# Eco Congregation Ireland

# Annual Review 2024

## **Eco Congregation Ireland Small Grant Scheme "A Huge Success"**

Eco-Congregation Ireland was very pleased to announce, during the Season of Creation 2024, that they awarded grants to 27 different churches across the island of Ireland. From Ballymena to Killarney, from Westport to Dublin, churches benefitted from funding towards biodiversity projects and energy use reduction schemes. Grant winners included First Presbyterian Church, Portadown who will be "adopting a roundabout" and planting it with pollinator friendly shrubs and trees, Carrigaline Catholic Parish in Cork who are providing information material and support for people to grow their own food, Aughrim



Encouraging biodiversity in the church yards of Aughavale Group of Parishes

Church of Ireland parishes in Co. Galway who will be planting native Irish fruit bushes, and Centenary Methodist Church in Dublin who are installing low energy LED lighting. All this has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of Logos Publications and RPD Ltd who have worked closely with ECI on this exciting scheme.



Bulb planting at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Steelstown, Derry Andrew Orr, Chair of ECI said, "we have been amazed by the number of applications for grants. It has been a huge success, far beyond what we expected. It is so wonderful to see the churches across the island taking the lead in caring for God's creation in so many diverse ways."

Tom Clements, CEO of RPD Ltd and Logos Publications said: "I am delighted at the number and variety of projects which have been submitted. It is really heartening to see so many faith communities working together to try to address the twin challenges of climate change and loss of biodiversity. Along with my colleagues I am really looking forward to hearing about how these projects progress and hope that these twenty seven congregations will inspire other eco-congregations next year. While it is easy to get overwhelmed by the challenges we face I believe in the power of using many small changes to create great change, to quote Dom Helder Câmara: "When we dream alone, it is only a dream, but when we dream together it is the beginning of reality".



Westport Eco Congregation with their new bird and bat boxes The **full list of grant recipients** is as follows:

- Kilternan Cofl (Dublin): keep cups with
- ECI logo
- Kilcronaghan Cofl (Derry): pollinator beds
- Newcastle (Down) RC: extend pollinator garden
- First Portadown (Pres): adopt a roundabout: pollinators
- Steelstown RC (Derry): crocuses and pollinators
- Killarney RC: planning new wildlife area
- Carrigaline RC (Cork): booklets with advice on growing your own food
- Westport RC and Cofl: bird and bat boxes
- St. John's Tralee RC: pollinators
- Lisburn Cathedral Cofl: pollinators and keep cups
- Dunshauglin Cofl: bird and bat boxes
- Cloyne Cofl (Cork): Pocket Forest
- Rathkeale Cofl (Limerick): insulation in community house
- St. Brendan's Tralee RC: fencing for wildlife area which is being damaged



Tree planting by Archbishop Rowan Williams at Balally Parish Return to Nature Project

- Balally RC (Dublin): tree planting
- Swords RC: rainwater harvesting and signage
- Donagheady Cofl (Derry): pollinator plants for the parish
- Sandford CofI: pollinator shrubs
- Centenary Methodist (Dublin): LED lighting
- Ballymena RC: pollinator perennials
- Killiney Cofl (Dublin): removal of invasive species, new shrubs
- Aughrim Cofl (Galway): fruit bushes
- Cratloe RC (Limerick/Clare): LED lighting
- Bonnybrook RC (Dublin): Pocket Forest
- Ards Friary RC (Donegal): renewable heating
- Augustinians Friary RC Drogheda: bird boxes and new seating in pollinator gardens
- Fethard on Sea Cofl (Wexford): solar panels on church



Aughrim & Creagh Parish Union Rectory Garden Project

# **Climate Justice Candles 2024**

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 2024. The candles proved 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 2024, in many different and creative ways include:

#### **Carrigaline Union of Parishes, Co Cork**



Ireland Yearly Meeting (Quakers), Cork



Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles



#### Hillsborough Presbyterian Church



St John's Presbyterian, Belfast



St John's Presbyterian Prayer Walk



**Bishop Street Quaker Meeting, Derry** 



Ards Friary, Co Donegal



St Nicholas' Collegiate Church, Galway



Ecumenical Prayer Service, Franciscan Abbey Garden, Galway



Holy Trinity Church, Westport



Westport Eco Congregation Celebrations of St Brigid's Weekend



**Bunclody Union, Co Wexford** 



The following also hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle in 2024: Ballineaspaig Faith in Action Group, Cork | Abbeystrewry Union, Co Cork | Castlebar Parish | Holy Family Lay Members, Newbridge | Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Group of Parishes, East Co Meath and North Co Kildare

