

## Dear Eco-Congregation friends

Welcome to the January 2018 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. Happy new year to all! Wishing all friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland an earth-centred 2018!



### Are you interested in learning more about Eco-Congregation Ireland?

Perhaps your congregation or parish has an interest in the environment and has thought about becoming an Eco-Congregation? The Eco-Congregation Committee has Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Quaker representatives on it and they are happy to come to speak to your group no matter how small! The contact details are listed at the end of this newsletter. Do 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.

### In this newsletter:

- Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues!
- Awards! Awards! St James Church of Ireland & St Anne's Catholic Parishes in Shankill, Co Dublin receive ECI Award!
- New Certificates from Eco-Congregation Ireland!
- ECI Collaborates with Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal & Representative Church Body to Promote the Lenten initiative #Jars4Journeys
- Intertwining of Ecology and Religion by Fran Brady, ECI Quaker Representative
- Save the Date! Laudato Si' – Connecting Global and Local Action by Lorna Gold, Trócaire
- Earth Hour 2018
- Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland Steps Up Its Commitment to Tackling Climate Change
- Traditional Sacrament of Epiphany Celebrated in Indian Orthodox Church, Dublin, Re-affirming the Need for Care of Nature
- European Christian Environmental Network has a New Website!
- Reminder! Drumalis 2018 Earth-Centred Retreats
- Annual Eco-Congregation Scotland Gathering Date and Theme Announced
- Carrigaline Union of Parishes Lenten Study Series 2018
- Update from Jubilee Farm, Larne, Co Antrim
- Forest Friends Ireland to Re-launch the Peace Forest Ireland Project
- New Year Reflection and Challenge from Killiskey Parish, United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough
- Care for Creation Day at Lough Derg, Co Donegal
- Climate Change Publications from the Quaker United Nations Office
- Laudato Si' Reflected in Funeral Service of Nora McDowell, Rathgar Parish Laudato Si' Group
- A Quaker Response to Animal Suffering – Woodbrooke Distance Learning Course
- Update from South Belfast Quaker Meeting
- Date of Next NI Creation Care Network Meeting
- Save the Date! Next Meet-Up of Belfast Repair Café!
- Laudato Si' Reflections from Loving Sister Earth
- Update from Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish, Dennehy's Cross, Cork
- Request for help!
- Dromantine Retreat – Finding God in the Singing Heart of the World: An Exploration of the Creation Spirituality of Laudato Si'
- Churches in France Encourage Ecological Conversion – Eco-certification Label Église Verte Launched
- Eco Challenge!
- Prayer for the Earth

## Our Climate Justice Candle – the journey continues!

In 2017 ECI's Climate Justice Candle has visited 26 different churches and faith communities/events around the country. However, it has suffered quite a bit of wear and tear on its ecumenical and climate justice journey which unfortunately cannot be fixed, so we are in the process of having another candle made. This will take a few weeks, so our Climate Justice Candle project is on pause at the moment. When the candle is ready we will be in touch with you all to let you know. If you would like to be part of this initiative and use the new candle in a future event, simply drop us an email to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com).

## Awards! Awards! St James Church of Ireland & St Anne's Catholic Parishes in Shankill, Co Dublin receive ECI Award!

On 19 November 2017 Sr Catherine Brennan, Catholic representative on the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee, presented to St James Church of Ireland Crinken and St Anne's RC parishes in Shankill, County Dublin their ECI award plaques following their assessment in late October. This ecumenical endeavour began in October 2015 when the two parishes founded [Shankill Action for a Green Earth - SAGE](#), to raise awareness, both in their congregations and in the wider Shankill community, of climate change and our responsibilities as Christians and citizens to counter its impact on the poorest peoples and on the planet.



The presentation of the plaques took place in two separate ceremonies following the main Sunday service in each church. SAGE is now part of the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities programme and is embarking on a project to reduce the carbon footprint of Shankill by five per cent over the coming three years. You can read more about this story and view more photos [on the ECI website](#).

