



Carrigrohane Union of Parishes
Parish Description
Autumn 2020

INTRODUCTION

Everything we are and do as churches in Carrigrohane Union flows from the call to mission, from the doors of our church buildings to the “front-lines” of our members wherever God places them.

Mission that is the Good News of God’s Grace for everyone

So you will find grace permeates all that we do: from the welcome we give, our relationships, our meetings and the way we deal with difficult decisions.

Mission seen in God’s Word from Genesis to Revelation.

So while in the Union we might look at the Bible from different angles, we recognise its authority as God breathed, equipping us for life and our ministries.

Mission borne of vision as Carrigrohane Union has embraced change over many years.

Vision burning all the clearer through movements of the Holy Spirit in charismatic renewal, fresh expressions of church, the work of eco- congregations and for some, an appetite for the richness of the spiritual disciplines of the daily office.

Mission to pass on the faith for generations to come*.

A major initiative in recent years has just seen the Carraig Centre opened, a refurbished heritage building in the centre of Ballincollig to be a springboard for evangelism, alongside parish and wider community use. * Psalm 74 v 8

Mission to be more intentional with our historic churches

To find ways to use our historic places of worship to connect with communities locally.

Mission that reflects the Five Marks of Mission

To engage with the issues and opportunities of our times:

To TELL the Good News of Christ.

To TEACH new and growing disciples.

To TEND to the needs of others with loving service.

To TRANSFORM the lives of those facing injustice.

To TREASURE God’s creation and strive to nurture and protect it.

Mission a shared call.

We seek a new rector who will come to lead alongside us, so that with faith we are braver and bolder about the next steps we take at the beginning of this decade. To do so collaboratively in an atmosphere of grace: the air we breathe as the Body of Christ.

THE IDENTITY AND ROLE OF THE RECTOR

Gifts and Leadership

Any rector's role is multifaceted, but it would be our hope that the new incumbent will find the space to express the particular gifts that God has given them to lead.

Key areas for ministry

The new incumbent will be someone who makes the Bible the basis for his or her life, not only for preaching and group study, but also as the foundation for leading worship, pastoral care, and administration.

Leadership

The rector is the leader of the staff team which includes an Associate Minister, the youth workers and the parish administrator and secretary. Meeting weekly, it is a vital, supportive, and creative group where every opinion counts and ideas are listened to and action taken forward as required.

The new rector will continue to facilitate the outcomes of Vision 2015-18, from which much has been fruitful but where there is more to do and build on.

The new rector will be a leader among leaders in collaborative ministry across the Union, working closely with the staff team, and able to delegate.

Worship

Key to the worshipping life of the Union is the diversity of worship.

Experiments during Vision 2015-18 showed that the expectations and needs of a group of worshippers could not be met with just one style of worship or building, leading us to use Prayer Book and contemporary expressions in different locations.

Key to every service is the participation of the people of God and where each congregation has a number of people reading lessons, intercessions, acting as lay ministers of the Eucharist and involved with prayer ministry.

The Union of Parishes has a wide range of musical talent and ability, from organists to instrumentalists and singers.

The congregations are used to both traditional and contemporary church music. There has been a long tradition of nurturing young musicians within the Parish who go on to play an active role in leading worship.

Pastoral Care

A vital quality of Carrigrohane Union is the care given to each other. The new rector will have their unique caring role to play, especially at those times of pain and loss. (Note: there are only a handful of "occasional offices" conducted most years).

Administration

With the Parish Office responsible for the day to day running of the office, we want to ensure the Rector is freed to focus on their primary calling, while having a good grasp of administrative procedures, especially in the area of Safeguarding Trust for children and vulnerable persons.

The Rector's Personal Life

It is vital that the rector finds their identity in God through Christ, and not simply because of what they do.

Therefore, it is important that the rector takes time during the week for personal prayer and to avail of courses/ retreats etc., organised by the Diocese and other agencies. We would encourage them, if they have not already, to have a mentor or spiritual director.

It is essential that the Rector takes one or two days off a week. To make time for loved ones and personal interests.

ABOUT THE CHURCHES AND THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

There are a number of church members who have a sense of place going back generations, and have graciously accepted the many newcomers, coming from Anglican and other church traditions who have moved into the area in the 1970's and 1980's through to today, many having come from other countries to live and work here.

Blarney - The Church of the Resurrection

Blarney is world famous because of the Blarney Castle and Blarney Stone set in beautiful grounds and is one of Ireland's leading tourist attractions. There is a vibrant community life with a small village with shops for basic needs.

The Sunday worshipping congregation is small but strong in fellowship averaging around 15 in size.