Church of the Assumption, Howth



St Joseph's Parish, Bonnybrook



Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Felim, Cavan



St Anne's Church, Bailieborough, Co Cavan



Urney Church of Ireland, Cavan



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



Zion Parish and Zion Parish Primary School, Dublin



Eco Spirituality Retreat in Manresa, Dublin



The Teresian School, Donnybrook



St Anne's Parish, Shankill



Booterstown, Milltown and Donnybrook Parishes



Eco-Congregation Cloughjordan at the Presentation of their ECI Endeavour Award



#### Certificates Awarded in 2024



#### Presentation of Endeavour Award to Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Johnstown, Killiney

#### Awareness Certificates

- Knock Methodist Church, Belfast
- St James, Donagheady Parish, Donemana
- Whiteabbey Methodist Church
- Prince of Peace Church, Fossa, Killarney
- Our Lady & St Brendan's Parish, Tralee
- Aughaval Group of Parishes
- Lisburn Cathedral
- Cloyne Union of Parishes
- Aughrim & Creagh Parish Union
- St Colmcille's Church, Swords
- St Augustine's Church, Drogheda
- Ards Capuchin Friary, Creeslough
- St John's Church, Cratloe, Co Clare
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Steelstown, Derry

#### **Endeavour Certificates**

- Grouped Parishes of Sandford & St Philip's Milltown, Dublin
- St Joseph & St Benildus & St Marys Parish, Newtown. Waterford
- Methodist Centenary Church
- Our Lady of Good Counsel, Johnstown, Killiney
- Eco-Congregation Cloughjordan



Knock Methodist Church Belfast receives ECI Awareness Award

## **New Representatives** on ECI committee

Jim Farrell is a member of the Diocese of Raphoe Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation committee in Co Donegal and is passionate about ecology and



promoting environmental sustainability at local level. He is an experienced facilitator and has delivered many workshops and training courses both in the profit and not-for-profit sector. From January 2025 Jim will be the new Chair of the ECI committee.

The Board of Social Responsibility of the Methodist Church has nominated Rev Daphne Hanna to be ECI's second Methodist representative.

Daphne is minister at Joanmount Methodist Church in North Belfast.

Jan Corrie is an accredited local preacher in the Methodist Church, joint contributor to the 'Living Faithfully' eco-articles in the Methodist Newsletter and



co-leader of Drumhilla Garden – a therapeutic space where she encourages living lightly on the planet and promotes the pleasures and benefits of growing your own food.

### **Finances**

€13,019.70		
	EXPENDITURE:	
€660.00	Salary	€7,200.00
€1.147.97	Newsletter	€264.00
€2,000.00	Annual Report	€140.00
€1,500.00	Computer Support	€628.58
€714.54	Bank charges	€52.16
€5,000.00	Website	€120.00
€1,000.00	Advertising	€209.10
€3,000.00	19 Small Grants awarded (to	o end of 2024) <b>€2850.00</b>
€95.00	Total Expenditure:	€11,463.84
€15,117.51	Surplus	€3,653.67
	Closing Balance:	€16,673.37

### **Chairperson's Remarks Archdeacon Andrew** Orr

Our annual report for 2024 showcases the wonderful work going on in many congregations throughout the

length and



breadth of the island of Ireland. You will hear the stories of groups working in their local communities, being sources of hope and inspiration to so many.

In particular, we have been blessed by the introduction of the small grants scheme, which enabled us to financially support the work of 27 different church communities. Our grateful thanks go RPD Ltd and Logos Publications for their generous sponsorship of the grants scheme. Our climate justice candles continue to be welcomed in many different places, and we love hearing the stories of how they are spreading good news to churches, schools and far beyond.

We welcomed new members to our committee: Jim Farrell as one of our new Catholic representatives and Daphne Hanna representing the Methodist Church. Daphne has had to step back temporarily, and her place will be taken for the time being by Jan Corrie. We trust they will have a fruitful and enjoyable time with us.

On the international front, once again there was mixed news. Although it seems as if global greenhouse gas emissions may have peaked, they are still not coming down fast enough. More action is needed for governments and the best way for that to happen is for local action in local communities to inspire politicians into taking climate action seriously.

This is my last column as Chair of ECI, as I am stepping down from the role after ten years. I will be continuing to serve on the committee as a Church of Ireland representative. I want to thank all my colleagues who have served on the committee, Karen our fantastic administrator, the Churches for their support, and most of all, all of you who work so hard to safeguard the environment in your own area, and encourage others to "act locally and think globally".

INCOME:
Religious Society of Friends
Methodist Church
Trócaire
Conference of Catholic Bishops
Presbyterian Church

**Opening Balance** 

Church of Ireland

**Total Income:** 

Sponsorship for Grants Sch

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Talks

€13,019.70		
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