

Dear Eco-Congregation friends

Welcome to the September/October 2018 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. Autumn is here with its beautiful colours!



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 and at the above link.

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.

Would you like to start your journey towards an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award? A good way to get started is by completing our [Environmental Check Up for Your Church!](#) Send us your completed Checklist and one of our committee will be in touch to help you move towards an application for an Eco-Congregation Ireland award.

Don't forget! ECI will award two certificates in the earlier stages of your journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award to mark stages on the way - the Awareness Certificate and the Endeavour Certificate. [Learn more on the ECI website here.](#)



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Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues in Northern Ireland!

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. Our new candle has headed off on its ecumenical and climate justice journey again!

For the next few months the ECI Climate Justice Candle will be travelling around Northern Ireland! Would your church or parish like to host the candle?

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. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

ECI Climate Justice Candle at the World Meeting of Families 2018!

Jane Mellett, 'Our Common Home' Project Co-ordinator at the World Meeting of Families provided ECI with a report and wonderful photos of the Climate Justice Candle at the event. She mentioned that one of the most interactive and prayerful spaces at the event was the eco-prayer space which was located in the main Prayer Marque and this space had the ECI Climate Justice Candle at its centre.



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. These were hung on the surrounding walls. People sat on cushions having time to reflect, walked around the photo exposition, wrote their prayers for the earth and were also able [to sign the Laudato Si pledge](#) if they wished.

The ribbons and prayer flags accompanied the climate justice candle to the final liturgy in the RDS on Friday 24th August where the candle was clearly visible on the main sanctuary during the Mass and led the final procession with eco-volunteers and Trócaire volunteers. The Candle, prayer flags and ribbons were then brought to Christchurch Cathedral for that evening's interfaith event on Our Common Home which was attended by 400 people and included speakers from across faith communities in Dublin. You can read Jane's report in full [on the ECI website and view more photos.](#)

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Ballineaspig Parish, Co Cork

Clare McCutcheon from the Faith in Action Group in Ballineaspig Parish, Co Cork sent ECI a report on the visit of the ECI Climate Justice Candle to their 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. You can read Clare's report in full [on the ECI website](#) and view her photos.

Westport Eco-Congregation Mayo: Towards a Cleaner Coast

[Westport Eco-Congregation](#) ran a very successful 'Clean Coasts' talk in Westport Town Hall on Monday 17th September. Up to 80 people attended on the night when speakers included Beckey Finn Britton from An Taisce Clean Coasts, Eithne Larkin from Leave no Trace, Fergal O'Dowd from GMIT and Louise Hastings from Keep our Beaches Clean Louisburgh. Louise outlined the power of social media in gathering local volunteers to clean up the beaches in Louisburgh after she witnessed appalling litter on Old Beach during the heat wave in late June. This one-off litter pick event became a regular event over the summer months. Her talk inspired all present to take further action to keep our beaches clean.



Following on from this Westport Eco-Congregation along with local volunteers carried out a clean-up in the Rosbeg area on Saturday 22nd. It was great to report that there was a minimal amount of rubbish to collect. Westport Eco-Congregation thanks all the volunteers and to Mayo Co Council for sponsoring their events. The photo above shows members of Westport Eco-Congregation with the speakers of the 'Towards Cleaner Coast for Mayo'.

Eco-Congregation Scotland Appoints New Environmental Chaplain

Rev David Coleman, has been inducted into the role of Environmental Chaplain for [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#) in Augustine United Church in Edinburgh. The Iona Community member intends to promote an eco-friendly approach across Scotland. Mr Coleman, originally from Birmingham and a minister in the United Reformed Church since 1995, will be based partly in the Church of Scotland offices. You can read [an article on the Church of Scotland website](#) about David's induction service. Read

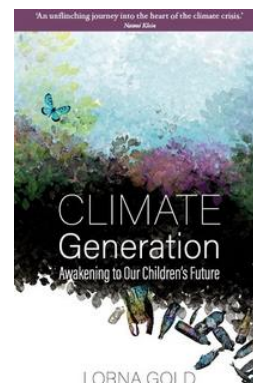


more about this story [on the ECI website](#). There you will also find the text of David's induction address and a video of his induction service. David, Eco-Congregation Ireland wishes you God's blessing in your new role!

