A Rainbow brings hope after the storm

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Genesis 9:13
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The Bishop Writes

A STORY
The Chief and village leaders prepared a great celebration to mark the arrival of electricity for their community. They had worked hard to achieve this wonderful result and they expected everybody to be overjoyed. However the village women were less than enthusiastic. A huge part of their life was fetching water from a distant well. As well as the physical effort involved in carrying large jerry cans long distances, several times a day, women were at risk of attack as they walked alone to fetch the water. If a village water supply had been installed, their lives would have been transformed. Water was what the women wanted, but they were not asked.

DECISION MAKING
Often in our parishes, decision making is left to just a few people. This is unfair on those who are willing to step up to the mark, but it also means that only a fraction of the wisdom, gifts and skills available is used in parish leadership. This limits the effectiveness of our parishes, our Diocese and our Church. And like the story above, we need more women and young people so that their voices can be heard and their wisdom shared.

Our Church structures are designed to be democratic, representative and participative. This reflects what we in the Church of Ireland believe about the Church; that God has given gifts to each of us, to be used for the good of all. Each of us has a contribution to make. When we refuse to contribute, to be involved, the Church loses out and lacks something special. If people withheld their financial gifts, the consequences would be immediate and drastic for our parish and our Diocese. Thankfully, our problem is not with our financial giving – each parish has met its Diocesan assessment. This is a huge achievement and as Bishop I want to express my thanks for the financial commitment of so many who give generously and often sacrificially to their Church.

PLEASE GET INVOLVED
But the needs of our Church are not just financial. We need people to be involved in so many ways. Some tasks needed to run a parish include musicians or cd disk jockeys, financial book keepers, teachers, Diocesan and Parish Lay Readers, visitors, youth leaders, organisers, those who welcome others to Church, those involved as teachers, Diocesan and Parish Lay Readers, visitors, youth leaders, organisers, those who welcome others to Church, those involved as

contribution to the Select Vestry, Church Warden or Glebewarden to serve your parish

• Think carefully and prayerfully about who would be good at choosing a Rector for your parish should be there a vacancy, to be elected as a Parochial Nominator at the Easter General Vestry. Think carefully and prayerfully about who would have a contribution to make to Diocesan Synod

• Tell the people you have chosen that you would like to nominate them at the Easter Vestry and ask them if they would be willing to take on that task if elected.

Maybe you feel the Easter General Vestry meeting is not for you? Well it is! No one should be forced or embarrassed into accepting a position which is not appropriate. Your Rector as chair will see to that. You are there to make your contribution, to ensure that the right people are in place to resource the Mission and Ministry of your Parish.

May each of us know God's blessing
Your Bishop
+Trevor

The Rt. Revd. Trevor Williams
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Mobile: +353 (0)87 9772125
Email: bishop@limerick.anglican.org

Diocesan Calendar
(for updates see Diocesan web site – www.limerick.anglican.org)

Friday 7th – Sunday 9th March
UDYC Spring Madness, Carhue Centre, Bandon, Co. Cork (13+)

Saturday 8th March, 8pm
Limerick City Parish Whist & Raffle, St Michael's Church

Saturday 15th March, 7.30–9.30 pm
UDYC Youth Fellowship Group, Kilmurray Church Arts & Community Centre, Castletroy

Tuesday 18th March, 7.30–9.30 pm
SafeguardingTrust Panel Training, Cloughjordan

Friday 21st – Sun 23rd March
UDYC West Alive Weekend, Esker Youth Village, Esker, Athenry, Co. Galway (10-13)

Tuesday 25th March, 8pm
Kilcolman Book Club, St Michael's Hall, Killorglin

Saturday 29th March, 8pm
Limerick City Parish Whist Drive, Villiers Square

Saturday 5th April, 2.30–4.30 pm
GFS Diocesan Service & Prize giving, Roscrea

Saturday 5th April, 7.30pm, Sunday 6th, 7pm
Shinrone Drama Group presents 'Drinking Habits' by Tom Smith, produced by Phill Quigley, Shinrone Community Centre, proceeds to redecoration of Church

Saturday 19th April, 7.30–9.30 pm
UDYC Youth Fellowship Group, Kilmurray Church Arts & Community Centre, Castletroy

Tuesday 22nd April, 8pm
Kilcolman Book Club, St Michael's Hall, Killorglin

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th April
GFS All Ireland Camp, Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Co Westmeath

Saturday 26th April, 3–5.30 pm
UDYC AGM, Kilmurray Church Arts & Community Centre, Castletroy

UDYC AGM, Kilmurray Church Arts & Community Centre, Castletroy

SafeguardingTrust Panel Training, Cloughjordan
Editorial - After the Storms

Over the last month Atlantic weather systems have brought extreme winds and torrential rain. Buildings have been damaged, trees uprooted, farm land, houses and businesses flooded. Deaths and injuries are few, thank God, but many are suffering in our communities. Our churches have not been immune, as you can read in this month’s parish notes – See the pictures from Adare on page 20. Let us hope and pray that the worst is over – at least for now.

Many will want to help our neighbours in need. St Mary’s Park in Limerick was devastated by floods, as we saw on TV – Bishop Trevor suggests those wishing to help the residents do so by cheque through our ecumenical partners to “St. Mary’s Parish - Flood Relief Fund”, c/o St. Mary’s Parish, Athlunkard Street, Limerick. In other areas, look for local appeals, or St Vincent de Paul as an alternative.

Is this extreme weather a result of climate change? No single storm can be blamed on climate change, because climate is about long run statistics, not individual events. But scientists are now certain that climate is changing, mainly due to greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. They forecast that the frequency of extreme weather will increase, and sea levels will inexorably rise, though by how much, how soon remains uncertain.

I think the recent storms and floods are a foretaste of what the future will bring more of, more often. I pray that I am right to detect a changing perception among ordinary Irish people, who are coming to see that things can’t continue as they are. Now is the time to act, both to adapt to climate change and to halt and reverse it. If we don’t, our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.

But God gives us hope for the future. The rainbow on this month’s cover is a sign of that hope, a reminder of the covenant God made with Noah and every living creature, after the flood receded.

Flooding in Burundi

Ireland is not the only country to have suffered extreme weather recently.

On February 9th Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi suffered the heaviest thunderstorms and rainfall in recent history. Torrential rains washed whole hillsides away. Over 150 people were reported dead and hundreds injured. Unofficial figures indicate over 1,000 houses were washed away, affecting an estimated 2,500 households, leaving around 20,000 people without shelter.

The Anglican Church in Burundi is responding to the needs of the victims by providing food, clothing and other necessities donated by church members. The Diocese of Makamba has been distributing charcoal for cooking and keeping warm. The Church is working with other churches and organisations to coordinate aid activities.

Distributing charcoal so flood victims can cook food

Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfort, which also includes the historic dioceses of Aghadoe, Clonfert, Emy, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh. For further information about the United Dioceses see the diocesan web site: www.limerick.anglican.org.

Newslink also covers Methodist Midlands and Southern District Circuits within the boundaries of the Church of Ireland Diocese.

Newslink received a ‘Highly Commended’ award in the Church of Ireland Communications Competition for diocesan magazines at General Synod 2013.

EDITOR

In addition to parochial news, the Editor is delighted to receive articles and letters for publication, as well as suggestions as to how Newslink may be improved.

Please note: names and addresses of contributors must be given, and all letters printed will include name and address unless otherwise agreed with the Editor. All material dealing with parish/circuit matters must first be cleared with the Minister concerned.

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Deadlines

The next issue will be for April 2014, published for Sunday 6th April 2014. All material must reach the Editor by Friday 21st March 2013 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed. Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

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Distributing charcoal so flood victims can cook food

Don't forget:

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M*thering Sunday

30th March this year
On Saturday, 15th February, delegates from the Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe, Tuam, and Clogher met at the McWilliams Park Hotel in Claremorris, Co. Mayo, to try to come to grips with the thorny problem of human sexuality in the context of Christian belief. This was a follow-up to the special meeting of General Synod members in Cavan in 2012, and the following regular General Synod, both of which were unable to arrive at anything resembling consensus on the issues.

Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert delegates

The purpose of the conference was not to try to get everyone to agree on the matter, but to begin to explore whether we in the Church of Ireland could live with difference of opinion, and to look at how we could agree to disagree with love and respect for each other. The facilitator was the Revd Doug Baker. A Presbyterian minister, he has been involved with the Corrymeela Community, the Irish School of Ecumenics, and, in the Church of Ireland, the Hard Gospel Project and the Theological Institute.

BIBLICAL VIRTUES

Besides chairing the entire day's proceedings, Doug led the morning session, “Transforming Conflict by Grace”. He showed how we can deal much more positively with conflict if we bear in mind four biblical virtues:

- **Humility.** As sinful human beings, we must acknowledge the limitations of our knowledge and understanding of God, and recognise that in any theological discussion, we could be wrong. There is no room for arrogance, but only humility, as we seek to find the truth.

- **Patience.** God will make the right and the good known at the end of human history. Until then, we pursue the truth with patience, remembering that we won't get all the answers in this life.

- **Integrity.** Someone with integrity is true to himself and his convictions, but also represents both himself and his opponents with honesty. He sees people as they are, without reducing them to labels.

- **Mutual respect.** If we are made in God's image, we respect one another out of respect for the image of God in each other, and in imitation of the grace that God extends to each of us. This is best shown in a willingness to listen – taking the time to really hear what our opponents believe, why they believe it, and what they find mistaken or hurtful in our own convictions.

All of these virtues lead us to show **forbearance**, literally delaying a negative reaction to another's action or inaction. The forbearance shown to us by God is his divine grace in not reacting negatively to our sin. Forbearance includes humility, patience, integrity, and respect toward others whom we perceive to be in the wrong. It requires a willingness to tolerate those who claim to share our allegiance to Christ, but understand the implications of that allegiance in very different ways.

His presentation was interspersed with exercises for our groups of 8 or 9, which were designed to challenge our prejudices and make us more aware of how to approach disagreement in ways that don't lead to open conflict.

Delegates at their tables

PANEL OF SPEAKERS

After lunch, Doug introduced three speakers. Professor Samuel McConkey is Head of Tropical Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. An expert on human sexuality, he spoke about the various forms taken by human sexuality from a biological standpoint, not a religious one, and showed us that human beings can have a great variety of sexual possibilities, among them those we know as heterosexual and homosexual. He also said that sexual preferences can change during a person's lifetime. The last two speakers told something about their faith journeys as they dealt with issues of human sexuality. The first of these was the Revd Peter Ould. A priest in the Church of England, he had a gay partner for many years, but later decided that that was not in line with the mind of Christ. He is now married with four children. He describes himself as ‘Post Gay’. The last speaker, Malcolm Macourt, a native of Belfast, has lived in England with his civil partner, a retired Church of England vicar, for the past 30 years.

At our tables we discussed our reactions to what we heard from the three speakers, and framed questions we wished to ask them. A selection of these were put to the speakers as a panel for their responses.

The speaker panel, l-r: Malcolm Macourt, Rev Peter Ould, Prof Sam McConkey, with facilitator Rev Doug Baker

Over the course of the day, we all learned some valuable tools to help us in future discussions on this and other difficult issues. We pray that we, and all Church of Ireland members, may use these tools to keep the conversation going, with love and forbearance. The future of our Church may depend on it.
Máirt’s Musings – A little Denial just in time for Lent

by Rev Máirt Hanley, Kilcolman Union

Denial has a pretty bad reputation these days. We are not supposed to deny anything, we should admit, face up, concede. The simplest way to win an argument is to tell the other person that they are in denial. Then you can dismiss anything that they say with the quip, ‘Well you would say that, because you’re in denial’, and ignore their arguments. The word denial also implies lying in the modern mind. A denial like, ‘What bar of chocolate? I didn’t eat any chocolate’, with the evidence of the wrapper on the table in front of the guilty party, infuriates. So does denial on the basis of ignorance: ‘I have no idea of the facts but what you’re saying can not be true as it interferes with what I want to be true’. Denial is morally wrong when it comes to information.

When it comes to activity, denial is also unpopular: ‘Why deny yourself the pleasure?’ Surely denial in this sense must be foolish – after all advertisers constantly tell us so. The consumerist band wagon trundles on like a deranged Mrs Doyle, ‘Arraha, go on, go on, go on, go on, go on, go on!’ And as if we don’t get the message – just in case we don’t feel like indulging – it gives us the perfect reason: ‘Because you’re worth it’. When I see someone rubbing some sort of snake oil into their shoulder and seductively telling me I’m worth it, my first thought is how wrong they are – I’m not worth that, I’m worth a lot more!

It sometimes seems that we are being sold foods we don’t need, to fatten us, so we can be sold exercise programmes that require us to buy track suits, which we wouldn’t need if we could just deny ourselves the extra pie and go for a walk on the beach instead!

It struck me recently as I was performing a baptism that before the candidate, or god parents, are asked to turn to Christ, they are asked to deny evil – to reject evil before they are asked to turn to good. Maybe in our lives that is actually easier. I mean we would love to think that we would always choose the right thing, and know what the right thing is, but maybe it’s easier and simpler to first get rid of the rubbish before we start to figure out what and where the gold is. So let’s hear it for denial. Let’s deny the untrue, the unhelpful and the unhealthy. Let’s clear out some of the clutter and look at what we have left.

While we are at it, what about denying ourselves? If I indulge my every impulse I won’t end up living authentically, I’ll end up a slob. Being yourself should be about conscious choice not doing whatever you feel. So I reckon that denying yourself can make you more the person you are meant to be, or want to be, and I believe we are all worth that effort!

Letter to the Editor

THANK YOU FROM KAREN GILLESPIE

I would like to thank everyone for their kind support, encouragement and assistance in recent fundraising events for Christian Aid Zimbabwe Projects. Along with a team of eight Christian Aid Ireland supporters I shall be travelling to Zimbabwe in March for two weeks to see where funding from the Christian Aid Projects goes and to see the difference Christian Aid has made to peoples lives.

I am overwhelmed with the generosity of everyone, for those who attended events and for the kind donations that have been sent to me. Everyone deserves a mention, but I would like to thank the event organisers: Elton Goodman for allowing a fundraising lunch after his service in Shannon; Teresa Williams who helped to organise the walk in Cloughjordan, and to everyone who helped and supported it: Pearl and George Whitford and Phylis and Willie Wolfe, who organised and ran a fundraising dance in Cloughjordan, and all the helpers on the night: to Sylvia Armitage for organising the coffee morning and cake sale, and to all who helped out and contributed. I would also like to thank Rev. Brian Griffin, Canon Stephen Neill, Gillian and Rev. Tom Kingston for their support through the churches and my family and friends for all the hard work, preparing and helping at these events.

