



KILTERNAN KLIPS

Building community, strengthening worship, growing in service

The quarterly newsletter of Kilternan Parish, Co. Dublin

Vol. 25 No. 4 Kilternan Klips | Winter 2019

www.kilternan.dublin.anglican.org



NOTICE BOARD

News and notices from around the parish

WHAT'S ON

Keep up with forthcoming events in the parish

FEATURES

Articles and features of interest to the church

MINISTRY

Youth, family and liturgy, articles and more

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The Alice Leahy Trust extends a big thank-you to
Kilternan Parish for toiletries
and clothes received this year.

Demand for the services of the Alice Leahy Trust
remains very high. All donations of unused/unopened
toiletries for men and women are very welcome. A
box for donations is located at the back of the church.

- Shower gel
- Hair products
- Perfume/after-shave
- Deodorants (only aerosols)
- Shaving cream/gel
- Disposable razors
- Sanitary products
- Hair brushes and combs

Warm clothes and sleeping bags are also welcome
but arrangements need to be made for collection.

Tel. Una MacConville
(086 8175530)



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Cover image: *the results of the creative challenge at the Building Blocks Conference, see page 14.*



Volume 25 Number 4
DECEMBER 2019

Editorial: Rob Clements and
Annemarie McCleane

Design: Wordwell Ltd
Distribution: Daphne Athey
Production: Nick Maxwell
Copy-editing: Emer Condit
Printed by: Ross Print, Greystones

Published by:
Kiltiernan Church of Ireland Parish,
Kiltiernan, Dublin 18.

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The Rector on ...

What are the forgotten stories this Christmas?

Putting up the Christmas decorations is usually a wonderful time of excitement and discovery, as baubles and last year's Christmas crafts are unwrapped. Dismantling them after Christmas, however, tends to be a less enjoyable occasion—at least, it does for us. The kids are less excited about being involved, and mum and dad struggle to match Christmas ornaments with their boxes.

We have had the same experience every year. We put the decorations away, and then a few weeks later we notice that one solitary decoration has escaped the pack. One tinsel angel, unnoticed in plain sight, overlooked and forgotten. One snow globe on the mantle, one candy cane behind the couch.

I've been mindful this season of the forgotten stories of Christmas. There are lots of them. For example, what about those weeping parents who lost children to the hands of Herod? That horrible line in Matthew 2, verse 16, when the embittered ruler commands the murder of every boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. What about the aged and 'barren' Zechariah and Elizabeth, often overlooked in our eagerness to tell what happened to Mary and Joseph at the first Christmas? The great storyteller Luke, on whom we rely for most of the details of the Christmas story, doesn't just tell us about Mary and Joseph. He devotes an equal number of verses to what happened to Zechariah and Elizabeth, who also experience a miracle birth.

What are the forgotten stories this Christmas? Who are the people in our community who will go unnoticed in the glitz of the season? Will we forget the people who are living on our streets or the people living in temporary accommodation, children opening presents in bedsits? Will we forget the refugees and asylum-seekers, far from home, perhaps living in direct provision centres? Will we forget the hungry, the lonely, the heartbroken?

Christmas is a season of joy, but we should remember that it was meant to be a story of great joy for all people. Especially the tinsel angels, unnoticed in plain sight, overlooked and forgotten.

Every blessing,
Revd Rob Clements

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music@kiltiernanparish.ie
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Jonny Holt, Jane Newell

PARISH TEAM

The Reverend Rob Clements
Rector
Carol Barry
Parish Reader
Brian Hickey
Youth and Children's Ministry
Kevin O'Sullivan
Organist
Jackie Robinson
Church Warden
Christian Kraeft
Glebe Warden
Gary Colcough
Church Warden
Bruce Fitzsimons
Glebe Warden
Carol Barry
Secretary of the Vestry
Harry Simpson
Treasurer

WHAT'S ON IN KILTERNAN

Since we opened the new centre, the life of the parish has become much busier. We've made a list of those programmes in this edition of *Klips*. Some are run by the parish and some are external groups using the centre that you might be interested in.

Sunday Services

8:30am: A traditional said Holy Communion

10:30am: Services

1st Sunday—Morning Prayer

2nd Sunday—All-Age Worship

3rd Sunday—Holy Communion

4th Sunday—All-Age Worship

5th Sunday—Holy Communion from somewhere else in the Anglican communion

Sunday Crèche:

The crèche runs from 10:15am till 11:30am and is staffed by Andrea McLean, a parishioner and childcare professional. Andrea runs the crèche with great care and organisation. It does not operate during the All-Age services, where we would expect them to be able to participate in their own special way in the service.

Sunday Club:

This meets on the first and third Sundays for all children of primary school age. The children start in the church and make their way to the centre for age-appropriate worship after the first hymn.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a fresh expression of church for families on the third Sunday from 4:00 to 6:00pm. It's based on the three pillars of creativity, celebration and hospitality.

Sunday @ the Gathering Grounds

Sunday Night at the Gathering Grounds is on the 4th Sunday of the month at 8pm. It's a unique venture for Kilternan. We meet in the Gathering Grounds for coffee, cake, worship and an interview with someone with something to say! It's an informal gathering and open to everyone.

Tuesday Communion

A short traditional service of Holy Communion in the Meeting Room every Tuesday at 11:30am.

Junior Choir

The junior choir meets on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:15 till 8:45am for children aged 7–12. They also sing at the all-age service on the second and fourth Sundays. Contact Kevin at music@kilternanparish.ie for more information.

Parish Choir

Aged 18+, the Parish Choir meet on Tuesdays at 8pm and participate in Sunday services. Contact music director Kevin for more information.

Mindful Mondays

Mindfulness from 9:00 to 9:30am in the Meeting Room @ the Gathering Ground.

Play Café

The play café meets every Wednesday from 10am till 12 noon. The main hall is filled with soft toys for tots, while the Gathering Grounds hosts prams and coffee.

Senior Soup Group

This is a weekly soup and bread lunch every Tuesday for seniors. Soup and bread don't quite do justice to what is regularly served. There are two types of soup freshly made every week, and fresh bread prepared that morning, not to mention the sweet treats that appear after. @ the Gathering Grounds

Thursday Lunch @ the Gathering Grounds

Rob Pierce, our chef, again creates delicious food for all on Thursdays, with a number of vegetarian choices.

Craft Nights

A craft night meets on the first Friday of the month in the Gathering Grounds. All are welcome, irrespective of crafting ability!

Kilternan Parish Table Tennis Club

Wednesdays at 8:00pm. The emphasis is very much on having fun and a social night out through the game of table tennis for adults aged 18+. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me, Irwin Johnston, email irwincjohnston@gmail.com; mob. 086 607 5357.

Kilternan Parish Lawn Tennis Club

We welcome enquiries for the Kilternan Parish Lawn Tennis Club. If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch or call in some Tuesday evening between 7:45 and 10:00 pm. Mary White, tel. 087 987 7377.

Highfield Academy of Music

Highfield Academy of Music provides individual piano, singing and theory lessons for all levels and ages. Victoria is a multiple award-winner in piano performance and composition. She also has extensive singing experience, having sung with several of Ireland's leading

chamber choirs, and has previously received a vocal scholarship from Trinity College Dublin. For enquiries call Victoria on 083 875 2277.

Gardening Club

The popular Gardening Club has a monthly Monday night meeting with a very interesting variety of speakers. Enquiries: Noreen Keane 087 259 2766 or Evelyn Richardson 087 240 6410.

Girl Guides, Ladybirds and Brownies

For more information check out the Kilternan Church of Ireland website.

Beavers, Scouts and Cub Scouts

For more information check out the Kilternan Church of Ireland website.

