

# CHRIST CHURCH

# Life

living to  
love God  
and you

August-September 2021



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"A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."

-Psalm 90:4



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*Thank you to all who have contributed articles for this edition of Life magazine.  
Please note that the **deadline** for submissions for the **October/November 2021 edition** will be **10<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.*

*Submissions are emailed to: **[editor@ccbedford.org](mailto:editor@ccbedford.org)***

## Vicar's Letter

**Dear friends,**

The summer slowdown is a great time to reboot life, not least your Christian walk with Jesus. We've had an extraordinary 18 months, and Covid isn't over yet, but this summer you could look forward in faithful confidence.



Here are 5 areas of your faith you can consider this summer slowdown.

**Authenticity** – hypocrisy is a big 'no' for our society these days. Just look at those who get caught not living up to their ideals! Your faith in Jesus is the same. Your family, colleagues and neighbours are probably watching you, out of genuine interest often, to see if you 'walk the walk'. Your faith is to be real and affect how you do day to day life. Authentic faith is holistic faith – body and spirit together. Authentic faith is a Monday faith not just a Sunday faith – a 24/7 life lived for Jesus.

**Genuineness** – God seems far away for many, distant and remote from our daily pressures. Jesus is personal and real. He's your friend, the one with whom you feel at home with, the one who gives you a powerful sense of his love for you, his joy encouraging you and his peace reassuring you. Your faith in Jesus comes from that deep assurance that he accepts you as you are and will work with you to make you what he longs.

**Transformation** – people tell the stories of when good things happen to them. You'll have stories of how Jesus has worked in your life too. Jesus is the one who transforms, working within you to make you what we might long to be: people of patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Jesus is the one who will transform us if we allow him to do so. Some stories are big changes: the ending of addictions or criminal behaviour. But many of us can tell stories of little changes: a new sense of purpose, an answer to prayer, a God who is active today in your life and in those around you.

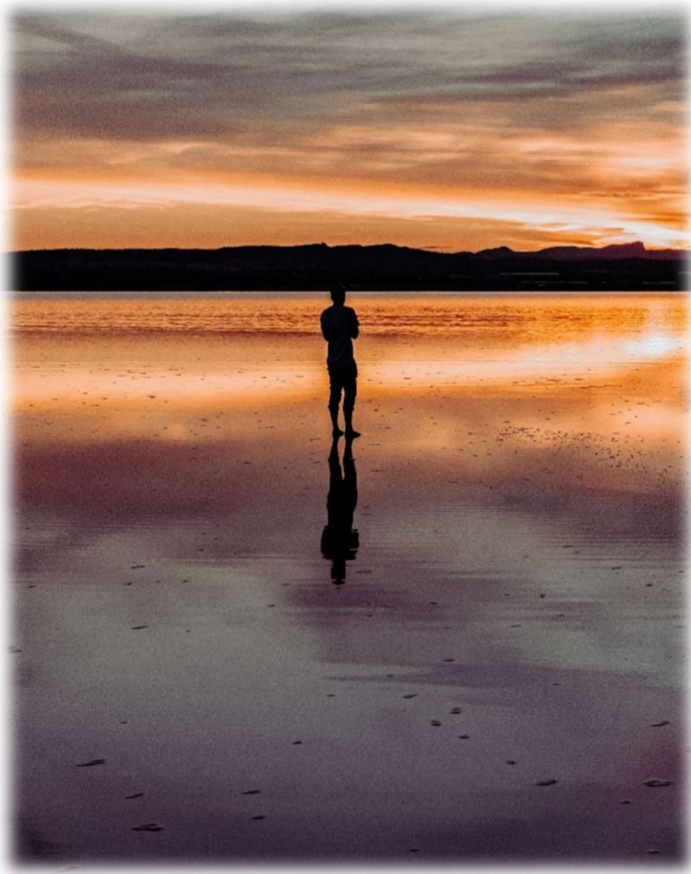
**Visionary** – passing exams, finding a life partner, getting a good job, finding promotion: is there more to life than this? Your faith in Jesus says 'yes, there is'. In Jesus, we have hope for today and eternity, a faithful friend, a Saviour, healer and answerer of prayer. Life is so much more than the mundane. Life can be filled with Jesus' vision of renewed life and renewed confidence.

**Community** – we all need space and we all long for community, a place where we are accepted, loved and wanted. Jesus builds community: he was always with people on earth, talking, listening, reflecting, eating, laughing, sharing, delighting. He builds community now through us. Your faith is revealed when lived in community, both as part of God's people gathered for worship and prayer, but also being God's people and God's activity in the wider world.

5 areas to reflect on how your faith is working out, how your walk with Jesus is progressing and how you might engage more on the weakest part: authentic faith, genuine faith, transforming faith, visionary faith and community faith.

Let slower summer days offer space to reflect, renew and respond to Jesus as your friend and Lord.

