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Items for >imprint< no. 112: **Mon. 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023**, please, by email at [editor@ccstalbens.org.uk](mailto:editor@ccstalbens.org.uk).

*Peter Young (Ed.)*

## 6<sup>th</sup> February PCC meeting

An update on the plans to celebrate the King's coronation was given. The event will be in collaboration with the Social Club. Discussions are at an early stage, but at the moment it looks like being **from about 1pm on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May**.

A recurring agenda item on the church's financial position covered a review of the categories used for budgeting in the accounts; a few changes were suggested in light of new or historic considerations.

There was also extensive discussion on the church's financial reserves, identifying the amounts that are *restricted* (can only be used for defined purposes), or *designated* (intended for use for defined purposes, but which the PCC could reallocate), or *undesignated* (could be used for any church purpose). The church is also obliged to retain some unrestricted fund reserves, to satisfy Charities Commission requirements, so much of the discussion was around how much of the undesignated reserves were available and how they could be used, given we have a deficit budget, and/or whether any could be used, together with appropriate designated funds to go towards the roof replacement. However no decision could be made at this point.

*[This was further discussed at the church forum meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February.]*

Jeremy also introduced a letter he intended to send to all members of the congregation regarding our church finances and giving. Some amendments were suggested and it was agreed to disseminate the letter as both hard copy and electronically (which has since been done).

There was also discussion on a proposal to install a defibrillator outside the church, available for both church and local community use, since there isn't one with 24-hour access in the vicinity. Although a grant should be available and it is planned that local

businesses would be approached hopefully to contribute to costs of installation, the PCC agreed by majority vote to underwrite any excess costs.

The projector that had been used in the worship area had failed and was beyond repair; one installed as a temporary replacement is of inferior quality and also faulty. The PCC agreed to the purchase and installation of a higher quality laser projector as a more permanent solution, but which could be relocated to another area of the church if it is decided to introduce more advanced technology at a future date.

A proposal to hold a children's holiday club over the course of 5 consecutive weekdays in the summer, using Scripture Union resources, or to reintroduce the weekly Big Lunch during August, was discussed and the pros and cons of each option weighed. This proposal had arisen from objectives outlined in the church's Mission Action Plan (MAP). Discussions also considered funding and grants that might be available and how much volunteer resourcing would be required. Although the PCC tended to favour the holiday club option, because of greater potential Christian content, it was agreed to bring this to the church forum for discussion on 26<sup>th</sup> February.

*[As PCC had proposed, this was another topic discussed at the forum meeting.]*

The PCC also discussed our church membership's involvement in small groups, also one of the MAP priorities, using their own experiences, and considered what perhaps could be done better, including how people were drawn in to small group membership, the diversity of membership, what small groups can contribute to the life of the church and benefits to individuals.

The next PCC meeting is due to be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

## **WHOSE IDEA WAS IT? (Mark 4 35-41; Matthew 8:23-27) – Dele Agbelusi**

We are into more than two months in the new year and what a fitting time for us to consider the key to our making a great success of the rest of the year- Holding unto Jesus and his promise to take care of us.

Dr. William Barclay was one of the most respected Bible scholars in the world. His life was devastated at one point when his only daughter drowned just a few days before she was to be married. Sometime later, commenting on Mark 4:35-41, Dr. Barclay said: "I am not so concerned as to whether Jesus stilled the tempest on the sea. What I do know is He stilled the tempest in my heart." This agrees with Charles Swindoll who said: "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react."

**Whose Idea Was it** to get in the boat in the first place in Mark 4:35-41? Jesus'. "That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "let us go over to the other side." No doubt his disciples were glad to hear that instruction because they were very tired. Crowds came to hear the Master. Sick people came to be healed. The confused came to find hope. On and on, day after day, they came. Serving others takes a toll on the spirit.

Several of them were fishermen who knew the Sea of Galilee intimately. As the boat left the western shore, the lake was so calm that Jesus decided to go to sleep in the stern, resting on a cushion. Suddenly a great storm arose, the wind rushing down across the mountains, whipping up the waves and causing them to come crashing into the boat. As the water entered, the disciples furiously tried to bail it out but the water rushed in faster than they could bail it out. Nothing could be more terrifying than to be on a boat in the blackness of night as it takes on water and slowly begins to sink.

