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Items for **>imprint<** no. 103: **Mon. 25th April 2022**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbens.org.uk. *Peter Young (Ed.)*

PCC meeting, 7th March 2022

Updates

Climate Crisis Declaration – it was decided to publish the version of the Declaration, as approved at the last PCC meeting, in **>imprint<** (see separate item following, pp. 6,7); and on the website; and also displayed in church.

Church roof working party – had met once so far prior to this PCC meeting and now had a good sense of the issues and other ramifications.

Main foyer entrance door sensors – a quote had been obtained for fitting automatic sensors to enable entry; additional sensors to prevent premature door closure; and also remote opening of locked doors allowing visitor entry by lone workers in the office. As this would fix issues experienced with entry to the building, expenditure on this was approved.

Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Tree – planting location of the proposed sessile oak will be a collaborative proposal, between Building and Grounds Action Group and the Christ Church Caring for Creation group, and will require PCC approval. The decision will need to take due consideration of the tree’s siting on aesthetics and use of the grounds as a whole, and the possible impact of any future building works, which could include storage of building materials.

Correspondence on different complex topics received from two of our Readers, were discussed and will be taken further for discussion and/or action, as required.

APCM, 3rd April 2022 arrangements

Finance

The PCC received a summary of the 2021 accounts and a draft of the Annual Report to the APCM which includes the statutory statement of the Accounts for 2021. The Treasurer spoke to this and reported the good news that the actual deficit, originally predicted at approximately £18k when the 2021 budget was set, was only £3.6k, largely due to substantial cost savings and income from congregational giving being very close to budget. The PCC approved the report to be sent for independent examination prior to the APCM, subject to resolution of a few queries; however due to the fact the APCM is very early this year it is probable the independent examiner will be unable to complete the audit of the accounts before the APCM. If this occurs, the unaudited accounts will be presented to the meeting and, once the accounts have been signed off by the examiner they will be brought back to the church for final approval in a short extraordinary meeting.

Church Wardens, PCC and Deanery Synod Annual Reports

These reports were received by the PCC, prior to circulation to church members for the APCM.

There will be 1 Deanery Synod representative (ex-officio on PCC) and five PCC vacancies to fill at the APCM, 3 current members (Malcolm, Becki and Sarah) having completed their 3-year terms and 2 unfilled vacancies from previous years. Additionally there will be a Church Warden vacancy as Meriel is standing down.

Jeremy outlined his plans to speak about aspects relevant to the APCM in his talk at the 10am service on 3rd April, focussing on the Mission Action Plan and the changes made to Sunday worship for adults and families since the pandemic, and the way forward.

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

Members of PCC were each encouraged to get behind and champion at least one of 3 priority areas identified in the development of the MAP: Unity as a Fellowship, Community Visibility and Resourcing the Mission. There will be a Hub Group for each of these three priorities which will initiate and co-ordinate actions. Progress will be reviewed by the PCC in July and after a further 6 months, with the objective of reporting to the 2023 APCM.

FROM GLOOM TO BOOM – Easter says it all – Rev. Canon Dele Agbelusi

Good Friday was like an anti-climax in the experience of the early disciples. It's like one of those war stories told by James Hewitt: It was June 18, 1815, the Battle of Waterloo. The French under the command of Napoleon were fighting the Allies (British, Dutch, and Germans) under the command of Wellington. The people of England depended on a system of semaphore signals to find out how the battle was going. One of these signal stations was on the tower of Winchester Cathedral.

“Late in the day it flashed the signal: ‘W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N---D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D- -’. Just at that moment one of those sudden English fog clouds made it impossible to read the (entire) message. The news of defeat quickly spread throughout the city. The whole

countryside was sad and gloomy when they heard the news that their country had lost the war. Suddenly the fog lifted, and the remainder of the message could be read. The message had four words, not two. The complete message was: 'W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N---D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D---T-H-E---E-N-E-M-Y!' It took only a few minutes for the good news to spread. Sorrow was turned into joy; defeat was turned into victory!"

