Rev Michael Cavanagh reflects on Epiphany p.20

The Adoration of the Magi, Quentin Metsys 1526, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
President Michael D Higgins visits Errislannan

The trauma of vandalism done to a sacred space, which in the hearts of plain people is more than mere bricks and mortar, is a hard thing to bear. The parishioners, neighbours and friends of Holy Trinity Errislannan, so badly damaged in recent weeks, are still coming to terms with the hurt of finding their church broken and battered. So it was a marvellous encouragement to them, and to their Priest–in-Charge, the Very Revd Stan Evans, to receive a visit on Friday 10th November from Uachtarán na hÉireann Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina.

The President walked through the church with Mr Evans, accompanied by Cathaoirleach Galway County Council, Eileen Manion. Together they examined the interior of Holy Trinity in its present state which, far from being restored, is now at least in a less chaotic condition than it was a fortnight ago.

The President met with a group of people who will undertake the repairs and refurbishment. He spoke with Joan Johnson of the Friends of St Flannan’s, a benevolent association which has contributed to the life of Holy Trinity for the past 51 years. Ms Johnson is a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), a body of Christians who have had a long connection with Errislannan.

President Higgins was clearly moved by what he saw. He expressed his compassion for the local community and offered words of great encouragement and support as they begin their work towards the day when Holy Trinity will once again be open for worship.

As the President and his wife left the Errislannan Peninsula, the Very Revd Stan Evans commented:

‘The outpouring of support for the Church community in Errislannan following the vandalism at Holy Trinity church has been quite incredible. From small donations from pensioners, to whole congregations of all denominations raising funds across the country, our hearts have been lifted by this outpouring of generosity and solidarity. We thank everyone for their support. The church will be totally restored ready for the summer services and without doubt there will be large numbers of people who will wish to view the restoration.’

The Errislannan Church Appeal is open for donations at www.gofundme.com/errislannan-church-appeal.

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Homes matter to Irish people. Young couples want to buy their own home, and renting is always seen as second best. A house gives us a sense of place, a place to belong to, a place to start a family. When abroad on holiday, Irish people always look at the Estate Agents windows, not because they want to buy somewhere in the sun (though that would be nice!) but out of curiosity as to how people live in that area, the sort of houses they inhabit and so on. TV programmes about other people's houses are always popular.

Some people trace this Irish obsession with having a home back to the famine with its legacy of evictions, when loss of one's home was the last stage on a spiral of despair.

Whatever its reasons or background we do see having a place of one's own as a basic right, an essential requirement for children and family life. Homelessness causes untold long-term damage to one's sense of self-worth and well-being, and for children brings long-term consequences which last into adult life.

For the Taoiseach to suggest that homelessness in Ireland isn't too bad compared with other countries is crass. For the head of a major housing agency to suggest that people sleeping rough in the street should be helped only by the "system", and those who give a sandwich or a cup of soup "aren't helping the situation" is simply offensive. No doubt both speakers will say they were misunderstood, and perhaps they were, but until homelessness in Ireland is addressed comprehensively such remarks will be seen as offensive and will grate with the public.

At Christmas, having anyone homeless in Ireland is wrong and we mustn't let up on our pressure on politicians, until no one is homeless or sleeping in a hostel or shelter.

This social issue will dominate our Christmas celebrations this year again. That isn't surprising, as at the heart of our Christmas story is the very real experience of a young couple expecting a baby, seeking shelter in a barn in Bethlehem, where their baby was born, because there was no better place to stay. Soon that new family became refugees in Egypt, driven out of their homeland by a murderous regime.

Homelessness and being a refugee are part of that Christmas story, and sadly that resonates down the ages, to our own time in Europe where still homelessness and refugees and migrants are part of our 21st century story.

That young baby grew up to bring a message of love and transformation of life, a message of God and his unconditional love for humankind. The glowing light from the stable in Bethlehem is a sign of hope in a cruel world.

May that symbol of hope, transformation and love shine brightly in your homes, your families and your friends this Christmastime, as we celebrate again the wonderful birth of a Saviour in Bethlehem.

Early as it is, may I wish you a very happy and holy Christmas.

Sincerely,
+Kenneth.

The Rt. Revd. Kenneth Kearon,
Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe,
Kilbane House, Golf Links Road,
Castletroy, Limerick V94 X0EF
Tel: +353 (0)61 333635
Email: bishop@limerick.anglican.org

Diocesan Calendar
To place an entry please email the Editor at joc_sanders@iol.ie.

Sat 2nd December GFS Christmas Craft Day, Birr
Sun 3rd December, 7pm Advent Carol Service by candlelight, St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick.
Sat 9th December UDYC Overnight Trip to Dublin, St John the Baptist Parish Church & Centre, Seafield Ave, Clontarf, Dublin (2nd level up)
Wed 13th – Sun 17th December, 1-6pm Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Church, Nenagh (Carol service Sun 4pm)
Thu 28th December UDYC Mega Christmas Day Trip to Dublin (10+)
Sat 20th January 2018 UDYC at National Youth Forum, City North Hotel, Julianstown (15-18)
Mon 22nd January 2018, 11am–3pm CME – Preparing for Lent & Easter (venue to be advised)
Mon 12th February 2018, 11am–3pm CME – Interfaith Day (meeting Jews & Muslims), Limerick City (venue to be advised)
Thu 22nd February 2018 Finance Committee 4pm, followed by Diocesan Council 7.30pm

See also the diocesan website www.limerick.anglican.org/calendar.

Past Students’ Association of the Church of Ireland College of Education
Annual Conference 9th – 11th March 2018, at Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny

for all current and past students of CIC DCU, C.I.C.E and C.I.T.C.

The theme for this year’s conference will be ‘Strength for Mind and Body’

Speakers on: PE, Growth vs Fixed Mindset, Making Children more Independent and Resilient

The conference is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and learn some new things to take back to the classroom! It also incorporates the 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 & 40 year reunions.

For further information please contact psacice@gmail.com or connect with us on Facebook: PastStudents Cice
Editorial
- Rates unchanged for 2018

I am delighted to announce that both subscription and advertising rates for 2018 will remain the same as for 2017 – they are in fact unchanged since 2014!

The decision to hold rates unchanged was not an easy one. We expect to make a small loss in 2017. Printing and distribution costs have both gone up, albeit modestly. Subscription income is stable, but as regular readers may have noticed we have lost some regular advertising. However, we do have sufficient retained surplus from previous years to bridge the gap between planned costs and expected income for 2018, despite repaying money granted to Newslink by the diocese some years ago.

A CHALLENGE TO RECTORS & SELECT VESTRIES
But we need urgently to increase our income during 2018. Otherwise we will have to increase subscriptions this time next year, or reduce the size of the magazine, which we are loath to do. Advertising is the key – other diocesan magazines get substantially more than we do. If each group or union of parishes could persuade one more local business to place a quarter page advertisement in Newslink we will not need to increase subscriptions in 2019. So I challenge Rectors and Select Vestries to take the initiative to drum up more local advertising – and I shall follow this up personally.

Newslink Treasurer Lawson Kirkpatrick will shortly be writing to ask subscribers and pew distributors to forward subscriptions, which are due in January. He will also contact our annual advertisers to ask them to renew.

I thank you all – subscribers, advertisers and contributors – for your continuing support of Newslink. But special thanks are due to our pew distributors – it is a difficult task asking others for money, and we should all help them by paying promptly when asked. Some Select Vestries help them by writing a cheque for the promised number of subscriptions for later reimbursement, so that their distributor does not have to write a personal cheque – others might like to do the same.

A very happy and blessed Advent, Christmas and Epiphany to you all from the Newslink team: Joc Sanders, Deborah Powell and Lawson Kirkpatrick.

God bless, Joc Sanders, Newslink Editor

Newslink

Newslink is the diocesan magazine for the United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert, 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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Newslink is printed by Davis Printers,
Unit 6, Crossagala Enterprise Centre, Ballysimon Rd, Limerick

Deadlines

The next issue will be for February 2018, published for Sunday 4th February.

All material must reach the Editor by Friday 19th January 2018 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

NEWSLINK ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2018
(UNCHANGED from 2017, for 10 issues February – December, part year pro-rata)

Delivered to pew in bulk €37
Individual copy by post €45
Collected from printer in bulk €30

(contact: Lawson Kirkpatrick, 39 Westfields, Clare Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. Email: lsmkirkpatrick@outlook.com)

NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2018
(UNCHANGED from 2017, full page is A4 portrait, half page A5 landscape etc)

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A Newslink delivery van, spotted in Blennerville by Canon Patrick Comerford
Partners in Prayer - December 2017

Each Sunday in December
Church of Ireland: Our United Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert and Bishop Kenneth Kearon.

3rd December, 1st Sunday of Advent, Purple
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Western Buganda, Uganda and Rt Revd Henry Katumba-Tamale, Bishop of Western Buganda.
Diocese: We pray for those in communities who are homeless, and for the agencies working to support them, that you may show us how best to respond to their needs.

10th December, 2nd Sunday of Advent, Purple
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Western North Carolina, USA and Rt Revd José Antonio McLoughlin, Bishop of Western Carolina.
Diocese: We pray for those in poverty, cold and hungry in our communities this winter, and for agencies such as Protestant Aid and St Vincent de Paul who work to ease their distress.

17th December, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Purple
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Wyoming, USA and Rt Revd John Smylie, Bishop of Wyoming.
Diocese: We pray for the lonely, isolated and bereaved in our communities for whom the Christmas season is difficult, that we may help them to feel loved and supported.

24th December, 4th Sunday of Advent/Christmas Eve, Purple/White or Gold
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Yola, Jos, Nigeria and Rt Revd Markus Ibrahm, Bishop of Yola.
Diocese: We pray for those working in essential services over this holiday season while others enjoy relaxing with family friends, that they may experience God’s blessing.

25th December, Christmas Day, White or Gold
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of York, England, Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York & Suffragan Bishops: Rt Rev Glyn Webster (Beverley), Rt Revd Alison White (Hull), Rt Revd Philip Richardson (Selby), Rt Revd Monument Makhanya, Bishop of Zululand.
Diocese: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, good will among people.

31st December, 1st Sunday after Epiphany, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Church of Bangladesh and Most Revd Francis Martin Nyaboho, Archbishop of Burundi & Bishop of Makamba.
Diocese: We pray for those who work with children and young people in schools, colleges, churches and sports clubs, that their work may be blessed.

January 2018
Each Sunday in January
Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Armagh and Archbishop Richard Clarke.

6th January, Epiphany, White
O God, who revealed your only Son to the Gentiles by the leading of a star, mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may after this life enjoy the splendour of your gracious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

7th January, 1st Sunday after Epiphany, White
Diocese: At the start of this New Year we pray that we may freely and wholeheartedly place ourselves at God’s pleasure and disposal.

14th January, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, White
Diocese: We pray for those who work to maintain public safety, in An Garda Siochana, the Defence Forces, Civil Defence, the Coastguard and RNLI, that as they keep us safe they may be safe themselves.

21st January, 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Church of Bangladesh and Most Revd Paul Shishir Sarker, Moderator of the Church of Bangladesh & Bishop of Dhaka.
Diocese: In this week of prayer for Christian Unity, we pray that Christians of all traditions in our communities may be as one, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one.

28th January, 4th Sunday after Epiphany, White
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil and Most Revd Francisco De Assis Da Silva, Primate of Brazil & Bishop of South-Western Brazil.
Diocese: We pray for those who care for, heal and comfort the sick in hospitals, nursing homes and at home, that their work may be blessed.

4th February, 2nd Sunday before Lent, Green
Church of Ireland: The Diocese of Clogher and Bishop John McDowell.
Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Church of Burundi and Most Revd Martin Nyabobo, Archbishop of Burundi & Bishop of Makamba.
Diocese: We pray for those who work with children and young people in schools, colleges, churches and sports clubs, that their work may be blessed.

Winter Trees

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<tr>
<td>Winter trees, of growth denuded</td>
<td>Winter trees will soon be verdant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bow their heads to wind and snow</td>
<td>When the winter turns to spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow towards a lonely stable</td>
<td>We, like them, can be as joyful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unto which some shepherds go</td>
<td>Death has lost its fatal sting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees that seem so cold and lifeless</td>
<td>For that babe within a manger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow toward that heavenly glow</td>
<td>Brings good news of which we sing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In that shed, a new-born infant</td>
<td>Glory be to God in Heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathed in golden lantern’s light</td>
<td>Glory be to God, we cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherds kneel in awe and wonder</td>
<td>For His gift, so freely given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the gift of God this night.</td>
<td>His own precious Son to die.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E’en the trees so bare do whisper</td>
<td>Alleluia! Alleluia!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondrous praises at that sight</td>
<td>We can live with Him on high!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Nigel Beeton, who writes:
It is good that we celebrate Christmas in midwinter. Yes, I know it is supposed to be rooted in the old pagan winter solstice festivals, but there is rich symbolism in celebrating Christ’s birth at a time when nature is at a low ebb for God intervenes when humans are at a low ebb; Christ breaks in when we are lost in the depths of our sin, and His new life brings us to the bearing of verdant leaves and rich fruit.
Intercessions for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018

Each intercession may be read by a different reader. As they finish, the readers each join hands or link arms, thus creating a human chain.

God of the Exodus, you led your people through the Red Sea from slavery into freedom. Free us from all forms of slavery and everything that obscures human dignity.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

God of abundance, you provide for all our needs. Help us to rise above selfishness and greed and give us the courage to be agents of justice in the world.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

God of love, you created us in your image and have redeemed us in Christ. Empower us to love our neighbour and to welcome the stranger.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

God of the covenant you remain faithful to us even when we have wandered into violence. Put a new spirit and a new heart within us that we may instead be servants of your peace.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

God of glory, in Jesus you chose to humble yourself and become part of our story. You made your home with a human family, and have adopted us as your children. Help us to remain faithful to our families and communities, and make us one in Christ.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

God of the Trinity, you make us one with you and each other. Free us from the self-centredness, arrogance and fear that hinders the full visible unity of your Church.

Lead us by your hand, that we may live.

---

The right hand of God

The right hand of God is writing in our land, Writing with power and with love; Our conflicts and our fears, Our triumphs and our tears, Are recorded by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is striking in our land, Striking out at envy, hate and greed; Our selfishness and lust, Our pride and deeds unjust, Are destroyed by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is lifting in our land, Lifting the fallen one by one; Each one is known by name, And rescued now from shame, By the lifting of the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is healing in our land, Healing broken bodies, minds and souls; So wondrous is its touch, With love that means so much, When we’re healed by the right hand of God.

This hymn is recommended for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was specially written by Patrick Prescod for the Conference of Caribbean Churches and has a long association with the Caribbean Ecumenical Movement. An audio file and details of where the music can be found is available at http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer.

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Armchair Christmas Quiz

All proceeds going to Bishop’s Appeal

Christian Aid/Bishop’s Appeal are charities which provides emergency and long term aid where-ever it is most needed in the world.

Please give generously.

Prizes: €30, €20 & €10 book tokens

Minimum entry €2

All entries will be eligible for prizes, so please send yours in, completed or not! By Feb 5th 2018

Vy Revd. Denis Sandoes, Ballyhasty, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.