Finally, the disciples woke Jesus up, asking him a question that to us may seem impertinent, but it is one we have all asked in moments of desperation: “Do you not care that we are perishing?” Don’t you care that my child is sick? Lord Jesus, don’t you care that my marriage is falling apart? Don’t you care that I am still single and age is not on my side? Don’t you care that I have no job? Lord Jesus, don’t you care that I want to give up? Don’t you care that my health is failing?

We have all asked that question in a thousand ways a thousand times. We never question the Lord’s compassion when things are going well. But God’s compassion is not measured by our circumstances nor is his kindness limited to our understanding. God cares just as much when the tempest is raging as when the seas are calm and the sun is shining.

If Jesus told them to travel with Him in the boat to the other side, they should be able to trust Him sufficiently that He would get them there. Which storm, no matter how furious would truncate God’s plan concerning His Son? None.

**The disciples should have known that Jesus was under divine protection till His ‘hour’ came. And those who were travelling with Him in the boat automatically had a heavenly insurance against a tempest that pretended to foil God’s plans!**

This story takes my mind to two occurrences which attest to the fact that when God indicates his involvement in a project, no one can foil it- no demon, no powers.

#### **Example of Paul**

On his way to Rome to appear before Caesar, a thunderstorm struck the ship he was travelling in and the men and sailors feared for their lives. But an angel of God had assured Paul that he would stand trial before Caesar, hence Paul was confident that his life would not be wasted in the storms. He received further assurance that only those who were with him in the moribund ship would be saved. Paul could afford to encourage his co-travellers to eat after about fourteen days when anxiety had made it impossible for them to do so. You can read the story in Acts 27:21-26;29-34. Paul’s confidence was in the promise (Word) of God he had received earlier that it would stand.

#### **Example of Peter**

After the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, it was becoming very fashionable and popular to persecute the Christians. Herod killed James, the brother of John (one of Jesus’ apostles), and Peter was next in line for execution. In the meantime, Peter was kept in prison awaiting a mock trial and subsequent execution. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter **was sleeping** between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Sleeping? How on earth could a man awaiting execution afford to sleep? I think it is because he knew that his time of death was not yet. Why? Because Jesus had predicted Peter’s future that he would live to an old age before dying as a martyr, (John 21:18-19), and he was still a young man. That time was still a long way in the future, not the following day!

Fear and Faith do not walk together. It was fear that prompted the disciples to angrily accuse Jesus of a lack of care for them. How could He stay asleep while they were wide awake, wide eyed with terror followed by a sense of spiritual paralysis. Not only were they afraid of their circumstances, they felt God was uninterested and apathetic about what they faced. I have been there and if you are honest with yourself, you have passed through that road before.

Instead of putting them down, Jesus rebuked the winds and said, "Have you still no faith?" I do not believe we can manipulate God into avoiding the storms or somehow making them suddenly disappear. Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves. When He calls us, we get into the boat. When he sleeps, we toil on. When the storm comes, we cry out to him. When he awakes, he calms the storm. When the storm is over, our faith is stronger.

Are you in a storm at this very moment? Do not be afraid. Keep believing. The Master of the sea is by your side. When the time comes, he will say, "Peace, be still," and the storm will run out of breath and the sea will become like glass. Eventually the day will break and the sun will shine again. And when you look back, you will see that your faith has grown stronger by the storm you passed through. What a Christ we serve! Even the winds and waves obey Him! His promise to us is **"I will be with you till the end of the age."** That is Christ's idea and I can hold on to it anytime.

## **Sermons at Christ Church**

The sermon "New Beginnings" series concluded on 19<sup>th</sup> February. You can listen to any of these again on the website: <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/sermons>, or on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyw1PLEnH1df2GzW3pZujyw>.

From 26<sup>th</sup> February a new sermon series for Lent commenced: **"Telling the Passion"** and the schedule of titles for this until Easter is as follows:

Feb 26	Cleansing the temple
Mar 5	The Last Supper
Mar 12	Gethsemane
Mar 19	The woman anointing Jesus' feet (Mothering Sunday)
Mar 26	Crucifixion
Apr 2	Entering Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
Apr 9	Resurrection (Easter Day)

After Easter a new sermon series on Paul's letter to the Galatians will start, but there will be separate, though related, topics for Christ Church Families' teaching. More details/titles to follow!

## **Deanery/Diocesan events for your diary**

***An open invitation to join the next Deanery Synod, 8<sup>th</sup> March at 7:30pm***

### **Net Zero Carbon: Practical steps to reduce the carbon footprint of church buildings**

At St. Stephen's Church, Watling Street, AL1 2PT. Doors open 7:00pm for light refreshments.

