Consecration of Bishop Kenneth p.19

We pray that God will bless his ministry among us as we welcome him with joy to the United Dioceses

Photo: Keith Scott

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Dear Friends,

I’m writing this letter to you all in what can only be called ‘middle time’ – the time between two periods of time. Before Christmas I said goodbye to very good friends and colleagues with whom I’ve worked over the last ten years both in London and throughout the Anglican Communion. In a week or so (I’m writing this on the 15th January!) I look forward to meeting many of you in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, and later in St Mary’s Cathedral Limerick and St Flannan’s Cathedral in Killaloe, and then over a longer period to getting to know you in your churches and parishes.

So I describe myself as being in ‘middle time’. Some of our furniture has arrived in Adare; more will arrive shortly. We seem to be surrounded by packing boxes and acres of paper. I’ve spent days on the phone changing utility bills and so on. I’ve had meetings about hymns in Christ Church, already I’ve met the Dean and Organist in St Mary’s and I look forward to meeting the Dean of Killaloe soon to plan the installation services.

All very necessary and worthwhile tasks, but all amount to a lot of busyness. So, next week, I’m going on retreat to Rostrevor, Co Down. A retreat is a time to be quiet (not necessarily silent!), a time to reflect and focus on what’s really important at this time. Above all, it’s a time to listen to God through worship, and prayer. For me it will be a time to focus on transition, on the meaning of the call to be a bishop in the church of God, and the responsibility that goes with being a bishop of a diocese in the 21st century.

Transition and change is nothing new in the church. The church has maintained its witness down the centuries and throughout the world by being adaptable, by responding to new situations and changed circumstances.

“So what are you going to do first in the diocese?” a few of my friends have asked, hinting that I might have some great plan I’m hoping to implement. I’m going to listen, I reply, listen to clergy who are at the forefront of ministry, listen to all involved in various forms of ministry through meetings and committees, and listen to parishes through visits and through diocesan synod, and above all seek to discern what God is doing and saying though our common life at this time.

Listening doesn’t happen for a period and then end. It’s a never ending activity, and it has to lead to thinking and planning. This is a shared task for all members of the diocese and the bishop has a special responsibility to see that it happens.

Listening to God, listening to each other, thinking and planning in the light of the listening – these are the hallmarks of all Christian ministry and Christian leadership. None is unique to the role of a bishop – each is the responsibility of the whole people of God.

So as I begin my ministry among you, I invite you to pray not just for me but for one another, as we each exercise our distinctive vocation and ministry in God’s church, and especially in this diocese.

Almighty and Everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified:
Hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people;
That in their vocation and ministry each may serve you in holiness and truth
To the glory of your Name;
Through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I look forward to getting to know you all in the days ahead!

Sincerely,
+Kenneth.

The Rt. Revd. Kenneth Kearon
Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe
Rian Roe, Adare, Co. Limerick
Tel: +353 (0)61 396244

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 7th Feb, 2.30pm</td>
<td>Enthronement of Bishop Kenneth Kearon in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 7th Feb, 10am – 12.30pm</td>
<td>UDYC Fundraising Coffee Morning &amp; Cake Sale, Adare Methodist Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 13th Feb, 8.15pm</td>
<td>Whist Drive, Borrisokane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 14th Feb, 10.30am – 4.30pm</td>
<td>Cloughjordan Junior Table Tennis Tournament (7-17), Cloughjordan (Catherine 087 666 4932)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 17th Feb, 10am–4pm</td>
<td>CofI Youth Department Day of Prayer, St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick City (all ages welcome)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 18th Feb</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 19th Feb, 8.15pm</td>
<td>Whist Drive, Aghancon Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 21st Feb, 7.30pm</td>
<td>UDYC Fellowship Group, Kilmurry Church, Castletroy, Co Limerick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 25th Feb, 9.30pm – 12.30am</td>
<td>Social Dance, Aghancon Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 6th – Sun 8th Mar</td>
<td>West Alive Weekend, Esker Youth Village, Athenry, Co. Galway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 7th Mar, 2.30pm</td>
<td>Enthronement of Bishop Kenneth Kearon in St Flannan’s Cathedral, Killaloe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 20th – Sun 22nd Mar</td>
<td>Spring Madness, Durrow Centre, Co. Laois (13+ yrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 21st Mar, 2.30pm</td>
<td>GFS Diocesan Service &amp; Prizegiving, St Mary’s Church, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary</td>
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Editorial

The regular rhythm of worship

In the immediate future many parishes in our United Dioceses face the prospect of disruption to the regular, established rhythm of parish worship. Clergy resources are thin on the ground, following a spate of resignations, retirement, sad illness and tragic death. But unless we join together regularly for public worship in our parish communities our spiritual life is impoverished, and we risk drifting away from God and our parish neighbours. Many parishioners find it hard to travel to a strange church. And if regular services are cancelled it is difficult to re-establish the habit of regular worship. What is to be done?

Happily there remain enough ordained priests for every parish group or union to be assigned a priest-in-charge for pastoral care. But only priests may celebrate the Eucharist, so the reduced complement, particularly in the northern part of the Dioceses, will likely mean that Holy Communion services will be less frequent. Even parishes with a Rector will probably find Communion schedules changed, as their Rector covers in parishes without one. Unless, that is, some form of ‘Communion by Extension’ is authorised in the context of public worship in the Church of Ireland, as it is already in the Church of England at the Bishop’s discretion - I may be mistaken, but in Ireland I think it is only allowed for sick Communions in private homes and nursing facilities, on a trial basis.

We are truly blessed that Audrey Clarke Gordon, Barbara Irgang-Buckley, John Jarvis and Barbara Bingham have recently swelled the corps of Diocesan Readers – let us give thanks for their calling and commissioning. I am sure they and other Parish and Diocesan Readers will step up to the mark to lead Morning or Evening Prayer more often in their own and neighbouring parishes. But it may well be that this is still not enough to allow every church to have a service at the usual time every Sunday.

If priests or readers are not available to take traditionally scheduled services in your church, you need not simply abandon the services! I suggest that you try to identify a Church Warden or other suitable lay person who is willing and able to lead the congregation in Morning Prayer from the BCP. You will probably find enough qualified volunteers to make up a rota, so that no individual is over-stretched. Discuss it with your Priest-in-Charge, who will likely be more than happy to give permission, offer some guidance, and perhaps provide a sermon to be read. Involving lay people in this way will not only maintain the regular rhythm of worship, but can strengthen you as a parish, and an active parish will be more attractive to potential future incumbents.

God bless, Joc Sanders

Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfern, which also includes the historic dioceses of Aghadoe, Clonfert, Emly, 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.

Editor

In addition to news from parishes, schools and diocesan organisations, 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 March 2015, published for Sunday 1st March.

All material must reach the Editor by Friday 13th February 2015 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed. Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

Enthronement of Bishop Kenneth as Bishop of Limerick
St Mary’s Cathedral, Sat 7th February 2015 at 2.30pm

This special occasion will herald a new phase for all of us in the dioceses. Space is limited, but a few unreserved places are available. If you wish to apply for an unreserved ticket please contact your Rector.

Dean Sandra Pragnell
Partners in Prayer – February 2015

Each Sunday
Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Clogher and Bishop John McDowell
Companion Dioceses: The five Dioceses of the Protestant Church of Anhalt, Germany.

1st February, The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Church of Burundi and The Most Revd Bernard Ntahoturi, Archbishop of the Province of Burundi & Bishop of Matana
Diocese: That the Enthronement of Bishop Kenneth Kearon in St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick on Saturday 7th February be filled with joy

8th February, The Second Sunday before Lent, Green
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Church of Canada and The Most Revd Frederick Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada
Diocese: The Kilcolman Union of Parishes during the vacancy there

15th February, The Sunday before Lent, White (Transfiguration Opt A) / Green (Option B)
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Church of the Province of Central Africa and The Most Revd Albert Chama, Archbishop of Central Africa & Bishop of Northern Zambia
Diocese: The Aughrim & Creagh Unions of Parishes during the vacancy there

22nd February, The First Sunday in Lent, Purple
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America and The Most Revd Armando Guerra Soria, Primate of IARCA & Bishop of Guatemala
Diocese: The Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Groups of Parishes during the vacancy there

My name is Mary – Mary of Magdala;
an ordinary person.
I have a past – as have we all.
When I was healed, I followed Him –
An ordinary follower, not one of the twelve,
But content just to follow, loving Him.
An ordinary follower.
An ordinary person.
So why to Mary Magdalene
was it given to know first that He’s alive?
Why me? Rejoicing, when others, worthier, still mourned?
Because I loved Him?
Or because I cried? – who knows?
But this I do know.
I was in the garden with my tears
And then he rose from death to life, and all that died were tears.
With His living, so was born within my heart
the strength to tell that my Lord lives
and death itself is dead.
And you – what truth is on your lips?
His cross? – a truth indeed, but lesser truth without the
knowledge that He lives.
If they ask you, as they asked me
What is this nonsense?
Answer only this, if true for you, or keep your peace;
I know, for I have seen Him.

Ash Wednesday – mourning our sins

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls this year on February 18th. But why ‘Ash’ Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin.

(See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly ‘class’ of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time, and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel’s call to ‘rend your hearts and not your garments’ (Joel 2:12–19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the ‘beginning of the fast’ or ‘the day of the ashes’.

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthyly lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
A View from the Pew – Surprise!! Surprise!!!!
by Salters Sterling

Arising from quite a lengthy conversation at the last meeting of the Diocesan Board of Mission the editor has invited me to contribute an article to News Link for the next number of months. Joc has given the series the title A VIEW FROM THE PEW. If I interpret that literally then I see a pulpit, an organ, an organist, a holy table, a lectern, a set of empty choir stalls, a priest and the backs of however many of the Parsons family happen to be in church. If I glance round I see, on an average Sunday, thirty to thirty-five other worshippers. All this in a church built for 800+. I think I had better begin elsewhere.

Perhaps it would be good to start with the question - Why are we all here or there? At least that could create some common ground with readers of Newslink in other parishes. So why are we at Church? I surmise that a very shared answer will be - to worship God. I believe I will begin just here.

The view is from the platforms of several British universities in the 1960s. The seats in front of us are packed with students and a University Mission is about to commence. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, as chief missioner, takes centre stage. His opening words are riveting. I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT GOD. They never failed to capture attention and with his learning and authority he continued to captivate in packed halls Monday through Friday. Ramsey’s direct approach takes us to the heart of the question which our answer - to worship God - raises. What do we mean when we use the word GOD?

In the same period as those missions the BBC invited me to front a television series involving 6th Formers from Northern Ireland Grammar Schools discussing John Macquarrie’s book God Talk. In her enthusiasm to get involved one young lady interrupted my introduction to the series with the question - What do you mean when you use the word God? I departed from the script and replied “A Spirit infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth” Classical and comprehensive it is. The response it elicited in a good Belfast accent was “So Whaat!” It was an open invitation to explore over four one hour sessions. And we did. Can we do the same now?

Depending on the translation of the Bible you use in your worship you may well have come across the word Jaweh. This is the special name of the God of Israel. It is the name with which Jesus would have been very familiar. In its written forms in both Hebrew and Greek it has a long and somewhat obscure history which need not detain us. It is part of the creation text in Genesis and it is in the text which recounts the story of Moses and the burning bush. That text allows us to say that Jaweh is the One who is present and, at the same time, the One who surprises. This element of surprise is hugely important because it is what makes God GOD. It is beautifully expressed in the Revelation of St John the Divine when John records the message of God to be “Behold I am making all things new” It is at the heart of the message of Jesus when he speaks of God as Father constantly and passionately concerned to give us gifts of overflowing love.

As we come to Church Sunday by Sunday is this our sense and our experience of God? Do we come prepared for an encounter with the God who is present and constantly surprises us? Or is our coming stale, part of a routine, closed to surprise?

This theme of Surprised by God is going to be central to the thinking in this View from the Pew over the next number of issues. If you want to get in the mood why not look at the words of the hymn, No 325, either at home or in church:

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place,

And as you are being still - LET GO AND LET GOD.

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Buttevant Parish Church, Former Jesuit Church
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Cheap Grace
“Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
CHRISTMAS CRAFT DAY
Christmas Craft Day was on Saturday, 29th November in Birr. We thank Diane Dagg and all the leaders of Birr Branch for hosting this event. As always it was a great start to the Christmas season. All proceeds from this event go towards Diocesan Camp in June - the more money we raise from events like the Craft Day the less parents will be asked to pay June.

At the Craft Day girls enjoyed making many crafts to take home – flower arrangements, Christmas crackers, tree ornaments and cards - the photos show the quality of their work. Thanks to Leaders in all the branches for providing the crafts and materials for the day. GFS were delighted to take part in the Christmas Tree Festival in St, Mary's Church, Nenagh in December. At the Craft Day girls make lots of decoration specifically for their Christmas tree. We hope as many as possible attended the Christmas Tree Festival and enjoyed the lovely display of trees.

