Crocuses and snowdrops remind us of God’s love for his creation

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these (Matt 6:28-29)
Creativity at the Nenagh Christmas Tree Festival

Community Christmas Tree – 353 squares, 82 ornaments from local knitters and crocheters

Dr Suess Tree – Burgess National School

Home and Homeless – Rehab Care

The Tree of Everyday Life – St Cronin’s Association (Nenagh branch)

Bandon Grammar School

Co-Educational Boarding and Day

Founded 1642

Principal: Ian Couvée, B.A., H.O.T., M.H.I.

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Bishop Kenneth writes - St Valentine, love and marriage

No sooner were the Hallowe’en masks, capes, sweets and cakes out of the shops than they were replaced by Christmas decorations, cards and mince pies. Christmas is only just over when the St Valentine’s Day cards and sweets appear – we seem to roll from one celebration to another – any excuse for a celebration and a party, it seems!

St Valentine’s Day, 14th February, has evolved its own traditions – cards, chocolates, even bottles of champagne – anything you can stick a red heart onto counts as a Valentine gift, all in celebration of Love.

The original St Valentine wasn’t so lucky. He was a Roman saint in the 3rd century, and all we know of him was that he was martyred in Rome, but we know nothing at all of his life or deeds, a fact which was clearly acknowledged by Pope Gelasius I who declared Valentine a saint, but who said Valentine was among those “whose names are justly reverenced among men, but whose acts are known only to God.” In fact there may have been two or even three St Valentine, whose feasts were celebrated on February 14th. The relics of one of these saints is to be found today in Dublin, in the Carmelite Church in Whitefriar Street.

This celebration of love is an opportunity for us to remember the high value that the Christian Church has placed on love and marriage. Our church’s understanding of marriage is expressed in the Preface (or Introduction) to the Marriage Service to be found in the Book of Common Prayer. There are two services in that book – Marriage One (p406) is the older service, in traditional language; Marriage Two (p416) is in more modern language.

What is often not noticed is an important change in our understanding of marriage to be found in these two services. The Introduction to Marriage One speaks of the “causes for which matrimony was ordained.”

“First, for the increase of mankind, according to the will of God, and for the due ordering of families and households, that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.” (The context of having and rearing children).

“Secondly, for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman, and for the avoidance of sin.” (The physical aspect).

“Thirdly, for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.” (The relationship of love, care etc.).

Note the order.

In Marriage Two, the modern service, the Introduction states

“Marriage was ordained that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in plenty and in need, in sorrow and in joy.” (The relationship of love, care etc.).

“It is intended that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and through the joy of their bodily union they may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives.” (The physical aspect).

“It is intended that they may be blessed in the children they may have, in caring for them and in bringing them up in accordance with God’s will to his praise and glory.” (Children).

This change of order between the two services marks a change in our theology of marriage in recent years. In the modern service the priority is the relationship between the couple; then the physical aspect, which is a way of expressing that relationship; and thirdly children, which result from the relationship.

So amidst all the cards, hearts, chocolates and champagne of St Valentine’s Day, it is important to remember that as Christians we have something very special and important to say about love and marriage, even in the 21st century and especially on 14th February.

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

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Diocesan Calendar

To place an entry please email the Editor at joc_sanders@iol.ie. Those organising events of wide diocesan interest are urged to do so as early as possible.

**Mon 11th February, 1am & 7pm**  CME Workshop: The Jesus Prayer & Icons, The Rectory, Askeaton

**Thu 14th February**  Mothers’ Union area meeting, Methodist Hall, Roscrea (Speaker: Mrs Lucy Kavanagh DP)

**Fri 22nd – Sun 24th February**  UDYC Taking a Leading Role Part 3, Django’s Hostel, Cloughjordan

**Wed 27th February, 8pm**  DCIM Mission Evening: Work of the Peter McVerry Trust (Speaker: Fr Peter McVerry), Woodlands House Hotel, Adare

**Thu 28th February**  Finance Committee, followed by Diocesan Council

**Mon 4th March, 11am**  CME Workshops: The Adventure of Prayer & Faith Development, The Rectory, Askeaton

**Sat 16th March, 10am-6pm**  UDYC Multi Activity Day - details to be confirmed (NS 3rd-6th class)

**Sat 23rd March, 2pm**  Come and Sing: Anthems, St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick (See advert p.19)

**Thu 28th March, 11am-3.20pm**  Joint Tuam/Limerick Lenten Quiet Day, St Mary’s Cathedral, Tuam

**Sat 30th March**  GFS Diocesan Prizeday & Service, St Cronan’s Church, Roscrea

**Mon 8th April**  GFS Diocesan Council Meeting, Cloughjordan

**Wed 1st May, 8pm**  DCIM Mission Evening: Youth Mission Experience, Church Hall, Moneygall, Co Tipperary

**Thu 2nd May**  Finance Committee

**Thu 9th May**  Joint Glebes & Property Committees, followed by Diocesan Council

**Thu 16th – Sat 18th May**  General Synod, Millennium Forum, Derry/Londonderry
Editorial - Brexit

I confess to following Brexit news compulsively, rubbernecking a slow motion wreck. The UK is split down the middle between leavers and remainers. The political class is having a nervous breakdown with no majority in the London Parliament for anything. Just weeks before Brexit Day no one knows whether ‘no deal’, a more or less ‘soft deal’, or staying in the EU will prevail, but ‘no deal’ looks ever more likely. Governments and major companies are triggering their plans for the UK crashing out. Whatever happens, the UK will never be the same again, and I fear it will become a poorer and more bitter place to live.

Brexit drives a knife through my heart and my family. I am an Irish citizen and a proud European, but also a British citizen by right. My children and all but one of my seven grandsons were born in Britain and are British citizens. With Brexit they lose their current right to move freely to study, work and live throughout the EU27, unless they apply for Irish citizenship through me.

A ‘no deal’ Brexit would affect all of us on this island profoundly, making us poorer at least in the short term – perhaps a bit like the Economic War of the 1930s. Tariffs and new regulatory checks would disrupt supply chains and increase costs. Farmers and agri-business would likely suffer most, though I expect the EU would assist those in difficulty. Economic War of the 1930s. Tariffs and new regulatory checks would disrupt supply chains and increase costs. Farmers and agri-business would likely suffer most, though I expect the EU would assist those in difficulty.

WHAT OF OUR ALL-ISLAND CHURCH OF IRELAND?

I expect the RCB, Standing Committee and Bishops have been making their own contingency plans. I hope they receive good financial advice to preserve the Church’s capital reserves so far as possible. Cross-border dioceses will no doubt suffer significant inconvenience. Clergy will be concerned how their pensions may be affected. For General Synod 2019 in Derry in May, will southern members need to show identity papers, concerned how their pensions may be affected. For General Synod 2019 in Derry in May, will southern members need to show identity papers, and will members who are citizens of other EU countries need visas? It is time the Bishops and central church outline their Brexit contingency plans.

In the meantime, let us pray for reconciliation amid Brexit turmoil – see the prayer on page 5.

God bless,
Joc Sanders, Editor

Letter to the Editor

CALLING ALL ALEX GIRLS IN THE CLASS OF ’69

On May 11th we will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary at the college in Miltown and would love for as many of us as possible to gather to mark the occasion. I have managed to contact over 60 of us but a few have remained elusive. If you are on this list or know of any of the women on this list you could pass on the information to them and contact me, so that we can be in touch. If you are not on the list, but were in Alexandra anytime from 1st Year in 1963 to 6th Year in ’69, please contact me too!

My email is janejermyn@gmail.com and my mobile number is 087 218 7962.

1. Adams Ruth
2. Beattie Heather
3. Fox Cecily (CDS)
4. Burnett Hilary
5. Goodbody Gillian
6. Livingstone Penina (Penny)
7. Maytham Mary
8. Pilsworth Helen
9. Totty Frances
10. Walton Helen
11. Young Helen
12. Betty Deane (Married name Skuse / Skuce?)

Yours etc, Jane Jermyn, Lismore, Co. Waterford

Newslink

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

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

Editor

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

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

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The next issue will be for March 2019, published for Sunday 3rd March.

All material must reach the Editor by Friday 15th February 2019 before 6.00pm, by email only, unless otherwise agreed.

Late material cannot be guaranteed insertion.

NEWSLINK ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2019
(INCREASED by €5 from 2018, for 10 issues February – December, part year pro-rata)
Delivered to pew in bulk €42
Individual copy by post €50
Collected from printer in bulk €35
(contact: Joc Sanders, Turravagaun, Dromineer, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.
Mobile: 087 699 6775. Email joc_sanders@iol.ie.)

NEWSLINK ADVERTISING RATES FOR 2019
(UNCHANGED from 2018, full page is A4 portrait, half page A5 landscape etc)

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Amen.
Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven.
you are mine and I am yours. May it be so forever.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
as and where you choose.
I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,
when I have all things, and when I have nothing.
when I find fulfillment and when it is lacking;
Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded;
when I am troubled and when I am at peace.
when there is work for me and when there is none;
wherever you may place me,
Your will, not mine be done in all things,
I am no longer my own but yours.

John Wesley’s Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine be done in all things,
wherever you may place me,
in all that I do and in all that I may endure:
when there is work for me and when there is none;
when I am troubled and when I am at peace.
Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded;
when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;
when I have all things, and when I have nothing.
I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,
as and where you choose.
Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. May it be so for ever.
Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven.
Amen.

Thomas Bray - founder of SPCK and USPG

Thomas Bray was once called a “Great Small Man”,
with good reason. This diminutive 18th century
English clergyman (1658 – 1730) not only helped
to establish the Church of England in Maryland,
but he was also founder of the Society for the
Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in
1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the
Gospel in Foreign Parts (USPG) in 1701.

Those are long names for societies whose aim was to get Christian
books and resources into the hands of those who desperately needed
them. For the early 18th century was not an easy time for poor
clergymen: books were expensive, and many of them had few, or none
to guide them in their ministry. And so Thomas Bray, who had been
educated at Oxford, joined with some other clergy friends to help them.

After a trip to assess the needs of the young Episcopal Church in
Maryland (he was sent by the Bishop of London), Bray became rector
of St Botolph’s, Aldgate in London in 1708. From here he served his
parish, and through SPCK eventually established 80 parish libraries
in England and a further 39 in the Colonies. SPCK and USPG worked
by asking learned authors to donate copies of their books. They also
appealed to merchants to the foreign plantations for financial help in
establishing the libraries.

Thomas Bray’s life has affected hundreds of thousands of people over
three centuries. SPCK is still one of the leading Christian publishing
houses today, and USPG continues to witness to the love of Christ
around the world. As if that was not enough, Bray also worked to help
poor debtors emigrate to better lives, and homeless children to get
care in England. He helped feed prisoners at Newgate prison in London
and joined in the political fight against slavery. He also supported
outreaches to Africans and Native Americans in their home countries.

He is commemorated on 15th February in the calendar of the Church
of England, the date of his death in 1730.

A Pilgrim’s Prayer

Make us strong in faith
and happy in hope
on our pilgrim journey
following the path of Christian life,
and sustain us so that we may finally reach
the glory of God the Father. Amen.

A prayer used on the Camino de Santiago

A Prayer for reconciliation
amid Brexit turmoil

God of our reconciling hope,
as you guided your people in the past
guide us through the
Turmoil of the present time
and bring us to that place of flourishing
where our unity can be restored,
the common good served
and all shall be made well.
In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

The Dean of Southwark, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn
I attended the Romanian trip thinking that it would be like a holiday, that I would have good fun with my friends, who I was travelling with, that I would come home, and that would be that. I never expected the trip to have such an impact on my perception of the world, the history of different cultures and the new friendships that can be made when you are given the opportunity as it did.

When I first met the Romanian and German groups I was overwhelmed at how welcoming they were, and they were very eager to share their culture and learn about ours. They had very interesting stories and facts to share about their countries and very quickly I realised how independent the teenagers were. They had extremely good English, which made communicating with them very easy. In this way we were all able to have a good time together. The Romanian and German teachers were excellent, and it was very clear that each one of them had a great relationship with their students. I thought this was lovely.

VISITING AN ORTHODOX MONASTERY
The first experience that really struck me as unforgettable was the first visit to an orthodox monastery on a Sunday, during a service. It was my first time being in a place of worship outside of Ireland and I didn’t know what to expect. I was surprised at how many people were at the service. I entered the monastery with a lovely Romanian girl who attended the monastery regularly. She led me up to the front and we knelt in the front row. To say that the building was beautiful is an understatement. I had never seen anything so colourful. The walls were painted from top to bottom. The ceiling had the same detail and all the pictures portrayed stories from the bible. I was in awe. It was so beautiful I felt privileged to be witnessing it. On top of that I got to see the service up close and it was a surreal experience for me that I hope I will never forget. Following this we visited another 7 places of worship, some included guided tours which gave everyone the opportunity to ask any questions they had.

