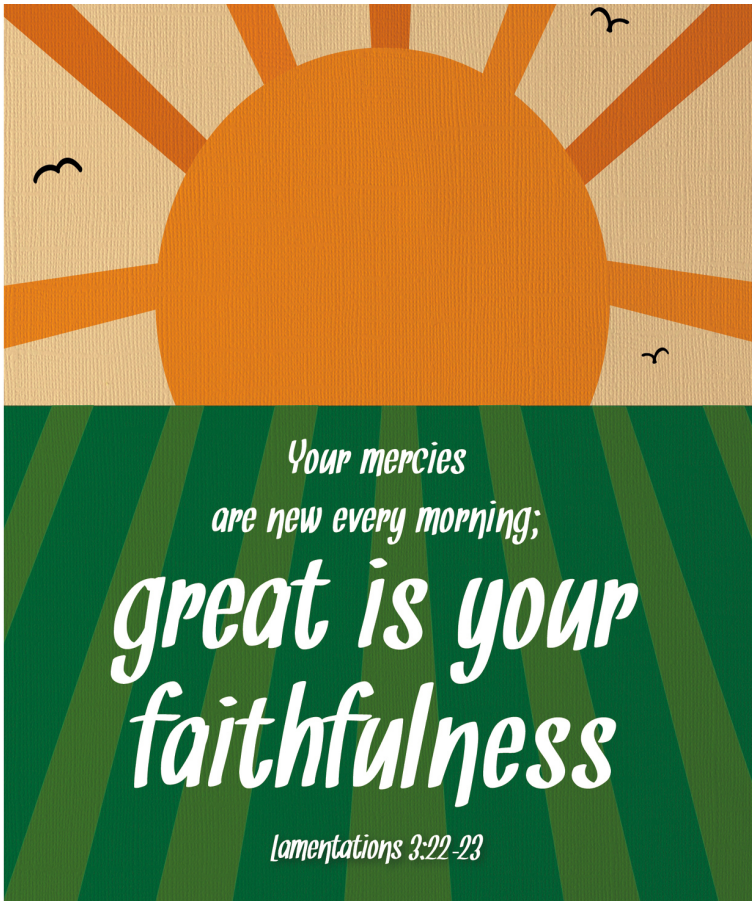


SPECIAL ECO EDITION



WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE
September 2021

Our Vision: "To celebrate God and share the love of Jesus."

Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

Here we are in September, eight months of 2021 having flown by already which makes me wonder how time can possibly pass so quickly. Can it be that the earth is spinning faster as a result of climate change?! Realistically there is no danger of that, but clearly the climate crisis does need to be tackled.

The world God created was not just good, it was perfect - until he entrusted it to us humans to look after. When I look at the natural world around me, I am full of awe, wonder, praise and thanksgiving. I don't understand how an egg can be strong enough to withstand being compressed along one axis but so fragile when you tap it on the side of a bowl? I know that the principle is the same for arches in cathedrals for example but if you would like to know the explanation then please don't ask me, ask one of the several engineers or scientists in the congregation to explain it to you.

What a privilege to see the wonders of nature and science all around us. What a privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility of looking after it all and being good stewards of it. How sad that the human race has departed from our obligations to our Creator and His creation.

As a church we are taking steps to become an eco friendly church but we are aware that if we are to make a difference in our world, we need to embrace eco friendly practices not only as a fellowship but also as individuals. So this month, hopefully, we will be inspired by new ideas of ways we can change our lifestyle, albeit in small ways, for the good of the whole planet. Our small but not insignificant contribution to tackling the climate crisis. From acorns oak trees grow.

The big picture reveals that our responsibility is not just to the land, seas and atmosphere, it extends to the people that dwell on, by and in them. While climate change in the UK rarely threatens our citizens' existence this is not the case elsewhere. Climate change is affecting the lives of the poorest nations disproportionately so that many people in low income countries are struggling to survive because of things like drought, floods, fires or unexpected weather patterns which disrupt or destroy their already fragile existences. It is not just a question of kindness, it's a question of justice. Justice for the vulnerable, the oppressed, the disadvantaged and we know that our God is a God of justice:
The Lord loves whatever is just and good; His unfailing love fills the earth.
(Psalm 33:5 NLT)

As I write this I have no idea of the other content of this magazine but I'm sure that it will contain many pearls of wisdom to help us, individually and collectively, to play our part in restoring the balance of God's creation.