Name

Address

---

1. This one could be a rug! (C)  S
2. Canadian Island: A
3. Darwins Ship: H
4. Nearly black hunter: T
5. Saint of Clairvaux: S
6. Sounds like a cold coming on: E
7. Excellent Viking: I
8. Uncomfortable for twins: (C) L
9. East Croatian: I
10. This one leaps: H
11. Sounds like Tanaiste 1977 -81: L
12. Should he have a ring in his nose: C
13. Sounds like a hound in a hurry: R
14. Sad, from the Kingdom: B
15. Robbie’s Story (C) H
16. Be Shone Freeze: E
17. Shows the way: I
18. Neolithic stones: V
19. Named for Charles 11: N
20. Shouldn’t tame it like this: I
21. This one has no tail: (C)
22. Inscrutable Egyptian (C)

Please feel free to copy this and pass it among your friends.
A View from the Pew by Salters Sterling
– The ME of Remembrance

Joshua were some kind of cousins. Both John, son of Elizabeth, and his mother was called Mary. Mary and Elizabeth were related so John and Joshua were some kind of cousins. Both were Jews and belonged, at least in part, to the priestly tradition of that religion. The times in which they were living were very disturbed and very disturbing. Underneath the Pax Romana, the Peace of the Roman Empire, there was seething resentments of different kinds. The ordinary people resented paying two kinds of taxation, especially in periods of food shortage. The more politically aware resented the rule of Rome even when it was mediated through either their own religious rulers or through compromised and often corrupt non-religious Jewish rulers.

It is not surprising therefore that there were those who plotted armed rebellion, those who advocated political compromise, those who advised keeping heads below parapets. Perhaps there was some surprise about those who chose to withdraw from society and establish religious communities of great purity of heart and practice. It is not difficult to understand how in these circumstances Joshua decided to go and see for himself what John was about. Others were going in quite large numbers to the River Jordan area to hear John’s message, some to be baptised and some of those were staying to live with him. John’s message was repent, reject the corruption of the world, prepare for the coming of the Kingdom. The Kingdom really meant the rule of God which would be a just rule which would vindicate the Jewish people. Joshua must have had some sympathy with John’s message for he accepts to be baptised. That moment of baptism is a decisive moment in the life of Joshua, a turning point that sends him into the wild places to reflect on what it meant for his future.

In the history of the Jews the Wilderness is of major importance. It represents the journey from slavery in Egypt to a land of their own and a way of life of their own in relationship with the God to whom they were a special people with a special purpose. No doubt this is what was Joshua’s understanding and no doubt that it was with this understanding that he was seeking to establish the purpose of God in his own life. During his time in the wild places Joshua rejected as unworthy a number of ways in which he might serve God. He rejected the way of buying loyalty by offering material possessions; of buying loyalty with the magic of the spectacular; of buying loyalty with the power of the potentate.

When Joshua emerged from the wild places he had a message which at first glance was not dissimilar to John’s message. Both called for Repentance, which is the turning again to God, and both spoke of the nearness of the just rule of God. Both drew their inspiration from the writings attributed to the prophet Isaiah. Beyond that there is a subtle difference. In John’s case he called people to come to hear his message. In Joshua’s case he went to where people were. And so we find Joshua in the Synagogue where Sabbath by Sabbath God would be worshipped and the message of God about his just rule for just relationships would be heard and explained. And in the Synagogue Joshua publicly identifies himself with the just rule of God by reading from the scroll which contained the prophetic message of Isaiah. He read,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

There was drama in Joshua’s reading of this Isaiah passage and that drama continued as in silence he rolled up and handed back the scroll, resumed his place and then turned to the congregation of worshipping Jews and announced to them,

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

It must have been a staggering statement as the message began to sink into the minds of those who heard him. He had said nothing. He had simply read some few words and added one sentence of comment with the implication that because I am here this message is realised. Did Joshua know, on that Sabbath Day in Nazareth, that the implication of giving practical expression to his message would be both the life and death of him? The answer to that would take too long to tell on this occasion but do look out for the sequel in the February issue of Newslink. Have a Holy and Loving Christmas.

POST SCRIPTUM
In case you hadn’t guessed Joshua is our Jesus. As reported above the story is pretty well what happened. Few if anyone would have heard the stories of the Shepherds, of the Travellers from the East, of the Sojourn in Egypt. There were no social media in those days. A handful of those who were hanging around the Temple some thirty years earlier might have heard of the experiences of Simeon and Anna, and probably many of those dismissed their musings as thirty years earlier might have heard of the experiences of Simeon and Anna, and probably many of those dismissed their musings as the meanderings of the frail elderly. No doubt the younger scholars who encountered what probably appeared to them as a precocious twelve-year-old occasionally reminisced about his penetrating questioning. But his mother couldn’t forget his otherness and neither could his brothers who grew to manhood with him. With them we will take up his story in February.

Thoughts on Incarnation

The Son came out from the Father to help us to come out from the world; He descended to us to enable us to ascend to Him.
- Anthony of Padua

Christ became what we are that He might make us what he is.
- Athanasius

The God who took a motherless woman out of the side of a man took a fatherless man out of the body of a woman.
- Matthew Henry
Ordained Local Ministry  
– New Open Learning Course in 2018

The Church of Ireland, along with the Methodist Church in Ireland, has been developing a course of training for those who wish to offer themselves for service as an ordained local minister. Training for ordained local ministry (OLM) is now due to begin in September 2018 and applications for the training next September should be submitted to Diocesan Directors of Ordinands by the end of January 2018 (at the latest). An ordained local minister will not be an incumbent of a parish but will be someone who can exercise some leadership role within a local congregation – the nature of their deployment may vary from diocese to diocese.

The underlying philosophy of the open learning course is that it will be integrated so that the development of learning and understanding takes place alongside the honing of practical ministerial skills and continuing spiritual formation. There will be a blended form of learning with the use of lectures, tutorials, workshops, on-line learning and self-study. It will be accessible to OLM training but also to ministerial training for the Methodist Church in Ireland and to a wide range of other users. It is hoped too that future modules will be developed for the training of the Methodist Church in Ireland and to a wide range of other users. It is hoped too that future modules will be developed for the training of specialist areas of ministry such as pioneer ministry and chaplaincies.

It will be a flexible Open Learning Certificate Course provided through Queen’s University, Belfast. Teaching may be local, which might mean diocesan or inter-diocesan depending on location and numbers, with central input. Five modules may be undertaken per year in years 1 and 2, with a further two modules in Year 3. OLM training will last two years but those who have undertaken the Foundation or Readers’ Course will be given an exemption for two modules enabling them to be ordained deacon after one year. Training will continue beyond ordination as a deacon with the aim that all students will successfully complete the necessary modules to gain the Open Learning Certificate. The modules being put together for September 2018 are Biblical Studies, Theological Reflection, Worship and Preaching 1, Introduction to Pastoral Skills, and Church History. Staff from both the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) and Edgehill College are involved in this module preparation.

The bishops have put together a Selection Process with Criteria for OLM. Central to it is a sense of God’s call. Those applying must be baptised and confirmed members of the Church of Ireland with a sense of their vocation to this particular ministry; a vocation which in the first instance may have been locally identified. Their personal commitment, spirituality, character, leadership potential and flexibility will be assessed during the selection process. Selection itself will be undertaken in each diocese to reflect the local or diocesan nature of this ministry. Those wishing to pursue OLM should speak to their Diocesan Director of Ordinands.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 
18-25 January 2018, That All May Be Free

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally celebrated between 18th and 25th January – the octave of St Peter & St Paul. It is a marvellous opportunity for us to join with Christians of other traditions to celebrate all that we have in common as followers of Jesus Christ. The material for 2018 has been produced in the Caribbean. You can download it from ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2018.

There are 1.4 Million Christians living in the Caribbean region, across a vast geographical spread of island and mainland territories. They represent a rich and diverse tapestry of ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions, with a complex variety of governmental and constitutional arrangements.

The contemporary context is deeply marked by the history of the colonialism which stripped people of their identity, dignity and freedom. Christian missionary activity, closely tied to the colonial system, seemed to support, encourage and excite it. During five-hundred years of the colonial system, scripture was used to justify the enslavement of the indigenous people. In a dynamic reversal, those same scriptures became the inspiration and motivation for people to reclaim their liberty. Recognising the hand of God in the ending of enslavement, the Caribbean Christians offer Exodus 15, a song of triumph over oppression, as the motif of the Week of Prayer. The hymn, The Right Hand of God, reflecting the song of Miriam and Moses in praise of the liberating action of God, has become the anthem of the ecumenical movement in the region (see page 6, where you will also find a form of intercessions).

Like the Israelites, the people of the Caribbean have a song of victory and freedom to sing. Yet, contemporary challenges continue to enslave and threaten the dignity of the people. Many of the contemporary challenges are the legacy of the colonial past. The Caribbean economies have traditionally been based upon the production of materials for the European market – sometimes producing only a single commodity. They have never been self-sustaining and their development has required borrowing on the international market. The servicing of the debt has caused a reduction in spending upon the development that it was meant to facilitate.

The chosen passage from Exodus 15 allows us to see that the road to unity must often pass through a communal experience of suffering. The Israelites’ liberation from enslavement is the foundational event in the constitution of the people. Although our liberation and salvation is at God’s initiative, human agencies are engaged in their realisation. Christians participate in God’s ministry of reconciliation, yet our divisions hamper our witness to a world in need of God’s healing.

The themes of the material raise some of the contemporary issues addressed by the churches of the Caribbean. Abuses of human rights are found across the region and we are challenged to consider our manner of welcoming of the stranger into our midst. Human trafficking and modern-day slavery continue to be huge issues. Addiction to pornography and drugs, continue to be serious challenges to all societies. The debt crisis has a negative impact upon the nations and upon individuals – the economies of the nations and people have become precarious. Family life continues to be challenged by the economic restrictions which lead to migration, domestic abuse and violence.

The Caribbean Churches work together to heal the wounds in the body of Christ. Reconciliation demands repentance, reparation and the healing of memories. The whole Church is called to be both a sign and an active agent of this reconciliation.
**Diocesan Organisations**

**Girls Friendly Society (GFS)**

Diocesan Council was held on 6th November in The Methodist Hall, Cloughjordan. Events for the upcoming year were decided. The Diocese thanks Cloughjordan for hosting the meeting and providing a lovely supper.

Headsaver CPR Training was held on Thursday, 16th November in Oxmantown National School, Birr. This was a one night update course for all leaders who completed the full programme 2 years ago. Ollie Hayes has promised to return in the New Year for another update training evening for those who could not attend on Thursday night. It is very important for all leaders to update their CPR training every 2 years. Ollie also advised leaders that he can provide manikins for leaders to practice their skills once or twice during the year. With practice comes confidence if and when we are faced with a lifesaving situation. The Diocese thanks Birr Branch for hosting the event and providing lovely refreshments.

**CLOUGHJORDAN BRANCH**
The branch warmly welcomes two new members - Sarah and Alice and hope that they will enjoy GFS and make many new friends in the branch and beyond.

Competition craft work continues and girls have been busy making cards also. Badge work has started too. For this year the girls are working on the following badges: GFS Knowledge, Drama and Citizenship. The girls have taken part in different games and activities as part of the Drama badge.

Everyone is looking forward to the Branch Christmas party which takes place on Wednesday, 6th December. Cloughjordan Enrolment Service - took place on Sunday, 26th November in St. Kieran’s Church.

**ROSCREABRANCH**
Members attended Diocesan Fun Day hosted by Nenagh GFS in September. Our own Branch commenced on 6th October when they welcomed 12 new members. Isabel Wallace has joined us as a helper for her Transition Year. The girls met at the swimming pool for a fun and active hour during their mid-term break. Everyone is looking forward to attending Diocesan Christmas Craft Day in Birr 2nd Dec and their Christmas outing is to the Pantomime in Abbey Hall Roscrea on 9th Dec. Word has just come through that Tipperary ETB have given us a Grant for €6000 to be spent on equipment and for this we are extremely grateful.

**UP COMING EVENTS**

**Christmas Craft Day 2nd December in Oxmantown School, Birr.**
Starting at 2.30 and cost is €5 per girl. Please bring artificial Christmas flowers and a basket to make a Christmas floral decoration. Each branch will assist girls to make lots of decorations to bring home. Girls will also create ‘sweet’ decorations for the GFS entry into the Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival.

Cloughjordan Branch Christmas Party will take place on Wednesday, 6th December in St. Kieran’s Hall.

Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival 13-17 December (1-6pm each day). Remember to visit the Festival and vote for the GFS Diocesan Tree – sure to be the sweetest tree in the church.

Leaders Night Out will take place on Saturday, 27th January in Oxmantown National School, Birr at 5.30pm. This year leaders will enjoy a different type of evening. Aileen Hogan will provide a workshop on decoupage and the food will be provided by leaders. We thank Birr Branch for hosting this event. To book your places please contact Betty Delahunt by 10th January with a payment of €20 for the workshop. Please note a minimum of 15 leaders are required for Aileen to run this workshop. Everyone will come away with a beautiful decoupage creation and enjoy lots of lovely food. For more information on Aileen Hogan’s work please see www.shabby.ie. For further information please talk to your Branch Leader or Betty Delahunt.

Killaloe & Clonfert Diocesan Service & Prize Day 2018 will take place on Saturday, 24th March in Birr.

We wish all our members and their families a peaceful and a happy Christmas and good health and happiness for the year ahead.

**Mothers' Union**

Following a very busy 130th anniversary year in Mothers’ Union it is now time for a little bit of quiet! Throughout the year I have been privileged to visit many of our branches to talk about the work of Mothers’ Union. I have really enjoyed meeting everyone and have been very touched by your welcome, generosity and hospitality, but why am I surprised! This is what Mothers’ Union do so well.

Our Diocesan Project is to supply care packages to Adapt House Women and Children’s refuge, and they have now received the bed linen and pyjamas they so badly needed. Next on the list is to supply them with filled individual wash bags so that any family arriving to Adapt House can each be given their own personal items and we aim to complete this before Christmas. The items needed are the usual toiletry items for teenage boys and girls and adults, although we are not allowed to supply razors. Ballinasloe Branch is a great support to Esker House Women and Children’s Refuge in Athlone and we hope to be able to support them on a Diocesan level also.

My sincere thanks to everyone for all that you do. It is hard sometimes to keep everything going when we are all so busy, particularly at this time of year, but with a little prayer now and then it somehow becomes a bit easier.

I wish you and your families a very Happy and Holy Christmas as we give thanks for all the blessings that we have.

**Lucy Kavanagh, Diocesan President**
St. John’s Ballinasloe

In October, Members of St. John’s Mothers’ Union and friends enjoyed an informative talk on the subject of Positive Mental Heath by Finola Colgan, Development Officer from Mental Health Ireland.

Finola encouraged group discussion on a number of aspects of Mental Health and their potential impact on individuals. The evening was fun despite the serious nature of the topic and everyone went away feeling more positive and equipped to deal with the everyday ups and downs of life.

“EVERY DAY MAY NOT BE GOOD.....BUT THERE’S SOMETHING GOOD IN EVERY DAY” Alice Morse Earle.
In November, Ballinasloe was the venue for the Diocesan Trustees and Council Meetings and St. John’s members were delighted to welcome the Diocesan President, Mrs. Lucy Kavanagh and members from all over the Diocese. Lucy thanked the branch for organising the event and the Rev. Canon Jane Galbraith celebrated Holy Communion. A light lunch was served in Giuliane’s Hotel and the members provided tray bakes for morning and afternoon tea. The Enterprise Representative was on hand with Christmas cards and gifts for sale.

MU GETAWAY
The theme for this year’s MU Getaway weekend in Sligo during October was “Celebrating our Gifts” and Jackie Eastwood, Penny Kearney and Margaret Ollett attended from this Diocese. MU members joined together for a meal and games and the organisers were delighted that all dioceses were represented.

On the Saturday a large number of day delegates joined the conference. The main speaker was Mary Good and her topic was “Ireland’s Got Talents”. She emphasised that everyone has talents and that we should not underestimate them or compare ourselves to others. Reference was made to the “Parable of the Talents” and the audience was asked to consider their personal image of God and given time for reflection to think about God’s love and how they could use their talents.

The keynote speaker, Alice Leadbeter from the UK, told her life story and how she had become involved with the Mothers’ Union. She had recently taken part in the London Marathon to raise awareness and funds for the organisation.