Dr Lorna Gold launches her new book

Dr Lorna Gold of Trócaire launched her new book 'Climate Generation: Awakening to Our Children's Future' on Thursday 13 September 2018 in Hodges Figgis. This is what the Veritas website says about her new publication:

'Climate change is the greatest challenge of our generation - we hear it all the time. It has almost become a refrain. But do we really believe it? What if we were to let those words settle a little, penetrate minds and hearts deeply, and accept their troubling, terrifying truth? What if we were to understand that climate change isn't something far away out there in space and time, but something that affects us here and now? In 'Climate Generation: Awakening to Our Children's Future', Dr Lorna Gold shares her personal journey in understanding what those two words 'climate change' mean for her as a mother seeking to protect her children and, by extension, the world of which we are all a part.' [Read more here](#).



New Autumn 2018 Talks Programme at An Tairseach

An Tairseach's Autumn Talks Programme is well underway with some new and exciting speakers this year! All welcome! To book contact them at info@ecocentrewicklow.ie or call 0404 61833. More information on their [Facebook page](#). This year topics include: Emerging Spirituality in Light of Our Cosmic Story; A New Harmony, The Spirit, The Earth and the Human Soul; Proclaiming Our Faith and Commitment in a Way that Takes Account of Our New Earth Awareness.



Update from Tuam Parish

Anne Quinn from Tuam Parish sent ECI an update of their recent activities which you can [read in full on the ECI website](#). You can also see their photos there. Tuam Parish came in numbers to celebrate National Holy Wells day at Abbey Trinity and Dr Tony Claffey gave a riveting account of the history of the 'Well' and its origins. Work on the restoration of the well was on-going for over 6 months in preparation for National Holy Wells Day. Members of Tuam Parish Eco-Congregation and Tuam Tidy Towns battled briars and brambles to reveal the beautiful old structure of the well.



A walk and talk 'in celebration of creation' also took place in Kilmore/Cloonfush bog and was a reminder to all of how if we stay in the present, a simple walk in a simple place, a bog, can bring us to the presence of our Creator God. As the group walked in glorious sunshine, they were introduced to the plants and flowers of the area, many unique to bogland and now becoming rare or threatened with extinction. To some people many plants may be seen as weeds but the group members reflected on how these plants have intrinsic worth as expressions of the Divine.

Next Northern Ireland Creation Care Network Meeting – 20 October 2018

The next Northern Ireland Creation Care Network meeting will take place in Ballynure Presbyterian Church Halls in Ballynure village, Co Antrim on Saturday 20 October at 10am. Ballynure Presbyterian church is located at Main Street, Ballynure, BT39 9TU. All welcome!



Living Without Plastic Lecture at Dublin Unitarian Church – 30 September 2018

[Dublin Unitarian Church](#) is holding a lecture on Sunday 30 September 2018 in the Vestry at 1.45pm with speaker Sue MacFarlane. Sue is passionate about sustainable living and for several years has actively tried to live without plastic. The title of the event is 'Start where you are, Use what you have, Do what you can.' All are welcome!



Celebrating Creation Time at the Parish of Sean McDermott Street, Dublin

Fr Hugh O'Donnell shared with ECI how the Parish of Sean McDermott Street, Dublin is celebrating Creation Time 2018. The parishioners used the brochure for the '[Curious Creatures: Frans Post and Brazil](#)' exhibition in the National Gallery of Ireland as inspiration for their Creation Time thoughts and prayers. This exhibition portrayed images of creatures drawn by Frans Post in seventeenth century Brazil. These creatures are now described as seriously threatened like the South American Tapir, Jaguar, Giant Anteater and the critically endangered Spider Monkey. People could see these fascinating creatures as they entered the church.



