

In this issue:

PCC meeting on 12 th June.....	1
DOES GOD STILL SPEAK TO HIS PEOPLE? – Rev Canon Dele Agbelusi.....	2
Mission Fayre Review – GMAG.....	4
Sermons at Christ Church in July.....	6
Caring for Creation.....	7

Items for *>imprint<* no. 116: **Mon. 31st July 2023**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbens.org.uk.

[Peter Young \(Ed.\)](#)

PCC meeting on 12th June

As actions from the minutes of previous PCC meetings were reviewed, a query arose regarding the defibrillator that we had purchased, helped by a grant from the Council. This had not yet been installed as the money we had received did not cover the full cost, including for installation. The PCC discussed how additional funding might be obtained to meet the shortfall, but felt that as a potential lifesaving asset for both the church and the community, installation should not be further delayed. However, unbeknownst to the PCC at the time of the meeting, a substantial additional contribution had just been received from a local organisation who had previously been approached, which, following the meeting, was acknowledged to be an answer to prayer.

The tree on the boundary between our grounds and a neighbour in Green Lane, which was preventing their fence replacement, had now been cut down and another tree had been pollarded. The wood had been saved and smaller logs are available for free to any Christ Church member, although there are some larger logs which we would like to retain for potential projects in our grounds.

An update on the arrangements for the holiday club at Christ Church (4 consecutive mornings during w/b 21st August) was provided. This will be for up to 40 children (5-11 yrs) and will be using Scripture Union's The Restoration Station materials. The PCC discussed the aims of the holiday club and which children specifically it should be aimed at, and agreed with one of the principal aims of Scripture Union: to reach the '95' (the percentage of children in England and Wales estimated to have never heard the gospel).

As we were about to have a vacancy for a Parish Safeguarding Officer, which has proved difficult to fill, Dawn Kennedy agreed to fill this post but with the proviso that she will be unable to fulfil the administrative aspects of the role, in addition to the aspects of recruitment, compliance and risk assessments, etc. She would also continue her existing role of overseeing safeguarding vulnerable adults. The PCC received

clarification on the safeguarding training required of PCC members and for other roles individual PCC members might have and also the requirements for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearances.

The PCC also accepted the principle of the Church of England's commitment to aim for net Carbon Zero by 2030, but due to uncertainty around what this would entail for Christ Church, including as yet unknown costs that might be involved, emphasised that this was as yet an aspiration to work towards.

Following comments made at the APCM regarding our current Mission Statement (an all age community on a shared journey of faith, making the edge the centre), drawn up about 20 years ago, that the statement does not specifically mention Jesus, the PCC discussed whether it needs to be revised from scratch, or tweaked, or just left as is. There was no clear consensus at this point, so it was agreed to make it an item for reflection and prayer at the PCC Quiet Morning on 1st July.

Also the church's Mission Action Plan was discussed. This is due for review and update, and specifically discussions need to be had concerning the reintroduction of an Alpha course and reinvigoration of our small groups. It was agreed to add this to the PCC agenda on 17th July.

An update on the roof replacement project was received. The working group has received visits from two companies to get ideas on what might be feasible and some ideas of costs. One of these companies has now been given the go-ahead to provide these in more detail, to form the basis for decision-making.

The PCC ratified the list of our Stewards who serve as Sidespersons for the year until the next APCM. It is the PCC's job to agree this list of people annually, or if there are any additions during the year.

Finally the PCC considered a proposal to increase our investment in a fund in which we hold an account currently, that could earn some interest on some of the unused cash in our designated and restricted funds. This would be instant access and claims to be low risk, so we could get the money and interest back as and when needed. While the PCC agreed that the money should be invested, there was more uncertainty for various reasons about the account and its fund manager, so this will be investigated further.