So it was when Jesus was laid in the tomb on that first Good Friday afternoon. Hope had died even in the hearts of Jesus' most loyal friends. After the frightful crucifixion, the fog of disappointment and misunderstanding had crept in on the friends of Jesus. They had "read" only part of the divine message. "Christ defeated" was all that they knew. But then on the third day - Easter Sunday - the fog of disappointment and misunderstanding lifted, and the world received the complete message "Christ defeated death!" Defeat was turned into victory; death was turned to life!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world. It is so foundational to Christianity that no one who denies it can be a true Christian. Without resurrection there is no Christian faith, no salvation, and no hope. A person who believes in a Christ who was not raised believes in a phantom, a myth and a powerless Christ, who is not strong enough to save. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then no redemption was accomplished at the cross and "your faith is worthless," (I Corinthians 15:17).

I wonder what might have engaged the thoughts of the women that first Easter Sunday morning. They had come to the tomb prepared to care for the dead body of a good man, a great teacher, a charismatic leader and now, like so many of his kind who give hope to the poor and the despairing, he had been killed by those in power. What a tragedy!

When we arrive in church on Easter Sunday, we are still part of a Good Friday world. A world where terrorists and demon-possessed leaders feel no regret for the massive loss of lives and property that they cause; a Good Friday world where our own lives know the heartache of death, the agony of failure and the misery of broken spirits. Maybe we have lost jobs or loved ones; or maybe we have hurt and been hurt; or maybe we have grown cynical about the future or joyless in the present. Our hope is all wrapped in the man who was laid in the tomb on Good Friday.

When the women arrived at the tomb, the stone was already gone. They didn't have to do anything except show up to witness it. God had already done the work of rolling back the stone. **God had already made a way where there was no way; not to let Jesus out, but to allow his disciples go in to see that the DEED WAS DONE.**

On Easter Sunday over 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. **The Gospels do not explain the Resurrection; the Resurrection explains the Gospels. Belief in the Resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith.** The Resurrection is ongoing because that same power that brought Christ back from the dead is operative within those who are Christ's. Easter sets the context for our freedom as humans, for without the Easter experience, we will be slaves to sin and the tyranny of Satan.

The resurrection has broken the shackles of sin! All the resources of Heaven are on our side; power to enter into a new relationship with God; power to be born again through faith; power to live a victorious life in Christ; victory over addictions and bondage to sin; power to understand our purpose for living; power over our enemy - Satan and his hordes of demons! The Resurrection power affords us protection; the

power to witness to others and to be a living testimony of God's grace. We receive power over darkness as we are translated into the Kingdom of Light. We receive the power to be resurrected someday and to live with Christ throughout eternity!

You can experience Resurrection Power Today! The apostle Paul spoke of the Resurrection Power this way... (1 Corinthians. 15:3-4) *'For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; that Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures...'* This is the GOSPEL - the Good News! The death, burial, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus!

Resurrection Power begins the moment you give your life to Christ. Perhaps you have never understood the resurrection this way before. But you desire to have resurrection power in your life today. What can you do? You need to understand four simple facts:

1. I am a sinner.
2. The penalty for my sin is eternal separation from God.
3. Jesus died to pay the penalty for my sin.
4. By faith call upon the Lord Jesus to be saved from sin.

And see how God takes away the gloom in your life and ushers in a new life in the resurrected Jesus.

Caring for Creation

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4)



Tree Planting

We've planted 3 fruit trees in the church grounds in the area bordering the Garden of Remembrance and the path leading up to it. They are two apple trees, a James Grieve and Ellison's Orange, both dessert/eating apples and a crab-apple tree, *Malus Evereste*. They are quite small as yet and will need to be kept well watered for some time.



