during these weeks including several large school groups, many tours who learned about the life and legacy of Catherine McAuley, and those stopping into our chapel space to light a candle and pray. We truly felt blessed to be carers of the ECI Climate Justice Candle and remain ever committed to being good stewards of our earth.

## Archbishop Dermot Farrell Presents SAGE: Shankill Action for a Green Earth with Roman Juriga Award

Sunday 19th June was a great day for SAGE! Archbishop Dermot Farrell visited St. Anne's Parish for the 10.00am Mass in order to present SAGE with their Gold Award from Eco-Congregation Ireland. SAGE had been awarded the Gold Award in 2021 but due to Covid it had not been possible to find a day for the presentation until now. On the same day the Archbishop presented SAGE with the plaque and certificate of the Roman Juriga Award from the European Christian Environmental Network.



*The photo on the right shows Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Fr Derry Murphy PP, Fr Jamie Twohig, Curate, Sr Catherine with the certificate for the Roman Juriga Award, Kathie Davey holding the Plaque and Justin Kilcullen with the Eco-Congregation Ireland Gold Award.*

In each case the range of activities undertaken by SAGE was recognised:

- Arranging to include climate justice in the weekly liturgy in the bidding prayers and parish notices,
- Recognising Earth Day, Celebrating the Season of Creation with events and prayers,
- Biodiversity planting in the grounds of St. Anne's parish,
- Replacing and upgrading the heating and lighting systems in the church to produce an estimated 40% energy saving,
- Engagement with local and national politicians,
- Outreach to other environmental and energy saving communities,
- Organising of lectures to discuss climate change and climate justice.



Parishioners are very proud to receive these two awards and plan to use them to improve their outreach and community engagement. You can read an account of the online presentation of the Roman Juriga Award from the European Christian Environmental Network [here](#).

*The photo on the left shows Sr. Catherine Brennan handing the Eco-Congregation Ireland award to Archbishop Farrell for presentation to Justin Kilcullen, Chair of SAGE*

## Resources for Season of Creation/Creation Time 2022

Season of Creation/Creation Time is almost here! There are resources available for all traditions! ECI would like to share the following resources with you. Simply click on the links to access the resources.

[Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

[Season of Creation 2022](#)

[Eco-Congregation Scotland](#)



## Latest News from ...

### Hillsborough Presbyterian Church

Grace Davin sent ECI this latest update: Hillsborough Presbyterian Church Eco Committee recognised that we need not only to focus internally on matters within our congregation, which we have largely done to date, but also to widen our focus to the local community. We therefore drew up the following aims for 2022:

- Plant a Tree for the Jubilee
- Introduce a Creation Care Service to raise awareness
- Encourage the members of the congregation to greater awareness and participation in Eco activities
- Resume our monthly Eco Tip
- Introduce a local Litter Pick



A Bulb Planting Day was organised at which some volunteers from the congregation participated – we enjoyed the benefits of this initiative in Spring with a good display of daffodils and tulips. Our Grounds Committee has worked hard to secure grants to develop a long overgrown and under-utilised area within our church grounds. We hope to start a Gardening Club in the new church season.



Our Mental Health Team also raised awareness of the benefits of being out and about in nature with a programme of events for Mental Health Week which included walks and an open-air concert: Proms in the Car Park which attracted around 250 people on a sunny afternoon in May. During our Platinum Jubilee Celebrations on 3rd June, HPC invited Lady Mary Peters to plant HPC's Jubilee Tree, an oak tree, with help from the many children present, as a symbol of hope and possibility for the future. The members of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church also carried out a litter pick and provide eco tips. [Visit the ECI](#)

[website to read Grace's report in full.](#)

### SMA Justice Office

#### **Celebration of seventh Anniversary Of Laudato Si' – A Prayer Service in the Garden of Wilton Parish on the 26th of May**

The Wilton Justice Group organised a prayer Service in Fr. Tom's eco garden to give God thanks for Laudato Si. On a blustery May evening a group of parishioners gathered and prayed in thanksgiving for the gift that is Pope Francis' encyclical. As well readings from the encyclical itself, there were readings from St. Francis and other mystics.