**-Richard Hibbert**





### When do you pray? What do you pray for? With whom do you pray?

We are all inclined to pray when we want something. We say prayers of Thanks for the good things we see & experience & we pray for family & friends. We pray for those in the circles in which we are Involved – There is so much we can pray for & to find a regular slot in the week or month to get together with others is a good way of focussing our prayers.

We usually pray in our church house groups, or at the start & end of church meetings. Of course, prayers are said every Sunday in church & we are invited to ask for personal prayer.

The Bible tell us to rejoice, pray continually & give thanks:

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.  
(1Thessalonians 5:16-18)

We've had a 24-7 Prayer Course on "Unanswered Prayer", with Pete Greig, which is available online with an introductory course on "Prayer" & our recent sermon series has been on Prayer... So are you now enthusiastic to pray more, pray effectively & pray regularly -Raring to go!

Link to: The Prayer Course/24-7 Prayer International

<https://prayercourse.org/>

There are a number of people in church who are now part of a prayer group meeting as a Partner, Triplet or Quad. It is has been very difficult to start new groups during these times of isolating but the opportunity to meet up in person is becoming easier, although we are now also using the wonders of technology & can keep in touch not just by telephone, but also using Zoom, FaceTime & WhatsApp Video to mention a few ways of communicating.

If you would like to join up with another or others to pray please contact me:- Sue@genesis1.plus.com



## Martin Hamilton

Martin Hamilton is a quiet, unassuming sort of chap but, if you get him talking about environmental sustainability, stewardship of God's creation and the like, you'll discover a passion that might take you by surprise, as I found when I broached the subject with him recently.

***Some say we Christians have a poor track record when it comes to the environment. Our focus on people's spiritual and physical needs has encouraged a relationship with the creation that looks more like exploitation and plunder than responsible stewardship! Is that fair?***

I think there's some truth in that. Christians have often taken the lead in looking after people (think Wilberforce and the abolition of slavery; Barnardo addressing childhood poverty; or modern-day organisations like *Tear Fund* working to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people in low-income countries) but I'd be struggling to name a Christian among the leading opinion-formers on the environment.

And yet the creation account in Genesis includes a mandate to us to be responsible stewards of the world God made, saying "God blessed (men and women) and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" (Genesis 1:28)

Fixing our eyes on heaven has maybe caused us to pay less attention to the Earth than God would want. As Tom Wright frequently points out, God's redemption plan is not restricted to people only; he plans to redeem all of creation and we are to start the process by working towards it being "on Earth as it is in heaven". At the end of time when God brings history to a close, the Earth will be renewed (Revelation 21:1) not screwed up and thrown away.

Environmental sustainability is about the whole ecosystem in which people live and operate and we surely need to be concerned with both as a package. I think there's a credibility issue here, too: if we want people to take our gospel message seriously, we need to be credible on these wider issues as well.

***Is the Covid pandemic having an impact on our attitude to the environment?***

I think it is or – at least – there is the potential to take advantage of the opportunities it brings. Referring to Covid, a number of people have said that we shouldn't let the crisis "go to waste"! The point they are making is that a crisis like the Covid





pandemic is highly disruptive of “business as usual” and so, when we come to pick up the pieces afterwards, we have a real opportunity to do things differently rather than just reverting to what was normal before. So, for example, during the pandemic many of us have been working from home, having more meetings online and travelling less. Nobody is suggesting that we’ll never go into work again or have physical meetings but, as restrictions lift, there’s the option to work to different patterns, making changes that would have been harder to contemplate if the pandemic hadn’t first disrupted everything. In my company, it’s likely that in the post-pandemic future many of us will go into work two or three days a week, working at home the rest of the time. We’ll spend less time on commuting, reducing congestion and also reducing our carbon footprint. The car will last longer and, in the end, may not be replaced as, for example, two car families can consider reducing to a single car.

It’s interesting how major changes are often associated with tipping points. Take plastics, for example. People have been warning us for years about the threat to the environment of plastic waste till “suddenly” (over the last couple of years) a tipping point has been reached so that now –wherever you look - there are schemes for reducing our use of plastics or recycling and reclaiming what we do use. We are in the middle of a real culture shift.

At work, *environmental issues* are now a standing item on the agenda of our monthly staff meetings and there is a growing desire to measure and manage the environmental impact of what we do as well as watching the “bottom line” and pleasing our customers.

***I know from the report that you gave at this year’s APCM meeting that you and a small group of Christ Church members have been running an environmental audit of the activities of Church as a whole and of us members in our everyday lives. Remind us of the main findings.***

One of the most commonly used benchmarks for environmental impact is the *carbon footprint* associated with an activity and we estimate that the use of the Christ Church buildings has a carbon footprint equivalent of 17 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, while the private activities of the people on Christ Church’s electoral role are estimated to have a combined carbon footprint of about 3500 tonnes, assuming we are behaving like average British citizens. We’re in process of exploring how we might reduce the Christ Church’s buildings’ footprint but, as you can see from the figures I’ve quoted, there’s way more potential for us to make an overall difference if we act together to reduce our personal carbon footprints.

