

## December Sunday Services

Date/Time	4/5th December	12th December	18/19th December	26th December
	Borris-in-Ossory <b>Saturday 4th 8:30pm</b>	Seir Kieran <b>9:30am</b>	Borris-in-Ossory <b>Saturday 18th 8:30pm</b>	Mountrath <b>11:00am</b>
<b>10:15am</b>	Lacca <b>Sunday 5th</b>	Mountrath <b>Clonagh National School Carol Service 11:00am</b>	Mountrath <b>Community Carol Service 3:30pm</b>	
<b>11:30am</b>	Mountrath <b>Sunday 5th</b>			

## Christmas Services

All Holy Communion

Christmas Eve - Friday 24th December	Christmas Day - Saturday 25th December
<b>8:00pm</b> - Seir Kieran (with Puppet Team) <b>8:00pm</b> - Borris-in-Ossory <b>9:00pm</b> - Roskelton <b>11:30pm</b> - Lacca	<b>9:30am</b> - Annatrim <b>11:00am</b> - Mountrath

## Parish Diary - December

November 29th.....Fund Raising Committee meeting, the Rectory (8:00pm)  
**1st Wednesday.....Closing date for Diocesan magazine notes!** (to Jennifer Masterson)  
 1st Wednesday.....GFS Meeting, Parochial Hall (7-8.30pm)  
 3rd Friday.....Borris-in-Ossory Parish cabaret in Allen's, Errill  
 3rd Friday.....Closing date for 2005 Confirmation candidates, to Canon Harvey  
 3rd Friday.....Abbeyleix Parish Christmas Concert, St. Fintan's Church, Durrow (8:00pm)  
 4th Saturday.....Kids Club & Kool Club  
 4th Saturday.....UDYC Annual Christmas Dinner Dance  
 5th Sunday.....Closing date for return of Leprosy Mission Boxes, to Olga Telford  
 7th Tuesday.....Senior Citizens Dinner, Parochial Hall  
 9th Thursday.....Bring and Buy Sale/Coffee Evening, Mountrath Rectory (7:30pm)  
 11th Saturday.....LCIYC Christmas Carol Service, Abbeyleix (8:00pm)  
 14th Tuesday.....Mothers' Union & Young Wives Christmas Party, The Lemon Tree  
 15th Wednesday....Parent & Toddler Christmas Party  
 15th Wednesday....G.F.S Meeting, Parochial Hall (7-8.30pm)  
 18th Saturday.....Kids Club party, & Kool Club party  
**22nd Wednesday..Closing date for January 2005 Newsletter items!**  
 27th Monday.....LCIYC Day Trip to Dublin  
 31st Friday.....LCIYC New Year's Eve Disco, Manor Hotel, Abbeyleix  
 January 22nd.....Mothers' Union meeting

**Parish Office** .....The Parish office in the Rectory will be open on Tuesdays, 10.30am - 1.30pm

**Canon Harvey reminds everyone that he needs to be informed when parishioners are sick at home or in hospital, and of bereavements outside the Parish. Also, he'd be grateful if those who are intending to get married would contact him to discuss their wedding plans.**

# Newsletter

## Clonagh Group of Parishes - December 2004

Annatrim, Borris-in-Ossory, Lacca, Mountrath, Roskelton, Seir Kieran.

### Priest in charge:

Canon Patrick Harvey, The Rectory, Abbeyleix.  
 Phone: 0502-31243  
 E-Mail: [abbeyleix@leighlin.anglican.org](mailto:abbeyleix@leighlin.anglican.org)

### Parish Assistant (Youth):

Linda Wharton, Dromoyle House, Birr, Co. Offaly.  
 Phone: 0509-31077 Mobile: 086-1966166  
 E-Mail: [rectory@clonagh.com](mailto:rectory@clonagh.com)

**Congratulations** to John and Joyce Lalor on the birth of a baby boy; to David Furlong on his engagement to Patrice Treacy; and to Wayne Clegg on his engagement to Norma Bryan.

We **sympathise** with Herbert Gill and Ann Gee on the recent death of Robert Gill; with Eric Condell on the death of his aunt; with Evelyn Bennett on the death of her mother; with the Bennett family on the death of Victor Bennett; and with Roger and Ian Hamilton on the death of their mother.