Surrounded by nature and the beauty of Fr. Tom's garden it was a joyful occasion with song and inspirational readings and prayers. Afterwards there was a request that they would make it an annual event to keep reminding all of our responsibility to take care of God's earth. To view a recording of the event click on this link <https://youtu.be/wV2rWou6ChQ>.



#### **SMA Summer School Resources**

The Society of African Missions Summer School took place in June. The theme was Sufficiency not growth – towards a safe and sustainable future. Speakers at the event were; Prof John Barry, Dr Anne Ryan, Prof Sadhbh O'Neill, Tom McDonnell PhD, Dr Sean Healy, Sr Colette Kane and Rachel Power. [Video Recordings of all the presentations are available at here.](#)



## Carrigaline Parish Care of the Earth Group

Janet Twomey sent ECI this latest news: Some members of the Carrigaline Parish Care of the Earth Group recently made submissions to the Cork County Council's Carrigaline Transportation Public Realm Enhancement Plan (TPREP). We commended the work that has been done so far to make Carrigaline and its environs a more sustainable and beautiful place to live and work. The plans include increasing the amount of cycle lanes and cycle facilities in the town. The Bridgemount to Herons Wood Pedestrian Cycle Link will be a core part of the Lee to Sea route. We wrote in our letters that a cycling scheme such as this one is important in terms of reducing our society's dependence on damaging fossil fuels. We also suggested how lovely it would be to see some of the land along the cycle way given over to wildflowers and nature hedgerow. The link would not only be important for the environment, leisure and the community but also for tourism where locals and visitors could travel from one side of our city to the mouth of Cork harbour. Our group also shared the link to the Season of Creation 2022 website and have started to plan our Season of Creation display for the church for September.



## Rathgar Parish Laudato Si Group

Miriam Mooney sent ECI this update: The Rathgar Laudato Si group has continued to work on the Biodiversity Pollinator Garden in the church grounds. We were blessed to have Terenure Men's Shed team create wooden tree/plant signs partly made from reused wood from pallets.

Dublin City Council kindly provided some wonderful posters based on information provided by National Biodiversity Data Centre. These posters are visible to all walking the pavement near the garden so we hope they will help raise awareness of the urgent need to support biodiversity in our gardens and public spaces.



The Biodiversity Garden is located on a dry windy site so we can see the impact of the reduced rainfall on the plants. We are conscious of all our need to conserve water so some plants in the garden are wilting. This helps us imagine the experience of those, especially in the Global South, whose food crops no longer grow due to drought and who are at risk of hunger.



The Laudato Si Group hopes to mark the Season Of Creation this year – 1st September to 4th October- using the wonderful resources available. The theme this year is Listen to the Voice of Creation. We are always heartened to read of the activities of other Eco-Congregation communities in the newsletter. One member of the Rathgar Laudato Si Group is a regular attendee at the Dail Fridays for Future presence each Friday 1pm to 2pm where we highlight the need to take urgent action to address the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis with Justice and Compassion.

## Carrigaline Union of Parishes

John Andrew sent this update: We are encouraging church flower arrangers to discontinue the use of Oasis. Made from plastic it ends up in landfill, or of greater concern it easily dissolves into tiny particles adding to the global problem of micro-plastics. There are many eco-friendly alternatives, Bio-foam being one. Same texture as oasis it is fully biodegradable and compostable. Using chicken wire in the container or just a simple posy of flowers are other alternatives to allow more sustainable ways of flower arranging. This year we planted pollinator friendly plants and flowers to try and encourage bees,



butterflies and insects. At the end of the growing season we intend to save seeds and next year expand into other areas of the garden by sowing the saved seeds. There are a host of pollinator friendly plants and flowers that are good at attracting bees i.e. Teasels, Borage, Nasturtiums to name a few.