Everyone tried gospel singing with Richard Mitchel and his assistant, Mabel, a refugee from Cambodia. Mabel told her story of arriving in Ireland and said she was now in college thanks to support from the Global Centre in Sligo. All delegates were also given a choice of doing a craft or zumba. Penny opted for the safe choice of making a bracelet while Margaret and Jackie tried to keep up with the very young and fit zumba teacher who their my opinion “should have gone to Specsavers” with the age group present!

In the afternoon Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President, addressed the conference. She reviewed events of the past few years and emphasised the need to share ideas and build upon teamwork. She said the MUs mission, aims and objectives had remained the same but how we go forward has changed. She highlighted the 16 day gender-based violence campaign and said that vigils would be held in every Diocese during November.

Mary Good spoke again on Life’s Patchwork quilt referencing Psalm 139 and questioned whether our faith is in our head or in our hearts. All in all the ladies from Limerick & Killaloe agreed it was a most enjoyable and worthwhile event and a great opportunity to meet up with friends old and new.

United Diocesan Youth Council
AUTUMN ADVENTURE WEEKEND REPORT
Over the October Bank Holiday weekend, a great time was enjoyed by all that attended the Autumn Adventure Weekend for secondary school students, in Lilliput Adventure Centre, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. There was a variety of outdoor activities throughout the weekend such as capture the flag, charity run, aero ball, kayaking, obstacle course, orienteering and laser tag. The usual mix of UDYC activities was also included such as icebreaker games, table quiz and movie night. The worship times during the weekend were led by a team from Youth for Christ (YFC). They explained to us about identification (ID) and used personal stories to show how our faith plays an important role in our ID among ourselves, others, God and the world. A splendid weekend was enjoyed by everyone who attended.

JUNIOR WEEKEND REPORT
Our well attended Junior Weekend took place this year at Castledaly Manor Christian Camp & Conference Centre, Castledaly, Moate, Co. Westmeath from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th November 2017. Steve Grasham from Church of Ireland Youth Department led the Worship times throughout the weekend. He was assisted by his wife Rev. Fran Graham on Sunday who led a Service of the Word. Rev. Fran is Church of Ireland Chaplain to Irish Army based at the Curragh Camp.

T’was a great day at Tayto Park on Junior Weekend
The Worship times focused on Peter and the choices, challenges and changes he had to make in his life. Participants and leaders at the
weekend were asked to focus on these too in their own lives. We can all have times in our lives when things can go a little off course, but throughout our lives we were reminded that Jesus is our rock. Jesus will always have an abundance of love for each one of us, no matter what happens. The weekend included a range of activities such as a trip to Tayto Park, Icebreaker Games, Disco, Charades, Capture the Flag and lots of Fun, Faith and Fellowship. A great weekend was enjoyed by everyone.

FUTURE EVENTS

Pre-Christmas Overnight Trip to Dublin

This event will take place from Saturday 9th to Sunday 10th December 2017 and is specifically for all those attending secondary school & upwards. The programme will include Shopping at Dundrum Shopping Centre, Ice Skating at Dundrum on Ice and attendance at CIYD Christmas Worship Service & Party with Disco. We will be joining Cork Diocesan Youth Council from/to Portlaoise this year. The group will stay overnight in Clontarf Parish Centre. There will be return transport from Limerick, Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea & Portlaoise. The cost for transport, activities, food (food not included on outward and return trips) and accommodation is €60, or €50 each if more than one from same family or if joining both day trips. Closing Date for receipt of bookings is Monday 4th December 2017.

Mega Christmas Day Trip to Dublin

Our Mega Christmas Day trip to Dublin will take place on Thursday 28th December 2017. This event is open to all those of 10 years and upwards. An action packed day will include Jumpzone Indoor Trampoline Park @ Sandyford, Funderland @ R.D.S. (wristband for unlimited attractions included again this year), I-SKATE on Ice @ R.D.S. , Fast Food @ Mc Donald’s Kylemore, Karting @ Kylemore Karting. There will also be return transport from Limerick, Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea & Portlaoise. The cost for transport, activities, food (food not included on outward and return trips) and accommodation is €60, or €50 each if two or more from same family attending or if joining both day trips. Closing Date for receipt of bookings is Thursday 21st December 2017.

National Youth Forum

This event will be an opportunity for 15–18-year-olds to come together with delegates from each of the 12 dioceses of Church of Ireland. It is hoped that each Diocese will have three delegates and two adult leaders. The Primate will be in attendance. The event will take place at City North Hotel in Julianstown. If you are interested, or know of any suitable delegate, please contact Edward @ 087 290 7553 as soon as possible please.

For more information on any of our events or activities, please contact Edward 087 290 7553 or myself. Email: udyc@limerick.anglican.org or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month, Oscar
Mobile: 086 247 6327

Diocesan Council for Mission

Marty Sanders reports on Welcoming Church Conference.

There are no easy answers but the Conference on how to be a welcoming church was full of presentation and discussion on how to tackle this important subject. This was the latest in a series of events sponsored by the Diocesan Council for Mission and was held in the Woodlands Hotel in Adare on 4th November for a group of around 30 people.

Rev Alastair Graham from Mullingar gave the first of the three main presentations. He started by telling us about his experiences when he arrived eight years ago to a church there that even a Garda thought was closed. Ireland was and is a challenging place for Christian witness, so any beacon of life and hope is very important indeed. A key point was the distinction between people who inherit the traditions of the church and those who choose to be church people. He had deliberately focussed his ministry on the latter, and told us many very positive stories about how the Mullingar Union was growing. Among the points I took away are these:

• First and foremost, leading the church is a joint effort, with the Select Vestry the leadership team. Rev Alastair Graham was particularly clear about the need to involve many in the decision process.
• Children are reading the Bible stories in Sunday School so they can actually learn what the Christian message is. This message can be lost in a world of individual concerns and consumerism. And the entire school and teachers come to the family or children’s service once a month.
• We should recognise that though a lot of young people are drifting, they are open to discussing faith-based issues. A lot of young parents realise the importance of this.

Ven Wayne Carney from Birr spoke about the importance of relationships, not just having a church building. We can remain a traditional parish in our building and liturgy but also be a mission parish in our attitudes. This included realising that by members, we mean people who are active and participating members of our congregations, not just people who are on our vestry lists, or who come at Christmas and Easter, or who just pay sustentation. Here are some ideas about how a mission parish thinks:

• How many people’s lives are being changed by what we are doing?
• We have to be faithful to our future, not just our past.
• How can this need by met by all of us, any of us?
• How can we be primarily transformational, shaping a vision of what can be, and marching off the map in order to bring the vision into reality, rather than just keeping things going smoothly?
• How can the church support these people, rather than how can these people support the church?

Canon Liz Beasley from Adare told us of some of her experiences and some interesting changes being implemented in their group of parishes.

• Faith and joy! These are the words that should describe how we feel and what we do.
• The church should be welcome to all, with no ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality. We should ask ourselves if we are willing to be changed or inconvenienced by the presence of newcomers.
• Often people come to church when their lives have been blown apart and they need more—we should be able to offer something substantial.
• Joy can exist in all circumstances, particularly when we sing. Not only have choirs been expanded, a singing group was established of congregation members so they could learn to sing some of the new hymns and be leaders within the congregations.
• We make plans and God has other ideas. We need to move where the Spirit moves us.

It was an interesting, informative conference with many good ideas from both speakers and audience members. Chief among them came through from all—we need a congregation of participants, not spectators!
SCHOOL NEWS

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

School life has become very busy indeed as the festive season fast approaches.

Our Notification of Intention to Apply form is now available to prospective parents who wish to enrol a child in September 2018. Please contact the school secretary between 1.40 and 2.40pm daily for the form. The form should be submitted as soon as possible.

Mrs Smyth is doing a stellar job of music coaching with the children this term. The children are busy with song and story in preparation for our carol service which will take place on 20th December at 1pm.

Many thanks are due to our Parents’ Association who funded our Science Workshop on 10th November. It was a great day of learning and fun.

On 16th November the senior classes welcomed Mrs Mary Dillon to talk to them as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum.

All of the pupils are busy creating our school entry to the Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival. They are crafting with quiet determination and concentration. Watch this space!

School vaccinations took place on 27th November for Junior Infants.

Many thanks to all the families who provided a shoebox for the Team Hope Appeal. Our photo shows pupils from Junior Infants to First Class holding the lovely boxes. The boxes contain practical items and gifts for vulnerable children around the world.

We wish all our pupils, parents, staff and our community a wonderful and joyous Christmas. Best wishes for a Happy 2018!

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

SCIENCE

This year, under the guidance of Miss Corcoran, we are applying for a STEM Award. STEM covers Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The senior room travelled to the Astellas factory in Killorglin recently where they manufacture the drugs used for transplant patients. This gave the children an invaluable insight into the pharmaceutical area of science. Sincere thanks to Astellas for our wonderful informative trip.

NOVEL/CINEMA TRIP

The senior room have been reading the novel ‘Wonder’ by R. J. Palacio for the past few weeks. Palacio wrote Wonder, based on a character called August, who was born with a facial abnormality. The movie will be released later this month and the pupils of Kiltallagh are already very excited about their forthcoming trip to the cinema to see the movie.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The children of Kiltallagh are busy practicing their Christmas Production called A King is Born, which they will perform on Wednesday December 13th 2017 in Kiltallagh Church, as part of their Christmas Service.

We look forward to welcoming the children and their families back to Kiltallagh School afterwards for some light festive treats.

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY FOR KENYA

The children of Kiltallagh School are invited to wear their Christmas Jumpers to school on Thursday December 21st. Miss Nóirín Roper, a teacher in Ballyfinnane, visited Kenya during the summer and taught the children while she was out there. They only learn English and Maths and so were very much delighted to have had some wonderful art lessons with Nóirín, who brought all her own resources with her to Kenya. Poverty is very extreme out there. €200 would feed, clothe and educate a child for a full school year. Our aim is to raise €200 to sponsor a child for the coming academic year.

WEST MIDLANDS THEATRE

The children of Kiltallagh had a wonderful time in Ballyfinnane School recently where they were entertained by the West Midlands Theatre Company. Afterwards, the children enjoyed some light refreshments compliments of Ballyfinnane School and a playtime. The teachers also enjoyed some delicious treats. Many thanks to Claire and all in Ballyfinnane School for their kindness and hospitality.

SYMPATHY

The staff and pupils of Kiltallagh were very saddened to hear about the untimely tragic death of Mr. Neville Atkinson, PE teacher in Villiers Secondary School in Limerick. Our school has been privileged to travel to Villiers each year to participate in their primary school sports day, under the guidance of Neville and the Transition Year students. Neville was always so kind and welcoming to each one of us down through the years and we hold many happy memories of those sports days very close to our hearts.

Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas sioraí dó.

We would like to wish you a very happy and peaceful new year. Nollaig Shona agus bliain nua fé mhaise agus faoi shéan díobh go léir.
Rathkeale No 2 National School

Our midterm break came around very quickly this year. We left school in high spirits on Friday 27th October following a day of activity culminating with our annual fancy dress parade. Once again we were amazed at the array of wonderful costumes from The Cat in the Hat, Thing 1 and Thing 2 to Delboy. Congratulations to all the pupils who put such effort into their costumes.

We were sorry to say farewell to our secretary, Sharon at the end of October. Sharon has begun work as an SNA in Coolcappa National School and we wish her well in her new employment, we will of course miss her from the office on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Pupils filled 23 shoeboxes for the Team Hope, Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Thanks to Mrs Evelyn Lambert and Mrs Daphne Casey for coming in and giving their presentation about the Shoebox Appeal before Hallowe’en.

During Science Week we were delighted to visit St Ann’s National School in Rathkeale for a Science Show. We were amazed with the demonstrations of heating and cooling and saw some wonderful demonstrations which literally burst into flames. The senior pupils were also delighted to get the news that they have secured a space at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition in Mary Immaculate College on Friday 19th January for their investigation, “Does whitening toothpaste work?” This will be our first time at the Young Scientist Exhibition so we’re all very excited about it.

The pupils got to see a hedgehog up close and personal recently as one ventured into our school field. This was the first time for many of the pupils to see a hedgehog. We hope he/she has found a comfortable place to hibernate for the winter.

Our Christmas Concert will take place in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale at 12 noon on Wednesday 20th December. We hope that Santa will make his usual visit to the school after the concert. School will close on Friday 22nd December and will reopen on Monday 8th January.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2018.

Villiers School

SPORTS

Congratulations to the senior boys’ hockey team who qualified for the second year running for the All Irelands and then finished second in their group. Congratulations also to Lauren Ryan who has an upcoming Irish U18 trial after the inter pros.

The Villiers senior Rugby team qualified for the senior cup after convincing wins against St Clements (17–7) and St Patricks (58–7).

In Basketball, both the senior and junior girls also had good victories against Presentation.

SHOEBOX APPEAL

Well done also to Miss Emily Sexton who once again led the drive in the Christmas shoebox appeal. A total of 107 boxes were donated by students, staff and parents to the Team Hope appeal. A particular thank you to Sinead O’Donnell Stolz and her parents for donating 56 boxes…

Congratulations to the Philosophy club who went to meet President Michael D Higgins in Aras an Uachtaran to discuss the lack of critical thinking in schools.

The Villiers prize day was held on Friday 17th and as ever was a wonderful occasion. Congratulations to all our prize-winners.

News from the Villiers Sanctuary

Warmest greetings and blessings from the Villiers Sanctuary. As ever, it has been a very hectic few weeks here in Villiers. Exams have started to feature quite heavily as well as all the other activities that regularly take place.

The Community group are busy raising awareness around social justice issues and positively promoting mental health within our community. We are busy putting together a project for Cycle Against Suicide and the Semi Colon Project. The group continue to lead the way in poster campaigns and random acts of kindness. Well done to all involved. We look forward to hosting Limerick City Parish with the parish fair which is always a wonderful occasion for people to meet and support the parish.
REMEmBRANCE SERVICE
At this time of year we invite people to our annual Remembrance Service in St Mary's Cathedral. Held on Wednesday 15th November, it was a service designed for all in our community who have experienced loss. It is always a solemn and poignant occasion where time and space lie at the heart of our worship, and hopefully a measure of peace and acceptance can be found as we place our loss into the loving hands of God.

This year was even more poignant given the tragic loss of Mr Neville Atkinson, a much loved and highly respected member of our community. This has been a difficult time as we come to terms with such a loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with Neville’s family and wide circle of friends.

At the Remembrance service, I talked about words and how sometimes there are no words to describe what has happened. Words can be an inadequate way to express how we are feeling, but they are all we have. I also chose a reading from Exodus 33, which talks about Moses as he stared in to the wilderness and challenges God to be with His people. God answered by stating ‘I will go with you and I will give you rest’.

These are incredible words of comfort not only to Moses but also to all of us today. They allow us to move forward in hope. So perhaps we should live in hope, for after all we do not go through life alone. We walk with our brothers and sisters of faith and with the Lord who has given us life and a promise to go before us and to give us rest. At times like this, we reach out to each other to ask God to give us the patience and the courage to be all that we need to be for each other.

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, you are our refuge and strength. Help and comfort us today: increase our faith, dispel our fears and revive our hope. May the Holy Spirit lift us from the darkness of our grief to the light of your presence.

Until next time, blessings and peace
Chaplain Jackie McNair

Neville Atkinson: a teacher who was so much more.
Mr Atkinson was a superb teacher, in the fullest sense of the word ‘teacher’. He gave so much more to us in Villiers than his classes in Geography, Ag Science and PE. Neville WAS much more, in every facet of his life.

In Villiers, a school he came to as a student teacher for teaching practice, he was always involved in work and interested in things beyond the school and college walls. The teacher he became had a real connection with his students. They meant so much more to him than just members of classes he was teaching. He had a natural, easy and positive relationship with the students he worked with.

On the sports field, his enthusiasm and his principles showed the players he coached much more than the skills of a game. Sportsmanship, pride and humility, honesty and respect were promoted under his tutelage.

