

Dear Eco Congregation friends

Welcome to the July 2016 edition of the Eco Congregation Ireland newsletter. We hope everyone is enjoying the summer and is getting the chance to get outdoors and enjoy creation!



If you have any information or stories from your congregation, parish, meeting or Eco Congregation we would love to hear from you! Please forward your news to us at info@ecocongregationireland.com. Don't forget, if you hold an event or meeting, please take some photos and we can include them on our website and our bi-monthly newsletter. If you want your event promoted in our bi-monthly newsletter, please email us about 3 weeks before the next newsletter is due out to ensure inclusion. Newsletters are sent out at the end of July, September, November, January, March and May.

Did you know we are on Facebook? You can access the Eco-Congregation Ireland Facebook profile [here](#) or just go to facebook.com and search 'Eco-Congregation Ireland'. It's a great place to keep up to date with ECI's activities and access current news and information from other NGOs and faith organisations.

Eco-Congregation Ireland has a new mobile phone number - +353 (0) 89 974 0744!

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Our Climate Justice Candle – the journey continues!

We invite you to join our [Shine a Light on Climate Justice](#) Initiative, which sees our specially commissioned climate justice candle visiting one church each week over the next 12 months. During that time, each church is asked to light the candle and to incorporate a climate justice theme into their services. Some churches may choose to use the attached service while others might want to adapt the service in a way that suits them; others may choose to simply include a few environmental prayers in their prayers of intercession. This initiative



was launched at the [National Ecumenical Prayer Service](#) in the presence of President Michael D Higgins that we hosted with Trócaire and Christian Aid in November 2015.

Since our last newsletter, the candle has visited Rathmichael Church of Ireland, Holy Redeemer Catholic Church Bray, St Peter's Catholic Church Little Bray, Kiltarnan Church of Ireland, Christ Church Church of Ireland Bray, Delgany Church of Ireland, Greystones Church of Ireland and Greystones Catholic Church.

Christ Church in Bray used the candle in their Parish Fete and had it lit throughout (see photo). During July and August, the candle will remain at Brigidine Retreat Centre, Tullow, Co Carlow where it will be used with the various groups passing through the centre over the summer.

If you would like to be part of this initiative, simply let us know at info@ecocongregationireland.com (we ask you to be patient if you are in the west or the north of the island as it may be quite some months before the candle reaches you)!

Rev John Corrie, ECI Methodist representative, attends garden party at Áras an Uachtaráin

Rev John Corrie and his wife Jan attended a garden party at Áras an Uachtaráin on 9 June 2016 to represent Eco-Congregation Ireland. John is the Methodist representative on the ECI committee. The garden party was held to acknowledge individuals and organisations working to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development goals agreed in New York in 2015. The mixture of guests attending represented farming, business, industry, non-governmental organisations, charities, community groups and individuals. A very wide range of people with a common aim. President Higgins gave a short address, thanking those present for their role in helping Ireland work towards the sustainable development goals set globally. He stressed the need to convert words into actions in relation to these goals and the necessity of addressing climate change at community and individual level and the changes that are needed at the level of political policy and individual action. Read John's full report of this event [here](#).



Westport Eco-Congregation organises Tree Walk

Westport Eco-Congregation, an ecumenical group representing St Mary's Church and Holy Trinity Church, Westport organised a Tree Walk on Sunday 12 June 2016. Westport Eco-Congregation is in the process of applying for an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award and has been visited by Sr. Catherine Brennan, Catholic representative on the ECI committee. Muriel Barry from the Westport ECI group provided Eco-Congregation Ireland with a report of the Tree Walk event in Westport. Read about this creative event [here](#).

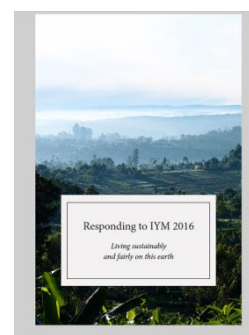
ECO-CONGREGATION, WESTPORT
presents

The Mall Tree Trail WESTPORT

Irish Quakers Commit to Sustainability and Ethical Investments

Quaker Meetings in Ireland are set to become "as sustainable as possible", following a resolution made by Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM) on 3rd April 2016. Each Meeting is asked to develop a sustainability plan before January 2017, taking into consideration factors such as accessibility by public transport, energy efficiency, use of Fairtrade tea and coffee and use of organic and locally sourced food, when possible.

A commitment was also made to develop an investment strategy by January 2017 to ethically invest all funds within Yearly Meeting in sustainable and peaceful companies,



and to divest from destructive industries, including fossil fuels. These two commitments were made following a call to action on sustainability that came from the Friends World Committee for Consultation's Plenary in Peru in January 2016, urging the worldwide Quaker community to re-double its efforts in relation to sustainability.

To find out more about the decision made by Irish Quakers, click [here](#). The Irish Quaker environmental committee, EcoQuakers Ireland, has undertaken to assist Meetings in working towards fulfilling these commitments and the booklet '[Responding to Ireland Yearly Meeting 2016: Living Sustainably and Fairly on This Earth](#)' has been prepared to assist with this.

Sr Catherine Brennan, ECI Catholic representative, attends the 11th Assembly of European Christian Environmental Network, Helsinki, 11-15 June 2016

Sr Catherine Brennan, Catholic representative on the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee attended the 11th Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network in Helsinki. The theme of the Assembly was 'Water in a Sustainable Future'. More than 80 delegates from 23 countries from all regions of Europe gathered for a time of prayer, discussion, and networking.



