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Items for the next *>imprint<* no. 118: **Mon. 30th October 2023**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbans.org.uk.

Peter Young (Ed.)

PCC meeting 11th September

Previous Minutes and Actions

There were several issues arising from PCC minutes for the June and July meetings and a number of amendments were requested and also modifications around the future recording of Actions.

Holiday Club

The PCC received a debrief on the outcome of the Holiday Club in August. It was felt it went well and reached some children who would not otherwise have heard the Bible. It was also well supported by young teenagers who helped and a diverse (in terms of age range) team of adults. There was a modest attendance of children over the 4 day period. It was decided to contact the team and get their opinion regarding possible future Holiday Clubs. Some of the feedback suggested that Easter might be better than the summer holidays to run future events like this. More team meetings prior to running the event might also be beneficial. Some suggestions around follow-up were also made.

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

Over the summer the PCC had provided feedback on the MAP development and progress to date, with groups each looking at one of the three main areas:

Unity of Fellowship - suggestions to develop a succession plan for the Worship team and facilitate discussion of their identity and fellowship goals; decide whether to continue live streaming and if so in what format; whether to end live streaming before the communion, to facilitate possibly more flexibility in format of the communion.

Community Visibility - lots of great ideas had been included in the MAP, but it might not be possible to do them all, so a decision on priorities will be required, consistent

with our resources and the mission of our church.

Resourcing the Mission – suggestions about whether the roof replacement when it happens could help to generate a bit more income through increased rentals and reduced electricity costs from solar power.

The MAP will be revisited at the October PCC meeting.

Finance Review

The Treasurer provided the figures for the first six months of 2023. The income from giving for the first 6 months is in line with what had been forecast for the full year. The expenditure over the six months has been reasonable so far, although it may be slightly greater in the second half of 2023. The Hardship Fund has so far not been greatly used, although this may change as time goes on; there is currently an adequate float and one regular donor.

The Community Activities expenditure forecast has increased and this is due to the Monday Suppers. Currently the income from Monday Suppers donations is included in congregational giving, which may require readjustment for the 2024 budget development. Also the short and medium term future plans for this initiative will need to be identified for 2024 budgetary implications.

Roofing Update

One of the contractors with whom we are in dialogue has visited and is expected to have provided some costings by the end of September, which will be brought to the October PCC meeting.

Mission Statement

The decision whether to amend the statement or start again continues to be difficult to make. It is planned to review this again at the PCC “away-day” meeting on Saturday 21st October.

I DON'T REMEMBER – *Dele Agbelusi*

In today's world, conflict is inevitable. And when it happens, it hurts our relationships with others—sometimes very deeply. As a result, we become susceptible to anger, depression, anxiety, broken relationships, rejection and manipulation. This is where “forgiveness” comes in. It is an idea which many of us regard as beautiful until we have to practice it. But over the years, it has been seen that we achieve inner health only through forgiveness— the forgiveness not only of others but also of ourselves. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note, torn in two and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one. Mark Twain said “Forgiveness is the fragrance that the flower leaves on the heel of the one who crushed it”.

Bruce Larson tells the story of a Catholic priest living in the Philippines, a much loved man of God who once carried a secret burden of long-past sin buried deep in his heart. He had committed that sin once, many years before, during his time in seminary. No one else knew of this sin. He had repented of it and he had suffered years of remorse for it, but he still had no peace, no inner joy, no sense of God's forgiveness.

There was a woman in this priest's parish who deeply loved God, and who claimed to have visions in which she spoke with Christ, and He with her. The priest, however, was

skeptical of her claims, so to test her visions he said to her, “You say you actually speak directly with Christ in your visions. Let me ask you a favor. The next time you have one of these visions, I want you to ask Him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary.” The woman agreed and went home. When she returned to the church a few days later, the priest said, “Well, did Christ visit you in your dreams?”

She replied, “Yes, He did.”

“And did you ask Him what sin I committed in seminary?”

“Yes, I asked Him.”

“Well, what did He say?”

“He said, **'I don't remember.'**”

This is what God wants you to know about the forgiveness He freely offers you. When your sins are forgiven, they are forgotten. The past—with its sins, hurts brokenness, and self-recrimination—is gone, dead, crucified, remembered no more. What God forgives, He forgets. And we must realize that we do not deserve it. Remember, only one petition in the Lord’s prayer has any condition attached to it. It is the petition of forgiveness. And this is where you come in. If God has forgiven your sins, both secret and open, He has the right to demand that you do the same for those that offend you.

