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Items for *>imprint<* no. 95: **Mon. 12th July 2021**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbans.org.uk.

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

PCC 10th May meeting

As this was the first meeting (via Zoom) of the newly (re-)elected PCC following the APCM in April, the meeting began after prayer, with Jeremy outlining, especially for the benefit of new members, the role and responsibilities of the PCC, with emphasis on representing the church membership, advocacy and unity of purpose.

A number of updates were provided on issues flagged from previous meetings.

Hall flooring: There appear to be two alternative courses of action, both likely to involve significant cost. Building & Grounds Action Group (BAGAG) will be considering these and hope to offer a proposal at the June PCC meeting.

New Bank Account: The process of transitioning to a new account with Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) from Barclays is not straightforward and may require both accounts to run in parallel, Barclays for income and CAF for outgoings, at least in the short term. A complete switch would need church members with existing standing orders to change to the new account. Discussions continue offline.

Online donations: Christ Church has now signed up with JustGiving to facilitate online donations. Various means of communicating this are being investigated.

Hong Kong Ready Church: This is now being actively promoted.

PCC/Church Officer appointments

The following appointments were made:

Lay-vice chair: Meriel Dixon

PCC secretary: Debbie Dorman (non-PCC member)

Minutes secretary: Peter Young (non-PCC member)

Treasurer: Paul Collis (co-opted PCC member)

Accountant: position vacant

Standing Committee: Vicar and Wardens, plus PCC members Malcolm Blaxland, Jackie Kenealy and Sue Medlycott

Electoral Roll Officer: David Boyce (non-PCC member)

Other appointments, including representatives from outside the PCC membership, included:

Banking Officers: Doreen Collins and Mary Cottrell

GMAG: Jackie Kenealy (PCC representative), Paul Bailey, Peter Cooper.

BAGAG: Wardens, Gillian Donald.

Staffing Sub-committee: Vicar, Jonathan Carter and John Sear

Assistant Church Wardens: Paul Bailey, Hilary Boyce, Oliver Donald, Jackie & Jim Kenealy, Chris Patrick, Eleanor Truscott (all unchanged from last year).

Stewards: The updated list of greeters and sidesmen were reviewed and approved.

Review of topics raised at the APCM Forum

These were not discussed in any detail at this stage. However in order to arrive at priorities for Standing Committee to include in forthcoming PCC agendas, the meeting split into 3 breakout groups to discuss their views on prioritisation and to report back. The church roof and what to do about repairs to stop water ingress was top priority in two of the groups' feedback. Engaging with the community, spending time together and the new patterns of church worship and facilitating church member feedback also featured in the three groups, as did mission action planning.

Creation care was also prominently mentioned and it emerged that Jane Sellars, our new Deanery Synod representative and thus an *ex-officio* PCC member, was keen to be involved in this. The PCC warmly endorsed this and encouraged her to communicate initiatives coming out from the Deanery, for example, and get a team behind her, to champion whole church awareness and involvement, and to review progress. [\[see Jane's item in this issue - Ed.\]](#) She was keen to try to get Christ Church engaged with SustFest (Sustainable St Albans), although it was slightly too short notice for the SustFest21 running from 23rd May to 6th June, but hopefully for future annual events. And she hoped aspects of Creation Care could feature occasionally as part of our worship together.

The PCC is next due to meet on 7th June 2021

GOD AMIDST RUINS – *Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi*

The catastrophic outcome of COVID worldwide has left behind it a tale of woes. It was a watershed in the history of pandemics. COVID caused the death of many, the collapse of businesses; loss of livelihoods; marital breakdown, mental problems, collapse of governments, not to mention untold emotional strains which have wrecked people's lives. Perhaps you have experienced grief from something different – a broken relationship, a miscarriage, loss of a close relative, unfulfilled dreams... **Take heart. God is not helpless amidst the ruins.**

Our broken lives are neither lost nor useless. God's love is still working. He comes in and takes the calamity we face, uses it victoriously to work out his wonderful plan of love. Darkness may veil God's lovely face but He is there, loving His own to the very end.

