



ECO-CONGREGATION IRELAND

Annual Review 2018

Eco-Congregation Ireland 2018 Awards

Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, Larne, Co Antrim

At a moving and inspiring celebration on Sunday 25th February 2018, Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre was awarded an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. Presenting the plaque Catherine Brennan SSL, Catholic representative on the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee said that Drumalis was 'a Beacon of Light' showing prophetic leadership in addressing the ecological crisis of our time. Hundreds of participants in the programmes at Drumalis have been challenged to celebrate the gift of creation and become ecologically responsible inhabitants of the earth which they share with many other species. Present at the celebration were representatives of many other groups associated with the environmental activities of Drumalis: Friends of the Earth, Larne Lough, Women Religious of Ireland who are pioneers in this field, An Tairseach Wicklow, Jubilee Farm, NI Creation Care Network and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. The Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor Paul Reid, attended along with Council officers and public representatives.



Westport Eco-Congregation, Co Mayo

The congregations of Holy Trinity Church and St. Mary's Church with Westport Eco-Congregation were delighted to receive their Eco-Congregation Ireland Award on Sunday April 22nd on Earth Day! Over the last two years the committee with the assistance of the schools and many other community groups travelled together on this journey to Care for Creation, inspired by the publication of Pope Francis 'Laudato Si'. The award was presented at the 11.30am service in Holy Trinity and then in St. Mary's at 12pm Mass. Catherine Brennan SSL presented the award to members of Westport Eco-Congregation. In her speech she acknowledged the committee for being a voice at this critical time, calling for us all to sustain and renew our planet.



St. Joseph's Parish, SMA, Wilton, Cork

Sunday, November 3, 2018, was a momentous and historic day for the SMA Parish at Wilton, Cork. After years of community collaboration and creativity, inspired by Pope Francis' great environmental encyclical Laudato Si', the parish was presented with their Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. This was recognised as a significant development both by the Diocese of Cork and Ross and by the City of Cork, evidenced by the presence of Bishop Buckley and by Cllr. Fergal Denney, representing the Lord Mayor of Cork. The award was presented by Catherine Brennan SSL. The parish community hopes that the award will be an inspiration to other parishes throughout Ireland to integrate creation theology and its practical expression in their expression of a living faith in Jesus, Lord of the Universe.



Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church, Belfast

The Climate Justice Candle was set on the communion table of Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church for their Eco-Congregation Ireland Award Service on Sunday 18th November 2018 where Joe Furphy, Presbyterian representative on the ECI committee presented this congregation with their Award. The Bible readings, hymns and anthem were chosen to fit with the theme of caring for creation, while the prayers of intercession were split into three parts representing land, sea and sky, praying for healing for the damage done to the natural cycles in each domain. Congregational activities which show concern for the environment were spoken about during worship, including a commitment to recycling, the use of the church grounds for biodiversity, and the congregation's involvement in overseas mission projects with a strong environmental element. Receiving the Award will encourage the congregation to maintain these efforts into the future.



Eco-Congregation Ireland continues to Shine a Light on Climate Justice in 2018!



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 2018 and visited 13 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.

In 2018 the Climate Justice Candle travelled for the first time to Northern Ireland where it was used in many different and creative ways.

Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, Co Down

The Climate Justice Candle was delivered to Hillsborough Presbyterian Church in time for their Harvest Services in October and the candle was centrally placed in the church sanctuary. It was used in an All Age Service, and placed in the church resource area for use in a Prayer and Reflection Time, using some of the resources from the ECI pack. It was a focus for a Communion Service, along with some books from the library about Climate Change. Members of the congregation hope that they have raised awareness of the urgency of addressing climate change and injustice.



Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church, Belfast



The Climate Justice Candle was the focal point on the church's communion table for their ECI Award Service in November 2018. After an introduction to the Climate Justice Candle project, there were Bible readings, hymns and anthems fitting with the theme of caring for creation. During prayers

a tea light was lit, symbolic of the Holy Spirit helping us to care for the earth and all creation. In the following days, the Candle made appearances at youth organisations, and at the church community lunch which is held in the halls each week.

