The Magazine of the United Diocese of Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh & Emly (www.limerick.anglican.org)

He opened wide his arms upon the cross
(photo A F Borchert - Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise)

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April 2012
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Under the patronage of Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland
THE ACTRESS AND THE BISHOPS

It was Emma Thompson who said “Any problem, big or small, within a family, always seems to start with bad communication. Someone isn’t listening.” Isn’t that true? Certainly problems cannot be resolved without careful, attentive listening. The purpose of the Bishops’ conference for General Synod members on ‘Human sexuality in the context of Christian Belief’ last month, was to listen carefully to those who have different views from our own. And from the feedback, clearly it was worth the effort and expense.

From the evaluations, 92.85% thought the venue was Very Good or Excellent - despite it being situated in deepest Co Cavan; almost 70% found the conference helped them feel much better prepared to discuss the issues; and almost 60% said it helped them broaden their understanding of other perspectives. I heard many people say that they had never before engaged with General Synod members from Northern Ireland in such an effective way. For me that was a resounding success and will have a positive effect on how we discuss this matter - as no doubt we will - at General Synod in May.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE?

Forgive me if I share with you some reflections after making an appearance on TV.

To build trust we need to speak the truth clearly, as we see it. And to maintain trust we need to listen to one another with great attention.

I had great misgivings making the “Would You Believe?” programmes for RTE. I was offered the opportunity, as a new Bishop, to say how I was finding the job and the changes I had to face. I was worried about how truthful I could be. For instance in saying that we are a huge United Diocese, but less that 3000 active Church of Ireland members, would you (as faithful Church of Ireland members of this Diocese) feel I was letting the side down. And when RTE asked whether they could film a service in St Mary’s Cathedral in Limerick, with such a small congregation in a very large building, should I have said No? The truth about our Diocese is that we are few and we are scattered. But to my mind that is not a problem. Jesus left his entire enterprise of revealing God’s love to the whole world, to twelve very uncertain disciples.

I questioned throughout the filming why I was doing this. Was there not someone better? No doubt there would have been, but I was the one who was given the opportunity. I went ahead, trusting that God would use my weakness to do some good. That conviction comes from stories in the Bible and the lessons of Church history. The Church has been most effective, not in the times when it had great power, but when it was humble and set about serving the needs of the people.

Thank you for the very kind comments many of you have passed on. If I have offended any - I apologize - it was not my intention. I would gladly talk over with you any concerns you may have had following the programme. What I was trying to be was honest, and willing to listen.

I was trying to avoid bad communication, by “not listening”.

Thank you for your patience
Your Bishop
+Trevor

The Rt. Revd. Trevor Williams
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Editorial

Dear Reader

We are all excited by the roller-coaster of Spring. New life is everywhere as days lengthen – grass growing, lambs in the fields, daffodils and primroses, birdsong. It’s time to get the potatoes in, service the mower and start the spring cleaning.

By the time you read this we will be riding another spiritual and emotional roller-coaster, that of Holy Week: Palm Sunday’s triumphal entry to Jerusalem; Holy Thursday’s Last Supper, betrayal, arrest and trial; Good Friday’s brutal crucifixion and burial in a stranger’s tomb. But then follows Easter Sunday’s empty tomb, and the first encounters with the Risen Christ.

We cannot experience the joy of Easter without the despair of Good Friday, any more than the new life of Spring without enduring Winter’s cold and gloom. That is the message of the cover photo this month.

We at Newslink wish you all a very joyful and blessed Easter.

Regards & God bless,

Joe Sanders

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Floral Demonstration

In Aghancon Community Hall
By Ethel Mitchell
"Castle Floral Creations"
on Wednesday 11th April 2012 at 8pm
Door prize and raffle
Light refreshments served from 7.15pm

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Bishops' Conference:
'Human Sexuality in the context of Christian Belief'

Statement by the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin

Over the past 24 hours, 450 General Synod members of the Church of Ireland (together with several ecumenical guests) have come together from across the island and all the dioceses of the Church to engage with each other on this subject in innovative ways. It has been a substantial conversation reflecting strongly held convictions characterised by clarity of expression without judgmentalism. The conference enabled interactive engagement by participants from a wide range of different perspectives, focusing on complex and sometimes contentious issues. The climate was one of respectful dialogue, all the more valuable for its structured mixing of people who have not before come together or conversed in such depth.

The format included a range of facilitated seminars on themes as diverse as the welcome provided to gay people in church to recent changes in legislation to whether or not there can be ‘agreeable disagreement’ over gay clergy. It further involved listening to the direct experience of gay Christians and to parents of gay children. There was a clear appreciation of the integrity and principled positions of those expressing different views. It has become clear that there is a breadth of opinion in the Church of Ireland on these matters but also a strong sense of the cohesiveness of the Church. While it is acknowledged that there are still difficult issues for us as a Church, there is not an atmosphere of division.

The intention of the conference was one of enabling open discussion, rather than one of articulating policy or making decisions. We observed a common desire to welcome all people to participate in the life of the Church, whilst accepting that there are no easy answers to difficult questions. In response to the Holy Spirit, the Church seeks to witness to society – with humility – rather than simply reflect current popular opinion. The conference comes at a time when there are live cultural and political debates relating to ‘same-sex marriage’. Within this context, the Church’s position on marriage as being the union of one man and one woman remains constant.

In conclusion, we ask those who have attended to reflect on what they have heard and experienced and to continue the process of talking to each other in their homes, parishes and communities.

The Most Revd Alan Harper, Archbishop of Armagh
The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin

The Bishops’ Conference - an ordained woman reflects
By Rev. Jane Galbraith

Reflecting on the Cavan conference I am reminded of two people and one painting. The first person is a girl, not of this parish. Before her confirmation she told me that “in order to know the love of God you must first know evil”. I recall looking at this precocious twelve year old as she worried about knowing enough evil so as to be able to appreciate God’s goodness. To this day she is not confirmed or even a churchgoer. She considers herself too bad to be a Christian. It seems to me, that strand of thinking was present in spots, at the conference; the particular spots were open gay lifestyle = evil! The young girl I know is not gay but she has been damaged by what the church has taught her.

The other person who comes to mind is a teen asylum seeker. This boy was frightened. He was too frightened to say he was gay, at first. He hadn’t so much run away from his country because of sexual persecution, though had he chosen to live openly as a gay person he would have been imprisoned - he was from Iran. He had simply run away from home, afraid of what his mother would say! He felt he had to escape his mother and his country too!! He was sent to a centre some distance away from where I could easily take care of him. He told me he was frightened because the centre was full of aggressive young men. They were the same religion as he was and their faith was intolerant of homosexuals. That is why he had traveled to Limerick city and entered a Christian church. A phone call to him soon after our chat revealed, guess what...his mother had flown over from Tehran to take him home.

I often wonder what happened next in that family. And I often think of that youngster who assumed that Christians have the ‘gay issue’ all sorted out. I don’t think we have, nor do I think any of the mainline religions have. We in the Church of Ireland are trying. There is a difference between the oft repeated phrase heard at Cavan, ‘let us agree to disagree, agreeably’ and the reality of the damage that is being done to people’s lives in the name of religion. It’s like living in an earthquake zone. The whole foundation is moving, some are damaged, some are untouched, but all are shaken. Like they were in the Temple according to John, the time Jesus deliberately brought down the trappings of religion and predicted He in His body would replace them. He did! Blessed Easter! And we are all still trying to keep up! ...With the power of His way of love.

There are those who say that the Church of Ireland is going to fall apart over this issue, the trouble is that those who say it, often think they are standing safely to one side while the rest get ploughed under. Well then, we miss our calling! We did! Blessed Easter! And we are all still trying to keep up! ...With the power of His way of love.

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The Bishops’ Conference – a lay man reflects
by Kenneth Baker

I was quite surprised and delighted to get a letter in the post to let me know that I was elected onto General Synod, followed by an invitation to “A conference on human sexuality in the context of Christian Belief”. With absolutely no idea what this conference would entail, I headed off to the Slieve Russell Hotel in Cavan for the weekend. On arrival, over 450 delegates were seated in groups of ten around round tables. This was a conference not a legislative body and we were here to listen and learn and gain deeper respect for each other. The discussions were held under Chatham House Rules and each discussion began with two minutes of silent reflection. We were told that some delegates were there with formed views and some were there to learn more. This became very apparent, when our round table discussion began, and it wasn’t long before people’s views became very clear.

My table was made up of a mix from people of “conservative” and “evangelical” opinions and some of a “liberal” point of view. The round table was to be a safe space for honest discussion. I came with quite an open mind. I wanted to listen and gain a greater understanding of the biblical texts surrounding this matter as well as the personal stories attached. I soon began to receive some interesting literature from both sides of the discussions from fellow delegates and seminars. Some even a small bit shocking and overly graphic.

On the first night, we started with some bible readings, in which two speakers discussed their different perspectives on the texts. After dinner, we heard from two very interesting speakers. The first was a gay man who had previously been in a relationship and has since lead a celibate life. He believed that if he continued with his previous relationship, he would be living a life of sin. The other speaker has been in a long term civil partnership for several years and leads a very happy life. Both spoke about how important the Church had been in their lives. Then, we moved on to our separate seminars of which I attended “Gay Clergy - Can we agree to disagree agreeably”, “Legal Aspects - Recent Changes/Where we are”, and finally “A parent’s perspective - Any Parent’s dilemma”, Other seminars included a more scientific approach, where both sides generally agreed that a person sexuality wasn’t a choice.

So for me, a fascinating conference. I have always had a great passion for the Church of Ireland; I have felt that the Church of Ireland is a truly open and all-encompassing church. I understand that the imperative of the Gospel is that God’s love is an inclusive love. I think that any legislation introduced in the Church of Ireland that discriminates against people due to their sexuality is unjust and could damage the important ministry of our church.

Alternatively we should embrace participation at every level of church life.

I generally feel that all members engaged in a Christian manner in open and honest discussion. The conference was a success in my opinion and I await General Synod with a mix of apprehension and eagerness. The issue of homosexuality still seems to present a huge difficulty for the Church. So we will wait and see what these gentle conversations on the complexity of the issues will lead to.

Back to Church Sunday Seminar
reported by Marty Sanders

Do you remember the lady...

...who used to sit behind you? Or the young couple who sat across the aisle for a while? Have we tried to find out why they aren't there anymore?

Most of our churches are in ‘managed decline’ according to Michael Harvey, founder of Back to Church Sunday, established in 2004 to help a million Christians invite a million friends to church. He has travelled the world—on March the 2nd he came to Adare to be with some of us in our diocese—talking to people from many denominations about the possibilities for growth and renewal once we turn our thinking on its head. In the Lord’s Prayer, when we say ‘…Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done…’ do we really think that means nothing more than ‘maintain the fabric of the church for fewer and fewer people to worship in’?

Now, taking that one step further, how do we get people to become part of, in many cases come back to, our church family? It may sound like simplicity itself, but the best way is to ask them. In Ireland, as the ‘other church’ we are hesitant to make that invitation for a variety of reasons; here are some given by the group on the day:

• People (we) don’t talk about religion.

• We’re C of I, we don’t do that - that’s for the evangelicals down the road.

• Society’s changing with Sunday shopping, Sunday working, kids’ sports; the whole family isn’t together to go to church.

• Not sure why we go ourselves.

It is absolutely true that God is the source of growth and renewal but God works in ways we don’t always comprehend. Maybe you or me picking up the phone or knocking on the door to invite someone to church is one of those ways.

Perhaps the only real reason we don’t do that is because of fear of refusal. At least that is what Michael thinks and he has dedicated his life to helping us see it that way, too. When you consider what the early Christians suffered to sustain their faith and share it with others, fear of refusal doesn’t seem like much of a reason to keep ourselves to ourselves.

