



## Eco Newsletter February 2024

This is our 27<sup>th</sup> Newsletter. Following the Silver ECO Award which Knowle Parish Church has just achieved it seems good to remind ourselves this month why Christians need to give tackling climate change a particular priority. This we have done in the first item of our Newsletter this month. We also link with the KPC Website items on “Sustainable Eating” and give advance notice of the Great British Plastic Count in March.

Christ died for (John 3 v16 – notice that it says “God so loved the **world**”, not just you and me, and the original text here uses the word that we might better translate as “whole cosmos”!) and it’s also the world that God made and committed to us to care for (Genesis 1 & 2 both use a term for “care” that might better be translated as “**guard & protect**”!). The earth is at risk and we have a responsibility under God to do something about that for the sake of the world.

**2. We need to act for the sake of people living in poverty around the globe.** We know from science that the earth is threatened by the side effects of industrialization, the burning of fossil fuels and the creation and disposal of plastics – all of which are the basis of our own prosperity and which have allowed us to make comfortable lifestyles for ourselves. All around the globe other communities have not had those development opportunities and lag behind us in education, health care and comfortable lifestyles. And now we risk not only having to ask those poor communities to pause their own development, but we have also inflicted on them losses of land, deforestation, droughts or flooding, and poor conditions for basic harvests. The consequences of climate change will be to drive up migration flows, displacing millions of people, and to trigger famines and health problems amongst those least able to tackle such challenges. The world is a very unequal place: here in the UK the average individual consumes in six days what the average citizen in Malawi consumes in one year. Climate change impacts the most on the poorest human beings and tackling it is a matter of justice – and justice is a central concept in both the Old and New Testaments. Our God is a God of justice and expects us to act justly.

**3. We need to act for our own sake:** The changes we are already experiencing from climate change are damaging eco systems right here on our own doorsteps and having an impact on mental and physical health, all of which will get much worse over the next 20-30 years unless we change course now. Do we want to leave our children and grandchildren with these problems? Right from the start human beings were meant to look after the earth they would pass on to future generations. According to the Bible the first humans were “taken from the soil” (Adamah) to “work the soil” and make the world a better place for their children. Christ came to be the “second Adam” and then passed on to us the tasks that Adam had: to cooperate with God in making this truly a “garden for humanity”.



Knowle  
Parish Church

## Why should Christians care about climate change?

*Peter Lewis writes:* You might be wondering why Knowle Parish Church is putting effort into tackling Eco issues and addressing the crisis of climate change? Haven’t we got enough other issues to worry about? Of course, scientists and others are warning us that climate change is the biggest challenge humanity faces, but you might be thinking there are enough other environmental and conservation groups to leave them to tackle that. What’s it got to with our faith and the spreading of the gospel? Well, here are some points to think about:

### 1. We need to do something for the sake of the world.

All around us we can see eco systems under stress and weather patterns changing faster than ever, with dire consequences for wildlife, pollinators and farmers. 1 in 3 amphibians and reptiles are in danger of extinction; 1 in 4 species of mammals are threatened; huge numbers of insects are in decline.

This is the world



**4. We have to do this for God's sake:** Not only is it true that God made and loves the whole of creation and made human beings to care for it, but it's also true that it's now going wrong because of us ("sin"?) and we have to repent and change – something we can only do under Jesus. And that's because God has a future for creation – a renewed and transformed earth has a definite place in the future we are to look towards.

**5. We need therefore to pray, to give and to act:** Praying for action on climate change, for changed direction from our leaders and whole economies, and for those poorer people suffering its effects, all these have to be high on our priorities for prayer. In church week by week, in our homes daily, and as we go about in the week watching the news and looking at nature all around us, **pray, pray, pray**. And because we have a responsibility for those suffering from climate change, we should **give** to agencies working with those people (Tearfund, Christian Aid, Oxfam, UNHCR etc) and to those organisations tackling environmental damage or working for conservation (A Rocha, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, World Wildlife Fund, etc). Our areas for **action** include: changing what we eat (less meat, more local and more seasonal foods), changing how we travel (fewer flights, fewer car journeys, more use of public transport, fewer polluting vehicles etc), altering our energy consumption at home and at work (better insulation, phasing out fossil fuel heating systems, less waste of energy in how, when and where we heat homes etc), and better waste systems (more recycling, less throwing away and more repairing items, more composting, less plastic packaging etc).



These are mighty big challenges aren't they? On our own we can't do it. Together and with God's help we can and we will!

*These ideas owe a great deal to the writings and speeches of Ruth Valerio, Tearfund's Global Advocacy and Influencing Director - an environmentalist, theologian and Canon Theologian of Rochester Cathedral – whose many books include "Just Living – Faith and Community in an Age of Consumerism". She has several talks on You Tube on the subjects of faith and climate change.*



### Sustainable Eating:

*Claire Carter writes:* Our current Eco focus is on a Sustainable Diet. This means choosing foods that have the least impact on the planet and the lowest carbon footprint. Around 30% of the world's Greenhouse Gas Emissions come from food. What we eat and what we waste, has a massive impact on Climate Change. It also impacts Food Poverty in Developing Nations. Making small changes in our diet can have a significant impact and it's really easy to do. You can find more information on a sustainable diet [here](#) or visit our [Eco Page](#).

### The Big Plastic Count is back from 11-17 March

In 2022, a quarter of a million people from households, schools, businesses and communities across the country made The Big Plastic Count the biggest ever investigation into UK household plastic waste. By counting plastic waste for 1 week, this helped reveal that the UK throws away 2 billion pieces of plastic every week, only 12% of which is recycled. In 2024, governments will be negotiating a Global Plastics Treaty that could finally phase out plastic production for good. And so, The Big Plastic Count is happening again - this time to convince UK ministers to lead the way at these talks and push for a strong treaty. It's a massive opportunity, but we have to act fast...and your help is needed! Greenpeace is coordinating this for a range of charities, and you can register to take part by logging on [here](#). It's an interesting exercise for our own purposes – to check on what we are using and where it is going.