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Items for >imprint< no. 111: **Mon. 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023**, please, by email at [editor@ccstalbans.org.uk](mailto:editor@ccstalbans.org.uk).  
*Peter Young (Ed.)*

## What happened at the 9<sup>th</sup> January PCC?

At this first meeting of the new year, the PCC reviewed a number of actions, events and updates since the previous meeting in November. It was noted that the Christmas tree light-up had gone ahead in December, thanks to crowd-funding endeavours, to which the local community made a substantial contribution, and so didn't overload our church budget after all. Unfortunately the carols outside on Sunday evening 18<sup>th</sup> December (World Cup final day!) were hampered by very rainy weather, but were still quite well attended with a few visitors.

A paper providing guidance for church members leading intercessions at church, including suggested topics and possible wording alternatives was agreed and will be made available to those volunteering for this ministry.

This month the PCC started what will be an ongoing series of discussions about our financial situation, to try to reassess priorities in the work we do as a church and identify what new things God might be calling us to and what may no longer be appropriate to continue. This is in recognition that increased costs of living are not only affecting individuals but also the running of the church which depends on the giving of all of our church membership.

It was noted regarding staffing at Christ Church that the PCC are still very keen to get someone (plus or minus an assistant) to take on the role of Communications Coordinator. However the possible replacement for Becki, which was being reviewed to evaluate what sort of person we might now be looking for, has had to be put on hold for now, since it would exceed the budget agreed for 2023.

The PCC considered a paper from the group looking at Community Outreach elements of Christ Church's Mission Action Plan (MAP). A number of initiatives are in place or are being planned. The Monday evening suppers which Damian is spearheading falls into this category and they are very much appreciated by those attending, including local people outside our church fellowship. The PCC highly commended this initiative.

There were also a number of successful events over the Christmas period which also attracted visitors outside the regular church fellowship. It is hoped to mark Mothering Sunday (19<sup>th</sup> March) in some way this year. The decision whether or not the church will be able to host a summer holiday club this year is still under discussion.

King Charles's Coronation (special Bank Holiday weekend 6th-8th May) provides an opportunity to join forces with the Community Club to hold some event on one of these days and approaches having been made, discussions are expected to start with them very shortly.

## **Happy New Year!!!** -- *Dele Agbelusi*

This greeting though simple may be loaded with meaning. Does it mean, "Thank God we are in a new year and hope it would bring a greater happiness than the previous one?" Or are we implying that because 2022 had a catalogue of unrealised dreams and shattered hopes, we have become blind to the possibilities of unforeseen goodness through God's intervention?

We can regret past mistakes, but we cannot change them. It is helpful to think about those occasions we regret so that we do not return to making those same mistakes.

Paul said, in Phil. 3:14, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The past gives us something to measure our successes by. God's plan for us is that once we repent of the sins in our life we can move on by replacing them with good things.

We all are aware that we need to improve and are probably thinking of New Year resolutions now. We should ask ourselves: Have we grown in our love for Jesus? Have we grown in our love for the Word of God? Have we grown in our love for fellow believers?

The year 2022 has rolled away with many people coming to the conclusion that it was the year of the "Unthinkable." Yes. Many unthinkable things happened, both desirable and undesirable. However, the thought that God foreknows all matters, and appoints certain critical hours in history to be turning points, is something that we Christians ought to find tremendously reassuring.

Human nature tends to constantly think of the unforeseen evil and forget that unforeseen good. It was so in the time of Jesus. When Jesus left the village of Nazareth to begin his public ministry, great crowds followed him. When He started to teach in a way that was unmatched by anyone in history, they listened with eager anticipation. When his hands reached out to touch those who were sick, there was healing power. And when they were told that he came from Nazareth, there was a quick sneer, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

There wasn't much to barren and backward Nazareth. Its hillsides were grey and lifeless, except for one or two months in the year. It was an ugly city compared to the others. But it was this city from which Jesus came. However, many good things did come out of Nazareth because God in Christ, was at work. We need this emphasis today, and at the beginning of this new year, to hope in the unforeseen providence of God-in spite of the evil in our world.

Sometimes we get downcast and depressed as we look at the state of the world and see the church derided and discarded by men and women of this age. The recent census in the UK that painted a decline in the number of Christians in the country was

not cheering news to many of us. But we must learn to put our hope in the Lord that his hand is upon the situation and a divine plan is being worked out.

Can we afford to look unto the Lord to take us through the uncharted waters of 2023? Yes. We can. If we care to look at the birds; they are not encumbered with care, unfettered, not tied down to a job description, but completely abandoned to the care of God. "And you are worth more to him than birds?" (Matthew 6:26).

