

*An all age community ... on a shared journey of faith ... making the edge the centre
so that Jesus can be known*

Registered Charity 1132925

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Items for **>imprint<** no. 129: **Mon. 28th October 2024**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbans.org.uk.

Peter Young (Ed.)

PCC meeting 22nd July 2024

[This seems a long time ago now, but owing to the break in PCC meetings over August, they were unable to approve the minutes of their July meeting until after the September issue of >imprint< was published. - Ed.]

After a bible reading and introductory prayer, the meeting reviewed the minutes from the previous, June meeting. The minutes were approved, subject to some amendments being incorporated. Notes from a recent Standing Committee meeting were also received. Matters arising and review of action points from the previous meeting included further clarification of Standing Committee's role, safeguarding training for PCC members and energy cost investigations.

The PCC subgroup looking at the 'Resourcing the Mission' aspect of the Mission Action Plan (MAP) reported on their recent review to the meeting. This included the fundraising for the roofing project, but also other wider aspects of its project management and interactions. The fundraising aspect was gone into specifically, including the need to establish what grant sources, loans and bequests that may become available, and pros and cons of appointment of a project fundraiser although a fundraising team would be established and their terms of reference were highlighted. The discussions raised number of questions. It was agreed to approach the Resources Action Group to help identify people with appropriate skills who might serve on the fundraising (and other?) group(s).

The PCC discussed, initially in breakout groups, whether to continue live streaming of our services, in view of the intensive resources required on Sunday mornings. It was noted that although the number of people actually streaming *live* is fairly small, a significant number do view services at some stage. These could include members in Families Church, or individuals in Connect groups catching up later. Also it is of considerable benefit for those unable to attend church on a regular basis for other

reasons. The PCC's plenary session for this topic in the end decided to continue live-streaming, on the understanding that confidentiality and safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults need always to be observed.

The PCC at this meeting also confirmed that, during August, services would not be live-streamed or recorded and that they would be more informal and intergenerational.

THE LOVE OF GOD HOW MEASURELESS! -- *Rev. Canon Dele Agbelusi*

'I am in love and my whole frame is consumed by passion for my Lover. I try to find words to explain the depth and breadth of my Lover's love but I am at a loss.' We cannot comprehend the magnitude of God's love for us. Many hymns have been written with the main priority of describing God's love. One in particular, written by Frederick Martin Lehman, 1868-1953, really comes to mind. Part of the first and third stanzas are reproduced here:

"The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell..."

Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made, Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry; Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky."

God's love is UNCONDITIONAL. It is not based on our performance as well illustrated in **Romans 5:8**. "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." It is based on His sovereign choice and His mercy

One of the tragic effects of a fallen world is that most people see themselves as a composite of all their failures. When they look in the mirror, they may see only an unwell person, or someone who has lost his job, or someone who is in the grips of a bad habit. Even if many of us cannot see beyond our failures and weaknesses, that is not the way God looks at us. As a loving father, He looks beyond our failures and weaknesses. Can you imagine a loving father introducing his children by saying, "*This is my daughter, Gladys, who stained the carpet with grape juice when she was two*" or, "*this is my son, Joe, who broke a valuable vase last week*"? If loving fathers do not have a need to memorize their children's failures, you can rest assured our Heavenly Father has no use for such memories either.

When we accept God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ, God forgives and forgets our failures. He looks at us and sees what we are able to become through His grace. That was the experience of Peter the disciple of Jesus, who denied his knowledge of Jesus and even swore to buttress his claim, at a time when Jesus could do with a friend. Yet, Jesus said He had prayed for him and that when he was restored he should help his brethren. Peter must have seen himself as a shaking reed but Jesus saw him as a rock. Jesus affirmed him when his spirit was really at a low ebb. He called Gideon who was hiding from the marauding Midianites "a mighty warrior who would deliver Israel from their enemies" Judges 6:12. The key to Gideon's success was that God was with him and he was surrounded by his love. God loves us as we are, but does not leave us as we are because he always has better things for us.

We all need affirmation and love, and the greatest show of love to humanity is the Cross of Christ. There, Jesus hung and died to set the sinner free from the consequences of their sins; sins of the past, present and future. His resurrection is the confirmation that God has accepted Him as a substitute for "my punishment". It's a gift

that I cannot add to or take away from. BY GRACE ALONE, THROUGH FAITH ALONE. NOT OF WORKS. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

As long as I keep this wonderful truth and my experience of God's love and forgiveness in focus, I will not doubt His love. It is through this act of forgiveness in Christ Jesus, that I know that there is no condemnation for me and I have passed from death to life. Whenever we allow the world and its values, the fear-inducing messages of some ministers, the world's issues, and other problems to press in so much upon us, God and His love become marginalized. But, we must learn that, when we lose focus of who God is, His love, mercy and faithfulness, we lose touch with reality.