Are we ready to take the challenge? Step out there and invite someone we used to see in church but don’t any more? Introduce ourselves to new neighbours and offer the invitation they may refuse? The only way to test ourselves and our faith is to do it. We might all be surprised at the positive results.
The Girls Friendly Society

GFS Leaders’ and Friends’ Dinner was held on Friday, 11th February at the home of Deborah Powell, Nenagh. “Secret Santa” presents were great fun with some very entertaining gifts. We enjoyed lovely food, great company and lots of laughs in a friendly homely atmosphere. We express our heartfelt thanks to Deborah for her kindness to the hard-working leaders of the Diocese.

Diocesan Council Meeting was held in Roscrea on Thursday, 14th March. There was a large attendance at the meeting, which was followed by refreshments - many thanks to the Roscrea Leaders for their kind hospitality. At the meeting the results of the Diocesan Council office holder elections were announced. They are as follows:
- President – Rose Langley
- Secretary – Florence Reid
- Treasurer – Diane Dagg
- Vice Presidents – Linda Gill, Carol Talbot, Betty Delahunt & Grace Healy
- Badge Secretary – Grace Healy
- Publicity Officer – vacant
- Central Council Representative – Grace Healy

All good wishes to our Office Holders as they begin their 3 years of service to GFS in the Diocese. Grace Healy has also been elected to serve on the Procedures Committee at Central Council. Best of luck to Grace as she continues on this very hard working committee.

UP COMING EVENTS

Diocesan Service & Prize Giving Day will take place on Saturday, 24th March - in St. Kieran’s Church, Cloughjordan followed with refreshments and stalls in the Parish Hall. On display will be crafts from the Hand-craft Syllabus and Bible Study Syllabus. This is also a major fund raising event for the GFS so please support the sales tables – cakes, plants etc. All are welcome to join this GFS day of celebration.

All Ireland Camp will take place in St. Columba’s College, Whitechurch, Dublin 11-14th April. All good wishes to girls and leaders from the Diocese attending.

Cloughjordan Branch Enrolment Service - Sunday, 22nd April in St. Kieran’s Church at 11.30 a.m. Morning Service.

Leaders Camp Meeting - Thursday, 26th April in the Back Vestry of St. Mary’s Church, Nenagh at 8pm. This meeting is for all leaders who are travelling to the Diocesan Camp in June.

Central Finance Committee Meeting - 28th April, Dublin.

Diocesan Leader Training – A Flower Arranging Class is being organised in the Diocese for all leaders. The focus of this class will be the Flower Arranging Badge. More details to follow next month.

Central Council Meeting – On Saturday, 19th May, Diocesan Council members will travel to Dublin for the All Ireland gathering of GFS at which the new Central Council Officers will be commissioned.

Camp 2012 (15th – 17th June). This year we are returning to the Faith Mission in Carhue, Bandon, Co. Cork. Camp is for girls aged 9 years and over. Events for the weekend and costs will be finalised at the Camp Meeting on 26th April. Following the meeting Branch Leaders will be in touch with parents regarding costs, requirements for weekend and bus times.

All Ireland Training in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute - 22nd-24th June.

Rose Langley, Diocesan President

Mothers’ UNION

Christian care for families

Festival Service – Sunday April 15th, Adare

The Sunday after Easter Day is sometimes called “Low Sunday” - not so this year for the members of the Mothers’ Union throughout the Dioceses! Our Festival Service is being held in St. Nicholas’ Church, Adare at 3.30 p.m. on the 15th April.

The service will be led by the Revd. Gary Paulsen and the special preacher will be the Revd. Arthur Minion, one-time Rector of Shinrone Group. We are very grateful to Arthur for accepting our invitation as he and his family will literally be on the road as they move from Tinahely to take up ministry in Wexford town.

The collection at the service will go to MU projects. As always, there will be a welcome cup of tea after the service and those travelling are asked to bring a cake per car please.'

Diocesan Showcase Event – Saturday May 19th, Cloughjordan

We hope that this date has been carefully noted in everybody’s diary. It promises to be a fun afternoon with something of interest for all – young and old alike! Our special speaker will be Mrs. Patsy Devoy, Cork diocese, and branches are working hard preparing their special projects which will be revealed on the day!
‘REFLECT’ YOUTH LEADERS WEEKEND

The annual retreat weekend, run by CIYD, for youth leaders in the Republic of Ireland, ‘Reflect’, was held on the 24th – 26th February. This year the event was jointly organised and hosted by the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare, in particular Diocesan Youth Officer Alison Jones, and held in the Tullamore Court Hotel. The title of the weekend was ‘Rewiring: Unplugging the Next Generation’ and was centred on the theme of leadership, communication, and youth ministry in this age of increasing use and reliance on new technology.

To facilitate exploration of this topic, we were joined by Greg Fromholz (Diocesan Youth Officer – Dublin & Glendalough), and Jude Trenier (CIYD’s new Youth Ministry Development Officer for the South of Ireland), who both shared their experiences and advice on the role of technology in youth engagement in two of our sessions. We also had a session on the importance, and delivery, of icebreaker games, from the much experienced Mike Edwards (recently retired DYO of Kilmore, Elphin, and Ardagh), who inspired us all by his enthusiasm for youth work. Our worship times for the weekend were led by Canon Gerald Field, Rector of Tullamore, where we worshipped on Sunday morning, sharing in the Eucharist with the parish.

As well as all of this, the weekend was marked by a great sense of fellowship among the group, with old friends meeting, as well as making new ones. There were nineteen participants, with Edward Hardy, Kenneth Baker, and myself coming from Limerick & Killaloe. All three of us would agree that it was a great weekend of fun, learning and community.

A.G.M.

The Youth Council held its A.G.M. in St. Nicholas’ N.S. on Saturday 3rd March. A busy afternoon took place with much discussion and some debate. It was great to see people (of all ages) so committed and dedicated to the life and mission of youth ministry in our Diocese. Elections were held during the A.G.M., and accordingly, the committee’s membership for the next year is as follows:

Chairperson: Rev. Lesley Robinson (Roscrea)
Secretary: George Walker (Croom)
Treasurer: Edward Hardy (Banagher)
Social Secretary: Kenneth Baker (Rathkeale)
Limerick Representatives (2): Malcolm Galbraith (Limerick), Wendy Walker (Croom)
Killaloe Representatives (2): Karen Gillespie (Cloughjordan), Sandra Wakefield (Shinrone)
Ardfert Representatives (2): Vacant
Representative to Board of Education: Eleanor Walker (Croom)
Representative to Board of Mission: Rev. Jane Galbraith (Limerick)
Villiers Representative: Gillian Johnston (Limerick)
Club 25 Representative: Beverley Callender (Kilpeacon)

Co-options (4): Alec Perrot (Adare), Kieran von Sperling (Limerick), Jason Downes (Castletown), Damian Shorten (Rathkeale).

We commend this entire group on their involvement, as well as the many others who serve in ways other than through the committee and wish them well on their continued influence and roles. The committee also is thankful for the support it has received from individuals (not least our participants) and parishes, financially, or simply through recognition of, and prayer for, the Youth Council’s work. We hope for and look forward to another great year for youth ministry in our Diocese.

DIOCESAN CONFIRMATION WEEKEND

This year’s Diocesan Confirmation Weekend will take place from Friday 4th - Monday 7th May 2012 at Muckross Youth Centre, Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry. This weekend is particularly for those confirmed in 2011 and to date in 2012 and to be confirmed during the remainder of 2012. The weekend workshop and worship programme will be facilitated by Bishop Trevor. We are hoping that as many clergy and those involved in preparing candidates for Confirmation will attend the closing worship in Muckross on the Monday. The weekend will also contain the usual mix of activities normally on offer at UDYC events. There will be return transport available from Roscrea, Moneygall, Nenagh, Limerick & Adare. The cost of the weekend will be €100.

Booking forms for all events will be out in the coming weeks, and as always further information about any UDYC events and activities can be got from Edward on (087)2907553. Also, information and programme can be found on the Diocesan Website at http://limerick.anglican.org/udy_c_news.php and "http://limerick.anglican.org/udy_c_prog.php"http://limerick.anglican.org/udy_c_prog.php, as well as on Facebook at our UDYC group page.

Until next month, Damian email: 05shortend@gmail.com
UNITED DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL - FORTHCOMING EVENT

4th - 7th May Diocesan Confirmation Weekend
Muckross Youth Centre, Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry
All Confirmation Candidates 2011 & 2012

See www.limerick.anglican.org/udyc_prog.php for the full programme
Full Details on all events from: Edward Hardy @ 087/2907553

ST NICHOLAS’ N.S. ADARE

The senior pupils were treated to a Science extravaganza in the University of Limerick to mark Engineering Week where they learned about some of our great scientists and engineers.

The school entered two teams, a girls’ team and a boys’ team, in a recent 5-a-side soccer tournament. They had some very exciting games despite a very wet day!

Pupils from 5th and 6th classes headed off to Glanmire Community College in Cork on Friday 9th March to compete in the Munster Finals in Spikeball. St. Nick’s Cougars represented Co. Limerick in the mixed event. It was a noisy affair, with enthusiastic players and supporters, high pitched whistles, not to mention over-enthusiastic coaches! The team had some great matches and qualified for the semi-finals only to be beaten by the
Tipperary team who went on to win the final. Well done to the team for their enthusiasm and wonderful team spirit and to their supporters who gave them great encouragement.

The school celebrated Seachtain na Gaeilge in the run-up to St. Patrick’s Day with lots of activities through Irish. Everyone made a great effort to use our language in and around the school during the week and pupils took part in a treasure trail in Irish, a céilí and we had a “Bialann Gaelach” (an Irish restaurant) at lunch-time.

Our school magazine was printed just before St. Patrick’s Day with a new name, St. Nick’s Buzz, and it is full of interviews, stories, news items and photos. Pupils in 4th, 5th and 6th classes have worked very hard under the guidance of Ieteke Oggel to produce this magazine. We look forward to the Summer edition!

**ST. CRONAN’S N.S. ROSCREA**

Parents Assembly this month focussed on our Green School theme of Biodiversity. It included an update of the work of our five Green School mentors, some scientific facts! A Biodiversity Rep and a special report from the Junior Room about the incubator in the classroom holding 10 precious eggs. The expected hatching date—March 26th—is eagerly awaited by all.

School continues to be a hive of activity this month as we prepare our float for the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Roscrea, our Green School Assessment for our 5th Green flag and our play – Roald Dahl’s “Three Little Pigs” on March 29th.

Open Day for Junior Infants enrolling September, 2012 takes place on March 27th from 2pm – 3pm and we look forward to welcoming next year’s new additions.

On March 6th Green School Officers headed to Templemore Park where they met with renowned environment enthusiast/broadcaster Éanna ní Lamhna. They enjoyed a walking tour of the park during which Éanna shared her knowledge full of little anecdotes on the various plants and animals living there.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter.

**ST MICHAEL’S N.S. LIMERICK**

It was celebration time in St Michael’s N.S. in February when Fifth and Sixth Classes collected their own Oscar at Kilkenny’s Young Irish Film Makers Awards ceremony. Gary McHugh, Outreach co-ordinator of Young Irish Film Makers and his team worked with the pupils in November and three films were submitted. “Rainbow versus Cloud factory” won the award for the Best Imaginative and creative Story/Plot.

Five teams took part in the FAI soccer tournament in Corbally on March 6 and one team of Sixth Class boys qualified for further rounds in the competition.

The St Michael’s Wildcats—a team of Sixth Class boys—qualified to compete in the Spikeball Munster Primary School Finals in Cork on March 9. We are delighted to report that they booked their place in the All-Ireland Finals in Limerick in March.