Presented by Catherine Ross, Net Zero Programme Officer for the Church of England (and a trustee of Sustainable St. Albans)

It will also be possible to join online at <https://youtube.com/live/Pt3nziswASY?feature=share>

## ***Church of England Environment Webinars, 16<sup>th</sup> March & 12<sup>th</sup> Sept***

The latest programme of webinars has been announced, along with all-comers briefings, which are open to everyone including parish/area/deanery Eco champions, and will be recorded.

The dates and links to sign up for the briefings are:

**Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup> 2-3:30pm** Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYpdO2grz8tGt0awGxLIWj9h4R2oipEgiWq>

**Tuesday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2-3:30pm** Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qcumgrj0jH91421Pss22A4-Yf1oY3Gwc1>

The webinars *[that could be relevant to Christ Church]* include:

- how to create a Net Zero Carbon action plan,
- becoming a NZC church,
- church solar panels
- church heating and also **NEW** heat pump training
- a brand **NEW** webinar on **Preaching for God's World**, with speakers from around the world.

**Also** the Diocese is now advertising for a **Net Zero Carbon Officer** to work within the property team which manages clergy housing and investment properties in support of parish ministry, church buildings and the diocesan offices and the DAC team which supports parishes in the care of church buildings. This important appointment will support our working towards reaching Net Zero Carbon by 2030, in line with the national commitment of the Church of England. The information pack, application form and further information is available on the Diocesan website: [Other Vacancies - Diocese of St Albans \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/other-vacancies-diocese-of-st-albans) Please pray for a successful outcome to the recruitment process.

## ***Easter Monday Pilgrimage, 10<sup>th</sup> April***

The Easter Monday Pilgrimage will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Pilgrims can journey from their local church, or from a hub church, to gather together for a celebration at St. Albans Cathedral. Our new Bishop of Hertford, Bishop Jane, will preach.

Save the date and look out for further details.

**Also** Bishop Alan will be hosting a reception for all those who have been confirmed in the diocese in the last two years.

## **Herts County Council initiatives**

### ***Slipper swap***

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has organised a slipper swap social at the **Central Library** at the Maltings on **Monday 6 March from 10:00 to 13:00**. It's part of their initiative for supporting older people and those at risk of falls. The idea is that people can swap old slippers for a brand new free pair of anti-slip ones, have a cup of tea and get information about keeping safe and well. No booking's needed – you can just drop in.

## *Cyber crime and fraud awareness*

On **29 March**, also at the **Central Library**, HCC will be working with partners who can give advice on keeping your devices and accounts safe. There'll be information on spotting phishing and social engineering; online, phone, email and text scams; and things like using passwords and 2-step verification. It's also a free of charge drop in session and there'll be people there **from 10:45 to 16:45**.

## *Meet the hosts – please come along*

In the year since Ukraine was invaded, several local households have sponsored people fleeing the war in Ukraine to come to the UK and live with them for 6 months or more. Others have helped by offering English conversation or practical help. The war continues and new Ukrainian women and children want sponsors to give them a starting point for moving to safety in the UK.

The first Homes for Ukraine hosts were breaking new ground and have built a wealth of experience about what has worked well, what's been rewarding and what's been tricky. Mindful that other people might be considering becoming sponsors or helping in other ways, there will be an informal get-together on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March from 7.30pm at the Townsend Tennis Club**, 8 Waverley Road, AL3 5PA. It'll be a chance to meet people with experience of hosting and find out more.

Everyone's welcome – not just potential sponsors. You can enjoy a drink from the bar and ask questions of people who have been leading the way.

## **Fairtrade Fortnight, 27<sup>th</sup> February – 12<sup>th</sup> March**

Due to lack of foresight on your editor's part, unfortunately this is very short notice of this year's Fairtrade Fortnight (it will already have started by the time this edition of *>imprint<* is published). Find out more at <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>



The Fairtrade Foundation is about fairer prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers around the world, but particularly in lower income countries. By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices, Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the producers from low-income countries.

You can get involved by trying to buy Fairtrade goods, that bear the Fairtrade mark (above), when they are available (see <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/buying-fairtrade/>) and *not* just during this fortnight, especially if you can't buy locally produced goods. Examples include: bananas and other fruit and veg, herbs and spices; chocolate, coffee, tea and other drinks, including wine; cotton goods; flowers; gold!!; other sweets and snacks; sugar, spreads and oil; and beauty/wellness products. Many of these are easily available in various supermarkets. However be aware that some products in shops may be described as 'Fairly Traded', but are not Fairtrade Foundation accredited if they don't bear the mark. Similarly, there are other Alternative Trading Organisations solely dedicated to trading fairly, but which don't fully comply with all the Fairtrade Foundation standards.