## New Certificates from Eco-Congregation Ireland!

Up to now churches and congregations have begun their journey to an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award by working their way through the Eco-Congregation Ireland [Environmental Check Up for your Church](#) and undertaking a number of items from it over a two year period. This then leads to the final and overall Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. In 2018 the ECI Committee has decided to issue two certificates in the earlier stages of this journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award marking stages on the way - the **Awareness Certificate** and the **Endeavour Certificate**. Eco-Congregation Ireland will send your church an Awareness Certificate when you let us know that you have begun your environmental journey and when you get a bit further along the road, we will present you with an Endeavour Certificate. After two years you can then apply for the overall Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. For more information please get in touch with ECI at [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com).



## ECI Collaborates with Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal & Representative Church Body to Promote the Lenten initiative #Jars4Journeys

[Eco-Congregation Ireland](#), [the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal](#), and the [Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland](#) are joining forces to promote the Lenten initiative #Jars4Journeys.



Bishops' Appeal Education Advisor Lydia Monds said: "We are inviting people to save an old jam jar or other recyclable container and every time they make a journey that is not by foot or by bike, they can donate to offset the impact of their carbon footprint. The money raised will go towards three conservation projects around the world that support and help build resilience in communities who are most affected by climate change. Bishops' Appeal and the RCB are match-funding the first €1,000/£1,000 raised. Join us this Lent in being mindful of the impact of our lifestyles on others and on all of creation." Anyone can take part in #Jars4Journeys by [downloading jam jar labels here](#).

## **Intertwining of Ecology and Religion by Fran Brady, ECI Quaker Representative**

Fran Brady, Quaker representative on the Eco-Congregation Ireland committee, has written a thoughtful piece on Spiritual Ecology for the ECI website. In this article she says: 'Spiritual ecology recognizes the sacred nature of all of creation. It recognizes that there is a spiritual component in all aspects of environmentalism and earth stewardship. Central to Spiritual Ecology, which is not based upon a single faith, is an awareness of the interdependence and living unity of the ecosystem. We need to nurture a way of life that is in harmony with the earth, a culture that cares for the soul as well as the soil.' [Read her article in full here](#).



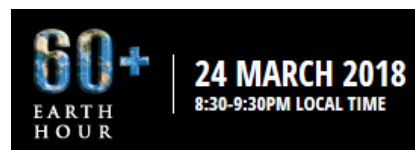
## **Save the Date! Laudato Sí – Connecting Global and Local Action by Lorna Gold, Trócaire**

The board of the Global Catholic Climate Movement will be convening in Ireland from 12th-15th February. To take advantage of having the board in Ireland, a special meeting on Laudato Sí will be held in Maynooth. At the meeting, participants will explore the connections between the inspiring work of GCCM and how they can strengthen links with initiatives happening in Ireland. The meeting will take place on Thursday 15th February at 11am in the Columba Centre Library, Maynooth University South Campus, from 11am, ending with mass at 1pm celebrated by Fr. Sean McDonagh. Places are strictly limited to 40, so please register with Susan Cullen [susan.cullen@trocaire.org](mailto:susan.cullen@trocaire.org) or contact Lorna Gold [Lorna.Gold@trocaire.org](mailto:Lorna.Gold@trocaire.org) directly for more details. [You can find out more about GCCM here](#).



## **Earth Hour 2018**

Around the globe, millions of people, businesses, and landmarks set aside an hour to host events, switch off their lights, and make noise for climate change action. Over the years, Earth Hour participants have helped make amazing things happen. From changing laws to funding solar-powered homes, volunteers have made a real, positive impact on our planet. This year Earth Hour is at 8:30pm on 24 March 2018. Deirdre Lane is Ireland's Earth Hour ambassador for the third year - [shamrockspring@gmail.com](mailto:shamrockspring@gmail.com). Lots more information is available on the [Earth Hour website](#). Don't forget – if you hold an event for Earth Hour let us know! Email your report with a photo to [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com).



