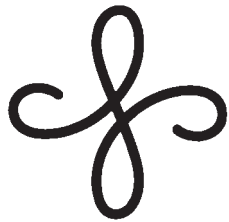




# Carafest Easter 2017



Carafest was a festival of faith and reconciliation, of friendship and fun, of theology and poetry, of politics and prayer, of story and sharing.

We were thrilled to welcome Azadeh Sobout, an Iranian PhD scholar at Ulster University who shared thoughts on reconciliation in the poetry of Rumi; Katy Radford who offered a Jewish viewpoints on Northern Ireland's hospitality and hostilities; Glenn Jordan who led a Sunday School bible session for adults (complete with colouring in and weak cordial); Duke Special, Katie Richardson, Alana Henderson, George Sloan and Blue Rose Code turned our dining room into a late night music venue with candles, twinkling lights and melodies to break your heart. We had late night Taizé sessions and early morning Easter services, we had a film programme that took participants from Iran to Ireland, we had



## The Seanchaí spins some tales...

Liz Weir had us all in the palms of her hands. The first two rows of the lounge were packed with kids and the rest with adults. Like all the best stories the meanings worked on a number of different levels. From tales of tight-fisted Ballymena natives to faeries and trolls and Rathlin Island she wove a wonderful picture of old Ireland rubbing up against the new and we were all the better for it. Fabulous.

## Back to Sunday School

Glenn Jordan transported many of us in the room back to a time when Church meant going to Sunday School halfway through the service to colour in pictures, drink over diluted orange juice, eat sweets and learn popular Bible Stories by heart. All those elements were in place but he took us back to some of those stories to ask how we read them now as adults. Is there a different lens to read familiar stories by that can open up new meaning in the text? We looked at the story of the tower of Babel and examined the idea that instead of being simply about hubris and pride, could this actually be God supporting diversity. Much discussion followed and much sugar was consumed!



food, queues of people, we had strangers making new friends and friends re-meeting strangers, we had that enjoyable level of chaos that we love at Corrymeela, we had the Corrymeela programme team presenting

workshops and trainings on their practices, we had Jo Berry and Pat Magee who shared extraordinary stories of their unexpected connection, we had Jayme Reaves hosting theology conversations about

Abraham, Hospitality and Myths, we had poets and authors – Jan Carson, Moyra Donaldson and Shirley McMillan – we had Andrew McCracken speaking about charities, we had a magnificent session from

Harriet Long exploring how theology can take the body seriously. We had Colin Craig speaking about elephants in the environmental room, we had Lynn Finnegan in the Polytunnel, we had art and paints and messy spaces, we







Azadeh Soubout sharing about the Heart of Reconciliation in Rumi's Poetry

### Ruminating on Rumi

Azadeh Soubout led us on an enchanting journey through the work of the 14th Century Persian Poet Rumi. Time slowed down to the calm measured beat of her voice and his work, recited in both Persian and English. As we thought about Reconciliation Rumi said "Out beyond ideas of right and wrong there is a field. I will meet you there."

After an enchanting hour her final exhortation was to do everything with great passion "Why be a dead fish in the sea of God's love?"

As one community member said on the way out – "Breathtaking!"

had Derick Wilson hosting sessions on Hope. We had youth workers speaking about how Youthwork can Work, and we had Alison Urie speaking about how singing and storytelling can transform a reform system. We had Linda, Ronald and Lillian speaking about Asylum and Duncan speaking about borders. We

had Liz Weir telling stories of fairies and Rathlin and Tenx9 hosting stories of frenemies.

What did I forget? We had volunteers who got up early and stayed up late, we had candles lit, we had poetry sessions, we had a kitchen staff who produced food for hundreds, we

had Heather Dornan Wilson speaking about resilience and David McConkey

speaking about debt. We had LGBT information sessions with Tim Kane, we



Ronald and Lillian Vellum speaking about the support provided for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland

### Forgiveness and Reconciliation

In 1984 the IRA tried to kill Margaret Thatcher at the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton. The Prime Minister survived but five others were killed including MP Sir Anthony Berry. Patrick Magee planted the bomb. Jo Berry is the daughter of one of the victims. In one of the most powerful sessions at Carafest they chronicled their unlikely journey into friendship and talked of the complexity of forgiveness and reconciliation. Compelling, moving and challenging.

had admin meetings to cope with changes, we had kite making, table tennis, children's programmes, gallons of tea, views of Rathlin and

We had light and life and a joyous celebration. The wonderful people at Trust Greenbelt supported our festival and we are so grateful to them, the Ireland Funds, JVM Trench Trust, the DFA in Dublin and the Community Relations Council. We are grateful to the volunteers, members and staff who made it happen. And we are grateful

to everyone who came and made our festival of faith and reconciliation a festival of friendship.

Join us for Carafest 2018. A festival of faith and reconciliation. 30th March - 2nd April. Tickets and line-up details from October 2018.

**Mark McCleary**  
Head of Communications,  
Corrymeela



A beautiful performance from Blue Rose Code



Katie and Norman Richardson creating a Scratch Choir

### Worship

The regular pattern of Corrymeela worship continued throughout the festival in the Croí. From Quaker silence in the mornings to a moving Tenebrae Service on Easter Saturday led by Trevor Williams. The lights that were extinguished on Easter Saturday were lit again with joy on Easter Sunday as Community leader Pádraig Ó Tuama and around 50 hearty souls gathered for the Dawn Service followed by an Agape Breakfast.