Thank God that He forgives when our repentance begins, not when it is complete. Without this none of us would ever be forgiven. Forgiveness involves the reconciling of two people—one who repents and the other who forgives. God forgives at the first sign of our repentance, and where forgiveness and repentance meet a relationship is restored.

Divine forgiveness of sins, carries with it the Divine condemnation and destruction of sin at the heart of it. That is precisely what we find at the cross. God’s forgiveness flows from the destruction and condemnation of sin in the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ, as He bore our sins at Calvary. His blood not only atones for our sins, His righteousness is given to us in addition. John Calvin rightly expresses this thought when he said: “We shall never be clothed with the righteousness of Christ except we first know assuredly that we have no righteousness of our own.”

Satan can get us so focused on one sin, one problem, one issue that we want to overcome. How do I get over my fear? How can I prevail over this lust? There you are, standing right next to the hurdle, and you can’t get over from that position. You have to begin further back, so you can get a run at it and get some momentum.

In a dream, Martin Luther found himself being attacked by Satan. The devil unrolled a long scroll containing a list of Luther's sins, and held it before him. On reaching the end of the scroll Luther asked the devil, "Is that all?" "No," came the reply, and a second scroll was thrust in front of him. Then, after a second came a third. But now the devil had no more. "You've forgotten something," Luther exclaimed triumphantly. "Quickly write on each of them, 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sins.'" In closing, I echo the words of Augustus Toplady in the third stanza of the hymn *Rock of Ages*: “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Saviour, or I die”.

Sermons at Christ Church – Autumn 2023

The theme of the autumn sermon series, which started on 10th September is “Slavery to Freedom”, following the book of Exodus. At the time of writing three sermons in the series have already been preached which can be found either within the services recorded on the Christ Church YouTube channel, or (readings and sermons, audio only) on the Christ Church website, if you missed them first time around or want to listen again. Here is the full list of sermons in this series, including the themes that CC Families will be looking at in their sessions, following the same texts:

Date	Text	Sermon Title	Families
Sep 10	Exodus 1:1-22	Slavery to Freedom	<i>Friends with Jesus</i>
Sep 17	Exodus 2:1-10	God starts a plan	Moses birth and upbringing
Sep 24	Exodus 3:1-17	The burning bush	God calls Moses
Oct 1	Exodus 5:1-21	Hardship increases	Israel/Moses tensions rise
Oct 8	Exodus 11:1-10	Plagues/hardness of heart	God’s purposes appear thwarted
Oct 15	Exodus 12:1-36	The Passover	Escape from Egypt part 1
Oct 22	Ex 13:17-14:31	Crossing the Red Sea	Escape from Egypt part 2
Oct 29	Exodus 16:1-36	Manna in the wilderness	<i>God’s provision</i>
Nov 5	Exodus 19:1-25	Mount Sinai	Slaves becoming a nation
Nov 12	Exodus 32:1-35	The golden Calf	Worshipping the wrong God
Nov 19	Exodus 33:12 -23	The glory of the Lord	Moses and God

September 10th and October 1st and 29th was/will be intergenerational services, when it’s expected everyone will be together and receive the same teaching. Also October 1st will also be our Harvest Service including a special focus on the 40th Anniversary of the founding of A Rocha (see Caring for Creation article below), so this might well affect whether the sermon that was planned for that date is delivered.

Advent Sunday will be on November 26th, and services from then on will have an Advent/Christmas theme.

Caring for Creation

A Rocha 40th Anniversary celebrated at Christ Church

A ROCHA Depending when you read this edition of *>imprint<*, this event may have already happened! However on 1st October, coinciding with our Harvest Service, there will be (or was!) a special focus on the Christian environmental charity A Rocha which we support and which celebrates the 40th Anniversary of its founding by Peter and Miranda Harris and subsequently the setting up of the first field study centre in Portugal on the Algarve. The name “A Rocha” is Portuguese for “the rock”. Since those early days A Rocha has become an international network of organisations caring for creation in over twenty countries, including the UK. Our service will have (or had!) lots of information on the work of A Rocha, including (in the UK) Eco Church, helping churches to care for creation, which we have been engaged in at Christ Church, having attained our Bronze award and now working towards Silver; the Partners in Action scheme, helping Christian land managers to care for creation; the Wild Christian initiative, helping individuals and families to care for creation. There are also resources and teaching on the theological

basis for creation care – why we should be engaged in caring for the world that God created and sustains. In other countries A Rocha is also active in raising awareness and helping communities live sustainably, which individuals and churches can support through the Gifts with a Difference scheme.