The physical worship space is the product of a process of vision in the 1980's when the building had been earmarked for closure. Subsequently, fresh life poured into the church community with many coming from other parts of the Union to play an active role. The Union has invested by employing a Church Army officer followed by two ordained clergy. Robert Ferris the current occupant is now in his 8th year and is highly respected in the local community by his presence and passion to be inclusive.

For over 20 years the Church of the Resurrection has hosted a Parent and Toddler group, with large numbers. It is a vital part of community life in the local area and many strong relationships have developed.

Through the Toddler Group and other links in the community, many have participated on Alpha courses, where they have come to a new faith in God, which has been nurtured by the weekly evening Growth Group. This is proving to be a renewing stream of Kingdom life and an expression of church, and frequently, attendance is higher than the Sunday morning services.

Further engagement with those outside of the church has been through Lighthouse, the fresh expression known as "Messy Church". Meeting monthly on a Sunday afternoon, it has often been the largest congregation of the day, made up of a large number of volunteers, including many young people from across the Union. Of late the numbers have decreased and a review is taking place.

The building is now used for a wide range of social needs during the day and facilitates concerts and community gatherings, such as refreshments after the annual St Patrick's Day Parade.

Inniscarra, St Senan's

Set in a leafy glade on the road to Coachford and a regular run for cyclists and day trippers heading out to the beautiful Lee Valley, home to the Irish Olympic Rowers, St Senan's is valued by everyone in the Union. Its tranquillity makes it a special place for seekers and believers, to simply be quiet, to find rest for the soul and enter into God's presence.

In 2012 an extension called The Glade was added for fellowship after services and for meetings mid-week and has made a difference in making St Senan's a welcoming place for retreats and Sunday services. The small congregation are incredibly resourceful, and with their musical talents and care, build bridges with their neighbours. So in 2019 the church celebrated its 200th anniversary with a variety of events supported by the Union and many others. One of the

highlights was the annual “Music among the Trees” a festival of local talent where it is standing room only.

Some while ago outsiders thought the church had been closed. Far from it! There is a deep longing by members to see the church thrive and grow with the introduction of a monthly service of “Reflective Worship” with the aim of appealing to those spirituality searching. To witness to the creator God, the establishment of a Bible themed nature and prayer walk trail has been introduced along with intentional sowing, planting and management of the cemetery.

Carrigrohane St Peter’s

The oldest church site in the Union dates back nearly a 1000 years, as a chapel for the Norman Castle. The place is steeped in history. sitting in the greenbelt between the centre of the city and Ballincollig.

Up until 2015 every Sunday two services took place in quick succession which between them were the largest in the Union. The early service then evolved with its own identity while the second service transferred to the old Parish Centre for Contemporary Worship to become the “Sunday AM” service, which now meets in the Carraig Centre. The separation has led to both services seeing signs of new life.

Currently, the St Peter’s congregation averages 20 to 25, and the Select Vestry has given its blessing to the setting up of a working group to develop a vision for the next five years. Part of the objective is to consider how the St Peter’s congregation can:

- Use the building as a community resource.
- Mission to the estates nearby which are set to grow in number to the south of the parish under the City Council’s Plan.
- Connect creatively with the small number of businesses locally, the Cork Institute of Technology, and a number of charities having their national or Munster headquarters in the vicinity.

Ballincollig - The Carraig Centre, home to the Sunday AM service

Following the move to the old parish centre in the autumn of 2015, this service has steadily grown so that it now averages 65. With adults and young people together –the Sunday school (Adventurers) meets in the same building –it has more appeal for parents with children. The sharing of God’s Word in more depth is central and appreciated. The worship led by individuals and bands is bringing freedom, while the monthly Holy Communion service roots the congregation in our Anglican identity. Under normal conditions a Toddler group, called Sparks, will run on Friday mornings from the Centre.

The move to the Carraig Centre is in its infancy, where the congregation is a church based plant in Ballincollig where core to everything is the way we engage with civic and community life and build relationships with local people. The heritage building, located in the town centre, was acquired in July 2017 and the refurbishment was funded by the sale of re-zoned lands so that there is no debt on the building. Around 790m² has been refurbished and equipped to a high standard and made ready in May/June 2020, and the remaining 536m² is partially finished, available for use by an anchor tenant.

The three functions of the refurbished Centre are: a) to provide a flexible worship space for Carrigrohane Union, b) to provide a parish centre and office functions for the Union and c) to provide a community centre for Ballincollig to allow more direct interaction with the wider community. All three of these functions have been initiated and are proving successful, COVID-19 notwithstanding! The Centre has been warmly welcomed across the board and a great variety of user groups have started using the space. In addition to providing welcome activity, it also ensures the running costs are met!