To keep our prayers informed, we have a speaker from TearFund for our harvest service on Oct 3rd. On Saturday 2nd October we will be hosting a community day as part of the Great Big Green Week initiative, with a variety of activities for the whole family. Do put it in your diary now so you can take part.

An exciting time ahead of us...

With love in Christ,

Lorna

Green Weekend The Eco Team

The Eco Team is busy planning a very special **Green Weekend** on **2nd and 3rd October**.

Special events will include

- A themed Climate Sunday Service
- Special film screenings
- Art and craft activities for children and young people
- Street stalls

Put the dates in your diary and come along and support us to raise the profile of climate change and why it is relevant to our community and local decision makers.

Cut Throat Lane allotment walk - Julie Harris

A walk is being planned to the allotments at 10am on 18th September, to promote well-being and the appreciation of God's green earth. The walk will depart from the church to Cut Throat Lane allotments and has been assessed to be an easy walk of approximately 1.5 miles please see the map on page 10. Sally has very kindly agreed to give a talk on arrival at the allotment.

I would really recommend this walk and if you are interested please ring the office to register your interest. Depending on numbers we might be able to meet up afterwards at the church for a coffee; The allotments are quite impressive and find them very interesting; I am sure Sally will give an interesting talk on what we can grow for ourselves in terms of fruit and vegetables.

Witham URC Carbon Footprint - Ian Hardie

Hopefully, you are aware that Church Meeting has expressed a desire that Witham URC become an 'Eco-Church' and that we have already received our bronze Eco-Church UK award.

One of the things we need to do to progress this further is to measure (and then take steps to reduce) the church's carbon footprint. A lot of that involves measuring the usage of power, and water as well as the volume of waste produced on church premises and measuring certain elements of church expenditure. Church records are sufficient to enable most of this to be done.

In due course we will also need to measure aspects of food production and usage associated with the church, but we probably need to wait until more "new-normal" times for that to be meaningful.

But there is an aspect of the carbon footprint measurement where we do not have the data to complete the calculation and where we need the help of all of you during the whole of the month of October this year.

This aspect of the church's carbon footprint relates to distances travelled by all means of transport (foot, bike, public transport or private vehicle as driver or passenger) in connection with church activities – Sunday services; pastoral visiting; Bible Study, House Group, or Elders' meeting attendance; having a coffee in Meeting Point; running Small Talk; travelling as a church employee; and so on.

We have devised a fairly simple one-page survey to be completed at the end of October 2021 to enable each and every one of you to list the approximate mileage travelled by each mode of transport when engaged in a church activity during the entire month. The survey will be made available before the start of October so you know what is going to be involved.

For those with access to the Witham URC website, it will be available for download from the Eco-church page. For those who do not have access to the website, hard copies will be available after the Sunday service on 26th September (when we hope a lot of you will be staying for the Church Meeting) or from the Church office. If you are not able to get a copy from either of those sources, please ring Ian Hardie on 01376 512513 and ask for a copy to be delivered.

Please use one of these methods to get hold of a copy of the survey, then

- keep as accurate a record as possible of your October 2021 travels in connection with church activities on whatever day of the week; and
- return the completed survey form as soon after the month-end as possible.

Thank you in anticipation for your help with this.

YOU ARE INVITED
TO
WITHAM URC's
POP UP COFFEE SHOP





EVERY THURSDAY
10am - MIDDAY
Witham URC's forecourt

How are you?

Nice to see you again

Enjoy a drink and chat
with friendly faces


The Centre
AT WITHAM URC

Everyone Welcome
Witham URC, Newland Street
Tel: 01376 500958
E-mail: info@withamurc.org.uk
www.withamurc.org.uk


The
United
Reformed
Church

Why don't you measure (and reduce) your carbon footprint? - Ian Hardie

Have you ever thought that you ought to measure your personal carbon footprint but have no idea how to do it, or what to do about it thereafter? Well, the answer may be here.

The first link below will take you to a fun and easy way to roughly calculate your carbon footprint, to tell you what you are doing well already, to challenge you to consider ways to reduce your footprint further and to enable you to offset your remaining carbon footprint after any challenges you have accepted. You can use it as a measuring tool, as a self-education tool, or as a prompt to life-style change. It will take only 5 or 10 minutes to complete, but could change your life and help to change the future of God's world.

The second link takes you to a much more thorough and detailed set of questions which will take longer to complete and may require you to do some research about aspects of your home and expenditure; but the result will be much more accurate as a measure of your carbon footprint. Again, there is encouragement to reduce and/or offset your footprint.