NENAGH BRANCH
Crafts will resume on Saturday, 31st January in St. Mary Church, from 11am to 1pm

BIRR BRANCH
Birr Branch are working on crafts and are preparing for our enrolment service on Sunday 25th.

UPCOMING EVENTS
• Diocesan Office Holders 2015/18 nominations are being taken.
• Leaders Night Out – 7 February, Cloughjordan – contact Grace Healy for details.
• Craft Judging – 7th March, Roscrea
• Diocesan Council Meeting – 9th March, Cloughjordan, 8pm
• Diocesan Service & Prizeday – 21 March 2015, Killaloe
• Camp – Castledaly Manor, Athlone, 12-14 June – email Nathan
• 25th Years of Camp Celebrations – Sunday, 14 June in Castledaly

BOYS' BRIGADE

NENAGH 1ST COMPANY
This time last year I wrote in Newslink about how beneficial it is to have Boys' Brigade in a parish. This never proved truer than this month’s family worship in St. Mary’s last Sunday. Twenty of our boys (we just grew to twenty three!) turned out in force to perform and present to the congregation. It warms the heart to see the boys bravely swallow their nerves, to read clearly and enthusiastically the prayers and “Samuel” story. They showed commitment with their evident practicing and great teamwork where prompts or nudges were needed! They did a brilliant job, as they always do! And they enjoyed themselves too! Another important part of the service was the enrolment of our new Junior, Zack and three of our five new Anchors, Samuel, Joshua and James. Welcome boys!

Very importantly, the boys read a tribute to Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke, in the form of a poem. As I have said previously, it was Canon Marie that introduced Boys' Brigade to Nenagh originally. She saw the need and the potential – then made it happen! On behalf of all the boys and families who have and will continue to benefit from being a part of this great organisation - a big huge THANK YOU!
We must also thank Ann Powell for her enormous effort in creating the Boys’ Brigade entry in the (hugely successful) Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival. The tree was amazing and the boys had great fun making it – and seeing their work standing proud in pride of place atop the font!

So our new year begins (delayed due to the snow) with a packed schedule including some crafts, a “strong man” fitness session, Tai Kwon Do and a couple of events with Roscrea company which we are really looking forward to!

This term’s dates are: Jan 20 & 27, Feb 10 & 24, Mar 10 & 24

Mothers’ Union

Mothers’ Union would like to wish everyone a bright and Prosperous New Year and following our theme for 2015, which is “United in Prayer”, may we pray with each other for guidance to fulfil our duties and help to keep Mothers’ Union afloat.

As you will probably read elsewhere, Nenagh Parish held a Christmas Tree Festival before Christmas. Mothers’ Union provided and decorated a tree and much to our delight, we were voted 2nd most popular. A number of branches made the decorations and we also put some Mothers’ Union flyers around the tree, which we hope might encourage some to join.

The Mothers’ Union General meeting will be held in Nottingham next June and if anyone is interested in attending please contact Ina Blackwell at 057 9141253 or 086 1481305 before 15th February.

SHINRONE/KINNITTY/AGHANCON members went Carol singing to Clover Lodge Nursing Home in Shinrone on December 11th. Rev Janet White-Spunner introduced the Carols and Rev Tom Kingston read portions of scripture. The staff and residents joined in the singing and all enjoyed tea and light refreshments afterwards.

BIRR BRANCH held a very enjoyable Kriskringle evening before Christmas in the Rectory, with a good crowd and some non-members came along and enjoyed the Christmas Fayre.

LIMERICK BRANCH Indoor members and friends of Limerick branch enjoyed a lovely tea and a good chat on the afternoon of Sunday 9th November and stocked up on their Christmas cards, etc. at the literature stall. In December we enjoyed a crafts evening when we prepared decorations for the MU Christmas tree at the Festival in Nenagh. In December members of the parish congregations

THIS LENT DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT!

LET’S GET TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE UNITED SOCIETY

Find out more at www.100ofUs.com or call Linda 086 8586337
contributed very generously to our appeal for groceries and we were able to present hampers to both the Women's Hostel in Thomondgate and the Men's in Clare Street where they were very gratefully received. In addition, we provided twenty-five gift-wrapped presents of toiletries for the women who would be in Thomond House over Christmas. New Year saw our annual Beetle Drive for national school children. It was the usual evening of riotous fun which the children enjoyed immensely. Great thanks are due to Lucy and Bev who managed to keep order on the proceedings with great good humour.

We are looking forward to a talk by Steven Redden on February 9th when he will be telling us about his experiences at Chelsea Flower Show. This will be a joint meeting with members from Adare and Askeaton and is open to anybody who would like to attend.

### Diocesan Board of Mission

The carrot washer for Swaziland is now finished and awaiting despatch in a container, at the beginning of March. There will be plenty of room for additional items which are needed by Luyengo Farm and will greatly benefit Anglican parishioners in Swaziland. But we need to get our skates on if we are not to miss the container!

The following items are needed:

- Protective clothing, rain gear etc.
- Children’s shoes, new or in good condition.
- A mower for a 40 hp tractor
- A fine seed planter
- Shovels, spades & hoes.
- A second hand tractor, in the 40 to 50 hp range.

Donations towards the cost of transport would also be most welcome.

If you - or anyone you know - or a generous business in your locality - could donate any of these items please get in touch ASAP with one of our collection co-ordinators listed below.

For Killaloe & Clonfert:
John Chadwick, Cullenwane House, Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary
Tel 0505 45283/086 2112985, Email john.chadwick@live.ie

For Limerick & Clare:
John Jarvis, 28 Heatherdale, Monaleen, Co Limerick
Tel 061 338262, Email john.jarvis@ul.ie

For Ardfern & Aghadoe:
David Frizelle, Curraduff, Camp, Tralee, Co Kerry
Tel 066 7130209/0876855251 Email davidfrizelle@eircom.net

Thank you for your ongoing interest in and, support of this project in Swaziland.

David Frizelle, Treasurer/Secretary
Archdeacon Wayne Carney, Chairperson

### United Diocesan Youth Council

**JUNIOR WEEKEND**
Our Junior Weekend for 10 - 13 year olds was held at Durrow Centre, Co Laois in early November with a fab time enjoyed by all present. We were once again delighted to have Amy McCrea from Church of Ireland Youth Department with us once more to lead our worship times during the weekend. The group on Saturday enjoyed a trip to Dunmore Cave, Reptile Village and Karting at Kiltorcan Raceway Track on the Saturday ending the day with a trip to McDonalds. After worship on Saturday evening a disco was organized with lots of party food. On Sunday morning a trip to Portaloise Leisure Centre for a swim was in store.

**24 HOUR MULTI ACTIVITY SLEEPOVER EVENT**
In late November a group joined together for a 24 hour event at Muckross Youth Centre in Killarney. On Saturday evening the worship times were led by Damian Shorten with an Advent theme. Amy McCrea led an art workshop and we were delighted to have Rev. Michael, Marjorie and Tom Cavanagh to lead us with a puppet workshop. With a splendid pizza tea compliments of Four Star Pizza

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**Church of Ireland**
**LIMERICK AND KILLALOE**
**DIOCESAN BOARD OF MISSION**

********

AN INVITATION TO A MISSION EVENING

**WEDNESDAY 11TH. FEBRUARY**

THE WOODLANDS HOUSE HOTEL, ADARE

AT: 8.00 P.M.

- **OUT & ABOUT IN SWAZILAND**
  BY:- **DEAN SANDRA PRAGNELL**

- Collection of items for container going to Swaziland... an up to date report.

- Everyone (irrespective of Christian denomination), with an interest in mission both within their local community and overseas, is very welcome to attend.

- Refreshments will be served both before and after the meeting
all were ready for a team challenge followed by a disco until late evening.

On Sunday the group travelled to Kenmare and joined the congregation there for a wonderful time of worship led by Marjorie Cavanagh. It was a really wonderful experience and the welcome to Kenmare was truly amazing. Our Sunday lunch was provided by a number of parishioners from Killarney Parish. It was a really great welcome to Kerry by both the people of Kenmare and Killarney to whom we are really thankful and would really like to thank everyone that helped in so many ways with this event.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE – by Maud Eadie

People young and old gathered together in their finery for a night of great food and embarrassing dancing in early December. The food as per usual was excellent and after dinner we all enjoyed some beautiful music performed for us by Tom Freeman. After a small break where everyone caught up with the people they likely hadn’t seen since the year before, our DJ started up and the party began! A thoroughly exhausted and happy group parted ways at the end of the night, or really the wee hours of the morning, to catch a few hours’ sleep before having to get up again the next morning.

FUNDRAISING CHRISTMAS DRAW

Many thanks to all those that bought and sold tickets for this fundraising venture. Congratulations to our winners as follows: 1st Prize 100 – Michelle Armitage (Limerick), 2nd Prize 200 – Mrs Noleen Lumby (Killarney), 3rd Prize 300 – Dean Sandra Pragnell (Limerick), 4th Prize 400 – Mrs Mary O’Regan (Kenmare), 5th Prize 500 – Mrs M. Delahunty (Kenmare), 6th Prize 600 – Mrs Mary Horgan (Kenmare), 7th Prize 700 – Mrs Mary Fagan (Kenmare), 8th Prize 800 – Mrs Mary Looney (Kenmare), 9th Prize 900 – Mrs Mary Taylor (Kenmare), 10th Prize 1000 – Mrs Margaret O’Callaghan (Kenmare).

FUTURE EVENTS

• Fundraising Coffee Morning with Cake & Home Produce Sale, to be held in Adare Methodist Hall from 10.00 am – 12.30 pm on Saturday 7th February 2015. All donations of cakes, home produce, vegetables would be really appreciated. All proceeds to support programme costs of Youth Council. We do hope that as many people as possible will support this event.

• Church of Ireland Youth Department Day of Prayer. UDYC are hoping to co-ordinate this in Limerick Diocese on Tuesday 17th February (Shrove Tuesday) at St. Mary’s Cathedral Limerick City from 10am – 4pm (All ages Welcome). It is hoped that a day of prayer will be held on that day in all 12 Dioceses around the country.

• U.D.Y.C. Fellowship Group. The next meetings are scheduled for Saturday 21st February at Kilmurry Church & Saturday 28th March St. Michael’s Church Hall, Pery Square, Limerick – both events 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm. Open to secondary school and upwards.

• West Alive Weekend for 10 – 13 year olds, Friday 6th – Sunday 8th March 2015 at Esker Youth Village, Esker, Athenry, Co. Galway. This is a joint event with Tuam Diocese, at a cost of €100 including transport to and from the event.

• Spring Madness Weekend, for 13+, at Durrow Centre, Knocknagraully, Durrow, Co. Laois from Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd March, with Cork Diocesan Youth Council. The cost will be €100 including return transport to and from the event.

For more information on any of our events or activities, please contact Edward (087) 2907553 or Damien on 087/2274663, Email: udyc@limerick.anglican.org or visit our website (http://udyc.ie/) or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month, Maud (087 995 9581)
One of the highlights of the school year is our Christmas party when each classroom puts on a play or musical. This year families and friends were entertained by three great mini-productions, with wonderful performances from all the pupils. Many thanks to all the teachers for their hard work in preparing the pupils for the stage and to Michael Ramendik who filmed the event. The Parents’ Association committee prepared and served the lovely refreshments and later in the afternoon we had a visit from Santa who brought some large sacks of gifts with him, much to the delight of all assembled in the hall.

School re-opened on Monday 5th January and since then pupils in 3rd to 6th classes have taken part in a Spikeball tournament in Villiers. This follows the six coaching sessions by Lauren and Saskie, Transition Year students from Villiers. The pupils in 4th to 6th classes will participate in the Limerick Schools Spikeball Competition at the end of January. For the next eight weeks some pupils will take part in sewing classes as an after school activity and chess club resumes at the end of January. The school will hold an open afternoon/evening on Tuesday 10th February. The afternoon session will take place at 3.30pm and the evening session will begin at 8.00pm. Enrolment forms and school booklets are available from the school secretary.

St Mary’s No. 2 National School, Nenagh

It was an early start to the new term on 5th January. It was great to welcome back all our pupils with the great news that their tree had come in 1st place in the Christmas Tree Festival.

Gymnastics coaching has commenced with Coach Julie O’Reilly. French classes continue for the Senior Room. Dance classes will commence in February.

Our Christmas Show and related events went very well. Credit is gladly given to the children who worked so hard to make the event a success. Thanks and gratitude must also be given to our dedicated Parents’ Association. They organised the fundraising raffle again this year. It is very much appreciated.

We welcome two new pupils this term – Sarah Maher (6th Class) and James Day (Junior Infants). We are delighted to meet you and we wish you happiness during your time at St. Mary’s.

Former pupil, Eve Mooney, returned to us on work experience as part of her Transition Year programme. It was great to see her again and we are grateful for her contribution to school life all through the month of December.

The pupils enjoyed their trip to see the Christmas Pantomime in UCH, Limerick. There was much merriment and plenty of high-jinks in the entertaining show “Jack and the Beanstalk”.