DOES GOD STILL SPEAK TO HIS PEOPLE? – *Rev Canon Dele Agbelusi*

One of the concerns often referred to me by many well-meaning Christians is this: "I don't hear God speak to me like other Christians claim he does to them". The impression is given that God speaks to some people who belong to the elite circle of "Super Christians". Because of this general problem, I am devoting this article to address the topic, "Listening to God" – DOES GOD STILL SPEAK TO HIS PEOPLE? Yes. The problem is not that God is not speaking to us, but we are not listening.

I will begin with a story, retold in "*Youth Specialties*":

A Native American and his friend were in down-town New York City, walking near Times Square in Manhattan. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing, and the sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, the Native American said, "I hear a cricket." His friend said, "What? You must be crazy. You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!" "No, I'm sure of it," the Native American said. "I heard a cricket." "That's crazy," said the friend.

The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the

street to a big cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes, beneath the branches, and sure enough, he located a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed. "That's incredible," said his friend. "You must have super-human ears!"

"No," said the Native American. "My ears are no different from yours. It all depends on what you're listening for." "But that can't be!" said the friend. "I could never hear a cricket in this noise." "Yes, it's true," came the reply. "It depends on what is really important to you. Here, let me show you." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. And then, with the noise of the crowded street still blaring in their ears, they noticed every head within twenty feet turn and look to see if the money that tinkled on the pavement was theirs. "See what I mean?" asked the Native American. "It all depends on what's important to you."

What's important to you? What do you listen for?

Sometimes I think we are much like the crowd walking down the street. We fail to hear the most important things in life. We've filled our lives with so much noise and things that it's difficult to hear anything anymore. And when we do hear, we often mistake what we are hearing for what we *want to hear* instead of what we should be hearing. There are lots of things we can choose to listen to today. There are lots of voices vying for our attention and action. The Internet, Social media, TV, radio. All types of media outlets are screaming for our attention.

Are you a good listener? This is an essential skill in every relationship, and that includes our fellowship with God. Most of us are better at talking to Him than we are at listening. We're quick to place our requests before Him but are sometimes in such a hurry that we overlook consulting His Word to see what He has to say.

The sad truth is that many Christians would rather skip reading the Bible than skip something else in their daily routine. Yet, God's Word is the foundation of our faith, and we need to feast on it regularly if we're to thrive spiritually. Daily meditation on Scripture results in a transformed mind, which in turn aligns our perspective, desires, attitudes, words, and choices with the Lord's will.

Although the Bible is inspired by God and given to us for our benefit, we won't hear His voice unless we make His Word a priority. That is why reading the Bible should be an integral part of our devotional times. God is able to 'quicken' a verse or passage of Scripture to us so that, though the Scripture is a written text, it also becomes a living message. He spoke once through the Bible and he still speaks through it.

If I don't hear God speaking to me when reading his Word, it is not because God is dead or silent but because I have not learned to listen or I am dull of hearing. John Stott said: "If we are cut off during a telephone conversation we do not jump to the conclusion that the person on the other end has died. No. It is the line which has gone dead. We must adopt Samuel's attitude: "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10) and not 'Listen Lord, your servant is speaking'.

If we ask, He will teach us to listen and help us understand what He is saying in Scripture. Our spirit needs to be tuned to the Father, and this sensitivity develops through prayer, meditation on His Word, and a submissive heart that obeys His commands. When God gives us an instruction, our response should be "Yes Lord" as we carry out his wishes. If we fail to take steps to carry out the last command, it becomes increasingly difficult to hear fresh commands as our hearing senses become dull. We get stuck waiting to hear what we are supposed to be doing next when we fail

to do what we are supposed to be doing right now. Wherever we are, our chief desire should be to serve God and others, consciously letting God decide the next step to take.

We should learn not to fill every moment of our devotions by talking and never waiting to hear what God might want to say. God is great enough to manage the rest of the universe but he cares enough to know the number of hairs on my head (Matthew 10:30). So, he wants to speak to me and wants me to understand more and more of him. At first, there may be the ghostly whisperings of the subconscious self, the clamour of personal ambition, the song of unbridled imagination but gradually, we become accustomed to God's direction.

