

DUBLIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

ANNUAL REPORT to Patrons and Members

June, 2018 – June, 2019

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Antiochian Orthodox Church – Armenian Apostolic Church – Church of Ireland – Ethiopian Orthodox Church -
Greek Orthodox Church– Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church – Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church - Lutheran
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INTRODUCTION

The work of the Dublin Council of Churches would not be possible without the willing generosity of the Council members to give of their time, energy and gifts despite already being very involved in serving their own denominational communities in so many different ways. I am very grateful to each one of them as well as appreciating the co-operation and commitment shown to us by our Patrons.

2018-2019 has been a busy year for the DCC. At meetings we have been giving time on our agenda not just for necessary business but to share information about events and matters of concern within our individual denominations as well as reflecting together on issues which affect all our churches. In this way we hope we can not only learn more about each other but also support each other in prayer and other possible practical ways.

It was with sadness that we said farewell to Abba Yohannes Amsalu of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church when he left for Australia in the Spring. We were delighted to welcome his successor Abba Berhanemeskel Gidey as well as five other new members: Alistair Doyle, Patricia Carroll, Jiby Jacob, Tigris Deju and Tseday Mulat Asfaw. It was also a great pleasure in January to welcome Pastor Martin Sauter back from his sabbatical after regretfully saying goodbye to Mariesophie Magnusson in the autumn as she returned to Germany and started in her parish ministry.

This past year Robert Cochran's involvement with DCC came to an end. Robert was a loyal and very helpful member of the Council for many years and even when he resigned from the Council he continued to look after our website and other IT matters. We are very grateful to him for all he did for us over the years so quietly and efficiently. Earlier this year, 2019, the Council decided that it was time to refresh our website and we were very pleased to find that we had IT expertise in Jiby Jacob who is in process of creating a new website for us as I write this report.

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 and to Fr. Damian McNeice for recording when Denis was unable to attend.

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, the Society of Friends in Churchtown, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. While it might be good to have a permanent "home" for our meetings, such 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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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 nine times during the year, June 2018 to June 2019 inclusive, in addition to our AGM.

As the DCC continues to have “no fixed abode”, we appreciate the various congregations 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.

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

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MEMBERSHIP and REPRESENTATION

Church of Ireland: Edward Lewis, Alistair Doyle

Presbyterian: Rev. Gary McDowell, Cherry Poynton, Denis Poynton

Methodist: Elizabeth Kelly, Rev. John Parkin

Religious Society of Friends: Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Niamh Hardiman

Lutheran Church: Pastor Stephan Arras, Yvonne Langebach, Mariesophie Magnusson/
Pastor Martin Sauter.

Salvation Army: Major Stuart Dicker

Roman Catholic: Fr. Damian McNeice, Patricia Carroll

Antiochian Orthodox: Fr. John Hickey

Greek Orthodox: Fr. Tom Carroll, Tom Kehoe, Stylani (Stella) Xenopoulou

Romanian Orthodox: Fr. Raul Simion

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox: Fr. Anish John, John Mathew

Armenian Apostolic Church: Dr. Paul Manook, Ayda Lundon, Margaret Sarafian

Ethiopian Orthodox Church: Abba Berhanemeskel Gidey, Tigris Deju, Tseday Mulat Asfaw

Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church: Jiby Jacob, Fr. Biju Parekkatiil, Santheep Kallungal,

KEY ACTIVITIES

Our eighth **Forum Day** was held on Thursday, 20th September, 2018 in Clonliffe College. Father Godfrey O'Donnell was the facilitator. In a break with what has been our recent practice we had three speakers on the theme of "The Church's Voice in Today's Society", Very Rev. Dr. Trevor Morrow, Father Sean Healy and Dr. Jessie Rogers. Their presentations were followed by group discussions. The attendance was disappointing. The September date seemed not to suit many of the invitees because of church or

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college activities starting up again after the summer. As a result, the Council have decided to hold the next Forum Day on Thursday, 3rd. October, in 2019.

The annual **WALK OF LIGHT** took place once again on the last Sunday in November. The theme chosen was *Encounter, Engage, Empower*. As in the previous year each act of worship was carefully co-ordinated so that one act of worship picked up where the other finished. The Walk started in St. Ann’s, Dawson Street, where Canon Gillespie introduced us to the theme with “Encounter” and lanterns were lit before we departed, walking from there through Ann and Grafton Streets to St. Teresa’s Catholic Church in Clarendon Street. Here, Father Peter McVerry SJ introduced us to the chosen charity for 2018 - Peter McVerry Trust - as well as to the second part of the theme, “Engage”. The Walk then moved on to Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church, continuing to be joined by people out shopping. During the last act of worship on the final word, “Engage”, David Boyd helped us to reflect on God’s call to bring the light of Christ into the lives of those we encounter. Over refreshments provided by members of ARD Presbyterian Church, there was a wonderful buzz of conversation and a seeming reluctance for people to leave! We are very grateful to the hosting churches and especially the organising committee for giving us a thought-provoking afternoon to challenge us. As ever our thanks are due to the Gardaí for ensuring our safe passage along the route as well as the ever-vigilant St. John’s Ambulance members.