On my return I would be glad to give a talk on my experience in Zimbabwe to any groups or schools interested.

Yours, etc.,
Karen Gillespie, Cloughjordan, 086 056 9695

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GFS Leaders Night Out

Leaders and Helpers of GFS in the Diocese had a very enjoyable evening at the home of Deborah Powell. We had a beautiful meal and enjoyed lots of chat and fun. Proceeds from the evening go towards Crumlin Children’s Hospital.

GFS All Ireland Camp 2014

Age Group: 10 + years (at time of camp).
(12 noon on 25th to 3.00pm on 27th).
Venue: Wilson’s Hospital School, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Location: Off the N4, close to Mullingar.
Cost: €30.00
Deposit: €10.00 (non-refundable)
by 14th February – to Branch Leader.
Balance + Consent form by 25th March.
Places: Allocation is on ‘a first come’ basis.
*Consent Forms available from Branch Leaders.

Birr Branch

During our opening meeting for 2014 the girls watched a video on the work of Paul and Tania Baker, GFS Mission partners in Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda. Following this they made boxes to collect money to support their work and the work of St. Columba’s Hospital in India, to be returned by the end of February.

Our annual enrolment service took place in St. Brendan’s Church on Sunday 2nd February. The girls processed carrying their own banner and the Diocesan Banner. They also contributed to the service with reading and prayers and by helping in other ways. A special welcome to our Diocesan President Ms. Rose Langley. Thank you to Archdeacon Carney for all the thought he put into the preparation of the service and to the girls for their participation.

Cloughjordan Branch

Our Mini-Market continues each week, getting enthusiastic support from everybody. The home-baking is especially well-received and enjoyed. Thank you to everybody for contributions to the stall and for shopping with us.

Girls Friendly Society

We are hard at work with our Bible Study. This year’s theme is “Caring”. While the questions are giving us plenty to think about and much to discuss we are reminded of God’s care for us and our care for one another. This leads us to the lines from our GFS prayer, “Help us to bear one another’s burdens, to live not for ourselves but for others”, which is at the centre of our organisation.

Our Craft Syllabus is providing plenty of variety and enjoyment. We are greatly looking forward to seeing everybody’s work on display after our Diocesan Service and Prizegiving which takes place on Saturday, 5th April in Corbally Church, Roscrea.

Nenagh Branch

Nenagh Branch held their Enrolment Service on Sunday, 16th February. Girls took an active part in the Family Worship in St. Mary’s Nenagh. The service was on the theme of Lost Sheep taken from the Bible Study syllabus. Girls provided a poster on Lost & Found Items – some very interesting articles worth reading i.e. the number of items an Post cannot deliver each month, the student who lost and found her wallet containing €1000, lost animals and jewellery in the Nenagh area. This helped to explain the reading from Luke 15. As always the girls assisted wonderfully in the Service.

A big thank you to leaders and girls for coming to the church on Saturday to prepare for the Service as we were not sure if we would have electricity, but all was well in the end.

The branch meets again on Saturday, 15th March in the Croft Hall, St. Mary’s No. 2 National School.

Nenagh

We have had two fantastic visits to the boys already this year – organised by one of our parents which is really helpful input! Kevin Murray, strength training and conditioning coach was with us for our first meeting of January. The boys were absolutely inspired by his words and training, not to mention his achievements including All Ireland Strong Man. Kevin gave his time completely free and we are very grateful, he has also agreed to support us in the future, particularly with our first achievement badge which will be “Basic Health & Fitness” on the back of his visit. Then two weeks later came the Guards! John Madigan and Jennifer Hughes demonstrated their equipment and gave a really interesting talk about a Guard’s role, road safety and general safe behaviour. The highlight of the evening though had to be the ride around Nenagh with lights flashing and sirens blaring! We really appreciate the Guards taking the time to pay the boys such an educational and fun visit. All this support is an important part of what makes Nenagh 1st Company function!

Our latest meeting was themed around the Winter Olympics – though the links may have been tenuous, the events were fun! Gold,
Silver and Bronze medals were awarded by Canon Marie. Well done to all our great athletes! And a big thank you to Nenagh Olympic for the loan of the high jump which was a hugely successful piece of equipment!

The other main event of the evening was for Canon Marie to present the boys with their service badges and some special achievement certificates for 100% attendance and excellent behaviour. Some evenings there are lots of contenders for great behaviour certificates and Winter Olympics night was one of them – we love those moments!

Roscrea

Some members of Boys' Brigade Roscrea, feeling very pleased with themselves after successfully completing a sponsored silence! They raised €890.50 for our BB company, to help us to fund fun activities for the boys, over the year. In addition to this, a raffle was held, which raised a further €508! Thank you to all who supported us. (Isn’t it interesting how much people will pay for a bit of quietness!)

Boys' Brigade Roscrea carpentry night, was a great success, great to see so many boys and their families, working alongside our BB leaders for a great night, which was enjoyed by all. Hopefully we will have many little birdies nesting before long. Hilda Mooney, Company Captain

Mothers' Union

RELIEF FUNDING APPROVED FOR SUDRA SOUTH SUDAN

Mothers’ Union’s Relief Fund Committee has sent a grant of £25,000 to aid the humanitarian response of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan & Sudan to thousands of displaced people in South Sudan. The funding will form part of the wider response of the Anglican Communion given to the local relief arm of the Church, SUDRA. This will be used to bring urgent food and medical aid to displaced families. A further grant of £25,000 has been agreed in principle by Mothers’ Union which the organisation hopes to source from outside its membership.

Harriet Baka, Mothers’ Union’s development co-ordinator for the Province is part of the SUDRA Relief committee. Over the next few weeks SUDRA aim to help 83,000 displaced people who have fled the conflict within South Sudan.

Mother’s Union has a unique role as one of the few Anglican mission agencies with a strong presence in South Sudan, with over 53,000 members and 30 trained development coordinators across the province. As well as providing immediate woman-power to deliver food and medical aid Mothers’ Union will be a key part of the rebuilding of community life in the months ahead, using their training to deliver community reconciliation. Therefore, in addition to the relief funding, Mothers’ Union will be raising funds for the ongoing work throughout 2014 in order to support the restoration that will be needed post-conflict.

Nicola Lawrence, Head of International Programmes said, “Our aim is to ensure we can support this work once the immediate need for aid is withdrawn and the news teams have come home. The people of South Sudan will rely heavily on women such as our 53,000 members as they seek to restore stable family life in the months ahead. We are committed to ensuring they receive a further £100,000 this year to ensure stable family life can be achieved in one of the most disadvantaged countries of the world.”

LIMERICK CITY BRANCH

Limerick City Branch had a very good meeting last night when a Garda spoke to us about security in the home, warning of bogus callers - the current scam round here is a caller pretending to have been involved in fitting the water meters and asking for payment for same! We were joined by members from Adare and Askeaton and following his talk Garda John answered a number of questions with great good humour. Members will attend one of the two World Day of Prayer services in the city and this year our Ladyday Service on 25th March will be held in Askeaton.

A number of delegates will travel to the All Ireland Training Conference in An Grianan the first week-end in March and we look forward to hearing all about it in due course.

An evening of great excitement and fun was had by all at the Limerick Branch Beetle Drive which was held in January. As usual, it was fast and furious with lots of fun for all, and the parents were very good at playing Beetle too! There were prizes for everyone at the end of the evening followed by a supper of crisps and popcorn for the under 12’s and a cup of tea and cake for everyone else.

Beetle Drive
ST. JOHN’S BALLINASLOE

St. John’s Branch held a very popular meeting in February when Mr. Brian Casey, a local historian, gave a talk on the history of Ballinasloe, and a number of interested friends also attended. Our speaker certainly knows how to make history “come alive” and there were many requests for a follow up meeting next season.

The branch now looks forward to welcoming Sr. Chad, Pastoral Care at Portiuncula Hospital, who will talk to us on the topic of “Listening”, on Monday March 10th in Gullane’s Hotel at 8pm. All visitors are very welcome.

CORK LEADER’S WEEKEND

Cork Diocesan Youth Council (C.D.Y.C.) ran a very successful youth leader’s weekend in January, which three of our Limerick & Killaloe leaders, Edward Hardy, Alec Perrott, and Damian Shorten, attended. A well-organised weekend, gave a great opportunity for those involved in youth ministry to come together for times of worship, learning, and Christian fellowship, as well as craic! Amy McCrea, Youth Ministry Development Officer (Southern Region) with the Church of Ireland Youth Department (C.I.Y.D.), led our main sessions, based on the theme of ‘Faith Works’. Discussions and team activities about what faith means, how we can grow in our faith, and how we can nurture ‘sticky faith’ in our young people, so that they can grow in and share their faith, together with lots of useful ideas and thoughts were shared and gained by the experienced and passionate youth ministers at the weekend.

Great teamwork was displayed by C.D.Y.C., in that it’s leadership team, young and old, took on different roles for the weekend, leading prayer and reflection times, worship, and sessions on different topics. We even had a (highly entertaining!) workshop on how to use drama to communicate the Christian message. Above all, spiritual commitment of all at the event to growing and living the Christian life was inspiring and very promising for the future of the Church.

The weekend was a very positive one, and all who attended felt refreshed and encouraged in their discipleship and ministry. We will be joining C.D.Y.C. for our Spring Madness weekend (see below!), to build on and deepen the relationships in Christ we have with our fellow workers in other dioceses.

SPRING MADNESS WEEKEND WITH CORK DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Friday 7th March – Sunday 9th March 2014
Carhue Centre, Carhue, Bandon, Co. Cork
13 plus years. Return Transport from/to Roscrea- Moneygall – Nenagh – Limerick – Mallow – Cork
Cost from €80 plus €20 for return transport if required.

ROSCREA

The Branch members are working hard at present. An excellent parish lunch in January in The Cosy Kitchen and a most enjoyable afternoon for members at Heather Evan’s home where each guest had to bring something from their home that they could not do without. Had this correspondent been present, it would have been a brio for ‘Newslink Notes’. Thank you Heather, and the general verdict on these occasions was that more are needed.

UNITED DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL OF LIMERICK & KILLALOE - PROGRAMME FOR 2014

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<td>21st - 23rd March</td>
<td>West Alive Weekend with Tuam Diocesan Youth Council</td>
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<td>26th April</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting @ 3.00 pm</td>
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<td>2nd - 13th August</td>
<td>International Exchange Trip to Germany (Leargas Funded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17th - 23rd August</td>
<td>Senior Summer Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fellowship Group Meeting Dates</td>
<td>15/03, 19/04 (Easter Vigil ), 1, 17/05, 15/06, 20/09, 18/10, 15/11 &amp; 20/12</td>
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Full Details on all events from: Edward Hardy @ 087/2907553
In spite of the prevailing weather conditions, our first Mission Evening for 2014 was well attended. The main speaker was the Rev Laurence Graham, Supt. Minister, Cork South & Kerry Circuit for the Methodist Church in Ireland. Laurence started by describing how through the vision and dedication of two ‘volunteer pastors’ the Methodist church in Killarney had been reopened for full time ministry in 1998. Since then it had acted as a ‘mother church’ to ‘prayer and study’ groups which had sprung up in Kenmare, Millstreet, Castleisland and Dingle. As he explained, there was no plan for church planting, ‘All mission is God’s and we just need to be open to his leading so that we can follow where He is already working’. Hence the title of his talk: ‘Tailgating the God of mission’.

Laurence went on to explain that while Ireland was still behind other western countries in social/infrastructural developments, we were now entering the period of, ‘post Christendom’. The Church is moving from the centre of society to the margins, from the majority to the minority, from control over society to offering the Church’s voice as one of many and, from feeling at home in a culture which had been shaped by the Christian story, to being more like aliens or exiles in an environment that is not Christian based. While over 50% of the people attending the prayer and bible study groups were from other countries, the remainder were from local communities, people who had become disillusioned with the rules and regulations of a hierarchical church system. They were looking for a ‘structure of worship’ with a very clear set of beliefs rooted in Christ and
his teaching, and at the same time being open to the guidance of His Spirit. In many respects, the future of Christ’s Church lay not so much in the traditional form of ministry, but in ‘incarnational mission’, where we demonstrate the faith by showing an attractive and distinctive lifestyle, while at the same time being a community of mutual caring and reaching out to social needs.

From the number and type of questions after the presentation, we were slowly ‘digesting’ a vision of worship and a church different from the one in which most of us had grown up. Yet, where there is an opportunity there is a challenge, where there is a privilege there is a responsibility to spread the ‘good news of the Kingdom’!

The Secretary then gave a report concerning donations from parishes. To date approximately €6500 had been received and we hoped to reach €9000 by the end of March. It looks as if we will not have reached our target of €15,000 by September, especially when taking into account that the Board of Mission are sponsoring the design & construction of a vegetable washer for Luyengo Farm, by two students as their third year project in Agricultural Engineering at IT Tralee. An additional source of funding has to be found.

MID-SUMMER FUN CYCLE – SATURDAY 21ST JUNE

It is proposed to have a ‘mid-summer fun cycle’ from Clonfert Cathedral to Killaloe Cathedral on Saturday 21st June. The route will be through Banagher, Birr, Roscrea, Moneygall, Nenagh and then down the old Limerick road into Ballina and Killaloe, finishing with a barbecue/social evening around 7 p.m. It is hoped to have street collections in each town as the cyclists pass through. Medical & safety plans, Garda permits and overall insurance cover for the event are at an advanced stage of preparation.

An enjoyable and informative/challenging evening closed with prayer and the Grace.

Archdeacon Wayne Carney (Chair),
David Frizelle (Secretary/Treasurer)

St. Nicholas’ National School, Adare

Pupils in 4th, 5th and 6th classes were once again involved in the Limerick Spikeball tournament held in Villiers School on January 29th. Well done to our four teams. All teams played very well on the day with one team making it to the semi-finals and our 6th class team going on to the finals. It was a very exciting tournament with all four teams playing to their strengths and showing great team spirit.

The senior pupils will start work on the next edition of our school magazine after mid-term break under the guidance of Ieteke Oggel. We look forward to reading all the St Nick’s news before the Easter break.

Chess club has started once again after school on Thursdays. We had twenty-six budding chess players at our first session and look forward to some exciting games this season.

Prize day took place on Friday 7th February and we welcomed Lady Geraldine Dunraven to present prizes to all pupils for their efforts over the past year in school. Afterwards the 6th class pupils organised a coffee afternoon in aid of the Simon Community. The senior pupils baked a delicious selection of cakes, buns and biscuits and these were served by 6th class pupils. Thanks to the generosity of all our guests €210 was raised for this very worthy cause.