**Best Wishes** and a speedy recover to Walter Finnermore who is at present in Tullamore Hospital recovering from an accident, and all the best to Ivor & Robert Chambers who have not been well recently

Canon Harvey thanks all those who have contacted him to talk about their plans for marriage and he is glad to have all the arrangements for **2005 weddings** in place. He also asks could the names of all those wishing to be **Confirmed in 2005** be given to him before Friday 3rd December

**Abbeyleix Parish Christmas Concert** in St. Fintan's Church, Durrow, on Friday 3rd December at 8.00 pm with the Choir of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

There will be congregational singing, and mulled wine and mince pies will be served afterwards. Tickets are €10 at the door.

**Mothers' Union & Young Wives:** Four members of the Young Wives attended the Off the Rails Show in the RDS recently. A

great day's entertainment was had by all and looking forward to next year's show already. The **annual auction** was held on Monday 22nd November, and as always the support from the members was marvellous. A donation from the proceeds will be sent to St. Vincent's Hospital, Mountmellick and The Irish Kidney Association.

The **Christmas Party** will be held on **Tuesday 14th December (NOTE CHANGE OF DATE!)** in The Lemon Tree Restaurant, Portlaoise. Anyone who would like to come along on the night please contact Sandra Condell (35067) before Monday 6th.

The **Senior Citizen** party will be the Christmas Dinner, on December 7th. Invitations are on their way, and as always many thanks to all that give their time and energy to make this day a great success.

**Bring and Buy Sale/Coffee Evening** in the Rectory, Mountrath, on Thursday 9th December, at 7:30pm.

There will be lots of Christmas fare, etc, and proceeds are in aid of the School Refurbishment and Parish Youth Worker Funds. Items can be left at the Rectory, or contact Emily (32980) or Joe (32385).

This event is in place of the Christmas Bazaar.

### Borris in Ossory

For the winter months there will be a service in Borris in Ossory church on the first and third Saturday evenings at 8.30pm. This will replace the 8.45am service on Sundays. It is hoped that these will be well supported. The Borris in Ossory cabaret will be held in Allen's of Errill on Friday 3rd December.

**Telford**

Newsletter sponsored by Telfords - Builder's Providers : DIY : Hardware.  
 Mountrath - 0502-32208 Athy - 0507-31462 Portlaoise - 0502-20952

## A VERY DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS STORY

- By Linda Wharton

During the end of October I went to Israel for 12 days. I went with 8 others from CIYD & CMS. It was a wonderful experience, but it was not what I expected. The 1st day we went to explore the old walled city of Jerusalem. There we saw all the famous sights, including the Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (where Jesus was crucified). It was a very emotional visit as it really made the Bible come to life. We visited all the different quarters of the city. A long, but great day.

Day 2 was spent with Musalaha, who are a group of Christians trying to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians. They bring teenagers from all sides together into the desert. In desert conditions, people have to work together to survive in the extreme heat. They learn about each other and through this fellowship the divisions between them are broken down.

On the Thursday we went back to Musalaha to meet some of the teenagers who explained the advantages of the desert experience and the friendships that have been made. We met with the Bishop of Jerusalem in his garden and spoke about the situation in Israel and Palestine. Later that night we spoke with Mordechai Vanunu (the man who revealed the Israeli position with nuclear arms). We heard about his very harrowing story of being imprisoned and what he had to go through. We then went to talk to Henry (whose grandmother comes from Kerry) to talk about his 'Kids for Peace' programme and then our group split up into twos and I went on to meet with a Jewish family which was a lovely experience. When all of our group met up again we discussed how both sides know so little about each others position (eg. how the media and Israeli government cleverly keep things very divided as some of the Jewish people know very little about 'The Wall', and the Palestinians never meet with Israelis because of the restrictions on movement so they only Israelis they know are the army).

Friday we met with Sabeel, and we travelled with them to different places such as the wall and a checkpoint and prayed for some end to the destruction we saw everywhere.

Saturday we went to Ramallah where we went into Arafat's complex, which is a complete mound of rubble. Then we went to a

school where we saw the complete upheaval of the teenager's lives. They were so despairing about their futures they could see no hope of things improving in this land.

On Sunday we had time off so some of us went to the Mount of Olives, which was very beautiful and serene. It was really needed as it had been a hard few days, there was a lot to take in.

On Monday we headed for Bethlehem, and in my innocence I expected a pretty little town full of joy. However that was not the case. First we had to go through a checkpoint, then we had to walk down this rubble filled street with kids following us, selling chewing gum and tissues. We had to walk away from the checkpoint, as the taxi drivers are in fear of getting shot if they go near the checkpoint. It was so sad, and I kept thinking to myself about how much we have here, how we have so much freedom to go where we like. And the Palestinians here live in fear of going through checkpoints to travel 4km down to Jerusalem, and that's if they get through the checkpoint.

