

## Eco Congregation Ireland Awards 2025

### Grouped Parishes of Sandford and St Philip's, Milltown, Dublin



Helen Prendiville and Rachel Richardson accepted the ECI Awards on behalf of Sandford and St Philip's at their united service on 15th June 2025. Maureen Rowan and Fran Brady from the ECI committee presented the Awards. Since their registration with ECI in October 2022, parishioners had submitted two reports of all their endeavours. They received their Awareness Certificate in 2023, their Endeavour Certificate in 2024 and now they are delighted to have received their Eco-Congregation Ireland Award in 2025.

In her address, Maureen congratulated the parishes and explained that one of the key things that they demonstrated was how "wide ranging their environmental work is and how many people are involved in keeping their activities going." Thanks to Rev. Canon Sonia Gyles for all her leadership and continuous support. The Select Vestries and the Parish Development Committee have done a lot of work in registering the parishes and driving some of these initiatives. However, this award has been achieved from the efforts made by every member of the joint parishes, in all aspects of their parish life.

With the climate crisis getting worse by the day, it is very easy to become disillusioned and overwhelmed by the huge challenge that faces us. But

their collective efforts all add up and in receiving this award it acknowledges that lots of small changes can really make a big difference.

### St Joseph, St Benildus & St Marys Parish, Newtown, Waterford



On Saturday 4 October 2025, Anna Byrne DC, Catholic representative on the ECI committee presented the Parish of St Joseph, St Benildus and St Mary, Waterford with their ECI Award.

Under the leadership of their former pastoral worker, Cecily Maher, an Eco-Action Group (EAG) was formed. Under the guidance of Eco-Congregation Ireland, the group has made huge progress over the last two years and has demonstrated that much can be achieved at local level to reduce their carbon footprint and make the parish and local community much more eco-friendly.

Parishioners provided ECI with a report on their work entitled 'Thinking Globally and Acting Locally to Combat the Environmental Threat'. Parishioners shared their feelings of powerlessness in the face of the impending global threat posed by climate change and environmental degradation. But as Christians they always felt that they should respond in some way. After all, creation is a gift of the Creator God who is present in the world sustaining life in

all its abundance and beauty. They feel it is better to light a candle than to continue to curse the darkness.

### Thurles Parish, Tipperary



Anna Byrne DC, visited Thurles Cathedral to present the Parish Care of Creation Group with an ECI Award to recognise the work they have done over the past 10 years. The group was set up by Fr. Martin Hayes, now Bishop Hayes, in 2015 to steer the parish response to Pope Francis' call to action on caring for our planet. Since its establishment the group has responded to their mission through liturgy, community engagement and practical action on climate and biodiversity. The ECI Award signifies for all, the parish's dedication to caring for creation and responding to environmental issues.

Pictured above are: Frank Macken, Mary Maher, Helen Campbell, Sr Anna Byrne (Eco Congregation Ireland), Fr James Purcell, Breda Kennedy, Maureen O' Neill, Marette Dunphy.

# Climate Justice Candles 2025

The four Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candles covering each of the four provinces of Ireland, have continued weaving their ecumenical and climate justice journeys around Ireland in 2025. The candles continue 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 Candles in 2025, in many different and creative ways include:

**Westport Ecumenical Service for  
Christian Unity**



**Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Group  
of Parishes, Co Kildare**  
*(permission given)*



**Parish of Glenavy and Killead,  
Co Antrim**



**St Joseph's Parish, Bonnybrook  
for Earth Day 2025**



**Rathgar Methodist Church**



**Mercy International Centre**



**Carrigaline Parish, Co Cork**  
*(permission given)*



St Cronan's Parish, Brackenstown,  
Swords, Co Dublin



Greystones Presbyterian Church  
and Leopardstown Park Hospital



Our Lady of Lourdes Church,  
Steelstown, Derry



Hillsborough Presbyterian Church,  
Co Down



St Peter's Church and Holy Trinity  
Church, Culmore, Derry



Dominican Sisters  
Chapter Meeting



Dundrum Methodist Church



Holy Trinity Church and St Mary's,  
Westport



The Teresian School, Dublin



The following also hosted the  
ECI Climate Justice Candle in 2025:  
Kinsale Union, Church of Ireland, Co Cork  
Beechwood Parish Church, Ranelagh  
Wicklow Church of Ireland