This year the school entered four teams into the Credit Union Quiz. Well done to all the participants and congratulations to one of our teams, Marie Butler, Arthur Cussen, Katie Purser and Bryan Smyth, who came second on the night, a great achievement.

We will certainly remember St. Brigid’s Day this year as the school and church grounds were flooded that morning when the river Maigue breached its banks in Adare. Thankfully the school building was not flooded. Thanks to all the parents and parishioners who helped with the clean up afterwards.

We look forward to the annual visit of Noel and Liza McMeekin who will present prizes to pupils who have completed Bible Times lessons during the year. They will visit Adare on the 25th March.

We were delighted to welcome the author Róisín Meaney to school just before mid-term break. She spent time in all three classrooms where she read from one of her children’s books and talked to the pupils about the writing process. She certainly encouraged everyone to keep on reading and writing.

Seachtain na Gaeilge will take place during the week leading up to St Patrick’s Day when pupils will be involved in many activities to promote Irish.

St. Mary’s No.2 National School, Nenagh

“There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods...”

- Excerpt from ‘Resolution and Independence’,
William Wordsworth

Our school has been struck by lightning and blown by the fiercest of storms during the terrible February gales, but we are all safe and well. Our prayers go out to students, parents and the wider community for a speedy return of all amenities and resources in the wake of Storm Darwin.

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our School Photo Day on Friday 14th due to a lack of electricity and heat in the school. The

SCHOOL NEWS

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Unfortunately, we had to postpone our School Photo Day on Friday 14th due to a lack of electricity and heat in the school. The
school had to remain closed on that day as we could not provide heat for the student's wellbeing.

This year our students are proud to support Christian Aid for our Lenten Project. Our Lenten Service will take place on Shrove Tuesday, 4th March.

We would like to congratulate Daniella Stumbre, Maruna Manthe, Anna-Mae Powell and Denis Sheehy for their very strong performance at the Credit Union Table Quiz. The team won third place and represented St. Mary's admirably.

Our mid-term break falls from Monday 17th to Friday 21st February.

We wish all readers light and warmth during these cold days.

**St. Cronan’s National School, Roscrea**

In 1974, St. Cronan’s National School moved from Gaol Road to Rosemount. The official opening was held on the September, 1974.

The Parents’ Association chaired by Shiela Blackwell decided to organise a 40th Anniversary Celebration Dance and the seed that was sown back in June 2013, came to fruition under the stewardship of the next Parents’ Association chaired by Lorinda Benn.

The Annual Dance was replaced by a 40th Anniversary Dance held in the County Arms, Brr. There was a fantastic atmosphere on the night, friendships were rekindled, stories shared and new memories created.

On Sunday, the pupils – past and present – led the congregation in an uplifting Service of Thanksgiving followed by refreshments and a trip down memory lane in the school. Parents and pupils, family and friends enjoyed looking at photographs, projects, artwork and even poetry written for the occasion. The Bishop unveiled a plaque made by the pupils and David Blackwell from broken tiles.

Sincere thanks to all who worked hard to make the weekend such a success including Mrs Edith Rafter and Mrs Ethel Telford, who took part in the Service and Mrs Noeline Williams, Mrs June Dunne, Mrs Sandra Hayes and Mrs Siobhán Doorley who joined us. Thanks to all those, who provided memorabilia, especially the slides converted by Jane and Eddie McManus for digital viewing. Visit the website at www.stcronansnsrosemount.ie to view images from the weekend.

Congratulations to Nadia Fletcher on winning 2nd prize in the Credit Union Poster Campaign.

Enrolment for September 2014 is underway. Please contact the School Office at 0505 21636 for an Application form. See our website for more information.

Pancake Day – 4th March 2014 to launch our Lenten Project.

Come along and join us for a cuppa and a pancake. Money raised will go to The North Tipperary Service for Children.

A big thank you to George Blackwell who is taking the pupils for hockey during February.

**Cloughjordan No. 1 National School**

Thank you very much to everybody who generously supported our PTA’s “Occupational Surnames Quiz” and congratulations to this year’s winners. The quiz winners were Gladys Shorten, Clonakilty, (1st Prize), Valda Smith, Dartington, England (2nd Prize) and Ruth Buttmer, Clonakilty (3rd Prize) while the following children won prizes for their very artistic entries in the Children’s Competition: Joshua Dann (Preschool), Ela Dann and Noah Dann (Junior and Senior Infants), Katy Williamson (First and Second Class), Sophia Whelan and Tom Larke (Third and Fourth Class) and Olivia Grant and Sarah Armitage (Fifth and Sixth Class).

The PTA is extremely grateful to Pearl and George Whiteford and to the Cloughjordan Social Dancing Committee who are very kindly holding a Social Dance, with music by the Kelly Family, in St. Kieran’s Hall, Cloughjordan on Sat 22nd March, 2014 in aid of the school. (Tickets €10 which includes supper) for the dance are available from the school and in the usual way. All are welcome.

Our Third – Sixth Class pupils had the wonderful privilege of singing with more than 800 other pupils at the Peace Poms Concert in the University of Limerick on Sat 8th February. The choir, accompanied by the magnificent Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland (CBOI) conducted by Gearóid Grant who is internationally recognised as one of Ireland’s and Europe’s leading conductors, sang in the company of Emmanuel Lawler, Tenor, Patricia Tracey one of Ireland’s finest virtuoso violinists, Patrick Martin, piper and The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Northern Ireland Branch to a capacity audience. It was a tremendous event, which we were honoured to participate in. Congratulations to Ms. Cromer and to Mrs. Grace who prepared the children so well and to the children themselves who we were the real stars of the show.

Well done to Jake Adler, Hannah Austin, Hugo Ó hAnluain and Ruarí Ó Brochain, our Under 11 Team, and to Sarah Armitage, Hugh Guest, Ruán Ó hAnluain and Jackie Wakefield, our Under 13 Team, who represented our school so well at the Credit Union Primary School Quiz in Borrisokane at the beginning of February and thank you very much to Borrisokane Credit Union for looking after all the children so well on the night.

We are delighted to welcome Mr. Patsy Farrell back to coach basketball to our middle and senior pupils and Mr. Alan Tynan to coach tag rugby to our senior pupils this term. Both sports are being enjoyed despite the very inclement weather.

It was a pleasure to welcome back four of our past pupils on work experience last month, all from Transition Year in Secondary School. We are very grateful to Rachel Armitage and Kym Hodgins, both in Kilkenny College, and to Emma Cavanagh and Cliona England, both in Borrisokane Community College, for all their help throughout the school while they were with us and wish all four every success as they pursue secondary education. We hope the experience will help the girls to decide on their future career paths.

We were delighted to welcome Dr. Susan Pike, Lecture in Education in St. Patrick’s College of Education, Drumcondra and a group of Third Year B. Ed students to our school some weeks ago. The weather spoiled our outdoor plans for the day but didn’t dampen the enthusiasm as the students visited every classroom and talked with all of our pupils.

Our Fifth and Sixth class pupils greatly enjoyed a visit to “WeCreate Workspace and Fab Lab” in the Eco Village as part of Engineers Week 2014. The children participated in hands-on workshops featuring stencils, milling machines and vinyl cutters and learned about digital fabrication. We are very grateful to Veronica Ryan for the kind invitation and to all involved in this very successful visit.

Enrolment application forms for September 2014 enrolment in Cloughjordan No.1 N.S. are now available from the school. If you would like an application form please contact the school on 0505 42318 or email: principal.cloughjordan.no1.ns@gmail.com
Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

February has been a very busy and extremely educational month here in Kiltallagh with the children enjoying a diverse range of activities incorporating many aspects of the curriculum.

The highlights of our month were:

- Participating in the Peace Proms with the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland in the I.N.E.C.
- Visiting Dr. Maths in Tralee IT as part of Engineers Week
- Making our very own delicious Vegetable Soup-Anraith Glasrai sa rang Gaeilge
- Learning to play Uni-Hoc
- Enjoying ‘Me Mollser’ at Siamsa Tíre- based on the 1916 Lockout
- Designing/painting rocks for our Spring Gardens
- Perfecting our Sliabh Luachra steps in dancing
- Our February School Service to celebrate St. Valentine’s Day
- Beginning Computer Lessons
- Receiving a handwritten reply to our letter from Irish Celebrity –Ryan Tubridy

After such a busy and enjoyable month we are all looking forward to a nice relaxing Mid-Term break.

Sincere thanks to all families, friends, and neighbours of Kiltallagh N.S. who consistently support our school thus ensuring we continue to thrive and prosper.

Míle buíochas

Paula Ní Bhríain

Below is a beautiful meaningful poem ‘Just for Today’ we read at the end of our February School Service that we would like to share with you all.

‘Just for Today’
Just for this morning I won’t wash clothes, instead we will watch your favourite cartoon.
Just for this morning I won’t wash dishes, instead we will color together.
Just for this afternoon I won’t watch my soaps; instead we will go to the park and feed the ducks.
Just for this afternoon you and I will snuggle up on the couch and watch a favourite movie and eat popcorn.
Just for tonight I will let you help me fix dinner and I won’t yell at you for making a mess.
Just for tonight I won’t yell when you splash water all over the bathroom floor.
Just for tonight when I tuck you into bed and we snuggle together to read your favourite story I will hold you a little tighter and a little longer and Thank God for giving you to me to love.

Rathkeale No 2 National School

The recent winter storms have been having an impact on all of us around the country. As I sit down to write these notes the wind is howling around us. Today’s storm was the worst yet with our electricity being knocked off at lunch time. We soon realised that it was going to be difficult to get home as almost all roads into and out of Rathkeale were blocked with fallen trees and power lines. Our bus wasn’t running and many of the parents couldn’t get to Rathkeale to collect their children. Thank you to all the other parents who offered to collect and look after children until the roads reopened again.

We pass on our congratulations to Alison and John Geoghegan on the birth of their daughter, Ailish, a sister for Jack and Rory. Swimming lessons began again in Askeaton Pool on Tuesday 18th February. All pupils have been eagerly looking forward to swimming since returning to school in January.

We are all busy preparing for Limerick’s first Young Scientist Fair. The Fair will take place in LIT on 6th March beginning at 7pm. Our pupils, along with the pupils of three other schools throughout the county, have been preparing experiments to demonstrate on the evening. We are also looking forward to a school visit by the organisers of the event to prepare some further experiments with the pupils. The teachers have both been attending training workshops in Limerick Education Centre in preparation for the event.

Our Open Hour for new pupils will take place on Thursday 13th March from 3-4pm. All prospective pupils and their parents are invited to come along, see the school and meet the staff. Please contact the school for further details on 069 64571.

St. John’s National School, Shannon

The pupils of St. John’s NS had an aeronautical adventure recently as part of Engineering Week. Shannon Aerospace Ltd gave the senior pupils an opportunity to attend a unique day of aviation discovery at the Atlantic Air Venture Aviation Centre in Shannon.

Pupils got the chance to learn about the mechanics of jet engines and the workings of a cockpit. A local engine enthusiast was also on hand to demonstrate his handmade, miniature steam engines. A Ryanair pilot then gave the children a great insight into his working life. The highlight of the day for the children, however, was a chance to virtually fly to New York and back, courtesy of the flight simulators.

In other news, St. John’s NS has been continuing its quiz success. Our team of Arainn Daley, Aaron Duggan, Kyra Collins and Owen Meehan achieved second place in the recent Credit Union Quiz in Shannon. A second, younger team of Tom Butler, Davin Dalton and Seán Kirk also did very well and is a good example of the calibre of quiz team we have coming up through the school. Malcolm Simpson of Shannon Credit Union visited St. John’s to present the children with their prizes.
We witnessed a TY theatrical extravaganza from our TY’s in ty DrAmA - the DreAmers - an evening at Galway Greyhound Racing Track. Good luck or bad luck, everybody in the group thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle and hospitality of the staff in Galway who not only welcomed the group, but treated everybody to a short history of Greyhound Racing in Ireland. A visit to the winning dogs’ enclosure finished an exciting night with some photos to go with the memories.

Sunday began with a visit to Coole Park. Unfortunately no swans were seen but some tales were told. History, literature and nature were all in evidence. And lots and lots of water. Flooding meant the planned walk around the lakes couldn’t take place. There was no dampening students’ spirits however.

Onwards through the Burren they went, stopping for pictures, hiding from the wind and singing on the Bus. A short visit to view storm damaged Lahinch and the students were home in time for tea! An educational, interesting and fun weekend. Many thanks to all involved.

BOYS RUGBY
Boys rugby has continued to do well this term. The U16s were unlucky not to win in their semi-final against St. Clements but will have a replay in 2 weeks. The seniors and U15 and U14 were also in action. The players enjoyed a recent session with Munster Development Officer Noel O’Meara which was really beneficial.

SENIOR BOYS HOCKEY
Congratulations to our senior boys hockey squad who recently beat Ashton School 3-2 in their semi-final in Ashton. They will now play Bandon Grammar in the final on Thursday 13th March in Garryduff, Cork at 2pm. David Cardy and Aaron Duffy were the scorers in a closely fought semi-final encounter.

VILLIERS SKI TRIP
Our annual ski trip took place during the mid-term under the leadership of Mr. Sutton. 40 students from forms 2,4 and 5 are currently taking on the slopes in Folgaria, Italy.

NEWS FROM THE VILLIERS SANCTUARY
Mid-term is upon us and the mocks are a thing of the past, congratulations to all who have reached this point, somewhat unscathed, so far. A well-earned rest for all teachers over the next week, however, there is the small matter of the pile of exam papers to be corrected! All the same it is a time to draw breath and recharge so enjoy one and all.

The topic of conversation in the sanctuary recently has been about the issue of vulnerability. An interesting question to ask is ‘what is vulnerability and when do we feel most vulnerable?’ In our modern society we spend so much time in front of screens that there is a danger that we have added to our vulnerability. There is very little responsibility attached to typing words onto a nameless screen, it won’t answer back and has no feelings. But what happens when we interact with another person? Do we continue to feel a lack of responsibility for what we say and has it made us more vulnerable in our interaction? After all, to open oneself up to another, to reach out and initiate contact can be a very scary place. We could be ignored or rebuked therefore vulnerability contains a certain amount of emotional exposure. Where then does this leave us when we consider the command to love our neighbour as our self? Well I believe that it takes a lot of courage to follow this command but then to be alive is to be vulnerable. Being vulnerable is not a choice that we make, the choice lies in how we respond when we are at our most vulnerable.
The last of a series of 5 articles by Rev Gary Paulsen, Dean of Killaloe

Over the last few issues of Newslink we have been looking at Benedict and some of his rules and teachings concerning monastic life and how we can apply it in our own context. Here I do a little recap, and I also want to add something about community as we come to the end of this short series.