Neville had a great sense of community. Pupils, parents, staff of all descriptions, boyfriends, girlfriends, wives, husbands, managers, governors, visitors were all likely to meet Neville’s friendly and open smile of welcome and his appreciation of their part in the school community life. He worked so hard in promoting the school in the wider community and had a keen sense of a school playing a role in this wider community and the connectedness, within and without.

He was mischievous, with a softness built on respect for people and circumstance. He had a great sense of humour and balance in his interaction with all, generous with his time and resources. A man who could get us to a better place in humour and sense of proportion – to appreciate and not take ourselves too seriously.

Much more than a teacher, friend, husband, father, brother, son. He was all these, and more. As such, his tragic accident and subsequent passing is so much more difficult to come to terms with, much more of a loss for all who have known and loved this gentle man. We will in time become reconciled to his loss, but we will always appreciate how he touched us all and made us all more much than our individual selves.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family

Social Media and Digital Communications Guidelines
The Church of Ireland has produced a set of guidelines for using social media and digital communications which seek to foster healthy and active online engagement while helping to manage risks and prevent misuse. All involved in the life of the Church are encouraged to use them. Social media offers a wide opportunity for groups and individuals to engage creatively and positively with others. It is a key contemporary way in which we can share stories about parish and diocesan life, the Church and the Christian faith as a whole. At the same time, the nature of social media means that it is important to think about how to use it well.

In particular, the newly published guidelines advise exercising courtesy and responsibility at all times. The guidelines invite users to remember that they are the face of the Church and to ask the following questions of themselves when posting a comment or image on social media:

• Would I want my family and friends to read this?
• If it concerns a disagreement, have I tried to resolve it privately first?
• Would I (in the case of clergy and lay readers/leaders in Church) say this from the pulpit or in general to members of my congregation either individually or collectively?
• Is what I’m writing reflective of a Christ-like compassion, even if challenge is present?

The guidelines also provide useful pointers to wider good practice and to safeguarding issues and the Safeguarding Trust policies.

The social media and digital communications guidelines have been developed by the Church of Ireland Press Office and the Central Communications Board and were approved by the Standing Committee of the General Synod at its September 2017 meeting. They are available at: www.ireland.anglican.org/policy
Dr Gordon Armstrong, a member of All Saints' Church Stradbally (Castleconnell) also Chief Technical Officer of the Bernal Institute at University of Limerick was recently awarded the rank of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques. Presented by Ambassador to France in Ireland, H.E. Stéphane Crouzat, the award is an order of the French Republic, recognising exceptional services to education, culture and the promotion of French language in Ireland. A Chartered Scientist and Chartered Chemist, Dr Armstrong obtained his PhD in materials science in UL in 2002 before starting his career as a researcher in UL and Trinity College Dublin. Presenting Dr Armstrong with the award, H.E. Stéphane Crouzat said: “Gordon has helped in allowing young researchers travel between our two countries, meet high-level specialists and professionals and, most of all, has helped maintain a close academic relationship with France at its highest level.” The insignia of the Palmes Académiques were presented to Dr Gordon Armstrong and Professor John Ringwood (Maynooth University) by H.E. Stéphane Crouzat, Ambassador to France in Ireland, at the Residence de la France on Monday, October 2. Our good wishes to Gordon.

At Clonlara church it was decided to run a course on mindfulness on Friday mornings and the group has grown from the initial 6 to 9 attending at 9.30 after dropping off children at school. It has been a wonderful experience being together in silence after a brief teaching each week. We looked at and practised, awareness, breathe focus, centering prayer, sacred word, and loving-kindness prayer. The current series ended on the 24 November. There is a keen interest to do it again but in the evenings for those who work and were unable to attend during the morning sessions. It is hoped that this could take place again early next year, so watch this space for details.

The school beside the church in Clonlara came to look at the church with the various classes and their teachers on 25 and 27th October. So over two hundred pupils visited and many in the school as well as the teachers had never been inside the church before. It is hoped that after this visit some relationship will develop into the future. As a start some classes did some art work and decorated the walls of the church for the festival. This is an attempt to get the church used where there is a very small Church of Ireland population. It is hoped that we can have them decorate for the carol singing.

Villiers Transition Year students once again did their walk along the river to Killaloe Cathedral. Some 70 of them feeling quite tired after a long walk managed to have a tour of the cathedral and go up the tower to ring the bells!

Advent Carol Services take place on 3 December at usual church times in the various churches in the Union. The service of lessons and carols in Mountshannon on 17 December at 4 pm, lessons and carols in Castleconnell on 24 December at 9.30 am and at 11.30 am in Killaloe. Christmas services are at 11.30 pm in Mountshannon on 24 December and at 9.30am on 25 December in Castleconnell and at 11.30 am Killaloe Cathedral.
Appeal to help vulnerable children overseas. Many thanks to all who contributed.

**“BRING YOUR CHANGE TO MAKE A CHANGE”**
The children in Birr parish are promoting a Mission Project for Advent: Parishioners (in all 4 congregations) are encouraged to bring in their €2 coins from wallets or jam jars each Sunday for the Simon Community which helps people suffering from homelessness. As in years past, we will also be collecting items of non-perishable food, toys and clothes (clean and in good condition) for Midlands Simon on the first two Sundays of Advent.

**CAROLS IN THE RECTORY & ‘KRIS KRINGLE’**
On Wednesday, 13th December, parishioners and friends are invited to come to the Rectory for an evening of carol singing, starting at 8:00 pm. Join in the fun by bringing a gift for the ‘Kris Kringle’ gift exchange, with a maximum value of €10. Gifts may be from an individual, a couple, or a family. Be creative; baking or homemade crafts would be great, but please no perfumes or bath products. Sponsored by the Mothers’ Union. Everyone is welcome!

**SERVICE SCHEDULE CHANGE**
Starting in December, we will be changing our regular rota of services.
- First Sunday: Holy Eucharist Two, alternating with traditional Holy Eucharist
- Second Sunday: Morning Prayer
- Third Sunday: Family Eucharist
- Fourth Sunday: Morning Prayer

The services may occasionally vary because special services. The 28th of January, the Conversion of St Paul, will be a special service of the Holy Eucharist for the GFS Enrolment. The schedule of services in Lorrha, Dorrha, and Lockeen will remain the same.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**
- Sunday, 24th December – Fourth Sunday of Advent - Christmas Eve
  Birr 11:30 am Morning Prayer
  Lorrha 8:00 pm Pageant & Family Eucharist
  Birr 11:30 pm Traditional Holy Eucharist
- Monday, 25th December – Christmas Day
  Dorrha 9:30 am Holy Eucharist
  Lorrha 10:00 am Holy Eucharist
  Birr 11:30 am Holy Eucharist
- Sunday, 31st December – The Epiphany
  Birr 11:30 am Service of the Word & Carols

**Roscrea Group of Parishes**
*St Burchin’s Church Bourney, Christ Church Corbally, St Molua’s Church Kyle, with St. Cronan’s Church Roscrea*

**Rector:** Canon Jane Galbraith

St. Cronan’s Rectory, Rosemount, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, E53X466
Tel: 0505 21725 Mob: 087 382 5336
Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com

From the register in St.Creadnait’s Church, Annakissa, Mallow, Co.Cork David Parr of St.Burchin’s Church, Bourney and Mary Louise McCarthy celebrated their marriage on September 19th. 2017. Congratulations to the happy couple, who are setting up home in Bourney environs.

Our deepest condolences are offered to Eva Harvey and to Margaret and Trevor Harvey and to Mervyn and Dawn Harvey and to Ethan’s parents Dwayne and Yvonne and their twins Rachel and Matthew and to their wider family on the death of young Ethan Harvey on November 15th. 2017. Ethan’s funeral took place in Christ Church Taney, Dublin. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

St.Cronan’s Church Tower, the works are nearing completion. Henry Thompson and his men have made several interesting discoveries; it is possible that some of the cut stone work from the 12th. cathedral church, has been used and set into our nineteenth century pinnacles; some of the crennellations have been restored to their original height. It is hoped that the many detailed photographs taken by the builder will be on display in the not too distant future showing the huge job of work that has been undertaken.

St.Molua’s Church Fundraiser raffle and coffee day in Mai and Eddie Clarke’s home. Mai and Valerie would like to thank all who donated or contributed, particularly the assistance of SuperValu. They reckon about 80 people passes through their doors. Much hard work yielded approx. €2,700.+

Team Hope Shoeboxes 43+, shoeboxes for Team Hope have been delivered to the depot in Nenagh for transportation to Eastern Europe or Africa.  Vivienne and Heather would like to that all who contributed to this project and especially Valerie St Leger who covered most of the boxes.

**CAROL SERVICES**
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<td>Christ Church Corbally</td>
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**CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY**
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1st Sunday of Christmas December 31st. United Service with the Methodists on The Mall. 11.45. a.m. This is a fifth Sunday. There will be no other service in Roscrea Group of Parishes that day, December 31st.

St.Cronan’s National School Christmas Service the children are in rehearsal. Parents and friends are warmly invited to the service in St.Cronan’s Church December 14th at 7.00p.m.

‘Taste of Roscrea’ is a Christmas market and festival where the whole town gets involved. There promises to be a fashion Show, plenty of school carol singing and look out for the launch of ‘Roscrea People...
2017. This year Churches Together Roscrea will be taking a stall for Saturday December 9th offering words of Christmas Cheer and ... a surprise!

EXPERIMENTAL CHANGE IN SERVICE TIMES.
In consultation with Corbally and Bourney parishioners an experimental change in service times is underway. Thanks are due to all parishioners for their consideration of the change, particular thanks to Bourney parishioners who have had to endure late starts to their Sunday worship for too long.

From Advent Sunday Christ Church Corbally service time will normally be Sunday 9.15 a.m.; St. Cronan’s Roscrea service time will normally be Sunday 10.45a.m.; St. Burchin’s Bourney will normally be Sunday 11.00 a.m.; St. Molua’s Kyle will normally be Sunday 12 noon. This experiment will be reviewed in time for Trinity Sunday 2018.

Mai Clare handing over the winning hamper to Pat Moloughney after the Fundraiser in her home in aid of St.Molua’s Church, Kyle.

Continued on page 24

Nenagh Union of Parishes
Nenagh, Templederry, Ballymackey and Killodiernan
Rector: Rev Rod Smyth
The Rectory, Church Rd, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.
Tel: 067 32598, Mob: 087 970 6479
Email: rsmyth6582@btinternet.com

SERVICES IN DECEMBER:
Sunday 3rd December Advent Sunday: 9.30 Templederry Eucharist; 11am St Mary’s Eucharist and Holy Baptism; 6.30pm Advent Procession with carols
Sunday 10th December Advent 2: 9.30 Templederry Eucharist; 11am St Mary’s Morning Prayer; 12.15pm Killodiernan Morning Prayer
Sunday 17th December Advent 3: 11am St Mary’s Eucharist; 4pm Service of nine lessons and carols and marking the end of the Christmas Tree Festival

Wednesday 20th 1pm S Mary’s National School Carol service
Sunday 24th Christmas Eve: 10am Templederry Eucharist; 11pm St Mary’s The Midnight Eucharist of the Nativity
Monday 25th Christmas Day: 10am St Mary’s Family service; 11.15am Killodiernan; Eucharist of the Nativity
Tuesday 26th December: St Stephen’s Day St Mary’s 10am Eucharist
Sunday 31st December: 11am St Mary’s United Morning Prayer
Saturday, 6th January: 11am in St Mary’s -There will be a celebration of the Eucharist as the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany. As part of the service we will place the kings in the crib!
Sunday 7th January as part of our services we will have a renewal of baptismal vows. As part of the service, parishioners will have the opportunity to come to the font and dip their hands into the water, leaving there any worries and those things of the past which they would like to leave with Christ.

Pact
assessment adoption support

Pact is an accredited agency under the 2010 Adoption Act to provide the following services:

Intercountry Adoption Assessment Service
Post Placement Report Service for Intercountry Adoption
Domestic Adoption Assessment Service
Post Adoption Service for domestic Adoption
A Pre-Adoption Foster-Care Service

Phone: 01 2962200 Fax: 01 2964049
Email: info@pact.ie www.pact.ie

here2help
support•counselling•information•education

No opinions, just support
Crisis Pregnancy Services

Helpline: 1850 67 3333. www.here2help.ie
Located by Nutgrove Shopping Centre.

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NENAGH CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Wednesday, 13th December to Saturday, 16th December
1 pm – 6 pm

Sunday, 17th December
1 pm – 4 pm

@ St Mary’s Church, Nenagh

Admire the trees
Enjoy the amazing Afternoon Tea (€5)
Purchase seasonal produce & craft items
Enjoy scheduled events & raffle

Admission €3 (accompanied children free)

Carol Service on Sunday 17th at 4 pm.

All Welcome

For more information call, text or email:
086 820 6514
nenaghchristmastree@btinternet.com

Children’s Ministry Network

Advent & Christmas resources for ministry with children are available from Revd. Canon Jane Galbraith. Email: galbraithjane@gmail.com, Mob: 087 382 5336.

Window of Reconciliation

This new window created by stained glass artist Thomas Denny for St John’s RC Church, Castle St, Tralee, was blessed by Bishop Kenneth Kearon and Bishop Raymond Browne at an ecumenical service on 27th October.
Adare honours World War I dead
by the Rev. Liz Beasley

Over the first week of November, the village of Adare held a special commemoration to honour those from Adare who had fought in World War I, especially the 21 men from the village who died in that war. The commemoration involved a number of people from throughout the village and culminated with an ecumenical service at St. Nicholas Church, in which a plaque listing the 21 men who died was dedicated.

The events began with an exhibit in the Adare Village Hall over the weekend of 4 and 5 November. On display in the exhibit were memorabilia supplied both by official war societies and also by local families.

We had special publicity in the week before the event. RTE's Nationwide included information about the exhibit in their program on the reopening of the Adare Manor.

In the months of planning leading up to the event, word was put out seeking family members of those who died and asking for any war memorabilia that people might have had from family members who fought in the war. We also suggested that people search in attics or sheds for items that might be stored there. Experts were on hand to assess and explain items that people brought.

All together, the items on display, supplemented by items that people brought with them, helped to build a history of those who went to the war from Adare and its environs and who were killed, wounded, or returned home.

During the next week, the older classes of the four schools in Adare came to view the exhibit, two schools on each of two separate mornings. The students seemed to be struck by the descriptions of trench warfare in World War I. On the following weekend, the Adare items in the exhibit were again on display on Saturday.

The preceding Friday evening, St. Nicholas Church hosted a worship service called “A Commemoration of World War I in Poetry, Song, and Prayers.” The service centred on 12 poems from World War I, most of them by soldiers who had fought in the war. Members of the church and other villagers read the poems, which were interwoven with hymns about peace and God's protection. All agreed that something like this should be an annual event.

The week concluded with an ecumenical service at St. Nicholas. Family members of those who died read the readings, offered the prayers, and read the roll call of the 21 men who died. At the end of the service, we unveiled a plaque honouring those who fought and listing the 21 men who died. The plaque lists the name, unit, date of death, and grave location for each of the men. The information is also given in Braille at the bottom of the plaque.

The plaque is set into a stone decorated with an oak leaf, the symbol of Adare. The stone will be placed in a sensory garden in the Village Park, the planning and construction of which is underway.

Meriel Clarke, of St. Nicholas Church, chaired the planning committee. We also relied on the expertise of villager Liam Nolan, of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, who has been involved in planning similar events in Tralee and Cork.
What Epiphany means to me
Rev Michael Cavanagh, Kenmare & Dromod Union, shares his personal epiphany.

I never made any of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking – Albert Einstein

What does Epiphany mean? Let’s look at a Dictionary definition first. “A sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience.” (Dictionary.com)

“A moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation” (Oxford)

Which is why Epiphany is the only word than can even begin to describe the Incarnation of the Christ. We might sing ‘Hail thou long-expected Jesus’ – but He wasn’t what was expected at all. Throughout history, God has never been what people expected. We have a singularly (and restricted) human perspective on what ‘Messiah’ ought to be, whereas God’s perspective is universal, although His revelation is personal. He does not come when we feel prepared, organised, and ready to meet Him. He comes when the time and place is right for us to begin a journey with Him.