Senior Youth group

This is an informal youth group developing for young people (2nd year plus) that meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. If you would like to be part of our youth group, contact our Youth Ministry Coordinator, Brian Hickey.

Junior Youth Group

Junior Youth Group meets fortnightly on Friday evenings for young people in 6th class and 1st year. If you would like to be part of our youth group, contact our Youth Ministry Coordinator, Brian Hickey.

Zumba and Zumba Gold

Contact Louise on 087 674 1444 or lheatherwick@gmail.com for more information.

Pilates with Sinéad

For details of classes, look at www.pilateswithsinead.com or contact Sinéad on 089 480 9219.

Saran B: Dance and Fitness

Every Wednesday from 7:00 till 8:00pm. Contact 086 162 7868 or check out Facebook [SaranBDanceFitness](https://www.facebook.com/SaranBDanceFitness) for more information.

Motion 2 Motion

Hip Hop dance for children aged 3–10 years from 6:00 to 7:00pm. Contact Sábha on 086 074 4511.

Jolly Boppers

Fridays at 10am. Music, movement, merrymaking, for children aged 1–3 years. Call Aoife on 086 821 1079 or see [facebook.com/jollyboppers](https://www.facebook.com/jollyboppers).

Stretch and Grow

Parent and Me fun fitness classes every Monday at 10:00am. Contact Jenna on 087 949 3059.

PARISH NOTICE BOARD

CHURCH SERVICES:

Midweek Service

There is a short service of Holy Communion using the traditional form in the Meeting Room of the Kilternan Centre every Tuesday at 11:30am.

Sunday Services

Communion service at 8:30am. Services at 10:30am unless otherwise noted.

Dec. 15	Holy Communion Messy Church at 4pm Ecumenical Carol Service in St Mary's at 8pm
Dec. 22	All-Age Carols and Nativity
Dec. 24	Midnight Holy Communion for Christmas, starting at 11:30pm
Dec. 25	All-Age Christmas Celebration
Dec. 29	Christmas Carols
Jan. 5	Morning Prayer
Jan. 12	All-Age
Jan. 19	Holy Communion Messy Church at 4pm
Jan. 26	All-Age Sunday Night @ the Gathering Grounds at 8pm
Feb. 2	Morning Prayer
Feb. 9	All-Age
Feb. 16	Holy Communion Messy Church at 4pm
Feb. 23	Founders' and Thinking Day Sunday Night @ the Gathering Grounds at 8pm
Mar. 1	Morning Prayer
Mar. 8	All-Age Worship
Mar. 15	Holy Communion Messy Church at 4pm

REGISTER

Baptisms

We welcome Robyn Elizabeth and Emma Louise into the family of God's church.

Christian burial

We mourned the loss of Douglas Richardson this quarter. The prayers of the community of Kilternan are with all of his family and friends.

ROTAS

The various rotas of the church are managed by the following people:

Flower rota:

Sarah Tilson—086 854 2967

Tea and Coffee rota:

Cathriona Fitzsimons—085 718 1188

KILTERNAN ON FACEBOOK

Kilternan Church of Ireland now has a Facebook presence. Search for us at Kilternan Church of Ireland and follow us for updates about what's going on in the parish. You might note that the Gathering Grounds has a busy Facebook presence also.

CAROL HENNESSY ON THE FEARLESS ROLL OF HONOUR

We hear from Carol every year when she motivates us to get moving with our shoeboxes! Carol has done an amazing job with Team Hope, bringing Christian love and blessing to children all across the world.

We were delighted to hear from Carol at the Sunday Night at

the Gathering Grounds in October, as she shared something of her own faith and inspiration.

Carol Hennessy's wonderful work with Team Hope was recognised at *Fearless—A National Event for Women of Faith*, which was held in the Helix in October. Carol was one of ten women on the Fearless Roll of Honour, which seeks to highlight and celebrate women who are putting their faith into action in a myriad of wonderfully creative ways. A filmed interview with Carol was shown at the event to great applause.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRIAN FOR GETTING HIS DEGREE (and shortly after passing his driving test)

Well done to Brian for completing his degree in Theology and Youth Work. Brian was juggling work and studies last year, which is never easy, completing his thesis on the role of chaplaincy. Well done, and doesn't he look smart!





Meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury, with Eddie D'Arcy, Abbey Sines, Maria Feeney and Rob, interviewed by Greg Fromholz.

MEETING THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

A service marking the 150th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland took place in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 23 November. The preacher was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, of which the Church of Ireland is a part. It is a global community of 85 million brothers and sisters, united by the love of Christ, called to serve a world in need.

A few hours prior to this, there was an event in St Catherine's facilitated by the Archbishop of Dublin to present to Archbishop Welby four innovative projects selected within the diocese of Dublin & Glendalough. Maria Feeney made a presentation on the 'Come and See' programme, Revd Abbey Sines talked about Christ Church as a Sanctuary Cathedral, and Eddie D'Arcy spoke about the Solas Project. I was honoured to be invited by Archbishop Jackson to talk about the Gathering Grounds.

Each of us was introduced by Greg Fromholz and given five minutes to present our project. Greg then interviewed the Archbishop of Canterbury, who offered us his encouragement to live out our faith in the world. The Archbishop challenged each of us

to live our ministry within the reality of the Resurrection.

We should be encouraged by this. For Kiltarnan to be identified as a pioneering parish and leader in mission is something we should celebrate. It's also something that we shouldn't take lightly.

You can see us all in a photo above. I didn't quite have the audacity to ask for a selfie!

SAFEGUARDING TRUST

On 19 November twenty youth and children's leaders in the parish completed their Safeguarding Trust training. In Kiltarnan we take seriously our duty to promote safety and welfare and thereby safeguard children and adults at risk.

Another training session will be arranged in the next couple of months for youth and children's leaders who were not able to attend.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MARY WHITE ON HER DIOCESAN SYNOD SPEECH

Kiltarnan was well represented on the stage of the Dublin and Glendalough Synod with reports and speeches by your rector, Lynn Storey and Mary White.

In particular, Mary proposed this year's report of Diocesan

Councils. Among the issues she brought to the attention of members was the ongoing work with young people in the dioceses. She said that she was saddened by the cancellation of the D&G Kids Camp this year but, as a new convert and occasional attendee at Messy Church, she said that it provided a wonderful opportunity for adults and children of all ages to take part in activities together.

She praised Greg Fromholz (Young Adults' Officer) and Susie Keegan (Youth Ministry Coordinator) for their enthusiasm for work with young adults and youth. She reminded parishes to avail of their ministry. She also paid tribute to Olive Good, the Diocesan Regulator for Safeguarding Trust, and her new team.

Highlighting the 'A Place to Call Home' appeal, which supports the Irish Refugee Council's efforts to provide housing and assistance to refugees so that they can exit the direct provision system, Mrs White noted that the appeal was nearing its end and urged parishes to get behind the initiative to meet the €300,000 target.

She spoke about the recently convened 'Moving Forward Together' group, which embraces three diocesan initiatives: Come & See, Gateway and the New Housing Action Group. She also paid tribute

to the staff of the Diocesan Office and those involved in communications.

Looking ahead, Mary flagged the forthcoming commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and General Synod 2019, which will take place in Croke Park, Dublin.

We also congratulate Mary on her election to diocesan nominator.

LOOKING BACK AT THE HARVEST

What a lovely harvest we had this year! A great many thanks go to Sarah Tilson and her team for making the church so beautiful, assisted by the school and the Sunday Club. We were also delighted to be joined by the choir from Glencullen and are thankful for the musical contribution of Kevin and the choirs.

The Revd Abbey Sines spoke at the community harvest on the ‘A Place to Call Home’ initiative and inspired us to consider the stories of those who are in direct provision. We heard from Abbey at the September Sunday Night at the Gathering Grounds also. In total, €940 was raised for this important cause.