The Assembly took place shortly after the historic Paris Agreement on climate change. The

theme 'Water in a Sustainable Future' was developed around the relationship between climate change, the water cycle, and efforts for sustainable development. The Assembly offered a venue for sharing and strengthening cooperation, and to further encourage the churches' work in the post-Paris era. Presentations addressed the theme from scientific, policy, and theological perspectives. These are available to read [here](#).

At the close of the Assembly, the delegates approved a statement emphasising the theological and biblical imperative to work for water justice, and a call to action for individuals and churches. The full text of the statement is available [here](#). For a complete programme and list of speakers, please click [here](#).

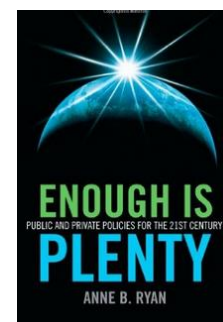
Creation Time - 1 September to 4 October 2016 – resources now available

Eco-Congregation Scotland has published material for use by congregations during Creation Time 2016. The material comes from an ecumenical writing group, with contributors from the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church. It follows the theme, 'Followers of Jesus, Caring for Creation', emphasising the readings from the Gospel of Luke which appear in the Revised Common Lectionary in September. The materials can be found [here](#).



'Enough is Plenty – Reclaiming the Common Good' organised by South Belfast Quakers and Methodists

Open to all, this participative event will explore what makes for a society where 'enough is plenty' – addressing contemporary moral, economic and theological issues in our affluent and waste-prone society. The presenters, Anne Ryan, Tony Weekes and James Orr, are well-informed social and economic commentators, who will open up general discussion on our contemporary society, including the environment, economy and the common good. The event is sponsored jointly by South Belfast Friends Meeting (Quakers) and Belfast South Methodist Church.



Details of event: Saturday 24 September 2016, 2.00pm - 5.30pm, The Agape Centre, 238 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GF. Admission is free and all are welcome! You can book a place through [Eventbrite](#) and get directions there too. South Belfast Friends Meeting is an Eco-Congregation.

BREXIT – its impact on the environment

Craig Bennett, head of Friends of the Earth, said the leave vote was a “red alert” for the environment. He stated 'The fight starts now to make sure that the UK doesn't water-down environmental safeguards that have been inherited from the European Union. The priority will be to ensure that every MP understands loud and clear that the referendum



result was not a mandate to weaken our environmental protection'. Read more [here](#). Operation Noah drew our attention to an [article](#) by Rev John Weaver, a former Baptist Union President, who assesses what impact Brexit may have on the climate change agenda. [Irish Environmental Network](#) reported that public figures and NGOs in the UK have expressed concern over new UK Prime Minister, Theresa May's decision to abolish the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Worrying times for the environmental sector.

Christian Aid, Tearfund and 2buy2 – The Big Church Switch

The Big Church Switch calls on churches and individual Christians of all denominations to switch their energy supply from fossil fuels to renewable energy. By using clean, renewable energy the Church can demonstrate its commitment to care for our neighbours and for the earth. By using clean, renewable energy we can help restore the earth and bring balance to God's creation. By acting together as the Church community we will send a clear and powerful message to governments and businesses that Christians are prepared to lead the way and that switching to renewables is crucial if we are to live in and enjoy God's world together. Visit The [Big Switch website](#) for lots more information and to access advice and resources to help your church to make the Big Switch!



Green Christian Prayer Guide July 2016

[Green Christian](#) is a multi-denominational UK Christian organisation for people concerned about the environment. Every month they produce a prayer guide to assist people of faith in their thoughts and intentions to live a more environmental lifestyle. Their July 2016 prayer guide is available to all [here](#).



Operation Noah annual report available online

[Operation Noah](#) has produced their latest annual report. Operation Noah is an ecumenical Christian charity providing leadership, focus and inspiration in response to the growing threat of catastrophic climate change. Read their annual report [here](#). Their annual report was presented by Nicky Bull, Chair of Operation Noah, at their AGM on 1 July 2016 in London.



Eco challenge!

Our friends at Eco-Congregation Scotland have produced a list of '[Ten Tips for Saving Energy in Your Church and Home](#)'. We all know that to reduce the effects of climate change we all need to reduce our use of electricity and gas. This does not mean drastic changes to our lifestyles. This list includes simple tips for use in our homes and churches that could add up to significant savings. Are we up for the challenge?



Prayer for the Earth

The [Uniting Church in Australia](#) shared the following prayer for the [Sacred Earth, Sacred Trust](#) global day of prayer and action for people and our planet on 12 June:

Creator God, breath and source of life, in love you called the world into being and in grace you made us and call us your children. We stand in awe of the wonder of your creation: its beauty and wildness; complexity and power; resilience and fragility.

God of life, you call us to be participants in the web and wellspring of life: to be nurtured by the planet; to be nurturing of the planet; to cherish the world and all that lives.

But we have failed and creation groans under our weight.

God of grace, forgive us in our brokenness: when we have taken too much from the earth; when we have not spoken out against greed and destruction; when we have allowed our most vulnerable neighbours to be harmed. We seek courage and forgiveness to be made whole.

God of love, we pray for those people, communities and nations already suffering the devastating effects of climate change; and we pray for the diversity of life on earth, so much of it already threatened by our actions.

God of hope, we pray for the world's leaders. Bless them with wisdom and creativity, and a shared vision of hope for all creation.

May they find the determination to take strong action against climate change, and the political will to act together for the common good.

Creator God, we pray for us all, that we might restore our relationships with each other and work together to heal the earth. Renew us in your grace for the sake of your creation. Amen.

With kindest regards

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