It does matter who is holding you in his hands. Take for example: A golf club is almost useless in my hands but a golf club in Tiger Wood's hands is a 4 Major Golf Championship. It depends on whose hands it's in... A rod in my hands may keep away a wild animal. A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea. It depends on whose hands it's in. Two fish and five loaves in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches. Two fish and five loaves in Jesus' hands will feed thousands. So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's Hands. It does make a difference!

I wish you a fulfilling, peaceful and happy 2023.

## News for the New Year from Homes of Promise Uganda

2023 - The weather has changed, no rain, brilliant sunshine and very, very hot – Jane's not complaining!

The boys welcomed the New Year at Entebbe enjoying the fireworks. Bethel was frightened to begin with as he thought it was gun fire! We can't imagine what this little lad must have been through in his short life.

The boys, some having been with relations in the villages over Christmas, are mostly back. The new young boys have been for interviews at the primary school, Denis is going into P1, Saidi P2 and Bethel into nursery.

The older boys in primary school are having extra tuition each morning.

Omasing may not return as he feels he is too big to return to primary school and his family are looking for a hairdressing course or apprenticeship for him, which we will obviously help with.

Asaph has started his industrial training and Godfrey has started a chapati making business, near the home, Victor and Saviour helped him set it up!



We seemed to spend a lot of time at Entebbe Hospital recently with Tim for his TB, with Bethal who now has his foot in plaster

(which the boys have been writing words of encouragement on!!). We managed to buy crutches for him but he seems to be managing very well without them!! And lastly, this weekend Musumba had his operation for the detached retina. As we need a family member or P.O. to sign the consent form, we were thankful that an aunt came to the hospital early on Friday when he had the operation. It took three hours, Peace and Benard were there and Benard stayed with him overnight. He came home Saturday lunch time and spent the afternoon sleeping whilst most of the boys went swimming. We have put him in a small



room on his own and asked the boys to be considerate for the next few days before he returns to the hospital on Tuesday (17/1)

The boys have been enterprising and have earned themselves some money during the

holidays, digging for their neighbours. We are therefore going to start a savings scheme. When they have saved 50,000UGX Jane will give them a little “interest” as a way of encouragement! Saving doesn’t seem to be part of the Ugandan culture, so hopefully this will be helping the boys to learn money management. Although Johnson (Musumba), who has been cleaning at a hotel, has saved enough to buy a pig which his family will rear in his village.

Jane visited the director of the clinic HoP use as the prices have risen recently - they have agreed a reduction in prices for tests - you can negotiate on everything in Uganda.

We begin 2023 praying about our future vision - we ask for your prayers:

- Finding a church/Bible study group where the boys can learn more about their Christian faith, through healthy discussion, to enable spiritual growth.
- Either rent or buy land near the home, encouraging the boys to cultivate and grow more of their food and rear chickens/rabbits.
- An organised savings plan for boys and staff.
- Prayers please especially for Johnson’s eye op to be successful and Tim’s TB to be successfully treated.

## Sermons at Christ Church

Here are all the titles and bible references for the latest sermon series, called ‘**New Beginnings**’ that started on 8<sup>th</sup> January and will continue until the beginning of Lent. If by the time you read this, you missed any or want to hear them again, do go to the Christ Church website, where you’ll find audio recordings under the Media pull-down menu, or click the following direct link: <https://www.ccstalbans.org.uk/sermons>. Alternatively the YouTube recordings of complete services including audio and visual are available on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@christchurchstalbans360>

Jan	08	Perceiving the new thing – streams in the desert (Isaiah 43)
	15	A new commandment (John 13:31-38; 14:1-7)
	22	A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
	29	New wine for new wineskins (Matthew 9:14-17)
Feb	05	Born afresh (John 3:1-21)
	12	A new heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:17-21; 36:24-32)
	19	A new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1-7)

Thereafter a series during Lent is being planned entitled ‘Telling the Passion’ and after Easter a series on the letter to the Galatians.

## Caring for Creation

### *C4 meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January*

This was the first meeting of the new Year, having last met as a full group in November. In the regular ‘Beliefs’ agenda item we watched and discussed the next Tearfund ‘Christianity and Climate Change’ video in the series we have been following

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/christianity-and-climate-change-film-series>: no.6 'Grateful for fossil fuels but time to move on' in which Katharine Hayhoe, the noted environmental scientist, talks about engaging with Christians who may have a very different view of climate change and that we need to acknowledge the very positive benefits that the use of fossil fuels have afforded us in the past, despite the damage it has also done to our planet, but that now we need to rethink.