In the weeks ahead we have plenty to look forward to. We are hoping to field two teams for the annual Credit Union Table Quiz. “Beir Bua” to Denis Sheehy who is preparing for a concert for An t-Uachtarán, Michael D. Higgins. The President will visit the Irish Harp Centre in February.

St Michael’s National School, Limerick

As forecast we had our first fall of snow, much to the delight of all our pupils. Yet again, being so close to the park enabled us to enjoy the magic of playtime in the snow. It was a joy to see the children run free and experience the making of snowballs and snowmen with their friends. For many of them, this was their first time to see snow. We are busy keeping our many bird feeders full with peanuts during these wintry months.

St Michael’s National School, Limerick

Spikeball season has commenced and Fifth and Sixth Classes participated in a tournament in Villiers School in January. The preparation and practice for this was organised by Transition Year students attending Villiers. Playing Spikeball is very inclusive for our mixed gender schools and appeals to all students. The use of the LPYMA Hall for practice sessions has greatly improved the standard and enjoyment for our school. Even the walk down helps fitness and highlights the importance of road safety for our senior pupils.

We are delighted with the contents of our big ‘L’ Leprosy Mission Box this year. A suggestion that the box be passed from classroom to classroom, and any ‘brown’ money gratefully donated, has increased our contribution significantly so far to €127.

Cloughjordan No.1 National School

Thank you very much to everybody who supported our Christmas Concert in December. Well done again to everybody involved on making it such a success, and most especially to all of our wonderful pupils, with the amazing assistance of Cassandra Kenny. It was a great pleasure for us to donate €825 to the Billy Goulding Fund from the Concert. We hope our contribution helps Billy, Victor and Eileen on their journey towards Billy’s recovery.

St Michael’s National School, Limerick

Prize winners in the Borrisokane Credit Union 2014 Poster Competition
Well done to Tom Larke who a prize in the Art Competition organized by Borrisokane Community College as part of their Christmas Concert. Thank you to Borrisokane Community College, once again, for the kind invitation to their Christmas Concert, which our 3rd – 6th class pupils and their teachers, really enjoyed.

Well done to Andrew Austin, Ella Dann, Stephanie Manley, Josh Caplice, Alfonso Galera Kleboe, Ruairi O’Hare, Niamh Ryan and Laura Hayes who won prizes in the Borrisokane Credit Union 2014 Poster Competition. Thank you very much to Borrisokane Credit Union for the very generous prizes awarded, and for the treats which were greatly enjoyed by all pupils!

Thank you very much to Ivan Dann and Victor Austin, who with many willing helpers, gave generously of their time to chop firewood and sold it in aid of the school. Initiatives like this are greatly appreciated and the €1000 raised will be put to good use in the school.

Congratulations to Mrs. Emma Crawford and to her husband Mark on the birth of baby Ruairi in December. We were delighted to hear this great news and wish Emma, Mark and baby Ruairi all the best.

Congratulations also to Miss Emma Doherty, our temporary Learning Support Teacher. Emma and Dave announced their engagement at Christmas. We wish them every happiness for their future together.

Thank you very much to everybody who supported our fundraising “Number and Word Phrases Quiz”, kindly compiled for us by Mrs. Miriam Henderson. This year’s quiz was very successful and enjoyed by many far and wide. The draw takes place on 16th January. Results will be in the next edition of this magazine.

Oxmantown National School, Birr

The Parents’ Association organised a beetle drive for the children from the infants, first and second classes and a table quiz for the older pupils as a fund- raiser, but with an emphasis on fun. Thanks to Jonathan Pyle, Paul Johnston and Frank Higgins for arranging this event.

The school said farewell and “Thank you” to Canon Neill on 16th January. Canon Neill was a wonderful Chairperson of our school since he arrived in the parish in 1998. We can’t thank him enough for all that he did for all who work and learn in the school, and for so many parents of the school through the years. His commitment to the school was outstanding, not only as Chairperson of our Board of Management, as a member of our Parent Teacher Association, but also as somebody who always wanted and did what was best for our school and all of our school community. We thank him most sincerely, will miss him terribly and pray that he, Nicola and Aaron will be very happy in their new home in Celbridge. We wish Aaron a very happy 18th birthday later this month and hope he enjoys his birthday celebrations!

The Parents’ Association organised a beetle drive for the children from the infants, first and second classes and a table quiz for the older pupils as a fund- raiser, but with an emphasis on fun. Thanks to Jonathan Pyle, Paul Johnston and Frank Higgins for arranging this event.

THE SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHER

The School Photographer made a biannual visit to School before Christmas; we had all of the children taken together this time which is done every six years.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our junior and Senior Infants entertained their parents and friends to a play called ‘Whoops–a–daisy Angel’ on 16th December, this was followed by the third and fourth class pupils with ‘Witch Griselda Rides again’. The following evening was the turn of first and second class with their version of ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’ and the fifth and sixth class pupils with ‘The Babbling Banshees’. Thanks to Stuart Smith and William Eades who erected the stage and built the back drop and to the Parents’ Association for organising the interval raffle, which provides funds for the Christmas party, Santa’s shopping and covers the costs involved in putting on the show. Thanks also to our face painting team who created witches, old men, angels and banshees etc. Thanks to Michelle Ross who recorded each play very professionally. As we use the stage every time we have a play/concert we are so grateful to Mrs Rhoda Gill who purchased it for us some years ago. This year we bought eighty new chairs for the hall rather than borrowing from other parishes as in previous years.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

All of our children enjoyed our annual party. Santa (a.k.a. past pupil Keith) paid a visit with a present for all and thanks to Robert Alexander who stepped in to take photos of the children with Santa at the last second as the person who had volunteered was ill. Each child will receive a copy of these photographs, we are grateful to Peter Fox Pharmacy in Birr who printed these free of charge. Parents may like to make a donation to the Parents’ Association. Thanks to everyone who helped us to create such lovely memories for the children.

LIBRARY CHALLENGE

Birr library have organised a reading challenge again this year, each pupil will take part in a programme of independent reading every day for ten minutes for the next eight weeks. Anything that encourages extra reading will be of benefit to all.

ART COMPETITION

We are proud of Jessica Pyle, sixth class, who was presented with a
prize for her poster on environmental awareness by Offaly County Council. Jessica’s poster was reproduced in the Council’s calendar this year. Congratulations, Jessica.

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

Our Christmas concert in Holy Trinity Church took place on Wednesday 17th December and many thanks are due to our music teacher, Gerry for all his work in preparing the children. This year we had a cowboy theme to the day and whoops and hollers echoed around the church. Following the concert we adjourned to the school for refreshments and to wait for Santa’s arrival. Santa arrived by fire engine and had a present for everyone. We were all delighted to see him again this year. Attendance prizes were awarded to pupils who had full attendance for the term. Congratulations to Jodie, Sarah, Sasha, Lauren, Rory, Aaron, Jack and Peter. Hopefully they can all keep up full attendance for the rest of the year. Our term drew to a close with a carol service on Friday 19th December with the readings being read by the pupils.

We pass on our congratulations to Ms Looney on the birth of her daughter, Saoirse Rose. Both are doing well and we look forward to meeting Saoirse soon.

We welcome Ms Maria Moore to the junior classroom. Ms Moore will be covering the maternity leave until June.

Villiers School

Congratulations to the following players who represented Villiers at Munster u16 level – Conor Beck (GK), Craig Morrow and Quinten Eccrett, with Marcus Ryan as a reserve. Also to Andrew Tutty and Callum Morrow who represented Munster at u18 level. Congratulations to Andrew who has also been selected for an Irish trial. We wish him every success.

PHONELESS FOR CHILDLINE

Our campaign was organised by Ciara Frawley and Andrea Slevin from TY. On Tuesday 16th December students turned off their phones and placed them in sealed envelopes for 24 hours as a symbol of what it would be like for children to have no access to Childline should the service be forced to close at night due to lack of funding. All students participating got sponsorship for their endeavours with all proceeds going towards saving the Childline service. Childline is the only 24 hour, free of charge listening service for children and young people in Ireland. The night-time service has grown to become a critical support to children in distress. Well done to all who helped organise and participate in this very rewarding fundraiser.

VILLIERS FOOD APPEAL

Many thanks to Villiers students, staff and parents who were so generous again this year in bringing in food for the Limerick Lions Christmas Food Appeal. The school should be very proud of its giving tradition of helping those less fortunate. The food will be going to Limerick homes who are struggling this Christmas, some only a mile from Villiers School. Well done to every-one. Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ms Sexton

SCHOOL BANK

On the 20th of November 2014 Villiers opened its school bank, run by 10 Transition Year students. It is open every Thursday in Room 11 where you can open a 2nd level account or make a lodgement. For every 25 accounts set up the school receives 250 from Bank of Ireland, which is being donated to Crumlin Children’s Hospital. When we reach 50 accounts we will receive an iPad to raffle off between all of the account holders in school. Once we reach 100 accounts everyone who has previously opened an account will be put into a raffle for two tickets to a Munster Match. The account can also be used for saving money for school trips and if a student sets up a standing order they will receive a free Munster Rugby school bag.

Account holders over 16 are eligible to receive a VISA Debit Card, with a 20% discount in select stores such as Elverys, Dominos and many more.

MUN – MODEL UNITED NATIONS

MUN this year was tremendous fun for all involved. Students were split into two different groups, EgMUN and Sieg-MUN. EgMUN was in Espergerde Gymnasium in Denmark. Mostly 5th years attended this conference as it was a MUN built for experienced debaters, but I’m sure the munners had great fun! During the trip, in addition to attending the MUN conference, the students went
shopping at the Christmas markets, took a trip to the amusement park, dined in really nice restaurants and went to the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen.

Sieg MUN was just as exciting with the students going to Bonn, Cologne and Siegen in Germany. In addition to debating, the Christmas markets were amazing, as well as the Lindt Chocolate Factory and Cologne Cathedral.

Congratulations to Seán Browne and Sam Clein for winning the best delegates award in their individual conferences!

**News from the Villiers Sanctuary**

The Villiers Carol service was once again a truly wonderful and inspiring occasion. The service was extremely well attended with a packed St Mary’s Cathedral and great enthusiasm. The choirs sang a variety of Carols, each reflecting the message of the previous or following lesson being read and the congregation joined in with the singing of hymns as the service progressed.

Once again I heard the comment that ‘Christmas does not begin until after the Villiers Carol service’, marking just how strong the depth of feeling is for this event. A big thank you to all the readers and singers and of course to our music Department with Ms. Sinead O Sullivan for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes all of which goes into making this event what it is.

Of course now we find ourselves at the other side of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany to a time of year where we can begin to wonder, ‘what next?’ After all the fuss and busyness of Christmas, when the Christ child has been born, the shepherds have gone back to their flocks and the wise men have gone back to their own country by another road, we are looking forward to the beginning of a new year with new challenges. It should be a time for reflection and leaning into those challenges that we have to face. Challenges like upcoming exams and simply trying to get through the day. The one thing to remember is that no one is left to face these challenges alone. There is always someone to turn to, someone to lean on and of course the helpers are always ably assisted by God. The Villiers Sanctuary exists to offer everyone in the Villiers community a safe haven and a place to turn to if dark clouds appear on the horizon. A place where the question of ‘what next?’

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**Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda & Martyr**

The Most Reverend Janani Luwum (d 1977) was the sitting Archbishop of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi and Boga Zaire when 35 years ago on 17th February he was murdered by the dictator Idi Amin. He was a leading voice in criticising the excesses of the Idi Amin regime that assumed power in 1971 and protested to dictator Idi Amin against the policies of arbitrary killings and unexplained disappearances. Shortly afterwards the archbishop was accused of treason, arrested and killed. When his body was released to his relatives it was riddled with bullets.

At the time the Church in Uganda was on the verge of centennial celebrations of its birth through the seed of the early Ugandan martyrs, and so Luwum became the first martyr of the second century of Christianity in Uganda. A statue of him stands in Westminster Abbey London.

Janani Luwum was greatly loved in Uganda. He was by all accounts an exceptional leader with a great personal godliness, a holistic vision, pastoral compassion and evangelistic fervour. Janani was born in 1922 at Mucwini in the Kitgum District of Uganda. He spent his childhood and early youth herding goats. Given an opportunity to attend a local school, he learned quickly, and was soon a teacher himself. Janani Luwum was converted to Christianity on 1 January 1948, started at theological college in Buwalasi the following year, became a deacon in 1955 and was ordained a priest in 1956. He served in the upper Nile Diocese of Uganda and the diocese of Mbale, and was consecrated Bishop of Northern Uganda in 1969 and Archbishop of Uganda in 1974; three years after Idi Amin came to power in a military coup. His death was mourned by millions in East Africa.