'Lys Marie', Good Shepherd Sisters, Belfast

The Climate Justice Candle was transferred from Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church to the Good Shepherd Sisters in South Belfast in an atmosphere of welcome, joy and unity. The Sisters, focussing on the Candle, had a special Evening Prayer, praising and thanking God for all creation, with hymns, psalms, scripture, prayer for the Earth and a Christian Prayer for all Creation from Laudato Si'. The candle reminded all present of the many gifts of creation. The presence of the Candle enabled the Sisters to be more alive to their responsibilities to care for Mother Earth and continue their efforts to make the world a better place to live in, especially for the poor, where all can have a share of the rich resources of Earth, needed to be shared by all.



Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group



The ECI Climate Justice Candle was hosted by Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group and was installed in St. Macartin's Church of Ireland, Enniskillen on 1 December and then in St. Michael's Catholic Church across the street on the 8 December. After a week there it was taken to the Catholic Parish Church of Pobal in Tempo, Co Fermanagh. Fr Joe McVeigh Assistant Priest, Enniskillen, spoke in St Michael's on Saturday

8 December 2018: 'Climate change is in the news every day and we need to be reminded that each of us has to do our bit for climate justice - if it is only with regard to the use of plastic. We have all seen pictures of the damage plastic is doing to sea life. We have a responsibility to care for creation and the earth God has given us and to make sure it is safe for future generations. It may be the greatest responsibility we have today as human beings ...'

In 2018 the Climate Justice Candle visited the following churches and parishes in the Republic of Ireland.

Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

The Climate Justice Candle was present in St. Mary's Cathedral in Limerick in 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.

Saint Mary's Church of Ireland, Killarney



In July the ECI Climate Justice Candle was present in St. Mary's Church of Ireland, Killarney where parishioners used it in their Family Service where they focussed on their young people's sunflower growing project and on nautical plastics.

Kenmare & Dromod Union, Co Kerry

In July 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.

World Meeting of Families, Dublin



The Climate Justice Candle was present at the historic World Meeting of Families event in Dublin in August which had Caring for Our Common Home as a core theme running throughout the festival. One of the most

interactive and prayerful spaces was the eco-prayer space which was located in the main Prayer Marque, alongside the WMOF Icon and Adoration Space for the duration of the pastoral congress. The ECI Climate Justice Candle was at the centre of this space. Surrounding the candle were signs which brought pilgrims on a journey using quotes from Laudato Si' and images associated with Climate Justice. Pilgrims were able to write a prayer for the earth on eco-ribbons or prayer flags which were carried on the GCCM pilgrimage which left from the Vatican on in October and travelled on foot to COP24, the UN Climate Conference, which took place in Katowice, Poland in December 2018.

Tuam Parish

The Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle visited Tuam Parish as part of their Creation Time 2018 events. It provided the focus of a beautiful Children's Mass. Fr. Francis Mitchell pointed out that caring about climate justice was not an aspiration but a Christian duty, echoing Pope Francis'

message in Laudato Si'. After Mass some of the congregation then accompanied the Climate Justice Candle to St. Mary's Cathedral and joined their congregation in a short ecumenical event.



Ballineaspig Parish, Co Cork



The ECI Climate Justice Candle visited Ballineaspig Parish where it was the focal point of their Harvest Thanksgiving and Sharing Celebration. Fr Tom led the congregation in a celebration of the gifts of creation, through

specially selected prayers and music. The Liturgy Group decorated the church with baskets of fruit and vegetables and a beautiful shrine symbolising the abundance of the earth's bounty which we are so fortunate to enjoy. The focal point of the shrine was the ECI Climate Justice Candle, which reminded parishioners of the urgent issue of climate change and the stark contrast between the abundance we enjoy and the horrifying extremes of weather in other countries which impact so heavily on the poorest people of the world.