photos by Izzie

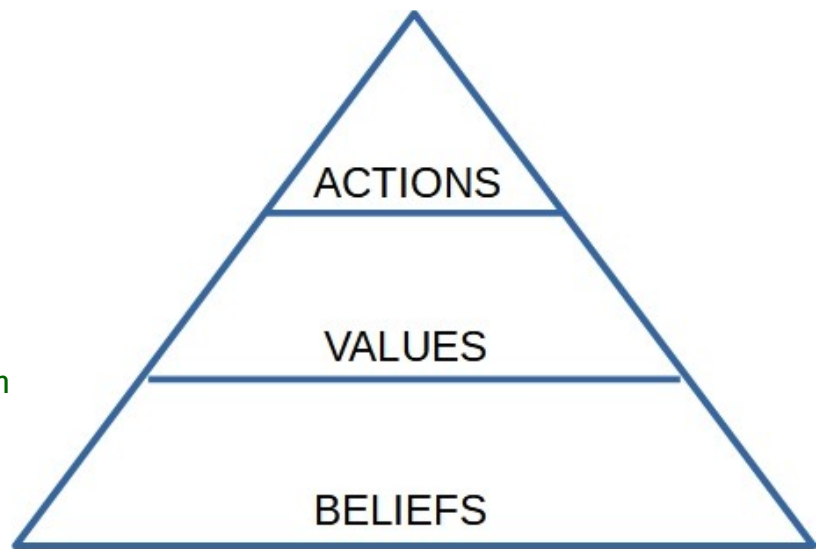
As mentioned in the 7th March PCC report above, it is also planned to plant an oak tree in the grounds to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and a suitable location is being investigated.

C4 meeting on 21st March

C4 introduced a new regular agenda item at this meeting for us to ensure we align our discussions on creation care with our Christian/biblical beliefs. On this occasion Felicity set the ball rolling and she has provided some notes on what she covered for readers of *>imprint<*:

"[In the] previous C4 meeting we looked at a triangle illustration that was used by Dr Hilary Marlow in her inaugural lecture as honorary environmental canon at the Abbey [on 23rd Nov 2021: 'Creation, Humanity, Hubris: Reading the Bible in an Environmental Age'].

Beliefs form the base of the triangle, values the next layer and actions the apex layer of the triangle. Without this structure, action in the area of creation care may lack foundation. What we believe as Christians is fundamental to our values and then leading on to any action of caring for God's world (and can avert the danger of falling for 'fashionable' fads, for want of a better phrase).



BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PYRAMID

- "A quote Dr Hilary Marlow shared during her lecture which I had found interesting:

"I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems, but I was wrong. **The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.** And we scientists don't know how to do that.' (Gus Speth, 2006, meeting of NAE and Harvard scientists)

"For me this links to the triangle illustration that we looked at.

- "To think about: Our creation care actions are more likely to be long term, rather than just fashionable fads, if they are part of our faith and discipleship, i.e. discipleship, that deeply affects our way of life because we are seeking to follow God/see the world the way God sees it.
- "Another thing that gives me pause for thought:

John 3:16 - God so loved the 'world' - we tend to relate it chiefly to people (and it does indeed concern people) but my reading around the subject suggests that the meaning is broader and embraces the whole of creation too ('cosmos' being the original Greek).

- “The first of Dr Marlow’s ‘pause for thought’ questions within her lecture was:
 - *What does the way we treat the earth say about our own relationship with God?*
- “Just some of the books I have personally found useful as I have tried to explore this field from a faith perspective:
 - Planetwise* by Dave Bookless;
 - God doesn’t do waste* by Dave Bookless;
 - The Radical Disciple* by John Stott (much broader than creation care, and definitely thought-provoking..).
- “p.s. if books are not your ‘thing’, then consider looking at the more bite-sized videos from the Lausanne Global Classroom: Creation Care series – with Dave Bookless, Ruth Valerio and many others! – lots to think about there too.” [*check out: <https://lausanne.org/lausanne-global-classroom/creation-care-episode> and <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYGxDL2dvuo6myoWfGs-quOs-JXuc6IUO>*]

Also at the March meeting, C4 reviewed the draft environmental policy, which Debbie had written, intending it to be directed at hirers and church users generally; and also the finalisation of proposals for a **St Albans Sustainable Festival 2022** Christ Church event which will be held at church (grounds) on **Sunday 22nd May, 2-4pm**. It will be advertised as “Planting for God’s Birds and Beasts” and will incorporate various activities and things to view and inspire. (**SustFest22 events around the area will be held between 15th and 31st May**). We are hoping to get signs around our grounds marking the various creation care initiatives so far in place.

Although C4 now normally meets on the third Monday of the month, because this would be on Easter Monday in April, the date of the next meeting has been rescheduled to **Monday 25th April**. Any church member is welcome to attend and contribute to these meetings. It is planned to hold the next meeting on Zoom and details will be supplied in advance via the church e-news.