The Carrigrohane Youth Work

A key to the renewing of the church has been the Youth Work.

What had been lay-led for many years, with the gift of a generous bequest the Select Vestry employed youth workers Matt and Katie Gould to job share. Their heart for evangelism, their ability to give time to individuals, discipling young people, and fostering young leaders has been immense. Going forward the Union wants to build on this and also engage in open youth work through the Carraig Centre, and has launched a ten year fund to add to the bequest, committing us to paid and fully supported youth work for another generation of young people.

Groups for Growth

Mid-week groups, based on welcome, word, worship and witness have long been part of the life of the Union and have ebbed and flowed in different forms, while building prayerful and supportive relationships. Frequently, members include individuals from other churches or none at all, and have reached out using the Alpha courses.

Prayer

Underpinning the life of the Union is prayer, personal and corporate. Some meet in prayer triplets and as a Union, Prayer Rooms and weeks set aside for prayer have been held in the churches.

The Carraig Centre has a dedicated “Prayer Space” to be solely used for prayer, worship and Bible study. As a busy Union it is hoped that this will become the “boiler house” where the power of the presence of God is sought in prayer of blessing for local and wider needs.

The Wider Church

Carrigrohane Union of Parishes comes under the Anglican Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. Already good relationships have been strengthened as different committees of the Diocese have given much time to see the Carraig Centre come into operation. Under the leadership of Bishop Paul Colton there is much support for clergy, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic. He has also initiated “Charting the Future with Confidence” for churches in the Dioceses to reflect on their work and look for ways to be stronger and grow. He has appointed our Associate Minister to coordinate this project.

The relationships with other churches are mainly with Roman Catholic congregations in Inniscarra, Blarney, and Ballincollig. In Carrigrohane in July 2020 a shared service with the RC parish priests and a representative group of parishioners took place in the Carraig Centre, as a sign of community healing past and present, to renew the bonds of fellowship, and to pray for the blessing of the work of the Carraig Centre and our shared witness to Christ in the town and its environs.

Relationships with other churches across the city and county are respectful but with little interaction. Positively, Cork Street Pastors teams are made up of Christians from a number of different churches and are highly regarded by Garda Síochána and the City Council for their contribution to the welfare of the city.

Clergy are occasionally asked to participate in community and civic events, the largest being the annual Cork Show which is within the southern boundary of Carrigrohane parish.

Administration

The Parish Office with secretarial assistance available is vital to facilitate the work of ministry in the Union. For the rector, associate minister and youth work leaders, this is a gift to release much of the administrative load.

The Select Vestry

As a Union it has one Select Vestry which over the years has been fully behind the refurbishment of Blarney Church, the addition of The Glade at St Senan's, and considerable structural and internal improvements to St Peter's. Most recently much time has been spent on bringing the Carraig Centre into being – a work about to be handled by the Carraig Centre Board of Management.

The Select Vestry is responsible for an annual turnover of around 300K.

The Carraig Centre Board of Management

A Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Management has started work to fulfil the vision. The board is separate from the Select Vestry but is accountable to it and the United Diocese of Cork. The rector is a member of the Board of Management and will play a key role in developing the Centre's mission.

LOCATING THE PARISHES

The Geography

The Union covers a large geographical area, from the western Cork city area of Carrigrohane. Continuing west on the N22 Cork towards Macroom, approximately:

- North of this line the parishes span the River Lee.
- Coachford is the most westerly,
- The most northerly point is Donaghmore and the most easterly the village of Blarney, which is within the city boundary.

A number of parishioners live outside of those boundaries.

The town of Ballincollig just west of the city centre, is the largest urban area, with offices, light industry and retail.

Demographics

Living here are those from the whole spectrum of social and economic circumstances and needs, who in the main are Irish, but with a growing number of other nationalities.

Education

There are a large number of National Schools and four secondary schools in Ballincollig, Blarney and Coachford, as well as close access to many secondary schools in Cork City including Ashton Comprehensive, which has a Church of Ireland foundation. (Nb; each school has their own enrolment policies which have to be strictly adhered to).

For third level education UCC in the city and on the parish boundary is Cork Institute of technology./Many other third level colleges of education in the city from the College of Commerce, the School of Music, to St John's College and other places of learning for a wide variety of careers, arts and life skills.

Key Features

This is a very special area to live in with access to the city of Cork, the airport and ferry, to Ballincollig a fast growing town and set to expand substantially. While at the same time retaining some of the best characteristics of a small town with a good community spirit and a successful Tidy Town entrant.

It also has the beautiful Blarney Castle estate, and the extensive Regional Park to the north of Ballincollig which has developed around the historic powder mills on the River Lee.