BUILDING BRIDGES
Very quickly, our different groups started forming great relationships. I honestly think we were all struck with how much we had in common with people who lived in completely different countries and came from totally different backgrounds. We were told that the trip was to start ‘Building bridges across the continents’ and I believe that all of the leaders held this close to their hearts, always encouraging us to mix with new people and share our thoughts and opinions. We did daily workshops together as a group, during which we reflected and talked about the places we had been and the people we had met throughout the day. This was a very good idea because it allowed us all to see the meaning behind the things we were doing and what we all learned from our experiences.

FORESTS
From the first day that we arrived in Romania, the abundance of beautiful trees and forests was obvious. We were lucky enough to have a guided tour led by Philip, who had been working in the forest for over 20 years. Philip was full of knowledge about the nature and wildlife of the area. He talked about the wild beasts, such as wild pig, wild dogs, and bears that used the forest as their habitat. He gave an educated talk about the illegal deforestation that occurs regularly in the area and what the wood in the forest is useful for.

AN ORPHANAGE
We also had the amazing opportunity to visit a children’s orphanage. We had a guided tour led by a very kind nun. I remember one of the first things she said to us all was that ‘many people think of this orphanage to be similar to those built and ran in the communism period, but here that is not true’. The nun was right. We could not get over how clean the grounds were kept, and the houses were brightly painted in pinks, purples, blues, yellows and greens. It was clearly a happy place and we even got to meet some little girls who lived there. They were doing their homework when we first saw them. They greeted us, told us a bit about themselves and showed us around their house. The orphanage had music rooms, classrooms, art rooms and a magnificent monastery situated in the heart of the grounds.

We visited Cetatea Sucevei, which is a medieval castle. There is a small historic village beside it that we got to walk through. There were many small medieval houses that we got to enter into and walk around. I learned about a lot of Romanian history here as there were many interactive screens and presentations available in the castle’s different rooms, giving detailed accounts of its history and the history of the country. For me this was a very educational trip.

Other highlights included a visit to the ‘Central Social Maria Ward’, dedicated to helping children stay in school, a visit to a Romanian high school, and a tour of the city of Radauti led by Romanian students.

Overall, I really do think that we accomplished to the best of our ability our goal, which was “Building Bridges Across The Continents”. I have made friends with people I still talk to everyday and I hope to have for life. The trip has given me a new perspective on the world, people and different societies and economies. I have learned so much from the Romanian and German group about working hard for something you want. I am so happy that I went on the Romanian trip, and I am extremely grateful to the leaders for organising such a life-changing and amazing experience.

Experiences in Romania with UDYC
by Robyn Gardiner, Askeaton

Editor: Although we published a report on the UDYC Romania trip with photos in the last issue, I am delighted to share this additional, delightful report.
It was some thirty years ago, one Sunday in St. Brendan’s Church of Ireland, Birr, that Archdeacon Keegan made an announcement from the pulpit. He told the congregation that following conversations with the County Manager, the Clergy of Birr had decided to create an interdenominational group to begin a process of ensuring that the Travelling Community associated with Birr would be properly accommodated instead of living dangerously on the verges of increasingly busy roads. Donald continued by telling us that he would be looking for two volunteers to represent the Church of Ireland on this proposed Group. In the Vestibule after the service, instead of waiting for volunteers, Donald, in his usual commanding way, recruited Lord Rosse and myself as representatives of the parish. Less than a fortnight later we met as a Group and were briefed by the County Manager and introduced to the Social Worker whom he had appointed to work with the Group. Fr. John Kelly was chosen as our first Chairperson and it was agreed to hold a public meeting to announce our presence and our intentions. The Methodist Minister, the Reverend John Parkin, offered the Morrison Hall as a meeting place.

That first meeting was huge. The Morrison Hall was packed with people from both the Travelling and the Settled Community in Birr and district. As the meeting progressed it became mightily evident that tempers were ‘ris’ among the Settled folk at any idea that Traveller accommodation would be provided in Birr. It was agreed to meet monthly and the representatives of the Churches were asked to find a larger meeting space. That proved almost an impossibility. Hotels didn’t want to know. Schools had insurance difficulties but made some effort to be accommodating. Attendances at meetings continued large and raucous. On occasion tempers frayed. Backed by the Clergy and the County Manager the Group persisted in the initial planning of what were to be three Halting Sites. Eventually as finding a meeting place became increasingly difficult, we decided to offer the Dining Room of Whigsborough House, our home, as the venue for the Group. The personal atmosphere there of domestic intimacy transformed the temper of meetings. Respectfulness became the order of the day and Town Councillors began to feel that there was a space for them to make a contribution and most of them became regular attenders at that stage.

Slowly but surely land was found and the design of the first site was approved in a process of consultation. Learning to read plans of care that has developed between the residents and the County Council Staff. The residents of both sites exercise ‘Open House’ hospitality during Vintage Week in August each year. The Millbrook Park site is used by RTE as an example of outstandingly well-kept Traveller Accommodation and Mrs. Mary Hutchison has become a star performer after a nervous start in front of the cameras. The third site is still a pipe dream despite being mooted in the most recent five year programme for Traveller Accommodation in Offaly.

It’s a story to celebrate incarnation and epiphany. It defies a widely held perception of how Travellers live, just as God in Jesus of Bethlehem defied all the then current expectations of what the Messiah would look like. It’s a Good News Story just as the Gospel Story, itself is. Episode three ‘whom do men say that I am” will appear in the March issue.

**Book of Common Prayer - revised edition**

A newly revised pew edition of The Book of Common Prayer in a smart blue cover, containing the newly approved Order for Morning and Evening Prayer for Use on Sundays, is now available. The Book of Common Prayer pew edition is priced at £20/€22 (with a 10% discount for orders of 10 or more).

Bishop Harold Miller, Chair of the Liturgical Advisory Committee, says: “The new edition of The Book of Common Prayer has arrived! For several years, the BCP has been out of print, but I think all will agree that the new edition, with its new navy blue cover, looks and feels every bit as beautiful as its predecessor.

“The pagination is almost exactly as in the green book, so the two books can be used together. The new edition incorporates changes made by General Synod in the intervening years, plus the new Morning and Evening Prayer for Use on Sundays. And the first thing many people will notice is that it has four marker ribbons instead of the previous three. We look forward to how the new BCP edition will be used to proclaim the Church’s worship of God in our time.”

Orders can be placed online here or by email: cip@ireland.anglican.org
CHRISTMAS CRAFT DAY
Christmas Craft Day was held in Corbally Church, Roscrea on Saturday, 1st December. This was a very enjoyable event where girls made a variety of crafts including a floral Christmas basket, Christmas crackers, cards, gift tags and reindeer decorations. As always it was a great opportunity to renew friendships with other branches. Many thanks to Roscrea Leaders and friends for hosting this event and providing lovely refreshments.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL IN NENAGH, DECEMBER 2018
Once again GFS presented a magnificent tree. Well done to everyone involved in a beautiful creation but special thanks to Avril Murphy, Grace Langley and Rose Langley of Nenagh branch along with George Langley for transporting the materials to and from the church. Thanks to everyone who visited the Festival and enjoyed the GFS tree.

ETB
GFS were invited to attend the Tipperary Education and Training Board Consultation with Volunteer Youth Club Leaders on Thursday 17th January 2019 at 7pm in Youth Work Ireland Tipperary, Croke Street, Thurles.

This was a great opportunity for GFS to be part of a consultation process for youth clubs in Tipperary and to feed into Tipperary Education and Training Board youth work plan and to meet leaders from other youth clubs.

All Branches in the Diocese are grateful to Tipperary ETB for Local Youth Club Grants Scheme which supports volunteer-led youth club/group activities at a local level. Funding for the Scheme is provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and is administered locally by Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on behalf of DCYA.

BORRISOKANE & CLOUGHJORDAN BRANCH
Christmas Party was held on Wednesday, 5th December. It was great fun and was enjoyed by all. Everyone was delighted with Santa’s visit and lovely presents. Reverend Terry also attended the party. It was a lovely way to finish for 2018.

Branch reopened on 9th January and they continue to work on Bible Study and crafts for competitions.

The weekly Mini-Market has begun with proceeds going to GFS Missions and GFS World Project. The Mini-Market is always greeted with excitement and enthusiasm. Leaders welcome contributions to the stall and appreciate support received.

We wish to sympathise with our Branch Leader Mrs. Grace Healy on the recent death of her sister Joan in the Isle of Man. Our thoughts and prayers are with Grace and her family at this time.

NENAGH BRANCH
Nenagh Branch reopened on Saturday, 19th January after the Christmas break. Girls are busy finishing crafts and have started Bible Study. Branch enrolment will take place on Sunday, 17th February, as part of Family Worship.

UP COMING EVENTS
• 23rd February, Central Council, Dublin
• 16th March, Craft Judging, Corbally, Roscrea
• 30th March, Diocesan Service & Prize Day, Roscrea
• 8th April, Diocesan Council Meeting, Cloughjordan
• 21-23 June, Diocesan Camp, Durrow

If you wish to contact Killaloe President please email Rose at killaloe presidentgfs@gmail.com (note new GFS President Email address)
**Mothers' Union**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:
April 6th – All Ireland Council, Christ Church, Dublin
April 13th – Diocesan Trustees & Diocesan Council meeting, Aghancon Hall

Christmas is a distant memory now and our thoughts turn to what this New Year brings. It would lift your heart and is wonderful to see a little more daylight and all the signs of spring appearing around us.

Mothers' Union meetings are gradually getting started again around the diocese and I look forward to meeting up with you over the next few months.

On behalf of all our members I would like to send our sincere sympathies to Bobby Bingham and family on the death of his wife, Evelyn. Evelyn, a member of Adare Branch, was a stalwart and dedicated member of Mothers' Union and really enjoyed attending as many meetings as possible. Her presence will be greatly missed by us all.

Limerick City Branch hosted their annual Beetle Drive for the children of the parish. St. Michael’s Church hall was packed and we had, as usual, a fast and furious evening when great fun was had by all participating, not least several of the parents! Addie Gilmour’s popcorn went down a treat followed by all sorts of goodies, lots of which were very kindly donated by members of St. Michael’s Church. The evening ended with the awarding of prizes, (one for everyone!) and a welcome cup of tea for the adults, and a couple of prizes for them also! Many thanks to Margaret Schutz, Branch Leader, for organising the event and also to Bev Callendar, Elizabeth Bovenizer, and Addie Gilmour.

**United Diocesan Youth Council**

ROMANIA TRIP
See page 6 for an additional report by Robyn Gardiner, Askeaton

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE 2018
The Annual Dinner Dance was held at the Woodlands Hotel, Adare. Nearly 40 people gathered on the 24th of November to enjoy a night of merriment and food. The hotel was beautifully decorated with a magnificent tree in the foyer and festive decorations on the dinner tables. The meal was preceded by a mulled wine (non-alcoholic) reception. We sat down to a dinner of ham and turkey with all the trimmings. After the meal there were plenty of spot prizes and entertainment was provided by DJ Joe. It was a great occasion to enjoy good food, friendships and lots of fun.

CHRISTMAS DAY-TRIP TO DUBLIN
The annual Christmas Day-Trip took place on 27th December. Nearly 50 people travelled by bus to Dublin. It was an action packed day with great fun and lots of laughter as we enjoyed Jumpzone, Funderland, ice skating at the RDS, Go-karting and of course the trip would not be complete without a visit to McDonalds on the way home. It was late when we arrived home, but everyone was happy after enjoying a wonderful day with UDYC.

**ST. JOHN'S MOTHERS' UNION, BALLINASLOE.**
Baubles, cones and orange slices adorned the flower arrangements produced by local florist Vera Harte from Aughrim for the St. John’s branch November meeting. Vera gave members and visitors great ideas for Christmas gifts with innovative and creative arrangements using garden foliage and other easily available accessories. At the end of the evening a draw was held and a number of ladies were lucky to take home one of Vera’s arrangements, and unexpected Christmas surprise!

The first of a large collection of shoe boxes (17 to date) were also received on the night for the local Simon Resource Centre in Ballinasloe which will be delivered to help those in need. Penny Kearney also sold her lovely handmade cards and her Christmas Gift tags to raise money for the much needed funds for AFIA.

**NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM**
We look forward to providing a report next month on Church of Ireland National Youth Forum which took place at City North Hotel in Julianstown from Friday evening 18th to Saturday evening 19th January 2019.
FUTURE EVENTS

Fundraising
It is not too late to purchase tickets for our Christmas raffle, at €2 each or a book of six tickets for €10. The prizes are €150 for 1st prize, €100 for 2nd prize and €50 for 3rd prize. The draw will take place on Saturday 16th February at Richmond Terrance Limerick. We would really appreciate if people could volunteer to sell tickets and of course if people could buy tickets.

We much appreciate the help and support many have given to UDYC fundraising events during 2018. We have received many personal donations and to these people we are really grateful. Any parishes or individuals that would like to make donations to help with 2019 programme, please do not hesitate to contact Edward Hardy at 087 2907553.

Taking a Leading Role – Part 3
The third and final part of our Youth Leadership Course is scheduled to take place at Djangos Hostel in Cloughjordan from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th February for those that participated in first and second weekends of the course.

MAD Day
UDYC are hoping to hold a traditional Multi Activity Day for all those in 3rd to 6th class in National School on Saturday 16th March from 10 am to 6 pm. Watch out for further details shortly.