There are great concerns about impending cutbacks in education, particularly so for primary schools. This would mean a loss of one teacher in September. Many of our families here in St Michael’s NS are multilingual and so language support is all-important. We have had wonderful support from the Board of Management and the Parent Teacher Association who have had key meetings with Jan O’Sullivan and Michael Noonan regarding these issues. We anxiously await the final outcome.

As was expected, the proposed amalgamation of the Language post with the Learning Support post has occurred and this now means the loss of a support teacher. We continue to have tremendous support from both PTA and BOM members. Bishop Trevor has also come on board to help launch our appeal.

World Book Day was celebrated in St Michael’s NS with pupils dressing up in character costume from many much-loved and well-read books.
NEW APPLICATIONS
We are currently taking applications for September 2012. Application forms are available by contacting the principal on HYPERLINK www.rathkealens.ie. The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 30th April. An original birth/adoption certificate should be included with all applications. By the time you are reading this we will have had our first Open Hour at the school for parents of new applicants. We invited anyone interested in enrolling their child(ren) in school to come along and meet the staff, view the school and have a cup of tea.

POSTAL BIBLE SCHOOL
We were delighted to welcome Noel, Liza, Gwen and Ann from the Postal Bible School to the school on Tuesday 13th March. This was their first visit to us. We began using the worksheets last year and they have been very popular amongst the pupils. We all sang a few songs and Noel then told us a wonderful version of one of Jesus’s parables. All the pupils received a prize for their work for which they were very grateful.

SWIMMING
Swimming lessons have now come to an end for this school year. The eight weeks flew by and all pupils made great progress. It is wonderful to be able to get to the pool in Askeaton during the winter term as the weather is often not suitable to have PE outdoors. We look forward to next year’s lessons again.

SCHOOL GARDEN
With a great feeling of spring in the air over the last few days we have taken the opportunity to prepare our vegetable patch for the coming growing season. We look forward to sowing our vegetables and watching them grow. As well as some vegetables we are growing some strawberries and this year we are trying to grow some in hanging baskets. We have also installed some bird nesting boxes throughout the school grounds and hopefully some birds will make use of them. There are also a few new insect boxes to try and encourage insect life in the school environment.

USPG LUYENGO FARM PROJECT IN SWAZILAND
During Lent Rev Dr Keith Scott has been telling us about the United Diocesan project in Swaziland. The children have been taking up a collection on Wednesday mornings in aid of this very worthy cause.

TESCO VOUCHERS
It’s that time of year again when Tesco are distributing vouchers for schools. If you shop in Tesco we would be grateful if you would collect the vouchers and forward them to the school. As Tesco themselves regularly say “Every Little Helps!” Thank you.

LÁ NA GAELGE
Following a discussion with the senior pupils about how we could mark Seachtain na Gaeilge they decided to have a day where we would try to use as much Irish as possible. We chose Friday 16th as our Lá na Gaeilge. Everybody did their best to use a little Irish throughout the day. We also had an Irish table quiz in the senior classes and tried out some Irish dancing during the afternoon.

And finally...
We would like to wish you all a very Happy Easter.

OXMANTOWN N.S. BIRR

PANCAKE TUESDAY
The Parents Association made and sold pancakes at School on Pancake Tuesday in aid of Tallaght Children’s Hospital, all of us enjoyed the feast as we raised money for this worthy cause.

OUR LENTEN PROJECT
The staff and pupils are fund raising during lent in aid of Swaziland, the pupils of fifth and sixth class are giving up their lunch times selling tray bakes and running a nail bar and bottle stalls etc. We are very grateful to the other pupils i.e. the customers and to all our parents for their generous support.

WORLD BOOK DAY
Pupils from third to sixth class took part in the reading challenge for world book day and then visited Birr library where they signed up to read as many books as possible in the next few months.

ART CLASSES
Thanks to Miss Lynch and Mrs Hamilton for organising the after school art and craft classes on Wednesdays they were very popular and productive.

NATIONAL TREE WEEK
Members of the Tidy Towns Group visited the School and spoke to the pupils about their anti-litter campaign and gave us an ash tree which they planted in our school garden to mark national Tree week.

CLoughjordan No 1 N.S.
We celebrated World Book Day in March by visiting “Sheelagh na Gig” bookshop in Cloughjordan with our World Book Day tokens. Younger children enjoyed the storytelling, kindly organized by Elizabeth, and all children enjoyed browsing through the books on display. Many children exchanged their tokens for the free books especially produced for the day while others dug deep into their pockets to purchase books of their own choice.

Junior and Senior Infants were delighted to welcome some of their parents to their classroom to celebrate World Book Day. Parents brought along their favourite children’s story, many from their own childhood, and read their
story to an enthralled audience. Fifth and Sixth Class also joined Junior and Senior Infants for World Book Day and read many stories to their young audience. It was difficult for the older children to escape the Infant classroom, such was the pleasure the children got from this experience.

Congratulations to Emily Greene who won a scholarship for Wilson’s Hospital Secondary School. This was a tremendous achievement and we are delighted for Emily and her family on her success.

It was a great pleasure to welcome Brendan Sheppard and Gearóid O’Foighil from Cloughjordan Community Development Committee to school and to learn, not only about the tremendous work carried out in the past by this industrious committee, but also about the very exciting projects planned for the near future in Cloughjordan. The children were very happy to submit their own suggestions for their dream projects for Cloughjordan. Some food for thought for the committee!

As part of National Tree Week staff and pupils planted some apple trees in the school grounds under the capable guidance of two parents, Deirdre O’Brolchain and Tom Tracey. We are very grateful to both parents for sharing their expertise with us on the day and for their kind generosity in donating the trees and stakes to the school. We look forward to a plentiful supply of apples later in the year.

We returned to Knocknacree Woods as part of National Tree Week - despite the rain! - to observe the changes in the woodland since our visit last autumn, and to search for signs of spring. Once again we are very grateful to Gearoid O’Foighil for sharing his extensive knowledge of the woodland with us on the day.

Congratulations to Amy Clarke and Caoimhe Power who won prizes in the Scriobh Leabhar Competition organised by Laois Education Centre last month, and to their teacher Miss Whiteford. A great achievement by these young authors!

Thank you to the many parents who dropped bags of unwanted clothing in to school, which were gratefully collected and brought to Mrs Quin’s Charity Shop in Nenagh, where the goods will be sold. Anything which cannot be sold is recycled, so nothing is wasted. All proceeds go towards the National Council for the Blind of Ireland.

The school is very grateful to the many parents who brought children to Birr Theatre for the very enjoyable Little Bigtop Science Show, and afterwards to Birr Castle, the visit being part of our Discover Science Award application.

Each year, during Lent, we focus our efforts on helping others. This year we hope to raise funds to donate to St. Anne’s Special School, Roscrea at our Bring and Buy Sale and Easter Egg Raffle at the end of March. St Anne’s is currently upgrading its hydrotherapy pool and will be very grateful for any contribution that we can give to them towards this very worthy cause.

First and Second Class, under the capable baton of their teacher Miss Whiteford, performed a wonderful selection of tunes they learned on the tin whistle throughout the year, for the other classes, and also for their parents. Well done to all concerned. The concert was tremendous. We look forward to the release of their first CD in the near future.

Our very best wishes go to one of our busdrivers, Mr. Joe Raleigh, on his retirement on 16th March. We will all miss Joe’s good humour and the wonderful care he took of those travelling on his bus down through the years. Joe retires with our thanks and best wishes for a long and healthy retirement.

DINGLE FESTIVAL
Eaglais Naomh Shéamais, An Daingean
St. James’s Church

will celebrate
Holy Communion, as Gaeilge at 11.00
on 6 May 2012
as part of Féile na Bealtaine
(cultural festival May 3-7
www.feilenabealtaine.ie)

Fáilte roimh chách.

Followed by
Walk Retreat
Start Kilmaolkeadar/Kilmacheeder at 2.30.
Time: about 2.5 hours
Finish: at Riasc with refreshments.
For further info contact
Eric 086 8258995 or Caroline 085 1632772
PRAYER FOR APRIL 2012

Prayer is the living breath of our parishes, and we have a wonderful heritage of spiritual jewels to draw on. As you read this we are drawing near to Calvary, but just beyond a joyful Easter awaits us. So let us recall all the blessings we have received through Christ’s passion and death, as we pray this ancient, comforting prayer, written originally in Latin in the early 14th Century. The strong rhythms and chiming repetitions of me/thee make it easy to learn by heart. It is a wonderful resource to draw on, particularly in times of trouble.

Anima Christi
Soul of Christ, sanctify me
Body of Christ, save me
Blood of Christ, refresh me
Water from the side of Christ, wash me
Passion of Christ, strengthen me
O good Jesu, hear me
Within Thy wounds hide me
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee
From the malicious enemy defend me
In the hour of my death call me
And bid me come to Thee
That with thy saints I may praise Thee
For ever and ever. Amen.
An early 14th Cent Latin prayer
From Guentersberge to Killorglin: Into the Wide Green Open Space

by PD Dr. Michael Labahn
Rector of Guentersberge and Siptenfelde in our companion church of Anhalt, Germany

I was asked to give a short report of my visit in Ireland. It is nearly impossible to give such a report in short form. There were so many friendly meetings, so many impressions from these meetings, from visiting Ireland’s Christian Heritage and from the beautiful landscape, so that it is completely impossible to bring them together in a short report.

My wife Antje and I left Guentersberge on a sunny morning heading to Berlin Airport to fly to Ireland to meet our partner parish in Killorglin. To be honest, there were hopes and dreams in my heart but I did not really know what would happen. Maybe, the sunny start after a couple of grey days was some kind of omen of the Christian hospitality we were about to meet.

Tuesday, 1st March, we arrived late at a hotel in Birr. On Friday we stopped on our way to Adare in Moneygall where President Obama visited the town of his ancestors. I guess Obama’s “yes, we can” might also be an inspiration for our partnership, although it is up to God and to us to fill it with life.

Finally, we arrived in the Woodlands Hotel, Adare, to hear a presentation on “Back to Church Sunday”. We met most of the clergy in the diocese there, including Bishop Trevor who gave us a very warm welcome, which was very encouraging. The main catchword of the vivid presentation “Back to Church Sunday” was “to invite” and about our fear of a “no”. We were reminded about the necessity to be an inviting community that is open to others in order to reach out to them. After that presentation our “mission partnership” started and Máirt Hanley brought us to Killorglin, where we stayed at “Hillview Farmhouse” and Dorothea and Joe were so nice and helpful.

For our part I can say Antje and I always felt very welcome. Máirt Hanley - I learned that Máirt is Irish for Martin and the name of Guenterberge’s church is St. Martini! - was an attentive and kind host. He introduced us to so many people and made many meetings possible for us, such as with the local youth café, with a group of Roman Catholic Christians from St. James Church, with Eric, one of the elders of St. Michael’s church, with the Evangelical Christians preparing their service and with parents at their coffee morning. Personal highlights were the multi lingual services at Killorglin, Castlemaine and in Sneem (Mother’s Union) with Michael and Marjorie. I was invited to preach in St. Michael’s and I interpreted Luke 8:4-15 as an encouragement for our parishes in Ireland and in Germany to whom God is so generously spreading out his kingdom and his word. I was also invited to talk on the Christian heritage of the EKD in Castlemaine and about my home parish in Sneem. We met wonderful sisters and brothers who were friendly and open to ask a lot of questions. It was a really nice Christian exchange.