***What typically contributes to our individual carbon footprints?***

The biggest contribution comes from being a citizen and consuming general goods and services: that typically accounts for 30-40% of it. Then, 20-30% is associated with a meat and dairy based diet, approximately 20% with air travel, and 10% with car use, while home energy is only about 5%. So, if you cut out the first item - much

of which is non-discretionary - there is still 65% of our individual carbon footprint which we can influence.

***If someone reading this article wants to reduce their personal carbon footprint, can you suggest some manageable steps they could take?***

Well, although the figures above are approximate and individuals will have a different balance and will be starting from different points it does help guide an individual to make choices which will have a significant impact. So, for instance, choosing to travel half as far for a family holiday flight might reduce your total footprint by 10% and the holiday could be just as good. Then, balancing your diet away from meat and dairy could save 15% and you are up to a 25% cut already. Over time we may get better at being able to quantify our own household carbon footprints and then we can have more certainty that we are really getting these benefits by the choices we make.

***It's much easier to make such changes along with others rather than on your own, isn't it? And the potential impact would be that much greater. Any ideas on how we might do this together?***

However much we care about the overall goal of environmental sustainability, the creation mandate and the long-term benefits it will bring to our global community, it is natural to feel that our contribution won't count if no one else is doing it, so we need to be able to act together. This will magnify what we are doing and help us to overcome the feeling (perhaps unconscious) that we would be making a pointless sacrifice.

It's up for debate how acting together might work. Perhaps a number of the church family might join a group which pools information in such a way that we can begin to track our carbon footprint as a whole group. That gives us a benchmark, knowledge about how we are affecting our footprint over time and we can also swap ideas and perhaps develop targets. It should be fun, a talking point with others and an opportunity for mission as we share what we are doing corporately and see it as part of our worship of God as we respond to his call on our lives and the way we live them.

***If – as a society – we learn to interact with our environment more responsibly life will look quite different in 30 years, say, won't it? Paint us a picture!***

Our houses and other buildings will be much better insulated. Heat pumps powered by renewably generated electricity will be providing heating and cooling to domestic and commercial buildings. Peak heating demands may still be met by domestic boilers but they will be burning hydrogen gas rather than natural gas. We won't be driving petrol cars: they'll be electric or fuel-cell hydrogen powered and there will probably be less private car ownership and more shared ownership or hiring. Changes in work practices will mean that many people work at home more of the time so there will be less time and energy spent on commuting. There will probably be less incentive to live near work but, although there is a trend at the moment for



people to move out of cities like London in pursuit of more green space, I am sure that city living will remain popular. I suspect that we'll spend just as much time travelling to see friends but we'll use carbon-neutral transport. We'll eat less meat. Some of the meat we do eat will be factory-grown, cultured meat; in fact, quite a lot of our protein will likely come from peas and beans.

**We shall be rather old men in 30y but, if I'm still around, I shall seek you out to check on the accuracy of your predictions!**

*Thank you!*

**-Alan Cottenden**



# Creations Impact On Our Faith

Psalms 104 talks intricately and intensely about God's wonderful creations, from the "moon to mark the seasons" and "the ocean, vast and wide, teeming with life of every kind" and from when "you give them your breathe, life is created" till "they die and turn again to dust", constantly renewing the face of the earth. "The Lord takes pleasure in all he has made" so I wonder what pleasure we can take from creation, what it means to us, if it impacts our faith and if so, how? Here are some responses-



'The kiss of the sun for pardon

The song of the birds for mirth

You are closer to God in a garden

Than anywhere else on earth.'

These words have come into my mind many times during the last eighteen months and were engraved on a plaque which was propped up against a magnificent pear tree in the centre of the lawn in the garden of my Aunt and Uncle's house in London. When I used to visit them as a child I was always fascinated by this plaque and would mull over the message especially during the Spring when the tree was laden with exquisite blossom. The awareness of God's amazing creation amidst the noise of

the traffic and fumes in London made these words very appropriate and unforgettable and then there was always a bumper crop of fruit in the Autumn to appreciate and to enjoy.

