

# **DUBLIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT to Patrons and Members**

**June, 2019 – June, 2020**

**[www.dublincouncilofchurches.ie](http://www.dublincouncilofchurches.ie)**



Antiochian Orthodox Church – Armenian Apostolic Church – Church of Ireland – Ethiopian Orthodox Church -  
Greek Orthodox Church– Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church – Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church - Lutheran  
Church – Methodist Church – Presbyterian Church – Religious Society of Friends – Roman Catholic Church –  
Romanian Orthodox Church – Salvation Army

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## **OBJECTIVES of the DUBLIN COUNCIL of CHURCHES**

- (a) To explore within a Christian fellowship, based on mutual love and the presence of Christ among us, the calling of the People of God to pray and work together for the fulfilment of Jesus' prayer 'that all may be one' (John 17:21).
- (b) To encourage co-operation between churches and inter-church groups, at both local and district level.
- (c) To facilitate an exchange of information and views of member Churches on matters of concern.
- (d) To support joint study and action.
- (e) To disseminate information on ecumenical activities and resources.

## **MEETINGS**

The Council met seven times during the year, June 2019 to June 2020 inclusive, in addition to our AGM. Two scheduled meetings had to be cancelled because of Covid-19 restrictions. The meetings in May and June were on Zoom for the same reason.

As the DCC continues to have “no fixed abode”, we appreciate the various churches which have hosted us during the year as noted in the Introduction.

## **ANNUAL OFFICERS**

Elected to serve for the year June 2019 to June 2020:

Chairperson: Cherry Poynton	Vice Chairperson: Niamh Hardiman
Hon. Treasurer: Edward Lewis	Hon. Recording Secretary: Vacant
Hon. Correspondence Secretary: Margret Sarafian (retired March)	

We record our gratitude for the many ways in which these office bearers have fulfilled their various roles with cheerful efficiency during the past year.

The following were elected to serve from June 2020 to June 2021:

Chairperson: Pastor Martin Sauter	Vice Chairperson: Dr. Paul Manook
Hon. Secretary: Cherry Poynton	Hon. Treasurer: Edward Lewis

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## INTRODUCTION

As ever it has been the cheerful willingness of Council members to give of their time, talents and energy that has made it possible for the Dublin Council of Churches to continue to function during this past year. Each member brings his or her personal gifts and viewpoints as well as those of their own denominations. I am very grateful to every one of them as well as appreciating the co-operation and commitment shown to us by our Patrons.

2019-2020 has not been as busy a year for the DCC because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary restrictions which had to be imposed. At meetings we have continued to give time on our agenda after necessary business to share information about events and matters of concern within our individual denominations as well as occasionally reflecting together on issues which affect all our churches.

It was with regret that we accepted the resignation of Margret Sarafian from the Council in March. She has been a cheerful and very willing Correspondence Secretary and we will all miss her smile at meetings. Major Stuart Dicker (Salvation Army) retired from active service at the beginning of June. Stuart has been a very active and valued member over the past nine years and we will miss him greatly. We wish him and his wife, Major Gillian Dicker a long and healthy retirement in England. It was with great sadness that we accepted the resignation of Rev. John Parkin in the Spring. John has been an enthusiastic member and an inspiration in so many ways not least as St. Patrick on many occasions. Rev. Gary McDowell (Presbyterian) also resigned in early 2020. Ayda Lundon (Armenian Apostolic) and Tom Kehoe (Greek Orthodox) were both on leave of absence during the year.

In September we welcomed Tanya Olhausen (Church of Ireland) to the Council and Colm Harte (Religious Society of Friends) in October. In February Yvonne Luven (Greek Orthodox) joined us and in May we were pleased to welcome Rev. Andrew Kingston (Methodist) and Rev. Alan Boal (Presbyterian). Rev. Yongnam Park has also been nominated to represent the Methodist Church.

Our refreshed website went live during summer 2019. It has an attractive layout and easy access and it has proved to be of great benefit to the Council in the months since. We are very grateful to Jiby Jacob not only for designing and creating the website but also for maintaining it. The role of Recording Secretary remained unfilled during the year and I am grateful to my husband, Denis, for taking the notes for me at meetings so that I can write the minutes thereafter.

The Council is also grateful for the venues which have been willing to host our meetings during the year, Clonliffe College, St. Finian's Lutheran Church, St. Matthias Church of Ireland, Ballybrack, Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Rathmines, and Wesley House, Leeson Park While it might be good to have a permanent "home" for our meetings, the diversity of meeting places is a very real reminder that we are a Pilgrim People.

May God continue to bless us as we journey together and bring to fulfilment all that we seek to do together in His name.