Our new Children and Family worker, Lynn, spoke at our family harvest, using a chestnut to turn our attention to prayer and gratitude. We also had a gratitude tree at the Gathering Grounds to remind us of the things we have to be thankful for.

DLR TEA DANCE

We were delighted to hold a tea dance this October as part of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Festival of Inclusion. Participants enjoyed dancing and food was provided through the Gathering Grounds (served by some very eager young people).

We hope to work with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown again in the new year on a Festival of Culture with food from all across the world. Keep an eye out for that.



An evening in the Gathering Grounds led by Paula Butler on eco-conscious living.



DLR Tea Dance at the Gathering Grounds

LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS

There is lots going on this Christmas. The season started with a concert by the Three Tenors on 8 December. We have our Christmas Messy Church on 15 December, followed that evening by our community carols in St Mary’s, Sandyford.

Our all-age nativity is on 22 December, and we will be using material from the Bible Society on the theme ‘With Love: from God to You’. This is our instant nativity, so young and old are invited to dress as characters from the Christmas story.

We will be looking at some of the forgotten stories of Christmas on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

ECO-CLIMATE: TIPS FOR A GREENER LIFESTYLE

On 6 November there was an evening in the Gathering Grounds led by Paula Butler (see picture above) on eco-conscious living. The centre was full of people of all ages from all across the community. Well done for all involved for drawing our attention to this vital area!

MUSIC NOTES

What’s coming

The choirs will return after a busy Christmas on 7 January. During the spring, we work on our programme for Lent and Holy Week. The Parish Choir also prepare for our summer weekend away (last year we visited

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Sligo). Both choirs will begin work on a fun programme of other music, which will lead to a concert in late spring/early summer. Choir and singing is a great New Year's Resolution. Music is a great boost to one's mental health and is great fun.

Victoria and Kevin have been delighted to welcome other singers/musicians who've helped with leading the music at Sunday Night at the Gathering Grounds. There's plenty of room for more, so if you play or sing, come along for a short rehearsal at 7:30pm on the 4th Sunday of the month.

What's happened

We've hosted two concerts: Cappella Choir and the Three Tenors. The Parish Choir has sung at Glencullen's Charity Concert in aid of the St Vincent de Paul Society. And finally, at the All-Age Harvest, last year's Junior Choir leader, Eva McCraith, passed on the Lionel Freeman Junior Choir Medal to Charlie Osborne.

Kevin O'Sullivan, the Parish Organist, can be contacted at any time via music@kiltiernanparish.ie for any queries about participating

in the music of the parish or to find out about other music events.

WHAT IS ALPHA?

BY CAROL BARRY

Well, apart from being the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Alpha is also the name of a group of Christians who believe that 'everyone should have the opportunity to explore the Christian faith, to ask questions and to share their point of view, no matter where they are in the world'. Many of us have questions about faith and about God but have found it difficult to find a suitable setting in which these questions can be discussed. Alpha provides this setting.

It is estimated that 29 million people in 169 countries have participated in the Alpha course to date and it has proved to be a life-changing part of many people's relationship with God.

So how did I get involved?

The success of Alpha worldwide has inspired many churches to run the programme in their own local parishes. Running the course in Kiltiernan was first mooted by Revd

Rob at a vestry meeting at the beginning of the summer, and along with Susan O'Toole (who works with Alpha in Ireland) I was invited to join the team. I had heard of Alpha before but had never taken part in a course and so, as for the other members of the vestry, this was a new experience for me.

What is the format?

Alpha is organised as an informal series of sessions over ten weeks, including a day away together. There are three elements to the meetings:

- *Meeting and eating together*—Food has a way of bringing people together. Just as Jesus often used mealtimes to engage with others, so we start each session by enjoying a meal together.
- *Viewing a short film*—A short, 30-minute film presents a different topic each week which explores the basics of our Christian faith.
- *Discussion in a small group*—We then move into small groups to discuss the topic of the evening and each participant gets the opportunity to share his/her thoughts. The time we spend in these small groups is what Alpha is all about.

What sort of topics are discussed?

In the first six weeks we have looked at many important questions of faith, such as: Is there more to life than this? Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? How can I have faith? Why and how do I pray? Why and how should I read the Bible?

How have I found Alpha?

I can honestly say that it has been quite a wonderful experience so far. The informal setting creates a comfortable and relaxing environment, which encourages great conversation and fellowship. Nothing that is said during discussions is judged and therefore all comments that are made are honest and from the heart. The talks are designed to inspire conversation and to encourage us to think about our relationship with God.



Last year's Junior Choir leader, Eva McCraith, presents the Lionel Freeman Junior Choir Medal to Charlie Osborne.

Would you recommend it to others?

I certainly would; Alpha is for everyone. Each one of us is on our own journey of faith and it isn't important where we are on that journey because it's **our** journey and the path that God has set for us.

**KILTERNAN PARISH
LAWN TENNIS CLUB**

The club championship finals were held on a wet October Saturday with the following results:

Men's Singles — Gary Colclough, runner-up Christian Kraeft.

Ladies' Singles — Irina Ricinschi, runner-up Mary McCluskey.

Men's Doubles — Christian Kraeft & Dan Balosanu, runners-up Noel Willis & Mark Tuthill

Ladies' Doubles — Irina Ricinschi & Suzanne Storey, runners-up Monique Tomkins & Carol Walker.

Mixed Doubles — Adrian Tuthill & Monique Tomkins, runners-up Derek Calton & Irene Clendennen.

Coaching for junior groups has been held on Saturday afternoons through October and November. Unfortunately there have been several wet days but the children have enjoyed the sessions with coach Peter Farrell.

The AGM was held on Thursday 14 November and the 2019/2020 committee is:
President: Revd Rob Clements
Chairman: Ethni Seymour
Hon. Secretary: Gillian Fleming
Hon. Treasurer: Richard Lombard
Committee:

- Rhoda Bradshaw
- Gary Colclough
- Gordon Pullen (Men's Captain)
- Irina Ricinschi (Ladies' Captain)
- Suzanne Storey
- Mary White (acting Junior Co-ordinator)

Annual Christmas tennis with seasonal refreshments on Friday 27 December, 12–2pm.

Enquiries and applications welcome—email the hon. secretary, kiltiernanparishltd@gmail.com.
Mary White 087 987 7377

Ladies' Doubles winners Suzanne Storey & Irina Ricinschi.



Mixed Doubles winners Adrian Tuthill & Monique Tomkins.



Men's Singles winner Gary Colclough.



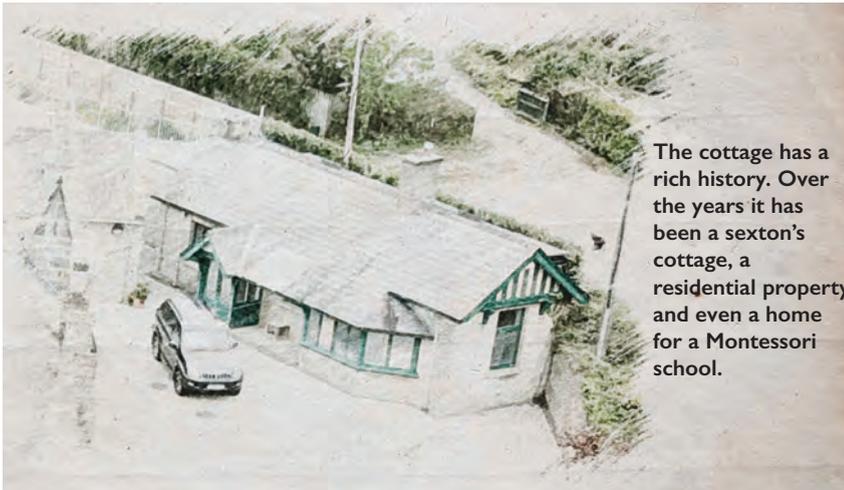
COTTAGE PLANS 2020

You may have noticed that there have been extensive works going on in the church cottage since the summer. The cottage has a rich history. Over the years it has been a sexton's cottage, a residential

property and even a home for a Montessori school.