<https://carbon-calculator.climatehero.me/?source=MicrosoftAds>

<https://footprintr.me/>

If you have access to a computer or similar device, please click on at least one of these links and think about what the test tells you about your current life-style and what you might be willing to do to change it.

If you do not have such a device, why not ask a friend with a suitable device to find the link for you and then enter your data?

Climate change and COP26 - Julie Harris

Climate change has been in the news for sometime now, but recently it's becoming more at the forefront of the headlines and it is becoming more urgent. I have been taking a lot more interest in it. So, what is climate change and what I can do on a personal level? What is causing climate change? Only after reading and researching did I fully begin to grasp what climate changes is and what is causing it. So when they talk about carbon footprint ,what does this actually mean for individuals and organisations?

Basically carbon footprint is the measure of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. These greenhouse gases are trapped in the earth's atmosphere and cannot escape, hence the planet is warming up at an alarming rate. So what exactly are greenhouse gases? They are emissions caused by many different factors this can be anything from car travel to plane travel to the production of fuels that we need to heat our homes, it can be caused by the fuel needed to burn or destroy the plastics and cardboard that we are disposing of these just some of the examples.

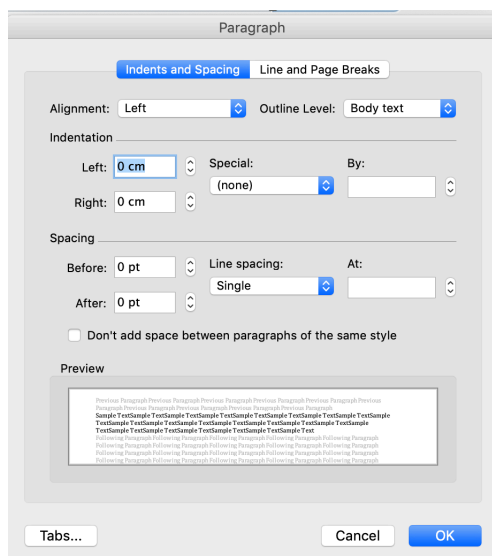
Another impact of emissions is the consumption of red meats due to the amount of methane eliminated by cows. As you can see there are many many aspects relating to climate change and it is escalating at an alarming rates. Food for thought, People in poorer countries produce far less greenhouse gases than those in richer countries. For instance in Qatar which is oil rich and probably one of the top producers of oil, 38.6 tons of greenhouse gases are emitted per person per year whereas in the Congo only 0.03 tons of greenhouse gases are emitted per person per year.

The COP26 Climate change conference is being held in Glasgow later on in the year, with delegates from 196 countries attending. They will discuss and agree proposals to limit climate change. They will also be reviewing agreements made in the Paris 2015 climate conference and review any improvements that may have been made since then.

How to Save Paper - and so do a tiny bit to help Climate Change! - Muriel Heppinstall

After having, yet again, to reformat a document so it uses less paper when printed, I thought I'd share some of the tips I've learnt over the years:

1. Decrease your margins. The normal Word document is set for a business letter. If you click on the 'Layout' tab on the toolbar, and then 'margins' you can select the page size most suitable. I normally use 'narrow margins'
2. For most of the next operations you have to select the text, either the whole document or part. My version of word has 'select all' on the drop down Edit tab at the very top of the screen. Otherwise click & drag your mouse over the part you want to work on to highlight it, when the background will turn blue.
3. Type size is a personal choice but 10 is plenty big enough for those of us with normal vision (far far larger than the ingredients lists on food!).
4. The Format tab, again at the very top of the screen, is very useful. Click on Format then Paragraph and you get a drop down menu:



The key boxes are

Spacing – this is spacing before or after a return or paragraph break. 6pt after produces a pleasing effect with 1/2 line spacing between. You don't normally need any more.

Line spacing – I always make sure this is set to single. Wider spacing is meant for editing and revising.