*Cherry Poynton* (Chairperson)

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## **MEMBERSHIP and REPRESENTATION**

Antiochian Orthodox:	Fr. John Hickey
Armenian Apostolic Church:	Dr. Paul Manook, Ayda Lundon, Margaret Sarafian(retired)
Church of Ireland:	Edward Lewis, Alistair Doyle, Tanya Olhausen
Ethiopian Orthodox Church:	Abba Berhanemeskel Gidey, Tigris Deju, Tseday Mulat Asfaw
Greek Orthodox:	Tom Kehoe, Stylani (Stella) Xenopoulou, Yvonne Luven
Lutheran Church:	Pastor Stephan Arras, Pastor Martin Sauter, Yvonne Langebach
Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church:	Jiby Jacob, Fr. Biju Parekkatitil, Santheep Kallungal,
Methodist:	Elizabeth Kelly, Rev. John Parkin(retired), Rev. Andrew Kingston, Rev. Yongnam Park
Presbyterian:	Rev. Gary McDowell (retired), Rev. Alan Boal, Cherry Poynton, Denis Poynton
Religious Society of Friends:	Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Niamh Hardiman, Colm Harte
Roman Catholic:	Fr. Damian McNeice
Romanian Orthodox:	Fr. Raul Simion
St. Thomas Indian Orthodox:	Fr. Anish John, John Mathew
Salvation Army:	Major Stuart Dicker (retired)

## **KEY ACTIVITIES**

Our ninth **FORUM DAY** was held on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2019 in Clonliffe College. As we had been considering environmental matters and as the feast day of St. Francis fell on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, Father Philip Baxter who has a special interest in St. Francis was invited as the keynote speaker. His talk and his topics for discussion afterwards were related to lifestyle, peace, creation and climate.

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The annual **WALK OF LIGHT** took place on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November. The theme chosen was *Walking together for our common home*. Starting with worship at the first Station in St. Finian’s Lutheran Church on Adelaide Road, the ecumenical congregation set out after that to walk along the north side of the canal to La Touche Bridge where the Walkers crossed the canal to reach the second station, the Church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners on Rathmines Road.



Worship continued here with the singing led by members of the choir and their choirmaster/organist of St. Bartholomew’s Church, Ballsbridge. An inspiring address was given by Jane Mellet of Trocaire, the organization which was the beneficiary of the collections at each of the three stations.

The walk then continued along Rathmines Road, past all the shops to Holy Trinity Church of Ireland where there was a short address and the concluding prayers were said. Holy Trinity Parish provided light refreshments afterwards.

As every year the walk benefitted from the efficient, unobtrusive stewarding of the Gardaí who also held up traffic for us at our crossing points. Members of the St. John’s Ambulance Brigade also accompanied us but thankfully their services were not required this year. As ever our thanks are due to the Gardaí for ensuring our safe passage along the route as well as the stewards who assisted.

**THE INAUGURAL SERVICE FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, (instead of 18<sup>th</sup>) was held in the beautiful surroundings of the Church of the Assumption on Booterstown Avenue. The change of date was because 18<sup>th</sup> fell on a Saturday and it was felt that we would not get a good attendance as a result.



The material for the 2020 service was created by the Christian Churches in Malta. They chose the theme of *They showed us unusual kindness (Acts 28v.2)*. It was a liturgy with a difference, gradually telling the story of the shipwreck of Paul and his companions and how the islanders rescued and treated them. The Liturgy Group in the Church of the Assumption involved young members to act out the various passages as they were read as well as being stewards at the door to greet people as they arrived.

Parishioners had also taken up the nautical theme of the liturgy when decorating the Parish Centre where refreshments were served afterwards.

**THE ST. PATRICK’S DAY SERVICE** had been prepared, advertised and was ready to take place when it had to be cancelled because of the spread of Covid-19 and the lockdown restrictions announced by the Taoiseach. We hope we will be able to use the liturgy in 2021, and that most of those who agreed to participate will also be able to take part.

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**OTHER EVENTS:** members attended, or were involved in, various ecumenical events during the year, although some participation had to be online:

On 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2019, the DCC Chairperson was amongst religious leaders invited to the National Day of Commemoration held in Collins Barracks;

Salvation Army Carol Service in December in St. Ann’s Church in Dawson Street;

Armenian Genocide Remembrance Service in Christ Church Cathedral;

Ecumenical Bible Week on Zoom.

*Cherry Poynton*

June 2020

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Our **website:** [www.dublincouncilofchurches.ie](http://www.dublincouncilofchurches.ie)

**Contacts:** Chairperson: [dccchairperson@gmail.com](mailto:dccchairperson@gmail.com)

Secretary: [dcouncilofchurchessecretary@gmail.com](mailto:dcouncilofchurchessecretary@gmail.com)

This report can be viewed as a pdf version which can be downloaded and printed from

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Member churches are encouraged to copy and distribute this report within their churches as they deem appropriate