How will you feel if your child or friend approaches you with a list of what he wants you to do for him and as soon as he hands you the list, turns his back without even waiting for you to say a word? You will feel bad won't you? But that is how we treat God. John Stott said: "Unlike heathen idols which being dead are dumb, the living God has spoken and continues to speak...and since God speaks we must listen". It is usually helpful, after reading the Bible and praying to spend a brief moment in quiet before the Lord and stop the habit of rushing away. God may have some thoughts he wants to drop in our minds.

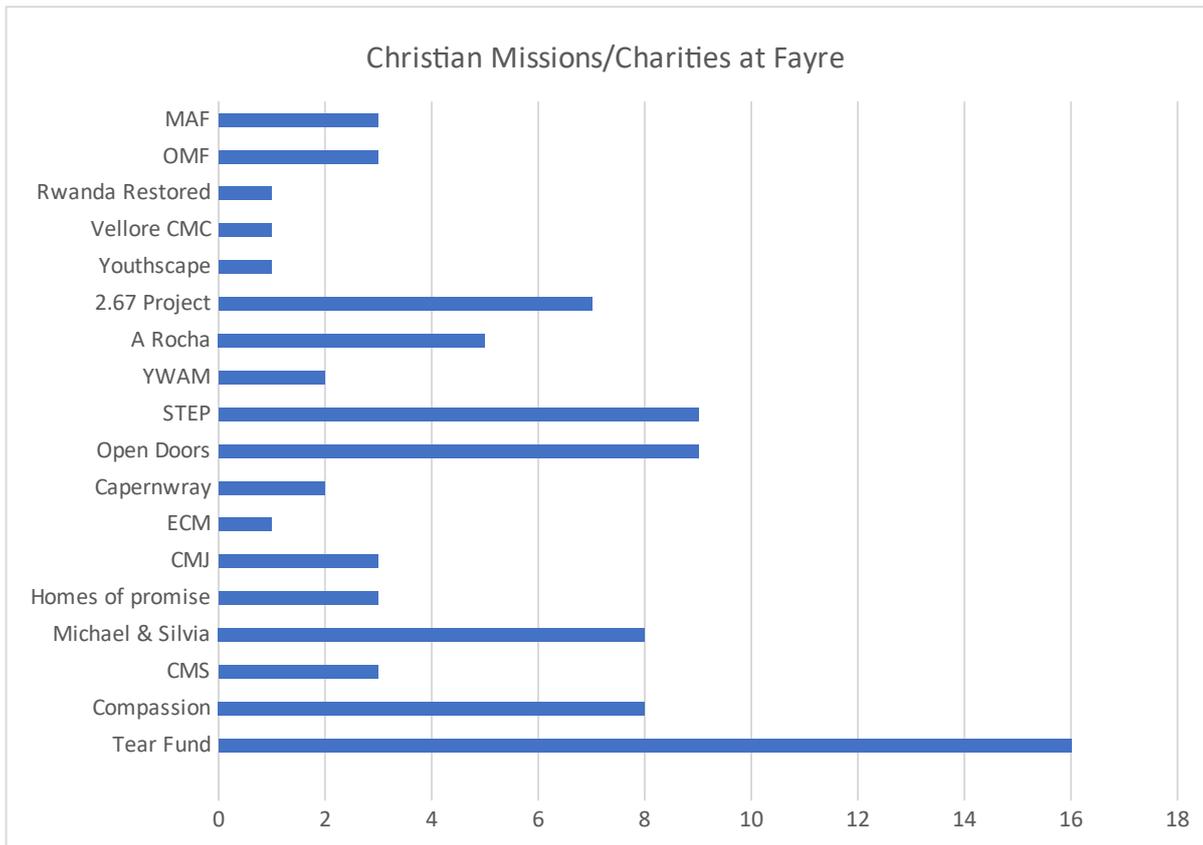
When Jesus and the Godhead make their dwelling place within us, it is not something static. They live and act within us. We receive life and it is their joy that we give life to others through our prayers, our words, and generally giving the gift of ourselves.