The rhythm of the seasons has continued despite Covid19 and as I have spent an increasing amount of time in the garden and adjoining allotment, I have been very aware of God's creation and grateful to be blessed with so much outdoor space. Growing fruit and vegetables always reminds me that there is a time to sow and a time to reap and that continues irrespective of the weather which during this year has been somewhat challenging. There can be various disappointments such as when the slugs decide to have a feast of lettuce overnight and when the rain encourages the weeds to proliferate, and perfection seems unachievable because energy and stamina are limited. There is so much wisdom in the Bible and although there is always so much to do which can at times feel overwhelming, I try to have a break on a Sunday, realising the importance of having a day of rest. When the shrubs and fruit trees look healthy and prolific, I can feel reluctant to prune them and leave them looking gaunt and bare for a while but again I am reminded of Biblical

passages about caring for God's creation. I have learned (most of the time) that although it is good to aspire to perfection, it is important to be satisfied with doing my best

Gardening on my own is a wonderful time to pray and to sing undisturbed and I appreciated the reduced amount of traffic and aircraft noise during the first lockdown to be able to hear the birdsong more clearly. I continue to rejoice in the beauty and wonders of nature such as when a robin perches nearby and sings lustily before hopping down to collect a worm from the piece of ground where I am working. I do look forward to the time when I can share my garden with family and friends.

**-Christine Harrison**

*'One is nearer to Gods heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth' Dorothy Frances Gurney*

This past year has surely taught us that gardening is good for us, physically and mentally, so many people have found that a garden or even growing plants has helped them through stressful times and times when we have stepped off the hamster wheel of a busy life to take stock of the important things in life.

I suppose I inherited my love of gardening from my grandmother who was still digging her potatoes at the age of 99. I have created or developed several gardens where I have lived from a small Bedford clay garden to half an acre on the West Coast of Ireland warmed by the Gulfstream each has its own challenges

Hard work is involved maintaining a garden, like the housework fairy the garden fairy does not exist but while working your mind is cleared of any worries or stress or grief that you are experiencing. My favourite time is enjoying a first cup of tea early on a summers morning before the world wakes up, when the only sound is birdsong.

I enjoy the creativity, knowledge gained and life lessons learned like failures, of which there are many but provide new opportunities and hope for the future.

Gardens can be a place for socialising or solitude, a time to marvel and praise the Creator God and spend time in prayer and time with him.

Gardens often mirror the personality of the gardener, some very precise and regimented but mine is more relaxed self-sown foxgloves and poppies are allowed to bloom, but I do like some order and variety is very important I have different areas such as a tropical area, scree garden, pond area and mixed borders. My garden gives me peace and joy, from the opening of a rosebud to bees buzzing and busy on my salvias and the robin that stands next to me while I'm working to finding hedgehog poo on the lawn!! Thank you, God, for your wonderful creations and blessing.



**-Penny Gilham**



## Shapes, colours, scents, foliage

Looking to move house? Look no further!

Elon Musk is selling the last of his mansions in San Francisco!

The asking price? A mere 37 million dollars but you get 10 bedrooms, a ballroom, a formal banquet room, a library and – what clinched it for me – a flower arranging room!

When I was a child on family holidays, I used to love doing something which we'd never do now – picking bunches of wild flowers...meadowsweet...buttercups...harebells...cow parsley...red and white campion...displaying them with childlike care in a holiday cottage jam jar, intrigued by the variety of shapes, colours, scents, foliage.....

Fast forward to my early teens and I discovered that one of the many benefits of growing up in a manse, right next door to the church, was that it was always “all hands-on deck” for team flowers, decorating for beautiful weddings, formal funerals and special festival occasions.

I loved it! Experimenting, creating, collaborating. Shapes, colours, scents, foliage.

As time went on, I became more thoughtful about trying to reflect something of a Christian season, story or celebration in the flowers I chose and how I arranged them.

Flame-coloured flowers at Pentecost would be an obvious example but sometimes there would be a more subtle, less overt nod towards an occasion with the choice of flowers or the design, a more personal touch for an anniversary perhaps.

For me it's a small but real contribution to worship and always, always a thank you to our wonderful God who created all the shapes, colours, scents and foliage.

**-Ruth Templeman**



## The Joy of Gardening

Do you remember the hymn ‘All things bright and beautiful’?

I first came across it at my nursery school and loved the lines ‘Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings, He made their glowing colours, He made their tiny wings’. I think my interest in flowers, whether garden or wild flowers grew from then, trying to remember their names (I'm hopeless at that now) and later on to grow them myself.

When the Lord brought me to Bedford after my husband died, the garden was beautifully set out. The biggest challenge in the early days was learning to manage the pond, full of fish, large and small.

Spring and early Summer are my favourite times of year for colour and scent, and whenever I can I sit out there, seeking sun or shade to read or meditate and thank the Lord for His wonderful creation. On a warm sunny day with blue skies and the scent of lilac or some other plant it seems to be a little foretaste of heaven.

I have become much more relaxed recently with the self-sown flowers and weeds (no, I mean wild flowers!). Just now the patio is awash with those beautiful blue campanulas and little erigeron daisies which get in the cracks and climb on walls. I shall enjoy them for a while and then remove them when they have finished flowering.

Whether we have a large or small garden, or just a window box or some containers, we can enjoy growing flowers and vegetables.