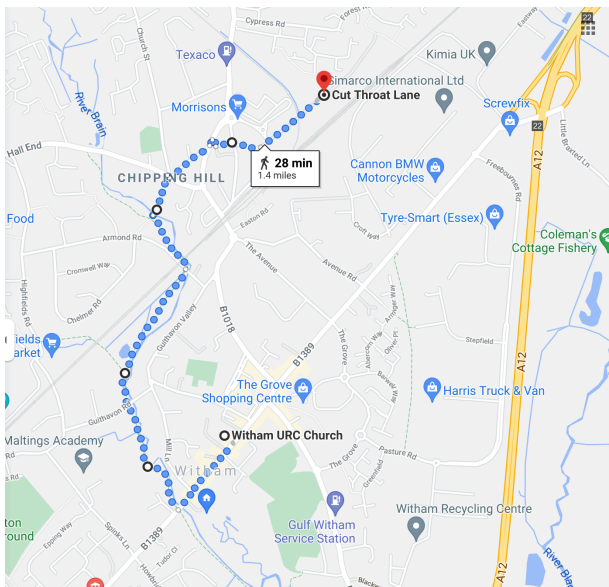
5. When printing from the internet,

you can highlight the important part then copy & paste it into a Word document then edit it so you only print what you need.

Church Walks Muriel Heppinstall

We are hoping to start regular church walks, for exercise, fellowship and to enjoy the beautiful countryside we are blessed with.

Most walks will need transport to get to the start but we are starting with a very local walk along the river to admire Sally's allotment: please see page 4 and the route is shown on the map below.



Elements of a low-carbon garden - Muriel Heppinstall (courtesy of the RHS)

A low-carbon garden buzzes with life, sparkles with water, and is packed with plants. If designed well, it can act as a carbon sink, actively combatting climate change

As gardeners, we have a chance to make a direct, practical difference in combatting climate change. Every time you grow a tree, mulch your soil, or let your grass grow long, you could actively be increasing the carbon your garden absorbs.

Too often, though, we return all that carbon dioxide right back into the atmosphere by firing up a petrol-powered mower, filling pots with peat based compost or scattering artificial fertilisers. So, low-carbon gardening needs a twin approach. Lower your carbon emissions to neutral by gardening sustainably, then maximise the carbon your garden sequesters and stores, and help it actively combat climate change.

1. Grow a hedge



Not only do hedges actively sequester and store carbon, they also provide nesting sites, food sources, and shelter for wildlife.

Hedges are the most eco-friendly type of garden boundary

2. Make a fedge

A fedge is a fence built from waste wood and prunings. Fedges serve as somewhere to stack woody garden waste while it



slowly rots down, providing shelter for wildlife, too. These beautiful woven borders can provide windbreaks and a handy way to dispose of anything too woody to go on the compost heap.

3. Grow your own plant supports

Coppices of hazel, birch, willow and dogwood trees provide a renewable, carbon-free source of beanpoles and pea sticks as well as a wildlife habitat. Hazel is best for the uprights, and willow for weaving poles together. Willow is best for the uprights, and willow for weaving poles together – don't stick willow into the ground as it roots very readily. Coppiced hazel poles have a much lower carbon cost than imported bamboo canes

4. Pick greener ways to grow your own

Home-grown food, when grown sustainably, has a much lower carbon footprint than that produced by conventional agriculture. Vegetable gardens store more carbon when permanently planted with fruit trees, berries, and perennial vegetables, interspersed with annuals to fill gaps. Use mulches such as homemade compost, make paths from woodchip rather than concrete or grass, and grow organically for maximum carbon benefit.

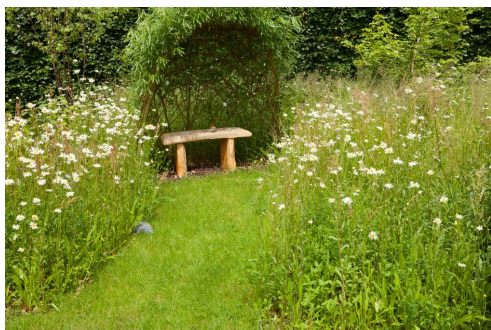
5. Make your own compost

Compost bins make good use of green waste from the kitchen and garden; this avoids waste going into landfill where it releases methane, a greenhouse gas 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. Soil mulched with compost holds on to nutrients and rainwater better, so meaning less need to water and feed your garden. An all-round winner!

6 Plant a tree

Trees suck in carbon, storing it in lignin-rich trunks and locking it in the ground. Plant a tree in your garden and you help offset not just your own carbon footprint, but that of your children too. It's one of the most effective ways your garden can help fight climate change. It's estimated that on average a single broadleaf tree stores 2.9 tonnes of carbon in its lifetime.