Update from Jubilee Farm, Co Antrim

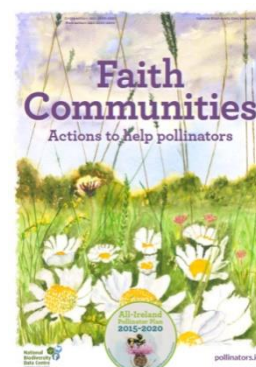
Jubilee Farm in Northern Ireland is trying to raise £300,000 to purchase a small farm outside Larne, where they can bring their ambitious plans for Jubilee Farm to fruition, with organic pigs, poultry, goats and vegetables, plus an internship programme, and even "glamping" in due course. As a Community Benefit Society – a form of cooperative social enterprise – they are raising this money via a community share offer, making this the first community-owned farm in Northern Ireland. [This scheme will be launched in Belfast on 20th October](#) and everyone is welcome! [Read Jubilee's blog on this event here.](#)



Jubilee's Managing Director, Dr Jonny Hanson, will be in Dublin on 29 October to talk about this exciting project and invite individuals and organisations to invest in the project, from only £50. The information evening will take place from 7-8 pm at Dublin City Mission, 9c Lower Abbey Street, D01 A3C4. Free tickets can be booked via bit.ly/shareofferdublin. For more information about Jubilee and their share offer please visit jubilee.coop/shareoffer or email mail@jubilee.coop.

Faith Communities – Actions to Help Pollinators

Faith Communities across the island of Ireland are being called on to take actions to help save our bees. Faith communities often own large areas of land and can lead the way in managing our landscape to better support and enhance all nature and creation. These non-denominational guidelines suggest 24 practical actions that any faith community can take. They are based on scientific research and are the measures that are most likely to benefit Irish pollinators. [To view the guideline document for Faith Communities, click here](#)



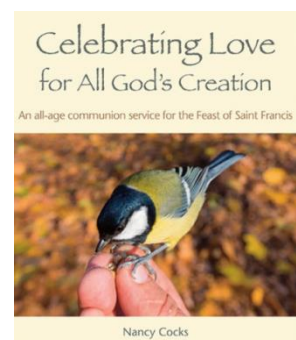
St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church Enjoys Nature Walk and Eco Reflection

Fr Anish John from [St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church](#) in Dublin sent ECI a report on this event. Around 20 young members and friends of St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church joined a walk through Waterstown Park (Palmerstown) reflecting on Genesis 2:15 'Till it and Keep it'. This young people's initiative was also supported by many senior parishioners. Short stories from the popular classic - *Dubliners* by James Joyce were also shared during the walk, which did enlighten many young minds to Irish culture and religion. You can keep up to date with [St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church on Facebook](#).



Celebrating Love for All God's Creation by Nancy Cocks

This publication is an all-age communion service for the Feast of Saint Francis (including a blessing of animals). 'Francis believed we should pay attention to everything God made, not just people who need help but every single thing around us. He thought that the spirit of life within each creature calls to that same spirit of life in all other creatures. That's why we feel sorry for animals when they're young or hurt and need help. And we feel for plants growing, even the ground we walk on and the stars in the sky, because we remember God cares for every precious little detail in the world. In the whole universe, even!'



Nancy Cocks is a former Deputy Warden of Iona Abbey, after which she took up the post of professor at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia and then served as minister of St John's Presbyterian Church in Medicine Hat, Alberta before retirement. [You can access this digital download here](#).

Tearfund Ireland's Renew our World Campaign Worship Anthem has been Released

The impact of climate change can be felt in every country in the world and the poorest nations are the most affected. [Tearfund Ireland](#) is part of the Renew our World Campaign and is inviting you to join them as they embark on a mission to mobilise and take action on issues of sustainability and climate justice. Renew our World is bringing people together from all the over the world to unite their voices in a global worship campaign. This campaign will culminate with the delivery of a song petition representing the voices of Christians all over the world, asking our global leaders to keep their commitments on tackling climate change. Tearfund is looking for people to follow the journey, learn the new worship anthem and then record it and post to social media. Learn more by contacting gemma.kelly@tearfund.ie or emma.lynch@tearfund.ie.

renew our world

Helpful links: You can read Tearfund's [Renew our World Campaign flier here](#); [Renew Our World Worship Toolkit: How to Organise a Worship Service](#); [Renew Our World Worship Anthem including a video, lyrics, music, worship tool kit](#).

