

# **DUBLIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**to Patrons and Members**

**June, 2017 – June, 2018**



**[www.dublinchurches.ie](http://www.dublinchurches.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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## INTRODUCTION

2017-2018 has been another fulfilling year for the Dublin Council of Churches, if a quieter one than the previous two with all their anniversaries and commemorations. This has given the members more time to share insights and reflect together on issues which affect all our churches.

We were delighted to welcome the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church as members in April and we look forward to the future contribution which its members will make in the coming years.

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

It was with sadness that at the last AGM we had to accept the resignation of our valued Secretary, Uta Raab, as she and her husband moved from Dublin to live further south. Uta gave us cheerful and sterling service particularly during her time as Secretary. Her resignation meant that, for most of the year, we had only one Church of Ireland member on the Council, our Treasurer, Edward Lewis, who continues to give us loyal and dedicated service and advice, particularly on fiscal matters. We have also missed the presence of Rev. Martin Sauter this past year as he has been on Sabbatical in Berkley, California.

I would also like to record special and heartfelt gratitude to Yvonne Langebach, who volunteered to take the minutes for six months but has continued in that capacity for the whole year, and to Margaret Sarafian, who volunteered to look after all matters relating to correspondence.

Finally, and by no means least, I want to acknowledge publicly the cheerful and willing support and assistance I have received from my predecessor as chairperson, Father Damian McNeice, despite his heavy workload this past year as one of the organising group for the Week of the Family, here in Dublin.

May God continue to bless us in the coming year and to bring to further fulfilment all the good work which 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 eight times during the year, June 2017 to June 2018 inclusive, in addition to our AGM.

The DCC continues to have “no fixed abode” and we are very grateful to the various congregations which have hosted us during the year - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Blackrock; St. Finian's Lutheran Church, Adelaide Road; Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines; Holy Cross College, Clonliffe; and St. Mary's Church, Sandyford.

Our lack of a “home” is in many ways a blessing. Because of this lack, we meet in the buildings of different denominations and not only enjoy their hospitality as well as have the opportunity to see the architecture of their churches but much more importantly we are enriched as we are able to learn more about their worship and witness.

## **ANNUAL OFFICERS**

Elected to serve for the year June 2017 to June 2018

**Chairperson:** Cherry Poynton

**Vice Chairperson:** Niamh Hardiman

**Hon. Treasurer:** Edward Lewis

**Hon. Recording Secretary:** Yvonne Langebach

**Hon. Correspondence Secretary:** Margret Sarafian.

I again record my gratitude for the many ways in which these office bearers have supported me during this past year as well as fulfilling vital roles for the DCC.

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## **MEMBERSHIP and REPRESENTATION**

Church of Ireland:	Edward Lewis
Presbyterian:	Rev. Gary McDowell, Cherry Poynton, Denis Poynton
Methodist:	Robert Cochran, Elizabeth Kelly, Rev. John Parkin
Religious Society of Friends:	Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Niamh Hardiman
Lutheran Church:	Pastor Stephan Arras, Yvonne Langebach, (Pastor Martin Sauter on sabbatical)
Salvation Army:	Major Stuart Dicker
Roman Catholic:	Fr. Damian McNeice
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 Yohannes Amsalu, Isaac/Yeshake Mebratu

With the addition from June 2018 -

**Church of Ireland:** Alistair Doyle

**Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church:** Fr. Jino Joseph, Santheep Kallungal

It was a great pleasure in June, 2018 to welcome Fr. Jino Joseph and Santheep Kallungal of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church to their first meeting as well as Alistair Doyle from the Church of Ireland.

We hope during the coming autumn to have two more Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and a third from the Church of Ireland.

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## KEY ACTIVITIES

There is no report on a **Forum Day** because the 7<sup>th</sup> such event was held before our last AGM in 2017 and is reported on in our Annual Report for 2016 - 2017. Our eighth Forum Day is being planned for September, 2018.

**ECUMENICAL WALK OF LIGHT, 2017:** The DCC is pleased to continue to sponsor this ecumenical event which takes place each year on the last Sunday of the liturgical calendar which fell on 26<sup>th</sup> November in 2017. As in other years the 13<sup>th</sup> Walk of Light covered a different route and included different parishes to the previous year. It commenced in Newman University Church on St. Stephen's Green at 4pm. The pilgrims then walked to Methodist Centenary Church in Leeson Park and from there to the final act of worship in St. Mary's Church, Haddington Road, after which the Pilgrim Walkers enjoyed refreshments organised by the parishioners. The theme for 2017, "To and from the mountain", was explored in different ways in each of the three designated church venues but it was also designed as one continuous liturgical unit. The organisers had again timed the worship well but less than 200 participants took part at any one stage. In retrospect both the organisers and the DCC agreed that by not including the south city centre on the walk we missed an opportunity to proclaim Christ as the Light of the World and as our only hope in dark times to many more people.



We express our sincere gratitude to all the members of the organising committee for the time, commitment and hard work which went into this event

**INAUGURAL SERVICE FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** is a key ecumenical moment in the greater Dublin area as it brings together the patrons of our various member denominations. The liturgy service is based on that provided by the *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland* and takes place every year on 18<sup>th</sup> January. In 2018 the theme was "That all may be free", based on the text from Exodus 15:6, *Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power*. The service was hosted by the parish of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Johnstown/Killiney. The address was given by Dr. Jessie Rogers from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in which she explored not only the bondage from which God's people had been set free but what God's people

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had been freed for. Moving on through the story of God’s People in the Old Testament to those in the New and Biblically challenging us to meet the Risen Lord on the road in our daily lives. “We will meet him in our brothers and sisters of different traditions when we welcome the stranger and work to free the oppressed - together.” We are very grateful to Father John Sinnott, the Sacristan, the organist and the all the team of parishioners who helped us prepare before the worship and who offered us hospitality afterwards.

**ST. PATRICK’S DAY, 2018 - PATRICK, A STRANGER BEARING GIFTS:** The event was again held in St. Patrick’s Cathedral on the evening of St. Patrick’s Day. The Council decided that it was time to refresh what had been a very successful format for this event. Early in the year the chairperson met with the Dean, Rev. William Morton, the Dean’s Vicar and some of the Cathedral staff all of whom were most supportive and encouraging and professed themselves “excited” at what we were proposing to do this year.

A small organising committee prepared a very memorable event which challenged all those present to think long and well about how we treat those who are different to ourselves and to examine ourselves to see how we feel about being strangers in a strange place. It is invidious to pick out individuals but special mention must be made of the creativity of Mariesophie Magnusson, Lutheran ordinand in training on placement in Dublin, who was mainly responsible for the three stations around the cathedral building which very effectively invited viewers in different ways to think about ‘Strangers’. Worship was greatly enhanced by David Leigh on the organ and by the Tara Ensemble who travelled from Co. Meath in spite of the forecast of atrocious weather to come later that evening and by the prayers of Intercession led by overseas students from DCU. It was a





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The DCC relies greatly on the knowledge and kindness of Robert Cochran who continues to look after the DCC website and Facebook and we are most grateful for all the work he does so efficiently on our behalf.

The website <http://www.dublinchurches.ie/> gives a point of contact, points to the Facebook page on which viewers can find upcoming events as well as links to various national and international ecumenical bodies as well as important ecumenical documents.

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

Secretary: [dublin.dcc@gmail.com](mailto:dublin.dcc@gmail.com)

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