As a Select Vestry we have wrestled with how best to use it. Our plan is to use the rooms as offices to house several charities. This feels like an appropriate way to

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use the space, consistent with our mission and ethos.

We may hold one of the rooms back for our own purposes, possibly for youth activities.

NEW KNEELERS

As a result of a kind donation, we now have a beautiful new set of kneelers for the parish. As you may know, the older kneelers were looking a bit the worse for wear and were in need of replacement.

We made a lovely discovery thanks to Mary White's meticulous record-keeping. Mary found receipts for the purchase of the original kneelers from the Luxuria Upholstery Co. (Cheshire) Ltd—£22.10 for 30 Blue Masco Felt kneelers. What made this discovery so special is that the purchase was exactly 50 years ago (almost to the day!)

The old kneelers will gradually be removed. If you would like to have one for your own use at home, you are welcome to take one. The new kneelers will be kept at the back of the church rather than under the pews, where they tend to get knocked about, tripped over or used as footrests. If you would like to use one of the new kneelers during worship, let the church wardens know and they will give you one as you enter the church.

MARRIAGE COURSE

The Marriage Course is a series of seven sessions, designed to help couples invest in their relationship and build a strong marriage. Nicky

and Sila Lee, authors of *The Marriage Book*, developed the Marriage Course for couples looking for practical support to strengthen their relationship. The course is designed to help couples build strong foundations, learn to communicate more effectively and resolve differences well.

Who is it for?

The Marriage Course is for couples who are seeking to strengthen their relationship. Some couples do the course to intentionally invest in their relationship, while others are looking to address more specific challenges. Either way, the course offers essential tools and practical

ideas to help you build a relationship that lasts a lifetime.

The Marriage Course is based on Christian principles but is designed for all couples, with or without a church background.

What should I expect?

On the Marriage Course you are seated at your own table for two. Each course is unique, but usually every session will include food, a practical talk and a time for private discussion between you and your partner. You never share anything about your relationship with anyone other than your partner. Background music ensures that you can chat in complete privacy.

The Marriage Course is being organised through the Gathering Grounds this autumn. If you would like to find out more, contact Julie at gatheringgrounds@kiltiernanparish.ie or 087 203 9516.

CONGRATULATIONS TO STEPHEN NEWELL

Well done to our Kiltiernan Centre architect Stephen, who was recently elected Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. With the job he did on the centre it's no surprise!

DOWN'S SYNDROME IRELAND 2020 'I AM ABLE 2' CALENDAR



This year Down's Syndrome Ireland launched their new calendar in the Kiltiernan Centre—apparently their biggest yet! We were delighted to be involved and promptly sold a number of the calendars in the Gathering Grounds.

This year's calendar is on sale NOW for €5 in Dunnes Stores around Ireland, online and at Calendar Club UK outlets, and at our centre and on our website www.downsyndromecentre.ie.

CELEBRATING ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY



The Gathering Grounds celebrated its first anniversary on 23 September with balloons and cupcakes, coffee and home bakes. The year has seen organic growth of this outreach project, drawing in volunteers and visitors from the community and from further out. Blessings abound here. We as a church and community are so lucky to have the use of this beautiful building every day to practise hospitality and show the love of Jesus to each other and to visitors.

It is thanks to all the volunteers that the Gathering Grounds continues to grow. In addition to the volunteers who serve you tea and coffee and clear the tables, there are volunteers who make delicious breads, home bakes and jams, arrange the flowers and work in the kitchen. A special thank-you to chef Rob Pierce, who has been a gem in this place, as he gives his time every Tuesday and Thursday to create amazing soups and fresh bread for the Senior Soup Lunch, and an incredible vegetarian menu on a Thursday. Not only is

Rob an excellent chef, he is a fantastic teacher in the kitchen. Several volunteers have expressed their gratitude for working with Rob, as they have learnt new skills that they can apply at home. Rob also has a group of younger volunteers who work with him when school is not on.

We have been blessed with several transition year students who have come on board with us thus far. TY students are very welcome, as there are several areas of focus in the Gathering Grounds: service, communication, cooking, baking, dishwashing and cleaning. And many students remain on with us even after their TY hours are completed.

Julie O’Sullivan (16 years old) began volunteering in the Gathering Grounds in March of this year. While the summer offers her more time to volunteer in the Gathering Grounds, she and her mum and sister come in every Wednesday afternoon and close the café. Julie had been trained as a barista in the Gathering Grounds and recently went on to do a TY

work placement in the Bestseller café in Dublin. Within a day of starting her work placement, her manager at Bestseller offered her a Saturday job in the café. We are delighted for Julie!

While volunteers are plentiful, the Gathering Grounds still has a few gaps in the rota during the week. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch!

Prayers in the Gathering Grounds

The Gathering Grounds is a social space but it is also a spiritual one. We believe that God makes Himself present every day as we receive and encourage each other. One of the things that often happens organically is that people pray for one other. There have been prayers in the kitchen and prayers around tables as people share their concerns and the needs of family and friends.

Every Thursday we have a formal time of prayer in the Meeting Room from 9:00 till 9:30am. You are welcome to join us, or you can place a request into our prayer box.

We are also delighted that some of the tools of Sunday worship have spilled into the Gathering Grounds.

Christmas plans—Santa at the Gathering Grounds

We are looking forward to Christmas in the Gathering Grounds! Decorations and Christmassy drinks will make an appearance soon. Mark your calendar for our last day before the Christmas holidays, Monday 23 December, as Santa’s Grotto will arrive in the Gathering Grounds! Come and see Santa, €5 per child, with proceeds going to a homeless charity.

Lastly, on Monday 6 January, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm, the Gathering Grounds will host a fund-raising Epiphany Tea with delightful food and live musical performances. More details to come!

SCENES FROM



Clockwise from top left:

The blessing of the backpacks.

Building Blocks in the Gathering Grounds.

Craft display from Craft Night.

Dads on Playdough at Messy Church.

The Church last winter.

Messy Church.

PARISH LIFE



BUILDING BLOCKS CONFERENCE

A report on the Building Blocks Children's Ministry Conference here in the Kiltarnan Centre.



Last month we were delighted to host the Building Blocks Children's Ministry Conference here in the Kiltarnan Centre. The annual conference supports, equips and encourages all those working with children and families in their local parish, community or school. The conference brings people together from various backgrounds and roles and from all across the country, and this year was no exception. While there were many from Dublin, others had a very early start, making the journey to Kiltarnan from Belfast, Galway, Limerick and Kilkenny. It was encouraging to see so many parishes represented, with a mix of clergy, children's and family workers, outreach workers and the all-too-often unsung heroes without whom children's ministry just wouldn't happen—volunteer leaders.

The day began with registration, tea, coffee and Julie's signature homemade scones, and the opportunity to connect with

'Building Blocks is always an opportunity to chat to the speakers and share ideas with one another'

attendees from other parishes while browsing the resources and materials from CEF, Mother's Union and Footprints Christian Bookshop available in the main hall. There was a great buzz around the centre as everyone gathered in anticipation of hearing from the keynote speaker, Martyn Payne (a long-time friend of Building Blocks), who brought a wealth of experience of working with children in schools, church and community. Martyn set the tone for what was a day of inspiration and encouragement, giving a captivating and interactive talk reminding us of the necessary foundational building blocks for effective children's ministry. These are:

- creating a safe place,
- clear boundaries,
- special moments of significance,
- a place to belong,
- learning through creativity and play.