The apostle Paul met with Christ on the Damascus Road and experienced a dramatic and instant conversion – but because of his past assiduous persecution of Jesus’ followers, it took years for him to be accepted as a genuine believer. Peter’s confession of Jesus as Christ, the Son of God, came two years after their first meeting, through traveling alongside Him and learning from Him. C. S. ‘Jack’ Lewis acknowledged the truth of Jesus Christ whilst riding in his brother’s motorcycle sidecar on the way to Oxford zoo – but it was not until a good two years later that he accepted the irrational truth of Christ before asking Him into his life. But that was the moment when my walk with Him began. My Epiphany took – is taking – years. For me it is the slow – very slow – continuing – sometimes growing, sometimes reducing – understanding of the significance of God sending His Son and its meaning for my life.

My own Epiphany was more aligned with Newton rather than Paul. It was not a one-off revelation, after which all became clear – but a series of regular blinding lights that probably would have been too much to bear if they had all come at once. That doesn’t mean that I didn’t have an initial blinding light – I did. Literally. I remember the exact moment. Apart from a short period of desperate sadness in my late teens in which the local vicar and congregation had been hugely supportive, up to my late twenties, with no family religious background to speak of and my trade being that of a rational systems analyst, I had little or no experience of church. As a community contribution, I began helping with a youth group attached to our local church. I was invited by their Vicar, Michael Williamson, to take the group to a meeting in Manchester Free Trade Hall at which the Revd David Watson, a well-known and respected evangelist, was speaking. None of the group turned up. (Such is the nature of young people’s work, although this time I suspect God had something to do with it as well). I went along anyway. David was a great speaker, but while interested, I was not really taken by his message. At the very end of the meeting, David introduced the chorus ‘He is Lord’, and everyone stood to sing. I happened to look across the theatre aisle, and saw a young man, arms outstretched, praising God and singing those words – ‘He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord.’ Before or since, other than in my new-born children, I have never seen a human face emanate light like that, the reflected light of Christ expressing transcendent joy. Like Jack Lewis, it took me a couple of years after accepting the irrational truth of Christ before asking Him into my life. But that was the moment when my walk with Him began. My Epiphany took – is taking – years. For me it is the slow – very slow – continuing – sometimes growing, sometimes reducing – understanding of the significance of God sending His Son and its meaning for my life.

But throughout all of those years, through times of surprise and revelation, times of understanding and confusion, times when faith is strong and times when faith is painful, from that moment, this I have known and this I confess – that Jesus Christ is Lord.

There is a postscript to this. I never met that young man in the Free Trade Hall. I do not remember what he looked like. If I met him on the street, I would not know him, and he would not know me. He won’t ever know that his praise changed my life. I can imagine hearing him sometimes saying that he has sadly never brought anyone to Christ, as I have often heard other people say. The point being, that it ain’t necessarily given to us to know the consequence of our testimony to the Gospel – it’s simply up to us to proclaim Jesus, and His Father will do the rest.
A personal reflection on Christmas
by Barbara Irgang-Buckley, Diocesan Lay Reader, Kenmare and Dromod Union.

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!
Si non-dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat,
Blande, veni, somnule.

Latin original

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

Translation by S T Coleridge

'The Virgin's Cradle Song' is my favourite cradle song, I grew up with it and used to sing it many times in my Bavarian childhood as part of Carl Orff's Nativity Play.

Many years have passed since, times have changed, and although I treasure my childhood memories of Christmas, I find myself confronted with a Christmas often far from the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. There is a lot of commerce and materialism connected to the 'festive season of the year'. All kinds of Christmas tunes are making noise in shops and even streets, lots of glitter, hustle and bustle around shopping and stress 'to get ready'. Santa is coming to town. And there is a lot of excitement about what Santa might bring.

Christmas seems like a time to brighten up the dark winter with plenty of partying, a tree in the house and special food, with Santa and a reindeer being the main figures.

It seems to be the main season for travelling 'home', wherever 'home' is. Families are gathering in the hope and expectation of spending a wonderful time, despite possibly lingering family tensions or unresolved conflicts. But peace and reconciliation do not always come out of the blue, and Christmas can be a time of arguments and disappointments. It is a very busy time for the Samaritan's and other help lines.

To avoid unfulfilled expectations, feelings of emptiness or the lack of peace and joy, I would like to base Christmas celebrations around the birth of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Putting this event at the focus helps us to see what Christmas is about. It helps us to recognize its profoundness for humanity, for each one of us, and it is a powerful starting point for learning the Christian message.

By drawing our attention to the Baby Jesus being born of his Mother Mary, we can become still, we can begin to see the wonder of life unfolding. Life, given by our creator. A woman giving birth in a shed, without medical support, just with some help from her caring husband. Immediately we feel joy and thankfulness for the successful birth. How wonderfully biology works, it is created in such a perfect way to bring forth human life. Looking at the new-born baby and his mother gives a sense of peace, humbleness, hope and trust. Life is strong, it is a miracle.

I continue looking at the scene of the new born baby Jesus and his mother Mary, reflecting on the specialness of this birth: It is God himself who became human through his incarnation. God himself relied on Mary and all these biological mechanisms to become human. Is this not a great sign of God's love for his creation, for humankind?

If we were visiting baby Jesus and his mother Mary for the first time right after his birth, would we not be still and full of awe, so as not to disturb them? Would we not rather attend to the needs of mother and child instead of loud celebrations and self-indulgence? Would we not approach the new born Lord, our God, who is just after becoming human, full of adoration, thankfulness and joy?

Christmas shows us a lot about the nature of our Lord, our King. He comes in a subtle, quiet, unspectacular way. He does not need pomp or a palace to be born. His birth is not widely announced. He wants to be found and recognized. Just as the shepherds did, who happened to be around that night, watching and waiting and willing to go and see. And just as the three wise men found him, who searched for him and arrived a little later.

In Advent we approach this wonderful event again, the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus, true God and true Human. Every year a new opportunity to recognize and accept this greatest gift one could ever receive: God our King who gave Himself to us as baby Jesus, born of his mother Mary.

I wish you all a joyful and blessed Christmas.
We three kings of Orient are... what?

“A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst
time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in.
The way’s deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest
off, in solstitio brumali, the very dead of winter.” T S Eliot

It was 1622, and the Bishop of Winchester, Launcelot Andrews, was
preaching a magnificent sermon to King James I. Reckoned one of
the best preachers ever, Launcelot Andrews’ words were later taken
up by T S Eliot and transformed into his wonderful poem ‘The Journey
of the Magi’. What a vivid picture – we can see it all! The camels’
breath steaming in the night air as the kings, in their gorgeous robes
of silk and cloth-of-gold, and clutching their precious gifts, kneel to
adore the baby in the manger.

Yet the Bible does not give us as much detail as some people think.
Tradition down the centuries has added a great deal more. For
instance, we know from St Matthew that the magi were ‘wise’, or
learned men of some sort, but we do not know if they were kings
or not. The Bible tells us there were several; tradition has decided
upon three, and even named them: Balthassar, Melchior, and Caspar
(or Gaspar). But the Bible does tell us that the magi gave baby Jesus
three highly symbolic gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Gold stands for kingship, frankincense for worship, and myrrh for
anointing – anticipating his death.

There is a lovely ancient mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, that is 1,500 years
old. It depicts the wise men in oriental garb of trousers and Phrygian
caps, carrying their gifts past palm trees towards the star that they
followed... straight to Jesus.

Asylum and refugee resource updated

The Church of Ireland’s Refugee Working Groups have published an
updated edition of their resource on supporting asylum seekers and
refugees in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The 19-page document highlights opportunities to become more
involved in this area of ministry and service. It also includes a
summary of the Church’s support for asylum seekers and refugees,
definitions and statistics, a section on responding to fear, and
information on work undertaken by ecumenical networks and
associated missionary societies. The resource is available online at:
www.ireland.anglican.org/resources/485/supporting-asylum-
seekers-and-refugees

The visit of the Magi, Basilica of Sant’Apollinare Nuova, Ravenna
(photo: Patrick Comerford)
In this, the 2nd of 4 articles on the subject, Rev Rod Smyth, Rector of Nenagh reflects on biblical texts which resonate with the experience of dementia.

Any approach to the pastoral care and spiritual well-being of those with Dementia must take cognisance of an approach to biblical studies which seeks to allow the texts to resonate with our life experiences.

It might seem an appropriate place to begin a biblical reflection on Dementia with a theme of lament, with Christ’s reference to Psalm 22 from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ In some senses, this seems to mirror the abandonment experienced by the Dementia sufferer. Yet Christine Bryden, diagnosed with Fronto-Temporal Dementia in 1995, argues that there is an essential essence of humanity, still in communion with God, whose soul must continue to be fed. “Never let it be said that I should say ‘why have you forsaken me?’ What about whether I can be in communion with you?” The unchanging nature of personhood is also surely connected to the concept of being made in the image of God. ‘So God created humankind in his own image.’ Genesis 1:27. If we continue to reflect something of the Creator God in us, then this must continue to be part of the essential essence of who we are. As one writer reflects, ‘Christ suffered indeed, but did so without his essential nature being changed. Therefore, being made in the image of God implies that whilst we suffer, we yet remain fundamentally the same person.’

The concept of the covenantal relationship between God and Israel is built on the notion of remembering. God is portrayed as a God of memory. In Deuteronomy, Moses warns the people that they will forget God and worship other gods. Yet he says to them, ‘He will not forget the covenant with your ancestors that he swore to them.’ Deuteronomy 4:27. If we continue to reflect something of the Creator God in us, then this must continue to be part of the essential essence of who we are. As one writer reflects, ‘Christ suffered indeed, but did so without his essential nature being changed. Therefore, being made in the image of God implies that whilst we suffer, we yet remain fundamentally the same person.’

The concept of exile has often been used as a metaphor to describe the situation in which the Dementia sufferer finds themselves. But, the truth is that, even in Babylon, the Israelites found that God was still accessible to them. Goldsmith argues that, just like the Israelites in a strange land, although the Dementia sufferer journeys to a strange land, God will still be accessible to them if we, as part of the body of Christ, enable them to do so. The onus is very much on us as part of the body of Christ to make that possible.

When one looks to the Gospels to look for texts which resonate with the isolation or exclusion from the community experienced by Dementia sufferers, we find much in the healing narratives which casts light on the inadequacies of some of our prevailing theologies.

For example, Jesus teaches the importance of touch as a means of communication with those who are isolated in nursing homes by their Dementia. Even those he cannot see but who touch him are made whole: ‘If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.’ Mark 5:28. A deep sense of symbolism is surely present when a healing touch is extended although they may forget God and whose they are, God will surely not forget them.

The Psalms provide a rich reservoir of theological reflection on the nature of Dementia, not least in the theme of lament. When brain impairment is such that communication has ceased, we may reflect on the words of the psalmist: ‘Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your saving hand in the land of forgetfulness?’ Psalm 88:12. ‘You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eyes grow dim through sorrow.’ Psalm 88:8. Psalm 71:18 echoes the plea of the Dementia sufferer, who, because of memory impairment, cannot remember God’s promises. ‘So even to old age and grey hairs, O God do not forsake me!’

The concept of exile has often been used as a metaphor to describe the situation in which the Dementia sufferer finds themselves. But, the truth is that, even in Babylon, the Israelites found that God was still accessible to them. Goldsmith argues that, just like the Israelites in a strange land, although the Dementia sufferer journeys to a strange land, God will still be accessible to them if we, as part of the body of Christ, enable them to do so. The onus is very much on us as part of the body of Christ to make that possible.

When one looks to the Gospels to look for texts which resonate with the isolation or exclusion from the community experienced by Dementia sufferers, we find much in the healing narratives which casts light on the inadequacies of some of our prevailing theologies.

For example, Jesus teaches the importance of touch as a means of communication with those who are isolated in nursing homes by their Dementia. Even those he cannot see but who touch him are made whole: ‘If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well!’ Mark 5:28. A deep sense of symbolism is surely present when a healing touch is extended...
At the United Family Service in St Mary’s on Sunday 19th November a frisbee was a fairly low-tech toy compared to computer games but, as he flung it down the church he exclaimed, ‘boy, can it fly!’

At 7pm on Sunday 19th November St Mary’s hosted an ecumenical service of remembrance. About thirty people gathered to pay their respects to those who had given their lives in two World Wars and in conflicts since. Remembrance services were held in all three parishes in the Union on Sunday 12th November.

On Saturday 11th November an ecumenical service of remembrance was held at the town war memorial. About thirty people gathered to pay their respects to those who had given their lives in two World Wars and in conflicts since. Remembrance services were held in all three parishes in the Union on Sunday 12th November.

On Monday 6th November saw the official launch of the year’s Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival, which runs from Wednesday 13th to Sunday 17th December in St Mary’s Church Nenagh. A large turnout enjoyed Christmas refreshments, including mulled wine and mince pies, as the Rector officially launched the Festival, stressing that it was very much part of the Nenagh Union’s outreach to the local community and beyond. It has now become a firm part of the run up to Christmas in the local community and a way of highlighting the work of a local charity. This year’s chosen charity is St Cronan’s Association (Nenagh Branch), a community organisation providing high quality, person-centred support to more than 120 people and their families living with disability in North Tipperary. Make sure you plan to visit the Festival (1pm to 6 pm)! See our advert on page 18.

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For the Dementia sufferer. It communicates something of Christ’s own love for them.

It is vital to try to see beyond the symptoms of Dementia to the real person if we are to minister to the whole person, not just managing their symptoms to suit our needs. Reintegrating them into the community of faith. We can see Jesus do this in the healing of the leper: ‘Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, “I do choose. Be made clean”… Luke 5:13. Jesus reintegrated him back into the society from which he had suffered enforced separation. Those who travel the road into Dementia often feel isolated from the faith community, marginalised by society.

The implications for faith communities for the pastoral care of those with Dementia could not be clearer. Tempted to think of visiting those with Dementia as perhaps a pointless exercise, Saunders argues that, ‘it is a striking feature of the accounts of the synoptic gospels that those whom Jesus heals are almost invariably people deemed unsalvageable by their society. Scandalously, the gospel writers insist that healing and salvation are intended especially for such people.’

Though the Dementia sufferer may not be able to communicate or articulate in any meaningful way during a pastoral visit, it seems important that they are noticed and communicated with. One may well ask why? The answer must surely be that Christ himself commands us so to do. ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:40.

It may be tempting, of course, to wonder what is the point as the person seems not to be present now, but it is I, part of the Body of Christ, who must seek to minister to those who are cognitively impaired. Paul makes this very clear in his use of the metaphor in 1 Corinthians: 12. As we seek to relate to one another as part of the Body of Christ, as members of the one body, we readily recognise that ‘if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice with it’. 1 Corinthians 12: 26. Paul says: ‘God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member.’ In 11 Corinthians, Paul introduces us to the concept of ‘treasure in clay jars.’ We must accept that we are all fragile clay jars, easily broken and damaged, yet the inner essence, the remnant of what we are as children of God shines through the fragility of our humanity. This has clear implications for our ministry to those with Dementia.