**-Lucy Waters**

### Stepping out in God's world- Church Walking Group

'We begin with a prayer to put us into God's hands. As we walk along, we can talk to different people and thank God for His creation. It is a good opportunity to remember that God is with us wherever we are.' **-Pat Mathias**

'It's great to get out into God's beautiful world! And it's good to have fellowship with fellow Christian folk!' **-Mike Palmer**

'Mary and Joseph walked from their home to Bethlehem as most people in those days walked, only the rich could afford other forms of transport. We the walkers of C.C.Bedford follow in their footsteps. The fellowship is great! Walking is a form of exercise that attempts to keep one fit. Those who couldn't walk were brought to Jesus, approaching him even through the roof, so that he might say "rise, get up and walk"! **-Pat and Dennis Davies**

'I enjoy the church walks as they are a good opportunity to catch up with fellow CC members in an informal setting and for a longer time than at the end of a service. They are also a chance to stretch my legs (with the striders) and to enjoy God's creation. Tea and cake at the end of the walk can also be an added bonus!' **-Sue Bradley**



'It's good to be positive about good things, like walking, as God is the same good God now as He has always been. He is 100% trustworthy! Things around us might change but He doesn't change.' **-Helen Brown**

'Walking with the group enables me to converse closely, with my fellow church family. I see it as an extension to social interaction with people from church and others, who are always welcome to join. It's good for our health and brings physical and emotional benefits, as well as getting to know people in a deeper way. The length of our walk is realistic for individual needs, usually consisting of strollers, not too vigorous and a faster walking group.' **-Mary Shaw**

'I like walking but not with crowds. I can see fields in my mind's eye, smell different scents of wildflowers and I think what a pretty sight, a heavenly smell of nature from God's wonderful garden, Earth. It's a joy to walk with lovely people and we praise God for His creation. We sometimes start our walk with the words...God is good. The response is... all the time. And all the time...God is good!' **-Pat Forsyth**

'We meet on the first and third Sunday of each month, 2.00 at the church car park. Please come, if you can, for a stride or stroll walk. We will be blessed to have your company!' **-Rachel Bennett**





# My Story – Training for Supernatural Ministry

A couple of years ago I really felt that I needed to engage with Father, Son and Holy Spirit much more than I was at that time. I was recommended to do a course called Training for Supernatural ministry, a big title for listening and acting on what you hear from the Holy Spirit. The yearlong course was wonderfully refreshing and challenging in equal portions. I really recommend this to everyone who wants to find out how to live listening to the Holy Spirit in everyday life and be bold enough to rise to the challenges He shows you. I have also done another course with Wendy Mann called Naturally Supernatural. This is similar and again very good to challenge and encourage. Both courses have lots of scriptural teachings, practical sessions and small groups to help work out what had been taught, how it applies to life and for prayer and support.

It has led me to now expect much more of Jesus's wonderful, powerful love and to be to hearing from God in everyday situations and to pray with people for their needs, including all types of healing. I also need to always remember Jesus' LOVE is the reason I am doing it and it's his love I share.

I now volunteer at the Hope Prayer Space in town every Wednesday morning. It's this that I now love doing but would never have seen myself doing before I started TSM. I'm also looking forward to re-joining the Foodbank team, again to show God's unconditional love to whoever turns up. At present we aren't allowed to chat to and pray with clients but, hopefully, soon we will be to do this again. This is a great way to meet people who know they need help and are open to receive it in any way.

Over the weeks I have spoken to many people on the street around the Hope prayer space and handed loads of different printed pamphlets telling of the amazing things God is doing in Bedford and around the world. This has helped me to gain confidence and trust that Holy Spirit will help me to be brave and I have actually engaged in conversation with many different people. All I have done is offer a leaflet or similar and take it from there as Holy Spirit leads.

Well, last week I thought that I wanted to do more and see Jesus's love spread wider so I asked Holy Spirit to show me what to do. I felt him say offer to pray for anyone who has a walking problem or anything anyone mentions in conversation. So...I did and it was great. I prayed for four people and they all felt loved, peaceful and safe, they said. There weren't any visible signs of physical healing but surely feeling love by Jesus is a great start. Who knows what else might happen in the future: some sow seeds and others reap.

I have also felt it good to look out for especially young people. I have had great conversations with groups of them and given them some leaflets and Gospels and other suitable booklets. Some were very happy to chat and talk about their family situations. I encouraged them to look to see who they think Jesus is and not take other people's ideas as fact without thinking them through for themselves. I also encourage them to ask God to show them who he is: again, seeds sown. Some, who have had church backgrounds as children, I've encouraged to find a church and go deeper to find out what they believe now.

This is just a taster of what is happening in Bedford these days. So many other people are out praying and talking with people and there have been many amazing things happening - miracles of healing in all areas of life and of people who have become Christians. This is a real awakening for Bedford, reaping the centuries of prayer that have taken place.