**RECAP**

Living in the presence of God means that I constantly let God look into the innermost chambers of my heart, that I bare all before God - all my thoughts and feelings - so that God may ask me how much I am attached to myself, and how ready I am to surrender myself to God. Therefore living in the presence of God, according to Benedict, shapes all the realms of our human life, whether it is prayer, work, fellowship, relationship with other people, our interaction with creation and so on.

Benedict in his rule says there is a link between work and prayer and it is only those who have become reconciled with themselves, with their own weaknesses, faults, their needs and desires, their ambitions and so on, who will start leading peaceful lives.

A further element of Benedictine life is order. The order of the days that brings clear structure into the course of daily life, and which then divides the day into times of prayer, work, silence, speech, solitude and so on.

**COMMUNITY & SMALL THINGS**

There have been many revivalist movements in the church throughout history. There are many stories of instant conversion and people filled with the spirit who give themselves to Christ and never look back. We see this in scripture where Saul had a revelation that changed his life forever. It changed his identity and he even changed his name to Paul. So instant change does happen and is possible.

The monastic rule was written to give guidelines to the monks in how to live in community. Benedict more realistically assumes that the progress to holiness is gradual. And that those who join together as a church community do so in order to serve the Lord better, yet are still weak and sinful people. Therefore we need the support of each other and the influence of habit and discipline.

In giving direction in how people can live together Benedict says we need to respect each other and not seek to penetrate the mystery of the other. It is so human, isn’t it, to want to figure out the other person, to identify them and place them in a box with a label, so that we feel we now know the other. However bearing with one another is essential to a genuine community. This does not mean that we should swallow everything thrown at us - everything needs discernment. Benedict understood that at times there were problems which required intervention.

He said in community living we are challenged by each others needs and we must attend to them, instead of just withdrawing into our own desires and needs. It is so easy even in parish situations just to be concerned about our own church’s needs. Yet we are a church within a community with people of other faiths, and people of no faith. Our humanity is what is common to all of us and how we connect to one another in our humanity is so important. Jesus valued our human state so much that he was willing to take on our form and live among us and be one of us. Benedict says in opening up ourselves to others, we will also find ourselves.

One of the things that his followers had to learn was that the way to heaven was not an exciting adventure but a humdrum journey. Cardinal Hume says, ‘Community life is made up of a lot of small things. It is the small courtesies that matter’. (Searching for God)

**NEW DIRECTION**

What is required from every Christian is a complete reorientation of life, so that it is longer self-centred but God centred. What is important to grasp is that such a total reversal of values is rarely achieved in a moment, and does not of itself imply any break with one’s former way of life. As this may be the very sphere in which you are to serve God.
Thomas Merton speaks of 'a mysterious awakening to the fact that where we are is where we actually belong.' Monica Furlong says, 'The Christian life can be done on the spot.' Where we are is, for the moment, where God requires us to be.

Our relationships enrich us, and the more we build and nurture those relationships we are changed by them. We are firstly human before we are Anglican, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, black, white, Asian and all other labels. All of us ARE made in God's image and our diversity can only enrich us.

The apartheid between Roman and Protestant churches needs to be abolished within our community life. I was in the village a few days ago and a lady who spoke to me said she was not from 'my persuasion' - by which I assumed she meant she was not Anglican. I then said to her I am sure we will not go the hell if we had a cup of tea together. And by the way, I said, Jesus was neither Roman nor Anglican but a Jew.

St Benedict's way is not the only way to heaven, but it is a way that is firmly grounded in scripture and in common sense.

CONCLUSION

I trust that these teachings on Benedict and his rule will help us live a better Christian life. Not only as individuals, but that we realise that we need each other as a community. That being part of a community is a support structure for us as Christians. For we are all weak and sinful and it helps to know that we struggle together. We are on a journey in becoming and growing in holiness and being transformed more into what God requires from us.

So every blessing as we go into the Lenten season of reflection and pray that this Easter we can truly celebrate the light of Christ in our lives as Christ illuminates the way we should be travelling.

St. Patrick wrote in the 5th Century

I am, then, first of all, countryfied, an exile, evidently unlearned, one who is not able to see into the future, but I know for certain, that before I was humbled I was like a stone lying in deep mire, and he that is mighty came and in his mercy raised me up and, indeed, lifted me high up and placed me on top of the wall. And from there I ought to shout out in gratitude to the Lord for his great favours in this world and for ever, that the mind of man cannot measure.

St Patrick, from his Confession

I am Patrick, yes a sinner and indeed untaught; yet I am established here in Ireland where I profess myself bishop. I am certain in my heart that "all that I am" I have received from God. So I live among barbarous tribes, a stranger and exile for the love of God. … If I have any worth, it is to live my life for God so as to teach these peoples; even though some of them still look down on me.

St Patrick's Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus

"No, not the steeple, the roof or the organ – it's for the Rector’s post – Christmas – pre – Easter recuperation holiday-break"
Spring in Your Garden
by Peter White

When 'spring has sprung and the grass is riz', do you feel delight at the appearance of the season's new growth or dread at the work you will now have to do in the garden?

Before you start, plan. What took too much of your time last year? Think about reducing or eliminating it this year. What didn't turn out as you hoped last year? Think about changing it this year. In a garden, as in life, if you go on doing what you have always done you will go on getting what you have always got. And we are often distracted by less important things and neglect the more important things.

So what's most important in your garden? Ask not what you should be doing in your garden, but what your garden should be doing for you (sorry, JFK!). Is it to show off the house to passers-by? For outdoor relaxation and entertainment? For children to play in? To provide fruit and vegetables for the house? All these would be different gardens. And if you haven't decided which you want you are not likely to get it. Some of these functions can be combined, but not all. It's easiest to have a separate 'room' in the garden for each function.

Many people, in their innocence, lay their whole garden down to grass in the hope of reducing labour, and then find themselves having to cut it thirty times a year. Lawns need more hours' work per square meter per year than any other type of garden! Flower borders need less labour and trees and shrubs need less again. If labour saving matters to you, think about reducing your grass area: it is also good for the environment as it saves lawnmower fuel.

You could also be kinder to the environment by using less water, chemicals and plastics. We don't own the Earth; we only borrow it from our descendants. It's not our job to consume all the Earth's resources before the next generation gets them.

After you have decided what changes you want, it's time to act. The fastest way to improve the look of a garden is to cut the grass if the conditions allow, but cut it higher when it is growing slowly, especially in spring, autumn and in summer droughts. Next trim the lawn edges and sweep the paths.

Then tidy the flower beds. Cut back the dead tops of herbaceous plants, and dig up divide and replant any that have become tired. Remove weeds, making sure to dig up any tap-roots of dandelions. Prune roses; in cold areas leave it until the hardest frosts are over. Prune shrubs whenever they finish flowering: if new stems are growing up from the ground cut out some of the oldest, thickest ones at ground level to make room for them. Cut back overlong stems to where new growth is coming out.

Dig over ground for vegetables only when the soil is too dry to stick to your boots. Cover some soil with plastic cloches to warm it so sown or planted crops will grow faster. Sow leafy crops in seed-trays or modules and grow them on indoors or in a greenhouse, and you will have growing plants to put out instead of seeds when the weather permits. The resulting crop will be ready to eat much sooner.

Whatever kind of garden you have, enjoy the fruits of your labour!
The Fingerprint of God

Michael Hanna, Birr Group of Parishes

An interesting musical “first” will take place in St Brendan’s Church of Ireland church Birr at 7.30pm on Sunday 6th April next. A choir assembled for the event will perform the Irish premier of a cantata called The Fingerprint of God written by my cousins Ruth Beasley (music) and Audrey Francis (words). Ruth and Audrey both worked as missionaries and both met their Australian husbands in far-flung lands – Ruth meeting John Beasley in Papua New Guinea and Audrey meeting Max Francis in the Ivory Coast. After Papua New Guinea, Ruth and John went to live in Kuranda, North Queensland, where they involved themselves in environmental issues and John sculpted in wood and stone. Ruth taught music and began writing cantatas for a community choir. Meanwhile Audrey and Max lived with their two daughters in Perth and Audrey became deeply involved in the Uniting Church, recently becoming an Accredited Lay Preacher. Audrey’s flair for liturgy and poetry and Ruth’s for music were put to good use and there developed a late flowering of a long-standing sibling partnership.

Salters Sterling and I have visited both Ruth and Audrey on two occasions five years apart, most recently in February/March 2013. Sadly John died between our two visits and Ruth must now adapt to life without him. The idea of performing “The Fingerprint of God” in Ireland developed wings during our recent visit to Ruth’s wonderful house built by John with his own hands and to his own design. It tells the story of the Creation and Redemption in a simple and straightforward way through soloists and choir and a narrative storyline spoken between arias and choruses. It is a wonderful introduction to understanding how the great choral masterpieces of the same timeless story are put together. The music is both rhythmic and melodious and written to be accessible to amateur choirs and audiences alike. While it has had several outings in North Queensland, it has never been performed in Ireland before. Ruth and Audrey are coming to Birr for the “Irish Premier” on Passion Sunday 6th. It promises to be a memorable occasion. If anyone wishes to come, just turn up on the night or drop me an email at Michael.hanna4@gmail.com and I will be sure to remind you and provide directions. There will be a small entrance charge to defray costs and make a contribution to a local charity.

Performing The Fingerprint of God at Mareeba, North Queensland

Noye’s Fludde at St Mary’s Cathedral

As readers from last month will know, St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick will be the venue for six performances of Britten’s opera Noye’s Fludde at the end of March. This is a piece written specially to involve many young people, and it is based on the familiar story of Noah’s Ark.

Details of the performances are as follows:

Friday 28th March, 7.30pm
Saturday 29th March, 2.30pm & 7.30pm
Sunday 30th March, 2.30pm
Monday 31st March, 10am (schools performance)
Tuesday 1st April, 10am (schools performance)

Tickets, priced at €15 (front seats) and €10, with concessions at €8 and children at €5, are available from the University Concert Hall (UCH) box office. A small number of tickets will also be available at St Mary’s Cathedral if you are in the cathedral or passing by.

TICKET BOOKING
061 331 549 or on-line: www.uch.ie/other_venues
What about the "Under Twelves"?

Rev. Jane Galbraith writes about Children's Ministry

Considering the census figures got me thinking about the 'under twelves'. Jesus took the children in His arms, put His hand on them, and blessed them. There was no question of how the disciples were to treat them. The children were to move into the center of the adults, to come closer to God to be blessed.

As soon as children are baptized they are members and full participants in the church's life of prayer, witness, and service. So we are called to receive, nurture and treasure each child as a gift from God; not only to proclaim the Gospel to children in the normal way but in ways that empower them to receive and respond to God's love. The implications are challenging giving rise to energizing questions:

• Do we give high priority, indeed any priority, to the quality of planning for children's spiritual nurture?

• What about help for the preparation and support of those who minister with them?

• How would the Sunday school teacher take to being considered the children's minister? ... because that is what the church expects them to be!

• How does the church community fulfill the 'We will support them' of our Baptismal Promises?

• How can we, as members and full participants in the church's common life of prayer, witness and service draw children to the centre?

• Are we concerned to join with groups such as M.U. who advocate for the integrity of childhood and the dignity of children in religious, civic and political structures?

A way into these questions is through the portal of the great greeting the community offers the new child member. ' We will support them' means that we try ensure that we will appreciate children's abilities and readiness to bear witness to Jesus wherever they may be and we include them as full participants in church life. It means too that we will eagerly receive children's gifts as signs of the life of the kingdom in our midst.

Imagine what the church would look like if children took their place in the life, worship and governance of the Church! If for example they had an influence in the liturgy, or, that vestry meetings considered child-proofing their decisions. Crazy! Think on this ...Children have a unique ministry to adults! They are called into the ministry of questioning. "Why do we do this?" "Is that fair?" - a prophetic ministry in which they naturally cry out for justice in their schools, in sport, at home, at church, and in their neighbourhoods. They naturally participate with adults in hearing and speaking the Word of God into the issues of the day.

But children can't just be dropped into the worship experience without good preparation. Adequate preparation is key in the church family.

We have Sunday schools in many churches today doing a wonderful job in amazing ways. However the system was designed to cope with The Industrial Revolution. Today, we are in the midst of another revolution, in which our children are fast out-running their parents, carers and Sunday school teachers. This is no-one's fault and is a just one element of a much bigger church crunch, the proof of which must be evident to all of us.

Society is not (yet) totally secularized but Christians of all shades are marginalized to a degree never seen before. Church is just one of many communities. Mission happens in a contested environment today. All this has an effect on children: They don't come to church as much. There is no Sunday commitment. When they do come, children frequently don't know Bible stories, past Noah, David and Goliath and the Nativity stories.

Children today are growing up in the Electronic Age. They are heavily influenced by the internet and all electronic gadgets. They are addicted to perpetual adaptation. They are less affected by truth narratives of any sort. They are less relationally integrated. There are pros and cons to all these factors. Expecting loyal and loving Sunday school teachers to 'keep up' without solid support, encouragement and training is placing them in an increasingly difficult situation.

The good news for the Good News is that help is available through the Children's Ministry Network. What we need to do first of all, is get ourselves together to harness and tailor our needs, so that we can make best use of the Network.

If you think you would like to share in this cutting-edge ministry ... Rev Jane Galbraith (085-1450804, galbraithjane@gmail.com) is waiting for your call!
Adare Church Flood

See the parish notes on page 27

Killaloe Diocese

Killaloe & Stradbally Union of Parishes

Killaloe, Castleconnell, Clonlara, Mountshannon and Tuamgraney.

Rector & Dean: The Very Rev. Gary Paulsen
The Deanery, Abbey Road, Killaloe, Co. Clare
Tel: 061-376 687
Mob: 085-764 0533
Email: abbeydean2@gmail.com

Rev. Lucy Green
Tel: 062-79941 Mob: 087 667 0425
Email: lucygreen06ie@yahoo.co.uk

The parish is going at its pace and finding a rhythm with a new incumbent, and it does take time to build and nurture new relationships. Prayer happens now each week day in the Cathedral. Lucy Green has been very faithful in keeping this going in the Cathedral. This is to highlight the fact that the Cathedral is essentially a place of worship.

The weather is a very topical subject in Ireland but it has been with good reason recently with storms battering the island and damage to people’s homes and flooding everywhere. There have been tiles off most of the churches in these parishes and water in every building including the deanery.