## Certificates Awarded in 2025

### Awareness Certificates

- Richhill Methodist Church
- Zion Church
- Knock Shrine
- St Colmcille's Parish, Ballyhackamore, Belfast
- Corrymeela Community
- East Belfast Mission
- Care for the Earth, Wexford Parish
- Church of the Holy Name, Beechwood Parish, Ranelagh
- Ballynanny Methodist Church

### Endeavour Certificates

- St Cronan's Parish, Swords
- Knock Shrine
- Green Zion Project



Richhill Methodist Church, Co Armagh receives ECI Awareness Certificate. Jan Corrie, Methodist rep on the ECI committee, presented the ECI Awareness Certificate to Tricia Andrews on 6 August 2025



Knock Shrine receiving their ECI Awareness Certificate on 20 September 2025 from Anna Byrne DC



Rev Brian Anderson, Mission Superintendent of East Belfast Mission received ECI Awareness Certificate on 7 August 2025

## Farewell to Fran

Fran Brady has been the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) representative on the ECI since 2016. She worked tirelessly to encourage Quaker meetings to think ecologically, both in practical ways, but also with the enthusiastic group of young Eco Quakers, in producing thoughtful testimonies and queries. She was a driving force behind the Quaker Ireland document "Regenerating Our Common Home – Quaker Considerations for Restoration and Protection of the Environment."



She has been a constant encouragement to our committee, and her kindness and compassion were valued by all of us. Fran was an enthusiastic supporter of the ECI Climate Justice Candles and took advantage of her free travel to make sure the candles always ended up where they were supposed to be. We wish her well as she continues her writing and her involvement in local community and Quaker action.

## Welcome to Niamh

Niamh Hardiman has been nominated by Ireland Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to be their representative to Eco Congregation Ireland. Niamh is also a member of EcoQuakers. She is a member of Churchtown Meeting in Dublin. We are delighted to welcome Niamh Hardiman to our ECI Committee.



## Chairperson's Remarks

### Jim Farrell



Once again our annual report for 2025 shows the incredible engagement and commitment by faith communities throughout the length and breadth of the island of Ireland to embrace becoming more eco-aware. This would not be possible without the dedication of so many volunteers and their commitment. Our monthly newsletter articulates this through stories, pictures and testimonials. Across the island of Ireland, faith communities of many traditions have continued to witness to care for creation, linking faith, action and hope in the face of the climate and biodiversity crises.

We say farewell with gratitude to Fran Brady who has been the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) representative for the past 10 years. She has been a constant encouragement to our committee, and her kindness and compassion are valued by all of us. We welcome on board Niamh Hardiman to our committee representing the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

On the international front, it has been another year of mixed news with increased global uncertainty and climate anxiety. More action is needed by governments to tackle climate change in order to protect our planet into the future. It is important that we do not lose hope.

Thanks to Karen, our efficient administrator officer, and to all our committee members for their commitment and to all of you who are committed to caring for creation and encouraging us all to 'act locally and think globally'.

## Finances

**Opening Balance** €16,673.37

### INCOME:

Religious Society of Friends	€690.00
Methodist Church	€757.71
Trócaire	€2,000.00
Presbyterian Church	€694.44
Church of Ireland	€5,000.00
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>€9,142.15</b>

### EXPENDITURE:

Salary	€7,350.00
Newsletter	€264.00
Annual Report/printing	€228.00
Computer Support	€503.51
Bank charges	€43.04
3 Small Grants awarded	€450.00
Committee Member expenses	€757.49
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>€9,596.04</b>
Surplus/Loss	-€453.89
<b>Closing Balance:</b>	<b>€16,219.48</b>