Martyn later led us in a session on exploring loss with children—an important and difficult part of our journey and one of the tough issues that many of us may find difficult or even avoid. This was insightful and thought-provoking, with plenty of useful ideas.

Sharon Maughtin-Mumby gave us an overview and brief introduction to Diddy Disciples, the programme she has written and published for babies, toddlers and young children. Diddy Disciples (Little Disciples) is real worship and real Bible engagement with children. In summary, it's a form of Common Worship and Bible

storytelling written by a Bible scholar, but where body language is recognised as our first language rather than spoken or written language. Diddy Disciples is designed to be very adaptable across traditions and across different settings. It can be used in toddler groups, schools, all-age worship, Sunday Clubs and across a range of church traditions. You can even just pick out the bits you like. It's a resource intended to be flexible with no one right way to use it, but there are seven principles that underpin it and remain the same. The resource celebrates:

- movement,
- repetition,
- voices,
- children's spirituality,
- being part of a church,
- learning,
- emotions and feelings.

Sharon certainly gave us all a fresh approach and ideas for worship with children while following traditional language and liturgy.

Lunchtime was an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful hospitality of the Kilternan Centre that we all know so well!

Lunchtime at Building Blocks is always an opportunity to chat to the speakers and share ideas with one another; there were also some prayer stations set up and a lunchtime creative challenge. The centre was filled with the usual Building Blocks buzz.

After lunch there were lots of interactive story ideas from Martyn, and others appreciated the opportunity to see how to use the different building blocks of Diddy Disciples to put a session together. The day ended with reflective story while Julie Currie, one of the Building Blocks team, led us in a time of musical reflection. What a fantastic day it was, and the feedback from those attending was positive. The Building Blocks team would like to thank the staff and parishioners of Kilternan for their part in making the conference such a success.

TOILETRIES AMNESTY @ KILTERNAN AND THE ALICE LEAHY TRUST

Helping the homeless to develop a sense of self-esteem.

The Alice Leahy Trust is a non-political, non-denominational voluntary body set up in 1975 (originally called Trust) to provide medical and related services for people who are homeless. The Alice Leahy Trust works in premises provided at a nominal rent by the Iveagh Trust and provides washing facilities for the 30 or 40 men and women who call each morning, the majority of whom are sleeping out (aged from 18 to 85).

The Alice Leahy Trust helps those who are homeless in a variety of ways, including helping people who use their service to develop a sense of self-esteem and to place a value on themselves.

One student nurse on placement at the Alice Leahy Trust had this to say:

'When we first entered on the Monday at the beginning of the week Alice asked us if we could ever see ourselves homeless and straight away we answered "No". But now after all we've experienced and seen I now realise there is only a very, very fine line between having a home and being homeless.

Homelessness is not just being houseless—it's about not feeling wanted or belonging somewhere. Society has an awful opinion of homeless people as drunks, down-and-outs—whereas they are only human beings like the rest of us who just couldn't keep up in the rat race.

We met some very well-spoken people—teachers who couldn't get jobs, doctors who couldn't "make it". They become so institutionalised that they will not move out of a hos-

tel. Before, I would have been anxious or afraid to approach a homeless person on the street but now I know that they would be happy to have someone to talk to. I also never realised all the organisations and people who devote and have spent most of their life working with the homeless.' (Extract from diary of student nurse on placement)

Kilternan parish has had a long association with the Alice Leahy Trust and this winter we will continue to supply the Alice Leahy Trust with a range of toiletries which can be used by the people using their services.

Items which are useful include: Shower gel, Hair products (shampoo, conditioner and hair gel), Perfume/aftershave, Deodorants (only aerosols, as roll-on deodorants can only be used once), Shaving cream/gel, Disposable razors, Sanitary products, Hairbrushes and combs.

Demand for the services of the Alice Leahy Trust remains very high, with several hundred showers per month. All donations of new and unused toiletries for men and women are very welcome. A box for toiletries is in place at the back of the church and also at the Kilternan Centre. Clean and warm clothes for men and women and sleeping bags are also welcome.

To make arrangements for collection of clothing items, telephone Una MacConville at 086 817 5530.

Very many thanks for your commitment and contributions to the Alice Leahy Trust.

**Una MacConville
and Dorothy Elliot**

CONFIRMATION

It's Confirmation season!

I'm sure that I also speak for Rob when I say that Confirmation is one of the most exciting programmes that we run for young people here in Kiltiernan. Being given the opportunity to help young people to try to understand and articulate their growing faith has been both a real joy and a challenge. The chance to once again look at the basic beliefs that we hold and learn with the young people is a source of great encouragement for me.

Over the past few months, Rob and I have been doing a bit of a revamp of the programme and how we deliver it. Although it is a great time of enjoyment, there is also a seriousness attached to it; we want to make clear that it is the young person's choice to be confirmed.

This decision is **not** to be made by parents, or even grandparents. The decision lies solely with the young person.

If you feel you are unready to be confirmed and would prefer to leave it till the following year, or even the year after, that is totally fine. Although some might say that Confirmation is the graduation from church, it is more a celebration of being welcomed into the church, to take into your own hands the reins of your faith that your parents have held for you, and giving you the opportunity now to move forward with it. So, if you feel you are not ready to take the reins, we would encourage you to wait.

The date for Confirmation this year will be 22 February and it will be taking place in Powerscourt. Our classes will provisionally begin on 4 January, but we will gather after church on 8 December to go through exactly what we will be doing. Confirmation is for young people in first year of secondary school and above.

You can see the full schedule on the right.



KILTIERNAN CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule for Confirmation classes 2020. These will be subject to change, but parents will be well informed if such changes occur

4TH JAN (SAT)

This session will be held over a morning and afternoon session. Lunch will be provided. In the first session, we will be looking at **the four**, which relates to the Bible. The second session will look at **the fish**, which covers discipleship and what it is all about

8TH JAN (WED)

This session will be looking at the important question of whether or not the resurrection happened. This evening will be called **the cross**

15TH JAN (WED)

This session will look at whether we are able to trust God. This session is called **the rope**

22ND JAN (WED)

We will be looking at what it means to celebrate **Communion**

29TH JAN (WED)

For this session we will look at who or what the **Holy Spirit** is

5TH FEB (WED)

This session tackles what is **prayer** and how we as Christians can get into conversation with God

12TH FEB (WED)

For this session we look at how we should **live as a Christian**. This session will be a panel discussion in which people from different settings demonstrate how they live out their faith

19TH FEB (WED)

This final session will be the rehearsal which will be held in Powerscourt church

22ND FEB (SAT)

This will be the day on which the Confirmation service will take place. The time will be told in the lead-up to the day

4TH MAR (WED)