This has highlighted the care of buildings and the costs to parishioners in maintaining them. There is serious consideration over what to do with Clonlara Church where there have been no services held for a while now. It is subject to vandalism as well as leaks, damp, electrical problems. There is literally one parishioner left at this church.

TUAMGRANEY CHURCH

... has the record of being the oldest church in Ireland as a place of continuous worship. However this is not done by a local congregation but rather with neighbours Mountshannon closing its doors one Sunday a month and going to worship in this building. The congregation of Mountshannon do feel burdened by this structure and do recognise its historical significance. However the reality is that there is no local congregation in situ. Repairs need to be done again because of leaks and it’s estimated to be around €8 000.

East Clare Heritage uses the foyer area of Tuamgraney Church for its activities of tourism and information, but for a token amount. However insurance and other maintenance costs are borne by the parish. Those who contribute at Mountshannon are retired or part timers who have to keep Mountshannon going as well which has its own structural problems that need to be addressed. Therefore, it is being considered if we should just shut the doors of Tuamgraney or see if someone is willing to use the building. It will be sad but buildings are there for worshipping communities and if there is no worshipping community it is a historic building with no purpose any longer for a small church. It is regrettable that there is not another financial mechanism within the greater Church of Ireland to keep it going because of its unique historic significance. We will take this next year to ponder, consider and explore our options regarding the future of Tuamgraney church.

BRIAN BORU 1000 ANNIVERSARY

This year is the anniversary of the death of Brian Boru 1000 years ago and a number of events are being planned for Killaloe and Ballina for 2014. This will be a great way to get the communities divided by the Shannon River to celebrate our common life. The launch of the festival was held on 4th February at the Lakeside hotel. St Flannan’s Cathedral forms a great part of the history of this area and it is significant community symbol as well as a place of worship. We hope to play our role as well in this year of events within the community.
PASTORAL

We have a number of people who have been laid low by falls or illness over the last month. Beatrice Fletcher, who is nearing her 101st birthday, suffered a broken hip in a fall, but is recovering well in Tullamore Hospital. Betty Delahunt, our GFS leader and faithful member of nearly everything in our parishes and diocese, also has a broken hip, and is recovering at home. Jackie Laurie is seriously ill in hospital, and we also remember her sister, Pat Alexander, and all her family. Derek Kenny is still in the Nursing Home in Borrisokane, and we pray for him, for Maureen, and all the family. Rosemary Fryday’s mother is seriously ill; and we keep them in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. And we keep Sam Glendenning, whose brother passed away recently, in our prayers as well.

STORM DAMAGE

As the storms hit along the coasts in the weeks since Christmas, we in the Midlands thought we’d escaped the worst of it. But on Wednesday, 12th February, the wind storm that struck was among the worst in living memory. Birr Castle Demesne lost some 30 trees, among them the giant poplar which was in contention for European Tree of the Year. Several trees fell across the road in front of Lockeen Church, and many parishioners lost trees, slates, and outhouses. WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service this year has been compiled by Christian women of Egypt, and in Birr this will be held on Thursday, 6th March at 7:30 pm in the Methodist Church. The Revd Rosemary Lindsay will be the speaker and members from the three churches will be taking part. All are welcome.

BEST WISHES AND CONGRATULATIONS

There have been several reasons for people to celebrate over the past few months! Congratulations to Nell Hanbury and Michael Parsons, who were married in a civil ceremony in February prior to a blessing service to take place later; and to Claire Donald and Roy Gill, to Lisa Coburn and Kevin Sheppard, and to Gwen Abbott and Nigel Culbert who have announced their engagements. Congratulations also to Alan Jackson and his partner Lucinda on the birth of a baby girl, bringing an even bigger smile to the faces of proud grandparents, Arthur and Barbara Jackson! Our prayerful good wishes are with all these people as they plan their futures.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Midsummer Day, Saturday June 21st, Fancroft Mill, Roscrea will be the venue for a fundraising concert towards the cost of restoring the three stained-glass windows in Lockeen Church. Two are by Joshua Clarke (1889–1931), father of the more famous Harry Clarke. More information later, or from Irene Sweeney at 0505-31484 or millgardens@gmail.com.

Roscrea Group of Parishes
Roscrea, Bourney, Corbally and Kyle
Vacant
Priest in Charge: Ven. Wayne Carney
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly.
Tel: 057 – 9120021 Mob: 087 – 7865234
Email: mapleire@eircom.net

SCHOOL AT 40!

A very Happy Birthday to St. Cronan’s N.S. Various celebrations dominated the occasion, culminating in an impressive Service of Thanksgiving in St. Cronan’s Church which was linked with the Sunday theme of Candlemas. All those participating had connections with the School over the past four decades. Four offertory processions brought gifts symbolising all aspects of school life, each accompanied by ten candles carried by ten former students, representing the forty years of school life. Current pupils played an active role singing ten different hymns and the School Creed was recited. Current pupils sang an active role in the service, representing the forty years of school life. Current pupils played an active role singing ten different hymns and the School Creed was recited. Current pupils played an active role singing ten different hymns and the School Creed was recited.

The service was conducted by Adrian Hewson, a past pupil, who also gave the address. Amongst those assisting were past pupils Nuala Dudley from Raphoe Diocese and Jason Patterson, Corbally. The lessons were read by Mike Pearson, Chairman of the Board of Management and Lynn Atkinson representing the Parents’ Association. It was a pleasure to have our Bishop, as Patron of the School with us to pronounce the Blessing. Also present in robes and participating in the Service were the Archdeacon of Killaloe, the Rector of Clontarf, Rev. Lesley Robinson, the Rector of Blessington, Rev. Leonard Ruddock, Dom Lawrence Walsh, Mount St. Joseph’s Abbey, Fr. Tom Corbett P.P., Rev. Brian Griffin, Methodist Minister and Rev. Tom Kingston, former Methodist Minister. The organists for the occasion were Marjorie McCorduck and Jennifer Hogan (teacher) to whom we say thank you.

Almost 300 people were present including Noel Coonan TD and former Minister Michael Smith, together with local civic and
educational representatives. It was a joy to see so many former teachers present with Edith Rafter, Ethel Telford, Ann Powell and Jane McManus all participating in the service; while Noeline Williams and June Dunne were both present, they were ably represented by their grandchildren illustrating the continuity of school life over the decades. Many former pupils also had a big ‘welcome’ for Sandra Hayes.

Overall a memorable and enjoyable and perhaps exhausting weekend! Thank you to all concerned in the organisation of this memorable occasion. (also see School Notes)

SICK LIST

Our thoughts and prayers are with these people and their families. Six parishioners in six different hospitals since our last Notes. We look forward to welcoming Nevin Alton home from Tullamore after a hip replacement and hope he has a speedy period of convalescence. We give thanks for some signs of improvement in Eddie Clare’s condition in The Mater Hospital following his severe accident. At the time of writing Wilfred Moloney is awaiting test results in Limerick and we wish him well, while Peter Read is now in Bushy Park Nursing Home, Borrisokane after a spell in Portlaoise Hospital and George Stanley returns to Clover Lodge after a long spell in Nenagh. Happily little Aaron Wallace is home after a tonsil operation in Mullingar. Finally all our friends are delighted to learn that Edith Rafter’s fall was not too serious and her cheerful disposition will speed up her recovery. Best wishes to all.

BEREAVEMENT

It was with regret we heard of the death of Ruth Stanley, while a Shinrone parishioner, she was a member of a long established Roscrea family and former parishioner. Burial took place in St. Cronan’s Church grounds following services in Shinrone. We extend our sympathy to her family, and Myra Stanley, her sister-in-law in Roscrea Parish who lost another sister-in-law, Mrs Wellwood in Cronan’s Church grounds following services in Shinrone. We extend our sympathies to the Roscrea parish and former parishioner. Burial took place in St. Cronan’s Church, Abbey Street, where our parish was engaged in parochial life on a daily basis.

ST. CRONAN’S YOUTH CLUB, ROSCREE

St. Cronan’s Youth Club meet monthly in the Methodist Hall, Roscrea and all secondary school students are welcome. We run a varied programme to interest all, girls and boys. On average, we have twenty eight attending on a regular basis.

Last October, twenty eight teenagers and five leaders travelled by bus to Spanish Point. We were supplied with wet suits and surf boards and spent three hours in warm sunshine surfing with Jono Griffin from the Methodist Youth Ministry Surf Project. This was a very successful event and we promised to return again.

Last November, we organised a fun night in the hall and again thirty teenagers enjoyed a fashion show with outfits designed from old newspapers, egg cartons, tin foil and lots of sellotape!

December was our largest attendance when we had our Christmas Party. Each family supplied either a main dish or desert which went down a treat.

January we meet at the cinema in Nenagh with Supermacs after.

We meet again on 22nd February from 7.30 – 9.30 pm. We hope to organise a fundraiser cabaret night to raise funds for our Youth Club and to subsidise two events coming up, paintballing and karting in April and surfing after the Junior and Leaving Cert exams are over.

We would like to thank Roscrea Group of Parishes and North Tipperary Methodist Circuit for their generous donations to the Youth Club. These donations are greatly appreciated by all involved in the Youth Club.

Nenagh Union of Parishes

Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killodiernan.

Rector: Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke


Tel: 067 32598 (answer phone only) Mob: 085-147 4792

Email: canonmarie@me.com

Thank heavens for the 4½ week gap between Candlemas at the end of Epiphany and Ash Wednesday this year - time to draw breath and prepare for Lent! There was one year not so along ago when we celebrated Candlemas, had a 48 hour break on the Monday and Tuesday and then lurched straight into Ash Wednesday - manic! This all happens of course because, like our Jewish and Muslim friends, the Christian churches continue to calculate their liturgical seasons according to the lunar calendar, and whatever about complaints to the effect that it would all be much simpler and more convenient, especially for the economic world, if the date of Easter was fixed, like that for Christmas, nevertheless there is something very valuable in retaining the lunar calendar - it reminds us that we are human creatures on a planet in a galaxy and we time everything by the rotation of both the sun and the moon.

So we have been preparing for Lent, and are ready to join in the Diocesan Lenten Sacred Reading sessions, which for us will be on Wednesdays in Lent, followed by Night Prayer and refreshments. We shall be supporting Christian Aid Ireland as our Lent charity this year, both in the school and in the parish.

Junior Choir sang ‘I have decided to follow Jesus’ at our February Family Worship, which was led by GFS (see page 7). Toddlers enjoyed making sheep whilst we explored the implications of our taking on the role of being Good Shepherds to those in need around us. Boys’ Brigade has also been very active this month (see page 7). And our main choir has begun practising for the Come and Sing Stainer’s Crucifixion to be held in April in St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick. Our confirmation classes have begun, and we welcome Anna-Mae, Maruna and Seren as they prepare to own for themselves the promises made on their behalf at baptism.

Both the Rector and Joc Sanders attended the Tripartite Conference on Human Sexuality in the context of Christian belief in Claremorris on 15 February, and both were Facilitators in the table discussions. There is a report on this Conference on page 5.

I know it will seem disgustingly early to mention Christmas, but we must! Plans are underway to hold a Christmas Tree Festival in St Mary’s in Nenagh in the week beginning Saturday 13th December. These Festivals are growing in popularity so we
thought we’d better get in early!  (If you’ve never been to one before, think ‘Flower Festival’ and then substitute ‘Christmas Trees’ for ‘Flowers’!).  We hope that our Christmas Tree Festival will enable a great celebration of all the good things that come with being a member of the worldwide Christian family.  Needless to say, there will be plenty more publicity!

**Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes**

*Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry*

Rector: Canon Stephen Neill
Modreeny Rectory, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.
Tel/Fax: 0505 – 42183 Mob: 087 – 2328172
Email: stephen.neill@gmail.com
Parish website: www.modreeny.com
Stephen’s blog: www.paddyanglican.com

**BAPTISM**

Welcome to Harry Christopher Williams, son of Bryan Williams & Maria Butler of Railway View, Cloughjordan. Harry was baptised on Sunday 19th January in St. Kieran’s Church, Cloughjordan. 4 generations were represented at the service with Harry’s parents, grandparents and great grandmother all present on the day.

![June Whelan (Granny) Bryan with Harry and Carol Talbot (Great Granny)](image1)

**CONFIRMATION 2014**

Classes will have commenced by the time these notes are published. At least 11 young people from our parish are in preparation for Confirmation on the 1st June and there are also others from the parish being confirmed at boarding school. We wish all the candidates every blessing in this important step in their lives.

**WEDDING BELLS**

Best wishes to Donald McLean of Borrisokane parish and Anita Toohey of Borrisokane who are to be married in Shinrone on Saturday 15th March.

![Maria, Bryan and baby Harry](image2)

Best wishes to Emma Whiteford from Cloughjordan & Mark Crawford from Roscrea who are to be wed on Saturday 5th April in Clifden, Co. Galway.

We wish both couples every blessing and happiness in their lives together.

**MONEYGALL HALL TIMBER AUCTION**

Thanks to all those who supported the recent Timber, Fuel & Fodder Auction in Moneygall on a very wet Saturday in January. The event was a fundraiser for the refurbishment of our parochial hall in Moneygall. In excess of €5,500 was raised through sales and donations. Well done to John Chadwick and his team who did such a great job, not only on the day but also in cutting timber and asking for donations towards the auction. There was a very generous response which reflects the community spirit in the area. In light of recent storms there may well be another auction on the horizon!

**SCHOOL DANCE:**

Many thanks to the Cloughjordan Dance Club and in particular George & Pearl Whiteford for facilitating another fundraising dance for the parish school. It is to be held on the evening of Saturday 22nd March in St. Kieran’s Hall, Cloughjordan. If anyone is interested in tickets please contact any of the school families who are all selling tickets or come along on the night. It is always a popular venue and you are guaranteed a great night of dance and a lovely supper included in the ticket cost. (More details in the School notes).

**MOTHERS UNION CLOSING SERVICE & LUNCH:**

Tuesday 25th March in Borrisnafarney at 11.30am (Time to be confirmed) followed by lunch afterwards.

**POKER CLASSIC**

Aussie Dennison is once again running his Poker Classic in Aid of Borrisokane Parish on Friday 28th March in Nenagh Golf Club - Tickets from Aussie on 067-27166

**LENT**

During Lent we will be following the Diocesan ‘Holy Reading’ schedule and reflecting on the appointed passages at our midweek gatherings. Details on parish website (www.modreeny.com) and to be announced in churches.