For more information on any of our events or activities, please contact Edward (087) 2907553 or myself. Email: udyc@limerick.anglican.org or our UDYC Facebook page.

Until next month, Grace (Mobile: 087 6776279)

Diocesan Council for Mission

A Committee Meeting was held on 16th January 2019 in the Woodlands Hotel.

There was a full agenda which ran late so it was agreed to defer the item on Mission Sunday Project for 2019 to our next committee meeting as it would need more time for discussion and allow members to investigate options available to us.

It was agreed that the 2018 Mission Sunday Project decision to support the Peter McVerry Trust was a popular choice and very well received throughout the Diocese. Note if any envelope donations are still outstanding please send immediately to our Treasurer Ed Hardy, as he needs to finalise the accounts before we present the cheque to Peter McVerry on Wed 27th February 2019 in the Woodlands Hotel.

Rev Charles McCartney was appointed as Diocesan Representative on the General Synod Council for Mission

The final figure for our donation towards the water tank project in Swaziland has now reached €7300 and will be posted off to USPG by 21st January

PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR 2019
• Wed 27th February, Ecumenical Mission Evening in the Woodlands Hotel, Adare at 7.45 p.m. Speaker Peter McVerry (see advert on page 17)
• Wed 1st May, Mission Evening at 8 p.m. in the Church Hall, Moneygall, Co Tipperary, Youth Mission Experience - some of the young people in the Diocese will tell of their ‘mission experience’ when working abroad in the past year.
• Sat 25th May, a one day conference entitled ‘Preparing for Youth Ministry’, in the South Court Hotel, Limerick commencing at 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. We will get the name of the speaker(s) from Ed nearer the time.
• Sunday 29th September, a ‘Fun Day’ c/w barbecue, treasure hunt etc., etc. in West Limerick commencing with a Service of Holy Communion.
• Wednesday 2nd October, Mission Evening in the Woodlands Hotel Adare commencing 7.45 p.m. - Presentation of Mission Sunday Project for 2019

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 28th March in the Woodlands at 7.45 p.m., to select a suitable project for Mission Sunday 2019, which is on 24th November, Festival of Christ the King/Sunday before Advent.

Children’s Ministry Network

Godly Play Gathering In Killaloe
Saturday February 9th. 2019
10.00 a.m. till 4.00p.m.
The Beeches, Shannonview, Ballina/Killaloe
€ 20.00 (€ 10.00 concession)

Come along and explore the Godly Play curriculum for Lent and Easter
• Make some materials
• Ideas for use in school and home settings
• Light lunch provided

For more Information email GodlyPlayIreland@gmail.com
Please advise by Feb.1st. if interested in material making
Directions to the venue will be sent once you sign up at:
https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/godly-play-circle-getting-ready-for-the-mystery-of-easter-tickets-54825904757?

Whether you are completely new to Godly Play or a seasoned practitioner, you are very welcome.

Jessie and Cora, on behalf of Godly Play Ireland

Godly Play is a Montessori approach to Bible story exploration with children (and increasingly adaptable for children of any age).

Continuing Ministerial Education

The Revd Anne-Marie Stuart, of Kilcolman Union of Parishes, led a day of workshops on ‘Celtic Spirituality’ in the continuing education programme for all clergy and readers in the diocese resumes in January.

The Revd Anne-Marie Stuart (centre) with participants in the January workshop on ‘Celtic Spirituality’ at the Rectory in Askeaton
Readers and clergy from across the diocese took part in these workshops in the Rectory in Askeaton, and were joined by two visitors who had travelled from Germany to learn more about Celtic Spirituality.

The February programme, on Monday 11 February, looks at the practice of the Jesus Prayer and using icons in prayer. These programmes are offered at the Rectory in Askeaton in two sessions: from 11 am to 3.30 for day-time participants, and from 7 pm to 9.30 pm for people in ministry who are also in secular ministry.

Tea/coffee/biscuits are provided, but participants are asked to bring sandwiches.

On 4 March, the Revd Anne-Marie Stuart returns to facilitate a morning workshop on ‘The Adventure of Prayer’ and a second workshop in the afternoon on ‘Faith Development.’

Meanwhile, Canon Patrick Comerford publishes online resources every Monday morning that are suitable for clergy and readers planning services the following Sunday. These are available online at: https://cmelimerick.blogspot.com/

St. Nicholas’ National School, Adare

As usual, December proved to be a very busy month in school. The junior classes had a lovely trip into Limerick to see Effie Saves Christmas.

We welcomed Kate Geary from the Limerick U20 Ladies Football team to the school with the team’s winning cup. All classes prepared for our end of term performances at the Christmas Party on December 19th. This year families and friends were entertained by three great mini-productions, with wonderful performances from all the pupils. Many thanks to all the teachers for their hard work in preparing the pupils for the stage and also to Michael Ramendik who filmed the event. The Parents’ Association committee prepared and served the lovely refreshments and later in the afternoon we had a visit from Santa who brought some large sacks of gifts with him, much to the delight of all assembled in the hall. The pupils also performed at Adare’s annual Live Crib and many of our pupils sang at St. Nicholas’ Carol Service.

Congratulations to Hannah Smith, a 5th class pupil, on winning a prize in the Credit Union Art Competition last term.

Well done to our two quiz teams who entered the Community Games Schools’ Quiz Competition. Congratulations to our A team on making it through to the Limerick finals.

The pupils in 4th to 6th classes have been practising their spikeball skills and they will participate in the Primary Schools’ Spikeball Competition later this term.

For the next six weeks some senior pupils will take part in sewing classes as an after school activity and chess club resumes at the beginning of February.

The senior pupils have been very busy preparing their ideas for the Junior Entrepreneur Project and we will welcome three ‘Dragons’ to our ‘Dragon’s Den’ this term. They will select the best idea and then everyone will work together to develop that idea.

The school will hold an open afternoon/evening on Wednesday 6th February. The afternoon session will take place at 3.30pm and the evening session will begin at 7.30pm. Enrolment forms and school booklets are available from the school secretary.

St. Mary’s No 2 National School, Nenagh

Welcome to all our students and teachers after the Christmas break. A warm welcome is extended to Mrs Cavanagh who returns from maternity leave this term.

We are delighted to have Mrs Smyth for music lessons again this term. We’d like to thank her for the wonderful job she did in preparation for our Christmas show.

French continues on Tuesdays for our senior classes. The Dance strand of the Physical Education curriculum kicked off this week with Coach Christine Nevin. This year’s dance style is Zumba.

Swimming will commence this term for all students.

Many thanks are due to our Parents’ Association who organised the Christmas raffle. Our parents and guardians were great to support the fundraiser which raised €733. Go raibh maith agaibh don tacaíocht.

Our school photo day will take place on Friday 15th February. Continuous Professional Development days continue nationally for teachers to implement the new Primary Language Curriculum. St Mary’s No. 2 N.S. has been allocated March 19th 2019 for staff training. School will remain closed for pupils on that day.

A Very Happy New Year to all in our school and wider community.

St. Michael’s National School, Limerick

As promised, our builders arrived on site on Friday 11th January to commence the building project that has been long-planned and awaited. As the new classroom is being built adjoining the existing school building, the builders needed to immediately separate the actual building site area from the rest of the school grounds. The most immediate difficulty we encountered was that car parking was no longer allowed on the premises. The scramble to secure alternative parking spaces began. We are most grateful that five staff cars are able to park in front of Saint Michael’s Church and thanks to the kind generosity of Saint Joseph’s Parish Church nearby, two more cars found parking. We are adjusting well to the combination of diggers and drilling right outside our window. The excitement of seeing foundations being dug makes all the upheaval so worthwhile.

Much to our delight, we heard news that Áine McMahon, our Deputy Principal, gave birth in December to her third daughter, Róisín. A second staff member, Lorraine Moran, has gone on maternity leave for her second child. We welcome Amber Allan and Mairéad Doran who have replaced these teachers, and hope they enjoy their time with us.
The two Junior classrooms have been enjoying dance lessons with Lisa from Dance Ireland in Saint Michael's Church Hall. They are loving the expert tuition and the freedom to express themselves through music and dance. We are extremely fortunate to be able to use the church hall as our General Purpose Room has been divided into two classrooms for many years. Likewise, being able to escort 5th and 6th Classes down to the LPYMA Hall in O'Connell Street, to practise Spikeball and play table-tennis is a huge asset for a small school so restricted with indoor space. Our other great privilege is being adjacent to the People's Park, which allows us to have our own version of Operation Tranformation Park Runs!

For the duration of January, the whole school drops everything to enjoy a daily run with a circuit of the park. The improvement in fitness levels after a few short weeks of doing this is remarkable. Having just earned our Active flag, it is of the utmost importance that we continue awareness of and participation in all possible healthy pursuits within our remit.

St. Cronan’s National School, Roscrea

Pupils and staff have settled back into routine following a hectic lead-up to Christmas, which included Carol Singing in The Dean Maxwell Home, joining with The Rosie Greys in The Choir of Ages at the Taste of Roscrea, where we also received our Bizworld Award, and a wonderful Carol Service in St. Cronan’s Church. Our amazing Craft Fair and Coffee Morning was held just before our holidays, when the produce created by our mini-companies under the direction of a number of very talented parent leaders was displayed and sold. The creations were breath-taking. There were Christmas cards and calendars, wooden Santas and sock snowmen, nail pictures, Christmas stockings and tree decorations, and sparkling lanterns and table decorations to name but a few. Many thanks to all the parents who guided each group through the whole exciting experience and to families, friends and parishioners who supported us on the day.

This term we look forward to rugby coaching and tennis lessons. Pupils will participate in the Credit Union Quiz and The Tidy Towns Concert Hall, to sing and dance, in a spectacular celebration of music old and new.

A wonderful occasion is guaranteed on March 3rd when pupils from 4th to 6th classes will join with hundreds of pupils from other schools throughout the country in the University of Limerick Concert Hall, to sing and dance, in a spectacular celebration of music old and new.

The Parents’ Association is busy organising a Cookery Demonstration by Edward Hayden which will take place in Rackett Hall in November. It promises to be a great occasion so come along and join us on the night.

Enrolment for September 2019 is now welcome. Please call us on 0505 21636 or drop in and we will be happy to provide you with an enrolment package.

Cloughjordan No.1 National School

Thank you very much to everybody from near and far who supported our very successful “Clothes” fundraising quiz. Once again, we are very grateful to Mrs. Miriam Henderson for setting the quiz, enjoyed by so many people.

Well done to everybody who participated in our school Christmas Concert. The children were wonderful! It was tremendous to see a packed hall on the night and to have so many present with us at this special event. We are very grateful to Cassandra Kenny for helping us to prepare for our concert and for all that she did to make the concert such a success.

Thank you very much to Borrisokane Community College, once again, for the kind invitation to their wonderful Christmas Concert which our 3rd – 6th class pupils and their teachers, really enjoyed. Well done to Roisin Dunne who a prize in the Art Competition organized by Borrisokane Community College as part of their Christmas Concert.

We are delighted to welcome Mr. James Coughlan to our staff to teach Fifth & Sixth Class and look forward to working with him for the rest of this school year. We wish Ms. Aimee Ryan all the best for her maternity leave and thank her for her huge contribution to our school last term.

Enrolment application forms for September 2019 enrolment in Cloughjordan No.1 N.S. are now available from the school. If you would like an application form please contact the school on 0505 42318 or email principal.cloughjordan.no1.ns@gmail.com

Kiltallagh National School, Castlemaine

On Friday November 23rd Kiltallagh school community woke to the heartbreaking news that one of our very dear, and much loved, parents Ciara Orme had suddenly departed our world.

Ciara was one of the kindest, most caring and thoughtful parents we have ever had the privilege of knowing. With a heart of absolute gold and an overwhelming warmth that enveloped you instantly. Ciara was truly unique in every way.

Slán Ciara, codladhsámh agus suaimhneas sioraiduit.
Ó Scoil Cill Tullaigh

Oxmantown National School, Birr

The pupils of Oxmantown National School ran many fundraising activities in order to raise €1200 for water projects in Swaziland during 2018. The children baked cakes, buns and biscuits to sell to each other at break-time, they ran nail bars and guess the names of soft toys. This fund raising ran through Lent and then culminated with a monster Easter Egg Raffle, the teachers purchased ninety eggs so there was great excitement and the chances of being a winner were very high for each child.
Rathkeale No 2 National School

Swimming lessons has begun in Askeaton Swimming Pool and will continue for eight weeks. Pupils always enjoy their weekly visit to the pool and with small groups they usually make great progress with their swimming.

On Friday 18th January we had a renewal visit for our Green Flag. This visit is an important part of assessing our progress towards the awarding of our sixth flag. Our committee, led by Ms Looney, is working hard on putting the application together.

The senior pupils have once again been selected to participate in the ESB Science Blast 2019 (formally known as the RDS Science Fair). The Limerick venue for this year’s event is Mary Immaculate College and it will take place in May.

We’d like to thank everyone who supported the Tommy Fleming concert in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale in December. We were delighted to raise just over €2,000 for school funds.