Christ Church Climate Crisis Declaration – Rev. Dr Jeremy Follett

At our February 2022 meeting the PCC agreed this declaration concerning recognition of the climate and environmental emergency that the globe is facing. It is a declaration written by TEARFUND, to coincide with last year’s COP26 summit (we have changed the order of some points but not the substance), who are encouraging as many churches as possible to adopt. We are placing a hard copy on the church noticeboard in the foyer and also on the website ... [*which you will find on the **Caring for Creation** subpage – under the **WHAT’S ON** drop-down menu – direct link: <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/caring-for-creation>*]. It is not designed to be a statement of faith (although there are clear theological statements within it) but is more about action points that need to be worked on in the long term. Climate & environmental issues are clearly becoming increasingly relevant. As individual Christian disciples and as a church with significant buildings and grounds we need to grapple with these at depth. We are planning to discuss climate and faith related issues in our Autumn series of sermons, when we look through the early chapters of Genesis.

Christ Church St Albans

Climate and Environmental Emergency Recognition Declaration

On the basis that:

1. The world is facing a severe crisis of environmental degradation and climate change that affects our ability to sustain human civilisation in its present form.
2. The crisis indicates a failure of human beings to follow God's mandate to care for the world and to seek justice among its peoples.
3. The main cause of the crisis is human activity.
4. The crisis is inextricably linked to global injustices and inequality.

We, the PCC of Christ Church St Albans, want to publicly recognise a Climate and Environmental Emergency, and commit Christ Church to:

1. Examining our lives individually and corporately in relation to this crisis and seeking to live faithfully to God.
2. Bringing forward by July 2022 an action plan to minimise our negative corporate impact on the environment and climate and to help restoration where possible.
3. Encouraging our members to make relevant lifestyle changes appropriate to their circumstances.
4. Encouraging action on this emergency in our neighbourhoods, workplaces, and other spheres of activity.
5. Using whatever influence, we may have to bring about positive actions by local and national government and by corporations.

A Rocha Field Notes Podcasts and Blog

More **Field Notes podcasts** have been posted since the last issue of *>imprint<*:

Episode 19, posted on 9th March, introduces **Sandra McCracken**, a singer-songwriter from Nashville, Tennessee and friend of A Rocha, who is interviewed on 'Why a world in crisis needs songwriters', about how her music has come to be her contribution to the 'renewal of all things' God is working out in and through each of us, whether artists, scientists, activists or peacemakers. Sandra has also shown a unique ability to recast sacred scripture texts into theologically rich yet accessible songs. Her thoughtful lyrics and gospel melodies in songs like "We Will Feast In The House Of Zion," "Steadfast" and "Thy Mercy My God" have become staple anthems in churches across the U.S. She contributes a regular column in Christianity Today and released her first book "Send Out Your Light" in September 2021.

In *Episode 20*, posted on 23rd March, **Rodel Lasco**, an A Rocha International Trustee and member of the National Academy of Science, also Technology and Executive Director of the Oscar M Lopez Center and a senior scientist in the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), is interviewed on 'A climate scientist in the Philippines faces facts and remains hopeful', despite the latest pessimistic Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.

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

A Rocha International blogs: New blog anticipated on or around Fri 1st April.

Go to <https://blog.arocha.org/en/> to read the blogs.

Our sermon series

We've now had the final talk in the Elijah series on 27th March. On the 3rd April there will be an introductory talk given by Jeremy to lead into the Annual Church meetings following the service, followed by Eastertide talks on Palm Sunday, and the Easter Day all-age service. Then from **24th April** a new series will start on the **first letter of John**. These will follow the sequence previously listed in *>imprint<* **no.101** except that on 12th June there will be an OMF speaker instead of the advertised sermon.

In training – Jackie Kenealy

*All who take part in the **games** train hard. They do it to get a crown that will not last. But we do it to get a crown that will last forever. [1 Corinthians 9:25](#)*

We come to church to train to get the eternal crown of being with the Lord forever, but if you ever want to train at a sport – why not try Bowls? Our Open days are on 10th and 24th April. It's a gentle game with enjoyment and friendship. It's not too onerous so many people can really enjoy it. Some of our congregation already do!!

Speak to Jackie or Jim Kenealy for more details.