**Shinrone Group of Parishes**

*Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin*

Rector: Canon Michael Johnston
St. Mary’s Rectory, Church Road, Shinrone, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 0505-47164 Mob: 086-6086567
Email: shinrone@killaloe.anglican.org
Parish Website: shinrone.blogspot.ie

**THANKS**

The Rector would like to sincerely thank all those from the parish and beyond who have sent congratulations on his appointment as Canon and especially to those who attended the service in St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick. He very much appreciated all the good wishes.

**MOTHERS’ UNION DINNER**

The annual MU dinner was held at the Parker’s Restaurant in Riverstown. A large number of members and friends attended and enjoyed a fabulous three course meal. Many thanks to all those involved in the organisation of another wonderful outing.

**FUNDRAISING PLAY**

A play called ‘Drinking Habits’ to help raise funds for the redecoration of St Mary’s, Shinrone will take place on Saturday 5 April at 7.30pm and Sunday 6 April at 7.00pm in Shinrone Community Hall. It will be performed by members from Lorrha drama group and Shinrone residents. The play is a very funny farce and will make a fantastic evening’s entertainment. Do come along for an enjoyable night and help raise funds for the much needed painting of the church.
CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Drs Derek and Amanda Grant who recently graduated from the University of Lincoln in England where they were awarded Doctorates in Educational Research and Development. We also wish Amanda well in her new role as District School Inspector with the Department of Education and Skills. Derek is the son of William and Florence Grant of Dunkerrin parish

CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to all the family and friends of Ruth Stanley of Rathcahill, Shinrone who passed away on 7 February. Her very well attended funeral took place on Sunday 9 February with burial in St Cronan’s Graveyard, Roscrea. Donations in lieu of flowers if desired for MRH Oncology Unit and Birr Community Nursing Unit, c/o Rev Canon Michael Johnston. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh

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

Rector: Rev. Chancellor Robert Charles Hanna

The Rectory, Bindon Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Tel: 065 – 6820109 Mob: 086 2167040

Email: bobhanna@eircom.net

Parish website: www.churchofirelandclare.com

LENT

During the six weeks of Lent the Rector proposes to lead Wednesday Evening sessions at 7.30pm on the subject of Prayer.... Contemplative prayer: Christian Meditation. These will be based on the teaching of the great modern Benedictine writer and retreat leader, the late John Main.

One quote might suffice to justify this theme for a reflective and penitential time like Lent. It comes from the ancient spiritual writer Origen:

"We do not pray, to get benefits from God but to become like God. Just praying itself is good. It calms the mind, reduces sin and promotes good deeds."

It is hoped to have a few folk from outside our immediate community to share in the fellowship.

(We note with interest and gratitude the series of articles by Dean Gary Paulsen on Benedictine prayer life.)

ST. PATRICK’S TIDE

A reminder of the joint service in Drumcliffe on Sunday 16th March, 11.30 am to mark the Feast of St Patrick, when Bishop Trevor joins us.

STORMS

On going to press assessments are still being made of any damage to Church buildings from the sustained stormy weather. Drumcliffe (Ennis) roof lost a number of slates, creating a significant hole in the main roof. Also slates lost in the tower roof suggest expense because of inaccessible height.

Mercifully, Christ Church Spanish Point’s steeple, due hopefully to be repaired this year following decay in its steel-rimmed base, survived the battering on the coast. High hopes are entertained of a Heritage grant towards the restoration work by Keating Bros., and we are grateful to Mrs Judith Ironside for spearheading a local plan to fundraise towards the project.

FINANCE

One item for the forthcoming AGM in Drumcliffe Union is the deficit showing in the end of year Accounts, causing the Select Vestry to break into the Reserves to cover expenses. This alarming scenario concentrates the mind and a primary act by the vestry is to immediately set up a budget programme for the year 2014.

CHILD SAFETY

Nigel West’s leadership in the Safeguarding programme is much appreciated. It is good to have an offer of another training evening for parishioners and Safety Panel members. We encourage as many members as possible to avail of this experience so as to build up our common regard for Child safety and the image of the Group parishes regarding this subject.

BOOK FESTIVAL

We in St Columba’s find ourselves linked with the now highly successful Ennis Book Festival. On Saturday March 10th (2.30-3.30pm) our premises host “World War 1 –How to research ancestors”. Behind this activity is the Clare Roots Society and the Clare World War Memorial Committee.

BIG 80

Jimmy Murphy returned to his erstwhile town of Shannon (from the new abode of he and Frances (and their several cats!) near Labasheeda) to celebrate his 80th birthday. They were joined by friends including those from the world of Chartered Accountancy and Animal Welfare. Congratulation and blessings to a lovely man who shares fully his wife’s devotion to caring for Clare’s animals - of every sort. For the first time Jimmy took a break this Christmas from his role of Santa at Kilnasoolagh Parish’s Annual Dinner.

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Mobile – Philip 087 6874775

Philip@jjryanundertakers.com – www.jjryanundertakers.com
Here's hoping for better drier weather to replace the cold, wet and windy experiences of the past number of weeks. We in this part of the Diocese have experienced the trauma of flood water and hope and pray that improved conditions will be with us soon.

ST. MARY’S CATHEDRAL LIMERICK

Sunday 19th January was a special day for myself as rector of our extended parishes and all concerned for the preparations for the special service of Choral Evensong and Bishop Trevor conferring me as Canon of Iniscattery. Many thanks to all my friends who joined my contingent of fifteen parishioners and made this occasion so special.

WEEK OF PRAYER JANUARY 2014

The week of prayer for Christian Unity was recognised in this part of the Diocese with a service held in The Carmelite Sisters Monastery in Loughrea on Tuesday 21st, which was attended by Bishop Kirby and the address was given by Canon George Flynn. On Friday 24th Holy Trinity hosted a United Service at which Fr. John Garvey - Ballinasloe, Fr Michael Finneran - Clontuskert, Fr Bernie Costelloe and Ms Niamh Brennan - fellow Chaplains to Portiuncula Hospital, attended and supported this service along with many from the community and parishioners bringing together a congregation of over forty. This was a very well received service and refreshments were enjoyed in the rectory following the service.

AUGHRIM MOTHERS’ UNION

Aughrim Mothers’ union were treated to an Art display by Jackie Eastwood in January. Jackie discussed technical issues with light and dark plus perspective while completing a beautiful seascape which she later framed and presented to Canon George to celebrate his elevation to Canon.

ARDRAHAN

The first Sunday in February was a historical day when Samuel and Sara Jacob the second born twins of Deepu and Jilu Jacob and siblings to Elizabeth were received into the World wide Christian Church. This family hail from India and have been parishioners in Ardrahan for a number of years. A large number of parishioners gave great support to the family with our confirmation candidates and some parishioners assisting the rector at different stages of the sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion.

CONFIRMATION

Advance notice to let you know that Bishop Trevor will confirm a number of young people in Ardrahan on Sunday 6th April. The service will commence at 11.00 a.m. Further details later. We remember, James Beazley, Charlotte Dowzard, Erica Shiels, Hugh McGovern and Georgia Summerville and their families as they prepare for this special stage of their Christian journey.

GLEBE SCHOOL AUGHRIM

To continue her support in our extended Parish Jackie followed her recent MU evening spending some time with our school children who together completed a collage depicting Egypt that will be included in the forthcoming World Day of Prayer exhibition.

FAMILY SERVICES 2014

The next Family Service will be on Sunday, 30th March, Ballinasloe 11.00 a.m. followed by Mother’s Day lunch in the Rectory.

LENTEN SERVICES

Services this year will incorporate the Bishop’s Lenten project and full details of the dates and venues of services etc can be found on our website

Clonfert Group of Parishes

Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna

The Rev. Alan Nevin

Priest in charge: Very Rev. Patrick L. Towers

Tel: (090) 9684547. Mob: (086) 8140649

Email: towers@iol.ie

PORTUMNA

The Church has been made more accessible with the availability of a Wheelchair Ramp which can be set up in seconds when needed. I think this is going to be a good investment not just for the church services but also for the Concerts and Events held in the church.

Out of respect for those who have been buried in the Church Yard and the magnificently maintained, protected structure of Christ Church, people are being requested to cease the practice of littering the perimeter with advertising boards. This is a prime position for advertising – it is going to be very difficult to stop.

MAUREEN MOSS ON SWAZILAND

Nola Nixon is a friend of mine who is out in Swaziland right now. I get regular bits of news from her. She tells me they have had heavy rain and a lot of the roads she uses to get to the schools, are deep in mud. She loves being there and like me feels the need for education in the children’s lives is paramount. I hope to have a fuller report next time.

We ask that Ann Menheneott be remembered in your prayers, as Ann continues her battle to recovery.
BANagher
Friends of Moystown Graveyard
A small Parish Committee has been put in place to clean up Moystown Graveyard as this Church and Burial Ground has been closed for many years and was in a very neglected state. TUS are providing labour and expertise for this clean-up but the committee has to provide funds for on-going expenses and the County Offaly Heritage Officer will provide guidance regarding restoration of wall and tombstones. If you have relatives interred at this graveyard and you feel would like to be involved in this project please contact Friends of Moystown Graveyard. Andrew and Ruth O’Neill have been most helpful in looking after Parish interests in this project.

Safeguarding Trust
We thank Rev. Ruth Gill and Canon George Flynn for providing a training course – for eleven future Youth Leaders- at St Paul’s Hall, Banagher the week before Christmas. Rev Patrick Towers travelled from Mountbellow to be with us for this training course. We are now awaiting Garda Vetting Approval to commence weekly Table Tennis for the Youth of the Parish.

An event will be held in Christ Church Portumna on the 8th March to mark International Women’s Day. For further details contact Portumna Church.

An interesting snippet of information.
Lenten curtain or Lenten veil. In the medieval church, a white curtain hung down in parish churches between the altar and the nave, and parted on feast days kept during LENT. It was taken down in the last three days of HOLY WEEK and said to betoken “the prophecy of Christ’s Passion, which was hidden and unknown till these days.” (Liber Festivals). Similarly, all crucifixes and images were covered, a practice still followed in some Anglican churches.

Lenten Services to be Announced in Due Course.

Limerick City Parish
St. Mary’s Cathedral, St. Michael’s Pery Sq. and Abington
Dean: The Very Rev. Sandra Pragnell
The Deanery, 7 Kilbane,
Castletroy, Limerick
Tel: 061-338697 Mob: 087-2658592
Email: sandrapragnell@eircom.net

 Bereavements
30th January – Maureen Mulcahy – our sincere sympathy to her son Derek, Team Leader of the Joint Initiative Scheme at St Mary’s Cathedral, his wife, family and relatives.
7th February - in his 100th year Ernest William (Ernie) Lyons – our sincere sympathy to his niece, Avril Gill, her family and relatives and the wider family circle.

Congratulations to Gary de Villiers (former member of the Cathedral Choir and Deputy Organist at St. Mary’s Cathedral), and his wife Melissa on the birth of a baby girl, Lia on 5th of February in Pinelands, South Africa

David Cowpar
On 30th January 2014 former Villiers School student and author David Cowpar returned to the school for the official launch of his two recently published books “The ODDs Beginnings” and “Lee Kennedy a Life changing friendship” both published by Andrews, UK. He has been nominated for the British Fantasy Award for best newcomer of 2014. David is the son of Ken and Katharine Cowpar and grandson of the late Freda and Stan Cowpar. At the launch he particularly acknowledged the great encouragement he received from both of his English teachers for his writing during his time in Villiers. He went on to thank Villiers School for all it’s help and encouragement and for providing the venue and refreshments for the launch. Both books are available to buy from Amazon.com, The Book Depository etc. They can also be borrowed from both Limerick City and Watch House Cross Libraries.

Memorial Unveiled
On 12th February 2014 former pupils of Mrs Louisa Baker (d. 1968), placed a memorial on the Baker family grave, as a tribute to their former singing teacher. The Dean led the prayers and dedication.

Special Olympics Ireland
St Mary’s Cathedral was delighted to facilitate the Limerick Musical Evening on 13th February which was a fundraiser.

World Day of Prayer
The morning service will be held at Villiers Square on Thursday 6th March at 11am. Tea/coffee and eats at 10.30am. This year’s service has been prepared by the Christian Women of Egypt. All men and women are very welcome to this annual service.

Limerick City Parish Whist Drives:
Sat 8th March (RAFFLE) – St. Michael’s Church
Sat 29th March – Villiers Square
All Whist drives start at 8pm sharp. Admission including supper €5. We welcome your support.

Looking Ahead – Lent
Let us begin the Holy Season of Lent together. There are three services on Ash Wednesday provided for you, so do try to get to one of them.

Healing Service
Sun 2nd March at 7pm St. Mary’s Cathedral
Ash Wednesday
Wed 5th March – 7.30am HC followed by breakfast – St. Mary’s; 10.30am HC followed by coffee – St Mary; and 7.30pm HC – St Michaels.
Sacred Reading and Prayer during Lent
(begins Wed 12th March)
Bishop Trevor is commending to us in Lent a series of Sacred reading of Scripture, following a South African method which is easy to follow, and very prayerful. All you need to do is bring your own Bible. Each week the Bible passage will be the Gospel for the following Sunday.

There will be 5 sessions, all at the Deanery – the Dean will facilitate the first session and others will lead the later sessions:
Dates are Wednesdays at 7.45pm to 8.30pm - 12th ; 19th and 26th March; 2nd ; and 9th April.
Each week is a standalone session, feel free to come along to any evening. Further information from the Dean.

Noyle’s Fludde
Noyle’s Fludde, an opera written in 1957 by Benjamin Britten, takes place in St. Mary’s Cathedral from Friday 28th March to Tuesday 1st April. This children’s opera traces the well-known story of Noah’s Ark from the initial depiction of God’s wrath and the subsequent storm and flood through to the peace of God’s covenant with his people at the conclusion. We have been
fortunate to receive generous grants from Limerick Regeneration and Limerick City of Culture, along with three trust funds and other well wishers towards the cost of this ambitious project. We are still looking to raise additional funding to enable this large-scale project to go ahead as smoothly as possible. If anyone knows of a potential donor or sponsor who might be prepared to donate a sum, however modest, please speak to Peter Barley, email him on peterandrewbarley@gmail.com or ring him on 087 673 8631.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

In September we plan to hold a Flower Festival in St Mary's Cathedral – on the theme “For the beauty of the earth,” from 5th – 8th September. We are inviting all parishes of the dioceses to be involved, by contributing an arrangement, as well as other local churches, and the plan is to auction the arrangements at the end. There will be a special service on Sunday morning 7th September, reflecting on the theme.

