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Items for **>imprint<** no. 117: **Mon. 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023**, please, by email at [editor@ccstalbens.org.uk](mailto:editor@ccstalbens.org.uk).

## Why???

If you've not received a copy of **>imprint<** before, you may be wondering why you suddenly got an email link to this edition.

Pre-Covid, if you'd been coming to Christ Church back then, you may have been offered a hard copy of the latest edition on arrival at church and encouraged to subscribe to the emailed notifications. However, during lockdown **>imprint<** went almost completely on-line, apart from a few hard copies sent out by post. Since then it has remained a predominantly online resource, so it has raised the question whether there are members of the congregation who may not be aware of its existence.

Jeremy kindly did a plug the Sunday after **>imprint<** no.115 was published, but also recommended that future notifications should go to *everyone* on the ChurchSuite members' email distribution list. So that's why you got this if you never had it before.

Notifications are sent out with a direct link when each new issue gets added to the Christ Church website (where they sit under the Media/Church News drop down menu). It's published roughly monthly, with the odd break (the next will be an October issue). You are quite at liberty to opt out of receiving the notification emails, but we hope you find some of the content in **>imprint<** of interest - there is rarely any overlap with what comes in the weekly e-newsletter - so we hope you continue to subscribe.

Peter Young (Ed.) 😊

## 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 PCC meeting

In the review of actions from previous meetings, it was decided that the availability of the recently installed defibrillator should be publicised in church, emphasising relative simplicity of use, as and when it might be needed for any member of our congregation. It was also clarified that the Council grant mentioned had come from Herts County Council.

Due to the resignation for workload reasons of one of our two Deanery Synod

representatives (who are ex-officio on PCC), it was felt that we should try to get at least one replacement (we could have up to three reps in total). The correct procedure for going about getting nominations will be investigated.

The PCC discussed correspondence that had been received about the workload of some members of the Monday Suppers team, and whether there could be any breaks for those engaged in this ministry. After lengthy discussion, considering needs of participants (e.g. financial hardship loneliness, gospel opportunity) and the well-being of the team members, the PCC felt that they wanted to encourage team members to take the opportunity of occasional time off, which would be communicated to them.

The PCC were given an update on the Holiday Club, which is being publicised locally via flyers and also on the church projector. As of 17<sup>th</sup> July, there had been 15 bookings so far. Due to the limitation on numbers (40 participants) which the team membership would be able to cope with, wider advertising was felt to be inappropriate at this stage.

The item carried over from the previous meeting on investment of designated and restricted funds which the church has no immediate need to use, was revisited, with more information provided on the fund originally proposed, and also a Christian bank, for comparison. The PCC finally agreed by majority vote to invest £100,000 of the currently unused money in the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

Paul, our Treasurer provided a financial update for the first 5 months of 2023, together with forecasts for this year and the next 2 years on a 3-year rolling plan, as had been agreed at a previous PCC meeting. The budget deficit (income minus expenditure) is modest so far for the year to date and (despite lower forecast congregational giving this year) the deficit is forecast to be less than was allowed for in the 2023 budget, particularly as a result of more expected income from lettings and lower forecast staff costs, since employment of a new staff member is currently on hold. However the 2024 forecast takes employment of a new staff member into account during the fourth quarter and for the full year in the 2025 forecast, when the forecast budget deficit will become significantly higher. Most likely this will require the use of reserves to fund this salary, if not achieved through increased congregational giving.

The new arrangements for the administration of communion are still being monitored and evaluated, although minor tweaking (e.g. tidying of route to the two stations) may be required, and some clarification of responsibilities.

Possible revision of our Mission Statement was again on the agenda for this meeting, in an attempt to make the centrality of Jesus more explicit. However there was limited time for discussion and it was agreed to look at it more closely soon, but that Standing Committee should pick up consideration meantime.

The progress in achieving aims for the first year of the current Mission Action Plan was briefly reviewed, together with anticipated next steps for future years that would be needed. There had been good progress in some areas, less so in others. In view of recent changes in PCC membership at the APCM, it was proposed to re-establish the championing of the 3 main areas (Unity as a Fellowship; Community Visibility; Resourcing the Mission) by PCC members with an interest in each given area, and aim for each group to meet once before the September PCC meeting.