7. Let your lawn show its wild side



Let the grass grow and you'll be surprised how many flowers appear. Meadows of naturally occurring wildflowers are threaded with closely mown paths, which lead through the clouds of butterflies, bees, and other insects that thrive here. Having a mown path helps keep it looking 'gardened'. Put away the mower and your lawn reverts to something

resembling natural grassland – one of the most efficient carbon sinks.

8. Try a tapestry lawn



There are many delightful plants you can grow in a lawn instead of grass, such as this *Acaena*

Tapestry lawns are full of flowers and low-growing, mat-forming plants. No-grass lawns have the benefits of a grass lawn but without the eco-drawbacks of weekly

mowing. There are many suitable plants including white clover, chamomile, creeping thyme and yarrow.

9. Grow lots of long-lived plants

Choose trees, shrubs and perennials instead of annuals and bedding plants for maximum benefit

Focus on long-lived plants; this means less replanting and less soil cultivation, helping you avoid disturbing fragile eco systems and releasing carbon that was locked in underground.

10. Harvest rainwater



Every litre, or gallon, of mains water you use adds to your carbon footprint. Rainwater harvesting will keep your dependence on mains water supplies to a minimum in summer. The best approach of all is to minimise your water use, wherever it comes from, by mulching and picking your plants carefully.

11. Green up your driveway



Bugles, violets and Arenaria grow well between the tyre tracks. Driveways of reclaimed stone slabs and infilled with low-growing plants provide parking but with added beauty, wildlife value and rainwater absorption. Concrete has a high carbon cost, so minimising its use will help keep your carbon footprint down.

Greenpeace is about to mark a big moment -- turning 50 - Audrey Kennedy

Greenpeace, 50 years old this year, is a movement of people who are passionate about defending the natural world from destruction. Their vision is a greener, healthier and more peaceful planet, one that can sustain life for generations to come.



- They are independent. They don't accept any funding from governments, corporations or political parties – their work is funded by ordinary people.
- They investigate document and expose the causes of environmental destruction. They work to bring about change by lobbying, consumer pressure and mobilising members of the general public. And they take peaceful direct action to protect our Earth and promote solutions for a green and peaceful future.

Greenpeace was [founded in 1971](#) by a small group of concerned individuals, who set sail to Amchitka island off the coast of Alaska to try and stop a US nuclear weapons test.

SOME OF THEIR SUCCESSES

[1972: US abandons nuclear testing grounds at Amchitka Island, Alaska](#)

In 1971, a small group of activists set sail to Amchitka island off Alaska in an old fishing boat called The Greenpeace. Their mission: to stop a US nuclear weapons test. it sparked a storm of publicity that ultimately turned the tide. Five months after the group's mission, the US stopped the entire Amchitka nuclear test programme. The island was later declared a bird sanctuary.

1989: Greenpeace campaign ends the use of deadly drift nets

Greenpeace campaigned for 15 years against destructive fishing practices like bottom trawls and driftnets. Activists campaigned at sea, and produced a documentary exposing the reckless destruction they caused. This led to widespread public outrage. The UN eventually agreed a moratorium on using large driftnets in the high seas, followed by a worldwide ban in 1992.

2014: 80+ fashion brands pledge to ditch toxic chemicals

Greenpeace's Detox My Fashion campaign called on clothing companies to stop polluting waterways with hazardous chemicals. In response, 80 companies pledged to phase out these chemicals from their production-line, and seven years after the start of the campaign, all 80 companies had made significant progress.

Today, Greenpeace is present in over 40 countries around the world.



...er Vicar, it's about that flower Mrs Brindle's brought back from her foreign holiday...

An Interview with Tina Townsend Chair of the HUB Newland Precinct, Witham - Audrey Kennedy

I had heard so much about the HUB to be found in Newland Precinct and had passed it by many times so it was with great curiosity that I made an appointment with Tina Townsend its chairperson to find out more about what went on there on a daily basis.

The HUB is a registered charity, set up on the 1st November 2018. On the charity website I read that the aims of the Witham Community Hub are to promote social inclusion for the public benefit of individuals living within the town of Witham and its surrounding area by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society. I also read that it aims to develop the capacity and skills of individuals living within that community who are socially and economically disadvantaged in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.

Tina was keen to tell me that a main part of the work done by the HUB is the Witham Community Fridge which was set up in October 2019. Its aim is to reduce food poverty and food waste. Tina told me that only a few years ago, thousands of tonnes of useable food were taken to landfill on a daily basis. The HUB has teamed up with the FareShare and Neighbourly charities to collect food surplus from them to redistribute via their Community Fridge which is located inside the HUB.