### South Belfast Quaker Meeting

Kerry Nicholson sent ECI this update: In the Spring, at South Belfast Meeting House we cleared out one of our old flower beds along the side of the Meeting House. The shrubs had been there for several decades and were getting woody and old. We decided it was time for a refresh and a team of volunteers spent an afternoon digging out the bed. As a first step we planted some wildflower seeds. This has been a huge success this summer as you will see from the photo. We also installed a covered bicycle lockup to encourage more people to cycle on a Sunday morning, knowing their bike will be safe and also dry!



### Gardiner Street Parish and JCFJ

On the 6th July Gardiner Street Parish held an ecological workshop on “Our Hopes for a Sustainable Future” with Hannah Malcolm, a theologian currently writing a PhD thesis on Climate Grief. A small group from the community joined together, and after a tour of the garden, discussed ideas that could make the area around the Parish more sustainable. Flower beds, at the front of the church in Gardiner Street, filled with plants for pollinators have been providing a green oasis in inner city Dublin for insects and Parishioners alike.

The polytunnel in Gardiner Street garden is a result of work of parishioners, the neighbouring primary school and the Jesuit community. Produce from the polytunnel is being used within the community and those working in the tunnel while surplus plants are shared with parishioners. The students love being able to learn about where food comes from and being able to work in nature. Working Notes 91, published by the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice (out in early September), gives an account of the students’ experience.



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The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice is also publishing a book called “The Parish as Oasis: An Introduction to Practical Environmental Care”, with Messenger Publications. It is a practical and accessible introduction to how local churches can contribute to healing the environmental crisis and is available to pre-order [here](#).

### St Nicholas Church, Galway

Sally Cunningham sent us this news: We had a wet and wonderful clean up morning on 30 July in the churchyard at St. Nicholas Church, Galway. We cleared some headstones and paving memorial stones and started our first





bug hotel, and we enjoyed a great chat and breakfast rolls and coffee afterwards. Thanks to Olive and Alistair for getting us going!

## Blessington and Lacken Parish

Carmel O'Neill sends this latest news: Three years ago, it was decided to create a wildflower meadow on a sloping area of ground in the heart of Lacken village. The grass was cut in late October and the ground scarified before sowing the seeds of yellow rattle. Each summer brought a new species of wildflower and now three years on we have been rewarded with a wide variety of wildflowers, clover, buttercup, speedwell, birdsfoot trefoil, knapweed, yarrow, vetch and hawksbeard. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of bees visiting the patch. During the month of July, we harvested the seed of yellow rattle so that we can extend the wildflower area at the back of Lacken Church. We also plan to create a small wildflower meadow in the local cemetery. The seeds will be sown in late October after the last cut of grass. Once the seeds are sown yellow rattle will limit grass growth thus allowing wildflowers to grow.



The Friends of Calcutta come regularly to Blessington Parish to collect wearable clothes, footwear and bedlinen for their charity in Calcutta. The clothes are sold by weight and the proceeds go to fund four schools in the slums of Calcutta. The charity is delighted with the response from Blessington Parish and parishioners are equally delighted that their used clothing is going to such a worthy charity instead of landfill.

The month of July brought the worrying news on an almost daily basis of wildfires in Europe and California resulting in people losing their homes, land and forests. This prompted the parish to pray during the Holy Hour every Tuesday from 7pm to 8pm for the issue of climate change and global warming to be addressed seriously. Prayers of the faithful were also offered at the weekend masses for all who were forced to leave their homes and seek shelter from the fires.

## Prosperous Parish, Kildare

Bríd óg Norrby sent us this latest news: Our group in Prosperous was delighted to welcome some new members this summer. They are a very knowledgeable and passionate bunch so we're looking forward to working with them. This summer we focused on sustainable local development and trying to figure out how to start a community garden. There is a huge amount of development in our village over the past two years which will bring big changes. Our main concern was the loss of biodiversity with the clearance of these sites.