Mission Fayre Review – *GMAG*

The Mission Fayre on Sunday 14th May was a celebration of mission work supported by members of Christ Church. It involved 17 organisations on the day whose enthusiastic stall-holders, apart from three, came from the congregation.

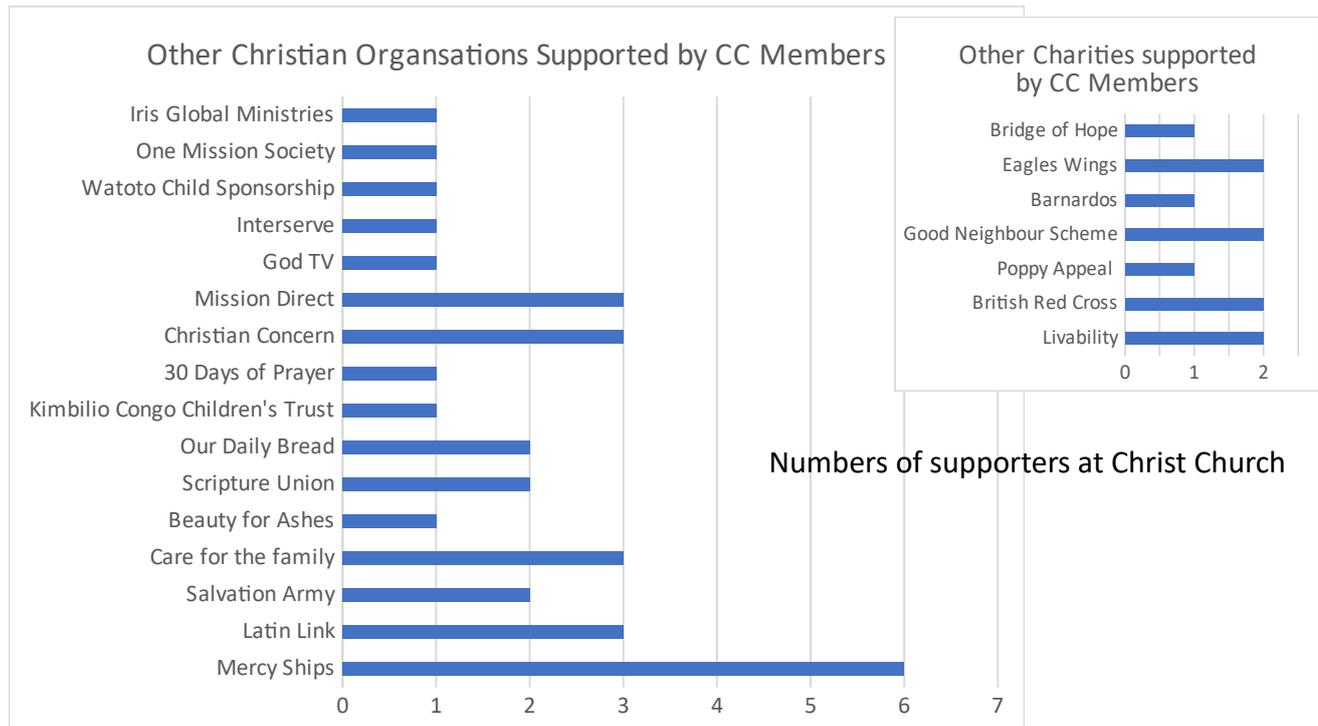
The commitment and energy of supporters was evident. Stalls had colourful displays and leaflets for people to take away. Some stall holders provided sweets, puzzles (e.g. Felicity's jigsaw of Europe) and videos to engage the children. Conversations were had in the allotted half an hour and people were able to find out about a few of the fantastic organisations represented.