Robert Gill (Chairperson Nenagh Chamber of Commerce) Mary Smith (Chairperson St Cronan’s’s Association) John Carrol (Chairperson Nenagh Municipal Council) Rev Rod Smyth and Mary Frend (Manager St Cronan’s Day Care Centre, Nenagh)
On behalf of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes we extend our condolences to June and Nigel Whelan and their family, on the tragic death of Jodie Tyrell on the 21st of October. The funeral service was held at St Brendan’s, Birr on the 25th of October. Only four years old she was remembered as a loving child and sister. She will be sorely missed. May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

On behalf of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes we extend our condolences to the Clarke family on the death of Ernest Clarke, who passed away peacefully on the 30th of October. Born on the 25th February 1943 the funeral service was held at Borrisokane, Church of Ireland on the 2nd of November. May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

On behalf of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane Group of Parishes we extend our condolences to the Chambers family on the death of John Chambers, who passed away peacefully on the 1st of November. Born on the 28th March 1931 the funeral service was held at Ballingarry, Church of Ireland on the 3rd of November. May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

A Safe Guarding Trust meeting was held in the St Kieran’s Church Hall in Cloughjordan on the 3rd of November. Thank you to Mr Gabriel Chrystal for his presentation and to all those who attended.

The Borrisnafarney Church of Ireland held a Fuel and Fodder Auction in aid of church funds and St Ann’s Roscrea on the 11th of November. Thank you for your support as just over €3000 were raised.

The Mothers’ Union will be holding an American Tea Party and Musical Evening on Monday 11th December at 8:00pm, in the Borrisokane Church of Ireland Hall. All are welcome.

Advent is a time when the Church prepares itself for Christ’s ‘presence’ amongst us. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), summarises the season of Advent as the three comings of Christ, “in the first Christ was our redemption; in the last he will appear as our life; in the middle coming, he is our rest and consolation.”

Advent Bible Studies will be held in the Methodist Hall in Cloughjordan and Borrisokane, as we explore more deeply what this means for us and for the world. All are welcome and for more details contact Revd. Terry Mitchell.

Christmas Whist Drives will be held at Borrisokane at 8:15pm on the 4th December; Cloughjordan at 8:15pm on the 6th December; Ballingarry at 8:15 on the 17th December and Borrisnafarney at 8:15pm on the 29th December.

Carol Services will be held at Borrisnafarney on the 10th December; Borrisokane on the 17th December at 10:15am; St Kieran’s on the 17th December at 11:30am Ballingarry on the 17th of December at 7:00pm

Please join us for these services.

Christmas Services will be held at Borrisnafarney on the 24th December at 8:00pm, at Ballingarry on the 24th December at 8:00 pm, at Borrisokane on the 25th December at 10:15am and at St Kieran’s Cloughjordan on the 25th December at 11:30am. All are welcome.
Monday, 25th December: Christmas Day
   Dunkerrin: Holy Communion at 9 a.m.
   Shinrone: Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m.

Sunday, 31st December: New Year’s Eve
   5th Sunday
   Dunkerrin: Group Carol Service at 11 a.m.

CONGRATULATIONS
To John Reid and Trish Fitzgerald who were married in St. Ruadhan’s Church, Lorrha, on the 11th November. They are wished every blessing in their future life together.

WELCOME
To Aaron, Shauna and Harry Elliston-Jones who have come to live in Dunkerrin parish.

MOTHERS’ UNION
There was a good turnout for the joint meeting in Birr on the 9th November when Salters Sterling and Michael Hanna gave an interesting and informative talk on their trip to China. On Thursday 7th December members will meet to join in Carol singing at Ealga Lodge Nursing Home (formerly Clover Lodge) following the weekly Holy Communion service at 10.30 a.m. Those wishing to donate food to the Lions Club should bring their contribution that morning please.

Monday, 11th December, there will be a group meeting in Borrisokane which will be an American Tea Party and Musical Evening.

Saturday 20th January at 1.30 p.m., cooking and dining with Gladys Drought.

AGHANCON SUNDAY LUNCH
The lunch was held on the 5th November. A great number turned up and enjoyed a beautiful meal. Sincere thanks to all those who put so much work and preparation into the meal. A sign of a good meal is the amount of chat afterwards and it was great to see so many remained on to catch up with friends.

PASTORAL
Georgie Johnston died on the 5th November and his funeral took place in Kinnitty on the 8th November. He was a great character who has left many happy memories for those who knew him well over the years. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his relatives, especially his brother-in-law Jim Cobine who travelled over from London with his son, Trevor, who paid a fitting tribute to Georgie. After the service, the internment took place in Kinnitty cemetery.

We also offer sympathy to Mrs. June Dunne on the death of her brother-in-law, Gordon Bradley. Gordon was well known throughout a large area of the country for his skills in installing loudspeaker systems for various events.

Fr. Kieran Blake’s brother, Pat, died in Co. Clare. A good number of people from the area of Coolderry and Aghancon travelled to his funeral. The memories we have of those who have died live on in our hearts and we pray that they now rest in peace.

We continue to remember in our prayers all those who are ill, whether at home, in hospital or in nursing homes. Readers might like to note that Clover Lodge is now named Ealga Lodge Nursing Home, Shinrone.

SERVICE IN CELEBRATION OF LIFE
The united Group service held in Aghancon on the 29th October was a good and meaningful occasion. It was a service of the word and included time for those who wished to light a candle in memory of a loved one. Many thanks to those who attended and to Aghancon for their kind hospitality.

Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh
Ennis, Kilfenora, 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

The Franciscan presence in Ennis, dating back to1284, is always a means of fascination and colour to church life, including the female branch of the Poor Clare’s, a closed contemplative Order residing next door to the “modern” working Friary. The old Franciscan Priory where Anglicans worshipped until dis-Establishment in and around 1971 is nearby and a striking feature for tourists. (We handed it back some 60 years ago!) A recent concert built around the poetic words of universal founder Francis of Assisi and set to music—his Canticle of Creation—by composer Vincent Kennedy, who also plays trumpet alongside Marina Cassidy on exquisite harp, with matching superlative and haunting soprano vocals, brought true Franciscan beauty and reflectiveness to meet a dark November night and cheer the Saints.

The evening was introduced by an old friend of Ennis and St Columba’s community, Fr Adrian Pelo, returned from California and now in Dublin.

The Franciscan church community and choir host this year’s Town Ecumenical Carols on Sunday December 17th, when Bishop Kenneth will join Bishop Fintan Monaghan, Bishop of Killaloe for the massed choir event, always a rich moment in the Advent-Christmas calendar, with orchestra. Bishop Kenneth will take the opportunity to meet the clergy, brothers and sisters of the Franciscan and Poor Clare communities on the day of the ecumenical carol service.

ART FUNDRAISER
Edwin Bailey, honorary secretary of Kilnasoolagh Parish, Newmarket-on-Fergus put the fruits of one of his hobbies, photography and audio visual display to good use in November with a showing of nine of his superbly produced presentations, including his national prizewinning production “Breath of Spring”. His gifts, so far as those who know him are concerned, are boundless Edwin is a busy member and leader of various community organisations and projects and amid his hectic and highly organised retirement, he is an indispensable layreader at Kilnasoolagh. The well attended evening raised €700 for the church fabric fund.

Showing his versatility and eclectic interests, among the nature and history themes was a picture Story of poet and World War 1 warrior Francis Ledwidge, the centenary of whose death at Ypres is marked this year of 2017.
WELCOME BACK
...to Rev Vicky Lynch, from Limerick and Shannon Methodist Church who swapped positions with the Rector at St Columba’s Family Service. Sadly few young children were there to enrich and benefit. Meanwhile the Rector had a most enjoyable time of fellowship in Christ Church, Limerick, enjoying the relaxed form of worship amid a good bunch of children and adults with international backgrounds. It was great to see there Mrs Jean Cunningham representing Shannon community.

COVER
The Rector is grateful to The Very Rev Maurice Sirr, Dean Emeritus of Limerick for providing holiday cover for the Rector over Christmas Week until Epiphany. His Mobile is 087 2541121.0

GROUNDWORK
Those of us who sat with the parish leaders and treasurers at the seminar at Adare on keeping Parish accounts and compiling returns thank Yvonne Blennerhassett for her organisation of the day. Her stamp of warm inclusive style made it a helpful and collegiate time furthered also by Treasurer Phylis Mason, and Diocesan laymen Roy Benson, Andrew Eadie and in his presentation Mr Paul Collins of Ecclesiastical Insurance
A key aim of the seminar was to promote the standardisation of annual accounts submitted by Parishes. One thing which stood out for this writer was in the area of personal giving and the significant benefit in tax refunds (40 per cent) to be claimed by the parish (depending on the giver being a taxpayer). As Del Boy would say, you know it makes sense.
At this juncture we might acknowledge our own treasurers Maria Kerins and Evelyn Mason.

REMEMBRANCE
Drumcliffe parishioner and warden Tim Gibbons made and presented the Group wreath for the Cenotaph at Friar’s Walk in the new Peace Park in Ennis, one year after its launch and dedication. It commemorates 700 war dead from WW1 in Ennis…..a stunning statistic (before we get to other wars). This moment, a brief ceremony on Armistice Day, 11th November was prior to a fuller event in St Peter Paul Cathedral, with a rich variety of items for the liturgy and---a depleted congregation due to Ireland v Denmark soccer on TV. An excellent address was delivered by Clare FM journalist and WW1 history enthusiast Joe O’Muirihearteagh with poetry from Francis Ledwidge, deceased WW1 War poet and Arthur Watson from Clare Poetry Collective.

On 12th November we marked Remembrance Sunday in all of our services. In St John’s Church Ballinasloe Lieutenant John Woods of the Irish Reserve Army laid a wreath in memory of the sons of that parish who lost their lives during the First World War. Jimmy Naughten led an Act of Remembrance in St Catherine’s Church Aharscragh, and during the family service in Holy Trinity Church, Aughrim, our children lit candles in memory of all who died in wars throughout the world, before committing themselves to work for peace, by singing Down By the Riverside.

On November 9th the rector was a guest at the Ballinasloe People of the Year Awards in the Shearwater Hotel. The event, hosted by the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and sponsored by Ballinasloe Credit Union, celebrated the outstanding contributions made to the life of our community so many people. The rector joined Fr Colm Allman of Ballinasloe Parish in leading a Eucharist in the Mill Race Nursing Home on November 10th in memory of their residents who died over the last year.

On November 18th Ardrahan Church was a ‘full-bottomed church,’ as friends and neighbours joined us in their droves for a wonderful fundraising concert, featuring harpists Caroline Bradley and Rachel
Reed and soprano Maeve Carney, supported by young trad musicians from Gort and Ballindereen. Donations of €550 were collected on the night and shared between Crumlin Children’s Hospital and the ongoing repair work to the church windows in Ardrahan. We were all saddened to learn of the recent vandalism to Erislannan Church, Clifden Parish. As a gesture of our solidarity with them, retiring collections were held in our churches for three weeks, raising €690 towards their appeal fund.

On November 26th the rector and representatives from Holy Trinity Church Aughrim were the guests of honour at a service of rededication in St Catherine’s Roman Catholic Church, Aughrim. Great goodwill has surrounded the arrangement of hosting St Catherine’s services in Holy Trinity Church since their renovation project began in the summer of 2016. Plaques to commemorate that arrangement were presented to each church during the ceremony.

**UPCOMING CHRISTMAS SERVICES & EVENTS**

**Requiem Mass in Memory of Fr McGuinness**

Ahascragh, at 11am in Sunday 31st December (Service of the Word).

**First Sunday of Christmas – United Service**

in St Catherine’s Church, Ahascragh, at 11am in Sunday 31st December (Service of the Word).

**Annual Christmas Concert**

Sunday 3rd December at 7.30pm. This is a not-to-be-missed highlight of the season, featuring a host of musical talent from the area in the beautiful festive setting of St Catherine’s Church, Ahascragh.

**Community Carol Service**

Fr Joseph Roche (Labane Parish) and Reverend John Godfrey will lead an ecumenical carol service in Ardrahan Church on Tuesday 19th December at 7.30pm.

**Christmas Eve in Ardrahan**

Holy Communion at 3.30pm on Sunday 24th December in Ardrahan Church.

**United Christmas Eve Eucharist**

in St Matthew’s Church, Clontuskert (Glan Church) at 6pm on Sunday 24th December.

**United Christmas Day Eucharist**

in Holy Trinity Church, Aughrim at 11am on Monday 25th December.

**First Sunday of Christmas – United Service**

in St Catherine’s Church, Ahascragh, at 11am in Sunday 31st December (Service of the Word).

**Praying into Advent**

our seasonal Bible study group returns from November 30th to December 14th on Thursday nights in the Rectory Coach House, Aughrim, from 7 to 8pm. This is an opportunity to meet for coffee and mince pies as we prayerfully mull over the scriptures for each Sunday in Advent.

**Ecumenical Advent Eucharist**

in keeping with the spirit of Oak House, Claire Besnyoe invites you to join her in Ballydugan House for Holy Communion on Friday 8th December at 3pm; celebrant Fr Iomar Daniels, preacher Reverend John Godfrey. RSVP 091843004.

**Community Carol Service**

Fr Joseph Roche (Labane Parish) and Reverend John Godfrey will lead an ecumenical carol service in Ardrahan Church on Tuesday 19th December at 7.30pm.

**United Carol Service**

St John’s Church, Ballinasloe will host a united service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday 24th December at 11am.

There will be no other services in the parish that morning. Our annual collection of gifts for Esker House women’s refuge, Athlone, will be presented during this service.

**Christmas Eve in Ardrahan**

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**Clonfert Group of Parishes**

**Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna**

Priest in Charge: Rev Charles McCartney

The Rectory, The Hill, Banagher, Co. Offaly. R42T935

Temp. Mobile – 0044 7484 602420

E Mail – dunroamin.mccartney@btopenworld.com

**NOVEMBER 2017 SUNDAY SERVICES:**

**Portumna** – 9.00am, Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

**Eyrecourt** – 10.30am, Holy Communion 3rd Sunday

**Banagher** – 12.00 noon, Holy Communion 1st Sunday

**Sundays**

**Portumna 9.00am – Holy Communion 2nd Sunday**

**Eyrecourt 10.30am – Holy Communion 2nd Sunday December,**

**3rd Sunday January**

**Banagher 12.00 noon – Holy Communion 1st Sunday**

**Clonfert Cathedral 5th Sunday 11.00am Holy Communion**

Next Sunday for Joint Service 31st December – The First Sunday of Christmas

Remembrance Sunday all congregations paid their respects with an Act of Remembrance. Charles related a little of his own family history only recently researched. “My grandfather never spoke of his experiences of the 1st World War. He recruited into the 15th North Belfast Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles, this was one of several Roman Catholic Battalions in Belfast. Grandad went over the top on the 1st July 1916 with over 600 soldiers in his battalion. They were successful and gained their objective just outside Thiepval. Unfortunately the German infantry regrouped and cut of the 15th Rifles from the rest of the division. Grandad was taken prisoner on the evening of 2nd July with only 24 soldiers surviving from the Battalion. Grandad was repatriated at the end of the war and the one thing he ever spoke about was the wonderful moment setting foot back on Irish soil at Dublin docks.”

A few members brought old family photos and even a few medals to Church on the day.

**Mission Sunday** – At time of going to press we do not have any offertory details, but we look forward to some old 1 Pound (round) coins from the UK as these have gone out of circulation. We can exchange for Euro easily. We look forward to reports on how our giving will be used.

Advent and Christmas seem to be rushing in upon us, going to press we have been invited to Clonmacnoise Carol Service and this will be held in Shannon Bridge RC Church @ 5.00pm Sunday 16 December. Charles is looking forward to taking part with Fr Mike in Portumna Social Centre for Carols Thursday 14th December @ 8.00pm. Fr Mike, Cecilia and Charles are also invited out for a Christmas Party with the Portumna & District Active Retirement Group.

**BACK TO OUR OWN CHURCHES AND AFTER SOME DISCUSSION WE ARE SETTLING DOWN TO A PLAN!**

Sunday 17th December - Joint Service in Eyrecourt Festival of Carols with a selection of Advent/Christmas Carols. Bishop Kenneth will join us and is looking forward to meeting everyone. Please stay for Gluwein and Mince Pies. We would like to encourage our younger members and Charles will have a suitable thought for the day. Rumour has it Santa intends to leave a few parcels in one of his sacks at the Church on his way past during the night as he gets ready for the big day!