We also revisited the Lifestyle section of the Eco Church questionnaire which we first looked at well over a year ago. This was a section in which we initially reckoned we fell below the bronze award level, but it looks like there has since been some slight progress which together with the other four sections, might mean we could now be *just* eligible overall for a bronze Eco Church award. Various ideas to enhance and encourage further individual lifestyle changes within Christ Church were put forward. *[By the way, publication of the preliminary responses to the Buildings section of the survey in >imprint< has been postponed as further review and some updates are felt necessary, although it shouldn't affect the original award level, which was silver for this section. - Ed.]*

There was some discussion to finalise the draft paper on C4 activities and aims which will be included in the package of papers for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in April.

### ***'earth matters' by Rosemary Drew***

Please visit the Caring for Creation page <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/caring-for-creation> on the Christ Church website (it's under the 'What's On' drop-down menu on the home page of the website) to see a presentation which has just been posted, entitled 'earth matters' by our own Rosemary Drew, who is also a member of our Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) group. Do read it ([here](#) is a direct link). There will also be a hard copy on display in the foyer at church. It contains loads of interesting facts, questions, suggestions and encouragements about how humanity is affecting our environment and what we might do by way of lifestyle changes to mitigate our impact. So, in this article for >imprint< we ask Rosemary a bit about herself and how she came to write 'Earth Matters'.



### **Rosemary, please could you tell our readers how long you've been a member of Christ Church?**

*"I was baptised in this church and have been a member ever since, although I was at university and abroad for 12 years."*

### **Could you tell us something about your education?**

*"I attended St Albans Girls School, then studied Geology at Exeter university, and Oceanography at Southampton".*

### **And what have you done during your working life, and since you 'retired'?**

*"I started working life as a geologist and lecturer in the university of Sierra Leone,*

*also carrying out field work for the university and local mining companies. Moving to Africa was a pretty steep learning curve....*

*"On returning to the UK I worked for the British National Oil Corporation in Glasgow*

*"When the family grew up I took a job in Smiths and then as a cover teacher at a local school...*

*"Since retiring I think I slept for England for a year, and looked after my teenage son, elderly aunt and Father until she died in 2020 and he died in 2022. My brother and I are still clearing up."*

**For those who don't know you or haven't known you long, could you share some interesting facts about yourself perhaps that might surprise us?**

*"I had a lovely red sports car, which sadly died of old age last Easter and now I have my father's Honda Jazz It's a couple of years younger than the Mazda, less than half the value and one third of the power, but it is twice as expensive as the sports car to insure... How does that work?*

*"I loved several sports including sailing, swimming, tennis, squash and lacrosse, not all at the same time, and even have a small cup representing a win in the national squash tournament in Sierra Leone! Somewhere I have a picture showing me falling out of an aeroplane, among friends raising money for leukaemia research. It took 3½ wonderful minutes to reach the ground, and I didn't break anything on landing. My doctor who had to certify me fit to jump [as I was so old!] said he could see I was physically fit enough but wasn't so sure about the mental aspect..."*

*"I'm less active now and took up spinning and weaving a few years ago which has been fascinating. I never realised the extraordinarily wide range of breeds, fleece types and even differences with each fleece. Each is unique. I am also learning slowly a bit about natural dyes to colour the wool."*

**So, about 'Earth Matters', what is it, what inspired you to produce it, and how would you like it to be used?**

*"I think geography was always important to me and I grew up hearing increasing concern on the media about some pesticides; then one of the first things I saw at Exeter was graffiti on a wall 'you can't eat people, they contain too much DDT'. It was a startling thought that something we were doing to our food meant we were effectively poisoning ourselves and the soil and by inference other creatures too. Of course that was one among the earliest indications of what we are recognising now as a much greater, more wide ranging and critically serious problem, which is our careless collective attitude to, and use of, our home and its resources, putting life on earth at risk.*

*"I wrote down some of the things I have come across over many years of watching, listening and actively trying to 'live light' on earth because I noticed I'm forgetting things as I get older, and some things shouldn't be forgotten. Some things are too appalling to ignore.*

*"I thought it might be useful as a rolling slide show on the TV screen when there wasn't much else to go on it. I hoped it would help people to have a little extra background on the structure and fragility of life on this planet as we take its endless solidity and provision so much for granted. I see time and again, the idea that there is a simple solution to the planet problem, which the government will be able to legislate for and scientists will be able to solve the problem. I wish it were that simple but it is not and I have tried to show some of the reasons why. I'm not claiming to be an expert in any of the fields I have touched on, but I hope it may provoke thought,*

*discussion, additions and perhaps shared ideas and encouragement that we can all do things which will make a difference even if they don't solve all the problems.*