Tina told me that dedicated teams of volunteers go to local supermarkets 6 nights a week to collect any usable food surplus and take it back to the HUB. There it is sorted out - some going into their freezer, some into the community fridges. Any vegetables and fruit no longer considered usable are picked up twice a week by volunteers from local animal sanctuaries for their use. If anyone locally has a bulging apple tree or a glut of veg that they just can't use or freeze then the Hub is more than happy to make very good use of it. Tina told me that there are no awkward questions asked if people

want to use the fridge. It is run on the basis that you can leave a donation if you wish and that this will go towards the HUB running costs.

I learned that empty blister packs – like the ones our pharmacy pills come in - can be dropped off at the HUB and they are then recycled and proceeds will go to the Marie Curie Charity.

I was pleased to learn that all volunteers working at the HUB are at least Level 2 Food Hygiene registered and several have Level 3 registration. The HUB is open from Monday to Saturday 10am to 2pm.

Second hand jeans, T-shirts and fleeces are needed to help the homeless in the area and your contributions for this would be very welcome. Just drop them off at the HUB.

Tina's team of volunteers would also welcome donations of small new gifts you may have at home and don't need and would also welcome gift bags in good condition - they will be used to make up presents at Christmas for residents attending the Christmas Lunch which we have hosted at WURC and for the volunteers who assist with that outreach in the community. I discovered that on the 4th September Witham HUB will celebrate their third Anniversary and many activities are planned for that day.

I came away from my visit to the HUB and my chat to Tina feeling humbled by the efforts she and her loyal team of volunteers make each day for our local community of Witham. They deserve all our support in the vital outreach they do so cheerfully and so willingly.

'Fact... during lockdown we collected over 200 times from all the local supermarkets and saved over 15 tonnes of food going to landfill'

Washing Dishes While the Planet Burns
Dr Dave Benson - Culture & Discipleship
Director, LICC



Connecting with Culture Issues & Trends

‘Each of us can take small steps toward achieving net zero carbon. ... how do you start to change your life in manageable, achievable, feasible, small ways?’

– Allegra Stratton (UK spokesperson for COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference)

This week the Sixth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) dropped with a thud. With 3,949 pages merely summarising the meteorological mechanics, it’s heavy reading in every respect.

Even so, the headlines are blazingly obvious, leaving policymakers no room to claim it’ll all come out in the wash. The record-breaking droughts, fires, and floods we’re seeing aren’t normal. The blame for ‘global weirding’ is on humanity. Everything is connected, and no region is exempt.

Our greenhouse gas-fuelled overconsumption is responsible for a 0.8–1.3°C rise in global surface temperature over the last century. We’re at code-red. Dialling down the heat requires drastic reductions toward global net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050.

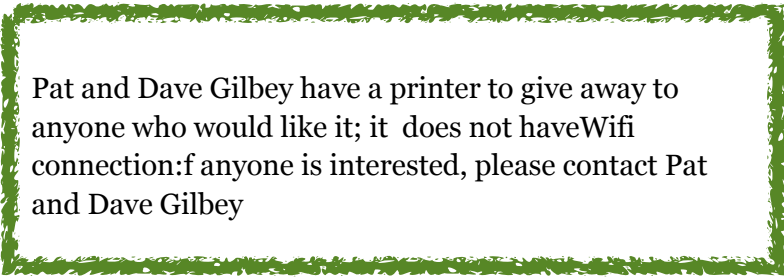
Yet it’s unlikely we can keep within the 1.5-degree threshold however severe the intervention; prior climate sins have generational fallout, with temperature rises set for decades to come. Where can we find hope when ecological scarring is ‘irreversible for centuries to millennia, especially changes in the ocean, ice sheets, and global sea level’?

Surprisingly, COP26 spokesperson Allegra Stratton suggested we start by skipping the rinse and putting our plates straight in the dishwasher. Unsurprisingly, such ‘micro-steps’ were mocked as ‘displacement activities’ that console overwhelmed individuals but ultimately distract from real change. Like Nero playing his proverbial fiddle, it’s easy to caricature this politician as washing dishes while the planet burns.

Without forceful lobbying and radical policies, many claim we’re doomed. But what if there’s a third way to bring change on both large and small scales – not just playing off one against the other?