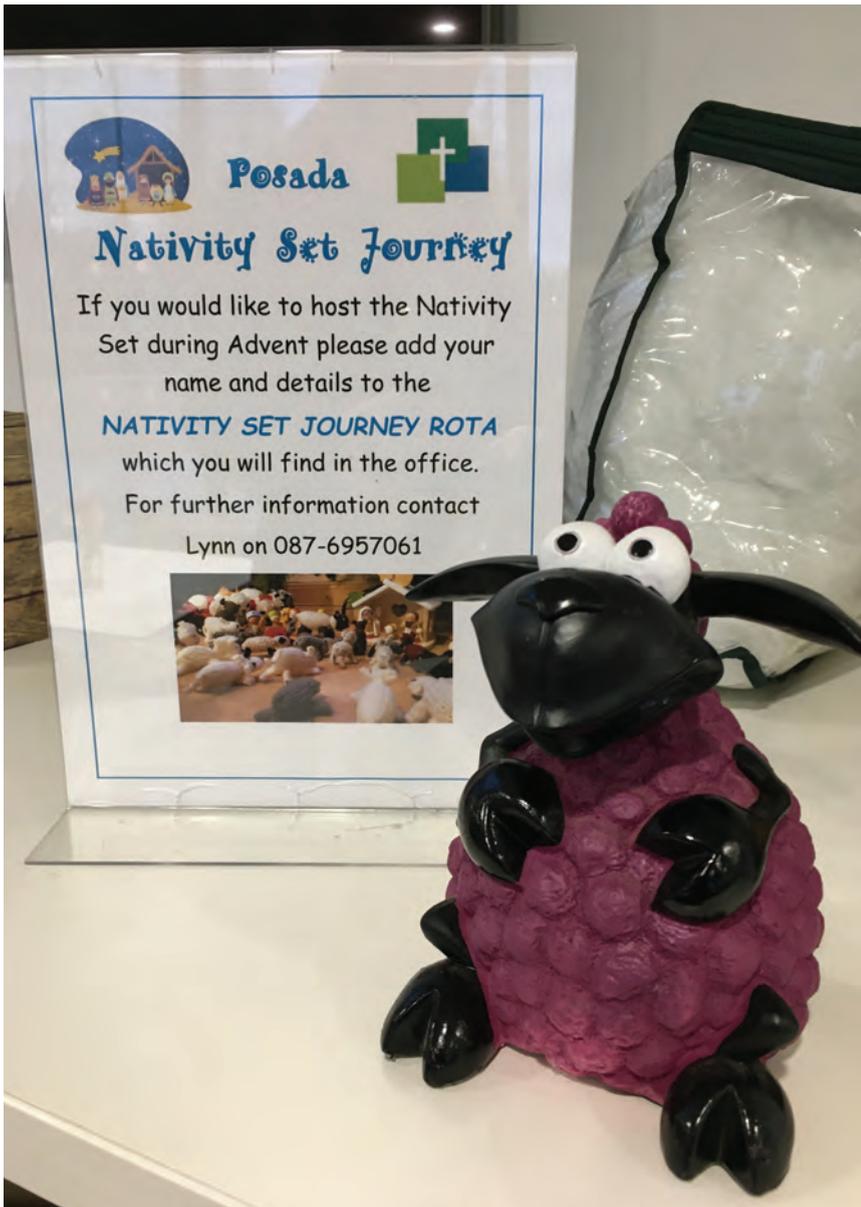
This session will be a post-Confirmation class. We wish to see how everyone is doing having completed the Confirmation classes

NATIVITY SET JOURNEY—POSADA

By now the Kiltiernan Nativity Set Journey or *Posada* has begun and the set is travelling through the parish from one host family to another. *Posada* is a Spanish word meaning 'inn'. It's also the name of an old Mexican tradition, whereby children would dress up as Mary

and Joseph and go from door to door in their village to re-enact the journey to Bethlehem. Nowadays small figures of Mary and Joseph are used instead; each evening in Advent they are hosted in a different home, before arriving back in church in time for Christmas.

We settled on a slightly different version of the *Posada* with a Nativity Set Journey. On Advent



Posada is a Spanish word meaning 'inn'. It's also the name of an old Mexican tradition, whereby children would dress up as Mary and Joseph and go from door to door in their village to re-enact the journey to Bethlehem. Kiltiernan Parish has settled on a slightly different version of the *Posada* with a Nativity Set Journey which will do the rounds of various families in the parish during Advent.

A NEW SCHOOL BOARD OF MANAGEMENT FOR 2019-23

Kiltiernan Church of Ireland National School (KCOINS) has elected its new Board of Management. We thank our outgoing board members, Sue Pedlow, Billy Tomkins, Oisín O'Farrell, Ruth Thorpe and Olivia Rigby.

The new board is as follows. Parent reps: Helen Hamilton and George Webb. Community reps: Heather Niland and Dennis Woods. Patron's reps: Carol Barry and Rob Clements. Teacher rep: Chantelle Plunkett. Principal: Grainne Darlington.

Sunday a Nativity Set along with lots of little knitted sheep began the journey from house to house. It will be hosted by lots of different families/households in our parish, as well as the Glebe Home. As the Nativity Set journeys through our community, a short Welcoming Prayer is read by the household handing it over to the next host family, while the new host family read another prayer as they welcome the set into their home. Each family chooses one of the small knitted sheep that has travelled with the Nativity Set to keep. The Nativity Set will arrive back in the church on Sunday 22 December at our Family Carol Service, when we hope that all the host families and their flock will be able to join us.



REVOLECTIONARY

REVOLECTIONARY AND THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

Two items to highlight that might be of interest to the young adults in the parish.

Revolectionary (www.revolectionary.com) is a weekly lectionary blog written by Irish young adults based on the Bible readings for the week. It's well worth a look. You might find a few articles by Emma Rothwell, who has recently joined the Kiltiernan choir.

The Graveyard Shift is a podcast about faith, life and culture with Revd Alan Breen, Scott Evans and Greg Fromholz.

EUROCENTRIC BEAUTY STANDARDS

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be pretty. What 'pretty' meant was a mystery to me. In some ways it still remains a mystery to me. In the eyes of many African and Asian girls, 'pretty' entails Eurocentric features: lighter pigmentation, lighter eye colour, a narrow nose—everything that has a connection to Eurocentric beauty.

The importance of beauty varies in everybody's minds, but there is no denying that somewhere within us there is an underlying desire to experience beauty at least once in our lives. Beauty standards have changed throughout the years and still continue to change.

Eurocentric beauty is something that has been admired for years among the African and Asian communities. Some are born with lighter pigmentation and eye colour. A true example of this is the 'paper bag test', whereby slave-masters would compare a slave's skin to the colour of a paper bag. Lighter-skinned slaves would work indoors, while darker-skinned slaves were kept outdoors in the fields. I recently read an article on the paper bag test that really made me think about this issue more deeply.

One would assume that with the end of slavery this bias would disappear. Unfortunately, I am correct in saying that it still exists. Women of colour still face this on a daily basis. They are affected by this bias socially and economically.

Advertisements are certainly not making it any easier. An example of this is this advertisement, shown in Thailand and all over Asia, promoting skin-bleaching (*shown right*).

The majority of us aren't light-skinned; we are darker shades of brown. Women and girls with Eurocentric features are treated better and considered more beautiful, which comes with its benefits—but how can one benefit



from something over which one has no control? Many may argue that this doesn't matter and may preach universal beauty, but try

'The dream of all races and ethnicities being appreciated and treated equally for their distinctive beauty seems to be unrealistic...'

telling that to a 28-year-old African woman who has been told that beauty conquers all, that the way to achieve a good life is through her beauty, and that her beauty must reflect an unrealistic standard. It leaves one in a situation of despair.

But those of us who are not gifted with light skin and a narrow nose need not worry. There are quick but painful solutions to our problems, such as skin-bleaching and plastic surgery. And if you can't afford it, don't fret! Where there's a will there's a way. 'Beauty is pain', my auntie always said to me, and I used to laugh and think she was crazy. Looking back with fresher, educated eyes, I now know that she

wasn't playing any game.

Skin-bleaching is not only damaging to the external appearance but also detrimental to internal well-being. Skin-bleaching is like a silent pill used to solve a so-called 'problem' but, like all pills, it doesn't solve problems forever. The problem is society. Skin-bleaching has become acceptable in our everyday society. In fact, I could name people I know personally who use skin-bleaching as a beauty enhancement. If you were to look up skin-bleaching on YouTube right now, millions of results would pop up, with titles like 'My skin-bleaching routine' being commonplace. Skin-bleaching is a ten billion dollar industry! In the capital city of Nigeria alone, 77% of its residents have used skin-bleaching before.