Vita's Climate Mitigation Social Impact Investment Platform Presented in Chicago

[Ciara Feehely, Head of Fundraising & Communications at Vita](#) provided ECI with a report on Vita CEO John Weakliam's recent invitation to the prestigious Quinlan Business School, part of Loyola University in Chicago, to present the Vita Green Impact Fund to an audience of social impact investors and climate mitigation financiers. Vita's Green Impact Fund, launched in Ireland, in 2015, has proven to be very successful at reducing carbon while supporting over 300,000 of the world's poorest people. You can read Ciara's report [in full on the ECI website](#).



Ecumenical Mission Evening in Diocese of Limerick & Killaloe – Stewardship of God's Creation



Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe

Church of Ireland, Limerick and Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission has issued an invitation to an Ecumenical Mission Evening on Tuesday 16 October 2018 at 7.45pm in the Woodlands Hotel, Adare. Topic: *Stewardship of God's Creation*. Speaker: Archdeacon Andrew Orr, Eco-Congregation Ireland. Everyone with an interest in caring for the environment in which we live and work, from a Christian perspective, is very welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served before and after the meeting. All welcome!

Mayo Dark Skies Festival 2-4 November 2018

Why not join [Mayo Dark Skies](#) on the Wild Atlantic Way in November 2018, as the 'Friends of Mayo Dark Skies' in Newport, Mulranny and Ballycroy host a three day feast of talks, workshops, walks and stargazing, to celebrate the many facets of our Dark Sky Story! There is a great [line-up of speakers](#) and lots of [wonderful events for all](#).



Mayo Dark Skies also has a special community heritage project to collect stories / traditions / poems or piseogs about our night sky. These will be transposed into a performance by a local storyteller by candlelight during the Dark Sky Festival. The organisers are asking everyone from schools, colleges and young folks to elders and all members of the community, to gather and share any traditions, stories or piseogs (superstitions) from times past. This could be as simple as a little superstition about the moon or its lunar phases, or perhaps a story which involves a mythical Irish character or an Irish constellation story. They are asking that these stories be written down in simple language and sent to them at mayodarksky@gmail.com. [Read their leaflet here](#).

Mayo Dark Skies

New Video from Operation Noah Highlighting Impact of Climate Change

[Operation Noah's](#) new video, Sālote, aims to help Christians around the world recognise the human cost of climate change, and particularly its impact on women and children.

The short animated video, designed for Christians of all ages and developed in partnership with the [World Day of Prayer](#), a women-led, global, ecumenical movement, introduces the viewer to Sālote, a seven-year-old Polynesian girl who is already experiencing the devastating effects of a changing climate on her



South Pacific island home. As Sālote witnesses the impacts of climate change on three generations of her family, she reflects aloud on what has caused this change. Sālote is a free resource and is now [available to watch here](#). Operation Noah has also produced an activity pack and factsheet, as well as colouring-in pages, to accompany the video. [You can access these and read more about this project here](#).

Climate Change & Consciousness: Our Legacy for the Earth, April 20-26 2019, Findhorn Foundation

Climate Change & Consciousness: Our Legacy for the Earth, April 20-26 2019, will be a collaborative and participatory investigation into how we can steward a sustainable future on what has already become a radically changed planet Earth. The conference will bring together eminent scientists, wisdom-keepers, business people, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, young people and others, to envision and begin to inhabit our joint future. It will be an international, inter-generational and multi-disciplinary gathering. This is the principle of 'the big tent', borrowed from party politics, whereby diverse viewpoints, backgrounds and interests (the 'voices in the room') are brought together to engage and dialogue.