Pupils held a “Crazy Hair and Clothes Day” in December and raised €126 with which they purchased 2x School Poultry Project (10 Chicks), 2x Solar Lamp at €21.00 and 1x School Piggery Project from the Fields of Life Gifts of Life.

We were delighted to have had some winners in the recent Ballinasloe Credit Union Art Competition. Congratulations to them and we would like to say how proud of them we are.

Garda Gary came to visit us here on Tuesday 15th January. He gave a talk on road safety and security at home. The children found this session interesting and informative.

We are looking forward to resuming our tennis lessons with Rob in the next couple of weeks. It will help us keep fit for the New Year, which we hope will be a good one for all of you!

Villiers School

GIRLS’ SOCCER

The first year team entered a Futsol competition in October. This was an indoor event held at Roxboro and it showcased the best teams in Limerick. The girls managed to get to a semi-final, where after a great game against Abbeyfeale, they were eventually knocked out. Lily Holloway was singled out as being one of the most talented players on display and was earmarked for the Limerick FAI soccer academy.

Senior girls’ soccer team had a very competitive game against Presentation Clonmel in the first round of the Munster Cup competition losing narrowly 3-2. We are now looking ahead to the Shannonside League where we are confident we can progress.

The junior soccer 1st yr boys have thrown down the gauntlet to challenge the 1st yr girls next Monday so this should be an interesting spectacle.

Training is on every Monday afternoon in the school.

BASKETBALL

This year’s basketball season started off very well. The senior boys played in the South West division and represented Villiers with great enthusiasm and some good basketball. They continue to practice twice weekly under the instruction of Leandro, a very good Spanish coach.

The senior girls played very well and narrowly missed the playoffs. The Under 16 girls won all their matches in the South West division and went through to the All-Ireland playoffs in Presentation Hall Wexford on Friday 11th. They defeated teams from Dublin, Cork and Wexford. They again won all their games against strong opposition. Their next outing is in the Oblate Hall, Inchicore, Dublin against Mount Mercy, Cork on Wednesday 30th January 2019.

Well done and best wishes to all teams.
HOCKEY
After a break for the holidays, all hockey teams are getting back into action. The senior boys play Bandon Grammar in the semi-final of the cup having got the better of Newtown in the quarter final. All the other teams also get their cups started over the next few weeks and hopefully will get rewarded with some good results.

Best of luck to Bryan Smyth and Sam Lilburn who continue their travels to Dublin to train with the Irish U16 & U18 sides.

The senior A girls unfortunately bowed out of the cup at the hands of Ursuline, Thurles so now hope to have a good run in the senior plate. The junior girls play local rivals Laurel Hill Colaiste in their cup while the minors play Mt. Mercy, Cork, hoping to overturn a 1-0 scoreline from the start of the year in the league. The 1st years continue to show huge improvement, competing very well in all their blitzes/matches with mostly beginners in the year. Very positive signs for future years.

Thanks to all the coaches who continue to give so much time and effort to all teams.

RUGBY
Under 15s are competing on two fronts, The Cleary Cup and the U15 Development League. The boys won their first round match against The Abbey, Tipperary with an injury time converted try!

Junior and Senior Boys both lost to Middelton in our last two matches but have qualified for the cup competition. The draw sees the Juniors face Middleton and Ballincollig await the seniors.

NEWS FROM THE VILLIERS SANCTUARY
The hustle and bustle at Christmas time has settled and life here at Villiers has once again returned to the academic rhythm of the year. The prospect of the dreaded Mock exams fills the air with a sense of nervous anticipation. This always raises the temperature and can be a source of stress for all concerned so it is at a time like this where the Sanctuary truly becomes a place of safety and a much needed timeout space.

The Carol Service in St Mary's Cathedral was a wonderful and blessed occasion. The students involved really put their heart and soul into creating a truly faith filled event. Thank you to all. I also want to thank Miss O Sullivan and Miss Killeen for all their hard work in preparing the choirs and musicians.

The SVP committee from the Community Group held a 'Sock and Scarf' drive and presented much needed clothing to the SVP drop in centre in Limerick. Well done guys on a wonderful project.

The Community Group’s final preparations for the upcoming Uganda mission trip are underway. It is now beginning to feel more ‘real’ as we get closer to Easter and our flight out. We will once again work closely with Zest4kidz who are currently putting the finishing touched to the itinerary. Really looking forward to this mission trip where we will meet up with Father Deo and visit hospitals, schools and the deaf orphanage. We will be working in a field hospital and helping to assess children for much needed surgery. Good luck to all the fundraisers!!

In the Sanctuary, I have been talking to the groups about New Year Time. This is a time for looking ahead. Some of us may have made New Year’s resolutions. A time where we plot our route through the next 12 months. But where is our focus right now?

It might be very tight, close-up, concerned with the issues of January, the immediate moment. That is fine, as long as we do not find ourselves being only reactive, managing the crises of the moment. It is useful also to look up and project ahead, at least into the medium term. When we take a close-up look at today and tomorrow, and then zoom out to the whole of our lifetime, it makes us realize how much time there is ahead of us and what we can enjoy and achieve. There is a passage in the Old Testament that expresses this very clearly. It begins with the statement, ‘There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.’ It then goes on to list numerous contrasting pairs of activities, such as being born and dying, tearing down and building up, weeping and laughing, silence and speaking. It is a picture of the sweep of time and opportunity that stretches ahead of us. It is also a description of the years that we have already seen, the contrasting events that we have experienced. But in addition, it’s a reminder that, when the opportunity arises to plant, to heal, to build or to embrace, we are advised to take it, for it may not come again. In May, don’t look back with regret at January and what might have been. Let’s enter the new year with hope and anticipation.

Dear Lord, Thank you for the new start that each day represents. Remind us of this when we feel overwhelmed by the failures of the past. Help us to change our focus. Amen

Blessings and peace
Chaplain Jackie McNair
5-session discussion course
Daring to see God now

Written by Bishop Nick Baines

On hearing, understanding and living ‘the Good News of God’ in today’s world (Mark 1.14-15).

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It was a wonderfully busy time in our churches since the last Newslink. We had baptisms, wedding, carols and Christmas services. Summer Benson was baptised at the cathedral in Killaloe on 25 November and so our good wishes to Keith and Claire Benson and we know that Summer will indeed bring you sunshine and warmth. Ryan was also baptised at the cathedral on 3rd December and our congratulations to Patrick and Karen O’Donnell and we look forward to Ryan adding his mark on our cathedral life. It had been great to have a number of new children baptised at the cathedral and to have the families actively involved in the church. We know it’s not easy to manage and coordinate children and their routines with Sunday morning worship and our admiration goes out to you that you do give it a go and bring your children to church.

At All Saints Castleconnell we baptised Julia on 3rd January. Ralph and Julia, who have now moved to Australia, travelled back for Christmas and so it was good to have them home and to be able to baptise Julia at the same time. William looked on with amazement as his sister was baptised and was interested to learn that the same happened to him in December 2015, in the same font. Ralph and Maya managed to travel with two children such a long way. It was also a good occasion to catch up with the rest of the Birdthistle family at the reception afterwards at the Castle Oaks.

Danny Collins and Carrie Mohan were married at All Saints on 14 December and they had a Christmas themed wedding which was of great help to us for the Christmas period as we just left the church decorated as they had done it for the wedding. Our good wishes to them and wish them a happy and long life together.

Our Christmas Carol services took place in all the churches and were all well attended. Our thanks in Clonlara, to the Kiltenanlea Singers for their annual participation and really lifting the roof with their singing. Our thanks to Father Pat for attending the carol service. Mountshannon School Choir added their voices to our celebrations in the church at Mountshannon our thanks to them and their teachers for the wonderful contribution of their voices. We did not expect the big turnout at the Cathedral and did not print enough booklets; but it’s a nice complaint to have. Our sincere thanks to those who decorated the churches, put up trees and those who did the flower decorations for carol services as well as Christmas services.

We are privileged each Christmas to have the Bishop celebrate and preach on Christmas Day at the cathedral and to have +Kenneth and his family join him in our celebrations. Visitors in all our churches make for glorious singing; and to have those who make their pilgrimage back home to the churches just adds to the celebration of Christmas.

Each New Year’s Eve at midnight the Bells of St Flannan’s ring out across Killaloe. The tower is opened to the village and Bryan Brislane coordinates those who welcome in the New Year with the bells. It is a wonderful tradition at the cathedral and which gets positive comments from the locals. We do wish everyone a good, healthy and happy year in 2019.
The Evergreens

The Evergreens held their first Christmas dinner in the Absolute Hotel on 18 December. This dinner was preceded by a service of Holy Communion in St. Mary’s Cathedral.

There was a very good attendance, and both the meal and the occasion were greatly enjoyed by all (as can be seen from the photos). After the dinner, there was a fun raffle with many prizes to be won. The event ended with everyone receiving a Lindt chocolate Santa! Those who attended expressed their appreciation for all the enjoyment, fun and fellowship. Some people said that they had spoken with people they had attended school with, decades previously.

The Evergreens continued with their first meeting of the New Year, on 22 January, at which a Relationship Manager from Ulster Bank, Cian Mc Inerney, addressed the group on Fraud.

Meetings continue on 19 February, 19 March and 9 April. All welcome.
Plough Sunday in Kenmare
by Rev Michael Cavanagh, Kenmare & Dromod Union

The annual Plough Service was held in St Patrick Kenmare on the first Sunday after Epiphany. A plough was brought into church and decorated; the whole congregation stood together, asking for God’s Blessing on all those who work in agriculture in the year to come.

Lord God, you give us skill to work the land, to prepare and nourish it, that it may be fruitful. By your blessing, let this plough be a sign of all that you promise to us.

This traditional service, with its wonderful poetic liturgy, is the ‘Please’ that balances the ‘Thank You’ of the Autumnal Harvest Celebrations. We remember that food doesn’t just arrive in SuperValu of its own accord – if a farmer doesn’t grow it, we don’t eat it.

We asked a special blessing on those who ‘plough, plant, feed and nurture’ our children – in a time when it seems that the world seems more interested in being clothed with self rather than clothed with Christ, we have a grave responsibility to keep Jesus’ little ones from being choked with the weeds of consumerism and prejudice, so that they will blossom as a harvest that knows justice, service and love.

This is the last stanza of a story poem by John Masefield called ‘The everlasting Mercy’. It describes a young man as he journeys from being a liar, cheat and womaniser into a man who understands the beauty of creation and receives his own salvation through a number of encounters. In the last encounter he recognises his need for Christ as guide, as he watches a ploughman (Callow) keep his eye firmly on his goal in order to plough a straight furrow.

Old Callow at the task of God,
Helped by man’s wit,
Helped by the brute
Turning a stubborn clay to fruit,
Hid eyes for ever on some sign
To help him plough a perfect line.

At top of rise the plough team stopped,
The fore-horse bent his head and cropped;
Then the chains chack, the brasses jingle,
The lean reins gather through the cringle,
I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,
That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart,
Through rest-harrow and bitter roots,
Through all my bad life’s rotten fruits.

O Christ who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter
Of holy white birds flying after,
Lo, all my heart’s field red and torn,
And Thou wilt bring the young green corn,
The young green corn divinely springing,
The young green corn forever singing;
And when the field is fresh and fair
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there,
And we will walk the weeded field,
And tell the golden harvest’s yield,
The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

Lunchtime Concerts March 2019, 1.15pm

Wednesday 6th March
Helen Hancock (soprano), Peter Sebestyen (cello), accompanied by Irina Dernova (piano)
Music by Faure, Britten and Strauss

Wednesday 13th March
Jennifer O’Sullivan (flute), Michael Young (piano)
Music by Mel Bonies

Wednesday 20th March
Roisin Walsh (soprano) and Sarah-Ellen Murphy (alto) with Peter Barley (piano)

Wednesday 27th March
David Cantillon (clarinet), David Szabo (piano) and friends

For details on all of the musical events held in Saint Mary’s Cathedral please log onto www.saintmaryscathedral.ie
St John the Baptist, Eyrecourt celebrates 150 years

Eyrecourt owes its name to the Eyre Family “the lords of the manor” who once occupied the castle. On the departure of the Eyre family in 1924 the castle fell into a state of disrepair. Although known as Eyrecourt, the ecclesiastical name of the parish was Dononaughta. The original church was a plain building erected in 1818 and followed by the Glebe house 4 years later.

The Church building quickly fell into bad repair and less than 30 years later the building of our present Church had begun. A most impressive Victorian, Anglo-Gothic building of red brick and once described as “without doubt one of the most striking in the diocese”. Our Church was consecrated on Friday 25th September 1868 by Bishop Fitzgerald of Killaloe and Clonfert. The dedication was followed by morning prayer, conducted by Rev Thomas H Cross Rector. The first lesson was read by Rev. R B Eyre a former Rector and the second lesson by the Chancellor of the Diocese. The collection in aid of the building fund was £54 and 11 shillings. The building was erected by “4 Johns”: Eyre, Butson, Watson and Seymour and fittingly dedicated to John the Baptist.

