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Items for *>imprint<* no. 98: **Mon. 25th October 2021**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbans.org.uk.

Peter Young (Ed.)

PCC meeting 20th September 2021

In updates on matters from previous meetings it was noted that a card reader to facilitate cashless donations at church had now been acquired and was awaiting installation and set-up. Further progress had also been made in the set-up of a new bank account with CAF. The quinquennial report from the appointed architect had been received and will be discussed by the Vicar and wardens and then brought to the PCC. The PCC also received updates concerning Hong-Kong Ready Churches and Creation Care activities.

Mission Action Planning

Questionnaires on the church's level of involvement in two further areas of mission were completed by PCC members and discussed, covering activities in the community and welcoming.

The need to engage more with the local and wider community where *they* are, rather than wait for them to engage with us, was emphasised, accepting that there are groups, e.g. Shack and the Toddler group, that are already doing good work serving the local community. It was also suggested that we could be more involved in challenging issues of injustice and inequality and in raising up champions with the passion to inspire the church in these areas.

It was noted that there were several practical things that could be done to improve our welcome of visitors/potential new members at Christ Church, notably updating the external notice board and the information available in written format or welcome presentations. However wider personal contact was also essential, whether informally through our church members generally, or through those given special responsibility in this area. It was recognised we have limited resources and possibly need to concentrate on specific areas and do them well.

All the responses to areas discussed over the last three meetings will be collated and priority areas will be discussed in detail at the Saturday 23rd October PCC meeting and form the basis of Christ Church's revised Mission Action Plan.

Financial Update

The Treasurer provided a summary showing the position at 7 months into this year. Congregational giving is about as expected, however rental income has suffered as a result of fall-off because of the pandemic. Overall we appear to be on track for the budget *deficit* of £17,000 which the PCC had agreed. While our level of reserves allow for this in the short term, it was not felt to be sustainable and a future break-even budget will require increased income, largely from increased congregational giving. This need and what it means for individual church members will be brought to the church's attention shortly. There will be a further update and discussion at the November PCC, with 9 month figures available for the purpose of setting next year's budget.

Hall Floor replacement

Three contractors have now quoted for the work to replace the defective hall flooring. All agreed that the entire floor surface needs removing and replacing due to poor workmanship in laying the original sub-floor which has led to the lifting of planks. The PCC compared costings and options for materials which included different grades of Amtico floor planking (the current floor is a high-grade Amtico finish) or a resin finish. After extensive discussion the PCC agreed to the quote from one contractor for an Amtico grade finish which would suit the level of use in the Hall. It was also agreed that the cupboards should be temporarily removed (by Christ Church) so that the new floor can be laid over the entire area.

Safeguarding

Kate Kent, our Safeguarding Officer, was invited to PCC to present an annual review of our policies and information on new developments and training modules on safeguarding. Since most of our activities have now restarted it is necessary to resume tracking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) renewals/applications and completion of relevant training for those already registered and any new volunteers. The three policies currently on file and on the Christ Church website (via the Safeguarding link at the bottom of the Home Page, which opens the Safeguarding page, from where the policies can be opened or downloaded) needed to be reapproved and signed/redated and the PCC unanimously agreed to this.

TRUE WORSHIP – *Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi*

Worship of the one true God is the primary task of the church. However, if we have not enthroned God in our hearts, it is impossible to worship Him in the way He desires. Our Lord's meeting with the woman at the well (John 4) provides powerful evidence of this. The woman's question about the correct centre of worship arose because of the endless dispute between Jews and Samaritans concerning the place where God should be worshipped. The Jews believed God should be worshipped in Jerusalem, whereas the Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim. By insisting on a precise location for worship both Jews and Samaritans showed their lack of understanding of the true nature of worship. This is why Jesus turned the issue from **where** God should be worshipped to **how** He should be worshipped.

How much true worship is there in our churches, you may ask? I don't mean how much of singing. How often do we come before God without thought of what we can get from Him, concerned only about how we can give to Him the adoration He deserves?" Our "Me Generation" needs to interrogate this anomaly.

Consider for a moment the concept behind the word "worship" It literally means, giving to someone the honour or worth that is due to them. To worship God is to give Him the glory that is due to Him. Don't stop praising God for all the good things He has done for you, but don't forget to adore Him also for who He is.

William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury wrote on this subject: He says, "*Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness, the nourishment of mind with His truth, the purifying of the imagination by His beauty, the*

opening of the heart by His love, the surrender of the will to His purpose, and all this is gathered up in adoration to the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable...

True worship, in other words, is defined by the priority we place on *who* God is in our lives and *where* God is on our list of priorities. True worship is a matter of the heart expressed through a lifestyle of holiness. If God does not occupy the throne of our heart, the central point of our being, then we can quickly idolise ourselves. “*Self-centeredness*” said William Law, “*is the root, branches, and tree of all the evils of the human race.*” We cannot worship God when the god who is at the centre of our hearts is called “I”.