We then went to WIAM, another group who are working for peace. Then Diane, a youth worker from the North and I went to stay with Lucy, a Palestinian. Lucy and her family all live in the one building, and they talked about the six day siege in Bethlehem when they have curfews. We met with her friends, some of whom have hope because they can get out of the country as they have family living here in Ireland and they are allowed to visit them. Then there are those who are suffering from depression because they know that they will never be able to leave Bethlehem in the foreseeable future. We also met the governor of Bethlehem who prays for peace soon.

On Thursday we went to see the church of the Nativity, where Jesus was born. We also went to see the shepherd's field, and it was wonderful to see it. But it was becoming less important to see the sites, compared to hearing about the ordinary people's lives.

This was certainly a very different Christmas story, I know singing "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie" will have a completely different meaning for me, this and every Christmas from now on. So I just ask you to keep all the people of this land in your prayers this Christmas time.

Linda Wharton

## Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to all who supported this project, a total of sixty three boxes were returned from Clonenagh Group of Parishes.

On the 4th of November we had a visit from the **Osby choir**. They really enjoyed their stay here, so much that some may be back during the summer. We were treated to a musical feast on Friday the 5th when we had the choir sing for us, Creideamh played and the puppet team performed. All who attended enjoyed the night. The next morning we had Kids Club and after dinner we headed to Kilkenny to show the Swedes our cathedral with which they were very impressed. Then on to town to pick up some souvenirs, clothes and the all important shoes for the girls!!! Later that night we had a junior disco, which was a real hit; thanks to DJ David. Thanks to all of you who put up the Swedes and provided meals for them. A special thanks to Jennifer Lator, Stan and Heather for their help. This trip couldn't have happened without all of your help.

## Girls Friendly Society

On Sunday 14th November thirteen girls and five leaders were enrolled in Mountrath Church. Many thanks to Revd. Philip Heak (Youth Officer) for officiating and to Hazel Corrigan (Diocesan President) for attending. The girls are busy preparing crafts for the Diocesan competitions and the Arts and Crafts Badge, and also learning their GFS Knowledge Badge.

We continue to meet fortnightly on Wednesday evenings 7.00-8.30pm. Leaders will be attending a Diocesan Council Meeting in Rathdowney at the end of this month.

The **Craft Classes** are going very well, there are some very talented ladies in the Parishes who are very capable of making cards. So don't be surprised if there are some hand-made cards floating around the Parish this

Christmas. Thanks to Christine for her teaching skills. Everyone welcome, as there are still a few weeks left.

## Adult Night Out

A group of seventeen parishioners enjoyed a meal in The Thatch, Crinkill on Saturday 13th November.

## Puppet Team

At the end of October the Puppet Team travelled to Reading, for the European puppet ministry festival. It was a wonderful experience for all of us. We learnt a lot about props and movements; I think the trip was essential to give us new enthusiasm and new skills. Thanks to Joanne who put up with our mad antics and is now an honorary member. The **Puppet Team** will perform at the Christmas Eve family service in Seir Kieran at 8:00pm.

## Laois CIYC events:

The LCIYC **Harvest Ball** was held on 20th November, and was very well attended this year. Everyone enjoyed the meal, and hats off to the band, they did a great job and kept everyone on the floor all night!!

**Candlelit Christmas Carol** service, December 11th, at 8:00pm in Abbeyleix.

**Annual Day Trip for ages 10-17** to Dublin, Monday 27th December.  
Contact Lorna on 087-1248084.

**New Years Eve Disco** in Abbeyleix Manor Hotel, on 31st December 2004. Strictly over 18s only. Garda ID will be required.

**UDYC Annual Christmas Dinner Dance**, Racket Hall, Saturday 4th December.  
Tickets €30, available from Alison Holmes.

Items for inclusion in the newsletter need to be with the editor by the Wednesday (**22nd December**) before the fourth Sunday of the month AT THE LATEST, so that the newsletter can be assembled, printed, and distributed in time for the fourth Sunday (**26th December**).  
Ideally, items should be submitted by E-Mail to- [newsletter@clonenagh.com](mailto:newsletter@clonenagh.com)  
Otherwise to- Ivor Clegg, Cloncourse, Mountrath, Co. Laois. 0502-21277 or 087-2522162  
This newsletter and many older editions can be downloaded directly from [www.clonenagh.com](http://www.clonenagh.com).