We celebrated 150 years on Saturday 24th November 2018. Bishop Kenneth Kearon was our Guest of Honour and Archdeacon Wayne Carney the preacher. Mrs Freda Kenny introduced the service and welcomed everyone. The Rev Charles McCartney Priest in Charge conducted a traditional service of evening prayer. Fr Declan McInerney PP read a lesson and Linda Kenny RGN lead us in prayer. Nicole Robinson, music teacher and music scholar, was our guest soloist and also has strong links with the parish. Mrs. Isabel Finney our parish organist led the praise.

A great day and a well-filled Church, many conversations after with old friends. The inevitable reception in a local community hall, where Bishop Kenneth cut the cake baked by Mrs Elizabeth Stoddart.

Going back 50 years to the centenary celebrations, the Guest of Honour was Most Rev. Dr. G.O. Simms Archbishop of Dublin. Also present was Bishop Stanistreet. Archdeacon Burrows intoned the service and Col. Eyre read a lesson. We are told celebrations lasted 4 days!

Thank you to all who helped in a great day.

Come and Sing:
Anthems
Directed by Peter Barley
St Mary’s Cathedral Bridge Street Limerick V94 EO68

Saturday 23rd March 2019
Registration from 1.30pm
Rehearsal starts promptly at 2pm
Joining with the choir of St Mary’s Cathedral in Limerick, RSCM Ireland invites you to ‘come and sing’ favourite anthems from the great sacred music tradition. Including music by Mozart, Byrd, Elgar, Eric Whitacre and John Rutter.

The event is open to all singers, individuals and choirs alike. A performance will follow the rehearsal and refreshments. Cost: €10/€8 (concession). Full details and how to book are available at: www.rscmireland.com

Email: cathedral@limerick.anglican.org
Web: www.saintmaryscathedral.ie
@stmaryslimerick
stmaryscathedrallimerick
Canon Liz Beasley was installed as Chancellor, and Rev Jim Stephens as Prebend (Canon) of St Munchin and Tulloh, to the Joint Chapter of St Mary’s Cathedral Limerick, St Flannan’s Cathedral Killaloe and St Brendan’s Cathedral Clonfert during Evensong in St Mary’s Cathedral on Sunday 25th November 2018.


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**Joint Chapter Installations**

Continued from page 16

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**Birr Group of Parishes**

Birr, Lorrha, Lockeen, and Dorrha

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

**PRAYERS**

In our prayers we remember Theo Dillon, Betty Eades, Harry Edge, Pamela Edge, George Gill, Henry Gill, Tom Hayes, Pam Reid, and baby Saoirse. We are thankful that George and Henry are out of hospital and on the mend.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Many thanks to all who helped out with services over Christmas and New Year’s, particularly those who were involved with our Pageant and Family Eucharist in Lockeen Church on Christmas Eve. Many thanks as well to Jessica Pyle for the photographs of the Pageant, highlighting the children involved, and our soloist, Charlene Powell.

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**CONFIRMATION**

Bishop Kenneth is coming to Birr Church for a service of Confirmation on Sunday, 16th June at 11:30 am. Any young people of at least 12 years old who want to confirm their Baptismal vows on that day and make a sincere commitment to follow Jesus should contact the Archdeacon as soon as possible, so plans can be made for classes.

**JESSICA PYLE’S TRIP TO UGANDA**

Jessica and some of her Transition Year colleagues from Villiers School are going on a Mission Trip to Uganda in the spring. In order to raise funds for the mission, there is a second-hand clothes collection (except duvets and pillows). These can be dropped in to Polydome or the Rectory, or text/ring June on 087-966-5852. Many thanks for any help you can give.

**EIRCODES**

Many people don’t realise that the EirCode system allows us to find any house or other building in Ireland – including churches. We need to know our own EirCode to be able to give it to the Gardaí, Fire Brigade, or Ambulance services in an emergency. But if you put an EirCode into Google Maps, it shows you the exact building you’re looking for. If you’re giving someone directions to your church, the EirCode will bring them right there. The EirCodes for our Birr Group of Parishes churches are as follows:

- Birr – R42 XA89
- Lorrha – E45 TV24
- Dorrha – R42 TW60
- Lockeen – R42 D296

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**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

2019 has begun. Happy New Year to all who read this. It was indeed a worthwhile and great pleasure to begin 2019 in church in St.Cronan’s marking the New Year.

The liturgy used some of the Methodist Church Covenant Service reminding us that all we do and say is to the glory of God and the building up of one another and ourselves spiritually … and as a consequence, in every other way too.

We offer sincere condolences to Eddie Clare on the death of his sister Evelyn, just before Christmas, in Adare Co. Limerick.

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**CONGRATULATIONS**

Best wishes to Andrew and Deirdre Gill on the birth of their son Lachlan Andrew, a little brother to Saoirse, and grandson of Whitten and Linda. Lachlan was born on the 12th of November.
ADRIAN HEWSON We were all very sorry to hear of Adrian’s sudden departure from his home to Portlaoise Hospital just before Christmas. He is making great progress and hopes to return home from Patterson’s Nursing Home very soon. We wish him a speedy recovery and return to his voluntary and much appreciated ministry amongst us when the time is right.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO THE TOWN OF ROSCREA. The scaffolding has finally been removed from the tower in St.Cronan’s, Roscrea. This has revealed finer detail of the stonework than has been seen to the naked eye for many years.

The works continue at the top of the tower ... which is noticeably ‘glowing’ after nightfall!... this is to facilitate the safe protection from frost as the drying process continues on the roof of the tower.

Both tower and restructured louvres look smart, particularly with the spotlights lit at night providing an even more pivotal landmark and welcome to the town from the Dublin side. A service of thanksgiving will be a feature of 2019.

CAROL SERVICES 2018 All were celebrated differently. Some with contemporary words some with traditional words. All churches were beautifully and tastefully decorated.

St. Burchin’s with its popular candle-lit service, warmth and tasty treats afterwards, Christ Church Corbally with full reader participation and St. Cronan’s with all the youngsters reading and their new kitchenette put to great use. St. Molua’s had to ‘make do’ at very short notice, due to circumstances beyond their control. This will be rectified a.s.a.p.

Many of our people attended the annual Methodist Ecumenical Carol Service to hear the Community Choir lead the carols, the reflective readings and take home activity and perhaps a first time feature and hopefully not the last...a plainsong Christmas piece featuring the Blessed Virgin and Child sung by three of the monks from the monastery of Mount St. Joseph Roscrea.

Mention must be made too of the charmingly sweet St. Cronan’s National School Christmas Service, which once more excelled. With costume, spoken parts and song verse and prayer, the children were magnificent.

All of our Advent and Christmas events only ran so smoothly because of the planning and work of so many people in each church. Busy people, who still took the time to decorate, polish and make ready the buildings for the festivities and tidying up afterwards, not least were the churchwardens and the organists and DJs whose extra help and efficiency was most appreciated.

QUIET DAY

Christ Church Corbally hosted a Quiet Day on Saturday January 19th for Cumann Breandán Naofa ... The Community of Brendan the Navigator. St. Brendan has roots here in our dioceses especially in the magnificent cathedral bearing his name at Clonfert, and at Ardfert.

Revd. Mairt Hanley of Baltinglass Parish, Co. Wicklow led the day with an Epiphany theme.

MOTHERS’ UNION AGM was held January 13th. during which Heather Evans announced her retirement as Enrolling Member. Heather has been promoting the work of MU in and from Roscrea Group of Parishes over many years. Her quiet behind the scenes ways, rallying her committee have ensured all sorts of events in Roscrea parish have been the success and the warmly hospitable events they have been. Heather’s reliability, dogged determinism, practicality and fun are the stuff of good leadership and an example to those much younger with whom she was so supportive. We wish her a good rest from her duties...but knowing rest isn’t really her ‘thing’, so we hope she will enjoy herself as she continues to do her ‘thing’, not least MU diocesan roles.

We welcome Florence Reid, another stalwart of parish activities, to take up the reins of leadership of the branch and wish her well and well done on getting complete fixture list for the year, arranged already.

HU AREA Meeting, Thursday 14th February, 7.30pm, Methodist Hall Roscrea. Speaker : Mrs Lucy Kavanagh DP. Please have Childhood Story to share with us and make us laugh.

Heather Evans (right) outgoing M.U. Enrolling Member and Florence Reid (left) receiving a small token of appreciative affection on behalf of the members present and absent on her retirement from the post.
The Nenagh Union Christmas Tree Festival was held between Wednesday 12th to Sunday 16th December. Over seventy trees were exhibited at the festival witnessing to the ever-inspiring creative spirit and energy in the Nenagh Community. The Festival, which always provides a wonderful way of bringing the local community together, was, in the view of many visitors, the best yet! Our partner charity was Focus Ireland, and Martina Finch and Michelle O’Connor accepted a cheque on behalf of the charity at the distribution of prizes which took place immediately after the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 16th December.

Once again, we witnessed a packed church, with standing room only. In addition to the benefit of reaching out to the local community and beyond, the most gratifying outcome of the festival, was to witness the way in which the people of our Union, from all of our parishes, worked so well together to make the event such a success. See photos on page 2.

Like most groups and unions, the Christmas period was extremely busy in the Nenagh Union. Indeed, there was not one Sunday evening in December when there was not a carol service in one of our parishes. All of these services were extremely well supported in each church, and, in general, all the Christmas services saw an increase in numbers attending. Indeed, on Christmas Day, the family service in St Mary’s showed an increase of over 100% on the previous year.

At the Family service on Sunday 20th January, there was a very unique event in the life of our Union. We had a double baptism! Two boys, Fionn Rauiri Cahill and Scott Paul Nevin, the sons of two sisters, Sandra Cahill and Sharon Nevin were welcomed into the Church of God in Baptism. The children of the Union assisted a somewhat harassed Rector as we welcomed the two newest members of our church family. We wish Fionn and Scott, together with their parents, Sandra and Sharon, their Godparents Robert, Grainne and Erin and families every blessing as they take their places in our Union.

On Friday 25th January St Mary’s, Nenagh, was the venue for the marriage of Clara Hayes and Mark Platt. It was an exceptionally happy day, the church full of family and friends. The Rector was assisted in the service by Rev Shannon De Laureal, Methodist Minister of Roscrea. It was also an occasion of double celebration with the Baptism of Colin Norman Wray Platt as part of the service. We offer our love and congratulations to the happy couple and young Colin.

Cloughjordan & Borrisokane Group of Parishes

Cloughjordan, Borrisokane, Borrisnafarney and Ballingarry
Rector: Rev Terry Mitchell
Modreeny Rectory, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 42183
Mob: 087 203 9333
Email: terrym438@gmail.com

The season of Advent was followed by Carol Services, held in all four parishes in our build up to Christmas. There is a tradition in some of the churches in Malta, for a child to deliver the Christmas Day service. While we have not yet tried this in our parishes, the Carol Services do allow for maximum participation from the children.

Thank you to all the children who helped with the Carol Services, for your readings and prayers. We always value and appreciate your contribution to our services. Thank you also to the parishioners and organists, as we sang the well-loved Christmas Carols.

It is always a joy on Christmas Day to see the churches packed to the rafters, where you had to arrive early to find a seat. It is also a joy to witness the excitement and anticipation that the children bring to the Christmas Service, as they look forward to the day and what it holds for them.
But as Shakespeare reminds us in Twelfth Night, it cannot be ‘cakes and ales’ forever, and we are well into Epiphany, the Christmas trees are down, the nativity scene packed away for another year and children back at school. Epiphany does still hold out for us, in the dark of winter, the hope of the light of Christ shining in our lives and in our communities, that his glory may be revealed to all people.

Thank you to everyone in the Group of Parishes who participated in the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and may the light of Christ continue to shine in our lives.

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS.
Congratulations to Nigel Stanley and Niamh Enright who were married at the Pike Church in Ballingarry on the 8th of December. The reception was held in the Woodlands House Hotel in Adare.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
It was a pleasure to attend the Cloughjordan No. 1 National School Christmas Concert on the 13th December. There were four plays, that all told of the Christmas story in different and creative ways. A lot of work went into the productions and the children, parents and teachers can be very proud of their performances.

MELLOWTONES CHRISTMAS CONCERT
The Mellowtones Choir held a Christmas Concert in St Kieran’s Church, Cloughjordan on the 22nd December. The choir lead the audience in a mixture of traditional and more contemporary Christmas carols and songs.

WHIST DRIVES
Thank you to all those who helped arrange and all those who participated in the Whist Drives. They were well attended, with great prizes and some lucky winners on the night.
A reminder that Whist Drives will be held on Wednesday 13th February at 8.15pm in Borrisokane, and Friday 22nd February at 8.15pm in the Moneygall Hall.