On Sunday afternoon, Máirt took Kreisoberpfarrer Juergen Dittrich and us on a trip to Dingle introducing us to some significant Christian monuments. This reminds us once again of the importance of Ireland and Irish monks for the early development and mission of European Christianity. To look at that green wide open landscape might explain why all the people we met were so open-minded and welcoming. On that trip we also learned a lot about rugby and its importance for Ireland and one Christian minister – I am still sorry that I did not become a witness of Irish victory over the French rugby team.

We enjoyed very much meeting our sisters and brothers in our partner parish and shared so many experiences with you. We still wonder about how many parallels there are between our churches and our Christian ways of life. We are still very impressed by the days we spent together and all that you showed us. We took a lot of impressions and ideas back home with us. We are telling all everyone in Guentersberge and around here about you and your congregations. I am sure that a partnership between Killorglin and Guentersberge will help us both to develop our parishes further in general, but also to foster our very own Christian lives.
Swaziland Coffee Morning at UL Chaplaincy

Report by Rev Patricia Hanna

REFRESHMENTS AND INFORMATION
A full-house for refreshments was the order of the day on the morning of the 28th February in the Teach Fáilte Chaplaincy Drop In Centre in the Student Square at the University of Limerick. There was much discussion on the nature of the Luyengo farm project as interested supporters gained insight into the whole ethos behind this special project. The outside display by David Frizelle contributed to the overall aim for holding such an event on campus, providing much useful information and photos. The indoor powerpoint by John Jarvis also helped to create a good atmosphere and pass on much visual information.

MUSIC
At lunch-time the traditional Irish music group on campus Criniú played outside the Chaplaincy Centre and contributed to the general buzz in the Student Square where Rag Week was taking place. Many students contributed to our fund-raising bucket and took to discussing their support for fair trade and self-sufficient development initiatives. One young student had just returned from a similar project in Uganda.

MONEY RAISED ON CAMPUS
The total amount of money raised, €624.74, will be converted to rands and we hope will contribute to creating a momentum which brings this farm project further towards achieving its goals of sustainability, profitability and ethically produced produce. Awareness of the problems of poverty and Aids may have kick-started this initiative, but the ongoing interest and sense of ownership of such an undertaking by our Diocese, in all its diverse locations and activities, is also important.

A group engaged in discussion at the Swaziland Coffee Morning

Sr. Sarah of the Chaplaincy team dances as Crinni play

University of Limerick
Notes from the Chaplaincy

Rev Patricia Hanna
The Rectory, Bindon Street, Ennis, Co Clare. Tel: 065 682 0109, Mob: 087 660 6003, Email: hannape@tcd.ie

Hi all from Chaplaincy in UL,
Here are a few news items for you about events currently running in UL Chaplaincy that are of interest and also a report with photos of how the recent Swaziland Coffee morning turned out.

EVENTS:
‘ADVENTURES IN SPIRITUALITY’
An eight week course, “Adventures in Spirituality” is running here at UL Chaplaincy and the group meet on Monday evenings at 5.15pm at the new Don Bosco Spirituality Centre beside Milford Church, just a short walk by Milford National School from the UL car park opposite the Sports Arena. This centre has just opened and is a project of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Jack Carter is the facilitator of the group and he has the skills and experience to teach us how to relax the body and meditate for life long calmness and peace of mind.
Dates: Mondays at 5.15pm until 23rd of April, 2012
We hope to offer this Course in the Autumn Semester in September as a result of positive feedback.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT
Two Counsellors and a Chaplain are available on Tuesday evenings from 5.00 to 6.00pm at the Teach Fáilte Chaplaincy Centre to support those going through grief or loss recently or in the past. This service is open to students and staff.

TEACH FÁILTE AND COFFEE MUGS
Teach Fáilte is a place of welcome and a lot of tea and coffee is consumed daily. The Students Union supplied us with 50 new Mugs. These mugs are special because they advertise ‘Please Talk’ and they give the www.Pleasetalk.ie address with the slogan ‘Talking is a sign of strength, not of weakness’. This batch is a deep shade of blue and the old ones were green which were popular souvenirs for International Students. Why not try out the blue mugs and enjoy a cup of free tea or coffee with biscuits, whenever you are passing. Students enjoy the space and they appreciate our Centre and are well trained in filling the Dishwasher!
Thanksgiving Conference for Oak House

Report by Archdeacon Wayne Carney

It was during the summer of 1994 that two good friends, Claire Besnyoe and Brigid O’Higgins, had a discussion that would lead to the founding of Oak House, an ecumenical organisation dedicated to reconciliation and healing. Since then, Claire, a member of the Church of Ireland who returned home after many years of working abroad with the United Nations, and Brigid, a Roman Catholic and former TD, have drawn a great many others into a fellowship that has sponsored retreats, pilgrimages, conferences, discussions, and Bible studies, usually meeting in Claire’s house at Ballydugan, near Loughrea, Co. Galway.

About a year and a half ago, Brigid and Claire indicated to the Core Group (the direction-setting body that supported Oak House’s activities) that they wished to retire from the administration side of Oak House at the end of 2011, and let the organisation find its own level.

In recent months, plans were put in place for a ‘Thanksgiving Conference’, to thank God for all that Oak House has accomplished over the years through the ministry of Brigid, Claire, and so many others. This was held on Saturday, 25th February at Esker Retreat Centre, a Redemptorist monastery near Athenry, Co. Galway. The guest speaker was Dr Salters Sterling, Secretary of the Irish School of Ecumenics, and also a Birr parishioner, who in his address ‘A Journey of Faith and Hope’ challenged the gathering to take ecumenism beyond its safe and comfortable environment into uncharted waters where it can make a difference in the world. A planned second speaker, Dr. Nóirín Ni Riain, was unable to attend due to illness. Also in attendance were Bishop Trevor, Bishop John Kirby (Roman Catholic Bishop of Clonfert) and clergy and lay people from many different traditions across this island.

Oak House will continue – it will operate in the future on a more informal level, with a minimum of administration. The monthly Bible Study/discussion and prayer group will continue, and plans are underway for a retreat in the autumn. The superb work begun by Claire and Brigid nearly 18 years ago will carry on, with less structure, and less organisation. And the spirit of Oak House, which has touched so many lives in this land, will live on.
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In 1945, at school in Dublin, I was told, I was ‘different.’ Two unhappy terms later, another ‘different’ girl arrived. She was Claire Burke from Co Galway, where she still lives. She arrived at school pigtailed and glum and like me, she never ‘mixed in.’

She was asthmatic and thought she wouldn’t survive in the West of Ireland, so she took a degree at TCD, with the intention of working abroad. She got work in the UN in Vienna, where she spent her whole working career. With a prestigious job and a lovely flat in Vienna, she put life in Ireland out of her mind.

In 1963, she married George Besnyoe, who was involved in the same work.

Coincidentally, Claire and I married in the same year and our husbands died in 1985 within a month of one another. Then Honora, Claire’s younger sister, died and Claire returned to Ireland.

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Coincidentally, Claire and I married in the same year and our husbands died in 1985 within a month of one another. Then Honora, Claire’s younger sister, died and Claire returned to Ireland.

She has been here ever since and has outgrown her asthma. We renewed a friendship which had been allowed to lapse. During the remainder of her time in Vienna, I stayed with her twice. This was a huge treat to me and just what I needed at the time. We even spent a week in Venice!

Back in Ireland, Claire founded ‘Oak House’. She says, ‘It started in my kitchen over a cup of tea in 1994. The spark came from a Healing Retreat organised by Ellel Ministries. I joined some members on a pilgrimage to learn and observe. It took us to Whitehill Chase, where we had a chat with Bishop Maurice Maddox. He administered a generous and kindly dose of encouragement and, at the regular healing service, we were commissioned to go forth and we did.

‘The group grew to include a balance of Anglicans and Roman Catholics – and our ongoing care has been to alternate between the Churches, speakers, retreat leaders etc... we have consciously maintained friendship with our two bishops.

‘There developed a leader team of four; two ordained, two lay; two men, two women! A blessedly ecumenical and politically correct balance at the start. People ask if ‘Oak House’ is Ballydugan. It isn’t a place, it’s a concept. Others wonder about a ‘healing’ ministry. The healing, like the reconciliation is a spiritual concept. We agreed on a name and organised our first retreat – which became an annual event, at the Mount St Joseph Cistercian Monastery in Roscrea.

‘... The motivation of Oak House is to build and foster friendship between the Churches in the hope of helping to dispel generations of fear and distrust... We have remained modest in size, we have never hit the headlines. Founder member Brigid O’Higgins and I have now retired; our charity status is discontinued and Oak House has been wound down.’

Claire’s success with Oak House amazed me. When she told me about her plans, I was unenthusiastic. A lovely idea I thought, but will people attend once the novelty wears off? At her first meeting I was surprised and delighted. Claire had the help and support of Brigid O’Higgins and I saw that I had no cause for worry. Oak House flourished for seventeen years. Speakers from the North of Ireland and the UK addressed the monthly sessions: all were excellent, many were widely known. It was usual for priests of different denominations to attend. I have never heard a word of criticism from anybody.

Claire’s success in promoting ecumenism is shown in an account of its retreat in Roscrea in 2011. This was led by Rev Dr Ken Newell, a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, jointly with Fr Gerry Reynolds of the Clonard Redemptory Monastery in Belfast. During the long dark years of conflict in Northern Ireland, there were some who set an example of reconciliation for the whole of society. Dr Newell and Fr Reynolds were among them. Both have been friends of Oak House over the years.

Now in their eighties, Claire and Brigid have earned their retirement. Two small, white-haired old ladies have shown what can be done with a combination of faith and determination.

It is surprising what a focussed mind and a generous spirit can achieve.
LUYENGO FARM PROJECT, SWAZILAND - AN APPEAL TO PARISHES

Swaziland, as a country and a diocese, finds itself in a serious situation. Out of a population of 1.2 million people, there are at least 300,000 orphans and vulnerable children; a seventeen-year-old has only a one in ten chance of reaching the age of forty; life expectancy averages thirty years; 15% of all households are headed by a child; 75% of the population lives below the poverty line with unemployment running at 50%. A major contributing factor has been the incidence of HIV infection, (approx 40%) and one of the main consequences is hunger.

The Luyengo Farm Project will start to address these issues. In partnership with a firm from South Africa, 200 acres of church land will be leased for production of ‘mini vegetables’ for the world market. The income generated by this venture will be used by the Diocese for training in agriculture and health education, which in turn will be carried back to the small holdings, families and communities. Over €300,000 is required to get the venture started. Under the partnership agreement the Diocese of Swaziland has to put up half of this amount. U.S.P.G. Ireland has agreed to raise the capital on their behalf.

In September, the Diocesan Board of Mission decided to have only one project for Mission Sunday 2011; they unanimously decided to adopt the Luyengo Farm Project, with the aim of raising €40,000.00 by Oct 2012. At our most recent ‘mission evening’ in January, Archdeacon Bheki Magongo from Swaziland gave a very personal and ‘moving’ talk on the spiritual and physical poverty in which he lived his early childhood in the foothills of Eastern Swaziland and, how by the goodwill of some relatives he was educated in a local church school and eventually committed his life to Christ. The meeting was very well attended with most of the parishes from across the diocese being represented.

To date we have raised just over €11,500 which is a long way short of our target, but there is still over 6 months to go! **We would ask that each parish, through their respective mission co-ordinators, consider an additional fund-raising event for the people of Swaziland and the Luyengo Farm Project in particular.**

Thank you for your support.

