“Tis the Season to be Merry....”
For many people Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don’t have extra money to buy presents for their children. Many are saddened at Christmas time when they think of their loved ones who won’t be joining them this year, or they themselves cannot travel. Turkey dinners may only be a wish and not a reality for some.

Yet Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing us His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength, of gift sharing and love. Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of Christ.

God sent his only Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world but he didn’t send him to a rich white family. He sent him as a baby born in a stable, in great poverty to parents seeking asylum from danger. It is only natural for parents then as now to want what is best for their children.

We have travelled all over the world since time began to seek a better life. I left Ireland as a young man seeking a new life, joining the hordes of immigrants who make up the American population today. What I found here was a great welcome.

Christmas is a time of welcome...a time to welcome love into our hearts, to welcome loved ones home and to welcome Jesus in his many representations on this Earth, recognizing that at the end of the day, we are all one, all unified in Christ.

I will leave you with a piece from the great Celtic poet, John O’Donohue:
“Christmas awakens wonder in the heart.
All belief depends on wonder.
Where there is no wonder, there can be no faith.
Wonder is a beautiful way of seeing.
Wonder never rests on the surface of a fact or a situation.
It voyages inwards to discover why something is the way it is.
Wonder celebrates the mystery and depth of presence that is within us and around us.
It has no greed to grasp or own the heart of a thing.
As Patrick Kavanagh said:
“Through a chink too wide comes in no wonder.”
Wonder keeps experience fresh and original.
At the Winter Solstice the divine presence stirs in the crib of the heart infusing our eyes with the glow of wonder.”

May you all have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year. May we be thankful for what we have and spare a thought for those who have not. And may Christmas open our hearts to others wherever they may be.

God Bless,
Well Done to the Friends & Family of Mike & Yvonne O’Donovan who hosted a great night for them on Friday 29th November.

The Irish, (Corkonians especially!) and Boston community showed up in great solidarity and it was a great show of solidarity and friendship.

IMMIGRATION LEGAL CLINICS

Please note our Tuesday clinics will no longer be held at the Banshee Bar & Restaurant but instead will be at our new offices in Adams Village.

IRISH PASTORAL CENTRE
FREE IMMIGRATION CLINICS 2020

Immigration, Visa, and U.S. Citizenship questions answered
Hosted by: Attorneys Chris Lavery, Dan Harrington, and Maura Kelly [Members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association]

DORCHESTER LOCATION:
Irish Pastoral Centre Offices
512 Gallivan Blvd., Suite 1
Dorchester, MA 02124

Tuesday, January 7
Tuesday, February 4
Tuesday, March 3
Tuesday, April 7
Tuesday, May 5
Tuesday, June 2
Tuesday, July 7
Tuesday, August 4
Tuesday, September 1
Tuesday, October 6
Tuesday, November 3
Tuesday, December 1

Clinic begins at 6:00pm

Questions: call 617-265-5300 or email macavant@ipcboston.org
All issues discussed remain confidential
Irish Pastoral Centre, 512 Gallivan Blvd., Suite 1, Dorchester, MA 02124
Tel: 617-265-5300
www.ipcboston.org

A NIGHT FOR MIKE

THE GREATNESS OF A COMMUNITY IS MOST ACCURATELY MEASURED BY THE COMPASSIONATE ACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS.
Cork Association

Cork Dance to benefit the African Mission fathers on December 14th at the Knights of Columbus in Arlington on December 14th. Music from Denis Curtin’s band and installation of officers for 2020.

Irish Club News

IPC Mass & Luncheon
Fr Dan Finn will be saying a Mass for the Irish Pastoral Centre in St John’s Chrysostom, 4750 Washington St, West Roxbury at 12 pm. Thursday December 12th Luncheon and Music will follow. Please RSVP to 855-479-2472

Irish Social Club, West Roxbury
TILL’s Annual Autism Support Center’s Annual Holiday Party on Sunday, December 15th from 1-3 pm.

RSVP to autism.services@tillinc.org or call 781-302-4835

Norwood Irish Music Club
Dance on December 21st with the Andy Healy band
Dance on January 18th with Erin’s Melody

At Knights of Columbus Hall, 572 Nichols St, Norwood.
This story can fit 100–150 words. The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field. You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

During the coming Christmas season
May you be blessed
With the spirit of the season, which is peace,
The gladness of the season, which is hope,
And the heart of the season, which is love.

www.IrelandCalling.ie
The ICC would like to invite Children of all ages to participate in this year’s Nativity Play produced by Sheila Hume.

**ICC nativity play & Children’s Mass**

**Sunday, December 15 at 11am**

Looking for young musicians, singers & actors. There is a role for everyone—speaking and non-speaking roles. All ages welcome.

We are delighted that Music Teacher Roisin Byrne will join us this year, she will direct the children’s choir.