Shinrone Group of Parishes
Shinrone, Aghancon, Kinnitty and Dunkerrin
Rector: Vacant
Parish Website: shinrone.blogspot.ie

Priest-in-Charge: The Revd. Canon Ruth Gill
Kilgolan House, Kilcormac, Birr, Co. Offaly. R42 HT20
Phone: 05791 35341: email: ruth_gill40@outlook.ie

CHURCH SERVICES
Kinnitty at 10 a.m.
Aghancon at 11.30 a.m.
Dunkerrin at 9 a.m.
Shinrone at 10.30 a.m.
Holy Communion in Dunkerrin & Shinrone on the first Sunday of the month and in Kinnitty & Aghanon on the second Sunday of the month.
Ash Wednesday: 6th March

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS
It all seems so long ago but the memories live on! The united Group Nativity Carol Service on the 23rd December was a wonderful time of listening to the familiar Christmas readings and singing the well-known carols. However, the children were marvellous and it’s thanks to the amount of preparation that was done beforehand, including decorating the tree, guaranteed that the children delivered the story in a happy and relaxed way – a perfect start to Christmas! The service was followed by seasonal refreshments. The proceeds of the Carol Service will go to the Emma Hannigan Memorial Fund and presents left at the Christmas tree for residents of Ealga Lodge were delivered afterwards.

The services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were well attended – it’s a great time to catch up with family and friends. We thank God for these occasions of celebration.

The weekly Holy Communion service in Ealga Lodge has created its own distinctive atmosphere of friendship and quiet devotion. Thank you to John Armitage who reliably turns up every week to play the hymns and to the Revd’s Janet White Spunner, Tom Kingston and Denis Sandes for making it possible to have the service every Thursday morning.

MOTHERS’ UNION
Garda Declan Ganley and a colleague joined members and friends for coffee in Cloughmoyle School recently when he spoke about safety measures which can increase safety in the home, especially for discouraging unwanted callers. Garda Ganley will be in Shinrone more often, so do call in if you want to have a chat with him.

FASHION SHOW
A Fashion Show will be held in the elegant surroundings of Gloucester House on Thursday, 11th April. We are extremely grateful to Tom and Mary Alexander and their son, Nigel, for supporting Shinrone parish in this way. Please make a note of the date and details will be circulated in the near future. The Show last year was a tremendous success and was thoroughly enjoyed by those who were able to attend. Watch out for when tickets go on sale!

SHINRONE RECTORY
Anyone passing by the rectory can’t help but notice the work which has been done to the house and garden, it looks neat and tidy! Many thanks to all who have given so much of their time, particularly Norman and Cynthia Grant who did the paint work and to the glebe wardens and committee for keeping on top of the work.

PRAYER BOOK
The new edition of the Book of Common Prayer is now available at a cost of €22 with a 10% for orders of 10 or more (See page 7).
Drumcliffe Union with Kilnasoolagh
Ennis, Kilfenora, Spanish Point, Kilnasoolagh and Shannon
Vacant
Priest-in-Charge: Very Rev Maurice Sirr
Tel: 061 277 372, Mob: 087 254 1121
Email: msirr@iol.ie
Parish website: www.churchofirelandclare.com

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
At St. Columba’s Church a Christmas Tree Festival was opened on the 14th of December by Mr. Jim Warney, the Ennis based Belgian caver who last July took part in the rescue of the 12 boys and their soccer coach from a cave in Thailand. The first-time festival was organised by Jenny Shaw who said the event was ‘Superb’ with a constant stream of people attending throughout the two weekend openings approaching Christmas. Visitors included the new PP of Ennis Fr. Tom Ryan and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Killaloe Bishop Fintan Monahan. A wonderful ecumenical occasion which attracted many residents of Ennis to the church for the first time. Jenny thanks all who assisted her in arranging the trees and minding the exhibition and said, ‘It was a wonderful way of bringing the people of St. Columba’s together in a united effort in doing something productive and rewarding for the parish’. The winner of the ‘best tree’ competition was Ennis Knitters who knit all their tree decorations.

CHRISTINGLE IN KILFENORA.
On Christmas Eve it has been the tradition that a Christingle Service is held in St. Fachtnan’s Cathedral in Kilfenora. So it was this year when a large group of people, well over 100 and mostly children, gathered to celebrate Christingle or The Christ Light. The cathedral was warm and welcoming with its open hearth fire prepared by caretaker Timmy and music provided by Fr. Ned Crosby PP with assembled friends who formed an orchestra for the afternoon. The service was conducted by the Rev. Patricia McKee-Hanna and readings were by Mr. Lawson Kirkpatrick. We thank those who devoted time and effort in making the Christingle candles which were distributed to the children to take home and the mulled wine enjoyed by the adults.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH
Kilnasoolagh Annual Christmas Lunch took place this year on the 16th of December in Bunratty Castle Hotel. There was a good attendance of 34 with guests Stephen Fletcher and his wife Frances coming down from Kilrush and Alex and Huilin Reid with 2 year old daughter Alison home from California for the holiday period. We also had from South Africa Julie Dickerson's mum Gail visiting over Christmas. The Very Rev. Maurice Sirr was our guest for the afternoon. Santa came to the children who were delighted to see him and to tell him what they expected in their stockings on Christmas morning. We finished the afternoon over coffee with a Christmas quiz with prizes. An enjoyable afternoon with nobody rushing home afterwards.

ASHES IN KILNASOOLAGH
It was a sad occasion on the 1st of December when the remains of Brian O’Callaghan Westropp were brought to Kilnasoolagh church for a memorial service and a final blessing. Brian and his wife Zoe were honeymooning in the coastal resort of Mati, near Athens on July 23rd, when they were caught up in an all consuming forest blaze. They had become separated in the panic during the fire and Brian’s remains were recovered from the sea a number of hours later. His wife Zoe spoke to a packed church at Kilnasoolagh and told mourners that she is still very angry that he was stolen from her after less than four days of marriage in such a cruel manner. Brian was an active member of ‘Blood Bikes East’ which provides a free medical transport service between hospitals in Dublin and many of Brian's colleagues from the charity were in attendance at the memorial service.

In attendance also at the service were the Aide de Camp to President Michael D Higgins, Captain Eoin Troy and Aide de Camp to An Taoiseach Leo Varadker, Captain Ciaran Wolfe along with the Irish Ambassador to Greece, Ms. Orla O’Hanrahan. The service was conducted by The Very Rev. Maurice O’Hanrahan. The service was conducted by The Very Rev. Maurice Sirr accompanied by Canon Brendan O’Donoghue AP from Shannon parish.

JUDITH IRONSIDE
Christ Church stalwart Judith Ironside died peacefully at home in Atlantic Lodge in Spanish Point on 31st December 2018. Wife of the late James, MRCVS, she was a woman whose voluntarism permeated through local and national life as she threw herself headlong into any project she became involved with. She was a founding member of Ennis Soroptomists, and one of her most significant achievements was to set up Caring for Carers, subsequently to become Caring for Carers Ireland, with a presence in 23 counties. Recently she was active in the spire restoration project at Christ Church Spanish Point where €22,000 was raised from various sources to complete the necessary work. Much loved by her children, James, Andrew, Sarah, Lucy, Emma, the late Jonathan, and their spouses and partners. Also her sister Diana and her brother Richard and many relatives and friends.

Christingle service on Christmas Eve in St. Fachtnan’s Cathedral Kilfenora.
Clonfert Diocese

Aughrim & Creagh Unions of Parishes
Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Ahascragh, Ardrahan, Clontuskert and Woodlawn
Rector: Rev. John Godfrey
The Rectory, Aughrim, Co. Galway.
Tel: 090 967 3735 Mob: 087 900 8085
Email: reverendjohngodfrey@gmail.com
Parish website: www.aughrim.clonfert.anglican.org

SYMPATHIES
The funeral service of Catherine Walsh was held in Glan Church on January 3rd, led by the rector and Canon Trevor Sullivan. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the family in their loss, Catherine’s husband William, her children Mary, Jolene, James and Gladys, her brothers and sisters and their families.

The anniversary of the death of Bob Chappel was marked in Ardrahan Church on November 30th. The first anniversaries of the deaths of George Bruce and Florence Fahy were remembered in St John’s Church Ballinasloe on December 23rd.

PARISH UPDATE
We wish every blessing to Gordon and Susan Patterson (nee Wakefield) on the birth of their son, Craig Leslie. A big well done to Margaret Sheppard and Ane Sinclair for their performances in Killalaghton Players’ production of the Jimmy Keary comedy ‘For Better, For Worse’, which ran from January 18th to 21st. Congratulations to playwright Shirley-Anne Godfrey (nee Bonner), whose play ‘Frances-Browne: In Her Mind’s Eye’ was performed in New York on January 23rd, as part of the Origin Theatre Festival. Sincere thanks to Rev Liz and Kirk Beasley, who helped to transform a bumper crop of apples in the rectory orchard into Aughrim Apple Juice – this year’s Christmas gift of choice in the parish.

The festival of Christmas was celebrated with great joy at a series of uplifting services and concerts throughout the parish. Claire Besnyoe hosted an Ecumenical Eucharist in Ballydugan House on December 7th, led by Archdeacon Wayne Carney and Fr Iomar Daniels. The Mother’s Union organised a retelling of the Christ Story in Gullane’s Hotel on December 11th, led by Marie Quinlan and Tina Walshe. The children of the Glebe National School melted hearts on December 14th with their production of A Midwife Crisis – a comical retelling of the nativity story featuring a beleaguered Bethlehem midwife and Steve the donkey. St Catherine’s Church Ahascragh was packed to the rafters for its splendid annual Christmas Concert on December 9th, led by the rector and Fr Christy McCormac. The Ahascragh team went on to run a Christmas stall at the Caltra Market on December 15th which raised over €1,000 for the church. Ardrahan Church continued their own fundraising efforts for local charities and for the ongoing repairs to the church windows with a clothing collection in December and a sale of work in Gort Golf Club on December 9th. The Carol Service in Ardrahan Church on December 18th, led by the rector and Fr Joseph Roche, was a wonderful community occasion.

The people of Woodlawn turned out in force for the carol service in Woodlawn Church, led by the rector and Reverend Patrick Towers on December 20th. St John’s Church Ballinasloe hosted a united carol service on December 23rd, which included our annual parish donation of gifts to Esker House, the women’s refuge in Athlone. Christmas Eve was celebrated with delightful services of Holy Communion in Ardrahan and Aughrim and St John’s Church Ballinasloe hosted a wonderful united Eucharist for Christmas Day. After a short pause for breath, we came together once more for a united family service in Ahascragh for the First Sunday of Christmas.
On January 12th the Parochial Hall in Ballinasloe was the scene of great excitement, as the Ballinasloe Town Band gathered there for a photo shoot to celebrate their agreement to purchase the building, subject to the exchange of contracts. We are delighted that the band has finally found a home, and we hope that the people of Ballinasloe will generously support them in their fundraising efforts as they seek to renovate the building for use by the band, parish and wider community.

The Baptism of our Lord was celebrated at the monthly family service in Aughrim on January 13th. The Carmelite Community in Loughrea hosted a Service of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 21st, led by Bishop John Kirby and Dr Salters Sterling.

The rector was most grateful for the opportunity to take a deferred Christmas holiday with his wife in New York from January 21st to 25th.

Clonfert Group of Parishes
Clonfert, Banagher, Eyrecourt, and Portumna
Priest in Charge: Rev Charles McCartney
The Rectory, The Hill, Banagher, Co. Offaly, R42T935
Mob: 087 709 4468
Email: dunroamin.mccartney@btopenworld.com

We did our best to hold onto Advent, but eventually, we rolled over and Christmas arrived in Clonfert.

We welcomed Mervyn Tomb from the Faith Mission Durrow for a Lego extravaganza in the Rectory before Christmas. The Christmas story followed by building modern style manger scenes from the huge Lego supply, juice and biscuits brought the afternoon to a close.

Clonfert Cathedral on the 5th Sunday has become very popular with families and we look forward to Mervyn joining us in March with families ministry.

Indeed the Cathedral kicked us off with a Community Carol Service led by an ensemble of the Ballinasloe Town Band. Canon Trevor and Fr Mike joined me and we really enjoyed the singing. A very encouraging congregation and Christmas Fayre after. Thank you to the band, just brilliant and we look forward to building on our experience for 2019.

Carols and Holy Communion in Eyrecourt and another well filled Church, Portumna on Christmas Eve by candlelight. Cecilia, Caroline and I went to Family Mass to wish the Church a Happy Christmas. Fr Mike and I took the opportunity to pray for each other and our community. Fr Mike joined us later for our Candlelit service and it was great joining together in a duet. Will we be asked to sing again?

Christmas day in Banagher and great to see our younger families joining in.

Thank you to all who worked very hard in preparation and creating the atmosphere for our services. The bonus for Cecilia and I in the Rectory was almost all of our family joined us in the Rectory for Christmas. We really had one of our best Christmas celebrations in many years.

In all of this celebration, we lost one of our most supportive members in Banagher. Val Bertram after a very short and aggressive illness passed from this earth. Perhaps we can describe this with the words “absent from the body present with the Lord”. Val arrived in Banagher many years previously on a canal boat and stayed. She had no family on our island but was surrounded by a wonderful group of Christian friends. Val’s time of illness was also a time of Christian witness to the whole community. Thank you for the care and attention, the shopping, cups of tea and much more to all who helped. The Revd Patrick Towers joined us for the funeral and hit the spot for all of us.

February will be a quieter month in the group as we fulfill the legal requirements leading up to the Easter Vestries. Perhaps a time to catch our breath and pick up the reins again.