David Frizelle
Killaloe & Stradbally Union
Killaloe, Castleconnell, Clonlara, Mountshannon and Tuamgraney.
The Very Revd. Dr. Stephen R. White
The Deanery, Killaloe, Co. Clare.
Tel: 061-376687
Email: dean@killaloe.anglican.org
The Rev. Lucy Green
Tel: 062-79941

APRIL SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS.
2nd April: Monday in Holy Week. 8.00 p.m. Holy Communion: Killaloe.
3rd April: Tuesday in Holy Week. 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Killaloe.
4th April: Wednesday in Holy Week. 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Castleconnell. 8.00 p.m. Holy Communion: Killaloe.
5th April: Maundy Thursday. 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Mountshannon. 8.00 p.m. Holy Communion: Killaloe.
6th April: Good Friday. 12.00-3.00 p.m. The Three Hours: Killaloe.
7th April: Easter Eve. 9.00 p.m. The Easter Vigil: Killaloe.
8th April: Easter Day. 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Castleconnell; 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Mountshannon; 11.30 a.m. Holy Communion: Killaloe.

EVENTS
Clearly the primary focus during April is the great festival of Easter. Holy Week will be fully observed in the group as always, and we will keep the Three Hours on Good Friday (this year with the Revd Lucy Green as the speaker) and the Easter Vigil on Easter Eve. I would urge as many parishioners as possible to attend these various services, and then, having experienced the bareness of Lent and the sombreness of Holy Week we will be ready to celebrate together on Easter Day itself.

April, of course, also brings with it the season of Easter General Vestries. At the time of writing the date of the Killaloe/Mountshannon one is not known, but the Castleconnell one will be held on Wednesday 18th April at 8pm.

As in previous years, there will be a devotional concert in Castleconnell Church on the Tuesday of Holy Week at 8pm. I do not know the programme as yet, but the quality will undoubtedly be excellent.

The Castleconnell Coffee Morning will be on the Wednesday of Holy Week (4th) following the morning celebration of Holy Communion in All Saints’ Church. As always, all are welcome.

Lucy has asked me to remind people that she is still shrinking, and sponsorship is still welcome. If you are interested in this very successful (from both points of view!) fund-raising slim then please get in touch with Lucy (if she is still even visible by this stage) directly.

THANKS
This month I wish simply to thank everyone involved in cleaning and decorating the various churches for Easter. It is wonderful to walk into church on Easter Day and be greeted by a joyous riot of white and gold.

PERSONAL
We continue to keep in our prayers all those members of the parishes who are in any way sick or frail, and so we pray especially for Betty Hogg, Frances Mooney, Jean Newenham and Anthony Torpey.

The Birr Group of Parishes
Birr, Lorrha, Lockeen, and Dorrha
Rector: The Venerable R. Wayne Carney
Archdeacon of Killaloe & Clonfert
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057-9120021 Mobile: 087-7865234
e-mail: mapleire@eircom.net
Assistant Priest: The Rev. Ruth Gill
Kilgolan House, Kilcormac, Co. Offaly
Telephone: 057-9135341 Mobile: 087-9484402
e-mail: ruth_gill40@hotmail.com

SERVICE TIME CHANGE!
The time of the service in Birr changes each year with the change to Summer Time. From the 25th of March, the service in Birr starts at 11.00 am.

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT
To date, there have been three services of Holy Communion held on Wednesday evenings. These are being held in the homes of parishioners and so far we’ve had speakers from Dóchas and Midlands Simon, with Jonathan Pyle giving a talk on his experience of a retreat on the Island of Iona. Many thanks to each one and we look forward to hearing from Linda Chambers of USPG and a speaker from the Citizens’ Information Centre for the remaining occasions. The venues have proved to be ideal for speakers as it is less threatening to speak to people when you’re on the same level!

HOLY WEEK SERVICES FOR 2012
Sunday, 1st April – Palm Sunday
11.00 a.m. Birr, Family Holy Communion (Group Service)
Monday, 2nd April - Monday in Holy Week
8.00 p.m. Lockeen, Compline
Tuesday, 3rd April - Tuesday in Holy Week
8.00 p.m. Lorrha, Compline
Wednesday, 4th April - Wednesday in Holy Week
8.00 p.m. Dorrha, Compline
Thursday, 5th April - Maundy Thursday
8.00 p.m. Birr, Methodist Church, Holy Communion
Friday, 6th April - Good Friday
12.00 noon Birr, Family Service
8.00 p.m. Birr, Compline
Saturday, 7th April - Easter Vigil
9.00 p.m. Lorrha, Holy Communion
Sunday, 8th April - Easter Day
9.30 a.m. Lockeen, Holy Communion
10.00 a.m. Lorrha, Holy Communion
11.00 a.m. Birr, Holy Communion

HOLY WEEK
Our Holy Week services are as listed above. The special group service on Palm Sunday at 11.00 a.m. in Birr will involve the children of the Group of Parishes in the Procession of the Palms. On Maundy Thursday, we will be sharing with the Birr Methodist Community in a service of
Holy Communion in their church. Please take note of our special Easter Vigil service in Lorrha at 9.00 p.m. on Easter Saturday, as we take part in the most ancient ceremony in our Church Year, the lighting of the New Fire of Easter to symbolise the return of the Light of Christ to the world in the Resurrection. This is followed by the first Eucharist of Easter.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School in Birr continues in the Church Vestry during the 11:00 am Sunday service. On Palm Sunday and Easter Day, there will be no Sunday School, as the children will be involved in the services on those days. Children of all ages are welcome.

PASTORAL

Good wishes are sent to Richard Alexander who is almost back to full strength after surgery. Our thoughts are with Whittem Gill who is recovering from hip surgery. We remember all those who are ill and who are going through an anxious time. If someone has difficulty in getting out to church and would like to receive Holy Communion in their home, please remember that the Archdeacon and the Revd Ruth are available – just please let us know.

MOTHERS’ UNION

Members and friends enjoyed a really good meal and each other’s‘ company in Roscrea Golf Club on the 3rd February. Many thanks to Betty Delahunt and Sylvia Vaugh for making the arrangements.

On the 6th March, an Overseas Meeting was held in St. Brendan’s Hall when members from Birr and surrounding parishes came to hear Mrs Gillian Kingston speak about the Church in China. It was interesting to hear how Christianity is spreading throughout that huge country.

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service was again held in Birr Methodist Church on Thursday 1st March when the special preacher was the Rev. Janet White Spunner who gave an excellent talk on her early life in Malaya (later Malaysia) and the social issues facing the people living there. The collection on the night came to €251.86 and will go to help the work of Ruhama in Dublin.

SUMMER FETE AND FUN DAY - SUNDAY, 27TH MAY

A quiz in aid of the Fete will be in circulation around Easter! Plans are progressing well and word will be going out very soon (if not already) that offers of help will be gratefully accepted.

BIRR EASTER VESTRY

Thursday, 19th April, at 8.00 p.m. in St Brendan’s Hall. All parishioners are urged to attend this important annual meeting. Dates for the Easter Vestry meetings for Lorrha, Dorrha, and Lockeen will be announced.

Roscrea Group of Parishes

Roscrea, Bourney, Corbally and Kyle

Priest in Charge: The Rev. Lesley Robinson
St. Cronan’s Rectory, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.
Tel: 0505 - 21725 Mobile: 087 - 9091561

NEW ARRIVAL

Heartiest congratulations to Gary and Yvonne Parr, Bourney, on the safe arrival of their first child, Cara - a little earlier than expected but perfectly well, thank God. Congrats also to Harry and Sylvia who became first time grandparents in the process!

BEREAVEMENTS

Once again this month a number of our parishioners have suffered family bereavements. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Vivienne Wallace and family on the death of Vivienne’s sister Freda Threlfall, Kilkenny; to Pat Drought and family on the death of Pat’s sister-in-law Connie Drought, Aghancon; to Ruth Pearson and family on the death of Ruth’s mother, Doris Hodgins, Borrisnafarney; to Wilfred Moloney on the death of his brother-in-law, David Lindsay in Sligo; and the Stanley family, Streamstown, on the death of Tracey Stanley in England.

LENTEN SERVICES AND APPEAL

It was great to see over forty parishioners drawn from among all four parishes at the Ash Wednesday service in Roscrea when the guest speaker was Andrew Coleman from Christian Aid. The collection at all our midweek Lenten services will be going towards the work of Christian aid. In addition, collection boxes are available in the churches for parishioners to take home and use during Lent as we focus on the gospel to imperative to love our neighbour.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

Mai Clare, June Wallace, Charlotte Roe, and Rev. Lesley all took part in the World Day of Prayer service which this year was held in the Methodist Church on 2nd March. It was good to see a reasonable representation there from the group of parishes.

BOYS BRIGADE MIDLAND’S DISTRICT SERVICE

St. Cronan’s Church is honoured to play host this year to the Boys Brigade Midland’s District Service on the afternoon of Sunday 22nd April.

BI-CENTENARY SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Sunday 29th April sees the liturgical highlight of our 200th anniversary celebrations when a major service of thanksgiving will be held in the church at 3pm. Bishop Trevor will be the celebrant at the Eucharist while the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev. Michael Jackson, Primate of Ireland and Metropolitan, will be the guest preacher. We hope to see many members of the Roscrea Diaspora return home to celebrate with us. Refreshments will be served in Grant’s Hotel after the service. All welcome.

CONFIRMATION

The rite of Confirmation will be administered by the Bishop in Roscrea church on Sunday 3rd June. Please pray for the following young people who have chosen to make this serious commitment: Chloe Brennan, Robert Brennan, Gordon Clare, Jason Drought, Rebecca Duke, Lesley Lewis, Emma Roe, James Roe and Rebecca Williams.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

As part of St. Cronan’s Bi-Centenary Celebrations a flower festival under the direction of Richard Haslam will be held in the church from August 17th—20th. The title and theme of the festival is ‘Heralding our Heritage’ - A Floral Portrayal of Roscrea through the Ages, and it will be previewed at a concert in the church on Friday 17th August. A large team of helpers and stewards will be needed in the run up to the event and during the weekend.
Please contact Rev. Lesley if you are available to assist in this regard. Also please spread the word about the festival far and wide for people to put in their diaries. Donations in memory of loved ones will be gratefully received from anyone willing to help defray the cost of staging the festival.

Nenagh Union of Parishes
Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killodiernan
Rector: The Rev. Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke
St. Mary’s Rectory, Church Road, Nenagh. Co. Tipperary.
Tel: 067-32598 Mobile: 085-1474792
e-mail: revdmarie@eircom.net

SUNDAY SERVICES
9.30 a.m. Templederry
11.00 a.m. St Mary’s Nenagh
12.15 p.m., 2nd and 4th Sundays Killodiernan.

HOLY WEEK
Maundy Thursday: 8.00 p.m., St Mary’s - “The Way of the Cross” A Passiontide Devotion in words and music for choir and congregation. An opportunity for the whole Union to come together in this solemn time for prayer, readings, hymns and music. Both the Choir and Junior Choir will be taking part.

GOOD FRIDAY
12.00 - 3.00 St Mary’s - A time of quiet prayer, with the Stations of the Cross at 2.00 p.m.
Ecumenical Walk of Witness from Templederry Church to Templederry RC Church, with the Stations of the Cross en route.

EASTER SUNDAY
Eucharists at 9.30 a.m. Templederry, 11.00 a.m. St Mary’s, and 12.15 p.m. Killodiernan.

BOYS BRIGADE
We are all thrilled to announce that the Nenagh Union has started a Boys Brigade Battalion! The first formal gathering was held on 14 March in the Croft Hall, with 11 boys enjoying activities under the committed guidance of 4 leaders - Lisa Drummond, Emma Dowling-Hussey, James Gloster and Ger Maher. Of course more new members are welcome, and for details please contact Lisa on 086 820 6514. The meetings are monthly until the end of the summer term, and then hopefully will take place fortnightly from September.

