



Happy New Year to all!

At the time of writing, it is reported that the loss of the ozone layer, which risked exposing people to harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun, is on track to be completely recovered by 2040 across the world apart from the polar regions which will take a little longer. This is happy news for the New Year, and an example of how global cooperation to reduce or eliminate harmful emissions can lead to good news for the planet. CO₂ however remains a significant challenge, and essentially involves getting every person on the planet to stop burning fossil fuels.

Good News

Congratulations to Glastonbury Methodist Church who obtained a Silver Eco Church award in December 2022.



Mary Powell writes: The main things we have been working on after gaining the Bronze were the wildlife areas of the rear of the church (we took part on the SWT Big Bug Count in the spring), recycling (we have a Bra Bank to recycle old bras, and have started soft plastic recycling for those who find it difficult to take it to the supermarkets), reducing paper usage by circulating the newsletter by email, and community involvement. We've also made part of the church's front lawn for wild flowers and some of the rear areas are used by our neighbours for growing vegetables and there are bird feeders and several compost heaps. It helps that we have had solar panels for over 10 years and we are on an Eco tariff, so our electric usage is mostly offset. Against

us is an old boiler and no insulation in the church nor hall. We have Environmental and justice-based services and prayers.

One of the neighbours was helping with the SWT Big Count and I found a scary looking tunnel web spider. we have seen badgers wandering down the church path.

In 2023 we are hoping to host a Climate Justice day from Christian Aid , and Churches Together ae working on a series on the Environment, probably in the autumn.



Midsomer Norton Methodist Church

As part of its response to climate change, members of the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church have replanted the church flower beds. With professional guidance from Simon Knight of Prior Park Garden Centre, the beds now have insect friendly, low maintenance plants better suited to withstand drier

summers. This is a small part of a bigger church programme to become more eco-friendly and address environmental concerns, such as cutting carbon footprint.



Plants we used were herbs such as Rosemary , Lavender Chives. Bergenias and Heathers for earlier flowering. Also, Foxgloves for early summer.

Erysimum Bowle's mauve, Hissop, Monarda, Scabious for plants that flower for a long time to try and have colour all the year around.

UNESCO welcomes COP15 Global Biodiversity agreement

The 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) adopted a landmark roadmap to 2030 which includes area-based targets such as designating 30% of the Earth's land surface a protected area and restoring 30% of the planet's degraded terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems by 2030. UNESCO will be contributing to implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as the agreement is known, through its own networks of designated areas.



© UNESCO

Negotiators meeting in Montréal, Canada, also agreed to reform damaging environmental subsidies and to create a fund to support the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. This fund will be managed by an existing body, the Global Environment Facility.

Reaction to COP 27

Some of the outcomes of COP 27 are, in summary:

- Agreement to set up a Loss and Damage fund for countries devastated by extreme weather
- Commitments on cutting greenhouse gas emissions were too weak to stay within the 1.5c limit agreed at the 2015 Paris agreement, and a resolution to cause emissions to peak by 2025 was taken out, to the dismay of many.
- A provision to boost 'low-emissions energy' – which could be interpreted to include gas, which has lower emissions than coal

Green Christian, the Christian environmental charity, has reacted to the outcomes of COP 27.

“We are failing in our duty to serve and preserve Creation. After 27 climate conferences, predicted carbon emissions are still a long way from where they need to be to safeguard our climate. In April this year, the head of the UN, Antonio Guterres, said “the world is on a fast track to climate disaster” More than 11,000 scientist from around the world have declared that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency. The last climate conference, COP27, took place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022. Yet again it failed us. The setting up of a fund for Loss and Damage is the one encouraging response to all our campaigning for it, a pin prick of light against the background of unabated climate breakdown. We knew it before COP but we know more deeply now that our global leaders do not have the collective moral courage to prevent the breakdown of our abundant-life-supporting climate. Let's grasp this opportunity not to dwell in despair and denial, but to pray and live with love and meaning at this time.”

Christian Climate Action – The Big One Protest

Christian Climate Action are planning a mass protest starting on April 21st this year called The Big One, aiming to bring 100,000 people protesting outside the Houses of Parliament in London. We are taking part in this protest alongside Extinction Rebellion. The ethos of the action is in line with a promise by Extinction Rebellion to move away from tactics which primarily disrupt the public and instead focus on those tactics which disrupt those in power. More information can be found at: <https://christianclimateaction.org/2022/10/22/april-rebellion/>

Climate Change – interview with Richard Lancaster

Naomi Sharp, who is a Church and Community Worker in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit conducted an interview for Climate Sunday with Richard Lancaster of Nailsea Methodist Church which is a long-term member of Greenpeace on the subject of Climate Change. Naomi and Richard are happy for the interview to be shared and used as a resource. It is available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/wHUIKaYeO4A>

Future Events

The first **webinar** of 2023 is entitled “Preaching for the planet – how do we bring creation care into our worship and preaching?” It will be on **Monday 20th February at 7.30 p.m.** It will be led by **Rev John Kime, Rev Simon Topping and Rev Ian Souter.**

The second **webinar** is on Monday 27th March at 7.30pm. It will be led by **John Brenton**, Sustainability Manager at Bristol University on the topic “Reducing Carbon Impact – quick wins for churches.”

Contact ian.souter@methodist.org.uk to book in or message him.

21 February: Shrove Tuesday: A good opportunity to use LOAF materials

22 February: Ash Wednesday: Let’s use Ash Wednesday to repent of our sins – of squandering the world’s resources and causing climate change and pollution making the world less habitable for other people in the world even now, never mind ten years’ time.

FairTrade Fortnight 23rd February to 5th March 2023

Are you preparing to celebrate FairTrade Fortnight? You can get useful information from the Fairtrade Foundation on this link: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/media-centre/news/countdown-begins-to-fairtrade-fortnight-2023/>. With the sad news that Traidcraft has gone into administration it is all the more vital that churches take a lead in promoting fair conditions for producers and ensuring that we use fairly traded food and goods. Green Christian organisation has publicised a set of recipes for FairTrade Fortnight which you might like to explore for your own use or for church groups. Follow this link: <https://www.therealmealdeal.com/recipes-for-fairtrade-fortnight-2021/>

Please feel free to copy this newsletter or any parts you feel relevant to your situation and use it in church notices or magazines. You are welcome to forward it to others who may be interested.

Pauline and Mike Culshaw

culshaw@strawberryvision.co.uk