Sincerely
From the Rectory

Limerick Diocese

Limerick City Parish
Saint Mary’s Cathedral, Saint Michael’s, Saint John’s Abington
Dean: Very Rev Niall J Sloane
The Deanery, 7 Kilbane, Castletroy, Limerick.
Tel: 061 310 293
Email: dean@limerick.anglician.org
Curate Assistant: Rev Paul Fitzpatrick
St Mary’s Cathedral, Bridge St, Limerick V94 E068
Tel: 061 338 697, Mob: 089 498 0495
Email: paulfitz1000@hotmail.com
Curate Assistant: Rev Edna Wakely
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Newslink Distributor: Gillian Cheatley

FROM THE DEAN - WHAT TO GIVE UP?
As Ash Wednesday approaches many look to their Lenten resolutions. Here are some alternative ones to think about:

Give up complaining——focus on gratitude.
Give up pessimism——become an optimist.
Give up harsh judgments——think kindly thoughts.
Give up worry——trust Divine Providence.
Give up discouragement——be full of hope.
Give up bitterness——turn to forgiveness.
Give up hatred——return good for evil.
Give up negativism——be positive.
Give up anger——be more patient.
Give up pettiness——become mature.
Give up gloom——enjoy the beauty that is all around you.
Give up jealousy——pray for trust.
Give up gossiping——control your tongue.
Give up sin——turn to virtue.
Give up giving up——hang in there!

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.
No matter what you give up or take on may the period of Lent be to you a time of rest and reflection and may Easter bring with it, to you, the joy of the risen Christ.

DIARY FOR THE MONTH – FEBRUARY 2019
1  St Brigid’s Day
2  Feast of the Presentation
2  Whist, St Michael’s Hall
10  Sunday School/Godly Play, St Michael’s Hall/St John’s, Abington
17  Evensong: Community Awards, The Cathedral
19  The Evergreens, The Cathedral
19  Select Vestry, St Michael’s Hall
24  Sunday School/Godly Play, St Michael’s Hall/St John’s, Abington

THE EVERGREENS
Anyone requiring a lift should contact Oliver Deegan at 086 204 3296 or 061 635 367.

MOTHERS’ UNION
Please contact Branch Chair, Margaret Schutz for further details. New members always welcome.
Margaret writes...
The photo captures some of the amazing number of items donated for two hostels in Limerick at Christmas. A large amount of groceries was given to the Men’s Hostel on Clare Street and a similar hamper to the Women’s hostel in Thomondgate together with twenty-five individually wrapped Christmas gifts for the residents there. To say all these items were gratefully received is an understatement! A letter of thanks has already arrived from Thomond House. Although the appeal for items is facilitated by Mothers’ Union, it is the amazing generosity of LCP parishioners which makes it such a success.

AN ABHAINN
The Winter edition is now available. The deadline for submissions to the next edition is the 15th February.

ST MICHAEL’S HALL
For booking enquiries please contact the Hall Manager, Suzi Eckhardt.

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.

FROM THE REGISTERS
Funerals
31st December (in the Cathedral) – Finnuala Graydon

Our sympathy and prayers are with all those who have been bereaved:
• Tom Mardsen and his family on the death of his sister, Brownie Murray
• The Rev’d Paul Fitzpatrick and his family on the death of his brother in law
• Robert, Carol, Ivan and their families on the death of their mother, Finnuala.
• Emma Melin and her family on the death of her aunt, Astrid Andersson

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

CHRISTMAS
We had a full slate of Christmas services and Carol Services, with a play put on by the Kilpeacon Sunday School, the Sunday School in Kilmallock building a nativity scene (with they themselves as the characters) during a Carol Service, and St. Nicholas School singing for the Carol Service in Adare.

CONDOLENCES
We offer condolences to Bobby Bingham of Kilpeacon Church, and to all the Bingham and Clare (Co. Wexford) families, on the death of Bobby’s wife, Evelyn, on 22 December. Her funeral was held on 28 December, with burial afterwards in the new cemetery in Adare Village.
Our church members also mourn the deaths of two members of the Methodist Church in Adare, who died on the weekend before Christmas: Edwin Smyth and Lorna Shier. They will be missed.

EPIPHANY PARTY
The annual Epiphany party was held at the Rectory, on the Sunday afternoon following New Year’s (this year it was actually on the Day of Epiphany). This year we had a surprise visit from the Three Kings, bearing gifts. We discovered that they were actually Robert, Diana, and Griselda Williams, but all had a good laugh and delight at their costumes. It was a good afternoon, in which we could all relax, have a bite of food and a cup of tea, and have a chat with one another. Thanks to all who came.

EPIPHANY was marked in a new way this year, drawing on old traditions, when the lintels of the Church doors in Askeaton and Kilnaughtin were chalked with the traditional Epiphany blessing 20 + C + M + B + 19, representing the numerals of the year, the initials of the Three Wise Men or Magi – Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar – who came to visit the Christ Child in his first home, and abbreviating the Latin blessing, Christus Mansionem Benedicat, 'May Christ bless the house.'

Best wishes for a blessed 2019 to all.

Rathkeale & Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes
Rathkeale, Askeaton, Castletown & Kilnaughtin
Priest-in-Charge: Rev Canon Patrick Comerford
The Rectory, Askeaton, Co. Limerick.
Mob: 087 663 5116
Email: revpatrickcomerford@gmail.com

MOVING FROM EPIPHANY TO EASTER:
The Christmas season comes to an end with the feast of Candlemas, which links Christmas with Easter, the incarnation with the crucifixion and the resurrection.

CHANGES IN SERVICE TIMES
We have continued a slight change in our service times, as follows:
On the third Sunday of the month, Adare’s service will be at 10.30am.
On the fourth Sunday of the month, Croom’s service will be at 10.30am.
This change is an experiment. It won’t last forever, but it may lead to a restructuring of our regular service times.

APPLE JUICE
The Rectory had bottles of "Holy Apple Juice" for sale as a fundraiser for the Rectory fund. The juice is made from the apples in the Rectory’s orchard. At a cost of €5 per bottle, €360 was raised for the fund.

LENTEN CLASS
Even though Easter comes late this year (21 April), we are beginning to plan for the annual Bible study class to run during the season of Lent. The class this year will be an introduction to one of the themes of the Bible, which is "Knowing God." It will address some of the questions that might occur to people about God, which people in biblical times also wondered, such as: What is God’s true nature? Can we trust God to be loving, fair, and just? How can we know the unknowable God? The class is seven sessions and costs €20 for the cost of the workbook. Please let Rev. Liz know if you would like to take part in the class.

ASKEATON SCAFFOLDING:
In the past few weeks, scaffolding has been erected on the west
front of Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, as the first stage in securing the church façade. Simon White and Ralph Drew have been busy working on the project, and we should soon know the news.

CONGRATULATIONS:
Congratuations to Nicky and Robert Daniel Foley from Cork on the birth of their daughter Tamsin on 7 January. They were married in Saint Mary's Church, Askeaton, earlier last year.

KILLALOE VISITORS:
As the deans and chapter members continue the chapter programme of exchanges between the deans and the canons, Canon Patrick Comerford is visiting the Killaloe Cathedral group of parishes on 17 February, and the Dean of Killaloe, the Very Revd Gary Paulsen, is visiting this group of parishes.

MINISTRY TRAINING IN THE RECTORY:
The Revd Anne-Marie Stuart spoke on Celtic Spirituality in the Rectory during the training day for clergy and readers on 14 January. The next day in this programme, on 11 February, looking at the Jesus Prayer and Praying with Icons.

FRESH SHOOTS:
Congratulations to Valerie and Tommy Downes whose garden in Ballysteen has been the focus of recent media acclaim.

TOMMY FLEMING CONCERT:
The evening with Tommy Fleming in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, on Saturday 8 December was an exceptional evening of music and song. This fundraising concert raised over €2,000 in aid of Rathkeale song. This fundraising concert raised over €2,000 in aid of Rathkeale song. Tommy Fleming in concert in Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale.

FEBRUARY SERVICES:
- Sunday 3 February (Epiphany 4, the Presentation): 9.30 a.m., Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, Holy Communion; 11.30, Saint Brendan’s Church, Kilnaughtin (Tarbert), Morning Prayer.
- Sunday 10 February (4 Before Lent): 9.30 a.m., Castletown Church, Kilcornan, Holy Communion; 11.30, Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, Morning Prayer.
- Sunday 17 February (3 Before Lent): 9.30 a.m., Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, Morning Prayer; 11.30, Saint Brendan’s Church, Kilnaughtin, Holy Communion.With the Dean of Killaloe, the Very Revd Gary Paulsen.
- Sunday 24 February (2 Before Lent): 9.30 a.m., Castletown Church, Kilcornan, Morning Prayer; 11.30, Holy Trinity Church, Rathkeale, Holy Communion.
- Sunday 3 March (Sunday before Lent): 9.30 a.m., Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, Holy Communion; 11.30, Saint Brendan’s Church, Kilnaughtin (Tarbert), Morning Prayer.

LENT 2019:
Lent and Easter are relatively late this year, with Ash Wednesday on 6 March 2019 and Easter Day on 21 April.
Ash Wednesday (6 March): 8 p.m., Saint Mary’s Church, Askeaton, Holy Communion and Ashing.

THE CHRISTMAS FAIR was a wonderful success and in spite of the bad weather it exceeded all expectations. €11,225 was raised, this will be of great benefit to the Tralee, Ballymacelligott and Ballyseedy end of the parish. The parish is blessed to have so many people who gave so generously of their time, energy and talent to make it such a positive event. The funds raised will help with the financing of the parish and will go some way towards closing the gap between expenditure and income. Occasions such as these are also important community building events as they bring the parish family together. The wider community were very supportive with good crowds attending throughout the day. Once again, the Links ladies served tea, coffee scones and various snacks. We are very thankful to all our sponsors and customers and supporters. We were happy to give unsold bric a brac, toys and books to the Adapt shop which raises funds for the women’s refuge.

Christmas began in Tralee with the telling of the Christmas story through song by the children of St John’s on the 9th December. The children and their Teachers can be so proud of themselves. This was followed by a lovely time in Teach an tSolais at which we enjoyed seasonal refreshments supplied by the Parents Council. Santa also arrived with a present for all the boys and girls.

CAROL SERVICES. The service in Tralee went off very well on the 16th December. The surprise element was the contribution from Samuel, Anna, Élton, Billa and Newland and their friend Ida who created a bit of magic for us with their wonderful singing.

The service in Camp was a community and ecumenical event, Maura Begley played the organ and the Village Voices and St. Mary’s RC Choir led the singing. Refreshments were served after the service in the Old School Rooms – many thanks to all the ladies for the tea & coffee and lovely cakes.

St. James, Dingle Ecumenical Carol Service was ‘standing room’ only! The Choir from St. Mary’s RC Church, Dingle and the Dingle Gospel Choir helped make it a memorable occasion at which Fr Anthony O’Sullivan took part. The collection was divided between Kerry Hospice and The Bishops’ Appeal.
In Killarney, there was a special Candlelight Epiphany Service at 5 pm which was enriched by the presence of members of Camp ICA and was followed by a special meal at Ashes’ pub to celebrate Nollag na mBan.

St John’s was the venue for two concerts in the week prior to Christmas. On Wednesday The Dingle New Music Orchestra performed a selection of well-known pieces and on the Friday night the Kerry School of Music held the annual Mistletoe and Wine evening in the church and parish centre.

**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

![Image of Killarney Parish](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**ST MARY’S CONCERTS WORTH €250,000 TO KILLARNEY**

The Concerts Programme at St Mary’s (Church of Ireland) Killarney, the Church of the Sloes, has been running for more than 10 years and has grown substantially. This year some 50 concerts took place, raising about €250,000 for the Church’s Restoration Fund. An analysis of the benefits to the wider community has recently been completed. It shows that 10x that amount is brought into the town. This year the town benefitted from the Church’s activity to the tune of a quarter of a million euros.

When the Killarney Chamber of Tourism and Commerce launched a report on the economic value it represents to our fabulous Town of Killarney. Not only do our visiting choirs seek accommodation here in Killarney, but they also are on holiday and so want to take coach tours and make visits to our iconic landmark locations and venues. To discover what that benefit might be we liaised with our main Tour Operators and asked them to identify the costs of buying resources and support services in Killarney.

It turns out that the average worth to Killarney of a concert in our church is €5,000. This is on top of the €500 the church gets in fees and donations. Therefore in 2018, with 50 concerts, the town has benefitted by more than €250,000 of additional income. (Over the past ten years, allowing for growth, that could be in excess of €2m.)

This has happened due to the quality of our product. When the Concerts Programme was first envisaged it was aimed at raising much needed money to keep the church going. Over the years, Tour Operators have come to know that our Church and Killarney are a very special place to send their visiting choirs and orchestras on tour from North America and Europe. The Church’s acoustics are very highly regarding by performers; its beauty and its situation are unique selling points. Our Church is especially delighted for our hotel sector and local tour operators who see the benefit of this uplift. The town shows its support to us; we remember gratefully the superb community effort to restore the Church Railings. He added, “The effort to run these concerts demand a lot of our small congregation, so we are always looking to add volunteers to our Stewarding Rota; it takes three people to maintain the safety and comfort of visitors at a concert.” The Church will welcome any offers of help in this regard so that they can accept more concert bookings in the coming years and continue to grow this worthwhile enterprise, not just for the social benefit and leisure of locals and visitors alike, but also for the economic value it represents to our fabulous Town of Killarney.