This year a commemoration, with support at the highest levels of Ugandan society, will be held on the anniversary of his martyrdom at the Archbishop’s home village and burial site in Mucwini, Kitgum. The Archbishop of Uganda, Stanley Ntagali, will be the Chief Celebrant and the Church of England’s Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, will be the Preacher.
Working on Ebola response in Sierra Leone
by John Reid

Editor: Let us pray for the medical teams and aid workers fighting the Ebola epidemic in Africa and elsewhere, give thanks for their compassion and bravery, and continue to support them in their dangerous work. Among them is John Reid of Concern, originally from Shinrone in the Diocese of Killaloe.

In early August 2014, I arrived into the Sierra Leone capital city, Freetown, with Concern to support their emergency Ebola response programme. I then moved to Magburaka town in Tonkolili district where the Concern field office is located and started managing the Ebola programme there. It’s a four hour drive inland from the capital Freetown. In early August there were only 2 Ebola cases in Tonkolili, by the end of September it was 74 then it just escalated rapidly and when I left in mid-November it was up to 333. Nationally, there were 5,441 cases by mid-November and 1,364 deaths. Due to unreliable data and underreporting, the actual figures were probably much higher. The already weak and under resourced health system was overwhelmed and nearly collapsed before the much needed international aid started to arrive. Fear of Ebola caused many people to stop using health facilities for fear of getting infected while there.

In my first few weeks Concern carried out mass community sensitisation activities to tell communities about Ebola, the main transmission routes and what to do if infected. There was a lot of misinformation and disbelief at first and so the initial message was centred on the fact that “Ebola is Real”. Over time, and with repeated messages, people became more aware of the real danger of Ebola and started to change their behaviour.

A key activity was training medical staff at Peripheral Health Units on Infection Prevention Control (IPC) to help them protect themselves from infection, to manage suspected cases of Ebola, to safely isolate Ebola cases until they could be moved to holding

continued on page 17
Since 1669, The King’s Hospital has carefully maintained traditional values and combined them with modern, cutting-edge education and facilities to create a welcoming environment that enhances pupils’ academic, cultural, creative, sporting and social development.

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  - Economics, Accounting & Business
  - 5 Curricular Modern Languages
  - Dedicated 1 to 1 Study and Career Advice

- **We also offer:**
  - 5 & 7 Day Boarding options
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  - Easy access to campus situated at the M50 & M4 junction, close to Dublin City and Airport
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- Bursary Support and Fee Assistance
- 5 & 7 Day Boarding options
- We also offer:
  - Dedicated 1 to 1 Study and Career Advice
  - 5 Curricular Modern Languages
  - Economics, Accounting & Business
  - 5 Sciences

28 academic subjects include:
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- Cultural, creative, sporting and social environment that enhances pupils’ academic, and career choices.
- Students discover and reach their full potential with the assistance of dedicated staff who offer individual personal, academic and pastoral development.
- With the transition to 3rd level education support throughout their time in school and maintained traditional values and combined with modern, cutting-edge education.
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For more information please call or visit us – or if you prefer – we will travel to meet with you.

Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival

Here is a montage including the winning trees at the Festival, which was so well received that the organising Committee are planning to do it all over again in December 2015! You can find a full report in the Nenagh Union notes on page 23.

2nd Prize – Limerick & Killaloe Mothers’ Union

1st Prize by a wide margin – Nenagh No2 NS

4th Prize – April & Heather Hayes

3rd Prize – Cottage Garden Crafts ‘Fairy Tree’,

5th prize – Templederry Church by Hillary Lewis

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centres and to encourage and reassure the general population that is was safe to attend the health facilities. At the holding centres, suspected patients had blood samples taken and sent to distant Ebola testing laboratories. If positive they were sent to the main Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) in the far east of the country, a gruelling 8-10 hour drive on bad roads, unfortunately some patients died on this trip. Many never came back as up to 70% died from Ebola while at the ETUs. As dead bodies are highly infectious, they were buried in sealed body bags in designated Ebola cemeteries, and as such could not be returned to their families for normal burials. This was particularly hard for families. In Freetown Concern eventually became heavily involved in managing safe and dignified burials to improve the burial process and allow the families there the opportunity to attend the burials but at a safe distance.

Ebola can be described as a disease of compassion and caring as it is mainly spread by direct bodily contact such as looking after sick relatives or friends. So we all practiced no handshaking or touching, and keeping a distance from others which is so contrary to the friendly nature of the Sierra Leonean people.

One positive story was the local Government run hospital in Magburaka, very close to the Concern office. There we found a very motivated and committed local doctor, who along with his team of 16 nurses, ran a very effective Ebola holding centre. They were receiving patients from all over the district and would keep them a few days until their results came back and then move them onto the main ETUs. His IPC was excellent and none of the nurses were infected during my 3 month stay, while throughout the country many health workers became infected including doctors, and over 80% of those infected died. The hospital had limited resources so we were able to help with solar power for lighting, upgrade the water supply system, provide email access and supply diesel for the ambulances and burial vehicles and the hospital generator. We provided soap for hand washing, chlorine for decontamination, protective clothing and we constructed a decontamination facility for the vehicles. At one stage 40 nurses, staff and patients were put under quarantine after a patient in the maternity ward developed Ebola symptoms and subsequently she and her baby died. Concern provided them with food and water and supplies to cover the quarantine. Thankfully none of the other staff or patients died.

Despite living with the constant fear of becoming infected with and dying of Ebola, the people still kept their faith and the churches were packed (but not touching) each Sunday with lively colourful and joyful worship, which greatly helped me to cope with the challenging context and to maintain my own faith.
The question that is perhaps most frequently asked of those who have been admitted to Reader ministry in the Church is ‘Does that mean that you read in church?’ It probably does to some extent, but those who read the lessons on Sunday morning have not usually spent two years training on a Level 7 course, as Dr Jarvis has done. Readers do read lessons, but they are also called to read in a much wider sense – it is a teaching and preaching ministry in a pastoral context, requiring reading of theology, and drawing on the wisdom of biblical scholarship, in order to help people understand and make sense of the Bible today.

It was in 1909 that the Church of Ireland inaugurated its Reader Ministry, and in 2009 there was a celebration of the century of Reader Ministry in Armagh Cathedral. The latest Diocesan Reader, Dr John Llewellyn Jarvis was commissioned in St Michael’s Church, Pery Square in Limerick, during an uplifting ceremony on 14 December. It was a special service for John who had chosen all the hymns himself, for the Advent Season and for Ministry. The hymn Brother, Sister, Let me Serve You, was chosen by John to be sung immediately before the commissioning itself, as the words sum up the essence of ministry to one another.

A good congregation braved the cold and the rain, to support John – parishioners, family, friends, neighbours, clergy, choir members and fellow readers came to recognise John’s successful completion of the Cashel training course for readers, and witness his commissioning. After many years as a Parish Reader, John will now have greater responsibilities, not only in Limerick City Parish but also throughout the diocese, which is such a great asset for us all, and a source of pride for John and his family. His son Adam read the first lesson, and Adam and his sister Emma brought the elements to the Holy Table. After the service, everyone joined John and his family to enjoy the refreshment and fellowship. Many thanks to those prepared the feast, and thanks also to the Head Teacher of St Michael’s School for allowing the school yard to be used for parking.

John Jarvis writes:

The Certificate in Christian Studies course run by the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns, and Ossory is one of two courses approved by the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland for Diocesan Reader training. It is accredited by St Patrick’s College, Maynooth. The course consists of modules on the Bible, Christian Liturgy, Thinking about God, Mission and Ministry, Ethics, Church History and Homiletics. Each module is delivered using two Saturday Study Days held in Kilkenny and two Thursday evening Seminar Sessions held in Clonmel. Attending these gave plenty of opportunity to bond with the other course participants and the lecturers concerned, a distinct advantage over traditional distance learning models where students can feel somewhat isolated. The History module included a history field trip directed by Canon Adrian Empey which was very enjoyable, for which participants travelled by bus to examine a number of churches for their architectural and liturgical features. The course is directed by the Very Revd Tom Gordon, Diocesan Director of Adult Education and CME, who I can only describe as a Course Director par excellence! He was extremely helpful to those who may not have studied for some time, as well as an excellent lecturer who delivered some of the modules. Overall I really enjoyed the course, learnt an awful lot, and have no hesitation whatsoever in highly recommending this course.
The Consecration of Kenneth Kearon as Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe

TheConsecration was notable for the presence and full participation of a number of Methodist clergy, including the current President of the Irish Methodist Conference, The Rev’d Peter Murray. This is the first time Methodists have been co-consecrators in Ireland and a real and visible mark of the effects of the covenant between us, with includes the mutual full recognition of our respective ministries. We pray that this will continue and grow.

Bishop Ken was thus duly ordained and consecrated as Bishop, and presented to the congregation to much acclaim and applause. We pray that God will bless and strengthen his ministry among us as we welcome him with joy to the mid-west of Ireland.

Photos: Paul Harron/Church of Ireland Press Office.

The sermon was given by The Most Rev’d Barry Morgan Bishop of Llandaff and Archbishop of Wales. He spoke of North Wales as the zip line capital of the world, with two zip lines on which one can ride at up to 160 kph. “The thing about the zip wire”, he said, “is that to start you off someone has to help you with a push, and as you end the journey, somebody hauls you in with something resembling a shepherd’s crook. Those two actions of launching and hauling in sum up the work of a bishop. We try to launch people on their journeys of faith and persuade congregations and parishes to do things they might not want to do, and we try to hold them safe as they journey, because that is what pastoral care is all about. Bishops, as well as being pastors, need to get on the zip wire first themselves to lead by example…”

The more serious side of his sermon explored the role of shepherd as one who cares for and enables the community of Christ to fulfill its mission and to stand with and for the poor and marginalized of the world. Bishops, he concluded, “are called to ensure that they and the church which they lead are truly friends of God by reflecting the glory of God made manifest in the face of Jesus Christ. That’s an enormous privilege and, like the zip wire, a totally exhilarating ride.”
St. Nicholas’ National School, Adare celebrated its 200th birthday in 2014. A number of events took place during the year and the culmination of the celebrations was on Friday 5th December with a service of thanksgiving in St. Nicholas’ Church and afterwards the launch of the book, ‘40,000 Roll Calls Later’ by Barbara Bingham. Minister for Education, Jan O’Sullivan, was on hand to officially launch the book which tells the history of the school from its early days to the present time.

The service of thanksgiving was led by Rev. Liz Beasley, with guest preacher and past pupil, Rev. George Cliffe. He shared his memories of his time at the school and recounted with humour many of those memories. Many past pupils spanning ten decades also took part in the service.

The service was followed by a reception in the old school where guests were given a warm welcome. Margaret Brickenden, principal teacher, was M.C. for the evening and began proceedings by sounding the school’s old handheld school bell and by calling a roll of some former past pupils, many of whom remembered to answer with a resounding ‘Anseo’. Refreshments were provided and served by the Parents’ Association during the evening and members of the Book Committee promoted the sale of the book. The book is available to purchase through the school, at stnicholasadare.ias@eircom.net and locally.

Speakers included Margaret Brickenden, principal teacher; Rev. Liz Beasley, rector; James Clarke, chairperson of the BOM; Louise Smith, chairperson of the Parents’ Association; Barbara Bingham, author; Lady Geraldine Dunraven, patron; Archdeacon Wayne Carney, on behalf of the diocese and Minister Jan O’Sullivan. The speeches included the history of the school and its ethos, the many changes and improvements down through the years and its hopes for the future.

Finally, Minister O’Sullivan officially launched the book to resounding cheers and applause. There was plenty of time left to reminisce, view the slideshow of old photos and films and catch up with old school friends and staff.

The evening could not have run so smoothly were it not for the help and support of the members of the book committee, Board of Management, volunteers who helped with parking and preparations, the Parents’ Association, the school’s patron, Lady Geraldine Dunraven and all those who took part in the evening.
A few days before Christmas we were all taken aback with the death of our parish reader Edward Richardson. Edward was walking along and then collapsed and died of a heart attack. It was unexpected as he was only 47 years of age and brought us all back to the reality of how short and fragile our lives are on this earth. He will be missed at Castleconnell not only in the church, but also in the village where he was so well known and loved. We continue to hold his sister Mary in our prayers.

The lessons and carols were held in the four churches before Christmas. We also held a community carol singing at St Flannan’s Cathedral which was led by the Boru Singers under the direction of Sadie Scanlon. A collection was taken for two community organisations in Killaloe village. A big thank you to all involved in this event.

There were more than the usual crowds at the Christmas services. It is wonderful to see how family and visitors arrive at the churches at Christmas time, symbolising the pilgrimage that people make to be with friends and family and to celebrate the birth of Christ. It can also be a time when the ‘regular’ attenders are not around as they too travel elsewhere to be with family and friends. It is such a wonderful time of the year and long may we keep up the tradition of Christmas in our communities.

We had the baptism of Leo Armstrong at All Saints Church in December and so our good wishes to Gordon and Claire. At St Flannan’s Cathedral we baptised Amélie Benson and our good wishes to Keith and Claire as well. These too are such joyous occasions in the life of a parish. At Jesus’ baptism in Mark’s gospel the heavens were torn apart and God’s voice is heard; such a dramatic event. Yet often our baptisms seem so docile and maybe we should do something that they will remember. Something as important as our baptisms should be remembered and celebrated a little more, perhaps like our birthdays each year.