## **Mind your language!** -- Rev. Canon Dele Agbelusi

Some years ago, there was a popular TV comedy by the BBC (called Mind Your Language) which featured different Nationalities learning English in the same class. It was always interesting how one word or sentence could mean different things to different people.

Today, teenagers apply the word *awesome* to virtually anything- clothes, music, you name it. The word is so overused that when people sing Rich Mullins's "*Awesome God*," they seem to trivialize God and put the Trinity on the same level as a toothpaste, beautiful house and clothing. As our culture has worked hard to establish equality among persons, we've somehow put God into that parity and gradually reduced our sense that this is a breathtakingly transcendent GOD we're talking about.

Almost everywhere you turn today, people are either denying the God of the Bible altogether, or redefining Him. An increasingly popular New Age doctrine displaces the God of the Bible, and sets the human being in His place. According to New Age thought, "your search for God needs go no further than yourself". You are God and because the celebrities say it, it must be true. Absolutely NOT!

I read about a fellow who was hurting all over. He went to his doctor and said, "*Doc, everywhere I touch, it hurts. When I touch my head it hurts. When I touch my shoulder it hurts. When I touch my arm it hurts. When I touch my chest it hurts. What's wrong with me?*" After the doctor examined him he discovered that his index finger (with which he was doing the touching) was broken.

There are many ills in the Christian life than can be traced to one single problem - our view of God and our attitude towards Him. In the preface to one of the greatest books ever written, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, the author A.W. Tozer writes: "The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us". What we believe about God and how we think of God will greatly affect our lives. A low view of God tends to produce a low form of living. A lofty view of God tends to produce a higher form of living. Prophet Isaiah is someone whose vision of God has got a lot to teach us. His experience is like that of a little boy that was reportedly drawing a picture in his art class. The teacher walked by his desk and asked what he was drawing. He looked up and said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." The teacher said, "Johnny, no one knows what God looks like." He smiled and said, "They will when I get done."

In Isaiah 6:1-8, Isaiah declares that he saw the Lord, in the year that a promising king Uzziah of Judah, who was a great benefactor to their nation, died. Uzziah was one of the few good kings of Judah who did not belong to the rogues' gallery in the history of monarchs in Israel and Judah. His reign could only be rivalled by David and Solomon in prosperity. All these great men died, but God is still on the throne high and lifted up, as the ageless One. The vision of God that Isaiah saw changed his prophetic ministry for ever.

He saw God in his temple with six-winged Seraphims attending to him calling to one another, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the LORD of hosts. The Jewish literary method of emphasis is the rule of repetition. It's only in the rarest sense you see this upgraded to highest sense. God is described as Holy Holy Holy, not love love love, or mercy mercy mercy, but Holy Holy Holy. God's holiness is so great, his separation from his creation so infinite, and his moral excellence so brilliant, that the six-winged seraphims used two of their wings to cover their faces. It was too dangerous for them to look at God.

One day, Moses saw a bush on fire that wouldn't burn up. That shocked him. He had to get a closer look. However, God said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5).

Likewise, the seraphims were on holy ground above God's throne. They didn't have sandals to take off. But they did have wings. So they used them to cover their feet. (Isaiah 6:1-3). Isaiah was so overwhelmed by what he saw that he cried: "Woe to me, I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Isaiah had previously pronounced six woes on the people (chapter 5) but instead of continuing with the announcement of God's judgement on the people, he pronounced the seventh woe on himself in a psychological-theological fix. It was a great awakening. Isaiah for the first time, realised who God is and who Isaiah was- a man of foul lips unworthy to be a messenger of the God who is Holy, Holy Holy. Awesome God. Mighty God.

Holiness is arguably the most neglected attribute of God in the contemporary church. If asked to describe God, many Christians would mention his power, love, wisdom, or a list of other attributes, before they mention holiness. Yet in Scripture, holiness is God's central, defining, and foundational attribute.

I pray for a great awakening for our local church, Church of England and the Church of Christ universal, that will make us sincerely cry, "Woe to me, a person with a filthy mouth..." as we try to comprehend God's holiness.

Our world is in great darkness and needs the glorious light of God's revelation and he needs you and me to go as his servants after standing in awe of His holiness, and being cleansed by the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's what God did to Isaiah. His unclean lips were cleansed, and his sins forgiven by a hot coal that came from God's furnace of sacrifice such that when God said, "Who will go for us, Who can I send?", Isaiah was able to respond, "here I am, send me".