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) activities

Christ Church Caring for Creation The most recent C4 meeting was on Monday 18th September when we watched the third of the [Lausanne Global Classroom Creation Care video series: The biblical foundations of Creation Care](#). Four major points, made by Ruth Valerio at the start of the video, are: 1) that God made the world and he loves it, so if we love God we should love what he loves; 2) The world has gone wrong because of our sin; 3) we have been created to look after what God has made; and 4) Jesus died for the **whole** of creation (not just humankind). Other contributors include Dave Bookless, Peter Harris, Mncedisi Masuku, Peter Houston, Rev. Rachel Mash (whose take on John 3:16 may surprise you) and Ed Brown. See [>imprint<115](#), p.7 for the full programme.



The meeting spent some time discussing the possible format of the 1st October service (see above) and briefly reviewing the Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan previously developed by C4.

A Rocha Blog

There has been one further blog so far posted since the last [>imprint<](#), no.116. It was posted by [Autumn Ayers](#) on 5th September and entitled: “[Celebrating 40 Years of Creation Care: A Rocha’s Journey from Cruzinha to a Global Conservation Movement](#)” Go to <https://blog.arocha.org/> to read this and more A Rocha blogs.

Field Notes Podcasts

There has been one further podcast since the last [>imprint<](#). The most recent is: [Episode 34](#): posted 4th September, featuring [Peter Harris](#), co-founder of A Rocha. In this podcast entitled ‘[Milestones, miracles and migration](#)’, he is in conversation with his daughter, Jo Swinney, and Rick Faw, talking about how and why Peter and Miranda (and Les and Wendy Batty) originally set up A Rocha, when they were in their early thirties, and their recognition of the collapse of the biosphere as the issue of our times and their desire to engage in community with those with a similar passion for the healing of God’s creation.

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

Green Christian St Albans (formerly Hope in Action)

.. have recently published their September 2023 newsletter, in which they encourage us to urge Rishi Sunak not to backtrack on climate action. Anna Barrett of St Albans URC talks about how she has been inspired to “give, act and pray” for our environment and the steps he has been taking. There is also a review of Chris Packham’s recent documentary on Channel 4 – see: <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/chris-packham-is-it-time-to-break-the-law>. You can sign up to receive the newsletters by email, or sample the latest and back-issues at

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/home/?id=04f756a054&u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87>

Zambia News

Following on from the Zambia-focussed service held at Christ Church on 3rd September, here is news recently received from Mission Direct:



Zambia News August 2023



Welcome to our Newsletter with latest news of our Partners in Lusaka. Our two hard-working building teams have returned to the UK, having made good progress on our projects and made many friends in Zambia!
Geoff Spiller and Roger Aukett

Progress at Kiine School ...



Before ... and after. The toilet block at Kiine School
The toilet blocks built last year and in 2014 were painted by our teams, giving a professional appearance to these facilities. And with pupil numbers now exceeding 1000, we were delighted to be able to complete another classroom, thanks to funds raised by a recent volunteer. The new classroom will be in use in September, at the start of next term.



Crown of Life School celebrates its 20th Anniversary in July next year and our first team in 2024 will include special celebrations. We would love you to join us!

Prayer Requests & Answers:

Give thanks:

- For Dorothy's health, which has steadily improved over recent months. Please continue to pray for complete healing and restoration;
- For donations which have enabled Mission Direct to carry out our building projects this year.
- For the new partnership with Good Samaritan School

Please pray:

- For our Volunteers, as they process all they have seen and experienced in Zambia;
- For all our Partners, as they continue to serve their communities.

A new toilet block for Crown of Life School



Our teams spent many sessions at Crown of Life School and we were delighted to see Dorothy looking better after her long illness, though she still needs to take plenty of rest. Good progress was made on the new toilet block, with Team 1 working on the foundations and the hard graft of 'back-filling' while Team 2 built up the walls, all under the careful guidance of Edward and his team. The builders will press on with the work over the coming weeks, and will hopefully be finished by October. We are also helping to complete some shower units at the school, for use by the older girls and nursery children. We have set up a **fund-raising page:**

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ZambiaCrownofLifeSchool2023>

Renovated classrooms at Good Samaritan



This is our first year to work with Good Samaritan School, a primary school for 470 children, where Vasco is the Chair of the Board. The school was built 25 years ago and parts are in need of renovation, so we were pleased to paint the inside of two classrooms. There was of course time to play with the children as well!