Ahead of us on 18 February is Ash Wednesday and there will be services in Castleconnell at 10.30 am, Mountshannon at 6.00 pm and Killaloe at 8.00 pm with the imposition of ashes, using ash made of the crosses of last Palm Sunday.

Our new bishop Kenneth Kearon will be enthroned at St Flannans Cathedral on Saturday the 7th March at 2.30 pm and everyone is most welcome to attend. It would be great to have standing room only to welcome the new bishop to this part of the world and into his seat, which is what the Latin word Cathedra means.

The Rev Lucy Green our non-stipendiary assistant in this union will be helping out in Nenagh during their interregnum as from 15 February and we wish her well in the task that faces her. This will leave a big gap in the provision of ministry in this union with her leaving and the death of Edward.

**Birr Group of Parishes**

_Birr, Lorrha, Lockeen, and Dorrha_

Rector: The Venerable R. Wayne Carney
Archdeacon of Killaloe & Clonfert
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 912 0021 Mob: 087 786 5234
Email: mapleire@eircom.net
Parish Facebook: www.facebook.com/BirrGroupOfParishes

PASTORAL

Evelyn Newton, who was such a cheerful part of Sunday mornings in Birr parish, died suddenly on the 30th of December. Her funeral, in Aughrim Church on the 30th of December. Her funeral, in Aughrim Church on the 2nd of January, saw the church overflowing with parishioners of Birr and Aughrim groups, and residents and staff from St Anne’s, St Cronan’s, and her home in West Gate. Sincere condolences to her sisters Linda Gill and June Chadwick, and all her family and many friends. Condolences as well to Peter Whyte, whose uncle, Edwin, died in Coleraine in early January. Our prayers, thoughts and best wishes are also with all those who are ill and those who care for them. Whitten Gill, Charlie Warren, Ann Dillon and Violet Harding.

**CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**

There was a wonderful display in St Mary’s Church, Nenagh before Christmas. The Mothers’ Union in the Diocese also entered into the spirit of the occasion. All those who attended were offered the opportunity to vote for their favourite and the MU tree came second! Mrs Joan Fairbrother designed and made the star on top.

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CONGRATULATIONS
Mr Tom Hayes celebrated his 90th Birthday in December. His neighbour, Mrs Joan Fairbrother made a cake for the occasion, the first time he had a birthday cake!

CHANGES
As most people will know, there are a number of vacancies in this part of the Diocese beginning this month, which will necessitate a number of temporary changes. The Revd Ruth Gill will be Priest-in-Charge of the Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes during the vacancy there. Revd Ruth will be coming back to lead worship in Birr Group of Parishes on an occasional basis. Various Diocesan and Parish readers will be leading worship in our and other Groups and Unions of Parishes.

ASH WEDNESDAY & LENT
Our Ash Wednesday service will be held at 8:00 pm on the 18th of February. Lenten services will be held on Tuesday nights, starting on the 24th of February at 8:00 pm in Birr Church. Further services and details of our Lenten programme will be announced closer to the time.

Roscrea Group of Parishes
Roscrea, Bourney, Corbally and Kyle
Rector: Rev Jane Galbraith
St. Cronan’s Rectory, Rosemount, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 21725 Mob: 087 382 5336
Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS
Christmas 2014 was duly observed in the Group of Parishes with Carol Services in all four churches. Seasonal decorations added to the Christmas worship. Attendances were excellent for all services. The Bourney Candlelight Service was so well led by the children, it was described as a pleasure to attend. Sincerest thanks to all who helped in any way to make this great feast of the Church so memorable.

INSTITUTION
Revd. Jane Galbraith was instituted as Rector of Roscrea Group of Parishes on Jan 11th, the Sunday after Epiphany, at 3.30pm. It was a truly wonderful occasion with family and friends from far and near joining the parish and ecumenical friends to witness before God the start of another chapter in the life of the Group of Parishes. Deepest appreciation and thanks are offered to all those who worked so willingly to ensure the service and the reception were a focused and uplifting time of fellowship for everyone. This generosity of patience and know-how continues to be gratefully received by Revd. Jane as she settles in to her new home and ministry.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
The service was led this year by Revd. Shannon DeLoreal of the Methodist Church in Roscrea on Monday 19th Jan.

ANNUAL “WEEK OF LIGHT”
This initiative to literally and evocatively bring light to all of Roscrea in what is designated the bleakest week of the year, ran from 17-25 Jan.
Award Ceremonies abound with a People of the Year ceremony and again this year ‘Roscrea Stands Up’, a Young People of the Year Ceremony.
We look forward to welcoming our new bishop Kenneth and his wife Jennifer among us when opportunity allows them, and in the mean-time send our very best wishes as they settle back to Ireland and their new home.

DEATH OF REV CANON ALFIE O’CONNOR
We record with respect the death of Revd. Canon Alfie O’Connor, former rector of Roscrea 1954-1962. Revd. O’Connor is well
remembered amongst our senior members as a great friend of farmers, animal lover and trainer of ponies and dogs. He was well known in the broader community. Known too, as a great family man, sound rector and lover of souls.

**Nenagh Union of Parishes**

*Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killadiernan.*

Rector (until 14 Feb): Rev Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke
Mob: 085 1474792

Priest-in-Charge (from 15 Feb): Rev Lucy Green,
Tel: 062 79941 Mob: 087 6670425;
Email: lucygreen06ie@yahoo.co.uk

With the Rector retiring on 14 February, Archdeacon Wayne Carney as Archbishop’s Commissary, has appointed Rev Lucy Green as Priest-in-Charge of the Nenagh Union of Parishes during the vacancy. We look forward to welcoming Lucy and getting to know her.

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Our Christmas Tree Festival was not ‘just’ a success; it was a marvelous, fantastic, amazing success!! Hundreds of people visited St Mary’s and were enchanted by the 71 trees on display. The tree voted the most popular was the St Mary’s No 2 School ‘Nativity’ Tree, with a wonderful tree from the Mothers’ Union, all decorated in blue, voted second most popular. Visitors were also treated to the best Afternoon Teas in Munster (some said in the whole country!)

There are so many thank-you’s – difficult to know where to begin .....to the hard-working Christmas Tree Festival Committee of course for starters. They began meeting in January 2014 so the Festival was extremely well-planned and thought out....

...to Cindy Stanley for running the catering side, and to the folk who helped serve, wash up, and who baked such lovely cakes and Christmas Tree cookies......

...to Dennis Croft, Ger Maher and team for hefting in the bases (cut to size by Caleb) for the trees to stand on, and also to Dennis for being i/c the smooth running of the electrical supply throughout....

...to Rae Croft and her team on the produce stall – many of whom had made and stirred lovely chutneys and jams during the previous summer – these were quickly snapped up by discerning customers!!!!!

...to all who donated prizes for the Raffle......

...to Brian Brislane, Diana Whitehead, Christopher Kelly, our Junior Choir and Nenagh Town Band brass group who entertained visitors with music during the afternoons.....

...to Mary, Jack and all who helped on the reception table – total takings came to more than twice what we’d expected, which is just fantastic! From this we’ll be making a donation to Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind.....

...to Marty and Patrick for all the printing....

...to Lisa, our amazing PRO who kept the Committee focused and on task and on time, and who ensured that the Festival received maximum publicity – everywhere!!

...and of course to our 71 gifted and creative Christmas Tree exhibitors!!!

So many visitors said they hoped it would happen again in Nenagh, and so – it will happen again! The Festival Committee have agreed that the Second Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival will take place next December – so you have all been given plenty of advance notice!

Of course regular worship continued throughout the season, with a lovely Carol Service in St Mary’s which raised over €400 for Ebola Crisis relief, and Community Carols in Templederry which raised €480 for Temple Street Children’s Hospital.

Our condolences go to the Moynan families in Nenagh following the death of Sadie Moynan. Sadie was a resident of Rivervale Nursing Home for the past 4½ years.

Congratulations.....to Olive and Charlie Powell on becoming grandparents again with the birth of baby Darcey to Julie and Brendan.

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**Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes**

*Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry.*

Vacant

Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Ruth Gill
Kilgolan House, Kilcormac, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 913 5341 Mob: 087 948 4402
Email: ruth-gill40@hotmail.com

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Services from this point forward to be announced

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**FAREWELL**

As I write these notes I am conscious that there is still an occasion to come when I will have a chance to say a formal farewell to you my friends in this group of parishes and the diocese. But for those of you who may not be able to be present may I thank you on behalf of myself and Nicola & Aaron for the warmth and generosity you have shown us since our arrival in August 1998. It has been a privilege to be your rector and fellow companion on the journey of life. We will always consider this place very special and it is you the parishioners who have made our time here a happy one. We leave with good memories and not a little sadness. May God bless each and every one of you as you have blessed us.

Stephen

PS - I am delighted that the Rev’d Ruth Gill is to serve as interim Priest-in-charge as one who is so familiar with the parish and has done such great work among us in the past. I know you will give
her a great welcome as she provides leadership during the time of transition.

BAPTISM
Welcome into the fellowship of the Church to Ethan James Healy, son of Heather & Brian who was baptised in St. Kieran’s Church, Cloughjordan on Sunday 7th December. We wish Ethan every blessing in his life’s journey.

Nigel Larke & Sarah O’Mahony were married on December 30th in St. Patrick’s Church, Kenmare

WEDDING BELLS
Congratulation to Nigel Larke & Sarah O'Mahony who were married on December 30th in St. Patrick’s Church, Kenmare by Canon Stephen assisted by the Rev’d Michael Cavanagh, Rector of Kenmare. It was a beautiful occasion and we wish Nigel & Sarah every blessing and happiness into the future.

Deepest sympathy to Mrs June Chadwick, on the death of her sister Evelyn Newton.

CLOUGHJORDAN JUNIOR TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT open to all young players 7-17. Saturday 14th February starting 10.30 sharp - 4.30 pm in Cloughjordan Co Tipperary. All entries by Saturday Feb 7th to youngstarstt@gmail.com. Text or phone Catherine 0876664932

Borrisokane Whist Drive Friday 13th February at 8:15pm

Shinrone Group of Parishes
Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnynt and Dunkerrin
Rector: Canon Michael Johnston (on sick leave)
Priest-in-Charge: Archdeacon Wayne Carney
The Rectory, Birr, Co. Offaly
Tel: 057 912 0021 Mob: 087 786 5234
Email: mapleire@eircom.net

Our thanks to Canon Marie for her oversight of the parish and for organising the rota of services while our rector is on the sick list. Please continue to have him and his family in your prayers.
Currently, Reverend Janet is celebrating Holy Communion in three of the four churches, twice in the month, and our Diocesan Reader, Jean Talbot has been conducting a United service on the other two Sundays. In January these services were in Aghancon and Shinrone. In February it is expected they will be in Dunkerrin and Kinnitty.

Our very best wishes go to Canon Marie for her retirement which commences on Valentine’s Day, after that date Archdeacon Wayne Carney will be priest in charge of the group of parishes.

All the churches were beautifully decorated for Christmas, and big thanks to all who helped in anyway. The United Carol Service in Shinrone was a wonderful occasion, with a really good congregation, so the singing of the familiar carols had great joy and volume. Canon Marie conducted the service, Jennifer Simmons was at the organ. It was lovely to see – and hear! – so many children who were expecting – and were not disappointed! – Santa to arrive, while the adults enjoyed a hot punch. A great atmospheric start to Christmas.

Sadly, Mrs Shirley Kenny died on the 27th December. Her funeral on the 31st in a church full of family and friends, showed how much she was loved and respected. Shirley was a regular worshipper and always involved in any church activities. She will be much missed. To her children, Mark, Joanna and Simon and their families, our sincere sympathy. Canon Arthur Minion, who is a longstanding friend of the family, preached and assisted Reverend Janet at the funeral service.

MOTHERS’ UNION
The Mothers’ Union has been very active. They organised a collection of non-perishable food items which were given to a much appreciative Roscrea Lions Club. These were handed to Jean Talbot and she filled the boot of her car!

The annual Carol Singing in Clover Lodge Nursing home was an enjoyable event. Ina Blackwell accompanied the carols on the keyboard and Reverend Janet led the prayers and linked the carols with the help of Reverend Tom Kingston, whose mother-in-law is a resident there, and both joined to give the blessing.

14 members travelled in Leslie Parson’s bus to the Christmas Tree Festival in Nenagh. A most excellent and enjoyable evening. The Mothers Union tree won second place!

On the 5th of February Aghancon Hall will be the venue at 8pm for a talk by Catherine Finney, entitled Bird Watch. All are welcome for what promises to be a very interesting evening.
Rev Janet at the annual Carol Service in Christchurch Cathedral for Pieta, a voluntary organisation which provides a pet therapy service to caring institutions.

WHIST DRIVES
The Christmas Whist drive in Aghancon had 14 tables and Shinrone, 13 tables. Events enjoyed by all present.
The February whist drive in Shinrone will be on the 14th of the month.