There is a real danger before us. The world is coming full circle. Having fed on the dry husk of materialism, secularism, and naturalism, it has created a spiritual thirst in humanity. People are returning to spirituality; however, it is a spirituality that has been disconnected from the reality of God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ. While it is a good thing for mankind to once again realize that he or she is a spiritual creature, a spirituality that is not based on biblical revelation is dangerous! John warns us in I John 4:1, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" There are voices present in the world, "*seducing spirits,*" which will turn you away from the God of the Bible. This is why you need God's Word more than ever today in your life, and bow to its authority not try to revise it. Do not be deceived!

## Sundays in August at Christ Church -- Rev. Dr Jeremy Follett

For the four Sundays in August we will not be Livestreaming our services. Neither will we be having live music or CC Families.

This is in order to give everyone involved a bit of a break: producing our service week by week is brilliant but it is hard and persistent work for many.

It also provides an opportunity to do some things differently! So:

- Our in person service at Christ church will utilise some of our amazing recordings from the pandemic
- We will provide a short pre-recorded service for each of the four Sundays
- Each Sunday will take a different theme and will be suitable for everyone, old and young.
- Normal service will resume Sunday 3rd September

We are aiming to focus on the following topics each week:

6th August	- Holiday Club
13th August	- The Christian Hope
20th August	- Creation Care
27th August	- Zambia Project

## Caring for Creation

### Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) activities

Christ Church Caring for Creation At the C4 meeting at 8.00pm on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June we watched the second of the Lausanne Global Classroom Creation Care video series: Creation Care as a Gospel Issue. It was stated that care for the earth is a spiritual matter as it relates to our relationship with God, with ourselves and with others as well as with creation (Romans 8:19-23). See [>imprint<115](#), p.7 for the full programme.



Following the PCC's agreement at their June meeting, that our church would pursue the Church of England's Net Zero by 2030 goal, assessing costs as we progress, C4 met with the Building and Grounds Action Group (BAGAG) to run through the checklist provided by the Church of England as a starting point and discuss next steps.

There is a lot of work going on and planned around the church grounds and C4 and BAGAG are working together around the ongoing work and the creation of a 5-year grounds maintenance plan.

There are also plans in progress to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Christian environmental charity A Rocha, on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October with an event and activities at Christ Church, as part of, or after the morning service.

C4 will not be meeting in August, so the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September, time and location to be notified.

## Getting to Church Survey

On the Sunday of the APCM (23rd April) you may remember we did a survey of everyone who came to church on how they got there.

The choices and numbers responding were:

Private Car :	29	
Car Share:	16	(this included passengers in any private car - family members or lifts, etc.)
Walk:	19	
Cycle:	0	
Public Transport:	0	
Other:	0	

Obviously this was just a snapshot and the figures could look different week by week. It will be interesting to see results of any further surveys we conduct in the future. Church members come from a range of distances from church, from quite nearby to well outside our Parish. And not everyone is physically able to walk or cycle, and public transport may not always be feasible. But in the case of those of us who need to use a car to get to church and drive on our own, could a car share arrangement be possible, either for the whole journey, or a pick-up *en route*? Maybe consider chatting with others living near you?

## A Rocha Blog

There have been no further blogs [to 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug] so far posted since the last *>imprint<*, no.115, in which the most recent blog, entitled 'Embracing Change', by Florence Muindi, posted on 5th July was publicised.

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 33: posted 2<sup>nd</sup> August, featuring Godwin Evenyo Dzekoto, who leads A Rocha Ghana's work in the north of the country, in and around Mole National Park. In this podcast entitled 'Collaborative conservation and why humans can be both the problem & the solution', he is in conversation with Jo Swinney and Rick Faw, talking about helping local communities see that their survival is dependent on the well-being of the entire ecosystem, and that the choices they make today have consequences that will play out for better or worse in times to come.

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

## Earth Overshoot Day

Did you know that Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August was Earth Overshoot Day? That was the date when humanity is reckoned to have used up more resources than the earth can regenerate in a year. That means for the rest of 2023, we are effectively borrowing resources from future years. This is for the entire world. However, every country has a different date based on the rate they use up resources. For the UK our overshoot day was even earlier, 19<sup>th</sup> May this year! In contrast Jamaica's overshoot day won't be until 20<sup>th</sup> December.

[Source: Good Energy plc marketing email]