Members of the congregation were also asked to complete a brief survey of whether they supported any of the missions or charities present or indeed other organisations not represented on a stall. The results can be seen below and show a wide variety of organisations in terms of scale, geographic spread and specialism. They ranged from large global relief and development organisations like Tear Fund and Compassion to localised ones such as Homes of Promise (Uganda) and Rwanda Restored. Some were very specialised such as Bible translation for indigenous South American tribes (Michael Browne) others were directed at youth work (Youthscape and 2.67 Project both local and YWAM, a global youth training and evangelism organisation).



Numbers of supporters at Christ Church

Do you think it was a worthwhile exercise? The aims were to celebrate Christian missions / charities; show the range of mission work which people may like to support (if not already involved); encourage members to consider mission work as a calling / career / change in career, full-time or part-time or volunteer.



Numbers of supporters at Christ Church

The celebration and range of mission work were evident on the day and shown in the graphs on p.5. The third aim will take time, further encouragement and of course, more prayer in order to achieve. This is for everyone to consider individually and to encourage each other to do so as well.

Anecdotally, there were pros and cons to the day. The stalls were organised and full of information with committed volunteers enthusing. In the plenary session it was noted that it was striking the scope and range of work done by the organisations. Also, it made some think about mission as a possible full-time calling.

Some stall holders mentioned that they did not see many people. Perhaps 40 minutes would have been better.

I thought the videos for the livestream went well. Not all were able to contribute but we had enough footage to fill the time. The mixture of individual 'face to camera' pieces and professional clips from the organisations worked well, portraying personal passion and detailed information and visuals. These videos can be still be seen on the Christ Church YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/live/2Pq5j_hmTnk?feature=share takes you straight to it).

Due to our own pressures and responsibilities and the enormity of need in the world it is easy to become overwhelmed with the challenge of mission work. However, our God is one 'who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us' Ephesians 3:20. As someone once wrote:

Look around, and be distressed;

Look within, and be depressed;

Look to Jesus, and be at rest.

Certainly the work of the organisations represented show the faith people have not to be daunted by the challenges of helping others, often in the midst of great opposition.

The question now perhaps, is 'what more will we do as individuals and as church to further engage in God's mission?'

Peter Cooper, Jackie Kenealy, Iyabo Agbelusi, Paul Bailey – GMAG

Sermons at Christ Church in July

(as known at present; August-September topics hopefully in the next issue):

	Galatians	CC Families topics
02 July	Freedom, not slavery (Galatians 4:21-31; 5:1-15)	Rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30)
09 July	Life in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-24)	Woman with issue of blood (Luke 8:42b-48)
16 July	Intergenerational service: Nameless bystanders? Luke 7:1-10 (centurion); Luke 23:44-49 (centurion at the cross); John 19:38-42 (Nicodemus & Joseph)	
23 July	Doing good (Galatians 6:1-18)	

Caring for Creation

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) activities

Christ Church Caring for Creation  At the C4 meeting at 8.00pm on Monday 19th June, we reviewed the five-year plan suggestions for the church grounds outlined by Avice Hall at the May meeting and discussed next steps in our programme of sustainability improvements, following the Eco Church criteria. As part of our regular beliefs agenda item we watched an introductory episode from the Lausanne Movement Global Classroom on Creation Care. There are 12 episodes and it was proposed that we should watch and discuss an episode at each of the forthcoming C4 meetings, which anyone at Christ Church is welcome to attend:

God's Word (*Bible / theology & creation*)

- [An Introduction to Creation Care](#)
- [Creation Care as a Gospel Issue](#)
- [The Biblical Foundations of Creation Care](#)
- [The Radical Renewal of Creation and the New Earth](#)

God's World (*Science and environmental issues today*)