Hosted at Findhorn Eco Community in Scotland, this conference will feature such internationally renowned speakers as Vandana Shiva, PhD, Nobel Laureate and world-renowned environmental thinker, activist, physicist, feminist, philosopher of science, science policy advocate and author of 20 books; Bill McKibben, one of the world's leading environmental journalists and Jonathon Porritt, founder and Director of Forum for the Future, the UK's leading sustainable development charity. [Visit their website for more information here](#). [The conference is also on Facebook](#).

Centre for Interreligious Dialogue DCU Organises Symposium on Religion & Climate Change

On 19 September 2018 a Symposium on Religion and Climate Change was organised by the Centre for Interreligious Dialogue and the School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music at DCU on the DCU All Hallows Campus entitled: ['The Sixth Extinction: Interreligious Insights, Warnings and Questions: A Symposium on Religion and Climate Change'](#). This symposium was attended by academics from a range of disciplines (Theology, Communications, Law, Ethics, and Philosophy), field workers, scientists, NGO workers, interfaith experts, and doctoral students. Dr Peter Admirand, Lecturer in Theology and Coordinator, Centre for Interreligious Dialogue provided ECI with the report about the symposium [which you can read here](#).



The Sixth Extinction: A Symposium on Religion and Climate Change

Information on Public Participation Network

Catherine O'Toole, Development Officer for [Irish Environmental Network](#) is spreading the news of a new community initiative called the Public Participation Network, or PPN for short and is searching for environmentally focused groups in Ireland to join. She explains: 'There is a PPN in every county. It is completely free to join and there are many benefits for PPN members. The main aim of the PPN is to provide community members the opportunity to have their voice heard in the local County Council. There is huge potential to create positive change by giving your input into motions and policies that are being created, and by putting forward your own motions and policies that are in your community's interest. If your group were to sign up, you would also receive important information about what is happening in your county, such as events, funding



opportunities and public consultations.' You can read Catherine's information [in full on the ECI website](#) and can access her contact details if you wish to learn more about PPN.

Eco Challenge!

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for September 2018 - Drive Slower to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions!

Rev Trevor Sargent is one of the Church of Ireland representatives on the ECI committee. Trevor shared his Ecological Notes with us for the month of September. You can read them in full [on the ECI website here](#). One theme in the notes this month is cutting speed when driving and how this helps us reduce our carbon emissions. He shares the story of what one person is doing to play her part, how speed really does matter in helping to reduce emissions and discusses speed and inner peace!



Trevor writes: 'The Bible may have a message for our approach to driving in Ecclesiastes 4:6, 'Better is a handful with quiet than two handfuls with toil, and a chasing after wind.' Likewise, St Francis de Sales, (1567 – 1622), who was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Geneva, said, 'Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.' It has been said that Christians worship a '3 km/hr God'. Jesus exercised a walking ministry. His way of life alone might suggest that leaving more time for each journey is a good idea all round'. Great advice! Let's slow down!

On the ECI website you will also find [Trevor's Ecological Notes for October](#) outlining how we can all live with less plastic. Another eco challenge for us all!

Prayer for the Earth

[Earth Link](#) is a community based in Australia which envisions a world where there is respect, reverence and care for the whole Earth community. The community believes that the heart of this lies in deepening our bond with Earth. Earth Link is endorsed by the Sisters of Mercy, and is open to all who share their concern for the whole Earth community. You can subscribe [to their e-newsletter here](#) and receive their inspirational prayers and news. For Season of Creation they have prepared a beautiful [Meditative Walk to Appreciate Nature](#), however this can be used at any time of year. Included in this walking prayerful meditation is the following prayer:

We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another and commit to protect God's creation.

We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God's creation: the sunrise and sunset, birds, flowers and trees, rainbows in the sky, the stars, many forms of life in water and the ocean, in fields and forest.

We have come to listen to the "music of the universe" - birdsong, water flowing over rocks, the wind, leaves fluttering in the wind, raindrops pattering on the roof.

We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of creation and we commit to try our best to answer God's call to reverence all creation.

With kindest regards,

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The Feast of St Francis on 4 October brings Creation Time to an end until next year. Let us continue to care for and bring healing to the earth and all her creatures.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