Big companies are preying on



poverty and inexperience for financial gain. The desire to be attractive seems to have topped the ideas of individuality, self-awareness and confidence.

Skin-bleaching has a guaranteed market. Despite the efforts of various countries to ban it, things are still being done in secret. It is almost as if there is an elephant in the room.

My younger sister is very fair-skinned and whenever we visit the African continent she is showered with praise and compliments about her skin. While I do not feel jealous of my sister, it leaves me questioning my importance. Do they purposely ignore me because of my skin tone? Is my importance now determined by my levels of pigmentation? These are the questions that come to mind. It seems as if looks are all-important. Maybe if I tried skin-bleaching I would be showered with the same admiration and appreciation.

Afro hairstyles and beauty trends are seen as intimidating and unattractive political statements, while straight and soft hair is seen as responsible and suitable. This is why many women in the African community have chosen to do this with their hair.

Despite the efforts of international campaigns such as #Unfairandlovely which are condemning acts of skin-bleaching and plastic surgery, the message just doesn't seem to be hitting home. These ideas are too deeply ingrained in our brains. The dream of all races and ethnicities being appreciated and treated equally for their distinctive beauty seems to be unrealistic, but we have hope and it is with hope that we keep on fighting and campaigning.

Colourism is a result of slavery, colonialism and institutionalised racism. Nowadays its effects are bullying and favouritism. As a society we need to fight back and not let such a serious issue just slip, because if we don't oppose it, who will?

Benita Muranda



IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: 'WHEN FACED WITH HOMELESSNESS DECISIONS BECOME MORE BLACK AND WHITE'

Recently the Irish Council of Churches Irish Inter-Church Meeting launched a campaign to address concerns around homelessness and housing insecurity in Ireland.

Nearly 10,000 people are homeless in the Republic of Ireland, accommodated in hotels and emergency accommodation. About 80,000 households are awaiting social housing. The Church of Ireland affirms with the Irish Council of Churches that there is no social or moral justification for the lack of housing that we are experiencing in Ireland today.

The Irish Council has produced a number of helpful resources: a Bible study, a liturgy for church services, and a list of questions to put to our elected representatives and canvassing politicians. More information on the campaign can be found on the website: <https://irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/homeless/>.

If you are ever in a situation where you have a politician at your door, or have the ear of an elected representative, why not use the Irish Inter-Church questions (below) for canvassing politicians?

Questions for canvassing politicians on housing and homelessness

THREE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW*

- (1) Nearly 10,000 people are homeless in Ireland, accommodated in hotels and emergency accommodation. We don't count adults still living with their parents or 'couch-surfing' with friends. About 80,000 households are awaiting social housing—that's nearly a quarter of a million people. Some 40,000 households are in mortgage arrears of more than two years. It's a national epidemic of housing insecurity.
- (2) In 1975 the government built 8,500 social houses. In 2017 it built 750. It will take a long time to house all those on the social housing list. The Minister for Housing has said that the State has enough land to build 50,000 houses but that he doesn't believe that this is the answer to the

COMMUNITY AND WIDER CHURCH

housing crisis.

(3) Every day we pay about €2,000,000 to landlords via the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and other rent support schemes. This is €3,650,000,000 over the last five years that hasn't resulted in a single house being built.

THREE THINGS TO ASK YOURSELF

- (1) What is the policy of my local council towards people who are awaiting social housing or who are homeless in my constituency?
- (2) Can I talk to someone in a charity working with homeless people or in housing support to find out about the lived realities of those with whom they work?
- (3) Would I be prepared to face a degree of suffering so that these people's suffering will be reduced (for example through an increase in taxes to pay for social housing, or through a reduction in house prices)?

THREE THINGS TO ASK CANVASSERS

- (1) Will you call for the State to build houses for social housing (not 'have people's housing needs met' through HAP rentals)?
- (2) What will you do to address 'vulture funds' buying up new properties in bulk, making it impossible for people to buy their own home?
- (3) Will you work for stronger regulations to improve security of tenure, prevent excessive rent increases and protect people from eviction?

**These figures are accurate as of September 2019.*

TEAM HOPE BREAKS RECORD

Team Hope is delighted to announce that they have today, Thursday 21 November, counted their two-millionth shoebox since 2010 as part of their annual appeal. The gift-filled shoebox was collected in their Cherrywood distribution centre in south Dublin and will be delivered into the hands of a young girl in Romania in early December.

According to Team Hope CEO



Peter Heaney, the volume of shoeboxes donated this year for children affected by poverty in Africa and Eastern Europe shows that the generosity of the Irish public continues with each passing year.

'Every shoebox collected is special, but this milestone figure means that if two million shoeboxes were laid out side by side they would stretch from Dublin to Nashville and beyond!', he said.

Team Hope is calling on the philanthropic owner of this special box to come forward, as they would like to personally thank this individual.

The box was designed for a young girl between five and nine years of age and contains a pink flamingo soft toy, a burgundy scarf and hat, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a hairbrush, soap and sponge, colouring books and markers, and a generous supply of sweets. Team Hope is keeping one memorable item under wraps for the moment, as they are hoping that the owner of this landmark shoebox will come forward so that he/she can be personally thanked.

Commenting on the charity's achievement, Peter Heaney said: 'This is a remarkable accomplishment and we would like to thank every single person who created a shoebox this year. Your gift may be

the only one a child receives this Christmas and so we'd like to thank you for helping add some excitement and happiness to the lives of children affected by poverty this festive season.

'Not only that, but we'd also like to shine a light and thank all the hardworking volunteers and supporters who have continued to make this appeal so impactful. To raise two million shoeboxes in a decade really is testament to the generosity and kindness of the Irish public. Let's hope we can continue to break records with each passing year and continue to make a difference.'

Although the deadline for donating gift-filled shoeboxes has passed, Team Hope can send ready-made boxes to a child in Kenya on your behalf for just €15. To find out more information about Team Hope's online appeal, please visit: <https://www.teamhope.ie/donate/about-online-shoebox/>.

For more information about the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal, or if you recognise the items in the two-millionth shoebox as yours, get in touch with Team Hope on Facebook (www.facebook.com/team.hope.ireland), Twitter (@TeamHopeIreland) or Instagram (@TeamHopeIreland), or call us on 01 294 0222.

CRANMER'S CORNER



I was struck by an observation made recently by the Church of England priest Revd Janet Fife: 'It is the powerful who get to frame the liturgy, especially in an established Church like ours'. It's a challenging statement, especially when the Gospel is meant to be good news for the poor, the powerless and the oppressed.

She argues that there has been a tendency within our liturgy to focus on the sins of worshippers and their need for forgiveness, rather than on Christ's subversive claims to free the oppressed and bless the poor. There are two reasons why the ruling classes would want the Church to do this.

The first, and perhaps the most obvious, is that they don't want their hold on power threatened. It suits them that the common people should know their place and be without a sense of their own dignity.

The less obvious reason for an overemphasis on sin and forgiveness is a lack of imagination on the part of those who frame the liturgy. Those who are in positions of power in the Church—traditionally, educated and affluent white men—have generally had little experience of oppression or powerlessness. It is easy to see, therefore, why their theology should emphasise personal responsibility rather than freedom from oppression.

In recent years, as part of the movement towards liturgical reform, efforts have been made to address this. The movement from rite 1 to rite 2 Holy Communion, for example, removed the idea of communion as a 'penitential rite'. The confession, the absolution and the

Gloria were moved to earlier in the service, even before the service of the word. Likewise, the language in Morning Prayer was changed, as phrases such as 'miserable offenders' and 'no health in us' were thankfully omitted.

Even our formal prayers reflect this bias. Our prayer-book intercessions are more concerned with the powerful—rulers, royals, governors, bishops—than with the everyday concerns of the people in the pews. Fife notes that your best chance of having your situation alluded to in most church services is to be sick or dead!