BAPTISM
On Sunday 4th March Keeva Deirdre Russell, daughter of Gareth Russell and Melissa Tallon was baptised in St Mary’s, with many family and friends present.

CONGRATULATIONS
Congratulations to Richard Jones (son of William and Georgina) on his engagement to Lisa Cloherty, and to Zara Moynan (daughter of Clive and Hilary) on her engagement to Noel Heffernan. Congratulations also to Mildred Clarke, who has a Big Birthday on 6th April and to Eileen and Stewart Whittion who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on 30th March.

EASTER VESTRY
Easter Vestry will take place on Monday 16th April, 8.00 pm, in St Mary’s Church.

Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group
Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry.
The Rev. Canon Stephen Neill
Modreeny Rectory, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.
Tel/Fax: 0505 - 42183 Mobile: 087 - 2328172
e-mail: stephen.neill@gmail.com
Parish website/blog: www.modreeny.com
My Blog: www.paddyanglican.com

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES
Tuesday in Holy Week: 8.00 p.m. Borrisnafarney
Wednesday in Holy Week: 8.00 p.m. Borrisokane
Holy Thursday: 8.00 p.m. Joint service in Cloughjordan Methodist Church
Good Friday: Way of the Cross: 6.15 p.m. Cloughjordan
Easter Eve: 8.30 p.m. Ballingarry
Easter Day: 9am Borrisinofarney, 10.15 a.m. Borrisokane, 11.30 a.m. Cloughjordan
(All services HC)

BAPTISM

Congratulations to George Adam Jason Graham son of Jason and Cathy of Coolnagower, Cloughjordan who was baptized on Sunday 4th March in St. Kieran’s Church, Cloughjordan. We wish George God’s richest blessing in his life.

BEREAVEMENTS

Deepest sympathy to Bobby Mclean of Borrisokane parish on the death of his sister Connie Drought – a large body of parishioners supported Bobby and the family in their loss at the service in Aghancon Church. She was laid to rest in Dungar Cemetery in Roscrea.

Deepest sympathy to Heather Powell, John Chadwick and Fred Chadwick on the death of their sister Freda in Kilkenny after a short illness. Freda’s funeral took place in St. Canice’s Cathedral in Kilkenny and the family were well supported by parishioners who came to give their support to the family. Cremation took place afterwards in Newlands Cross with one of Freda’s nephews John Chadwick (Parish Reader) assisting.

Deepest sympathy to Ken Hodgins and all his family on the death of Doris his mother. Doris was our oldest parishioner in Borrisinofarney and a stalwart of the choir and Mothers Union. She will be greatly missed. At her funeral and burial in Borrisinofarney the rector was joined by Rev’d Lesley Robinson and Mr. Adrian Hewson of Roscrea as well as a church filled to capacity with family and friends. We keep all the bereaved in our prayers in the days ahead.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Confirmation is 3rd June in Borrisokane at 3.30 p.m. Please pray for the candidates as they prepare to take this important step in their lives of faith.

LENTEN STUDY GROUP

Lenten Study Group continues after Easter – We are looking at the 10 Commandments. Venue is the rectory at 8 pm on Wednesdays.

MU PROJECT/CLOUGHJORDAN 175

Do you have any old photos/cine film articles or newspaper clippings concerning moments in the history of St. Kieran’s Church. Or perhaps a story or piece of interesting information about the Church. Whatever you have the Mothers’ Union would love to hear from you as they prepare their project for the MU Exhibition day in May and for our 175 celebrations later in the year. Contact Eileen Armitage or the rector if you have something you think might be of interest.

GROW CLOUGHJORDAN TREE PLANTING

Sunday 11th March marked a very special event in the life of Cloughjordan. Congregations from the three churches and others came together to plant 200 Beech trees to symbolize the vision of growing together as a community. Special sermons were preached that morning in the churches and there was a really positive atmosphere as people of every generation dug the soil and planted the trees together. It was a tangible expression of the kind of community that we as churches need to promote.

POKER CLASSIC

Many thanks to Aussie Dennison who once again came up trumps in organising a fundraising poker classic in Nenagh Golf Club for Borrisokane Church. The funds raised from this event in recent years paid in full for the recent repairs to our church tower.

BORRISokane CHURCH TOWER

Works have recently been completed on the Church tower which should prevent further leaks. In addition the pathway to the church was ramped, the gate restored and some missing tiles replaced. Thanks are especially due to Norman Harding, Tom Donovan and Cyril Harding in arranging and supervising these works.

Shinrone Group of Parishes
Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin
Rector: The Rev. Michael Johnston
Tel: 0505-47164 Mbl: 086-6086567
email: shinrone@killaloe.anglican.org

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES
Spy Wednesday: 8.00 p.m. Eucharist Kinnitty
Maundy Thursday: 8.00 p.m. Eucharist Aghancon
Good Friday: 3.00 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy, Shinrone; 8.00pm Good Friday Liturgy, Dunkerrin.
Easter Eve: 8.00 p.m. Eucharist Kinnitty
Easter Sunday 9.00 a.m. Eucharist Dunkerrin; 10.25 a.m. Eucharist Shinrone; 11.45 a.m. Eucharist Aghancon

LENTEN SERVICES

During the season of Lent there were regular penitential Eucharists held on Wednesday evenings in each of the churches. These services served both as a sign of giving something up (time for ourselves) and of taking something up (time for God) during Lent, and thanks to all who supported them.

SHINRONE COFFEE MORNING

A wonderful Coffee Morning for Daffodil Day, in aid of cancer research, was held on Thursday 22 March in Cloughmoyle Schoolhouse, Shinrone. Many thanks to Richard Abraham for the organisation and to all who helped support this worthy cause.

MOTHERS’ UNION

The MU Closing Service and Sale took place on Monday 26 March at 8.00pm in Aghancon Church and Community Hall. Thanks to all who helped organise such
an interesting programme this year, and to all who supported the sale.

TABLE TENNIS

Congratulations to the Aghancon B team who won their recent final in Cloughjordan, and commiserations but well done to the C team who narrowly lost theirs. Many thanks to those in Aghancon and Shinrone who have helped organise this season.

FLORAL DEMONSTRATION

A Floral Demonstration by Ethel Mitchell of "Castle Floral Creations" will be held in Aghancon Community Hall on Wednesday 11th April at 8pm with door prize and Raffle. Light refreshments will be served from 7.15pm. Tickets €10 from Betty @ 087 3137736 or Sharon @ 087 1330779

Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh

Ennis, Kilfenora, Kilkee, Spanish Point, Kilnasoolagh and Shannon

The Rev. Chancellor Robert Charles Hanna

The Rectory, Bindon Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Tel: 065 - 6820109 Mobile No. 086 2167040
email: bobhanna@eircom.net

The Rev. Vicki Lynch

Coor East, Mullagh, West Clare.
Tel: 065-7087600 Mobile: 086-8292073.
e-mail: vickilynch@eircom.net.

HOLY WEEK

Holy Week will see the resumption of the LUNCHTIME PRAYERS and READINGS in St Columba's Church, with accompanying light lunch. Funds raised from this will go towards the diocesan Swaziland Appeal. So far the combined parishes have raised nearly €1,000, the greater part by Kilnasoolagh parishioners, for which much thanks. (See Parish website for details of Holy Week and Easter)

ST. PATRICK

The baptism over Patrick’s Tide in Christ Church, Kilfarboy, ( seat-or pew-of the Moroney /Ellis connection around that Miltown Malbay parish for several generations and laterally through Molly Ellis and husband Doug Ewen) brought fresh new connections to the lovely 1922-built Spanish Point Chapel as well as bank holiday sunshine.

Clare O’Sullivan, née Ewen, daughter of the late Doug and Molly, and her husband Aidan (who is Roman Catholic) have been stalwarts at Spanish Point for many years, spending festivals and Summer time worshipping there. Their daughter Karen was married in the church and she and husband Michael who live in the Limerick area (like the O’Sullivans) returned to Karen’s ancestral ground on her mother’s side with husband Michael and baby Ewen Fionn Callan McNamara for the Christening performed by the Rector with the assistance of the Rev Vicki Lynch. (‘Callan’ denotes a West Clare mountain near Miltown),

Being Mothering Sunday as well, the swelled congregation of McNamaras (some from France), O’Sullivans and locals had plenty to think about! And local minister Rev Vicki Lynch presided over the presentation of Mother’s Day flowers (beautifully prepared as ever by Mrs Judith Ironside) and at the second sacrament of Holy Communion.

Canon Bob Hanna undertook the patronal day baptism with a distinct Celtic feel and in his homily, leaning on the writings of leading popular Celtic writer Philip Newell, formerly of Iona Community, proclaimed the good news that St Patrick essentially embodied in theology along with Pelagius and John Scotus Eriguena, that we are born with one foot in Eden: we are becoming what we are, children of God, however clouded that picture gets in humanity. The West Coast Scots apparently celebrated the belief that every child coming into the world was a new picture of God the Creator. Holy from Eden in its innocence. The link between God and his people through the Incarnation (Jesus the baby of Mary) means that our earthly and human pursuits have God at their centre. His Kingdom is here. Spirit and Matter are His. Baptism is the beginning of the struggle to live up to God’s call, so even beautiful babies straight out of Eden have to be marked for battle with a Cross!

Later at St Columba’s, Drumcliffe (Ennis) great-grandmother Mrs Anna McCrum came out of Cahercalla Residential Hospital, to sing St Patrick’s Breastplate (full old version!). Aged 96, one can confidently assume this was about her 86th conscious St Patrick’s Day attempt! In tribute to Anna, she had to marshal every ounce of her Matter to be in the choir stalls, such is her fragility!

BEREAVEMENT

We offer our condolences to Dr. Rosemary Power of Clare Pioneer Methodist Ministry on the death of a brother in England.

INTERMENT

Friday, 13th April will see the interment of the ashes of Mr Bindon Blood of Dublin in the family mausoleum in the grounds of St Columba’s Church, Drumcliffe (Ennis). Mr Blood, an engineer of some distinction, is the last of the male line of Bloods linked with the Church of Ireland in Clare. The famous family produced soldiers, farmers and clergy, among them the 17th c Dean of Kilfenora, Neptune Blood. And of course, Thomas Blood who stole the English Crown Jewels!

WEDDING

The wedding of beautiful local bride Hilary Neylon (of Ennis Cathedral Roman Catholic Parish) to Anglican Richard Kelly of Brisbane brought a truly international gathering into St Columba’s in early March. Fr Tom Hogan assisted and gave the homily. Hilary’s mother Margaret is the long-time serving Secretary to Ennis Chamber of Commerce. The couple work for BSkyB in Dublin.

SHANNON

Christ Church at Shannon Airport is no more. The building which was burned in early 2011 was finally demolished by contractors. The site originally on a long special lease for worship to the ecumenical Community in Shannon is expected to be handed over to the Airport Authority.

HOSPITALITY

We are happy to host from time to time Egyptian
Copts for their gathered mass in St Columba’s. Now it seems the Lutheran Church in the Republic and its leader, Pastor Corinna will use the premises for their Shannon region gatherings. Most welcome. Meanwhile we look forward to welcoming the choir of St Mary’s Cathedral for Sung Evensong on Easter 3, Sunday 29th April at 5.30pm.

Seasonal greetings to you all from Co. Galway and the most Northern Parish in our extended United Dioceses, with the wonderful weather of spring continuing we hope that Easter will uplift us all as together we move forward observing new growth and new farm stock appearing throughout our countryside.

Let us pray for an uplift for our country no matter how difficult it is for us at the moment but support our government as they strive to effect and address our present period of recession. We can all play our part by looking at their policies in a positive light and supporting them with our personal prayers.