God is utterly trustworthy in all He says and does, and this is the rock-bottom reality on which everything in the universe depends. In an age when so much unfaithfulness abounds, how good it is to lift our eyes to the heavens and realise that there, we have the One who will never let us down, never have to apologise for failing us, and never go back on His Word.

A woman who had previously lived a riotous life was dying of AIDS after she had made peace with God by accepting Jesus as her Saviour. A priest was summoned. He attempted to comfort her, but to no avail. "I am lost," she said. "I have ruined my life and every life around me. Now I'm going painfully to hell. There is no hope for me." The priest saw the framed picture of a pretty girl on the dresser. "Who is this?" he asked. The woman brightened. "She's my daughter, the one beautiful thing in my life."

"And would you help her if she was in trouble, or made a mistake and she comes to you repentant? Would you forgive her? Would you still love her?" "Of course I would!" cried the woman. "I would do anything for her! Why do you ask such a question?" "Because I wanted you to know," said the priest, "that God has a picture of you on His dresser." The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ made this possible. God gives you the righteousness of His Son in exchange for your failures, guilt and shame.

Will you embrace God's love? God's love is UNCONDITIONAL for each one of us today.

His love has nothing to do with our goodness. His love has nothing to do with our performance. God already knows the worst about every one of us here - yet, He chose to love us. His love is measureless and it lasts forever.

Sermons at Christ Church

From the beginning of October until Advent the new sermon series will be on the **Miracles of Jesus**. Here is the schedule as known at present:

Date	Reading	Sermon topic	Families plan (see key below*)
October 6 Trinity 19	Luke 13:10-17	Sabbath healing	C
October 13 Trinity 20	Mark 10:46-52	Blind Bartimaeus	BB
October 20 Trinity 21	Luke 5:1-11	Catch of fish	H
October 27 Last in Trinity	John 11:1-44	Raising of Lazarus	Intergenerational
November 3 4 before Advent	Mark 5:21-43	Jairus' daughter	C

November 10 3 before Advent	Mark 5:21-43	Woman with issue of blood	H
November 17 2 before Advent	John 9:1-34	Man born blind	Intergenerational
November 24 Christ the King	Mark 2:1-12	Paralysed man	H

Then during Advent, the Christmas period until the end of 2024:

December 1 Advent	Luke 1:5-25	John the Baptist part 1	BB
December 8 Advent 2	Luke 3:1-6	John the Baptist part 2	Intergenerational
December 15 Advent 3 – 10:00 am	Matthew 1:18-25	Joseph accepts Jesus as his son	H
December 15 -- evening	Carols		Intergenerational
December 22 Advent 4	Luke 2:1-21	Shepherds visit	BB
December 24 Christmas Eve	Nativity	The whole story	
December 25 Christmas Day	Luke 2:22-40	Presentation in Temple	Intergenerational
December 29 Christmas 1	Luke 2:41-end		Intergenerational

***Families plan key:**

C= Return for communion; **BB**= return for breaking of bread; **H**= remain in Hall

Connect Groups that eat together

For our Connect Groups item this month, three of our groups explain the value of eating together.

Most Connect Groups that meet in person have coffee and cake or biscuits at their sessions. But some go further and programme in occasional meals together. Three of our groups share their experiences.

Hilary Boyce writes: *'Ridgeway Group* has been meeting for a number of years now and has its name because we used to meet in a home on the Ridgeway, Marshalswick. Ridgeway meets fortnightly on Tuesday evenings, starting at 8.30 pm. to allow for commuters' timetables and children's bedtimes. We started meeting virtually during COVID and have continued with it since.

When we met in person, pre-COVID, we had refreshments at the beginning of each meeting and a time of catching up as we drank and munched. With the virtual meetings we have to provide our own refreshments but we still start with a time of catching up. We also used to have termly social times where we shared a meal together. This fell away during COVID but we restarted it last term with a bring-and-share Sunday lunch held at Christ Church and including the children.

The time meant that all the group could be there, otherwise babysitting becomes an issue. We see each other at church but still it was a delight to meet as a group in person. The virtual

meetings are practical for busy lives but we all felt that there is something special about actually being together and sharing food together. Now we have started meals together it will hopefully be something that is a regular part of our group life.'