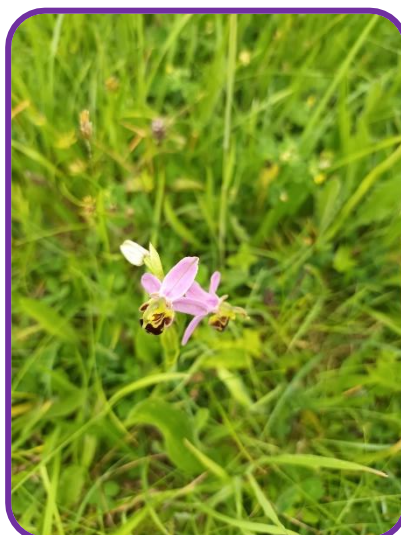
We are in contact with all the development companies asking them to replace what has been lost, by planting only native trees and pollinator friendly plants. We are also trying to secure a piece of land to start a community garden. There has been great interest in starting one and we really believe that this will not only help our parish to be more sustainable but also add greatly to a sense of community spirit. Gardening is such a wonderful way to bring people together. We are also doing some research on water quality in the local area as this is an very important subject that we have not dealt with yet. We hope that all Eco Parish groups got some rest and renewal and are looking forward to the season of creation ahead!





## Orchid Walk at Church of St Thérèse, Mount Merrion

Clodagh O'Reilly sent us this news: Following on from the Blessing of our Meadow on World Biodiversity Day in May, our annual Orchid Walk – or “inspection” – recently took place. Amongst the abundant wild orchids and other wildflowers and fauna in our meadow garden, we spotted a Bee Orchid. Relatively rare, the Bee Orchid has been recorded popping up on roadsides and places where mowing routines have changed. It is pollinated by bees, wasps, flies and others. For medicinal use, when boiled with water it is of special value to convalescents. It is a protected species, and we will be contributing our find to the National Biodiversity Data Centre via the “Ireland’s Citizen Science Portal”.



## Sonass Christ Community Garden

Sr Margaret Bradley sent us this latest news: This year our flowers and vegetables have been great. Sr. Eileen is a keen gardener and we have already enjoyed her new potatoes. She has also grown carrots, turnips, onions, kale, lettuce, and marrows. And her spread of bright flowers has attracted numerous bees. On the other side of the garden fence we have more flowers- all kinds tall and short, wild and cultivated; a splendid variety of different colours. The bees continue to have a feast! Unfortunately we have only one cabbage-white butterfly. We had hoped for more. We may be surprised yet!



## Act for Nature Day at Hugh's Meadow Nature Reserve

Bertie Stirling sent us this report: Saturday morning, 23rd July with much activity; putting up Gazebos, noticeboards, signs and roping off areas. Soon there was a rumble of traffic on the half mile long lane, passing points having been clearly marked. What a pleasure to be here that morning at the beautiful Hugh's Meadow Nature Reserve in Parkgate (yes, there's a Nature Reserve in Parkgate!). 'Thanks to the A Rocha UK team for the opportunity to explore the reserve, learn about wildlife and conservation techniques and find out how we can speak up for nature and address the climate and biodiversity crises head on through positive and practical action.' This 'Act for Nature Day' was one of four taking place in the UK, the other three taking place in West London, Essex and Dorset.





It was good to have the chance to encourage people to look after God's Creation and explain how mysterious and wonderful it is. We had talks on meadow management, techniques for monitoring the species and a leisurely walk around the reserve taking in all its beauty. Andy Lester (Head of Conservation for A Rocha UK) challenged folks to beat his eight species of grasses collection in a five metre square and was beaten by a nine year old in the group. Hannah Eves led a Wild Christian session, and together we took a campaign action, writing to our MPs. Andy explained the aspects of A

Rocha UK. 1) Wild Christian – an monthly activity sessions for the family by email, 2) Eco church (Eco-Congregation if in Ireland) where churches can work towards and Eco-award and 3) Partners in Action in which other agencies, organisations and land owners are supported and linked together in action and prayer. The weather was quite kind to us and a good time was had by all.