It's a great start I feel for me and anyone who wants to step up their lives for God and to be courageous. He is willing to meet people wherever we go, at home, with friends and neighbours, whoever God puts on our path. It can be scary but Jesus is always with us and has prepared all our encounters, we just need to be brave and go where Holy Spirit leads us and he will equip us AS we go out. I wonder who else might feel this way?

***-Margaret Cottenden***



# God and his whole Creation.

God's whole creation was a present

**Colossians 1:16** says the whole creation was made for Jesus – a present, if you like, from Father to Son, “*all things have been created through him and for him*”. And we were created to play a unique part in God's purposes.

## Psalm 8

Hallelujah Lord, our Lord  
Oh, how I love you.

You've made man a little lower than all of  
the angels,

And crowned him with glory to rule over  
your creation

Not only did God create us and crown us, he made us his image bearers. It is this that gives human beings their unique place in nature. After he created the earth, God maintained a connection with his creation and in particular with humankind, loving and cherishing each human being. He gave humanity the task to nurture his

creation, to create new life by being fruitful - to care for and protect his masterpiece so it would remain a place where all creatures could thrive.

## Salvation is putting to rights ALL that God has made

Despite God's commission, humans do not do such a great job of creating that place of joy and peace across His world. Deforestation, climate change, species extinction, soil acidification - a sad reflection on the harm done by those given the responsibility to care.

So, God does something amazing to call us back to his original intent: he sends Jesus. God steps out of himself and becomes one of us – **to die not just for mankind, but for the whole created order.**

**Colossians 1<sup>19</sup>** “*For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,*” **Colossians 1<sup>20</sup>** “*and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*”

## God has a future for this world.

The Bible does not talk of earth being destroyed and us going to spend our days someplace else. The disciples were told in Acts 1:11 that “**this same Jesus ... will come back...**” Revelation 21 pictures God coming to inhabit his transformed earth “**Now the dwelling of God is with men. And he will live with them**”.

A place where nature, the animal kingdom and humanity are in their originally intended harmony. And where ecological and human suffering will be no more.



## What God's future means today

***“Creation waits”*** says Romans 8:21 ***“to be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God”***

Personal salvation is fundamental – but that alone is an emaciated gospel – it's about ALL that God has made. Our concern for the hurt done to God's natural world is as much part of our love for the Creator as our concern for the hurt of sin in God's human world. Indeed Romans 1:20 describes the natural world as God's mouthpiece pointing people to himself. And it speaks as clearly to those who cannot even read.

Throughout his life Jesus calls his listeners back to God's will for all creation, urging his followers to heal rather harm, nurture rather than ravage and make peace rather than war.

It is for each of us to make our own personal response.

**Acknowledgments:** In addition to my own thinking, I have used material from Randall Gauger, a pastor in upstate New York, and Ruth Valerio, the Global Advocacy director for Tear Fund.

**-Michael Bishop**



# How is our Church eco-friendly?

## Being eco-friendly as church and follower of Jesus

It's the big thing at present – going carbon neutral. The Church of England has set itself a very challenging target of being carbon neutral by 2030 and the clock is ticking. It has to look at its churches, buildings, vicarages, land and its human activity. It's a huge target to cover, and we have a part to play, not for the sake of the Church but for the sake of God's good purposes for humanity.

Despite the sceptic's dismissal of human caused change in our climate, most scientists are convinced that life on earth is impacted by a slow but sure rise in temperatures due to our activities. Two places – northern UAE and the Sindh region of Pakistan – have both this year reached a summer temperature at which it is impossible for human beings to cool themselves through sweating. These places have exceeded a 'wet-bulb temperature' of 35°C. It's the serious tipping point for temperature related deaths.

'Wet-bulb temperature' is the temperature read when a thermometer is covered in a water-soaked cloth (wet-bulb thermometer) over which air is passed, imitating the temperature at 100% humidity. At 100% relative humidity, even people used to high temperatures, such as UAE and Sindh province Pakistan, find usual outdoor activity seriously difficult. The body cools itself by sweating and when the temperature is so high that the body cannot sweat enough, the body overheats and heat-related death can occur. Until recently few places on earth regularly reached that tipping point.

### Creation mandate

The scientists say climate change is happening. The temperatures are rising because of how we are living our lives. That makes climate change a matter for us, because our 'neighbours' – all humanity – are being affected. Being eco-friendly is important.