Ards Friary, Co Donegal

On Saturday 29 September Ards Friary held the opening day of a two week programme to celebrate the Season of Creation: 'Tread Lightly on the Earth'. Over 100



people attended an exhibition during day one and many more during the coming days. Twenty five Syrian refugees joined the retreat for the day, adults and children. Bishop John Kirby on seeing the mix of nationalities and religions remarked: "Ni neart go cur le cheile": unity is strength! Presence and neart were the two main points of Rev Grace Clunie's talk, as she drew out how Celtic culture and spirituality contributes to a new ethical perspective on our changing climate chaos. Her talk was preceded by the lighting of the Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle.

ECI is grateful for the financial support of Trócaire



FINANCES

Opening Balance €8,017.98

INCOME:

Church Subscriptions €600.00
Trócaire Grant €2,000.00
Donations €5,663.66
Total: €8,263.66
+ €8,017.98
= €16,281.64

EXPENDITURE:

Staff, office & IT expenses €5,262.70
Printing €120.00
Award Plaques €541.85
Climate Justice Candle €135.14
Total: €6,059.69

Closing balance at the end of 2018: €10,221.95

Chairperson's Remarks

Rev Andrew Orr



As we face the difficult challenges of climate change and other environmental problems, people are searching for signs of hope. 2018 was once again a mixed year for the international and global environment, and that's why hope lies with local grass movements for change. If we act locally, this adds up to global change. Eco-Congregation Ireland encourages and resources parishes and congregations to make a real difference in their local communities.

We believe that God has given us this planet to share with the rest of his wonderful creation. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Psalm 24): we are not separate from the creation but part of it, interdependent with everything that God has made. We also believe that climate change is about justice. Acting on climate change is about loving our neighbours, now and for the future.

In this report you will read wonderful stories of people who have made a difference in their local area. North and south, east and west, there are great people in our congregations who are doing so much to safeguard the environment. Thank you to you all.

Certificates Awarded by Eco-Congregation Ireland in 2018

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

In 2018 the following churches were awarded certificates:

Awareness Certificate:

- Gardiner Street Parish
- Dromantine Retreat & Conference Centre
- Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland
- Church of Ireland Theological Institute
- Holy Faith Sisters
- Dublin Unitarian Church
- Hillsborough Presbyterian Church
- Ennisclorthy and Monart Union
- Indian Orthodox Church
- Parish of Our Lady & St John, Carrigaline, Co Cork
- Prosperous Laudato Si' Group



Endeavour Certificate:

- Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church
- St Joseph's Parish, SMA, Wilton, Cork
- Tipperary Church of Ireland
- Lismore Church of Ireland
- Daughters of Charity
- Cork Quaker Meeting
- Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar
- Holy Faith Sisters
- Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles
- Eco-Congregation Group Tuam Parish
- Cathedral of St Mary & St Anne, Cork



DONATIONS

ECI is grateful to all the individuals and churches who donated to our work in 2018. We are reliant on donations in order to keep our work going.

BANK details:

Ulster Bank, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Account name: Eco-Congregation Ireland
Sort code: 98-50-50
Account number: 10373901
IBAN: IE68 ULSB 9850 5010 3739 01
BIC: ULSBIE2D

CHEQUES: Euro and Sterling are both acceptable. These should be made payable to 'Eco-Congregation Ireland' and sent to: Rev Andrew Orr, ECI Chair, 13 The Pinnacles, Broomfield, Midleton, Co Cork, P25 KN12.

STANDING ORDERS: Euro standing orders are welcome. Unfortunately Sterling standing orders are not possible currently.

For more info visit:

www.ecocongregationireland.com

+353 (0) 89 974 0744 info@ecocongregationireland.com



www.facebook.com/ecocongregationireland