Adare and Kilmallock Group of Parishes

Adare, Croom, Kilmallock, Kilpeacon
Vacant from 12 December 2012
Priest in-charge: Rev. Maurice Sirr
Address: 17A Knock Hill, Ennis Road, Limerick
Tel: 061 277 372
Mob: 087 254 1121
Email: msirr@iol.ie

Once again, your reporter is Ann Gill. Many thanks for this valuable service.

This month in St Nicholas in Adare we had a baptism of floodwaters washing through our church. The beautiful river. Maigue, overflowed its banks and flooded our church. Some pictures of the devastation caused by the water are on page 20. Saturday morning saw our parishioners in shock at the sight of the church with about a foot and a half of water in the aisle. Obviously Sunday service was not possible and this had to be communicated to all our regulars. The school and school house nearby escaped the worst, but had some damage to the outside buildings.

A work party was organised and everyone who could came with buckets and shovels/mops to help with the clean up. Where do you start to thank people for their efforts? – but to mention a few who did Trojan work – Sam Shine and his crew, Kieron and Sandra, James and Meriel, Valerie and Liam and Eileen and Kevin who live in the old school house.

I will stop there, but God knows who you all are and you have our grateful thanks. At times like this the community spirit really showed itself at its best. We can be all proud of ourselves. Some people who could not help physically sent contributions which will be of great help also.

A simple but sincere ‘Thank you to all’

The work of restoration is still in progress, dehumidifiers are working, cushions, cloths are being dried and work is being progressed with refurbishment by surveyors/architects and insurance people. Due to all this happening we were able to have our service of Holy Communion on Sunday 9th just a week after the flood. The Rev Elizabeth Hewitt (Methodist Minister) had very generously offered to accommodate us in the Methodist Church for service if St Nicholas was still flooded and out of commission. Thank God for the very best of neighbours.

Now the task is to redecorate, renew and rejoice in our church. A decision has made to purchase hymn and canticle discs and when the ‘boom box’ has been acquired we will have much needed help with our singing on the Sundays when there is no organist to lead us. Please dress warmly and bring a cushion until all is working well again.

We certainly can empathise with families throughout the country who are suffering terribly with flood and wind damage to their properties, the loss of electricity and are out of communication with telephone lines down. We trust that they also will have friends in their need.

There will be a service in St. Nicholas at 7pm on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. We plan to join with the Methodist community on the Wednesdays of Lent as we share a series of Lectio Divina led by Jackie McNair, chaplain in Villiers School. These meetings will be held in the Methodist church hall and we trust they will be helpful in our preparation for Easter joy.

Please note that the world Day of Prayer will be held in the Methodist Church on March 7th, as St Nicholas will still be recovering. For this we must thank the Rev. Liz. The theme this year is “Streams in the Desert” and was prepared by the Christian Women of Egypt. This service is international and interdenominational, a global movement of informed prayer and prayerful action. Both men and women are invited and welcome to this service.

Services for this month will be at the usual times. As this is being written there are gales blowing outside, reports of trees down, roads blocked, public services being disrupted, but hopefully we all will be well, and be able to gather to praise and serve as we do every Sunday.

Kilmallock church was broken into and the safe and its contents, which included the Communion Silver, were stolen from the Vestry. Fortunately no damage was caused in the church save for the vestry door that had been forced open. All the necessary reports have been made, but unfortunately nothing has been recovered yet.

Please note that the central service for the 5th Sunday in March, Mothering Sunday, will be held in Kilmallock church at 11am. The Mothers’ Union has produced a service outline that involves children and our service will be planned around that theme. It would be lovely to see a full church.

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes

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

There is a busy time coming in our group of Parishes. On Friday March 7th we are hosting the local World Day of Prayer service at Holy Trinity Rathkeale at 8:00 p.m. Please feel free to join us and people from all over the world to pray together. This year the service has been prepared by the women of Egypt.

Wednesday 5th March sees the beginning of Lent, and we have our Ash Wednesday service at St. Mary’s Askeaton at 8.00 p.m.

Much has been written about the Lent Sacred Reading course and we will be starting a sacred reading group on which will meet on Thursday March 6th at the Rectory 8:00 p.m. Please make this a priority in your Lent this year. People do not live by bread alone but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. While Irish people may suffer physical obesity I have yet to come across a case of spiritual obesity.

The Feast of the Annunciation is a traditional day for Mother’s Union services and we will be hosting our local area Mother’s Union at St. Mary’s Askeaton on March 25th at 8:00 p.m. ably supported by the Very Rev’d Sandra Pragnell.

Handily this year Mothering Sunday is on the 5th Sunday in March and we will be holding our joint service for Mothering Sunday at 11:00 a.m. on 30th March at Castletown Church Kilcornan. Do join with us.

Bishop Trevor will be with us for confirmations on May 11th and classes will start in March. Please listen out for the announcements.
**STORM DAMAGE**

Unfortunately a number of our buildings have been seriously damaged by the recent storms. Many slates have been lost from the roof of Ballyseedy Church and many more are in an unsafe condition. No services can be held there until the roof is inspected, repaired and declared safe. Some of the wall bounding the road also collapsed and more of it had to be demolished for reasons of public safety. Ballymacelligott Church lost its power supply. The east end of St. John’s seems to have become more porous than ever and the ingress of water is now extremely serious and Teach an tSolaís has lost some ridge tiles. As worrying as these things are it could have been so much worse. Please remember those more seriously affected in your prayers.

**Killarney and Aghadoe Union of Parishes**

Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross
(Vacant)

Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Máirt Hanley.
Mob: 087–619 4733
Email: rev.hanley@gmail.com

**WEATHER**

What better topic to start the Newslink notes than the weather. Truly for the last month it has determined the mood music for us all with a continuing cycle of storms, rain and tempest culminating in the storm of Wed 12th February. This accounted for two large limbs of the larch tree in St. Mary’s leaving the tree looking pretty lopsided and ugly. Muckross Venture Centre had three trees fall. One did some minor damage to the building but thankfully no major damage. Thanks to Denis O’Connell for promptly clearing two of the trees and clearing the debris. Our regular Newslink correspondent Mike O’Sullivan is immersed in the ESB repair effort so has delegated the notes writing for the month.

**LENT**

This year we are holding an evening service on Ash Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. to facilitate parishioners unable to attend during the day. This will be followed by Thursday evening “lecto divinia” scripture readings during Lent. The time set for these meetings is 8.00 p.m. and all are welcome.

**GOLDEN WEDDING**

Congratulations to Klaus and Christel Noelke who celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary this month and are still blissfully in love! Many more years of wedded bliss to you both. They have also settled into their apartment in Killarney over the last few months. They accomplished the move from Crohane most successfully and have made a beautiful home in Countess Road.

**CONCERTS**

We are delighted to have a good programme of concerts booked for St. Mary’s in 2014 and invite all who are in the area on these days to come, listen and enjoy. In March there will be 3 concerts on March 4th, 14th and 31st featuring university and high school choirs from New York, Wyoming and Tennessee respectively. Concerts start at 8.00 p.m. and last just over an hour. Just the right length for sitting on a church pew. If you would like email details of the programme for the year please contact Andrew Eadie email andrew@kerrywoollenmills.ie

**VACANCY**

Following a visit by the Diocesan Ministry and Resources Committee the Diocesan Council decided to advertise for a resident part time priest for our parish. This is great news for us all. At time of writing the parish is preparing a parish profile to submit in connection with the advertisement of the position.

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**SERVICE TIMES.**

St. John’s Tralee 10.45am.
Ballyseedy 9.45am.
Ballymacelligot 12noon.
Kilgobbin 10am
St. James Dingle 12noon.

Holy Communion Tralee on 1st, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 11am,
Service of the Word with the Laying on of Hands for Healing on 3rd Wednesday 11am.

**CHOIR WORKSHOP**

There was a Choir Workshop in St. John’s Church Saturday 1st March, led by Rev. Canon Marie Rowley Brooke, focussing on music for services during Lent and Easter. This was an ideal opportunity for new members to come along and see what it’s all about. We were most grateful to Canon Marie for travelling from Nenagh to present the workshop.

**CONFIRMATION CLASSES**

A Confirmation introductory evening for parents and candidates was held in the Parish Centre on Thursday 27th February. Confirmation Candidates are required to establish that they are baptised, it would therefore be appreciated if Baptism Certificates, or a note of date and place of baptism could be available for the Rector from those who have not yet done so. If any candidate is not already baptised this is not a problem as arrangements can be made for this to take place in the lead-up to Confirmation. The classes will continue on Thursday evenings until 1st May and the Confirmation Service will be held on 4 May. There will also be occasional meetings after the Confirmation.

**ORGAN**

Plans for the service of re-dedication of the organ in St. John’s on 15 June are progressing. As we would like to have the church looking really beautiful floral decorations are being organised for various windows and other areas of the building. If anyone would like to sponsor or create an arrangement, please contact Margaret Groves or Sue Latchford. There will even be a session on floral arrangement for those who feel they would like some tuition or advice. On Saturday 12th April there will be a cake and plant sale in Teach an tSolaís to raise funds for flowers. In days following the service of re-dedication there will be a number of musical events and open days.

**WEDNESDAY CLUB**

Thank you to the members of Wednesday Club who all chipped in to replace the red pew carpets in the front and back pews of St. John’s. It is greatly appreciated.
So Lent is upon us and we are planning two reflective walks - one in Killarney on Sunday 9th March starting at 3pm from Muckross Venture Centre, finishing at about 5.30pm back at the Venture Centre, and another run in conjunction with St. James’ Parish on Friday 11th April which will be an evening walk (probably starting at 6pm). These are all-age events which will take between two and three hours depending on how reflective/active we feel on the day. The April walk will have an environmental feel with a number of special speakers already booked.

The rest of our Lent schedule is:
Ash Wednesday 12 noon St Cartach’s Castlemaine
On Tuesday nights of Lent - Lectio Devina 8pm St. Michael’s
Events at St. Michael’s 8pm every night of Holy Week
Also our Easter Vestry is planned for Sunday 6th of April immediately after our morning service in St. Michael’s.
We are sorry that due to the storms we had to cancel the Beetle Drive but we do hope to re-schedule this soon.
St. Patrick’s Day will be celebrated on Sunday 16th of March
Keep an eye on the web site for the date of the Cricket team A.G.M, should be soon.

Please remember in your prayers those who have been baptised (Kalem Poff) and those who will be married (Mark and Irene Hussain) recently and all those connected with the parish who are ill at the moment. Thankfully Ron is recovering well from a hip op. and hopes to be umpiring for the new cricket season! We also think of those bereaved recently, especially the Leen and Husain families.

SEARCH – A Church of Ireland Journal

The Spring issue of SEARCH comes out on February 24th and offers a mixed bag of subjects. Looking forward to May’s General Synod, Ídeh Haukness, chair of the Commission on Episcopal Needs, offers some reflections on the proper role of bishops; while looking back to the autumn, the Bishop of Connor writes of his time at the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly in Busan. But undoubtedly the headline event of the autumn was the election of the Revd Patricia Storey as Bishop of Meath and Kildare. “Call me Pat,” was her simple response as to how she was to be addressed, even if she had to accede to being called “Madam Bishop” on formal occasions.

It’s a sign of her no-nonsense attitude that she has released an article she wrote about her vocation five years ago, until now unpublished, showing a decline of self-identifying Anglicans in the North and a “religious” element of Irish Censuses of Population of 2011, which threatened to divide the Anglican Communion. This is complemented by a look at the source of divisions within Islam – a faith with probably as many “denominations” as Christianity and with two major traditions.

Further items include a report from Adrian Stringer and Dr Abby Day of a recent conference in Canterbury addressing issues that threaten to divide the Anglican Communion. This is complemented by a look at the source of divisions within Islam – a faith with probably as many “denominations” as Christianity and with two major traditions.

Near home, Malcolm Macourt contributes a consideration of the “religious” element of Irish Censuses of Population of 2011, which show a decline of self-identifying Anglicans in the North and a corresponding rise, occasionally a dramatic one, in the South. Or do they? On a more general level, Noel Coogan takes a questioning look at 21st century attitudes in Ireland, asking “Whatever happened to Civic Morality?”

Contact: Ginnie Kennerley, Tel 01 275 0737
Email: vkennerley@gmail.com
Website: www.searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org
Whilst preaching a sermon in Leeds, England on October 6, 1813, the Rev Richard Watson proposed a society for the support of foreign missions which led to the formation of the first district Wesleyan Missionary Society. As a consequence, Methodism spread throughout the globe with over 70 million in the Methodist family world wide, approximately the same as the number of Anglicans and Presbyterians.

In October 2013 over 500 people gathered in the Leeds Minster Cathedral to celebrate 200 years of Methodist Mission. It was an “honest service” according to the current Methodist Missionary review. Those things badly done in the name of God’s mission were confessed. Three Methodist Presidents, Rev Dr Albert Jabanesan (Sri Lanka), Rev Cuthbert Edwards (South Caribbean) and the Rev Arnold Temple (Sierra Leone) encouraged the Methodist Churches in the UK and Ireland to “move on.” A scroll on a screen rolled down the names of over 12,000 missionaries from these islands who had served overseas. The great congregation reflected on each man, woman and child who had given much to share Christ’s gospel over 2 centuries.

The Methodist Church in Ireland has just 4 families overseas today; the Sloan family in Germany, Kilpatricks in Sri Lanka, Cunninghams in Belize and Pat Jamieson in Bangladesh. The new General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society in Ireland, the Rev Laurence Graham (Killarney) who is already embarking on a major review of the society’s activities will reflect on how its aims could be further achieved.

Many churches which in the past received missionaries, like Mexico, South Korea, Ghana, are now themselves sending missionaries to the West. At present Emmanuel Stemmlar, a student for the Ministry in Germany, is on a short term placement in Christ Church Limerick. While we once took the gospel to the “mission field”, that mission field now has its own well established churches, many of which are growing spectacularly. There are 2 million Methodists in Nigeria; 700,000 in Ghana. In Bolivia the Methodist Church is the second largest denomination in the country.

The role of the Missionary Society is now more to connect the church here with over 60 Partner Churches throughout the world. We now do mission together, as ‘Mission Partners’, and there is much for the churches here to learn from these Churches overseas. Mission is about coming alongside people, where they are, whether that is in Killaloe or Kampilpa. It is about listening to them and discovering what God is doing in their lives and sharing our own personal experience of Christ.