Of necessity, the government must do the heavy lifting. And yet, the micro and the macro reinforce each other. Head, heart, and hands must also work together. The facts will fall on deaf ears if our hearts are hard to the planet’s plight. And without hope that God loves his world and hasn’t abandoned us in this time of ecological need, our hands are prone to point the finger at fallible politicians or hang limp by our side when our big plans fail.

Everyday actions, prayerfully performed, prime us to care for creation. A simple lifestyle, sustainable eco-churches, and wise advocacy, together make for ecological integrity. This is a potent witness to the powers who, post COP26, will be tempted to ‘greenwash’ their strategies. It shows that hopeful action begins with our Creator’s goodness, not simply human machinations. If this truth isn’t seen yet, be sure it’ll come out in the rinse.



Pat and Dave Gilbey have a printer to give away to anyone who would like it; it does not have Wifi connection: if anyone is interested, please contact Pat and Dave Gilbey

Toilet Twinning - Sally Stracey

Lack of decent sanitation can result in people contracting cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Four major outbreaks of cholera between 1832 and 1866 led to the death of tens of thousands of Londoners and as a result, Joseph Bazalgette designed and built the magnificent engineering feat that is the London Sewerage system (and created the Victoria Embankment in the process).

We in the UK therefore have had decent sanitation for many years (although even I remember outside toilets!). We even wash our cars; water our gardens, and jet wash our patios with mains drinking water.

However, in some other parts of the world this is not the case. It is estimated that a staggering 2 billion people don't have somewhere safe to go to the toilet, and the WHO estimates that each year, around 432,000 people in developing countries die as the result of poor sanitation. As well as being potentially fatal, sanitation related diseases can prevent people from being able to work and children from being able to attend school.

In addition to saving lives, other benefits of improving sanitation are:

- reducing the spread of intestinal worms, schistosomiasis and trachoma, which are neglected tropical diseases that cause suffering for millions;
- reducing the severity and impact of malnutrition;
- promoting dignity and boosting safety, particularly among women and girls.

For these reasons the charity Toilet Twinning runs a scheme by which (as the name suggests) people in developed countries can twin their toilet with an impoverished family's household latrine.

Rather than arrive, build a latrine, and then depart again, Toilet Twinning works with communities to educate them about the importance of sanitation and hygiene, and then assists families with the design and

construction of their own latrines. It is a collaborative process. The average cost per household, for a water and sanitation programme, is about £60 and therefore, the cost of twinning your toilet is £60. In return for your £60 you get a certificate stating which latrine you are twinned with, and a family get a latrine.

Toilet Twinning operate in a number of countries: Afghanistan; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ivory Coast; Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. The latrine that my toilet is twinned with is in Uganda and I have the certificate framed in the downstairs toilet.

Toilet twinning is a very simple and straightforward way in which you can literally save people's lives and make a huge difference to their communities, for the cost of a few Costas (other coffees shops are available!). I would thoroughly recommend it.

You can find out more at <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>



Shoe Boxes - Christine Huggett

Yes, it is that time of the year again: I know that this year has been especially difficult. We are unlikely to have any more covered boxes as they are all flip top now, but we have plenty of the Samaritan's Purse ones in the loft, but please use any covered ones first as that leaves more loft space.

The leaflets have been ordered and will be available soon. Now more shops are open it is easier than it was to get items, but please check the list before you pack the box as some of the items are unsuitable.

For those of you who would prefer to have a £20 box prepared for you there is an online option. Boxes will be collected between 15th and 22nd November, but more about that later. Last year's boxes went to three different countries so please continue to support this.

It's Curtains for the Cupboard - Graham Bantock

Could one of our craft orientated congregation provide a small curtain to finish the re-furbishment of the store cupboard at the back of the sanctuary please? There is an area under the worktop that has larger objects stacked in it. It looks a bit untidy and its appearance would be greatly improved if a curtain could be drawn over it. It would also prevent distracting and tempting young eyes by hiding the toys stacked behind it. The space is 970 mm wide and 1000 mm high. A traditional round pole stretching across that width can easily be mounted 20 to 100 mm below the work top.

If you have some suitable material, curtain rings and skills please contact Graham Bantock for more details. Thank you.