The bible reveals that God our Creator gave us a mandate at creation to steward His creation, caring for the world, its animals and plants. This is God's invitation:

*"God blessed them [Adam and Eve] and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" (Gen 1:28) for "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Gen 2:15).*

Andrew Ollerton, theologian and pastor, writes (Summer 21 Tear Times) of the biblical principle behind the way humans relate to God, each other and the natural environment as key to creation flourishing:

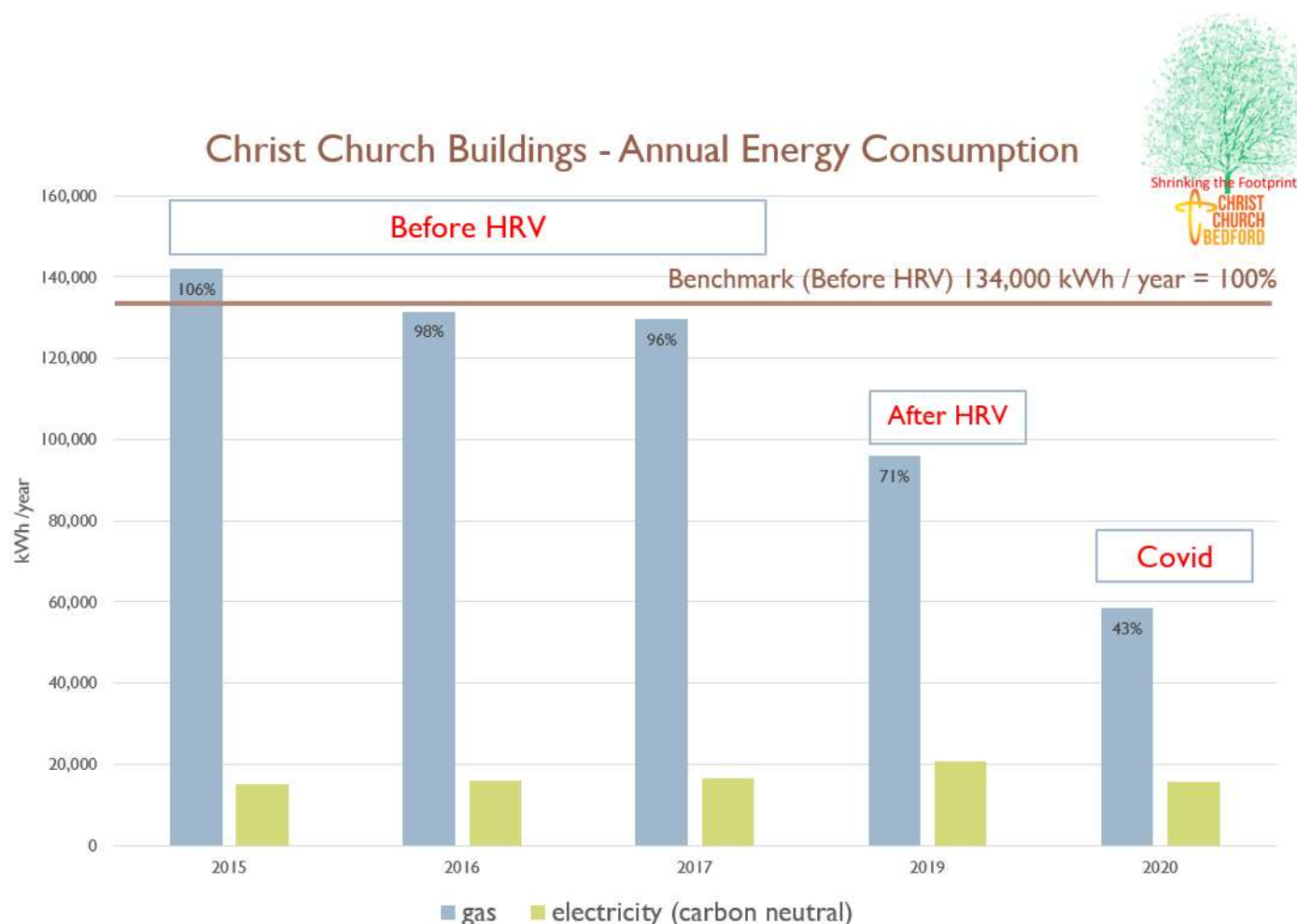
"I found it helpful to revisit the Genesis narrative, and how it reveals what it means to be human. To be made in the image and likeness of God is to flourish – precisely by accepting our responsibilities. Creation and care are Biblical principles established

right at the beginning. But there's also the cursed nature of our relationships to the ground. 'Adam' ('man/humanity') comes from the Hebrew 'adamah' (ground). That relationship is not just semantics. It's how God set the world up to be: humans in relationship with the ground, with each other and with God. We flourish when the ecosystem is harmonious."

To be eco-friendly, to care for the world God has given us and steward well its resources is a creation mandate for all humanity. We have of course substantially failed in our duty, polluting the earth and despoiling its treasures.