CONFIRMATION
Please remember our young people who will be confirmed this coming month at two services. Ardrahan Service of confirmation will have taken place as you read these notes yet the second will be held on Sunday 22nd in St. John’s Ballinasloe.

In total fifteen young people will be confirmed and I ask you to remember them in your prayers as they embark on their independent journey of faith. Photographs will appear in the next edition marking this special occasion in their lives.

LENTEN SERVICE
As these notes are presented the Lenten Services have taken place to date in four churches with the planned schedules to continue with the climax of the reading of the Passion Story this year in Woodlawn parish church at 8.00 p.m. on Good Friday.

These services have been well attended with a collection each week supporting the Lolly Pop Cancer Appeal.

SERVICES EASTER
The schedule for Easter 2012 is as follows

Saturday
7.00 p.m. Ardrahan, 9.00 p.m. Woodlawn, 11.00 p.m. Aughrim

Sunday
8.15 a.m Ahascragh, 10.00 a.m. Ballinasloe, 11.30 a.m. Clontuskert

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
The Annual World Day of Prayer was held in St. John’s on Friday, March 2nd 8.00 p.m. with a good congregation in attendance. The liturgy this year was prepared by the people of Malaysia and refreshments were served following the service in Gullane’s Hotel.

ST PATRICK’S DAY
The St Patrick’s Day Service of Holy Communion was held in Clontuskert with a good congregation taking time to acknowledge the contribution our Patron Saint gave to the development of our Christian Faith here in our homeland.

A different St Patrick Day’s celebration took place in the form of a ‘Paddy Whackery Hooley’ night in the Rectory Coach-house. Over forty parishioners supported this “fun night” and enjoyed a meal of ‘bacon and cabbage’ or ‘Irish stew’ and a selection of deserts colourfully decorated to mark this ‘Irish Night’. Following the meal all in attendance sang their hearts and lungs out to specially prepared Irish karaoke traditional music. A night of great ‘craic’ with the punters all wearing something green. Mind you as you will see from the enclosed photo the said rector disguised himself as Larry the Leprechaun.

Mulvaney’s with Larry the Leprachaun

“RHYME TIME” PARENTS AND TODDLER GROUP
In conjunction with our Glebe School, a Parents and Toddler Group commenced on Ash Wednesday and continues each Wednesday in the school from 12.30 to 13.45. The purpose behind this group is to enable parents and our very young to meet for chat and get to know each other. Special attention is given to the very young with story-telling, rhyme and lots of fun etc. Ms Jan Mulvaney a member of our new board is undertaking this venture that will in time provide a feeder facility to our primary school. Children must be accompanied by an adult, Child-minder, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles all welcome in place of Parents.

To-date up to ten young people have been in attendance from the parish and the community and this is most encouraging.
GLEBE SCHOOL AUGHRIM

The children of our school are progressing well under the watchful eye of our Principal Lisa McKeig. In addition to learning French the children are learning some useful gardening techniques and are in the process of sowing their own seeds in specially prepared grow boxes that they will be able to bring home with them as the summer term ends in June. The school looks forward to another exciting chapter in our school with additional children enrolled for the coming year 2012/13

NEW PARISHIONERS

It is wonderful to be able to extend warm welcomes to new parishioners to our congregations and in the last month we have welcomed the Clayton family to Aughrim: Simon, Jean, Joanne, Bronyn, Corey:

PASTORAL CARE

A number of parishioners continue to have health concerns with a number spending time in hospital with others undergoing tests and procedures. I am glad to say that these are making good progress and we all hope and pray that they will all recovery as soon as possible and put their health concerns behind them..

Please note that the healing service in Ballinasloe on the first Wednesday of each month takes place at 3.00 p.m.

NEW ARRIVAL

Best wishes to Ivan, and Ruth Newton on the birth of their second daughter Rebecca, a sister to Lauren. Congratulations and God’s blessings to all the families connections.

ARDRAHAN FUND-RAISING

A table-quiz was held recently in Bradley’s Lounge, Labane, in aid of the development funds and along with a raffle raised over €450 on the night. Our long awaited improvements plans have had a further set back and it is hoped that following an anticipated meeting these will be back on track sooner rather than later.

COMING SERVICES

Ballinasloe 29th April will be the occasion when all churches come together for our next United Family Service. This family service will include Holy Baptism. Parishioners are invited to the Rectory for a light lunch following the Service.

The Clonfert Group of Parishes

Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna

The Rev. Alan Nevin
Priest in Charge: Very Rev. Patrick L. Towers
Tel: (090) 9684547. Mobile: (086) 8140649

LENTEN SERVICES

Our Wednesday Lenten services have been particularly meaningful this year and have been well attended. On one occasion we visited our friends at Eliza Lodge nursing home where we needed extra chairs to accommodate everybody in the small Oratory at the home for our service of Holy Communion.

CONGRATULATIONS

To the Banagher table tennis team for reaching the final of the B section in this year’s competition. Their efforts are appreciated by everybody in the parish. Although the team keep as quiet about their wins as they do when they don’t win, we are all very proud of their efforts in this annual event.

Also congratulations to Shirley and John Flanagan on the safe arrival of baby Ruby on March 6th. This is the first grandchild of Edward and Isobel Delahunt. Also to Frances Delahunt on becoming a great grandmother.

TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED

Something we are all guilty of at some time. We as a group of parishes have been blessed by the possession of a model of each of our four churches. These were made some years ago for us by Joan Lewis, assisted by her husband Sidney who lived in Banagher, and what a wonderful job they made of them too. A recent visitor remarked that it was a great shame that these models did not have a plaque on them remembering who had made them as the original ones of card had long since faded or been lost. Our kindly visitor offered some funds towards getting some brass plaques made; these are now in place and a wonderful reminder to the skill of the builders.

BAPTISM

On the 3rd of March in Clonfert Cathedral, we welcomed into the fellowship of the Church Astrid Sara Elisia, daughter of Emil and Susanna Skoldberg of Galway, formally of Sweden. We wish all the family health and happiness for the future and may they walk in the footsteps of our Lord.

REV PATRICK TOWERS ADDS:

It was probably about 850AD that the Vikings visited Brendan’s monastery at the spot where the present Clonfert Cathedral stands. The languages that the Vikings spoke would have been allied to Danish and Swedish. The Irish would surely have spoken in Irish. It was therefore particularly fascinating to take a baptism in Clonfert Cathedral of a Swedish child of Swedish parents whose mother told me that they have a family home on the Swedish island of Gotland, an island renowned for its Viking heritage. It might have been a long time since the combination of Irish and Swedish met on the sacred spot of Brendan’s monastery. It was thus very good to welcome the Scandinavian family and to listen to them reading and singing in Swedish and to hear other readings in Irish. I was reminded of the Viking heritage of this land and much of Europe.

THANKS

Eliza Lodge Nursing Home would like to thank everyone who supported their coffee morning which raised €600 towards ‘Age Action Ireland’

MOTHERS UNION

We thank Roy Stoddart from Eyrecourt parish for coming to tell us about the wonderful work he has done for the Niall Mellon building project in South Africa. Roy gave us an inspiring talk on his experiences in Cape Town to our Mothers Union group in St Paul’s Hall Banagher in March. Roy plans to go back to South Africa to volunteer again later this year. God bless Roy in this good work.

BEST WISHES

To Claire Besnoye and Brigid O’Higgins who were responsible for Oak House as they hand over to others.
Limerick Diocese

Limerick Diocese
St. Mary’s Cathedral, St. Michael's Parish, and Abington
VACANT
The Rev. Jane Galbraith
50 Ballinvoher, Fr. Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick.
Tel: 061 – 302038 Mobile: 085-1450804
Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com
Assistant Priest: The Rev. Stan Evans

SINCERE SYMPATHY
Sincere sympathy on the death of Robert (Bobby) McMurray of Oakland Drive, Greystones, Limerick who died on Monday 27th February - to his sister Louie, brothers-in-law Seamus Ryan and John Keely, their families and relatives.

BAPTISM IN ST. MICHAEL’S CHURCH
Amy Lauren Bebbington, baby daughter of Wendy and Rob and new granddaughter of Avril and Alan Condell was baptized on Friday 24th February.

CONGRATULATIONS
Congrat to Geraldine Hely-Hutchinson who celebrated a special birthday - her 90th – on Monday 27th February.

WHIST DRIVES
St. Michael’s Church Whist drives are now taking a break till October. Gill Cheatley & Tracey Lyttle would like to thank everyone who has supported these whist drives whether it was by attending, making scones, bracks, helping with the supper or donating prizes. It is very much appreciated

RICHMOND TERRACE
Every Tuesday at 1 pm a three course lunch is served in the dining room in Richmond Terrace for €7. Anyone who would like to join us at any time would be very welcome. Just let us know by the previous Monday on 061 - 310 455.

CONFIRMATION
Please pray for Tristan Allen, Elliott Redden, Craig Morrow, Craig Harrison and Makaya Stockil. Bishop Trevor has arranged the Confirmation service for May 13th 2012, at 3.30 pm.

VILLIERS SCHOOL REUNION DINNER
Barbara Bingham is one of the coordinators for Villiers School Reunion dinner to be held on Saturday 28th April 2012 in the Greenhills Hotel, Limerick. She urges every past pupil to share their photographs on the night by displaying them in the exhibition. So dig out those old albums and find the ones that make you smile the most! Tickets and full details can be obtained from their Facebook page (Villiers Past Pupils Limerick). Cost is €40 per person or €75 for a couple, and payment can be via cheque/post to Barbara or via online banking using bank details provided by her (barbarabingham@eircom.net).

Adare & Kilmallock
Group of Parishes
Adare, Croom, Kilmallock, Kilpeacon
The Rev. Gary Paulsen
Tel: (061) 396227 Mobile: (085) 7640533
e-mail: adarerector@gmail.com
NO NOTES SUBMITTED

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin
Group of Parishes
Rathkeale, Askeaton, Kilcornan & Kilnaughtin
Rector: The Rev. Keith Scott
The Rectory, Askeaton, Co. Limerick
Tel: 061 - 398647 Mobile: 087 2885169
E-mail: rathkeale@limerick.anglican.org

As I write this Lent has nearly passed, and by the time this magazine hits the pews Easter will have galloped over us. Something must be happening out there, because the years just seem to be getting shorter and shorter. Our parish life has not been quite so rushed, but we are still busy and planning to make ourselves busier.

Our Lent group has been meeting and thinking up new ways of raising money for the Swaziland Farm Project which is the focus of our diocesan Board of Mission. Look out for news of this later in the year.

We are also preparing some young people for confirmation and our Bishop will "break cover" and be with us at 11:00 a.m. on April 29th at Holy Trinity Rathkeale. You would be welcome to join with us.

Congratulations to Norman and Teresa Parkinson of Tarbert parish who celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary by renewing their marriage vows in St. Brendan’s Tarbert. Also congratulations to Daphne and Pat Casey, who have just become grandparents for the second time. Their daughter, Melanie and the new baby boy are, we are assured doing well.