## **Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland Steps Up Its Commitment to Tackling Climate Change**

The Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland (RCB) has been stepping up its commitment to address the problem of Climate Change in the broadest way possible. Some actions include: a dedicated section on Environmental Sustainability under the Parish Resources section of their website; joining the Climate Action 100+ initiative at the



end of November as a founding signatory and supporter; two new pilot schemes – firstly the Property Committee is working with 10 parishes in the Dioceses of Down and Dromore with a view to reviewing the efficiency of existing energy management controls and secondly a recent proposal to locate beehives on RCB property from Spring 2018. As mentioned above, for Lent, the RCB is participating in [a collaborative initiative alongside Eco-Congregation Ireland and Bishops Appeal called 'Jars4Journeys'](#) and putting an end to the use of the non-recyclable, disposable coffee cups in Church House. [You can read more detail about these interesting efforts by the RCB here.](#)

## Traditional Sacrament of Epiphany Celebrated in Indian Orthodox Church, Dublin, Re-affirming the Need for Care of Nature

Fr Anish John, Vicar, St.Thomas Parish and Vice President Ecumenical Relations (Indian Orthodox Church, Ireland Region) provided a report for ECI on this wonderful event. The feast of Epiphany in Orthodox Churches has a profound feature of blessing sources of water and re-affirming the need for care of nature. The Church was exhorted to care for our precious water sources and the Sunday school children encouraged for eco-friendly living. Read more on [the ECI website and view more photos.](#)



## European Christian Environmental Network has a New Website!

The aims of the European Christian Environmental Network are to share information, experiences in environmental work among widely varied Christian traditions and to encourage a united witness in caring for God's creation. They have started 2018 with a very colourful new website! The website is packed with interesting Europe-wide news items, information and relevant documents from the ECEN Assemblies, a section for Creation Time, upcoming events and news on their thematic work i.e. work on climate change, theology, eco-management, nature protection/biodiversity, transition living and energy. You can also sign up for their new e-newsletter via the website. [Take a look at the ECEN website here.](#)



european christian **environmental** network

## Reminder! Drumalis 2018 Earth-Centred Retreats

[Drumalis Retreat Centre](#) in Larne, Co Antrim is offering two earth-centred retreats in 2018. 'One Family, One Common Home' is the name of the Re-inhabiting the Earth Spring Conference which will take place during 23-25 February 2018 and will be facilitated by Grainne Doherty and Dr Lorna Gold from Trócaire. *This weekend retreat will close with the presentation of an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award to Drumalis in recognition of the centre's environmental work over the past 20 years!*



'Exploring the Emerging Human within the Evolving Universe' will take place 23-29 June 2018 facilitated by Anne Harnett CP and Margaret Rose McSparran CP and team. You can learn more about these retreats and register by contacting [drumalis@btconnect.com](mailto:drumalis@btconnect.com) or phoning 028 2827 2196 / 028 2827 6455.

## Annual Eco-Congregation Scotland Gathering Date and Theme Announced

The 2018 Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering will take place in the Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh on Saturday 28th April. The theme is "Pass the Planet" and focuses on the International Year of Young People. ECS is encouraging as many young people as possible to take part. Amazing new

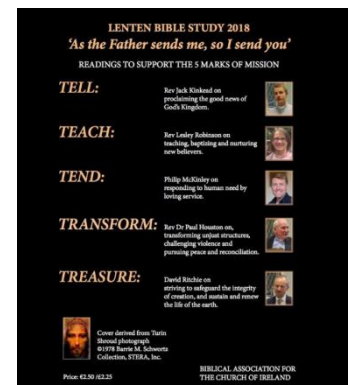


personalities, talents, attitudes and ambitions are born every day and in celebration of the Year of Young People 2018, this event focuses on the planet passed on from generation to generation. [Learn more and register.](#)

## Carrigaline Union of Parishes Lenten Study Series 2018

The 2018 Carrigaline Union of Parishes Lenten Study Series will focus on the Five Marks of Mission and will be using the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland resources. The series begins on 21 February at 8pm and continues each Wednesday in Lent in the Parish Hall, Carrigaline. Everyone is welcome!