AGHANCON HALL
On Thursday 8th January, members of Aghancon with the local IFA held a “Men’s Night” in Aghancon Hall. Over seventy men enjoyed a meal and were then entertained to Music, Storytelling, and Irish Dancing. The evening was financed under Offaly Rural Isolation Scheme particularly for men living alone, but older men were included. Thanks to all who helped in any way.

We would like to extend a sincere welcome to Reverend Jane Galbraith as Rector of our neighbouring parish of Roscrea. Our prayers are with her that she will find a truly fulfilling ministry in her new parish. Jane, may God richly bless you and your parishioners.

ASH WEDNESDAY & LENT
There will be an Ash Wednesday service at 8:00 pm on the 18th of February in the church in Birr. Shinrone Group parishioners are invited to our joint Lenten services on Tuesday nights, starting on the 24th of February at 8:00 pm in Birr Church. Further details and locations for our Lenten programme will be announced closer to the time.

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

As we go to press the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity begins. This formalising of on-going development and sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ through action (good works) and contemplation is always within Epiphany. The Rector emphasised the centrality of unity (as opposed to mere uniformity) within Orthodox Christian doctrine in his sermon at the beginning of the week in St Columba’s and Dean Maurice Sirr was to close the theme for parishioners on the following Sunday.
The service this year was in the Cathedral Church of St Peter–Paul in Ennis on the Thursday – last year it was in St Columba’s. The speaker in the Cathedral was Fr Brendan Quinlivan and the Cathedral Choir led the music. A random ecumenical group within local churches undertakes the organising of the event which we like to think is growing in importance. We thank St Betty Curtin from the Cathedral Parish for her work in co-ordinating the Unity service.

In the same week the Drumcliffe parish was represented in a closure service at Cahercalla Hospital and Hospice for the Christmas Tree Yellow Ribbon fund-raising event in aid of the Hospital. Ribbons representing the names of loved ones to be remembered over the Festive period, missing through work or death, were offered up at a prayer vigil in the Chapel of Cahercalla. Members of Lions International and Rotary manned the Christmas tree ribbon stall, raising for the third year since its inception thousands of Euros. With their families they made up the bulk of the congregation along with staff from Cahercalla.

Looking back on Christmas with thankfulness, our gratitude goes to Rev Patricia McKee Hanna, Canon T Sullivan, Mr Edwin Bailey, Professor Steven Ellis, Mr Eckl Wurm, Mr Tim O’Connell and Mr Lawson Kirkpatrick for their assistance in leading worship. And of course to Mr Nigel Bridge on organ and piano. Christmas Eve at Kilnasoolagh with the brass ensemble (thanks Ecki) classical flute (thanks Fina) and hot drinks (thanks Ladies). Kilfenora Christingle in St Fachnans was more packed than ever – we thank Fr Ned Crosby PP for gathering his ensemble of musicians.

Profound thanks to parishioners who negotiated dark days prior to Christmas with their Christmas warmth and cheer.

SPRING officially arrives with BRIGID’S Day on Sunday February 1 when there will be a Celtic moment with vespers in St Fachnans Cathedral Church.
We look forward to Bishop Elect Ken Kearon’s Consecration in Christ Church Jan 24th and his Enthronement in St Marys Cathedral, Limerick on Saturday 7th February.
LENT begins on Wednesday 16th February with a Penitential Service in St Culumba’s and the first of a series of study gatherings – more details to come.

Clonfert Diocese

Aughrim & Creagh Unions of Parishes
Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Ahascragh, Ardrahan, Clontuskert and Woodlawn
Vacant
Priest-in-charge: To be announced.
Parish website: www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org

ENGAGEMENT
Congratulations to Susan second daughter of Leslie and Jennifer Wakefield on her engagement to Gordon Patterson of Carrigallen, Co Leitrim.

BIRTH
Congratulations to Damien and Niamh Sheppard of Clontuskert parish on the birth of a son, Noah Alexander.
HIGH MILEAGE CLUB ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH
This was something that Canon George had organised annually during his ministry with us and so it was suggested that we should carry on the tradition in his memory. It was held in the Rectory on the 5th of December and some eighteen older people sat down to enjoy a turkey and ham lunch, having first partaken of Holy Communion which was celebrated by Canon Stephen Neill. We are grateful to Canon Stephen for being with us for the occasion and also to all the kitchen staff for all their hard work. All were in agreement that this was a great occasion and that it was well worth carrying on the tradition.

CAROL SERVICES
The annual Christmas concert was held in St Catherine's Church Ahascragh on Friday 13th December. Thanks to all the various acts from the community who made this a very enjoyable evening and to Canon Trevor for acting as MC for the night. A community Carol Service was held in Woodlawn on Friday the 20th December with Tom Seale leading. On Sunday the 22nd a united carol service for the parishes of Aughrim, Clontuskert and Woodlawn was held in Aghrim church with Robert Cooke leading. Thank you to all the organists and readers who took part in these services.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
Thanks to Canon Stephan Neil for celebrating Holy Communion in Aghrim on Christmas Eve Night at 11pm and to Canon Trevor who celebrated Christmas day Eucharist in St Catherine’s Ahascragh at 10 am.

SICK LIST
We keep in our prayers those who are sick especially Mary Sinclair who is still recovering at home after her hip operation and Violet Walshe a resident of Aughrim nursing home.

SYMPATHY
To Mrs. Mary Stoddart on the death of her Aunt Maud Booth, of Kells, Co. Meath

FUNERALS
On the 28th of November Martha Seale of Woodlawn parish, passed into the nearer presence of her Lord. Martha was born with Cerebral Palsy and though confined to a special chair all her life she always had a smile and a twinkle of devilment in her eye. She was laid to rest beside her Grandparents in Woodlawn churchyard on the first of December after her funeral service which was conducted by Canon Neill assisted by Rev Robert Stotbury a cousin of the family, Father Sweeney, Mr Tom Seale (Martha’s uncle) and Mrs Valerie Kinsella, Diocesan Readers. To her Parents Alf and Ida her sisters Alma and Diane and brother Paul we extend our deepest sympathy. On the 30th December we got word that Evelyn Newton had died suddenly that morning at Westgate Home, Riverstown, Brr. Evelyn was well known to all in Aghrim parish as she grew up and spent the earlier part of her life at the old Newton homestead in Kilmalaw. Her funeral service in Aghrim church was conducted by Archdeacon Wayne Carney, assisted by Rev Ruth Gill and Father Christy McCormack. After the service she was laid to rest in the adjoining gravey whole in the presence of a very large congregation. To her sisters June Chadwick and Linda Gill, her nephews and nieces, we extend our sincere sympathy.

ARDRAHAN.
We at Ardahan are coming to terms with the loss of Canon George and have to reorganise ourselves to cope with depleted clergy numbers throughout our Diocese. We are not alone in this, but we can look forward to the consecration of Revd. Canon Kenneth Kearon in Christ Church Dublin, and Enthronement in St. Marys Cathedral Limerick on the 7th of February at 2-30pm and in St Flannan’s Killaloe on the 7th of March. Looking back at the final quarter of 2014, we had two very successful fund raising events. The LENREC black bag collection which was supported by some of the other churches in the Aghrim/ Ballinasloe Group and we ran a very successful Jumble Sale. These combined events raised some much needed funds for our new Sunday school building. The building is at last complete and the children can receive their education in a much safer, and a more child-friendly environment.

The Children’s Christingle contributed to our Carol Service and it was great to raise our voices in praise to the upcoming birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the annual Croagh Patrick climb 2014 young Zara Black was one of three of the youngest climbers with other members of her family. The climb raised the fantastic sum of €41,238 for Galway Hospice. Well done Zara!

Thank you to Canon Stephen Neill for his Ministry in our Parishes since last September and while we are sorry to lose him we wish him well in his ministry in Celbridge Union of parishes.

Clonfert Group of Parishes
Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna
Rector: The Rev. Alan Nevin
Priest in Charge: Very Rev. Patrick L. Towers
Tel: (090) 9684547. Mob: (086) 8140649
Email: towers@iol.ie

SALVE ET VALE
We extend our warmest wishes to our new Bishop and his wife, Jennifer, to these United Dioceses and look forward to welcoming him to our Parish.
We say farewell to the Rector of our neighbouring parish of Cloughjordan, Canon Stephen Neill. We will greatly miss him and wish him and his wife, Nicola and son, Aaron, a very happy time in Celbridge.
We would like to record our appreciation and gratitude to Rev’d Ruth Gill who has assisted us in so many services over the past year. Ruth will be looking after Cloughjordan for the vacancy there. Likewise Archdeacon Carney has been most gracious in his care of us in his role of in loco episcopus.
Parish Reader, Jerome Phair, has given mighty service to the Parish. Having said this he would immediately refer me to many others who play an invaluable part in creating, in maintaining, a vibrant parish. And he is right too.
We welcome too Rev’d Jane Galbraith as the nearby Rector of Roscrea and hope she will spend many happy years in North Tipperary. We have been so blessed by the service of Maureen Moss as the superb scriptor of these Newslink notes. Her time doing this has alas come sadly to an end. Thank you very much Maureen for your energies and talent in this regard. See below an advertisement for a successor to Maureen.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE
We had some wonderful Christmas Services and so many thanks for all the contributions of our organists, our readers of the traditional readings, our flower arrangers, church yuletide decorationists, refreshment providers, crib makers, and candle lighters. Great credit to all those whose singing and angelic tones enhanced our sense that angels were truly singing. Thank you so very much indeed.
(I attach a picture of people arriving for the Carol Service in Eyrecourt. The church filled up and this most attractive church in a classic anglo-gothic style was lit only by candlelit for its most memorable celebration).

Rev’d Patrick would like to thank each parish for their generous, very generous, Santa filled Christmas pressie. He would like to say how much he has enjoyed the past year with all of you in group of parishes: it has been so life enhancing. Thank you so much.

PARISH CIRCULAR
• Marriage. Congratulations to Avril Williams, daughter of Millar and Pamela, to John Hargreaves in Mountrath in St Peter’s Church. Rector Canon Ian Poulton handled consummately the gravity and glamour of the Saturday afternoon. The Rev’d Patrick Towers was present in the sanctuary to witness the marriage, to join in the remembrance of the groom’s faithfully departed parents and to admire the sparkling bridal gown, male outfits to make Victoria Beckham smile, and a large glam-filled congregation.

• Eyrecourt’s Advent Cake Sale for the Galway hospice raised €1,250 and the Mission Sunday Collection raised €350. The Carol Service in Eyrecourt raised €260 for the Homeless which was sent to Cope Galway.

• The St Paul’s Film Night was an outstanding event in the Social Calendar. The film seen was “Heaven is for Real” which invited many observations on Heaven and near-death experiences. Our considerable thanks to Val Bertram who drove the idea of a Film Night. And to the team who ran the very successful Advent evening.

• The Funeral took place in St Paul’s Church Banagher of Louis Kelso on December 15th. We extend our sympathies to his son and daughter and their families.

• Portumna Christ Church’s Ecumenical Service will take place on Friday 23rd January when certain students of Portumna Community School with their teachers will join together for a jointly conducted service with the Chaplain of the School, the Rev’d Patrick and Diocesan Reader Ann Menheneott.

POSITION AVAILABLE
A highly intelligent resourceful individual, or AI Roboscriptor, with exceptional literary skills sought to undertake the writing of these notes monthly. We welcome applications from writers, agriculturists, musicians, artists for humanity or others who may be pursuing other goals in the balance of their time. Remuneration: pro bono.

WOW
It is quite exhausting writing these notes: so even more thanks to you Maureen and to our dearly departed friend Les.

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

Curate Assistant: Rev Edna Wakely
50 Ballinvoher, Fr. Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick
Tel: 061-302038 Mob: 085-1450804
Email: ednawakely@hotmail.com

BEREAVEMENTS
Our deepest sympathy to the Wyse Jackson family on the death of Lois Wyse Jackson, wife of the Late Bishop Wyse Jackson, who died in Dublin in her 93rd year on 4th of January; to Norman Campion (ex-parishioner St. Michael’s Church) and family on the death of Matilda Campion who died on 5th of January.

CONGRATULATIONS
... to Gillian Lyttle and Nick Lee on their recent engagement; to Kelly McKenna Ruggiero & Daniel Ruggiero from Ohio, who were married earlier in 2014, and had their new rings blessed by the Dean in St Mary’s Cathedral on 4th Jan 2015, following the Healing Service and to the Rev’d Jane Galbraith who became the next rector for the Roscrea group on 11 January.

CATHEDRAL CHOIR NEWS
Congratulations to Carol Millar who was formally made a full member of St Mary’s Cathedral Choir, and was vested with her new white surplice; to Saoirse Kennedy and Laura Howes on achieving
their Bronze Award and Lauren Hannon on achieving her Silver Award in their recent RSCM Voice for Life examinations.