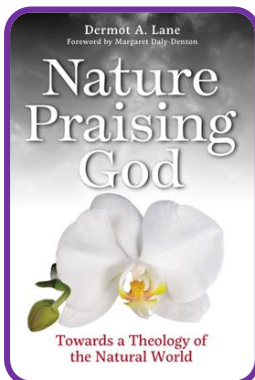
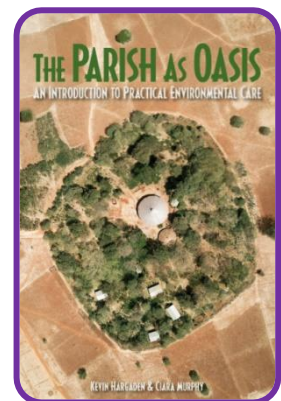
## Publications of Interest ...

Three new publications will be published soon:

### *The Parish as Oasis: An Introduction to Practical Environmental Care*

A practical and accessible introduction to how local churches can contribute to healing the environmental crisis. By focussing on practical 'experiments' that any parish can explore according to their own context and capacities, this book seeks to equip people with a hands-on understanding of the ideas unpacked in Laudato Si'. It is a book that aspires to inspire congregations to get their hands dirty, but also plants those initiatives within a coherent eco-theology. Dr Kevin Hargaden is the Director and Social Theologian of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Ireland. Dr Ciara Murphy is the Environmental Justice Advocate of the Jesuit centre for Faith and Justice, Ireland. Publication Date: 25 September 2022.

[Available here.](#)



*Nature Praising God: Towards a Theology of the Natural World* by Dermot A Lane, with a foreword by Margaret Daly-Denton. This book was written during the lockdown caused by the Covid crisis: streets were emptied, churches closed down, and a relationship with nature developed in which new questions arose: is God present in nature? Is communion with God in nature possible? Is there a relationship between the God of creation, the God of history and the God we worship in Sunday liturgies. Author Dermot Lane says we need to flip the way we regard nature—traditionally as a resource for human needs—and embrace a new way of praising God through an appreciation of and care for the myriad of life forms on earth. Dermot A Lane is a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin and former President of Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. His publications include *The Experience of God*, *Keeping Hope Alive*, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, and *Theology and Ecology in Dialogue*. Publication date is 29 August 2022 and is [available now to pre-order here](#)

## Eco Challenge!

**Climate Stewards – Have we considered measuring, reducing and/or offsetting our personal carbon footprint?**

Climate Stewards, [Homepage – Climate Stewards](#), encourage us to measure our carbon footprint and then, if we can, reduce it. The carbon calculator tool available on the Climate Stewards website ([Offset – Climate Stewards](#)) enables us to look at, for example, how much carbon dioxide is produced by the travel





involved in our summer holidays, whether this be by air, train, ferry and/or car. If we can't find ways to reduce our carbon footprint then we can consider offsetting the emissions by making a donation to Climate Stewards. They use these donations in projects with people in the majority world to bring benefits to their health, family finances and the local environment, alongside carbon mitigation. Details of the nine projects currently under way in six countries can be found on the website ([Projects By Type – Climate Stewards](#)).

A Carbon Calculator for organisations, 360oCarbon, is also available on the website ([The Collaborative Carbon Calculator for Churches, Synagogues, Charities and Small Businesses • 360°carbon.org](#) ([360carbon.org](#))). This is being widely used by churches in Great Britain to measure their carbon footprints with a view to reducing and/or offsetting their emissions.

A recent blog by Caroline Pomeroy, Climate Stewards' Director, helps to explain offsetting: [Ice-cream and carbon offsets – Climate Stewards](#), and emphasises how Climate Stewards aims to be 'sustainable, transparent, high quality and honest' in their practice.

