

THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY

PRESENTATION FOR THE SIBYLS WEEKEND AT PURLEY CHASE
24- 26 SEPTEMBER 2021

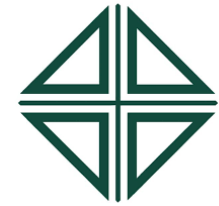


Corrymeela is people of all ages and all Christian traditions who, individually and together are committed to the healing of social, religious, and political divisions that exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world

The Corrymeela Community is a dispersed community, with many friends, staff, volunteers, and associates, which in many places is working to bring this vision to a divided world

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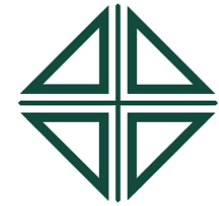
CORRYMEELA'S HISTORY

- Ray Davey was the founder and first community leader of Corrymeela. During World War II he joined the YMCA to provide spiritual and physical support for troops. Ray was captured and incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp in Dresden and there bore witness to the bombing of that city.
- This experience profoundly changed him. The bombing of Dresden affected Ray deeply, underscoring the futility and destructiveness of all conflict. While a prisoner, Ray thought about building community amidst conflict.



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SECTARIAN ISSUES

- After the war, Ray was appointed the first Presbyterian Dean of Residence at Queen's University. He was an engaging and committed chaplain and created events where students could experience a sense of community and gathering.
- Ray and his students became concerned at the sectarian tensions that were brewing in Northern Ireland during the 60s and wished to establish a place of gathering, an *“open village where all people of good will”* could come together and learn to live in community.



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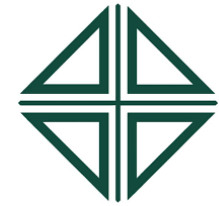
THE HOUSE FOR THE “OPEN VILLAGE”

- In 1965, it became known that a site outside Ballycastle was up for sale— a site that had an old Dutch–style holiday house on it. This Ballycastle property was purchased by Ray and the students for £7,000 in early 1965
- The money was raised within 10 days. The current site was officially opened on October 30, 1965.
- “Corrymeela” was already the name of the area when the community purchased the property



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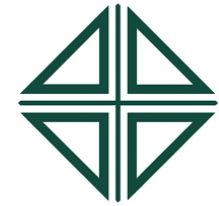
WHAT DOES “CORRYMEELA” MEAN TO US



- The word Corrymeela can be interpreted in different ways: “Hill of Harmony,” “Hill of Honeysuckle,” and “Lumpy Crossroads” are three of the possible interpretations.
- From its first days, Corrymeela has been a place of gathering, work, faith and discussion; bringing people of different backgrounds, different political and religious beliefs and different identities together.

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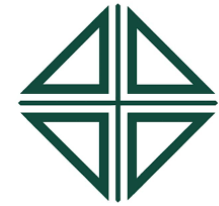
GATHERING

- We believe that there is strength in gathering and that, when we can be with each other in commitment, no difference is great enough to break us.
- In the early days of Corrymeela, hundreds of volunteers gave up their holidays, weekends, and summer breaks to host events, seminars, camps, and conferences, as well as to literally build the Ballycastle site.
- In time, staff members were employed who ran the site at Corrymeela and ran programmes in the wider community.



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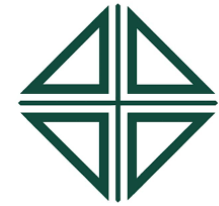
WHO DO WE INVOLVE?

- Corrymeela has always had a healthy combination of three types of people who have invested in making it what it is.
- People who, like the early founders, had their own careers but who dedicated many, many hours to the work.
- Those who had the time to volunteer for longer periods of time on-site and invest in the lived community of Corrymeela.
- And full-time staff whose skill, expertise and leadership gave shape to the permanent work of Corrymeela



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TODAY

- We are honoured to continue this tradition. Now, 55 years after we began, we have almost 40 full time staff, we have a cohort of 20 year–long volunteers and interns, and we have hundreds of other volunteers who come for shorter periods of time.
- Many of our volunteers have been working on the site for decades, generously giving time and service to the work.
- The Community of Corrymeela has grown too, with 170 members, 70 associate members and thousands of friends around the globe. Together we make commitments to be engaged with the world at its points of fracture, faith, and potential.