Of special interest to friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland is week 5 of the series. This session will look at 'Striving to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth' by David Ritchie. For contact details and more information visit the [website of the Carrigaline Union of Parishes.](#)



## Update from Jubilee Farm, Larne, Co Antrim

Jubilee Farm has circulated their January 2018 newsletter where they introduce [their website](#) and highlight some upcoming events such as their first community volunteer day, and dedication service on 27 January, their creation care prayer meeting on 30 January and their launch and BioBlitz 22-23rd June. Everyone is welcome! [You can read more about these events here.](#) For more information contact [jubilee.farm.larne@gmail.com](mailto:jubilee.farm.larne@gmail.com).



## Forest Friends Ireland to Re-launch the Peace Forest Ireland Project

Forest Friends Ireland was founded to provide an alternative to a rampant monoculture forestry policy. They value forests because of their essential role in maintaining the fragile ecosystems which preserve the earth's rich biological and cultural diversity. Forest Friends Ireland is encouraging communities and agencies all along the border to initiate tree plantings so that eventually there will be a great Peace Forest. They plan to re-launch the Peace Forest Ireland Project in May this year. They are currently recruiting volunteers for the project just now. If you are interested in getting involved contact John Haughton on 085 253 6650 or [visit their website](#). Forest Friends Ireland is also on [Facebook](#).



## New Year Reflection and Challenge from Killiskey Parish, United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough

Stephanie McDonald and Anne Newton, parishioners in Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey Parish shared their Ecotips which were published in their monthly church announcements sheet.

'As another year rolls in, it is a good time to reflect on our environmental impact over the past twelve months. Have we cut back on our waste at all? Did we reduce our car journeys, number of flights abroad, amount of home or office heating (there is no need to be cold, but many houses and work places are so unnecessarily hot), unwanted products we succumbed to buy, or purchase food we did not eat? Ireland's record at reducing CO2 emissions is one of the worst in Europe, quite simply we are not reaching any of our stated goals.



Government policy is crucial, but each individual must play their part too. So, try car-pooling, taking short week-end breaks in Ireland not abroad, adjust radiator thermostats, discern between want and need when shopping. Challenge yourself to reduce waste! [Visit the Killiskey Parish website.](#)

## Care for Creation Day at Lough Derg, Co Donegal

A date for your diary! There will be a Care for Creation Day on Saturday 19th May 2018 in Lough Derg, The Sanctuary of St Patrick, Co Donegal. The guest speakers are Jonny Hanson and Nellie McLaughlin. For more details contact Maureen in Lough Derg on 071 9861518 or email [info@loughderg.org](mailto:info@loughderg.org). Visit the [Lough Derg website](#) to learn more.



## Climate Change Publications from the Quaker United Nations Office



Lindsey Fielder Cook, Representative for Climate Change at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has shared two very useful resources. [The Negotiator's Toolkit](#) was prepared for the climate change conference, and QUNO is revising this for climate activists and citizens. [The Climate Justice Paper](#) QUNO wrote for grassroots communities active on climate change, to explain the connection with human rights and how groups are using international 'norms' to support their call for climate change nationally. [Visit the QUNO website](#) which is full of very useful and interesting information.

## Laudato Si Reflected in Funeral Service of Nora McDowell, Rathgar Parish Laudato Si Group

Nora was an original member of the Rathgar Parish Laudato Si group. When Nora died peacefully in December 2017 her family wanted her connection with Laudato Si to be reflected in her funeral service. The large congregation which attended the service witnessed a copy of Laudato Si being brought to the altar as a symbol of its importance in Nora's life. They are keen that part of her legacy will be that the words of this reflection from Laudato Si will be realised:



“To be present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things. We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth” - Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter 'On Care for our Common Home'. You can read the tribute to Nora on [the ECI website](#).