(Photos courtesy of Lynn Glanville.)

Altogether, this was a more successful Walk than the previous year, taking in as it did some of the shopping precincts. Our presence attracted attention and queries and as already noted we were joined by members of the public as we walked from church station to church station.

THE INAUGURAL SERVICE FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY on 18th January, 2019, was held in the beautiful surroundings of the Church of Ireland Church of St. John the Baptist, Clontarf. The theme for the 2019 Week of Prayer was “Justice, and only Justice, you shall pursue”,

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based on the passage from Deuteronomy chapter 16 verses 18 - 20. Archbishop Jackson took part and there was a particularly good attendance of the clergy from the different churches in the area. A feature of the service was the active participation of the congregation, not just in the responses and singing, but in being asked to make their own commitment to Justice after Father Fachtna McCarthy's address on the theme. Each person at the service had received two pieces of coloured paper on entering the church and were then asked to write the same commitment on both pieces of paper at the relevant point in the service. These papers

were collected in two different baskets, one was offered to God at the altar, the other was brought to the door as the congregations was leaving. Each person was asked to take one piece of paper and to pray for the person who had written the commitment and also to use it to help them in their own prayers for Justice. Our sincere gratitude is due to the Rector, Rev. Lesley Robinson and Mark Acheson for their welcome and assistance and to the hospitality team from the parish who provided delicious refreshments in the parish centre.

The ST. PATRICK'S DAY service was once again held in St. Patrick's Cathedral by kind permission of the Dean and once again we were blessed in our preparations by the enthusiasm of the Cathedral staff, both ordained and lay, for whom nothing ever seems to be too much trouble. Music and song as well as St. Patrick's Own Words were a core element of the service.



(Photos courtesy of Denis Poynton)

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We were also blessed with the musical talents of members of the O’Floinn family, our two cantors and of course David Leigh in his accustomed seat at the cathedral organ. On this occasion the theme chosen for the service was “We do not lose heart”, using St. Patrick’s own words to encourage and inspire us as well as the words of Father Padraig McCarthy in his address. Father McCarthy produced the latest official translations from Latin into Irish and English of Patrick’s *Confessio*. Rev. John Parkin again made a magnificent “Patrick”. In keeping with our theme, the chosen charity was Pieta House which helps so many of all ages who “have lost heart”.

OTHER EVENTS which members attended or were involved in:

On 8th July the DCC Chairperson was amongst religious leaders at the National Day of Commemoration which this year was held in Collins Barracks. (2018 marked the centenary of the cessation of hostilities in World War I.)

The World Meeting of Families 2018 took place in August with weekday events held in the RDS and a celebratory concert in Croke Park on Saturday evening. On Sunday, His Holiness, Pope Francis, celebrated mass in the Phoenix Park.

500+1 Service in St. Finian’s Lutheran Church on 31st. October.

The launch of Kairos on 4th December in Wesley House, Leeson Park.

Salvation Army Carol Service on 7th December in St. Ann’s Church in Dawson Street.

The dedication service of the National Bible Society of Ireland and the commissioning of its new Development Officer, Julia McKinley, on 24th January, 2019.

On 3rd. March Members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church invited DCC members to a gathering in St. Mary’s Parish Centre, Haddington Road, to say farewell to Abba Yohannes Amsalu who was leaving for Adelaide in Australia. The event concluded with a traditional Ethiopian meal.

On 6th March Members were invited to “Totally East”, a photographic exhibition and reception in the Lutherhaus at which the German Ambassador spoke. The evening concluded with an ecumenical service in St. Finian’s Church.

Armenian Genocide Remembrance Service on 24th April in Christ Church Cathedral.

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The Ecumenical Way of the Cross in the middle of the day on Good Friday starting in Rathmines and ending in St. Finian's as well as the Ecumenical Walk and Taizé Prayer around the Cross in the city centre in the evening, led by the two Archbishops of Dublin.

Ecumenical Bible Week events from 9th to 16th June, 2019.

Cherry Poynton

June 2019

We are grateful to Jiby Jacob for creating **a new website** which will go live in July:

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Correspondence Secretary: dublin.dcc@gmail.com

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

www.dublincouncilofchurches.ie/

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