Christ Church is registered with the Fairtrade Foundation and we attempt to purchase Fairtrade whenever possible and Debbie is now our key contact with Fairtrade Places of Worship (see <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-community/faith-groups/>)

## Caring for Creation

### C4 meeting 20<sup>th</sup> February

As part of our regular beliefs agenda item we watched another of the Tearfund Climate Change videos given by Katharine Hayhoe, entitled 'Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier'. She argues that it affects everything we care about, directly or indirectly.



We discussed various resources, e.g. the Impact Score Shopping App ([Impact Score® Shopping](#)), Yuka, the app which analyses product labelling ([Yuka](#)), and the A Rocha International facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/arochoa.international/>).

We also discussed some grounds maintenance ideas and the proposal to hold a **C4 works day** on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March** (this is *as well as* the Love our Grounds [LOG] Day scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> April), to include installation of sign markers for features in the grounds, reduction of the bramble invasion around the compost area, shredding, tidying the bug hotel and possible planting of more fruit trees (subject to checking their placement with BAGAG).

It's hoped to keep and update a journal for maintenance in between LOG days, listing potential upcoming 'bite-sized' jobs that would be helpful (and that anyone could do - hint!), including, for example:

- Clip off all the dead lavender heads, preferably before the start of the growing season, to encourage better growth and possibly, a lavender harvest in the future that could be dried and used
- Sweep leaves and debris from the edges of the car park every so often and add to the correct compost bin (labels are in place on the compost bins to guide people)
- Deal with the shredding pile that we can use when the weather allows.
- More weeding and pruning around the fruit bushes and raised beds, when the weather allows.
- Litter-picking around the site.

A possible group visit to A Rocha UK's urban community reserve, Wolf Fields (a former rubbish dump) in Southall, West London, is also being investigated.

Do remember that C4 meetings are held monthly via Zoom usually on the third Monday of the month and anyone is welcome to join - a link is given in the e-newsletter on the Friday preceding the meeting.

### **Reminder: The Caring for Creation (C4) library has relocated!**

During the God's Creation sermon series the C4 Creation Care library was displayed on a table in the link corridor between the foyer and the worship area. Now that the series has finished, the books have been returned to a shelf (lower left) in the library/former crèche area, just off the St. Andrew's Lounge. (If you're not sure where that is, just follow the beating of drums after the service!!).

The booklet for recording book loans is with the books and anyone in church is still more than welcome to borrow, and if you have C4 library books to return or exchange, that's the place to go now! Ask C4 members for recommendations.

## ***RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch***

Several of us (adults and children) met from 8.15 to 9.15am before church on 29<sup>th</sup> January to take part in the annual RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. We spotted more birds landing in our grounds than we did last year, when we did the BGBW after the service. From the various posts around the site we saw the following species landing: Wood pigeon, Magpie, Song thrush, Ring-necked parakeet, Robin, Starling, Blackbird, Crow, House sparrow, Great tit and Blue tit (compared with last year when we recorded just 6 species: Blackbird, Blue tit, Chaffinch, House sparrow, Magpie, and Wood pigeon). So the earlier time did seem to yield better results for us this year. We enjoyed some light breakfast as a reward afterwards, which was kindly arranged by Debbie. The results of this year's survey from Christ Church have now been submitted to the RSPB, where together with all the other results collected by individuals, families and groups from around the UK, the crunched numbers will help to determine which bird species seem to be in decline. Unfortunately even the most commonly sighted bird in 2022, the house sparrow, has declined to the extent they are now on the UK Red List.

## ***A Rocha Blog***

The latest blog, with a Lenten theme, posted since the last *>imprint<*: 'Love the Fast', by **Autumn Ayers** (A Rocha International's Social Media and Content Coordinator), was posted 8<sup>th</sup> February.

Go to <https://blog.arocha.org/en/love-the-fast/>

## ***Field Notes Podcasts***

The latest episode, no.27, posted since the last *>imprint<*: is entitled 'Prophetic acts of hope on Lebanese soil', features **Guillaume de Vaultx** (recently appointed National Director of A Rocha Lebanon), and **Nabil Shehadi** (Chair of the A Rocha Lebanon Board), interviewed by Rick Faw and Rachel Mander.

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