## A Quaker Response to Animal Suffering – Woodbrooke Distance Learning Course

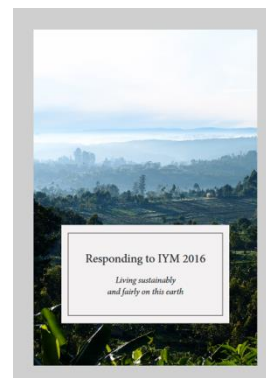
'Are you concerned with animal suffering? Do you question the moral justifications for their ill-treatment? Do you have an awareness of them as precious creatures of God? This six week online course will introduce key themes in the field of Animal Theology within the context of the Quaker faith. Also looking at biblical, Buddhist and scientific understanding, we will ask how our lives of active witness might realise the common bonds we share with other species, and extend our vision of the



peaceable kingdom.' This online course is taught by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham and begins on 5 February 2018 until 18 March 2018. and requires approximately 2-3 hours per week to complete. [You can learn more and register here.](#)

### Update from South Belfast Quaker Meeting

South Belfast Quaker Meeting is planning a follow-up 'After Meeting Conversation' and shared lunch on Sunday 18th February. The focus of the conversation will be 'Food & Friendship' as these were two areas from the EcoQuaker booklet '[Responding to IYM 2016: Living Sustainably and Fairly on this Earth](#)', that members haven't explored in any depth yet at South Belfast meeting. Under the heading of 'Food' they hope to explore issues around eating seasonably, Fairtrade, organic, sustainable, food miles, and looking at effects on soil. These 'conversations' are held to assist members of South Belfast Meeting respond to the commitment undertaken by Quakers across Ireland in April 2016 for meetings and members to become more sustainable. [Read more.](#)



### Date of Next NI Creation Care Network Meeting

The next meeting of the Northern Ireland Creation Care Network will be held on Saturday 10 March 2018 starting at 10.00am in Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Church, 191-193 Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy, Belfast BT10 OLL. All are welcome!



### Save the Date! Next Meet-Up of Belfast Repair Café!

Repair cafés are volunteer-run, pop-up community events which take place around the cities, where skilled volunteers help people fix their stuff for free. It brings people together, keeps waste out of landfill, keeps traditional skills alive and encourages re-use and repair. The wait is finally over... the next event will be on Saturday 24 February at the Crescent Arts Centre in Belfast! [Check out this link for more details.](#)



### Laudato Si' Reflections from Loving Sister Earth

Brian Grogan SJ is writing for Loving Sister Earth a series of short reflections on the Mysticism of Laudato Si'. These may be helpful to groups as well as individuals, and are already finding their way into Parish Newsletters. His belief is that the foundational stage in caring for Sister Earth is to fall in love with it, as St Francis did (see Laudato Si 11). He explores the mysticism underlying Laudato Si': 'There is a mystical meaning in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face' (233). More information on the [new section on Laudato Si' Mysticism on the Loving Sister Earth website.](#)



### Update from Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish, Dennehy's Cross, Cork

On Tuesday, 23rd January Ballineaspig Parish hosted a Recycling Workshop led by Recycling Ambassador Teresa MacEoin. Teresa is part of Voice Ireland's Recycling Ambassador Programme which is offering free interactive Recycling Workshops to help people improve Ireland's recycling rates and reduce levels of contamination in household recycling bins. The recycling workshop was very



informative. Parishioners discovered that the vast majority of them were doing at least some things wrong! [You can read about this recycling workshop in detail here.](#)

Parishioners have arranged the following talks for Lenten Series 2018: 20 February Trees and the Environment, Kevin Corcoran; 27 February Cosmology, Sr. Nellie McLoughlin RSM; 8 March, Micheál Lehane, Director, EPA; 13 March, Ants, John Breen, Zoologist. All talks at 8pm. You can find out more information at [www.dennehycrossparish.ie](http://www.dennehycrossparish.ie).