The 4th Sunday of Advent which is Christmas Eve this year with
a later Holy Communion in Portumna 7.00pm. This has become a well established joint service, so please come along and bring a chum! Some Christmas goodies after.

Christmas Day – Banagher Christmas Holy Communion @ 11.00am

CLONFERT CATHEDRAL
Perhaps this all leads us up to the Cathedral on the 31st December Joint Service @ 11.00am Holy Communion. We have a plan for a little extra heat, so perhaps just the one coat and a cushion will suffice.

Our services over the Advent/Christmas will be very younger folk friendly and visitor welcoming, so please do come along and join us. C U There

FAREWELL & THANKS TO REV PATRICK TOWERS
The parishioners from the four churches of Banagher, Eyrecourt, Portumna and Clonfert organised a well attended farewell party for Rev Patrick & Mrs Anne Towers on Friday 10th November at Portumna Golf Club. Rev Patrick was Priest-in-Charge in the Clonfert Group of Parishes for over 6 years. There were speeches of heartfelt thanks by representatives of each of the churches with a presentation from each. Rev Patrick thanked everyone for attending and expressed sincere thanks for gifts presented. The parishioners were extremely grateful for Rev Patrick’s Ministry over the last number of years.

Limerick Diocese

Limerick City Parish
St. Mary’s Cathedral, St. Michael’s and Abington Churches
Dean: Very Rev Niall Sloane
The Deanery, 7 Kilbane, Castletroy, Limerick.
Tel: 061 310 293
Email: dean@limerick.anglican.org

Curate Assistant: Rev Edna Wakely
50 Ballinvoher, Fr Russell Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick
Tel: 061 302 038, Mob: 086 357 4917
Email: ednawakely@hotmail.com

FROM THE DEAN
My prayer at this time of year is for all who find the Christmas season a sad or lonely time. No matter what your circumstances this Christmas, please be assured of the presence of God with us all – Emmanuel. To you all, I hope that this Christmas may be filled with peace, rest and that wonderful sense of God’s presence. Happy Christmas!

ADVENT, CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY
Details of services for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are been finalised at time of going to print. Please refer to the weekly newsletter for further details.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING
If you wish to help out with the decorating you would be very welcome to join us. As Limerick City Parish is an “Equal Opportunities Employer” – Gentlemen are very welcome to try out their artistic skills!

CONGRATULATIONS
- to Gordon Dreaper (son of St Michael’s Churchwarden, Victor Dreaper and wife, Georgina Dreaper) and Sinead McKenna who were married in Lattin, Co. Tipperary on Saturday 28th October.
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A sculpture to commemorate the 35,000 men of the fifteen Irish Regiments who made the supreme sacrifice during World War 1, was unveiled and dedicated at the annual service of remembrance at St Mary’s Cathedral.

The sculpture, created by Limerick born artist John Toomey, consists of two parts. The upper shows a shamrock surrounded by a traditional poppy wreath. This section has an outer bezel with the regimental badges of the fifteen Irish Regiments in order of seniority. The lower plaque is engraved both in Irish and English with the names of the various regiments.

Dean Niall Sloane pictured with the Dean’s Verger, Craig Copley Brown, at the recent Remembrance service in the Island Field Cemetery, Limerick

ST MICHAEL’S HALL

For booking enquiries please contact the Hall Manager, Suzi Eckhardt.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please contact a member of the clergy for more information.

SELECT VESTRY

The Register of Vestrypersons is open for revision until the 11th January 2018. If you are over 18 and subscribe to parish funds and are not yet registered, please see one of the Churchwardens and fill in the registration form. This will enable you to vote at the meeting of the General Vestry.

MOTHERS’ UNION

Details of the December Christmas meeting are being finalized, please contact Branch Chair, Margaret Schutz for further details. The AGM will be held on Monday 8th January in Richmond Terrace. New members always welcome.

NEWSLINK

Subscriptions for 2018 will be due shortly and may be paid to Gillian Cheatley. New subscribers are always welcome.

HOSPITAL VISITING

The Clergy would appreciate being told if parishioners are in hospital, going into hospital, are being transferred or if they have been discharged, and will be pleased to offer pastoral support. A selection of prayers is available from them or in the Church porches.

PARISH ARCHIVES

We are looking for any photos, information or historical artefacts relating to any of the churches in Limerick City Parish. If you have any such records, please contact the Dean.

READERS AND INTERCESSORS

If you would be interested in reading at services and/or leading the Prayers of the People at Parish Communion once a month please sign up at the Church door or speak to a member of the clergy.

CHILDREN AND CHURCH

We are grateful to the leaders of our Sunday School who have organise a wide range of events and activities. Children who wish to remain in church can avail of the Children’s packs at the back of the church and/or follow along in our Parish Communion services with the ‘I can join in the Holy Communion Service’ booklets.

COELIAC?

Communicants who wish to receive gluten-free bread please inform the Clergy or a Churchwarden.

ECO CONGREGATION IRELAND

Keep an eye on the notice board in the Church on news and updates.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Our sympathy and prayers are with all those who have been bereaved, in particular: Jill Storey and her family on the death of her brother in law.

Adare and Kilmallock Group of Parishes

Adare, Croom, Kilmallock & Kilpeacon
Rector: Canon Liz Beasley
The Rectory, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061 396227 Mob: 087-7199750
Email: revlizadare@gmail.com

The past month in the Adare Group has been one filled with a number of special events, often in cooperation with our neighbours. First of all, St. Nicholas, Adare, is grateful to volunteers from the company Regeneron, who on 27 October cleaned the church’s large windowsills and cleared the grounds of storm debris.

REMEMBRANCE

St. Nicholas, Adare, hosted an ecumenical service on Remembrance Sunday, 12th November, as part of a week-long commemoration of those who died in World War I. More than 120 people attended the service from throughout the community, which included the dedication of a plaque honouring those from Adare who fought in the war and listing the names of the 21 men who died.

The week also included an exhibit in the Adare Village Hall of war memorabilia on Saturday and Sunday, 4th and 5th November. The upper classes from the four schools in Adare attended the exhibit during the week. See page 19 for a report with photos.
THE REFORMATION
The Roman Catholic Church in Crecora invited Kilpeacon Church, and all our parishes, to join in an ecumenical service on Thursday, 16th November. The service was planned by the church’s priest, Fr. Richie Evans, and Rev. Liz Beasley. The chosen theme was the Reformation, in keeping with the widespread commemorations this year of Martin Luther tacking 95 theses for the reform of the Church on a church door in Germany in 1517, an event that is considered the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Rev. Liz was the preacher, and members of our parishes joined the Crecora choir for the service.

The service was well-attended by members of both the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland parishes, and was followed by refreshments down the street in the Crecora National School. A great feeling of comradeship pervaded the events, and many agreed that we should be together more often and hold another service next year, this time in Kilpeacon Church.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
We have two Carol Services before Christmas, both on Sunday, 17th December:
Kilmallock at 12.30pm. This service is designed especially for children, and will be followed by a Christmas Dinner in the Bulgaden Lounge. Adare, at 7.00pm

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Almost at the top of the world … Tommy Downes on his recent trip to the Everest Base Camp

RECENT BAPTISM:
Edith Maria Jean, daughter of Brian Fitzell and June Fitzgibbon, was baptised recently in Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton. The sponsors were Lucy Fitzgibbon, John Fair and Kenneth Alfred. Brian and June live in Ballindeel House, the old Rectory in Askeaton.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM:
Colonel Edward Buckingham, retired diocesan reader, took part in the Remembrance Sunday commemorations in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, introducing the minute’s silence and reading the words of Laurence Binyon with a dignity that added solemnity to the occasion.
ERRISLANAN CHURCH:
Canon Stan Evans, Priest-in-Charge of Omey (Cliden), Co Galway, is remembered with fondness as a former priest-in-charge of this group of parishes, when he lived in the Rectory in Askeaton. Parishioners were saddened to hear about the recent vandalism and wanton destruction in Holy Trinity Church, Errislanan, which is part of his parish. At a recent United Group Service in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, it was agreed that a generous collection should be donated to the restoration of the church in Errislanan.

DECEMBER, CHRISTMAS AND JANUARY SERVICES:
Sunday 3 December: 9.30 a.m., Saint Mary's Church, Askeaton, Holy Communion; 11.30, Saint Brendan's Church, Kilnaughtin (Tarbert), Morning Prayer.
Friday 8 December: 8 p.m., Tarbert Carol Service, Tarbert Community Centre.
Sunday 10 December: 9.30 a.m., Castletown Church, Kilcornan, Holy Communion; 11.30, Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale.
Sunday 17 December: No morning service in Askeaton; 11.30, Kilnaughtin, Holy Communion. 3 p.m., Carol Service in Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, followed by refreshments in the Rectory.
Wednesday 20 December: 12 noon: end-of-term School Play and Carol Service, Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, 12 noon.
Christmas Eve, Sunday 24 December: 11 a.m., United Service (Holy Communion), Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale; 8 p.m., Kilnaughtin (Christmas Communion); 10 p.m., Castletown (Christmas Communion).
Christmas Day, Monday 25 December: 9.30 Askeaton (Christmas Communion); 11, Rathkeale (Christmas Communion).
New Year's Eve, 31 December (Fifth Sunday in the Month): 11 a.m., United Parish Communion, Saint Brendan’s Church, Kilnaughtin, Tarbert.
Sunday 7 January 2018: 9.30 a.m., Saint Mary's Church, Askeaton, Holy Communion; 11.30, Saint Brendan's Church, Kilnaughtin (Tarbert), Morning Prayer.
Sunday 14 January: 9.30 a.m., Castletown Church, Kilcornan, Holy Communion; 11.30 a.m., Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale.
Sunday 21 January: 9.30 a.m., Askeaton, Morning Prayer; 11.30 a.m., Kilnaughtin, Holy Communion.
Sunday 28 January: 9.30 a.m., Castletown, Morning Prayer; 11.30 a.m., Holy Communion, Rathkeale.

EVERT BASE CAMP
Congratulations to the John Lenihan and Victor Blennerhassett from Ballymacelligott parish and Tommy Downs from Rathkeale together with their friends, John Lyons, Mary Patwell and Eileen Deanley who successfully reached the Everest base camp on the 26th October.

TRALEE CHURCH
St John's has been very tastefully painted in recent weeks, this was coordinated by Mona who did a splendid job. We also owe a huge debt to the Lions Club for their support. This task would have been impossible without their assistance this project would have been impossible.

CHRISTMAS FAIR.
The Christmas Fair will be held in Teach an tSolais on Saturday the 16th December from 10am until 4pm. This is a valuable fundraising and community building event and I urge all parishioners to support this as best you can.

THE JOHN LENIHAN & VICTOR BLENNERHASETT FAMILY MEMORIAL SERVICE.
The service was held on St John's Ashe Street on Sunday the 12th November to remember loved one who died during the past twelve months. Candles were lit and placed on the Altar, by a family members, in memory of their loved ones.
Those remembered were, Emma Fitzell, Lisa Chandler, Tommy Mason, Maraquita Blennerhassett, Timothy Horgan, Ann Knightly and Ann Brosnan.
We continue to hold their families in our prayers at this time. We also used a memory tree which was provided by the Sunday School on which we wrote the names of loved ones.

DENNY WINDOW
A beautiful stained glass window was fitted in St John’s Castle Street on Friday the 27th October. The window was built and installed by Tom Denny, the stained glass artist, who lives in Leicester. Tom is a descendant of the Denny family who were big employers in Tralee in former times. Members of the family also served as Rectors of Tralee. See page 18 for a picture. The Ecumenical service was well attended and many of our parishioners took part in the liturgy. Bishop Kenneth and Bishop Ray blessed the window. The preacher was the Very Rev David Monteith, Dean of Leicester Cathedral, a Fermanagh native and a friend of the Denny family.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:
On Sunday 10th December, there will be a service of carols and readings at the Church of St. Brendan, Killiney at 7.00pm. The Camphill Community are holding their Christmas Carol Service in St. James, Dingle on Friday 15th December, at 6.30pm. The Ecumenical Carol Service in St. James, Dingle, will be on Sunday 17th December at 7.00pm.

10th December: School Play in St John’s Ashe Street 10.45am Service.
17th December: Carol Service in St John’s at 7pm.
24th December: Christmas Eve Service in Ballymacelligott @ 9pm
25th December: Christmas Day St John’s Ashe Street @ 10.45am
27th December: St John’s Tralee @ 11am.
31st December: United Service in Ballyseede at 11am.

NEWS FROM THE WEST
All Souls Day was celebrated at the church of St. Brendan, Killiney with a service to remember our departed loved ones. The church was beautifully lit with candles. Names were read out as a candle was lit and placed on the altar, followed by a time of quiet and prayer. Refreshments in the old school rooms were enjoyed following the service.

WINTER CONCERTS:
On December 12th St Mary’s will be hosting our annual community concert. This year’s entertainment will be provided by Killarney Golf Club Choir, Oh Happy Day Ladies Choir (Killorglin), St Oliver’s National School and the Presentation Monastery Boys’ Choir. As there are a lot of parents at this concert it is advisable to come early with a starting time of 8pm. On Sunday December 17th our Christmas Community Carrol Service commences at 3pm. This is one of the spiritual and musical highlights of the year as we share the sacred space at St Mary’s with the other churches in the town.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:
As Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, it makes for a busy weekend. Services at St Mary’s will be
Dec 24th (Christmas Eve) 11:00 Sunday Service
23:00 Holy Communion Dec 25th (Christmas Day) 11:00 Holy Communion

DIOCESAN TREASURERS’ CONFERENCE:
On November 18th Bob Harman, Adrian Hilliard and Rev. Simon attended this very important conference in Adare, Co Limerick. This critical forum discussed at length what is required at all levels of the Church of Ireland to ensure compliance with the new charities regulations which will be fully effective from 2019. There are some governance issues which will require work at a parochial level, but we can rest assured that our delegates are well on top of this and all parishioners at St Mary’s can rest easy in their beds at night.

On the day there was a presentation on insurance issues as well, which apparently was very informative. Risk Assessments will be required for insured premises going forward and Select Vestry’s should start on them as soon as is practicable. Because it’s an area I’m involved in, I know that the standard Risk Assessment uses a very simple calculation which involves multiplying the “Likelihood” by the “Severity”. However, more and more companies involved in providing cover look for a more complex analysis matrix which is a multiple of “Potential Exposure”, “Probable Likelihood” and “Most Probable Loss”. If any of the churches in the Diocese need a bit of advice or a calculation table, give me a ring.

RESTORATION WORK:
In the November issue of Newslink we made reference to preparatory cleaning and filling of sections of the internal walls of St Mary’s prior to full restoration and painting. The photograph shows Richard Hilliard, Kathi Machat and Stewart Eakin checking some of the work in the South Transept.

Killarney and Aghadoe Union of Parishes
Killarney, Aghadoe and Muckross
Rector: Ven Simon J. Lumby, Archdeacon of Limerick
The Rectory, Rookery Road, Ballycasheen, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 064 66 31832 Mob: 086-8703997
Email: killarney@ardfert.anglican.org

BOOK CLUB:
The December book chosen for reading is On Tuesdays, I’m a Buddhist written by the Irish Times columnist, novelist and playwright Michael Harding. Harding, a former Roman Catholic priest, was a practicing Buddhist for 17 years and has always been controversial in his writings. Now in his mid-sixties he seems to be finding his way back to beliefs and spiritual dimensions and this book is a must for anyone who struggles with the concept of religion and faith.
Kilcolman Union of Parishes

St Michael's, Iveragh Road, Killorglin
& St Carthage, Killilagh Road, Castlemaine.
Vacant.
Priest-in-Charge: Archdeacon Simon Lumby,
Mob 086 8703997 & Tel 064 66 31832.
Parish Postal Address: St Michael's Church, Iveragh Road,
Killorglin, Co. Kerry.
Web: www.kilcolman.ardfert.anglican.org

SERVICES:
St Carthage Sunday 9.45am.
St Michael's Sunday 11am followed by refreshments.
During the vacancy:-
Holy Communion 2nd & 4th Sundays in both churches,
Morning Prayer 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays.
We have a Sunday School for our Parish Children in St Michael's Hall
on 2nd & 4th Sundays @ 11am.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE.
Our Remembrance Service took place in St Michael's Church
in Killorglin on Sunday 12th Nov where The Rev Brian Rogers
administered Holy Communion for us. Members of the congregation
& family members brought up a lighting candle for each of those
who died in the last twelve months, Margaret O'Grady, Anne Boyle,
Bernadine Boyle & Evelyn O'Flynn.