*"I am a Christian and have included references to prayer as it seems to me that whether one believes in God or not, it is hard to imagine the beauty, intricacy, interactions and dependences, grandeur of Earth, and the miraculous quirks of 'science' that make it possible at all, as happening randomly. And if as I believe, God made the earth and saw that it was good, perhaps He is the only One with the real solution to the mess we are making and we turn from Him at our peril."*

**If you could share just one brief message with folks at Christ Church, what would it be?**

*"God has given us 2 great immensely costly gifts, far beyond our understanding and comprehension.*

*"One we talk about all the time...Jesus came to earth and died for our forgiveness and salvation, to restore us to unity with God in heaven and secondly He has given us the most fabulously beautiful, carefully balanced, wonderfully complex unique home planet to live on.*

*"The least we can do is:-*

- Respect His gifts*
- Love the Lord with all your heart [He loves that]*
- Thank Him for all his gifts; take time to reflect on them and honour Him*
- Praise Him for everything He is and Everything he is and does*
- Live simply, cutting... waste, unnecessary things, use of many toxic products*
- Reuse, recycle, upcycle, eat seasonal, buy local, grow your own, walk more, fly less*
- Seek ways to reduce our negative impact on earth, find out for ourselves, try things out*
- Don't wait for someone to legislate, it will be not be a perfect solution and it will almost certainly be too late.*

*"The responsibility belongs to us all, now."*

***Scroll down...***

Since we have referred to the Caring for Creation page on our website (see above link) for Rosemary's 'earth matters', do scroll further down this page for ***lots more*** information and links on sustainable living:

**Christ Church's** climate recognition statement which the PCC approved in February 2022

**Invitations to C4 meetings** on Zoom, which are open to all members of Christ Church

**Eco Church** information

**Creation Care** website (not ours), with information and links to help households to make changes to care for God's earth

**Tearfund's Hope challenge** – encouraging us to put our faith and hope into action

**Climate Stewards** website – where you can do your own audit of your carbon footprint (which the Eco Church Lifestyle section encourages)

**Green Christian** website encouraging us to use our 'LOAF' (i.e. Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly or Fairly traded food products, wherever possible)

**Sustrans** website- for sustainable transport, since we should be encouraging church members, who are able, to be walking or cycling to church (or sharing lifts where this is not possible) and as a general lifestyle activity

**Ethical Investments** - although we don't have much specific information on this as yet, we do include a link to a *Which* guide explaining what it is meant by ethical investment.

*Also...*

### **A Rocha Field Notes Podcast, blog and new 'Elements of hope' video series**

In the latest (episode 26) Field Notes podcast, hosted by Rachel Mander and Rick Faw, [Christine Warner](#), Director of the Matthew 25 Initiative and road traffic accident survivor, discusses '[Learning from the snail: joyful living within painful limitations](#)'. Go to <https://arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/> or wherever you get your podcasts.

There have been two further blogs since the last *>imprint<*: [Stephanie Perregaux](#) on '[A Rocha, recovery and hospitality](#)'; and from [Simon Stuart](#), shortly to be retiring as Executive Director of A Rocha International, on '[A life's work in conservation](#)'. Read them at <https://blog.arocha.org/en/>

**'Elements of hope'**: as part of A Rocha's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, watch the first entertaining video, entitled '[I am a conservationist](#)', of this new 5-part series at <https://arocha.org/en/i-am-a-conservationist/>

### **#C4 Life Hacks**

Look out for these in the weekly news-sheet. A new life hack is published each week. All are no-cost tips to assist sustainable living.

### **RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.**

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/?sourcecode=BWMITH0230>

You can do this yourselves at home in your garden, or any open space, for an hour between **27th-29th January**. However it's hoped to have a group watch, like last year, at **Christ Church on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January**. From last year's experience, after church is probably not the best time of day to see lots of birds (although still useful information for RSPB), so this year we will be trying **8 AM to meet, for an 8.15-9.15 AM slot**(!) and all are welcome. There will be some breakfast on offer afterwards, before the service!

### **Rethink Climate**

Did you hear the series of 5 programs (42min each) hosted by Amol Rajan and guests, broadcast on Radio 4 between the mornings of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January? They were asking why there seems to be a gap between pledges made to address the effects of climate change and the delivery of reductions in greenhouse gases. If you didn't catch them, they're well worth listening to and they can still be found on BBC Sounds: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/m001gk5h>

### **C4 library - please note**

For anyone, either with books to return to the C4 library, or wishing to borrow any (you're still very welcome to do so), this is a reminder that although the table display that was in the link corridor during the God's Creation sermon series has been removed, the library has now been returned to the shelf in the library/former crèche room off the St Andrew's lounge (where the drum-kits are stored!).