### Request for help!

Rev John Faris, retired Presbyterian Minister and member of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Clandeboye, Bangor, Co Down is seeking advice about good sources for eco-friendly disposable cups. The members of his church are concerned about the amount of Styrofoam cups they throw out each week which end up in landfill. He would be grateful if folks would email him directly to share any information and experiences. His email address is [farisjohn@gmail.com](mailto:farisjohn@gmail.com).



### Dromantine Retreat – Finding God in the Singing Heart of the World: An Exploration of the Creation Spirituality of Laudato Si'

Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co Down is offering a retreat based on creation spirituality conducted by Dr John Feehan and Fr Hugh O'Donnell, SDB – *Finding God in the Singing Heart of the World: An Exploration of the Creation Spirituality of Laudato Si'* from Friday 4 May 2018 - Thursday 10 May 2018. An adventure in creation spirituality: a week of encounter, discussion and reflection, in which participants explore the mystery of God's presence in the natural world: in rock and the heavens, plants and animals; looking each day at a different facet, in the wonderful landscape of Dromantine with its lake, extensive woodlands, large variety of trees, shrubs and flowers. [More information here.](#)



### Churches in France Encourage Ecological Conversion – Eco-certification Label Église Verte Launched

The [Council of Christian Churches in France](#) (CÉCEF) is encouraging local churches to support a recently created Green Church environmental certification label, and asked that offerings made at ecumenical services during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity go to help finance the initiative. The ecumenical eco-certification label called Église Verte (Green Church) was publically launched with a new website on 18 January, at the beginning of the Week of Prayer, to promote environmental awareness in local churches, following from the United Nations agreement on climate change Paris in 2015. Learn about this initiative on the [World Council of Churches website](#). [Visit the Église Verte website.](#)





## Eco Challenge!

The season of Lent is almost here. Are you willing to Show the Love in Lent 2018?



Christian Aid is calling for people to take and share 'green heart photos' to show the love for the people, places and things which are affected by climate change. All you need to do to take part is to make or print green hearts and take a photo of you and your group holding the hearts. Send the photo to Dave Thomas at Christian Aid [dthomas@christian-aid.org](mailto:dthomas@christian-aid.org). The photos will be compiled into a short video slideshow and shared online and via social media to send a message to policy makers that people are concerned about the impact of climate change and want them to take urgent action. [Find out more here.](#)

You can also help those around the world whose lives are impacted by climate change by getting involved in the Lenten initiative #Jars4Journeys co-ordinated by [Eco-Congregation Ireland](#), [the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal](#), and the [Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland](#) and [Trócaire's Lenten campaign](#).



## Prayer for the Earth

Rev Andrew Orr, Chair of Eco-Congregation Ireland provided the opening meditation and prayer at a recent Irish Council of Churches' Climate Justice Workshop based on Genesis 2: 4-9, 15-17. You can read his inspirational [text in full on the ECI website](#). He offers the following prayer for the Earth:

Give us vision and new commitment  
To take up the challenges to which you call us,  
That in company with all created things  
We may sing the joy, the beauty and the glory  
That is creation's song.  
Amen.

With kindest regards,

**Karen Nicholson**  
Administrative Officer

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

**Rev 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 John Corrie**  
Methodist representative

[jscmethodist@gmail.com](mailto:jscmethodist@gmail.com)  
+44 (0) 28 9209 1559

**Joe Furphy**  
Presbyterian representative

[jfurphy@aol.com](mailto:jfurphy@aol.com)  
+44 (0) 28 9061 2311

**Fran Brady**  
Religious Society of Friends representative

[wastenot@eircom.net](mailto:wastenot@eircom.net)  
+353 (0) 1 837 6464