We worship God because he is God. Period. Our extravagant love and extreme submission to the Holy One flows out of the reality that God loved us *first*. It is highly appropriate to thank God for all the things he has done for us. However, true worship is shallow if it is solely an acknowledgement of God's wealth. Psalm 96:5-6 says, “For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.” In other words, our worship must be toward the one who is worthy simply because of his identity as the Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent One, and not just because God is wealthy and able to meet our needs and answer our prayers. We must focus our practice of worship on the worthiness of God and not his riches.

Think about this: Would you continue to worship God if, from this day forward, God's miraculous signs, wonders and provision were not so profoundly evident in your life? Would God still be worthy of your worship? Or is your worship completely dependent upon the abundance of God's blessings upon your life? Do you only worship God for what he can do for you?

Anytime I read the book of Job, I am challenged by his response to all the calamities that befell him. After he lost his children through a freak accident and his investments in the stock (animal) market and all his bank balances plummeted to nothing, Job in agony of spirit “fell to the ground in worship and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb and naked I shall depart.’ The Lord gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” Wow!

Job’s worship was a choice, not based on feelings, on fortune or being forced. He chose to trust God and worship him even when he did not understand why such calamities befell him. He believed in God’s sovereignty. Job’s worship was in weakness and great grief and he was alone in his grief. We can, like Job determine to worship the Lord no matter what.

In conclusion I will refer to Hebrews 13:15-16: “Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” (NLT). So through Christ two things become worshipful sacrifices in our life: the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name; that is, worship services in singing and praying and repenting and confessing, and secondly, the fruit of good deeds. Don’t neglect to do good. Share what you have. Such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Both of them are acts of worship.

Creation Care

A Rocha Field Notes Podcast and Blog

Episode 9 of the [Field Notes Podcast](#) was posted on 16th September and features Enric Sala talking to Bryony Loveless and Peter Harris on ‘The transformative power of nature’ (approx. 49mins). Enric is the National Geographic’s ‘Explorer-in-Residence’, which he admits is a bit of an oxymoron. He leads the ‘Pristine Seas’ project, is the author of ‘The Nature of Nature: Why we need the wild’ and has produced a TED talk entitled ‘[Let’s turn the high seas into the world’s largest nature reserve](#)’. In the podcast he speaks about the desperate situation our oceans are facing, with international (i.e. non-territorial) waters, more than 200 miles away from coasts, subject to exploitation and illegal activities including slave labour. But he remains

optimistic that solutions can be found to protect our seas.

Episode 10 was posted on 30th September and features an interview with Colin Jackson, founder and Director of A Rocha Kenya, on the subject 'Conserving Kenya's forests through church and community' (47½ mins). In it he speaks about the challenges facing conservation in the Dakatcha Woodland in the south of Kenya, hosting a number of rare species, but which is threatened by an increase in people purchasing land for agriculture, in particular for pineapple farming and charcoal burning.

Go to <https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/>, or from wherever you get your podcasts to listen to the interviews.

The latest **A Rocha International blog** has **Rev. Dave Bookless** blogging on the topic: **'Code red for humanity': Can we, and the world, still flourish?**

<https://blog.arocha.org/en/code-red-for-humanity-can-we-and-the-world-still-flourish/>

Hope in Action – local activities (see <https://www.hopeinaction.uk/regional>)

The September news is in the archive section of the Hope in Action website

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=77562ee34c> and you can also sign up to receive emails when new newsletters are released.

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4)

Bugs, Bats, Compost and Fungi!

In case you might have missed them or don't have access to the **Christ Church Facebook page**, recent posts include one from Barbara on the **Bug Hotel construction** project that took place on 25th September which was great fun for all involved and drew a number of positive comments.



Another post came from Gillian who drew attention to the **composting** done in the Christ Church grounds. There is now a **lot** of spare compost in the middle bin to the side of the church which is **freely** available for collection by church members for your own gardens and you are invited to 'please, please help yourselves' to any. Just bring your own container(s) and tools to dig it out.

We have had a **Bat detector** in the church grounds for a while, which was on temporary loan from a friend of Brenda's who will be giving a talk about what species have been identified by the detector (when their echolocation calls are pitched down into the (human) hearing range) at the next C4 meeting on **Thursday 21st October**. Again, anyone is welcome to attend!

It is planned to have a **Fungal Foray, (aka toadstool and mushroom walk)**, in Batch Wood on Sunday 7th November, meeting at the Toulmin Fields Car Park at 2.30 pm. It will be led by Dr Avice Hall, an expert in plant pathology and Felicity's sister. It will be run as on past occasions which have been very successful and which were particularly good fun for the children. Watch out for further publicity.