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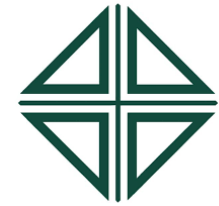
HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

- There are many ways to be in relationship with Corrymeela. We seek to work with all people of good will to transform division through human encounter.
- You can volunteer with us, support us by becoming a Friend of Corrymeela, or partner with us in the work that we do.
- And, of course, you can always visit us as part of a programmed group or through one of our Open Events.
- We invite those who feel led to commit themselves to the work of peace and reconciliation to consider membership.



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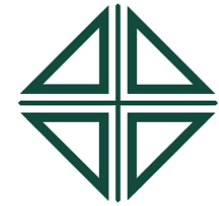
OUR WITNESS

- Corrymeela is people of all ages and all Christian traditions who, individually and together are committed to the healing of social, religious, and political divisions that exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world
- Whether or not members comfortably identify as 'Christian,' our witness is inspired by a desire to be Christ-like. We expect to find fellow children of God in our encounters with strangers.
- We believe that reconciliation with others and with the earth is at the heart of the gospel. And we view unconditional love as a divine response to the madness of being human.



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WHAT DO MEMBERS COMMIT TO?

- Members commit to a number of things:
- Daily prayer (we have a small prayer book where we reflect on a text and pray for members)
- Monthly gatherings (home groups, monthly seminars, prayer times).



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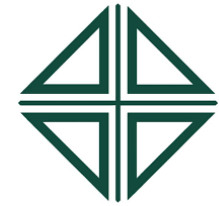
WHAT DO MEMBERS COMMIT TO?

- Three community weekends per year (early January, late April, early October)
- Supporting the work of the Corrymeela residential centre in Ballycastle financially, with time and professional support.
- Being a community presence at the Corrymeela centre.



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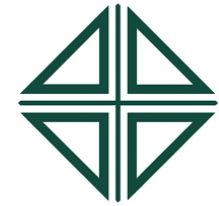
MISSION

- Being part of an open, inclusive Christian community committing to work for a society whose priorities are justice, mutual respect, the participation of all, concern for the vulnerable and the stranger, stewardship of resources, and the care for creation.
- Along with maintaining the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle, members of Corrymeela promise to act as 'centres of peace and reconciliation' wherever they live, work and worship.



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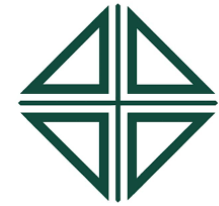
IN IRELAND

- We have monthly house groups that meet in six locations: Belfast, Newtownabbey, Bangor, Ballycastle, Lisburn, South Down and Dublin.
- We also have a short Taizé-like gathering in Belfast each month called Corrymeela in the City
- We commit every year at our dedication service to this vision and to play an active part in a process of change.



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OUTSIDE IRELAND

- Because our commitment focuses on gathering together, and the work of the Ballycastle centre, members tend to be from this island. But there is no restriction and members live abroad
- There have been many initiatives and activities which have supported and worked alongside Corrymeela in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. In the United Kingdom these have included:
 - THE CORRYMEELA COVENTRY PROJECT
 - THE LONDON CORRYMEELA VENTURE
 - CORRYMEELA LINK, BASED IN READING BUT WHICH CO-ORDINATED SUPPORT FOR CORRYMEELA THROUGHOUT THE UK

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WE ARE ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE

- We are teachers, writers, people looking for work, retired people; we are young, middle aged and old; we are people of doctrine and people of doubt.
- We are people who seek to engage with the differences of our world. We are people who disagree with each other on matters of religion, politics, and economics.
- We are people who wish to name our own complicity in the fractures that damage our societies.
- We are people of dedication and commitment.
- We are people of prayers, conversation, curiosity and questioning. We are people of truth telling and hope.
- We are Corrymeela. And you are always welcome.



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EARLY LEADERS

- **Ray Davey** served as the Leader of the Corrymeela community from 1965 to 1980. During that time the work at the centre evolved from being run by volunteers who gave their weekends, holidays, and summer breaks to having the programmes run by the joint endeavours of volunteers, staff and those who joined as Corrymeela Community members.
- From 1980 to 1994 **John Morrow** led the community and he was succeeded by **Trevor Williams** who led from 1994 to 2003. From 2003 David Stevens led the community until his untimely death in 2010. At this stage **Kate Pettis** served as the leader of Corrymeela until **Inderjit Bhogal** was appointed in 2011 and he served until the end of 2013.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Up until this stage, the leader of Corrymeela acted as leader of the Community as well as CEO of the more formal business side of the work. Over the years Corrymeela expanded to become an organisation with an annual turnover of £1.5 Million per year and almost forty staff.
- In 2014, following a major review of governance and leadership, it was decided to create two new roles and early in 2014 Colin Craig was appointed as Executive Director of Corrymeela with responsibility for the operational side of the organisation.
- Tim Mc Gowan is the current Executive Director