ST. MICHAEL’S WHIST DRIVE

The Christmas drive was held on Saturday 6th December – The Raffle Prize winners were 1st Hilary Park (Hamper kindly sponsored by Niall Johnston) and other raffle winners were Bertie Alfred, Noreen Johnston and Michael Casey. Many thanks all the ladies who supplied the lovely mince pies and tray bakes and to all those who donated many lovely prizes. On 10th of January the Raffle winners were Tony Hally, Lindsay Boyle and Tim Keehan. Next whist Drive in St. Michael’s is on Sat 7th Feb and Villiers Square Sat 21st February both at 7.30pm.

DECORATING OUR CHURCHES FOR CHRISTMAS

Sincere thanks to those who helped decorate and/or supplied materials. The results of their talents and ability were much admired and appreciated.

MOTHERS’ UNION HAMPERS

MU would like to thank most gratefully everyone who donated items for their hampers this year. Two hampers were made up – one for Clare Street Men’s Hostel and, one for Thomond House Women’s Hostel and also individual gifts for the women’s hostel were made up. Both Hostels were very appreciative.

THANK YOU

Dean Sandra and Rev’d Edna both wish to thank all who sent good wishes, cards and gifts – this is much appreciated. They both wish all a healthy, happy and prosperous new year 2015.

MANY THANKS

... to all who made the whole season from Advent through to Christmas so special – our choirs and organist, and organ scholar, our readers, our flower arrangers, those who provided refreshments, those who clean our churches, and who prepare newsletters and service sheets, those who contributed to the MU Hampers for the Men’s and Women’s Hostels and the gifts taken to St Vincent de Paul for those in need. It was good to see so many people turning out to support their church over the Christmas period – all services were well attended, and Abington Church was literally packed to capacity for its Carol Service on 22nd December and the collection for St Vincent de Paul totalled €1,040 which was a wonderful result – Special thanks to Mrs Roche for the refreshments at Madaboy after the service. Many thanks also to those who provided refreshments at St Michael’s Church and at the Cathedral.

OVERSEAS LINKS

Our friends in Anhalt in Germany are looking to progress a musical link with Limerick City Parish, and are also hoping that there may be an exchange involving a visit to Anhalt in 2016. We also continue to support our link with the Diocese of Swaziland – Bishop Ellinah will be in Ireland for the consecration of our new bishop, and some of us hope to be able to meet in the margins of that busy day.

CATHEDRAL NEWS

Early morning listeners to RTE Lyric fm on the Sunday after Christmas were able to re-live the atmosphere and enjoyment of Britten’s children’s opera Noye’s Fludde. Six performances of this seminal work had taken place in St Mary’s Cathedral in late March, as part of Limerick City of Culture, and RTE Lyric fm had kindly recorded the Saturday performance as part of their support of the event. This recording was broadcast on the programme ‘Classical Kids’, presented by Ian McGlynn.

MARKING THE END OF LIMERICK’S CITY OF CULTURE YEAR

On 27 December St Mary’s Cathedral was privileged to host the final event of Limerick’s year as City of Culture – a fabulous concert of the music of Michael O Suilleabhain, with the RTE Concert Orchestra conducted by David Brophy, and with the composer himself as piano soloist. The event was recorded by TG4 and broadcast in mid-January.

BELLS

Following a long tradition, the Dean led prayers with the ringers in the bell ringing chamber, before the old year 2014 was ‘run out’ and then the 12 tolls for midnight, followed by the ringing in of a new year 2015 – we hope it will be a healthy and prosperous year for you all.

THE HEALING SERVICE

... is held on alternate months in St Mary’s Cathedral – this service of Holy Communion offers the laying on of hands, and anointing; and don’t forget that you can come forward on behalf of someone else for healing, as well as for yourself. Next one is on Sunday 8th of March.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service this year has been prepared by the women of The Bahamas and, in Limerick, will be held in St Mary’s Cathedral, on Friday 6th March, starting at 7.00pm. For those who do not like to come out at night there will also be a service in Villiers Square on Thursday 5th, starting at 11.00am. Refreshments will be served at 10.30am. All, men and women, are welcome to either of these services.

Adare and Kilmaclovil Group of Parishes

Adare, Croom, Kilmaclovil & Kilpeacon

Rector: Canon Liz Beasley

The Rectory, Adare, Co. Limerick.

Tel: 061 396227 Mob: 087-7199750

Email: revlizadare@gmail.com

It was a great month in our parishes. We started December with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of St. Nicholas National School. The festivities included a service of celebration and a reception, with the launch of the book 40,000 Roll Calls Later, by member Barbara Bingham. Present for the evening were a number of past pupils,
including four over 90 years old, and Minister of Education Jan O’Sullivan. See page 20.

On 18th December, Ronnie Baker, of Adare, and Martina Forde, of Galway, were married at St. Nicholas, Adare, with the reception afterwards at the Dunraven Arms Hotel. All who attended rejoiced with the couple on their wedding day. Congratulations, Ronnie and Martina!

Two days later, St. Nicholas was again the venue for a different kind of service: the funeral of Rose Ruttle, who had grown up in Adare and moved to Dublin about 70 years ago. She was buried in the family plot in the old cemetery.

Meanwhile, the churches were preparing for Christmas. The Sunday school at Kilpeacon Church put on a play on the true gifts of Christmas. Kilmallock held their annual carol service, but with a new twist: in this one, as we heard the story and sang the carols, the children brought forward the figures to build the créche, including a bright homemade star to shine over the whole scene. Following the service, 78 people, representing all the parishes, gathered at the Deebert House Hotel in Kilmallock for a Christmas dinner and singing. Carol services in Adare the Sunday before Christmas and in Croom the Sunday after filled out the schedule, capped by celebrations of Holy Communion in all the churches on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The last event of the Christmas season was an open house and Epiphany party at the Rectory. Rev. Liz and her husband, Kirk, wanted to share a few bits of food from the American South and to invite the people of the parishes into the beautiful Rectory that they had worked so hard to spruce up before Liz and Kirk arrived. The weather was kind and graced us all with sunlight streaming in the front windows, a marvel to many who had been in the Rectory on previous occasions.

In Adare, the Office of Public Works has been working on the riverbanks, including the area in front of the Rectory, to remove debris, and to shore up or build embankments, all in an effort to prevent the kind of flooding that St. Nicholas experienced during the storm last February.

And on 9 January, Barbara Bingham was commissioned as a Diocesan Reader in an evening service at St. Nicholas. Archdeacon and Bishop’s Commissary Wayne Carney was celebrant and preacher for the service.

In the last issue of Newslink, we asked everyone to save the date for the celebration of St. Nicholas’s 700th anniversary. The date has changed! On the weekend of 22-24 May, which is also the weekend of Pentecost, the parish will hold a flower festival, in which the history of the church will be depicted and symbolised in flower arrangements. A variety of other activities will fill out the schedule for the weekend. So, please, save this date! More details to come.

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes

Happy New year from all of us here in Rathkeale, we know it is a bit late but this is the first Newslink since before Christmas. Our parish has had its ups and downs over the holiday season and is getting ready for a busy few weeks in February and early March. Lent is coming up quickly, and there will be a special service for Ash Wednesday on Wednesday 18th Feb at 8:00 p.m. in St. Mary’s Askeaton. We will also be having a Lent study programme, details will be published shortly.

March 6th is World Day of Prayer, and there will be a special service at Ballingrane Methodist Church at 8:00 p.m. Everyone is very welcome.

There was much joy on 28th December with the baptism of Zoey White Bowen, daughter of Samantha and Trent Bowen and granddaughter of Simon and Hilary White. We also rejoice with Nora Fitzgerald on the birth of her first grandchild, in Geneva.

Some of you may have followed the story of Mitch Power who was reported missing from Lucan in January. Her body was found just as these Newslink notes were being prepared. We extend our deepest and most prayerful sympathies to her husband, Mike, and son, Aylmer. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.
Archdeacon Susan Watterson,
Teach an tSolais, Ashe St, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066 719 5416 Mob: 087 689 2025
Email: tralee@ireland.anglican.org

Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to our Christmas Services, either during worship or in decorating the buildings, it was greatly appreciated by all who attended.

The 'Thousandaire' Quiz night at the Ballyroe Heights Hotel was a great success and in excess of €25,000 was raised. Many thanks to all who worked so hard to bring in the sponsorship and advertisers it was a brilliant effort. Thank you also to those who sponsored, advertised and gave spot prizes and vouchers, as well as those who took part in the quiz - it was a fabulous 'fun' evening, thank you again.

February will be a busy month; Ash Wednesday falls on the 18th when there will be the usual service of Holy Communion at 11am in St John’s and also in Ballymacelligott at 8pm. This begins our traditional series of Wednesday services in Ballymac throughout the season of Lent. This year there will also be a short Lenten series of four Bible Studies in Teach an tSolais which will be led by Mr. Mike Culloty. The studies will be held at 8pm on Mondays: 23 February, 2, 9, and 16 March, and will focus on famous characters in the Bible. Since Lent will be taken up by the foregoing, it has been decided to postpone the planned Table Quiz until after Easter.

The proposed Book Club, which will begin in April, is mainly intended as a social activity, an opportunity to get to know each other better and to invite friends and family who would not usually attend church events. It will not be based on religious books but on novels proposed by members; we may be surprised by the way in which our faith informs our opinions. Just one book per month will be chosen to be discussed at the end of the month, members will take it in turns to recommend a book they have enjoyed and will lead the discussion at the next meeting. All are welcome; the venue will be arranged nearer the time.

Because there were so many Confirmation candidates last year - to keep the classes smaller there will be another Confirmation this year. Bishop Kenneth Kearon has agreed that he will visit parishes for Confirmations, but the date has yet to be arranged. The commencement date for Confirmation classes will be announced as soon as dates convenient for tutors have been discussed. In the meantime anyone who would like to consider Confirmation this year and is in sixth class or older, please contact Rev. Sue for details.

We continue to remember Bishop Kenneth and Jennifer in our prayers and also Rev. Jane and Rev. Máirt as they settle into their new parishes.

Archdeacon Sue has chosen her Lenten reading for this year – it is In God’s Hands by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Amazon review reads; “In God’s Hand; the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent Book. In this little gem of a book, Archbishop Desmond Tutu distils the wisdom forged through a childhood of poverty and apartheid, an adulthood lived in the glare of the world’s media, and the long and agonising struggle for truth and reconciliation in South Africa, into the childlike simplicity which Jesus tells us characterises the Kingdom of God.”

Our prayerful sympathy remains with the family of Jack Tonra, thinking especially of Linda, Ben, Claire, Michael, Helen and Brian at this time; and also with Peter, Angela, Pamela Colm, Jennifer and all the family and friends of Hester Hill. May Hester and Jack rest in peace and rise in glory.

DINGLE UNION NOTES

Revd. Jane’s installation service in St. Cronin’s Church, Roscrea was very well attended by members of the Tralee and Dingle Group. Afterwards they were treated to supper in the local Community School, where someone was heard to remark that if they feed their new Rector as well as they had been fed, Jane will never be short of food! An enjoyable evening was had by all and we wish Jane very blessing as she opens a new chapter. We were sorry to hear of the death of the Rev. Canon Alfie O’Connor. Alfie, a native of Ventry, was educated in Kilkenny College and Trinity College and was curate in Bessbrook Parish, Co. Armagh before being appointed Rector of Roscrea. He finished his ministry as Rector of Dungannon parish in Co. Tyrone. Alfie enjoyed sport and had played for Ulster with the legendary Jack Kyle. Coming from a West Kerry farming background, he never lost his interest in livestock, and often judged at agricultural shows in the North. Our thoughts are with our fellow parishioners in St James’; Eleanor, Jacqualine, and John, on the death of their uncle.

Killarney and Aghadoe Union of Parishes

Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross
Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Simon J Lumby
The Rectory, Rookery Road, Ballycasheen, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 66 31832 Mob:086-8703997
Email: killarney@ardfert.anglican.org

CHRISTMAS

The church looked exceptionally well over the Christmas period thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of decorators – thanks! This was just as well because we had excellent attendances at all services throughout the period and hopefully this will continue throughout 2015.

BIBLE STUDY

Throughout Advent Rev. Simon hosted a series of relevant bible study evenings in the Aghadoe Room and these were enthusiastically received by all of the participants. Following on from the series, a Christian Meditation Group meets every Friday night at 7 pm for a
one hour session of developing and experiencing the power of the prayer of silence.

SOCIAL
Simon and Noleen have hosted several social events at the Rectory in Ballycasheen throughout the Christmas and new year period on Friday afternoons. However, because many of the congregation are working during the day, this has been extended to an evening “open house” session at 8 pm on Friday evenings where the emphasis is strongly on tea, chat and chocs.

THE WINDOWS
On Sunday January 11th early arrivers for Holy Communion discovered severe damage to several of the stained glass windows. The deliberate and violent damage, which was caused by a person or persons unknown, resulted in three glass security screens being smashed and one of the most famous stained glass windows being brutally attacked. The Nativity window was driven in almost a foot into the church by the force of the attack and the lead flashing and glass itself were rendered unfit for any level of repair.