October Church Magazine. Please forward articles by 20th September to bjstibbards@gmail.com

Prophets of Our Age - Christiana Moon



"Take away from me the noise of your songs;
To the melody of your harps, I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream!"
Amos 5:23-24 ESV

The writings of the Biblical prophets are full of rich language, often in the form of Hebrew poetry. Ancient Israel was where the people who would have first heard and read these words lived. Rivers were often seasonal. They flowed in rainy seasons and were virtually non-existent in the dry seasons. The land and people were often dependent on such rivers for survival. The point of Amos 5:23-24 is that righteousness and justice were to permeate the lives of God's people. As a rushing stream permeates a dry land, so are God's people to be life-giving to the people surrounding them. Wow- what an image!

Amos' ministry (c760-750 BC), was a time of great unfaithfulness for Israel. In a time of great wealth and material prosperity, they had grown proud. They were unjust, greedy and oppressed the poor. They worshipped idols alongside the God of Israel. Cold hearts caused their religious practices to become empty and meaningless. God sends



Amos amongst other prophets as His megaphone to speak to a deaf people. He speaks God's words of warning for the judgement coming in the form of destruction and exile. He also speaks of the promises of future restoration for the faithful. All this from God to persuade His people to repent of their sin and turn back to Him.



Sadly, the writings of the Biblical prophets are often neglected in the wider church. This can be due to the difference of writing style, and times when an application is not as obvious. Yet, God can use the prophets as His megaphone to powerfully speak into our lives today. If we take the time to learn more beyond the surface, we also will be

challenged. We will be challenged to turn away from religious hypocrisy. Instead we will turn towards loving God and loving those around us. Righteousness and Justice will follow us as a result.

In the second term of our School of Biblical Studies we study the books of the prophets. Our students have tackled tough texts, deepening their understanding of God's character. This has been a challenging second term for a few of our students for different reasons. But, we can see that God is meeting each student where they are in their dedication to study the Word. He is showing them His sovereignty and faithfulness even when the answer doesn't seem clear or easy. Yes, the seriousness of sin expressed in the prophets remains the same for us today. Yet, the promises of restoration and hope for the faithful also remain true. That is a very real and great comfort.

I was also encouraged to see our students continue to step out in the gifts that God has given them. It was wonderful to see students lead Bible studies and even teach a lecture on the books of Hosea and Nahum. We even have some budding worship leaders! My personal highlight, was one student we trained to help lead Bible studies. These were for teenagers at



the school we have on site. Some of them have church background-others none at all. It was wonderful to see her develop her gift. It was also great to see the teenagers engaged and studying the Word of God for themselves. Perhaps some for the first time. It is wonderful to see how the Lord is raising up 'prophets of our age'. These are people who will speak into the culture around them. They, like the Biblical prophets, were not chosen based on any personal merit. They were simply obedient to the call of God on their lives. It is this obedience, that God will use to bring about lasting change.



More Praise Points

- Staff Retreat. Our staff retreat back in March was a great time of fellowship and spiritual renewal
- Successful Renewal of my Residency Permit!
- I am good to stay for another year!
- Fundraising Seminar. Organised for an external speaker to come in and give some training for our students. Lots of perspectives changed and plans made!
- Connection with Assemblies of God- I connected recently with the Missions Team of AoG GB. It has been wonderful to get to know over zoom some other missionaries in Europe. It is also exciting as there are some potential opportunities for partnership forming.

Prayer Points

- Church Bible Studies - We have taken a break from Bible studies over the summer. We have enjoyed some great times of informal fellowship together. Pray for the re-launching



of our ladies group Bible study to continue our study of Mark this weekend.

- B2B Leadership Course- At the end of August I will be undertaking a 10-day course. Pray for vision-planning, skill development and renewal.
- Finances. Pray for our students to continue to be able to raise their support for school. Pray for the funds to come in to finish off our building
- Our students-Pray for energy, perseverance and transformation
- War with Russia and COVID- Keep Ukraine, particularly the East in your prayers
- Trips to England and Turkey in September. Pray for travelling mercies with quarantines and covid tests as I travel back home for my Mum's wedding, and then travel to Turkey directly afterwards for our New Testament Sites Tour.
- Next Teachings- Bible Overview in the West of Ukraine and 1 Corinthians in October. Pray for time management, wisdom, navigation of tough passages and for God to move!

Thank you wholeheartedly for your prayer and support! Thank you for transforming lives through Bible teaching in Ukraine and Eastern Europe! None of this would be possible without you!

Love and Blessings,

(P.S. For weekly photos and updates, you are welcome follow our Bible school on Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/sbs_kyiv/



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*** Revd Mark Ambrose will be on Sabbatical September thru November**