Jack Kuhatschek wrote on suffering: "If seismic devices could measure personal tragedy,

then Job's "earthquake" would have registered 8.5 on the Richter scale. In one day he lost everything he owned and almost everyone he held dear. Because of what he endured, his name has become synonymous with suffering." Yet even though Job's suffering was extreme, it was by no means unique. In one form or another, his story is re-enacted everyday in a broken and fallen world. A Christian in crisis may be shaken, but he will never be shattered. **God has not promised that He will allow us to go through life unshaken, but He has promised to carry us through unshattered if we let him.**

It is an encouragement for me to tell you that not only does God know your sorrow, He can taste its bitterness in His own mouth. He looks on your tears with a rip in His heart and a catch in His throat saying through His own tears, "Your sadness affects My soul, too."

Many times we feel as though God is asleep but I have learnt that God does not need pyjamas. Our path may be rough with no cheers on the way, but our Jesus is always by our side.

Many of us are familiar with "*Footprints in the Sand* by Margaret Fishback Powers: *A story is told about a man who dreamed he was at the end of his life. He saw his life as if it were a walk along a beach with Jesus. As he looked back over his life he saw two sets of footprints in the sand along most of the way—one set belonging to him, the other to Jesus. He noticed, though, that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints in the sand. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.*

This really bothered the man, and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that you would never leave me nor forsake me. You said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most difficult times in my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me."

Jesus replied, "My son, I want you to know that I love you and that I would never leave you. Look again at those footprints. During your times of trouble and suffering, the footprints you saw were mine. I was carrying you."

We can be certain that when we are going through the difficult times of life, God is always with us. Never doubt his presence, even though you can't feel him or see him at the time. He keeps his word: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

We need not be afraid because God does not desire our suffering but rather is constantly working to turn our suffering to joy. **The pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives, but it has not and cannot prevent us from communicating love to one another.** It may actually be providing us the opportunity and the motivation to let love abound all the more. What is certain above all else in this time when so much is uncertain is that "nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:38).

St Albans Diocesan Synod Elections 2021 – *Meriel Dixon*

You may be aware that a new Diocesan Synod is to be elected this summer, for a 3 year period, 2021 to 2024.

Eleven seats are available for the Diocesan House of Laity, to be filled from the 16 churches in the St Albans Deanery. Any person on an Electoral Roll of a parish in the St Albans Deanery may stand. Candidates must be nominated and seconded by a Lay Member of the Deanery Synod. An elected member of Diocesan Synod becomes automatically a member of their own Deanery Synod and of their own PCC.

Nomination forms are available from the Deanery Administrator, Danielle Argent,

deanery.stmichaels@gmail

If you are interested in matters wider than our own parish please consider whether you might be the right person to represent your deanery and parish at a Diocesan level. Or, for more information please talk to me.

Meriel Dixon

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) Group – *Jane Sellars*

'Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it' (Genesis 2:15)

You may have seen in the church newsletter that the C4 group is being re-launched. We are currently seeking members who wish to work together to find and implement ways to promote sustainability and live sustainably at Christ Church. This is an opportunity to maximise the potential of the people, the building and the grounds of our church in order to cultivate and guard our environment. Hopefully it will be possible to incorporate some community outreach too.



Please contact me, Jane Sellars [*contact details in the Members' Directory in ChurchSuite*], should you wish to be part of this group. We plan to share updates in future issues of *>imprint<*.

Hope in Action

Hope in Action (HiA) exists to support the churches' response to the climate and ecological crisis through networking and the provision of resources.

Please go to their website for more information and from where you can also sign up to receive their monthly newsletter, <https://www.hopeinaction.uk/> which contains loads of resources and links.

HiA's May newsletter, which has been posted to the Christ Church website archive, can be accessed from the following link: [HiA newsletter May 2021](#) (NB. It's not accessible directly from the website, however). Contents include:

Get Active · Make COP Count · Send a Postcard to Boris · UK Churches' Relay to COP26

Get Praying · Thy Kingdom Come · 24-Hour Wave of Prayer

Local News · SustFest'21 – what's planned by our local churches [*sadly events will be mostly over by the time you'll read this – Ed.*]

Be Inspired · A Rocha – At Your Service [*see <https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/about/>*]

Be Informed · Climate & Nature Course · Hope in Action website updates

Current Sermon Series

The current sermon series going through the book of Malachi continues with 3 more sermons:

“The challenge to serve God” (3:13-15) – 6th June

“The day of the Lord” (3:16-4:6) – 13th June

“The message from ‘The Messenger’” (Resume of the whole book) – 20th June

Please click [here](#) for a reminder of the full programme (on p.4 of *>imprint<* no.92,)