In addition, we remembered all those who gave their lives in wars
& conflicts, in Ireland & throughout the world in the name of peace
and we remembered the Irish soldiers in support of the UN.

We brought up a candle in memory of all those Still Births,
Unbaptised Children & adults and in earlier times those unfortunate
people classified as Paupers.

LOOKING AHEAD.
Our Advent Sunday Services will take place on 3rd Dec when the
readings switch to year B. Our Holy Communion Services will be
on Sunday 10th Dec and Christmas Day. Our Carol Service will take
place on Sunday 17th Dec at 7pm in St Michael's Church. There will
be no morning services on Sun 17th Dec. On Sunday 24th Dec it is
Morning Prayer in both Churches in place of Holy Communion. The
Rev Brian Rogers will be with us on Christmas Day, Monday 25th
Dec. We will have Morning Prayer in both Churches on Sunday 31st
Dec.

CAROL SERVICE.
As I write these notes, it is worth letting you know, that our Carol
Service of nine Carols & nine Lessons will be lead by Archdeacon
Simon Lumby and we will have the Killorglin Mens' Social Club Choir
and the Ladies' Oh Happy Day Choir at the service, each singing two
of their own Carols, to give the congregation a rest. The service will
be followed by refreshments in the hall. I want to express sincere
thanks to all those who will be called upon to prepare the two
Churches for the Christmas Season and to those who have yet to be
asked to read the lessons and to oversee the refreshments. Without
these dedicated people our Church would be a very less attractive
place to worship.

WELCOME:-
As usual St Michael's Church in Killorglin is open every day for a
period of peace and quiet prayer. Situated on the Ring of Kerry road
out of Killorglin we ask you not to pass the door without looking
in. Our Carol Service on 17th Dec is at 7pm not 11am and we would
be delighted to welcome visitors.

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

A Service of Remembrance – and Forgetting. Ignoring the now-
traditional huff and puff about whether the wearing of a November
11th poppy (accompanied or unaccompanied by a shamrock) is
suitable in this part of the world, our services in both Sneem and
Kenmare focused on forgetting, rather than remembering.

Our fellowship – Church and Praise n’ Play – is blessed with
people from many different birth nations. Irish of course, but also
American, Dutch, English, German, Hungarian, Polish, Spanish, South
African, Welsh and Vietnamese. We worship together, share the
bread and wine around the Lord’s table together, and if there is any
disagreement, it is usually about sporting prowess.

Interesting, therefore, to note that each and every one of those
nations has, at sometime in the past, sent out its young men and
women to kill each other. In many ways, it is even more tragic to
realise that civil war has been fought between the people of those
nations themselves.

On a personal note, Remembrance in 2017 has been made even
more poignant for me, in that the 20th of September was the
100th anniversary of my own Grandfather Valentine losing his life
in the fighting for a small Belgian village named Passchendaele;
just two weeks later, I led the memorial service for my dear and
close friend Ebbo Leuttgen. It is perfectly possible that in 1917 his
grandfather and mine were separated by a narrow stretch of no-
man’s land, seeking each other’s death. I lack words to express the
stupidity of that conflict, or indeed most of the other conflicts in
our congregations National histories – and even more so, I cannot
understand how those past conflicts can still stir up thoughts of
revenge that have lasted for generations.

Our Remembrance Service, therefore, was really one of Un-
remembering – praying for reconciliation and forgiveness, while
giving thanks for those who in all conscience, were prepared to
give their lives for causes they believed in – whoever they were and
whatever side they were on. Jesus told the story of the unforgiving
servant. If we cannot forgive, how can we possibly expect forgiveness
for ourselves?

The picture is of one of the 888,246 ceramic poppies in the
installation ‘Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red’, commissioned to
commemorate the beginning of the First World War. I bought it
not just to remember Valentine, but every single one of those who
fought. From all sides.
Methodist News

Adare & Ballingrane Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Ruth Watt
Methodist Manse, Rathkeale Road, Adare, Co. Limerick.
Tel: 061 396 236 Email: watt_ruth@yahoo.ie

As I wrote last month we were preparing to have 24 hours of prayer on our circuit. As I write this month we have just completed that 24 hours (actually 22 ½ hours, but close enough for our small community). The hustle and bustle around the hall with our Christmas Card Fair & Coffee morning (& cake and toy sale) seemed to add to the contrast of the church where there was a quiet and peaceful atmosphere. The event had become a community event with church leaders from Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church and St. Nicholas’s Church of Ireland involved in the opening service of Praise & Prayer, with church leaders from the ecumenical group which meets once a month in Charleville. How blessèd was this time of coming together, to pray together and as individuals, to worship together.

Praying for the homeless

God is at work in our lives and in our communities. He is drawing us together from many different Christian traditions. He has called us to be united, to be one (John 17:20ff). I pray that we will continue to grow towards that goal.

And as we look to the next few weeks, where we seek to celebrate again the coming of Christ Jesus as a little baby, let us remember that, while we may celebrate with different liturgies or with none, we all celebrate the coming of the same Lord Jesus Christ. We have more to unite us than divide but far too often our fallen human state focuses on the divisions. Let our New Year resolution be to see Christ in each other, to learn from each other, and to celebrate, worship and pray together.

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Rev. Tom Kingston Services of H.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Saturday evening Service of Lessons &amp; Carols in Ballingrane @ 8pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Sunday morning Service in Adare, 11am</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt United Children’s Carol Service @ 11am in Adare</td>
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<tr>
<td>25th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Christmas Morning Service in Ballingrane, 10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st</td>
<td>Mrs. Siobhán Wheeler United service in Adare @ 11am.</td>
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Services for January 2018: (Happy New Year, may it be a Blessèd One)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Services of H.C. &amp; Covenant Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Saturday evening Service in Adare @ 8pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt Sunday morning Service in Ballingrane, 11am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th</td>
<td>Rev. Ruth Watt</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Unless otherwise stated services are in Adare @ 10:15am and in Ballingrane @ 11:45am

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

November was a time of goodbyes. One of the very nice things about being a city centre church is that you fairly regularly get visitors and indeed some stay for a while.

Sean our Mission Worker has been teaching English as a foreign language at Griffith College. While he was there he met some Christian Brazilian students who were very keen to start a Bible Study group. Obviously this was great to hear and Sean and Christ Church were very happy to oblige. It also had the added benefit of helping the students with their English language practice. We then discovered that one of the Brazilian students was a Presbyterian minister! Silas is a minister in the Ourinhos Presbytery which covers an area quite unlike Dublin and Munster Presbytery I imagine. The Bible Study group grew and then with the help of musical brothers Luis and Guilherme, Silas began leading worship in Portuguese in Christ Church on Sunday evenings. It’s amazing what God brings really. We could never have imagined it but there it was! But we had to say goodbye, firstly to Silas, then to Luis and Guilherme. And we gave thanks for them.

At the beginning of autumn we’d also waved goodbye to Alan who had been studying Music Therapy in UL. Alan had been so helpful in encouraging our young people to really get involved with the church band. Just as Alan left, Carter, another very talented music student arrived in the church! It was fantastic. Carter then brought a new burst of enthusiasm with his skill on piano and guitar. And in the middle of November we had to wish him farewell too! And we gave thanks for them both.

I think we’re beginning to really appreciate God’s generosity in the moment; to really celebrate and give thanks for gifts that God sends. We often remember the financial gifts or the gifts at Harvest, which of course are wonderful, but it’s really good to appreciate the gifts that come in human form. We’re quite regularly seeing new faces in the church and they’re faces that started out in many different parts of the
world. It's just so interesting to see what God is making in Christ Church. I hope we stay rightly curious, truly responsive and very thankful!

Included, a photo of our newly qualified Now We're Cooking! crew. They did their food hygiene training and are now good to go. So another very big 'thank you,' this time to Kasia, Sarah and Ean from Zest and EFG for sorting that out for us.

Now We're Cooking! - the crew

Killarney, Kenmare & Millstreet Methodist Churches
[part of the Cork South & Kerry Circuit]

Minister: Rev Karen Spence
10 Flesk Grove, Killarney, Co Kerry
Tel: 064 6631613
Email: karen.spence@irishmethodist.org
Website: www.irishmethodist.org/kerry

Lay Pastoral Assistant: Suzie Gallagher
Kenmare Lay Pastoral Team: Ed and Jean Ritchie
Tel: 064 6620580

The Lighthouse MILLSTREET
Sunday service 6.30pm
Bible Study Tuesday 7.30pm

KILLARNEY
Sunday services 9am and 11am
Soul Food Bible Study Friday 11am followed by Drop-in lunch 12pm
Parent and Toddler (term time) Tuesday 10am
Kids Ministry Club monthly as arranged on Saturdays

The Gateway KENMARE
Sunday Service 11am (preceded by tea/coffee)
Prayer Meeting Wednesday 9.15am
Bible study Wednesday 10am
Drop in for coffee Wednesday 11am

Contact Rev Karen Spence for further information.

November has been a month when the churches have focussed on the theme of prayer, partly in response to the call to pray by the Methodist Church and all preaching and teaching has followed that theme. Prayer rooms were set up in the 3 churches as we discerned the theme ‘Now! What is the spirit saying to the Church?’ Future events include a Christmas Sale in Killarney on Saturday 9th December from 1pm – 4pm and at the same time the children will focus on a FAB Christmas with crafts. All are welcome!

A Carol service is planned for Wednesday 20th December at 7.30pm in Killarney and in Kenmare on Sunday 24th December at 11am.

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit
Minister: Rev Shannon DeLaureal
The Manse, The Mall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 050 21670 Mobile: 085 1920 808
Email: Shannon.delaureal@irishmethodist.org

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

As I write this article, our circuit has participated in the first 12 hours of our 24 hour call to prayer. Three prayer rooms across the circuit have been set up in Cloughjordan, Borrisokane and Roscrea. Members have signed up to pray for an hour at a time. For most of us, a prayer room with interactive prayer activities is new. And making time out of our busy schedules to pray for one hour in a prayer room is definitely new!

We invited the communities to join us with an invitation through their own church leadership along with a sign on our wayside pulpit saying our “prayer room is open.” The response and feedback have been very positive so far. Several have mentioned about how good it was to be still with God. A Methodist from Athlone just happened to be driving by in Borrisokane and saw our sign; he popped in to pray for 20 minutes! A person from the Eco Village in Cloughjordan has requested to have the Prayer Room once a week! Several people commented on how 1 hour was not long enough, (myself included)! And I’m very proud of our folk in Cloughjordan who took it upon themselves to nearly fill the full 24 hours of prayer by signing up for 1 hour on both Friday and Saturday to pray. I didn’t even ask them to do that. God is at work here! As a circuit may we continue to be open to try new practices which draw us closer to God and which strengthen us to share our faith with others. May we continue to share the Good News and to invite people to experience this Good News for themselves.

And speaking of invitations, you are welcome to come celebrate the birth of Christ with us on the N. Tipperary Circuit where we strive to shine the light of Christ into the world’s darkness so that our burdens are that much lighter and the companionship on the journey is that much sweeter.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”– Isaiah 9:6-7
Rural Isolation

Editor: The Church of Ireland’s Church and Society Commission has published this discussion paper on rural isolation. It provides an overview of factors contributing to isolation in rural Ireland, with links to resources on improving mental health and reducing financial stress.

CONTEXT
A substantial number of people in every age group within the adult population live by themselves, with this proportion increasing markedly as people grow older. The challenges of living alone are more enhanced in rural areas than in urban areas due to the more dispersed pattern of housing and the variable nature of farm incomes – often closely related to weather conditions and changing prices for produce.

Rural isolation is not easily defined. A person may or may not prefer to live alone and his or her status may be determined by choice, bereavement or the ending of a relationship among other factors. Isolation may be experienced by couples and families as well as individuals. Several factors which may contribute to a sense of isolation were identified in a Northern Ireland Assembly research paper in 2014. Geographical factors may include:

- Proximity to services (e.g. a post office, bank or shop);
- Travel distance to an emergency care department; and
- Access to a car or van (with fewer alternative forms of transport than in urban areas).

The scoping paper also noted that the proportion of adults living alone more than doubled between 1983 and 2014 and that the greatest increase in the number of older people is occurring in rural western areas. A rising number of people are living in poverty, including fuel poverty which is more prevalent in rural areas without a natural gas supply. Net farm incomes had varied between £10,000 and £30,000 in the previous eight years.

While noting that some people prefer to live alone, the paper found that rural isolation may well have negative impacts on individuals, including poorer mental health, a higher risk of suicide, and a lower sense of isolation.

The first ‘Rural Ageing in Ireland’ working paper – published by NUI Galway in 2012 – noted that a higher proportion of older people live in rural areas compared to the general population and this trend is particularly apparent in border and western counties.

‘Rural Ageing in Ireland’ identified similar challenges to those identified in Northern Ireland i.e. low levels of service provision, inadequate public transport, and social exclusion (related to the migration of younger family members and fewer opportunities to socialise in shops and bars). Rural poverty is often less visible as its effects are not as concentrated as they would be in towns and cities. The paper affirmed the role of personal circumstances and has been followed up with further research into income, poverty and deprivation, social exclusion and gender.

RESPONSE
The Church of Ireland serves rural communities across the island and seeks to respond to the needs of its members and their neighbours through pastoral care and specific ministries. For example, senior citizens’ groups provide a continued sense of community for those living alone in later life. Play groups can give valuable practical support for lone parents.

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality.” Romans 12.10-13

People living in the countryside can also benefit from assistance given by the Rural Support charity (Northern Ireland), the Irish Farmers’ Association’s Mind Our Farm Families helpline (Republic of Ireland), and other charities working to improve mental health and reduce financial stress (see below).

The Irish Government’s Rural Social Scheme allows farmers and fishermen living on low incomes to earn supplementary incomes e.g. through providing care or helping to maintain local facilities. The Farm Assist programme provides means-tested income support to farmers. The Rural Transport Fund and Rural Transport Programme help to sustain rural bus services in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland respectively.

“Almighty God, whose will it is that the earth and the sea should bear fruit in due season: Bless the labours of those who work on land and sea, grant us a good harvest and the grace always to rejoice in your fatherly care; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Rogation Day Collect, Book of Common Prayer

ADVICE & RESOURCES – Republic of Ireland

IFA - Mind Our Farm Families: 1890 130 022, www.ifa.ie/mental-health
Samaritans: 116 123, www.samaritans.ie
HSE – Your Mental Health: www.yourmentalhealth.ie
A short story from the Bible

In Israel, about 2000 years ago, a young woman, Mary, was going to marry Joseph. The weddings were in two stages.

In one year we will complete our wedding.

Then God's messenger angel came to see Mary.

Don't be afraid!

You will have God's baby, and call him Jesus, 'God saves,' because he will save people from what they do wrong.

How can this happen?

Your cousin Elizabeth, who couldn't have children, is now 6 months pregnant.

With God, nothing is impossible.

Mary visited Elizabeth.

When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was very upset.

This will bring shame on me and my family.

He always did what was right so he decided to end their marriage, but quietly.

But the angel came to him in a dream.

Don't be afraid to marry Mary. The baby is God's, and you will call him Jesus.

So Joseph and Mary completed their marriage.
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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

Weekend bus service - Killaloe, Ballina, Nenagh, Borrisokane, Birr, Roscrea.