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) group meetings

These are being held monthly and please be aware that they are open meetings and any Christ Church member can attend. The main focus of the July meeting concerned plans to assess our Church's theological, environmental and sustainability credentials against A Rocha's Eco Church award criteria (which it runs in conjunction with the Church of England as well as other church denominations). The aim is not *just* to see if we might qualify for a 'bronze', 'silver' or

'gold' award, but to see how we measure up in each of the five areas assessed in the survey, which provide a framework from which to build awareness and education and identify what improvements can be made. As of the meeting held on 29th September, among other projects discussed, the group started looking at the elements of the Eco Church award scheme survey, one theme to be tackled each month. There are 5 of elements to the survey, encompassing:

- Worship and Teaching,
- Buildings,
- Land,
- Community and Global Engagement, and
- Lifestyle

and to gain an award *all* of these need to be shown to meet certain criteria for eligibility. Essentially this will require church-wide involvement, not just from a group like C4 or the church leadership. The 29th September meeting focussed on the Buildings aspect and we welcomed Anthony Harris back to give us his expertise and insights from his previous role as Site Manager here at Christ Church and how they qualified for a bronze award at their church in Eaton Socon.

Tearfund's COP26 Church Service on Sunday 7th November will be hosted by Pete Greig, Carol Ng'ang'a and Celtic Worship in a climate themed service mid-way through the COP26 conference. It will be available as pre-recorded content for integration into local church services, or as a live-streamed event. Go to

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/cop26-church-service> for further details. We are also hoping to hold a climate focussed service at Christ Church on that date.

October Sermon Series

In September we had 4 sermons on Nourishment. There are audio recordings on the Christ Church website in the Media/Sermons section if you missed them or want to listen again and they should still be available in the recorded services on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyw1PLEnH1df2GzW3pZujyw>). On 3rd October we start a new series based on the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion. Ten sermons are planned, which will run until 12th December (except 28th Nov., Advent Sunday). The titles were given in the last edition of >imprint<, no.96, p.6, also available in the Media/Church News page of the website, or click this link [>imprint< no.96](#) to go straight to it.

Zambia News

The latest News is on the next page, but first a couple of photos of the new science lab under construction at the Crown of Life school, with the help of CC funding:





Welcome to Zambia News, with news from our in-country partners. In June, we sadly lost Amos Lwabila of Kumbaya to Covid. Mission Direct has been privileged to have partnered with Amos since 2008. He will be greatly missed.
Geoff Spiller

Two New Classrooms for Kumbaya School



The two new classrooms at Kumbaya School have been completed and are already being used! Thank you to everyone who donated towards this work. But there is a bit more we want to do: at a recent inspection by the Department of Education, it was recommended the front and back yards, which create a lot of dust in the classrooms, are concreted over, to improve the health of the children. We need to raise £1600 to carry out this work. If you can help, please follow the link to our fundraising page: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/zambia2021>.

Teachers - Could you prepare online training material for Zambian teachers? Ann Williams, who led the teacher training teams to Zambia for several years, is now coordinating work to produce online training. If you are interested and think you could help, please contact Ann at annmewilliams@ntlworld.com.

Prayer Requests & Answers:

Give thanks:

- For the life of Amos Lwabila, and for all he achieved through Kumbaya Ministries. We continue to pray for Ketty, his family and all at Kumbaya.
- For progress on the building projects and for generous donations which have enabled Mission Direct to continue supporting our Partners;

Please pray for:

- The vaccination programme in Zambia, that more vaccines would be made available.
- Our Partners, for protection from illness and for strength and wisdom to continue their challenging work.

Covid-19 update

Zambia experienced a peak in cases during June / July due to the delta-variant, but cases have now fallen to a few hundred a day. The vaccination rate though remains very low, with less than 2% of the population receiving a single dose. Zambia remains on the UK 'red list'.

Amos Lwabila 1956-2021



Cry Community School has been educating disadvantaged children in Misisi compound for a number of years. But many pupils are unable to continue beyond primary school due to school fees and other costs. Could you sponsor a pupil from Cry School to go to secondary school? Please contact Geoff Spiller if you can help: gspiller@hotmail.co.uk

Twins **Taonga and Tasiya Banda**, daughters of Pastor Benson and Barbrah Banda at Chamba Valley, have both been accepted to study medicine at University in Lusaka. It does however, present considerable financial challenges for the family. If you are able to help Taonga and Tasiya achieve their dream to qualify as doctors, please contact Geoff Spiller. Thank you.

A Science Lab for Crown of Life School



A church in St Albans which has provided amazing support to Dorothy and Crown of Life School over the past 10 years, has continued fundraising to build a science lab at the school. Good progress is being made, with the basic building almost complete. Work is now starting on the internal fittings.