### **Cherry Orchard Community Garden by Fran Brady**

Fran Brady, Quaker representative on the ECI committee, wrote this article: Cherry Orchard Community Garden was set up in 2010 by the Cherry Orchard Regeneration Board with funding from Dublin City Council and assistance from City Dublin Vocational Educational Committee (now the Education and Training Board).

Management of the garden was handed over to the Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership in 2012. It is still supported by the partnership as well as a group of enthusiastic and trained volunteers. Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Affairs later funded a Garden Manager to develop this social enterprise, centred on supplying fresh vegetables, herbs and flowers.



Cherry Orchard Community Gardens are passionate about sustainable, healthy, locally grown food that is good for the neighbourhood and good for the planet. Their aim is to be sustainable with low energy inputs, low food miles and a low carbon footprint. Fresh seasonal produce is grown using traditional gardening techniques and no artificial chemicals. As part of their sustainability journey, they will be applying for Organic producer status with the Irish Organic Association.

The Community Garden provides an amenity for local residents and volunteers, including training and employment opportunities. SVP and groups such as the Ballyfermot-Chapelizod Partnership have been responding to 'culinary illiteracy' with the Partnership regularly hosting classes such as 'Healthy Food Made Easy'. To further address cooking illiteracy, SVP and Cherry Orchard Community Garden are combining their resources to provide allotment land to a number of service users. The community garden is willing to show people how to plant and grow and also organise regular gardening classes.

Customers to the Thursday Markets, as well as Dublin Food Coop, Small Changes, SuperValu and other outlets who have Cherry Orchard Garden produce for sale, are supporting this local social enterprise, which has a modest traded income. I was pleased when I recently went to Small Changes Minimal Waste Food Store to find produce from Cherry Orchard Community Garden there. As a social enterprise all profits are re-invested back into our community garden.

## **Prayers/Reflections for the Earth**

### **A Reflection by Fr Hugh O'Donnell**

Living out our small lives on a small scale, it's hard for us to imagine that a million miles above the earth is the largest telescope ever built, the James Webb Space Telescope, which this July is sending its first images showing galaxies so far away



they take us back to the dawn of the universe 13.5 billion years ago. There is no end to the wonder and astonishment they trigger in us.

However, on our home place we do not gaze with such reverence. We strut about as though it was ours alone and take the measure of things by their market value. We view it all with a greedy eye. And so we end up with a destabilised climate, polluted air, soil and water and the extinction of species whose hymn of praise must now be forever missing from the cosmic harmony.

What will save us from ourselves? Another COP workshop? Another appeal from children, yet unborn, asking where will they play? Or a startling photo from deep space of new stars being born in an unfolding ballet and a new alphabet to learn with words like nebula, exoplanets, galaxy clusters.

Or perhaps by listening to the prophetic voice of John Moriarty as he asks that we 'move our gaze from seeing to beholding the world'; in other words, that we gaze upon it from the place of soul. As Martin Shaw, mythologist, said of John; 'the Earth was grateful to have his gaze on it'.

With kindest regards,

**Karen Nicholson**  
Administrative Officer

[info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com)  
+353 (0) 89 974 0744

**Canon Andrew Orr**  
Chair and Church of Ireland representative

[andreworr1234@gmail.com](mailto:andreworr1234@gmail.com)  
+353 (0) 87 419 6051

**Catherine Brennan SSL**  
Roman Catholic representative

[catherinebrennanssl38@gmail.com](mailto:catherinebrennanssl38@gmail.com)  
+353 (0) 87 259 9071

**Rev Allen Sleith**  
Presbyterian representative

[allen.sleith@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:allen.sleith@tiscali.co.uk)  
+ 44 (0) 7801273354

**Fran Brady**  
Religious Society of Friends representative

[franbradywritings@gmail.com](mailto:franbradywritings@gmail.com)  
+353 (0) 86 373 0396

**Rev Trevor Sargent**  
Church of Ireland representative

[sargentt@tcd.ie](mailto:sargentt@tcd.ie)  
+353 (0) 87 254 7836