The Church is delighted to be able to support the community that supports it. The Rector of Killarney, Archdeacon Simon J Lumby said "we were both surprised and delighted when we saw the figures." When asked about the importance of this to the Church, he said, "It's great that the Church is able to lift the economic wellbeing of the community; it's a part of our spiritual task of 'loving our neighbour'. We are especially delighted for our hotel sector and local tour operators who see the benefit of this uplift. The town shows its support to us; we remember gratefully the superb community effort to Restore the Church Railings. He added, "The effort to run these concerts demand a lot of our small congregation, so we are always looking to add volunteers to our Stewarding Rota; it takes three people to maintain the safety and comfort of visitors at a concert.’’ The Church will welcome any offers of help in this regard so that they can accept more concert bookings in the coming years and continue to grow this worthwhile enterprise, not just for the social benefit and leisure of locals and visitors alike, but also for the economic value it represents to our fabulous Town of Killarney.

Now we are preparing for an Ecumenical Service to celebrate Christian Unity Week, and all the local and not so local ministers from a variety of different church traditions have agreed to come. So we have the Catholic clergy, a representative of the Lutheran Church who worship in our church occasionally and are more than welcome. We have a priest from St. Mary of the Angels Home which is run by the St. John of God community, a Pastor from a Free church, and of course the two of us, Revd Isabel and Revd Ann-Marie. We invited them to choose their favourite texts from scripture, one that has inspired them

**Kilcolman Union of Parishes**

St Michael’s, Iveragh Road, Killorglin & St Carthage, Killalagh Road, Castlemaine.

Priest-in-Charge: Rev Isabel F Keegan, FJ, MA
Mob: 085 853 2431, Email: revikireland@gmail.com
Assistant Priest: Rev Ann-Marie L Stuart, FJ, MA
Mob: 085 852 9414, Email: revstuart29@gmail.com
Seaview House, Gurrane West, Killorglin, Co. Kerry.
Tel: 066 979 0359
Web: www.kilcolman.ardfert.anglican.org

Now that the practicalities of Christmas and The Late, Late Toy Show have been packed away for another year, and Ann-Marie actually managed to greet our people in Gaelic and to wish them a Happy Christmas under Isabel’s expert tutelage (actually I had to write it out phonetically so that I got it right).

Since then we have had two wonderful Baptisms of two little cousins, on the anniversary of one of our Churchwarden’s own twin Baptism many years ago when he and his cousin were also Christened. But the photo is of the more recent Baptisms of little Layla Iris Baptised by Isabel and Lilly Frances, by Ann-Marie.

**Baptisms of Lalya Iris and Lilly Frances**

Now we are preparing for an Ecumenical Service to celebrate Christian Unity Week, and all the local and not so local ministers from a variety of different church traditions have agreed to come. So we have the Catholic clergy, a representative of the Lutheran Church who worship in our church occasionally and are more than welcome. We have a priest from St. Mary of the Angels Home which is run by the St. John of God community, a Pastor from a Free church, and of course the two of us, Revd Isabel and Revd Ann-Marie. We invited them to choose their favourite texts from scripture, one that has inspired them
in ministry and in their daily lives, and to share briefly the reason for choosing their particular text, and a hymn to go with it. Members of the various congregations were also invited to take part to read and lead the prayers, and two different choirs as well. Sounds grand let’s just hope that we all are enriched by this sharing of different traditions and insights.

Our lovely little Church of Ireland School has begun another term in its usual splendid way, with children keen to learn, and an excellent staff who love and nurture the children. Each week we look forward to going into the school to share something of our Christian heritage with them all.

Sadly, we also celebrated the life and funeral of Eileen O’Neill who had attended the school many years ago when it still consisted of one room, an outside toilet and a large black kettle. Those were the days!

So over this Christmas period we welcomed two new members of the church and bade farewell to two church members who have returned to their Lord after fruitful lives. May they rest in peace and rise in Glory.

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

Is hecticfullness a word? I’ve heard about mindfulness, but that doesn’t exactly cut the mustard when talking about one Praise n’ Play party, two Christingles, a Bible study inspired by The Muppets Christmas Carol, thirteen Holy Communions, four Carol services, an Orchestra Concert, one live action Nativity for grownups and not yet grownups – and sadly, two funerals – that constituted December in Kenmare, Sneem, Valentia and Waterville.

Lessons learned: People, especially grownups, love to dress up, and there were as many wise women as wise men at the stable; congregational Carols need practice to have any chance of competing with the C of I CD versions avec ‘descants’; the Muppet version is arguably the best and most authentic film portrayal of the message Dickens actually intended; Christingle cocktail sticks would probably not be acceptable to the Safety Elves (often you don’t need red ribbon – you’ll have plenty of scarlet bandages); if you don’t really, really, really concentrate on counting, you’ll never get through playing the viola part of ‘Unto us a child is born’; and, thanks to the Iceland Christmas advert, you won’t enjoy mince pies if they contain palm oil.

But above all the main lesson was that God loves us so much that He sent His Son in order that we may not perish but have eternal life – and that message came through loud and clear in every single one of the above. Perhaps most poignantly in the two funerals.

The family of Cara Frost-Jones (nee Scofield) have a long history in Kenmare, owning Dinish Island in Kenmare Bay; Cara spent most of her youth in Uganda, where her parents were medical missionaries. She and husband Robin were Sunday School teachers in St Patrick’s for a number of years before moving away, then eventually returning back to Cara’s birthplace for the last five or six years. They were both quite frail, living in the local nursing home where they were made very comfortable. Cara died in early December; Robin followed her to glory just a couple of weeks afterwards. ‘How sad’ was the usual reaction of most people when they heard the story; ‘I’m not sure myself. ‘How wonderful’ might be more appropriate, when two people who knew the Lord went to be with Him almost hand in hand.
Then we moved into the New Year... From the earliest days of the Methodist societies, John Wesley invited people to renew their covenant relationship with God.

The emphasis of the whole service is on God’s readiness to enfold us in generous love – a love which is not dependant on our deserving it. Our response, also in love, comes from our thankful recognition of God’s grace.

The covenant is not just a one to one agreement between individuals and God but the act of the whole faith community – us.

This is the prayer we say together.

I am no longer my own but yours.  
Your will, not mine be done in all things,  
wherever you may place me,  
in all that I do and in all that I may endure:  
when there is work for me and when there is none;  
when I am troubled and when I am at peace.  
Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded;  
when I find fulfillment and when it is lacking;  
when I have all things, and when I have nothing.  
I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,  
as and where you choose.  
Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours. May it be so for ever.  
Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven.  
Amen.


december as always was a busy month.  
Blue Christmas services were held in Millstreet on 11th December and in Killarney on 12th December. These were quiet, reflective services for anyone who was facing Christmas alone, suffering loss, or simply wanted a space to step out of the busyness of the time of year. Both services were helpful to all who came and conversations over mince pies and mulled punch were beneficial.

Carol services were held in Killarney on 19th December and in Kenmare and Millstreet on 23rd December reminding us all about the birth of Jesus. Killarney held a service on Christmas day when Rev Karen spoke of Christ being born into a messy world.

Watchnight service was held in Killarney on 31st December which was preceded by fellowship and food. During the fellowship time both the children and adults shared how life had been in 2018 and gave thanks to God for his faithfulness throughout the year.

Also, during December an Open Mic night was held in the Lighthouse in Millstreet. Several local musicians and singers came along for this relaxed, informal get together. This was a great way to bring locals into the premises where we worship and to get to know each other.

Mince pies and the usual teas and coffees went down well! This evening was such a success that we are already planning the next one.... So watch this space!

January began, as it always does, with the Covenant service and the saying of that challenging but profound prayer. Bible studies continue in the 3 churches using the book of Proverbs and on Wednesday nights in Killarney we are studying Jonah.

Congratulations to Rev Karen who has been appointed Vice Captain of Beaufort Golf club for 2019. She will also be travelling to Bogota in Colombia in February to visit the work of the Light and Life foundation including an orphanage, school and farm.

Plans are already in place for St Patrick’s Day celebrations in Killarney and Millstreet.

North Tipperary Methodist Circuit

Minister: Rev Shannon DeLaureal
The Manse, The Mall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0505 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

December was a very busy month for so many folks. Along with extra carol services in our churches, the schools offered special services/concerts during the Advent season. In addition, many organizations collected items for those who found themselves in a circumstance of need during the holidays.

Our Roscrea Boys Brigade 1st Company collected non-perishable food items for the Lions’ Club who were making food hampers for local residents. This was a valuable way to teach our young
people the importance of giving to those they possibly don’t even know. Included is a picture of the boys holding food items they had collected. Rev. Shannon DeLaureal and Lions Club President, Miriam Lupton, joined them on the night.

As a circuit we hope to instill the values of generosity and giving in our young people as a way of living out our discipleship in Christ. Loving our neighbours as ourselves is vital to who we are and what we do as Christians. May we be encouraged by the enthusiasm and willingness to serve others as seen in our children and youth.

Faithfully,
~ Rev. Shannon

SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS SCHEDULE: ALL ARE WELCOME!
• Sunday 27th February – Mountmellick Methodist Church at 7pm: Methodist District World Mission Partnership Service
• Friday 1st March – St. Cronan’s Catholic Church, Roscrea, at 7pm: World Day of Prayer Service

MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY
• Circuit Executive: Wednesday 27th February at 8pm in Shinrone
• Boys’ Brigade – We will meet next in Roscrea Church Hall on Friday 8th February for Enrolment Service and on Friday 1st March, from 7-8pm. If you’re interested in joining or have queries, please contact our captain Alison Hayes at 086 6030225 for more information.

With Christ’s love,
~ Rev. Shannon

Collegiate School Celbridge - A Social History: 1909 -1973 by Lorna Sixsmith
Reviewed by Dr. Brendan Twomey

If any of your family members are known to reminisce in glowing terms about their good old school days in ‘dear old Celbridge’, then this is the book for you; and more importantly it also the book for them. Many of these reminiscences are of the rose-tinted ‘life back then was wonderful’ variety, but it must be admitted that there may also be some of the ‘it was cold and I missed home’ variety. Within the covers of this finely written and well-illustrated book you will have an opportunity to check out your household’s oft-repeated story against the facts; or at least one person’s recollection of the facts. Your relative may appear in this book, not only on the list of the former pupils of the Collegiate School Celbridge (CSC), which is interesting in itself, but they may also be recorded as the heroine of some fondly-remembered academic, sporting or artistic achievement.

This 151-page volume recites the social history of the CSC in the period from 1909 to 1973. The school, founded in 1730 was initially financed by the legacy of William Connoly, MP and speaker of the Irish House of Commons, reputedly the richest commoner in Ireland, and the builder of nearby Castletown House. CSC closed in 1973 when it merged with Kilkenny College and since then this co-ed college has become a powerhouse of Irish education. This is consciously a ‘social history’, and so the focus is on stories of daily life in CSC including memories of the diet, sports events, school trips, the college magazine, school plays and concerts. The teaching staff, curriculum and educational standards also come in for some comment.

Notwithstanding that it is not an institutional history in the traditional sense, historians of education in general, and Protestant education in particular, in twentieth century Ireland will find much to interest them in this book. The text provides not only anecdotal or colour pieces but also gives a sense of daily life, concerns and attitudes in the relatively private world of a Protestant girls boarding school in twentieth century Ireland. The sources for this book have been twofold; firstly and most importantly individual reminiscences by numerous former “Celbridgites” and also by extracting details from the school archives, and in particular from the long-running in-house magazine The Celbridgite.

The book is written in a lively chatty style by Lorna Sixsmith, a veteran observer of modern Irish life with numerous publications to her credit including, ‘An ideal farm husband’ and ‘Would you marry a farmer’. Finally it must be acknowledged that the production of this book would not have been possible without the indefatigable dedication of Freda Yates. Freda taught in CSC and was headmistress of the school from January 1970 until its closure in June 1973. Freda’s dedication to her vocation as a teacher is legendary, as is her Christian charity and her devotion to bible study and its important role in ‘a loving devoted family’. This book constitutes another and enduring part of her already magnificent legacy.

This keenly priced volume will be of interest not only to former Celbridgites and their relatives, but to anyone with an interest in local history, history of education, and in particular Protestant education in Ireland in the twentieth century.

Copies are available through Kilkenny College at a cost of €15 plus P&P. Contact: Peter Dukelow, Kilkenny College, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny (tel 056 7761544)
Joshua led the Israelites across the river Jordan. They camped near the town of Jericho and prepared to fight.

The people in Jericho locked the town gates. They thought they were safe. God told Joshua what to do.

On the first day, the priests carried the sacred chest, they blew trumpets, and walked round Jericho once. The army followed not saying a word.

They did this for 6 days. On the 7th day they walked round 7 times.

The army gave a victory shout! The army rushed into the town and captured it.

The walls of Jericho collapsed. Jericho was destroyed.
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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.

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