Tralee & Dingle
Union of Parishes
Tralee, Ballymacelligott, Ballyseedy, Dingle, Kilgobbin and Killiney.
The Venerable Robert Warren
Archdeacon of Limerick, Ardfert & Aghadoe
St. John’s Rectory, Ash Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066 - 7122245 Fax: 066 - 7129004
Mobile: 087 - 2521133 email: rwarren@indigo.ie
Pastoral Assistant: Rev. J. Hardy
18 Woodlee, Monavalley, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066 - 7126733
NO NOTES SUBMITTED
Killarney & Aghadoe Union
Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross.
Priest in Charge:
The Rev. Canon Susan Watterson
The Rectory, Rookery Road, Ballycasheen,
Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064-6631832 Mbl: 087-6892025
Email: smwatt@eircom.net

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES
April 1st: Palm Sunday. Passion Narrative and Eucharist.
11.00 a.m. Monday & Tuesday. Morning Office and
Passion Gospel reading. 10.30 a.m.
Wednesday - Holy Communion 10.30am.
Maundy Thursday - Tenebrae 7.30pm.
Good Friday - Liturgy of the Last Hour 2-3pm.
Easter Day 8th: Family Eucharist 11.00 am followed by
an Egg Hunt for the children.
April 15th. Holy Communion 11.00 am.
April 22nd: Morning Prayer.
April 29th: to be arranged.

During the Palm Sunday Service a gift of new linen
(purificators, corporals and credence cloths), which will
be received and dedicated in memory of Miss Olive
O’Neill. On Easter Sunday the gift of a new Fair Linen
Cloth will be received and dedicated in memory of baby
Quintin Casey. Our grateful thanks and appreciation and
extended to the O’Neill and Casey families for their
generosity.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Family
Service on Mothering Sunday, especially to those who
prepared posies of daffodils and to the youngsters who
took part in the quiz.

The Last September by Elizabeth Bowen is the Book-
club choice for this month. It is set in County Cork in the
1920s, and focuses on a young woman’s coming of age at
a time when her family, settled in their country estate,
maintain a sceptical attitude toward the events going on
around them.

The concert season has begun early this year, with a
memorable programme by Lancaster Bible College Choral
(USA) on 12th March. Our next major event is a
performance of Handel's Messiah by Kerry School of
Music on Saturday April 14th – Easter Week. Please note
the change of date. As yet we have no details regarding
admission, but seating should not be a problem. There is
quite a full programme planned for the summer, which
will be advertised in the Killarney Outlook and Advertiser
as well as Newslink.

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously of
their time to clean and polish and decorate the church in
preparation for Holy Week. The church looked especially
lovely this year.

Killcolman Union of Parishes
Killcolman, Kiltallagh and Glenbeigh
Priest in Charge:
The Rev. Máirt Hanley
20 Knocklyne, Sunhill, Killorglin, Co. Kerry.
Mobile: 087-6194733
Assistant Priest:
The Rev. James Stephens
Kilderry, Miltown, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066-9767735 Mobile: 087-0529107

GREETINGS ALL
I hope every one enjoyed the St. Patrick’s Day parades
- Milltown and Killorglin’s were both very impressive. It
has been such a busy few weeks. We have had a number
of events. The annual Ladies Dinner was a great success
with numbers up on last year. It is wonderful to see such
support in what are hard times for many. The Ash
Wednesday service had a great attendance and thanks to
all the parents and children who took part. A very big
thanks to all who took part in the music marathon
yesterday. It went well with an ebb and flow (sometimes
lots of people some times just one or two) and I have
learned a lot for doing such an event again. It was very
good to be seen to be doing something else for young
people in conjunction with other groups in town.

The parish survey service (or should that be a ‘post-it
note’ service).

I know that there were some who would have rather
been serviced by post, some who thought the whole thing
went on a bit long, and some who didn’t realise that form
of service was on that Sunday. My apologies to ye.
However, it did provide me with a lot of valuable
information. It would seem that people are very keen on
the evening services, teas after church and are enthusiastic
about other activities including having more ecumenical
links, and people would like to see us doing more for
seniors in the community. It is clear that we also need to
improve our communications which I will make my
priority over the next few months.

BOOK CLUB
We continue with C. S. Lewis’ ‘Mere Christianity’,
and we’re pleased to welcome some new members.

GARDENING
I am in the Prayer Garden from 4 PM and 6PM on
Thursday evenings. Anyone who would like can come and
help, or just watch me work and have a chat. Please
contact me if you are interested in participating 087-
6194733.

PARENTS GROUP
This is an informal get together for parents with or
without their children on the first Mondays of the month,
from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon, for tea and coffee in St.
Michael’s. So that is Monday the 2nd for our April
meeting.

GERMAN VISITORS
Our link Diocese visitors had a wonderful visit and
were full of thanks to all those who made their visit so
special. They learned a lot and shared a lot with us - and
I know I got a lot out of the visit. There is more on this
elsewhere in this publication.
ECUMENICAL PRAYER
For our first Tuesday of the month evening prayer at 8pm we will be joined by Pastor Segun of the Redeemed Church to pray for the community and any special intentions. This is instead of the Healer prayer service, though prayer for healing will be included in praying for intentions, of course.

THE BISHOP
Thanks to all who helped prepare for our visit from the Bishop. A special thanks to the choir for the work they are putting into the new liturgical material - it sounded great - and also to the Poffs who had volunteered to do the tea and coffee that Sunday, knowing it would be a busy one.

OUR EASTER SCHEDULE
I am planning on having a service each evening at 8 pm from Monday to Friday in St. Michael's. I am also hoping to lead a walking retreat on the Wednesday from 2 to 5 pm, weather permitting - please contact me if you are interested.

I think that is all for now, so God Bless, Rev Máirt

Kenmare and Dromod Union
Kenmare, Sneem, Waterville and Valentia
The Rev. Michael Cavanagh
St Patrick's Rectory, Kenmare, Co Kerry
email: sneemchurch@gmail.com

KEY:
HC: Holy Communion
CFC/CFW: Church Family Communion/ Church Family Worship
MP: Morning Prayer

ST. PATRICK, KENMARE
1st, 3rd, 4th Sundays: 12.00 noon HC/MP
2nd Sunday: 12.00 noon CFC/CFW; 6.00 p.m. Evensong (Summer only)
5th Sunday: 12.00 noon HC/MP; 6.00 p.m. Evening Meditation (Summer only)

CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION, SNEEM
1st, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays: 9.30 a.m. HC/MP
2nd Sunday: 9.30 a.m. CFC/CFW

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, WATERVILLE
(September – June) 4th Sunday 11.30 a.m. HC/MP
(July & August only) Every Sunday 11.30 a.m. HC/MP

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, VALENTIA
(July & August only) Every Sunday 9.30 a.m. HC/MP

LENT STUDY
In conjunction with our local Methodist friends, we have been running a Lent study based on the multiple-Oscar-winning film ‘The King’s Speech’. There have been five sessions, following the future (reluctant) king George VI as he struggles to overcome a severe speech disorder and fulfill his calling. We initially see him almost totally unable to speak in public, then realising that he must do what he is called to do, and with the unflinching support of his wife and new tutor/ friend, working hard to forget his treatment as a child and pressing on towards his goal, losing his inhibition and finally, despite the stammer still being there (although much reduced), inspiring his people in their forthcoming struggle against Nazism. The parallels to our own, individual, Christian journeys are profound. Ill-equipped as we may think we are, God calls us and equips us to fulfil His purpose in the coming of His Kingdom. We can respond to His call in confidence that when we keep our eyes on the prize, He will be our unfailing companion on the way.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED
After Easter, we intend to run an ecumenical course for the whole of Kenmare town –‘Christianity Explored’, supported by books, study guides and video – offering a guide to the basics of our faith and helping us to discern the way forward, both personally and in our combined Church fellowship. Further details from Michael.

Methodist Notes

Adare & Ballingrane
The Rev. Elizabeth Hewitt
Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Road, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061-396236
Email: elizabeth.hewitt@btinternet.com
NO NOTES SUBMITTED

Christ Church, Shannon
Dr. Rosemary Power, Pioneer Minister
5 The Grove, Shannon, Co Clare
061 - 363717
NO NOTES SUBMITTED

Christ Church, Limerick
(Methodist & Presbyterian)
The Rev Elizabeth Hewitt
Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Road, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061-396236
Email: elizabeth.hewitt@btinternet.com
NO NOTES SUBMITTED

Killarney & Kenmare Methodist Churches
[part of the Cork South & Kerry Circuit]
Minister: Rev. Laurence Graham
10 Flesk Grove, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 6631613
Email: laurence.graham@irishmethodist.org
Website: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry
Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team:
Ed & Jean Ritchie; Larry & Meriel O’Mahony
Tel: 064 6620580
KILLARNEY METHODIST CHURCH EAST AVENUE, KILLARNEY
Sunday Services. 9 and 11 am (inc. Children’s’ programme at 11 am)
Prayer meetings: Monday – Thursday 8.00 a.m. – 9.00 a.m.
Bible Study Meetings: Wednesday 8.00 p.m., Friday 10.00 a.m.
Drop in for coffee each Friday 11.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.
Parent and Toddler Group. Tuesdays 10am – 12pm
Youth Club (11+) 2nd & 4th Fridays 8-10pm, preceded by Youth Bible Group at 7pm.
KENMARE “GATEWAY” GORTAMULLIN, KILLARNEY ROAD, KENMARE.
Sunday Service. 11am (preceded by coffee) (inc. Children’s’ programme)
Weekly Bible Study/Fellowship meetings: Tuesdays at 8.00 p.m. (Prayer time at 7pm), Wednesdays at 10.00 a.m.
Drop in for coffee each Wednesday 11am – 12.00 p.m.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
Gneeveguilla Home Fellowship group is planned for Thursdays 5th and 19th April this month while the Castleisland Home Fellowship group is scheduled for Friday 20th April all at 8.00pm. Contact Laurence for directions to the venues.
Meetings in Millstreet continue each Sunday evening at 7.00pm in the Canon O’Donovan Centre on Clara Road in Millstreet town.
The monthly Men’s Breakfast meeting in Killarney is due to be held on Saturday 14th April at 8.30-10.00am in the Church.
Praise group practice is scheduled for Sunday 1st April at 12.45 p.m.
Film nights continue in Killarney on the last Saturday of each month at 7.30 p.m.

We are spring cleaning in Killarney – both physically and Spiritually! Recently someone who was cleaning the Church noticed that there are a lot of things gathered around the building which need cleared. God then began to speak to this person that the need for clearing away unnecessary stuff is not just a physical thing for a Church.
So, in the weeks leading up to Easter, we are going to have spring cleaning both physical and spiritual. On Saturday 24th March we met at 10am at the Church to clear, clean and sort the building from top to bottom. Then we will meet on Good Friday morning (6th April) at 10am for a time of praise and corporate prayer. Then from 11am on Friday 6th right through to 9am on Sunday 8th April (Easter Sunday) the Church will be open all day and all night for people to come and go in prayer. During this time there will also be a service of Holy Communion at 8pm on Good Friday evening.
Next Sunday a large sheet of paper will be on the wall so that people can sign up to cover each of the slots of this 48 hour prayer time. Also if there is anything which you would like to bring or create as an aid to prayer then please speak to Laurence so that it can all be helpfully set up around the building. We trust and pray that this will be a very special time of refocusing ourselves with our Lord.

In recent months Christians from many different Churches around Kerry have been gathering to pray for God’s work in the county. We are delighted to host the next of these meetings on Thursday 5th April at 8.00 p.m.
On the weekend of 27th-29th April the Midlands & Southern District MWI (Methodist Women in Ireland) have their annual conference at the Castle Ross Hotel in Killarney. It is always a joy for us in Killarney to have the conference join us for our Sunday services. We hope and pray that the conference is a great blessing to everyone who attends.

... A Date for your Diary...
Christian Aid & Trócaire present
“Colours of the World”
7.30pm Saturday 12th May, St. Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick
A musical evening with global perspective with “Voices Together” (Northern Ireland) and Villiers School Choir

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Further information can be found on our website or by contacting the School Office.
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Waterford, Ireland.

Tel: +353 51 860 200
Email: info@newtownschool.ie
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Contractors Liability
Private Motor
House Insurance
Small Businesses
Property Owners

Contact
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