Marion Jones writes: '*Pilgrim Group* really enjoy the times when we eat together and everyone almost always attends. Up till now, the preference has been to eat out (roughly three times a year) on a regular Pilgrim night at a local restaurant e.g. Harvester or King William - we've considered staying on for the quiz at the latter but that hasn't happened yet! These meetings are looked forward to and allow us to have an extended, relaxed time of 'life sharing' valued by all.'

Barnabas Group have a sit-down meal together twice a year, one in January and one in the summer. These are events that are eagerly awaited and the quality of dishes is outstanding.

One of our members is incredibly inventive in his starters, which he claims to have simply taken from the internet. For our recent summer meal the main course had a choice of a whole salmon or gammon and sweets included a variation on an orange flavoured bread and butter pudding and a pavlova. We certainly go to town on our catering!

Meeting together over a meal is an important part of these three groups' lives. Members get to know each other better, enjoy each other's company and it gives everyone time out. It builds community and encourages prayer and love for each other.

What about your group? **Kingfishers** are hoping to have a Christmas meal together this year. It is worth the effort!

STOP PRESS

We have already grown one new group this summer with plans for another to start in October, so there should be seven not five. More details in the next *>imprint<*.

John Truscott acts as the Christ Church Connect Groups Co-ordinator and would love to hear from you if you would like to join a group, especially one of the new ones. He would especially like you to contact him if you received a letter from him over the summer period. See him at church, ring 01727 568325 or email him at john@john-truscott.co.uk. Don't put it off - you are missing out on so much!

Caring for Creation



Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) group

As reported in *>imprint<* no.127, C4's September meeting was held earlier in the month, for planning of the Creationtide activities, culminating in the 'picnic' and family events held inside the church and in the grounds on the afternoon of Sunday 22nd, which seemed to be enjoyed by all who took part, despite less than ideal weather!

If you weren't there or didn't manage to get one of the free tetrapak bird-feeders being made to order, it's not too late if you wanted one, just contact me at peter.young86gl@gmail.com and I'd be happy to supply materials and instructions for you to DIY.



The next C4 meeting will revert to the usual 3rd Monday in the month meeting pattern

(so 8.00pm on 21st October, online on this occasion). Remember, any church member would be welcome to join C4 meetings (details will be in our weekly e-newsletter).

A Rocha Blog

There has been one further blog posted since the last *>imprint<*, no.127. This blog was posted on 1st October and is entitled '[Tears of God: the greatest environmental disaster](https://blog.arocha.org/en/tears-of-god-the-greatest-environmental-disaster/)' (https://blog.arocha.org/en/tears-of-god-the-greatest-environmental-disaster/), authored by Rui Ramalho who featured in the Field Notes Podcast episode 40 (see *>imprint<* no.123) and is based at the A Rocha's first Field Study Centre, at Cruzinha in Portugal, an area that has been experiencing a crisis in water conservation in recent times.

Click the link above or go to <https://blog.arocha.org/> to read the A Rocha blogs.

Field Notes Podcasts

There has also been one further podcast since the last *>imprint<*.

Episode 45, posted on 1st October, features [Cyriaque Nikuze Sendashonga](#) who has worked in the policy and politics of biodiversity conservation for over forty years. She has had influential roles with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environment Program, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and more. As a Catholic, she explains in this podcast how her deep faith has been a source of hope and helped her persevere, both in work and in withstanding the traumatic personal losses she has suffered along the way. In this podcast is entitled '[The politics of protecting nature](#)' she talks with Jo Swinney and Nick Faw about the task of getting joint commitments with different countries each with their own agenda.

To listen to Field Notes Podcasts go to <https://arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/> or from wherever you get your podcasts.

Green Christian St. Albans (GCSA) – September 2024 newsletter

The latest GCSA (formerly Hope in Action) newsletter, published 26th September, is now available from their website (hosted by St. Lukes, St. Albans): <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=53b00ecc1a>. Links to their back-catalogue can be found at <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/home/?id=04f756a054&u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87>.

Dates flagged in this issue include:

Saturday 12th October, 11am – 3pm – St Albans Community Showcase, at the Abbey, free to attend and open to all, with opportunities to chat about Eco Church, other green ventures, stalls featuring organisations and charities, and panels on social and environmental issues. For further information go to <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/st-albans-community-showcase>

Saturday 19th October, 2 – 5pm – Repair Fair at St Paul's Church
<https://sustainablestalbans.org/repair-and-reuse/st-albans-district-fixers/>

Sunday 3rd November, 12-5pm – March for Clean Water, London
<https://marchforcleanwater.org/>

.. and other events later in the autumn.