We do, and should, cherish our great liturgies and the words of our prayer-book poets. However, here is a healthy reminder that liturgy is not neutral. The liturgy that we have received did not descend from heaven, but was written by men, flawed men, often reflecting the ideology of their day.

Our liturgy should be valued, but it should not be exempt from interrogation. Liturgy is constantly evolving as we learn more about God and ourselves. This was the idea behind Common Worship in the Church of England, which was conceived as a set of resources and a framework within which to use liturgical material. There is an abundance of positive and affirming material on which we can draw. There is also a wealth of liturgical material emerging from communities that were once invisible, written out of women's experiences or from other corners of the global communion.

LECTIONARY RAMBLINGS

I mentioned in my Rector's Letter that Elizabeth and Zachariah are often overlooked in the Christmas story. In the lectionary we tend to hear about them during Advent.

Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist and the wife of Zechariah, a priest of the temple. Their story is also told in the first chapter of Luke. It is a story that Luke weaves in and out of the story of Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus. It is important to hear both stories together.

Like Abraham and Sarah before

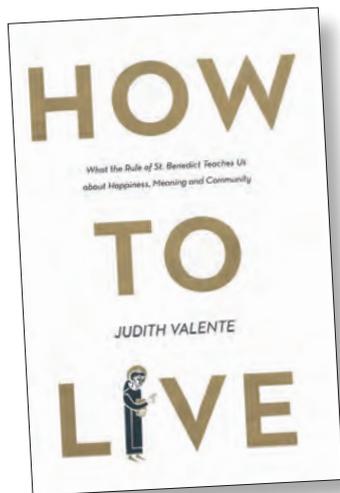
them, Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and childless. As the story unfolds, Zechariah is at the temple working. He was in a place in the temple called the Holy Place, where only priests could go, lighting sweet-smelling incense as a sacrifice to God. On that day, suddenly there was someone else with him. It was an angel.

The angel tells him that Elizabeth is going to have a child who will prepare the way for the Messiah. Zechariah almost laughs in his face. 'What? Are you joking? Elizabeth and I are way too old to be having a baby.' The angel says, 'Listen. I am Gabriel, and God has sent me to give you this good news. But because you don't believe me, you will not be able to talk until after the baby comes.'

In time, Elizabeth discovered that she was going to have a baby, but she kept it to herself. When the baby was born, all of the neighbours and the family came because they were so excited for Elizabeth and Zechariah, who had waited so long for a child.

When the baby was born, the kinfolk wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father, but Elizabeth said, 'No, his name is John'. They protested, 'But no one in your family is named John'. The villagers likely expected Zachariah to agree with them (this was, after all, a man's world). Instead, he took up a tablet and wrote, 'His name is John'. When he made that confession of faith in the promise of God, his tongue was loosed, he found his voice and he burst into song, the song of Zechariah, a song of prophecy and joy.

The story of Elizabeth and Zachariah is an unconventional one. They were too old, yet they had a child; they should have named the child according to tradition, yet they named him John. That's before we even consider the angelic appearances and babies jumping in the womb! But the story of the birth of Jesus is a story of surprises, filled with unconventional people and unexpected happenings. Maybe this Christmas we can invite some of that into our own lives too.



How to live: what the Rule of St Benedict teaches us about happiness, meaning, and community. Judith Valente. William Collins. ISBN 9780008300418. Hardback. 220pp.

Self-help books normally turn me off. To misquote the late David Fitzpatrick, they are often filled with the ‘usual pieties’ and with observations that could be classed as the ‘bleeding obvious’. Having got that off my chest, I must say that this book turns that prejudice on its head. Before then, however, I must declare another prejudice in that my father was a Benedictine monk for a number of years after having spent most of his secondary schooling with the monks at Ampleforth Abbey. While deciding against conventual life and the priesthood, he nonetheless remained a devotee of the Rule of St Benedict, described and interpreted so clearly in this book by Judith Valente, an award-winning US-based print and broadcast journalist, poet and essayist. My father also claimed that the precepts contained in the Rule informed how he ran a succession of young offenders’ institutions in the 1950s and ’60s. And admiring my father as I did for his work with Borstal Boys, I find it hard to be neutral when it comes to the life and works of St Benedict.

Benedict, a Christian saint who flourished in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, is generally admired and venerated by the Anglo-Catholic, Roman Catholic

and Eastern Orthodox traditions. He founded a number of monastic communities in Rome and southern Italy. His lasting legacy is his Rule, which for its time (and today) contains a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness. We are often urged not to judge the past negatively in comparison to today’s so-called enlightened awareness, but it is instructive to judge the present in the light of this wonderful document.

‘Run with the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you’

Benedict wrote the Rule in 516 for monks living communally under the authority of an abbot. Comprising 73 short chapters, its wisdom is twofold: spiritual (how to live a Christocentric life on earth) and administrative (how to run a monastery efficiently). More than half of the chapters describe how to live together harmoniously, and what to do when a member of the community fails to do so. About a quarter regulates the work of God (following the golden rule of *Ora et Labora*—pray and work). A further portion outlines how, and by whom, the monastery should be managed (my father gained his inspiration from this, I think). Ms Valente claims with some justification that this document may have great significance for people trying to live in community with others today. It is hard to disagree with her.

The author deals with 22 themes which this short review cannot cover, but as an experienced communicator and a lay associate of the Benedictine monastery of Mount St Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, she is well qualified to do so, and does it well.

Two of the chapters stand out for me. The first, on Chapter 6 of the Rule, ‘Restraint of Speech’,

should resonate with anyone who is tired of and depressed by the obnoxious culture that has grown up around social media, where it is apparently OK to say the most hateful things in response to issues. The author quotes the sisters of Mount St Scholastica, who have a mental routine, based on the Rule, for preserving harmony in their community. ‘Before you open your mouth to speak,’ they say, ‘ask yourself three things. Is what I am about to say true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?’ Could we get that to trend on social media? Valente goes on to recount that the first words that men and women who reside in monasteries speak at the beginning of the day (familiar to us) are ‘O Lord, open my lips and I shall proclaim Your praise’—reminding them that speech is not meant for griping, gossiping or criticising but for praise and encouragement.

The second of the chapters that resonates is on ‘The Guests at our Door’. The Rule is clear on the need to offer care and honour to guests and strangers, and enjoins the community to provide food and drink and a place to wash and rest. The author points out that in St Benedict’s time this was a risky proposition. The Roman Empire was in a constant state of unrest and the stranger at the door was not necessarily your friend. Nevertheless, the Rule asks that we offer hospitality, extend a hand and pray with the stranger. Valente points out how serious a challenge this is to Christians today to do likewise in dangerous times. If every Christian parish were to sponsor just one refugee family, she asserts, there would be no refugee crisis, certainly not in the US.

This is a wonderful and uplifting book, and this short review cannot do it full justice. Apart from messages that can resonate with the community challenges we face, the Rule also provides personal guidance. Let me finish with my favourite: ‘Run with the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you’. Amen to that.

Nick Maxwell

POEM

Harvest Thanksgiving

We thank Thee for the harvest,
The barley and the wheat,
Farmers and their workers
Who provide the food we eat.

We thank Thee for the weather,
Sunshine and the rain,
Without these gifts of nature
No harvest would we gain.

Leaders of the world,
Remember those in need.
Show love and compassion
Where is only greed.

Frank Spain



Note a photo of Joshua reading Klips while on holiday at Centre Parcs.

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- White Chocolate Peppermint Mocha
- Peppermint Hot Chocolate

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10:30-12:30

A white line drawing of a gift box with a ribbon, positioned on the left side of the red background. The gift box is decorated with a large bow and a ribbon. There are several white snowflake icons scattered around the text and the gift box.



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