**Practice Times:**
- Sunday, December 1 @ 12:30 (after ICC Mass)
- December 6 (Friday) at 7pm
- December 13 @ 9am

Call 781-821-8291 or email mdoother@irishculture.org to sign up.
A U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) Community Relations Officer will provide information on the use of official USCIS online resources. All the immigration information needed to understand and apply for an immigration benefit such as a green card or citizenship is available on the USCIS.gov website. And the USCIS website provides a personalized account to help you navigate the immigration process. There you will find:

- Up-to-date information about the application process for immigration benefits;
- Tools to help you prepare for filing and help finding citizenship preparation classes; and
- Information to help explore your immigration options.

This presentation will focus on the USCIS information you can obtain on-line, and how to find it, and how to avoid and report immigration scams. Learn about finding official, free USCIS forms, how apply for an immigration benefit online, how to check the status of your case and more.

Free and open to the public
Irish Pastoral Centre, 512 Gallivan Blvd., Suite 1, Dorchester 617-265-5300

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**Christmas Craft Fair**

Come join us for our Christmas Craft Fair....

with local crafters...Santa Claus, and a few elves!!! There will be music and mince pies and lots of Christmas festive fun and a Christmas movie for the kids to watch on our big screen while their carers relax!!

11 - 2 December 14th.

Interested crafters can call us on 617-265-5300 to book a table before 10th December.
Many of you know Dr Maura Weir, daughter of Adams village’s beloved Rosaleen (Gaffney) Weir... We are very happy to share that Maura will be doing a Mental Health CPR training in January at the IPC Offices which will be finalized at a later date. This helps people to deal with situations where they are with somebody in crisis and furnishes them with the confidence and skills to manage that effectively. It is to the mind what First Aid is to the body. January is a difficult month for many so this may prove very useful.

Anyone interested can call the office and find out the dates or keep an eye on our Facebook page.
The date of Christmas was most likely taken from the Celtic winter solstice.

"It is cosmic symbolism ... which inspired the Church leadership in Rome to elect the winter solstice, December 25, as the birthday of Christ, and the summer solstice as that of John the Baptist, supplemented by the equinoxes as their respective dates of conception," says historian S E Hijmans.

Leaving a candle in the window of the house to guide Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem to give birth was inspired by an old Celtic ritual of lighting a way for the spirits to pass peacefully.

Hanging the holly and ivy wreath outside the house. In pre-Christian times they warded off evil spirits. In modern day the holly represents the crown of thorns, the ivy the pre-Christian era.

The decorating of evergreens in the home originated in olden days in Ireland when people were very conscious and fearful of the "little folk". They were wary of their powers and knew they were capricious characters who could fling a curse at a whim so they were anxious to keep them happy...hanging greenery inside so as to make them feel at home should they take shelter there during the colder months.

The giving of Christmas gifts most likely is as a result of a winter solstice custom when gifts were exchanged between clans and chieftains as a means of renewing ties and friendship.

Food left for Santa Claus comes from the Gaelic tradition of leaving food for Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem.

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**An Ciarraí Carúl Nollag - Kerry Christmas Carol**

Leave out the bread and meat for them, And sweet milk for the Child, And they will bless the fire, that baked And, too, the hands that toiled.

For Joseph will be travel-tired, And Mary pale and wan, And they can sleep a little while Before they journey on.
Facing the Holidays After Loss

Whether it is the empty chair at the table, the present that won’t be opened or the visit that won’t happen because of the loss of a loved one, the holidays are a difficult time for people going through grief. Sometimes being around happy party-goers can accentuate the pain of your own grief. We have been asked by people over the last few months about resurrecting the Bereavement Support Group for people who are dealing with grief.

Holidays are notoriously emotional times. We invite anyone who feels they are dreading the looming holiday or who just would like sit with other people who have also lost loved ones and get support from community to our Bereavement Support Event Thursday December 19th at IPC Offices.

People who have dealt with this over the years and would like to share their experiences in a spirit of togetherness and mutual support are also very welcome.

We aim to provide a safe space for people to work through their grief and explore ways of making the holidays a less painful experience. Please tell friends or family you think might benefit. Call 6172655300 Ext 10 for more info or email veronica@ipcboston.org

Holiday Travel Advice

Know Your Technology Rights

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Law enforcement officers MAY NOT search electronic devices without probable cause or consent within the U.S.
- Immigration officials need reasonable suspicion to search electronic devices when a person is entering or leaving the U.S.
- Immigration status influences your right to refuse access to electronic devices

Probable Cause: Logical belief based on facts & circumstance that a person has, is or will be involved in illegal activity.

Reasonable Suspicion: Objective, reasonable thought that a person is involved in illegal activity.

Rights by Immigration Status:

- U.S. Citizens & Green Card Holders in good status: CANNOT be denied entry by refusing to unlock their device or provide a password
- Visa Holders/Visa Waiver Visitors: MAY be denied entry to the U.S. for refusing to unlock their device or provide a password.

Follow CIIC for updates

We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year’s Day.

—Edith Lively Pierce
A very special thanks to all the local businesses who helped us celebrate our Official Opening of our new Offices in Adams Village. We are delighted to have such hospitable neighbors. Special thanks to Dermot Quinn from Greenhills and of course Peter Lydon & family.