

## **Eco Congregation Notes**

During July, we got good news from Dublin City Council that Methodist Centenary Church's application for a grant from the Community Climate Action Fund was successful. The Fund aims to support projects that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets, increase climate resilience and greenhouse gas removals, and enhance biodiversity. To have a chance of success, our application needed to integrate several of these aims, so we applied for funds for solar panels, a sliding front door to reduce heat loss, a secure bicycle cage with a repair station, and some pollinator-friendly planting.

We were pleased to be allocated the full €53193 that we applied for. "Terms and Conditions Apply" of course but we are working through the process and aiming to synchronize with the refurbishment project already underway. The Energy Audit completed earlier this year estimated annual emissions reductions of 28 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year and annual energy cost savings of €15,000 from insulation, windows replacement, new front door and solar panels.

It is unlikely that the congregation will see the benefits from the Climate Action Fund grant until early next year, or indeed be able to repair their bikes at Centenary while watching the pollinators at work! The bigger refurbishment project has to be completed first. We will, however, eventually feel the warmth, both physically and metaphorically, as we measure our progress towards a sustainable future.



**Dublin City Community Climate Action Programme**  
**Building low carbon, sustainable communities**

## Eco Congregation Notes

Welcome back from the summer break. We begin this new 'term' with some significant developments.

Firstly, we have received the Endeavour Award from Eco Congregation. This is a step up from the Awareness Award which we currently hold and recognises the progress we have made in developing good environmental practice in the Spiritual, Practical, Community and Global areas of church life. Factors in our favour were the incorporation of ecological themes into preaching, reflection and prayer, our recycling practices, the insulation work underway, the plans for solar panels, our involvement with the local community in providing a garden at the direct provision centre, and the ongoing support for Christian Aid and World Development and Relief. We will celebrate our progress at the Season of Creation service which will be held on the first Sunday of September. More information will be provided later about this service. The next steps with Eco Congregation are the full Award and beyond that the Gold Award. We hope to persevere!

Secondly the Church Council at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> August approved the implementation of the new Environmental Policy of MCI. This is more than a paper exercise. Specific targets have been set and responsibility assigned to named individuals who will report back to the Church Council twice year. The action list is extensive, as you will see if you have time to look at the policy and implementation checklist at this link [CSR Archive — The Methodist Church in Ireland \(irishtmethodist.org\)](https://www.irishtmethodist.org/CSR-Archive---The-Methodist-Church-in-Ireland) (Environmental Policy 2024).

Reading Hannah Richie's book *'Not the End of the World'* helps gather motivation and persistence to deal with the inevitable challenges ahead. Countering the notion that unsustainability is pushing us to extinction, she draws on extensive research to assert that with the right kind of commitment, we can be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. She points out, for example, that previous generations were not environmentally sustainable, our ancestors hunted animals to extinction, cut down forests, and generated emissions in the 1950s at double the levels we do. Technology is progressing to the extent that in just a decade the price of electricity from solar has declined by 89%, the price from onshore wind has declined by 70% and we passed peak per capita emissions globally in 2012.

With belief in the power of prayer and technology, we can perhaps look to Hannah Richie's definition of optimism as "seeing challenges as opportunities to make progress, having the confidence that there are things we can do that make a difference."