The Epistle reading for World Church Sunday, usually celebrated in February, concludes with our great longing:

“that at the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father” ...Philippians 2. 9 – 11

Rev Brian D Griffin
Superintendent of the Midlands & Southern District

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**Methodist News**

**Adare & Ballingrane Methodist Circuit**

Minister: Rev. Elizabeth Hewitt
Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Rd, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061 396236
Email: mliz.hewitt7@gmail.com

**SERVICE TIMES**

Adare: 10.15 am
Ballingrane: 11.45 am
Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday of the month
Sunday School during morning services

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

When you read the March issue of Newslink, it may seem a long time since the WPCU in January! However, the services to mark the Week took place after the deadline for copy for the February issue. Our Circuit was involved in two services. Instead of having the usual monthly meeting of MWI, the members invited people from the local churches in Cappagh, Rathkeale and Askeaton to a service in Ballingrane Methodist Church on Wednesday evening 22nd January. Fr. Phonsie (St Mary’s RC Church) and Rev. Keith (Holy Trinity Cof I) took part in the service and there was an encouraging attendance.

Then, on Sunday evening 26 January the three Churches in Adare united for a service in the Methodist Church. We were very pleased that Bishop Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick Roman Catholic Diocese, agreed to be the guest preacher. Bishop Trevor Williams was also present along with the local clergy, Rev. Maurice Sirr, Fr. Joe Noonan and Rev. Liz Hewitt. A good number of people attended and the atmosphere was warm and friendly. The order of service, prepared by French–Canadian Christians was inspiring, on the theme, ‘Is Christ divided?’ based in 1 Corinthians 1: 1-17.

**THE IRISH COUNTRYWOMAN’S ASSOCIATION (ICA)**

...is celebrating their 70th Anniversary in this area, this year. We are pleased to have been asked to host an ecumenical service to mark the anniversary in Adare Methodist Church at 11.30am on Saturday 1st March.

**WOMEN’S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

We look forward each year to two services in our area on Friday 7th March.

Adare: 10.30am The women from St Nicholas’ C of I are arranging the service but it will, most likely, be held in the Methodist Church, depending on the completion of work in St Nicholas, following ‘the flood’.

Ballingrane: 8.00pm in Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Rathkeale

**BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

8.00pm in the Manse on Wednesday 12th March.

Rev Liz and Rev Maurice Sirr (St Nicholas’) are exploring the possibility of a joint Study during Lent.

**UNITED FELLOWSHIP AT CHARLEVILLE**

7.30pm Sunday 17 March, in the Convent.
MIDLANDS & SOUTHERN DISTRICT SYNOD

Synod meets twice a year to discuss the work and mission of the churches on our District. The next meeting is on Saturday 8 March in Carlow Methodist Church.

METHODIST WOMEN IN IRELAND

MWI will meet at 8.00pm on Monday 7th April in Adare Church. The speaker will be Rhoda Nixon who served, with her husband David, in the Methodist Church in Zambia.

Christ Church Limerick, united Presbyterian & Methodist and

Christ Church Shannon, joint Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Ireland

Minister: Rev. Vicki Lynch
The Manse, 15 Aylesbury,
Clonmacken, Limerick.
Tel: 061 325325  Mobile: 086 8292073
Email: vickilynch@eircom.net

CB COMMUNITY PROJECT LAUNCH

On Saturday February 1st, St Brigid’s Day and the first day of Spring, we had the official launch of Central Buildings Community Project. We had chosen this day especially as a day of light, life and new beginnings and it coincided with the worst flooding in Limerick City for fifty years! But although we lost our main speaker and one of our bands it didn’t manage to dampen our spirits and amazingly we still had a great crowd. Honest Arts made some adjustments - our man on stilts moved inside the church out of the high winds, our twelve feet tall puppet found a home off the street in CB1 and our festivities continued. We enjoyed rapping, choirs and bands from Music Generation and were treated to songs in both Irish and English from Limerick rock band Lynshig. Photos courtesy of ‘I Love Limerick’.

SO MUCH GOING ON

At the end of last year we were successful in our application to receive funding from the ‘Made in Limerick’ process to make Central Buildings a networking and cultural hub for 2014 and beyond. Now we’re already well underway with our programme. As you may have noticed we’ve had a variety of exhibitions in CB1, most recently an Occupy Space exhibition ‘Scratching the Surface’. CB2 is home to the Music Generation Project and Honest Arts Production Company as well as members of our own team, and Doras Luimni are well settled in on the top floor. In March and April we will be hosting the City of Churches Exhibition, Genealogy Day, Café na Gaeilge and St Munchin’s Photography Club. And there is much more to come.

Back in 2012 we started to wonder what was possible for what was then an empty and rather dreary looking Central Buildings. We had conversations, networked and began to try things - all the time with a belief that we simply just wanted to bless the city and partner with others who had that same desire however they expressed it.

When the City of Culture arrived it seemed a wonderful possibility, opening up so many more opportunities to get connected with the marvellous diversity there is here in Limerick; so many different groups and people doing so many interesting and positive things.

We have a lot to be thankful for. For the help and support of Limerick City of Culture, for the help and encouragement of Christ Church and Methodist Home Mission and for so many brilliant people who voluntarily give their time, gifts and skills. So many groups, organisations and people have already used Central Buildings and we want to go on sharing our building and time and efforts with anyone who just wants to bless this city in their own way.

COME AND SEE US

Why don’t you come and look around the building and wonder how you might be able to use it to share what you have to offer with the people of Limerick and beyond. There are lots of possibilities for meeting, training, workshoping, exhibiting, rehearsing, performing – just think about it – come and talk to us. We just don’t know what might grow from a short conversation, just what will happen. We know what is possible can sometimes be a bit vague at first, but the fun is making it become more and more real, especially together.

And keep checking out our Facebook page to see what’s going on www.facebook.com/CentralBuildingsLimerick

 Gods will rapping at CB Community Project Launch

 Lynshig at CB Community Project Launch, Anna, Andrew & Patrick

Killarney, Kenmare & Millstreet 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
Web site: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry

Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team:
Ed & Jean Ritchie
Tel: 064 6620580

Sunday Services:
9 and 11 a.m. (inc. Children’s programme at 11)
Prayer meetings: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8-9am, Wednesday 9.15-10am
Bible Study Meetings:
Wednesday 8pm, Friday 10am
Drop in for coffee
Each Friday 11am – 12 noon
Parent and Toddler Group:
Tuesdays 10am – 12 noon
Impact Youth Club (13+):
1st, 3rd & 5th Fridays 8-10pm
Kingdom Krew Junior Youth Club (9-13): 2nd Friday 7-8.30pm
Women’s Fellowship:
2nd Mondays 10am – 12 noon.

KENMARE “Gateway”, Gortamullin, Killarney Road, Kenmare.
Sunday Service: 11a.m. (preceded by coffee, inc. Children’s programme)
Weekly Bible Study/Fellowship meetings.
Tuesdays at 8pm, Wednesdays at 10am
Drop in for coffee each Wednesday 11am – 12 noon

MILLSTREET
Services every Sunday evening at 6.30 p.m. Meeting in Drishane Castle.
Bible study every Tuesday at 8 p.m. in “The Lighthouse” Centre on the town square. Entitled “Step by Step Bible Group” this group is open to anyone who wants to know more about the Bible and grow in their faith.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
As well as all the regular activities listed above the Gneeveguilla Home Fellowship group will meet on Thursdays 6th and 20th March at 8pm.

Dingle monthly meetings are now well established in the Gairdin Mhuire Day Care Centre on Green Street in Dingle town on the second Sunday of each month at 7pm. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday 9th February. The Home Fellowship group continues to meet in Lispole on the last Thursday of the month at 8pm.

In Castleisland everyone is welcome to join us on the last Monday of each month meeting at 7.30pm in An Riocht, Crageens, Castleisland. This is the health and leisure club located beside the athletics track in Castleisland. Our March meeting is scheduled for Monday 31st. Please pray for this new initiative.

In Millstreet the opening of “The Lighthouse” has been delayed but it will be open by the time you read this. We pray that these premises will enable "The Light of the World" to be proclaimed in the area. Our Tuesday evening Bible studies meet there and the centre is open on Thursday mornings for people to drop in with coffee and conversation. We’re also partnering with “Unbound” Christian bookshop to have Christian literature etc. on sale. Please continue to pray for this initiative. We also continue Sunday night services in Drishane Castle Asylum Seeker Hostel at 6.30pm each Sunday night. This meeting also incorporates a children’s programme which many children attend.

Men’s Breakfast in Killarney is scheduled for Saturday 8th March from 8.30 – 10.00 a.m. Pastor Shaun Abrahams from Kilorglin Baptist will speak.

Some ladies in Killarney have begun a ladies lifestyle club called “No Biscuits”. This is an opportunity for women to fellowship together while also sharing ideas for healthy lifestyle choices. They now meet on the last Monday of each month. Next meeting 31st March at 11.00am.

Killarney Women’s Fellowship group have embarked on a “Christianity Rediscovered” course meeting on the second Monday of each month at 10am – 12noon. Next meeting 10th March. It is of course open to everyone so contact Laurence for further details if interested. The Women’s Fellowship is also planning a series of Saturday evening Pot Luck Suppers followed by a talk the first of these is on Saturday 8th March with Jean Ritchie speaking. The meeting begins with supper at 6.00pm.

Kingdom Krew (the children’s club in Killarney) will now take place monthly on the second Friday of each month from 7.00-8.30pm for children aged 8-13. Our March meeting will be on Friday 14th.

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit
Minister: Rev Brian Griffin
The Manse, The Mall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 21670 Mobile: 087 987 0755
Email: beg08@eircom.net

Roscrea Methodist Church, in the Mall, is hosting an Ecumenical Lenten Series. The theme is: “Is Christianity and the Church still credible?” The meetings will take place on each Wednesday in Lent, starting at 8.00 pm for about one hour.
The following are the guest speakers:
• Wednesday 12 March: Rev. David Cooper, former Methodist Minister on the Cloughjordan, Borrisokane Circuit.
• Wednesday 19 March: Bishop Kieran O’Reilly, SMA, Bishop of Killaloe.
• Wednesday 26 March: Dom Richard Purcell, Abbot of Mt. St Josephs Abbey
• Wednesday 2 April: The Rt. Rev Trevor Williams, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe.

Our guest speakers will be interviewed by the Rev Brian Griffin (Superintendent of the Midlands and Southern District) on current issues, and encouraged to share their personal faith journey and experiences in Priesthood and Ministry.

Each speaker will also give a reflection on the above theme and local choir groups will animate with special music.

PRAYER CORNER

Prayers after the Recent Storms & Floods

For use by those seriously affected.

Merciful God,
Hear our cry for mercy in the wake of wind and water.
Reveal your presence in the midst of our suffering.
Help us to trust in your promises of hope and life
so that desperation and grief will not overtake us.
Come quickly to our aid that we may know peace and joy again.
Strengthen us in this time of trial
with assurance of hope we know in the death and resurrection
of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

For use by those less seriously affected.

Gracious God,
Your word of peace stills the storms that rage in our world.
Bring hope to places that know devastation
in the calm after the storm and the ebbing of the flood.
Bring comfort to those who grieve loss of loved ones and property.
Let your love be known through those who work
to bring order in the chaos.
Help us to shoulder the burden of suffering
and make us bearers of the hope that can be found in you
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

© Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Lent is a ‘penitential season’, so we are told. But no matter how much my head tells me I should be penitent because I need forgiveness, my heart tells me it is much more a season for joyful thanksgiving! How could it be otherwise as Spring bursts upon us? What a cause for rejoicing to see the signs of new life follow one after another! How the heart leaps with grateful thanks for the wonderful creation we are a part of! As the great hymn says:

"Then sings my soul, my saviour God, to thee. How great thou art! How great thou art!"

It is surely right to give especially joyful thanks on the decidedly un-penitential festivals with which our Lent calendar is punctuated. On St Patrick’s Day we celebrate not just the Christian faith which immigrant Patrick brought to our land from Britain, but also all that is good in our communities and our nation – even if some would do well not to over-do the drink. And then there is Mothering Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Lent - 30th March this year – let us hold on to the old name, and not call it ‘Mother’s Day’! What a lovely opportunity it is to show our mothers how much we love and honour them, or to remember them if we are parted from them – a proper cause for family celebration.

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What Lent means to me
by Joc Sanders, Nenagh Union of Parishes

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It pleases me to continue the old tradition of ‘giving something up for Lent’. For many years this has been alcohol, not so much as a penance to mortify the flesh, but to show myself that I can do so, that I am master of my appetites not their servant. Perhaps it’s cheating, but I don’t count Sundays, as to do so would be to make Lent last more than the 40 days of temptation Jesus underwent in the desert. And Sundays in any case are to be celebrated. For me this too is a joyful fast rather than a penance. And the money I save – quite a sum when I calculate it – will be split between the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem to support Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and Christian Aid Ireland which my parish is collecting for this Lent.

But the real meaning of Lent for me is the opportunity the Gospel readings give to accompany Jesus once again on the road to Jerusalem alongside his disciples. I will hear Jesus describe how he resisted temptation in the wilderness. I will listen as Jesus converses with Nicodemus about earthly and heavenly things. I will see Jesus convince a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. I will watch as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey to the cheers of a fickle crowd.

This is an opportunity given to every one of us. And this Lent Dean Gary Paulsen has proposed that we should do so together in parishes through the ancient practice of Lectio Divina – in English, Holy or Sacred Reading. It is often suggested that instead of, or as well as, giving something up for Lent, it would be good to take something up. Well this is just such an opportunity – I urge you to grab it with both hands. Look out for notices in your parish, and join in one evening a week if you possibly can. I am sure it will be worth it and I shall be doing so myself.

May your Lent be filled with joy and thanksgiving!
Mouse Makes

The 4th Sunday in Lent is celebrated as Mothering Sunday. Originally families would get together for a special service at the ‘mother’ church, often at the local cathedral.

Today Mothering Sunday is celebrated as a family day, a time to say ‘thank you’ to our mothers and to all who look after us.

There are many wonderful Mothers in the Bible, look up the Bible verses and find out who they are....

Matt 1:16  M  _  _
Num 26:59  O  _  _  _  _  _  _
Luke 1:57-60  _  _  _  _  _  _  _  T
1 Sam 1:20  _  _  _  _  _  _  _  _  H
Genesis 4:1  _  _  E
Gen 25:21-26  R  _  _  _  _  _
Gen 21:1-2  S  _  _  _

Thank you Mum for all you do,
For all your love and care,
For helping me as I grow up,
For all your loving prayers.

For teaching me about Jesus,
Of how he loves me too.
Thank you Mum for loving me,
I LOVE YOU!

A bookmark gift for Mother’s Day. Cut out the bookmark above, glue onto card and colour in.
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