- [Critical Issues Facing Creation Today](#)
- [Climate Change and the Problem of Human Greed](#)
- [What Science and Faith Can Teach Us About Creation Care](#)
- [Creation Care and the God of Hope](#)

God's Work (*How the Church and Christians can respond*)

- [The Role of the Church in Creation Care](#)
- [Caring for Creation One Church at a Time](#)
- [Creation Care Wherever You Are](#)
- [Caring for Creation for Tomorrow Starts Today](#)

There is also a study guide, available at:

<https://atyourservice.arochoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Lausanne-Global-Classroom-Creation-Care-Study-Guide.pdf>

We normally meet at 8pm on the third Monday of the month; however, in July it will be on **10th July** to avoid clashing with the PCC meeting on 17th. On this occasion it will be held in person at church and as ever it will be open to anyone to attend. There will be no meeting in August. (Further details of meeting venues or the link for Zoom meetings, when they replace face-to-face meetings, are generally notified in the weekly e-news-sheet).

Green Christian, St. Albans (formerly Hope in Action)

The latest newsletter, posted on 21st June, full of informative items, is available either on regular subscription from

(<https://hopeinaction.us4.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=04f756a054>)

or on an *ad hoc* basis from their archive: <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/home/?id=04f756a054&u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87>

and you can also join their WhatsApp group and like them on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/greencristian.stalbans

In the latest issue there are interesting items around greening up of finances. There is also a 'heads-up' about the forthcoming Season of Creation (1st Sept – 4th Oct 2023) on the theme of 'Let Justice and Peace Flow'.

New Executive Director for A Rocha International

A Rocha International (ARI) is looking forward to welcoming **Ed Walker, MBE** as its new Executive Director, starting 1st September, replacing Simon Stuart. The trustees of ARI were unanimous in their decision to appoint Ed, confident that he is God's person of choice to lead them through the next phase of their work. Ed is the founder of Hope into Action (not to be confused with Hope in Action, now Green Christian, St. Albans, see above!), which is a multi-award-winning homeless charity, which he led for 13 years. Before that he has worked for Tearfund in its disaster relief programmes. As an amateur ornithologist (like many in A Rocha!!), trained mountain leader, PADI scuba diver and sea-kayaker, he loves God's creation and believes wholeheartedly in A Rocha's mission and vision.

He says, 'It is a huge honour to have been appointed in this role for A Rocha International.

'A Rocha is at once both an amazing story and also thousands of individual and very personal stories. I recognize the courage, hard work and inspiration from many who have gone before.

'A Rocha's work is so close to God's heart: the environment, poverty, simple living, speaking out, justice, community, theology, education and science are all intrinsically interwoven with the command of Jesus to "preach Good News to all creation".'

A Rocha Blog

There has been one further blog posted since the last *>imprint<*, no.114, The most recent, posted 5th July, is called 'Embracing Change', by **Florence Muindi**'. She is a trustee of A Rocha International, and in the light of A Rocha's 40th anniversary and the recent change in leadership for A Rocha International, she reflects on Elijah's story when he confronted King Ahab and the prophets of Baal at the end of a 3-year drought in Israel. Go to <https://blog.arocha.org/en/embracing-change/> to read this blog.

Field Notes Podcasts

There has also been one further podcast since the last *>imprint<*:

Episode 32: featuring **Prarthini Selveindran**, currently a Head of Ministry with the Fellowship of Evangelical Students (FES) Singapore. She also volunteers with A Rocha International and is co-editor of the book 'God's Gardeners: Creation Care Stories from Singapore and Malaysia', published as part of her work with Friends of A Rocha in Singapore. In this conversation with Jo Swinney and Rick Faw, entitled 'Reading the World with Wonder', Prarthini invites us to be attentive to our surroundings, and "live with a posture of curiosity and playfulness and learn from the book of nature."

Go to <https://arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/> or wherever you get podcasts.