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PREVIOUS LEADER

- In September 2014 **Pádraig Ó Tuama** was appointed as Leader of the Corrymeela Community with responsibility for spiritual direction, vision and pastoral care. The new roles and division of responsibilities allow more time for new initiatives, greater focus on development and an enriching team leadership approach where each brings skills, expertise and analysis that enhances the leadership function.
- Padraig, a well-known Catholic theologian, poet and LGBT+ activist was the first openly gay leader of the Corrymeela Community



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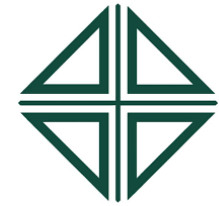
LEADER TODAY

- Alexander Wimberly became Leader in August of 2019
- Alex's pastoral background has helped him lead the community into conversations about how we care for one another within Corrymeela — and how being a member of Corrymeela leads us to becoming 'centres of peace and reconciliation' wherever we live, work and worship.
- Our leaders have come from many backgrounds. **Inderjit Boghal** for example is of Kenyan-Indian origin who came from a Sheffield ministry. Alex hails from the USA



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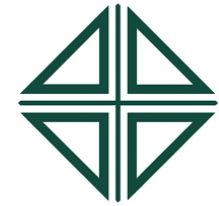
THE LUMPY CROSSING PLACE

- Corrymeela is often translated from the original Irish as “Hill of Harmony” or “Hill of Sweetness.”
- But there is another and more probable translation. The name comes from a neighbouring townland, Corrymellagh, in the parish of Culfeightrin. Culfeightrin means in Irish “The Corner of the Stranger.” Corrymellagh means “The Lumpy Crossing Place.”
- Perhaps the latter etymology is more apt for us: a place where differing groups, strangers to each other, are offered the opportunity to cross over into another space. And the crossing is “lumpy,” not easy, full of pitfalls.



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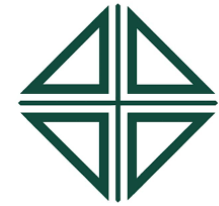
OUR REACH

- Corrymeela has 50 years of experience facilitating safe and creative space for groups to engage in transformative work.
- If you come to us our staff can deliver the entire programme for your group. We have a number of programmes designed for a range of ages and needs. We can also create a bespoke programme for your group.
- We work alongside people from youth and school groups, family and community organisations, faith communities and political parties.



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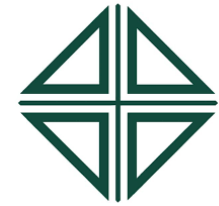
OUR RANGE

- We run group sessions using dialogue, experiential play, art, storytelling, mealtimes, and shared community to help groups embrace difference and learn how to have difficult conversations.
- We work alongside visiting university groups as well as groups from other parts of the world who wish to learn from our experience, and learn how to apply the Corrymeela lens to fractures in their own societies.
- We are involved with many ethnic groups and communities throughout the world



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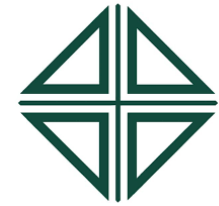
HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

- Through our activities and programme of events we seek to allay fears and to challenge homophobia and transphobia, wherever it occurs
- We welcome all transgender people, transsexual lesbian, gay, heterosexual, and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves.
- And we challenge all institutionalised and personal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people wherever it occurs, throughout the world.



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TOGETHER IS BETTER

- In our increasingly divided world, Corrymeela is a movement of people rallied around one inspirational idea: ‘Together is better’.
- Every year we welcome over 8,000 people to our beautiful Ballycastle home and into our programmes in communities around Northern Ireland.
- We deeply believe that everyone is welcome, whatever their background, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, or nationality.
- We welcome everyone — because together is better.



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AND TOGETHER WE WELCOME YOU

- In our programmes enabling young people to tackle sectarianism, to supporting survivors of racism and homophobia and transphobia, we work relentlessly to tackle intolerance, hatred, and oppression.
- We challenge injustice — because together is better.
- As we hear each other's story, we learn how to live well with each other.
- We change ourselves — because together is better.
- And we'd love to welcome you.