Garda technical experts examined the damage and gave advice as to how they would be following up. It is thought that entry to the grounds was from the rear during the late night as all of the streets around St Mary’s are very busy up to the small hours of the morning. CCTV from various premises and the Town Council is currently being examined by Gardai in an effort to determine the perpetrator(s). As I write this, estimates for immediate repairs and strengthened protective screening are coming in and the Select Vestry will meet shortly to determine what we are going to do and how to fund this very unwelcome additional expense at a time when our coffers are stretched anyway.

That said, as Christians we must not lose focus on the Word of God in our attempts to find out who did this and why. Our first act must be one of forgiveness for whoever did this, not retribution. Let us all pray that he/she will take time to reflect on their actions and the futility of such violence. Let us pray that such reflection will lead them towards a more benign approach to life. It goes without saying that local and national media tried to make a lot more out of this act of vandalism which occurred during the immediate wake of those horrible scenes in Paris. At this time it would appear that there was no murky religious motives behind the attack and, hopefully, it was just a random unpremeditated act of stupidity. Either way, forgiveness must be our prime motivation and prayers were held in church during the week following the incident.

Kilcolman Union of Parishes
Kilcolman, Kiltallagh and Glenbeigh
Vacant
Priest-in-Charge: The Rev Jim Stephens
Kilderry, Milltown, Co. Kerry
Mob: 087 052 9107
Email: stephens.j@temmler.eu or stiofain.s@gmail.com

SERVICES
Kiltallagh 9.45am, except 1st Sunday at 7pm
HC 1st & 4th
MP 2nd & 3rd
Kilorglin 11.00 pm
HC 2nd & 4th
MP 1st & 3rd

CONGRATULATIONS
To Barbara Buckley who was commissioned as a Diocesan Lay Reader in St Michael’s church Killorglin. The Rev Mairt Hanley presided and preached at the service. Archdeacon Sue Watterson presented Barbara to Archdeacon Wayne Carney who conducted the act of commissioning. We wish Barbara well in her ministry.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
As we go to press we look forward to this service and it is the turn of Killorglin RC Parish to host the event to be held in St James Church on the 20th Jan at 7pm. The preacher for the service is the Rev Conor Bradley who has recently been ordained to the Diaconate for the Diocese of Kerry.

FAREWELL
We said farewell and thanks to the Rev Máirt Hanley and his family who have left the parish after almost four years amongst us. Máirt is now the Rector of Baltinglass in Co. Wicklow. His final service
was the carol service in Killorglin at which he was presented with gifts as a token of our appreciation of his ministry in mid Kerry. We were joined by Fr Michael Flemming who also spoke and made a presentation to Máirt.

The Men’s Shed choir as usual led the singing at the service, which was followed by light refreshments in the hall. Many thanks to all who prepared the hall for the tea and did the wash up afterwards.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
The season of Advent began with a candle lit service in Kiltallagh Church and the season of Christmas ended in Kiltallagh with an evening service of Holy Communion on the 4th of January. Killorglin hosted the carol service. The Christmas morning services were also well attended and thanks is due to all who took the time to decorate our churches for this holy season.

CHRISTINGLE
This service will be held in Killorglin Church on the 7th Feb at 11am.

TUESDAY EVENING
Tuesday is the evening on which we hold mid-week services and meetings. These will include evening prayer. we are also planning on doing mindfulness once a month instead of evening prayer.

ASH WEDNESDAY
As we look towards Lent, the Ash Wednesday service will be led by the children of Kiltallagh school in Kiltallagh Church. Time to be announced.

SYMPATHY
Sympathy is extended to Stan and Ita Brick on the death of Ita’s mother Tess Kearney of Cordal Post Office, Castleisland. Tess was in her 95th year.

Kenmare & Dromod Union of Parishes
Kenmare, Sneem, Waterville and Valentia
Priest-in-Charge: Rev. Michael Cavanagh
St Patrick’s Rectory, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 664 8566 Mob: 087 1606312
Email: michael.cavanagh@eircom.net

St Patrick’s were delighted to host the wedding of Nigel Larke & Sarah O’Mahoney on 30 December. The ceremony president was the Revd Canon Stephen Neill, a family friend, who managed to evade border controls on his journey from Cloughjordan to the island Kingdom.

Closer to home, Praise ’n Play mum Lyndsay Hill-Cottingham was baptised on 28th December during the Morning Communion service – a blessing not just for Lyndsay and her family, but for the whole congregation as we were reminded of our own baptism and the cross we wear on our forehead.

OUR GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S GIFTS
From God comes every good and perfect gift.
From God comes every good and perfect gift
The rich soil, the smell of the fresh turned earth:
Come from God.
The keenness of a winters’ frost,
men’s breath and horses, steaming:
Come from God.
The hum of a tractor, the gleam of a cutting edge:
Come from God.
The wheeling of the birds, men’s shouts and laughter:
Come from God.
The seamed hand, the knotted arm, the sweat of the brow,
the skill of the ploughman:
Come from God.
The beauty of a clean-cut furrow,
the sweep of a well-ploughed field:
Come from God.
Blessed be God in all his gifts:
And holy in all his works.

January 11th saw our annual Plough Sunday service, where a plough is brought into church and the gathered congregation ask God’s blessing on all those involved in Agriculture in the coming year. The traditional liturgy is very beautiful, and the thanksgiving prayer is reproduced below. We would be very happy to share our experience with other parishes should they wish to try out a similar service on the first Sunday following Epiphany next year.

OUR GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S GIFTS
From God comes every good and perfect gift.
From God comes every good and perfect gift
The rich soil, the smell of the fresh turned earth:
Come from God.
The keenness of a winters’ frost,
men’s breath and horses, steaming:
Come from God.
The hum of a tractor, the gleam of a cutting edge:
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Come from God.
The beauty of a clean-cut furrow,
the sweep of a well-ploughed field:
Come from God.
Blessed be God in all his gifts:
And holy in all his works.

"Next Sunday I think I’ll do a new take on the Parable of the Virgins and the Oil."
2015 started well after a wonderful Christmas season. We had services Christmas Day and we had a great open house at the Manse to see the decorations. Then we had a wonderful Covenant Service with Communion on the 4th.

Looking ahead we will have our monthly Ministers’ meeting in Mitchelstown and on the 18th we will lead the ecumenical meeting in Charleville.

Our women will lead the World Day of Prayer meeting in Ballingrane. We look forward to a Bible Study starting in February.

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

Rather than supplying notes this month I have asked Franco Jumbo to report on the Conference he attended back in November.

Yours in Christ, Vicki

- report by Franco Jombo, Christ Church Limerick

International Justice Mission (IJM) is an International Christian and a human rights organisation that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM was established in UK in 2006 and it is a registered charity organisation. International Justice Mission’s lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to promote efficient and effective functioning public justice systems.

IJM staff work in 18 field offices in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to secure tangible and sustainable protection for victims of injustice through implementation of national laws through local court systems.

IJM headquarters is in Washington DC from where it oversees and directs IJM field operations. There are at the moment four affiliated offices located in the UK, Canada, Germany, Australia and the Netherlands. IJM UK commenced operations in 2006 under the leadership of Terry Tennens, with a number of objectives such as:

- To raise awareness of injustices in the world and how IJM responds;
- To gather support, both of finances and prospective employees;
- To form partnerships that strengthen and expand IJM’s global operations; and
- To engage Westminster and Brussels with the aims of promoting efficient and effective functioning public justice systems and mobilising intervention on behalf of the oppressed.

Under IJM Casework Collaboration, the IJM investigators, lawyers and social workers intervene in individual cases of abuse in partnership with local authorities to ensure proper support for the victim and appropriate action against the abuser. Such collaboration is essential to obtain convictions against individual perpetrators and to strengthen local justice systems.

CASE WORK

IJM is presently responding through individual casework. IJM confronts aggressive human violence: violence that strips widows and orphans of their property and livelihoods, violence that steals dignity and health from children trafficked into forced prostitution, violence that denies freedom and security to families trapped in slavery.

This violence can only be stopped when the power of the law is brought to intervene on behalf of those who need it, and when people of good will will contribute their financial and professional resources to insisting that it stops.

IJM’s casework pattern is designed to eradicate victimisation and violence on the level of the individual, and supports efficient and effective functioning public justice systems where the poor urgently needs an advocate.

CORE COMMITMENTS

The Core Commitments of IJM are Christian-based and are in compliance with the tradition of slave trade abolitionist William Wilberforce and transformational leaders like Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King, Jr. The foundation of IJM’s work is based on the cornerstone of the Biblical call to justice enunciated in Isaiah 1:17: “Seek justice, protect the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow”.

IJM pursues to restore to victims of oppression the things that God intends for them: their freedoms, their liberty, their dignity, and the benefits of their labour. IJM helps victims of oppression regardless of their religion, ethnicity background, or gender identity.

MOVING FORWARD

IJM has seen significant progress in its eradication of oppression and injustice in the past 10 years, and remains committed to forging ahead and expanding its work in the next decade. See their web site: www.ijmuk.org.

MAKE DARKNESS LIGHT

I attended IJM UK’s first National Conference ‘MAKE DARKNESS LIGHT’ at St Paul’s Hammersmith, London on Saturday 15th November 2014, along with more than 300 other delegates. This Conference was slated to fulfil the scripture, “I will make darkness light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them” Isaiah 42:16.

The Conference schedule kept the delegates very busy from 10.00-20.30, including presentations, workshops and plenaries, as well as worship and intercessory prayer. The main plenary topic was “How can we engage in local and global justice, here in the UK, E Ireland?”, to which contributions were made by Gary Rucci on the Church Perspective, Baroness Caroline Cox on the Political Perspective and Marcus Hill on the Business Perspective. Shawn Kohl, Field Officer and Director of IJM Kenya, was interviewed and gave the keynote address on ‘Prayer and IJM's Vision’.
The Gneeveguilla Home Fellowship group and the Bible Survey Group “Step by Step Bible Group” is open to anyone who wants to grow in their faith. Bible study: every Tuesday 8pm in The Lighthouse. 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.

SUNDAY SERVICES
10:00am – Borrisokane
11:30am – Cloughjordan on 1st & 2nd Sundays
10:15am – Cloughjordan on 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays
11:45am – Roscrea
7:00pm – Shinrone

SPECIAL EVENTS AND SERVICES
GLOBAL VISION
All are invited to this special event on Saturday 21st February, 10:30 – 4:00pm at Gurteen Agricultural College. Special guest speakers are Anton Scheele (from the School for Deaf in Lebanon), Rev. Joseph Donkoh (from the Ghana Woodlot Project) and Ruth Cooke (from the International Justice Mission). Conference fee: €10 (Lunch), €6 (Tea). Please contact Rev Shannon if you plan to attend.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
All are welcome to Shinrone Methodist Church on Wednesday 18th February at 8pm for a service where we acknowledge our lives are in God’s hands and set our heart and minds on repentance for the Lenten season ahead.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES
St. Cronan’s Boys’ Brigade (Roscrea) – The Company will meet on Fridays 13th and 27th February at 7pm in the Methodist Church Hall.
St. Cronan’s Youth Club (Roscrea) – Our joint Col/Methodist youth club will meet on Saturday 28th February from 7-9pm in the Methodist Church Hall for Papa John’s Pizza Night. Contact Rosie Gee at 086 1973311 if you have any queries. Cost is €2/head/night.

Bible-Study – Our weekly study resumes on Monday 26 January at 7:30 in Borrisokane and on Thursday 29 January at 8pm in Roscrea. MWI – Cloughjordan/Borrisokane chapter will meet at 8pm on Tuesday 17th February in Cloughjordan church for “Everyday Cakes Made Special” by Caroline Goulding. MU and ICA are invited.

MWI – Roscrea chapter will meet at 8pm on Tuesday 10th February in the church hall for a medical talk led by church member and nurse, Georgina Armitage.

Lenten blessings,
Rev. Shannon DeLaureal
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Headmistress - Jill A Storey M.A. H.DIP. Ed (Hons) DIP. in REM. Ed. (Hons)

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- Comprehensive Transition Year Programme with wide ranging opportunities.
- Varied and multi-cultural society.
- Protestant ethos.
- Reasonable fees.
- Grant assistance, bursaries & scholarships available.

Bursaries & Discounts
In addition to the SEC and other grants available Villiers School offer the following assistance with fees: Hannah Villiers Bursary, Governors’ Bursary, Villiers School Bursary. Sibling Discounts.

Scholarships
Four Academic Scholarships, currently €1,000 per year, are awarded based on the results of the scholarships exams set each May for students entering Form 1. These are awarded to the best Day Girl, Day Boy, Boarding Girl and Boarding Boy.

Prompt Payment Draw
All families who pay before a specified date each semester are entered into a draw for a refund of their net fees for that semester. Please contact our School Bursar for specific information on all our grants, scholarships and bursaries. All enquiries are dealt with in the strictest of confidence - bursar@villiers-school.com