### Christ Church's creation mandate

At Christ Church, our Buildings Impact Group (BIG) has determined that living sustainably as a church is part of our Christian response. We are already blessed with new halls and rooms, whose design was mandated to be eco-friendly. The main construction material is sustainably-grown and easily recycled wood. Heating is by modern efficient gas boilers. The insulation substantially reduces heating requirements to a bare minimum. The church's insulation however is very poor in comparison, but its new boiler and computerised management ensure that minimum energy is used to maintain a comfortable temperature when it is required. The church south aisle roof contains 40 solar panels, generating over £5000pa of electricity, nearly as much as our total energy cost.

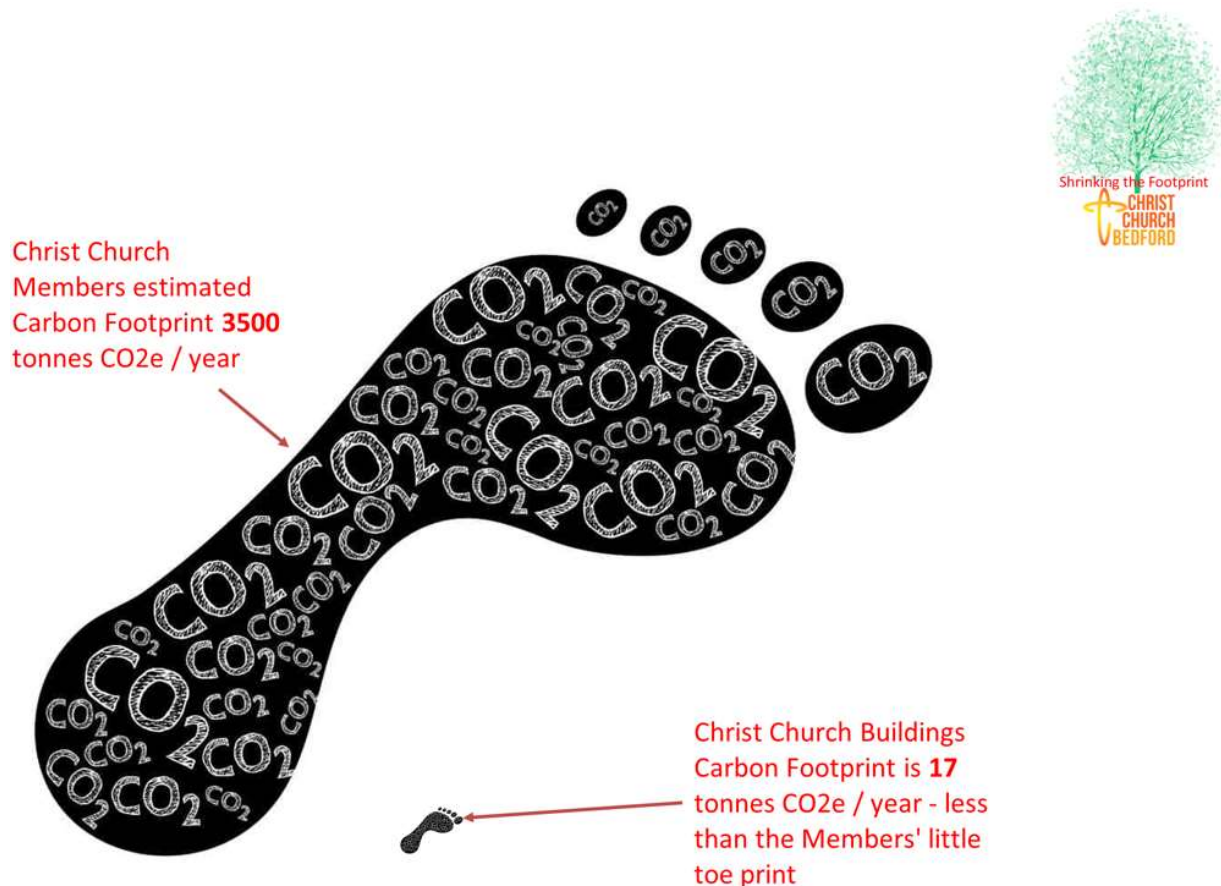




BIG has looked at other parts of our corporate life and approved the replacement of our high energy spotlights in church with low energy LED lights. They are working to reduce drafts through the windows by cleaning and resetting the windows. There is more that could be done, but the cost and carbon impact outweigh the eco-benefits: \*secondary glazing would likely be more harmful to build and fit carbon-wise than the minor benefits in heat retention.

## Your creation mandate

The key now is you. How can you shrink your own carbon and energy footprint? BIG estimates that the carbon footprint of the church and halls is now 17 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year, whereas we members, all 200 households (303 members on electoral roll), are estimated to create 3500 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year.



If each of us reduced our energy and carbon footprint a little, the overall impact would be far more than we could do to our buildings.

That is our challenge. Is this a challenge, for the sake of God's creation and the fulfilment of our mandate to steward the earth, that you are willing to take up? Some options you can take include:

- Walking or cycling rather than using your car. 80% of car journeys are less than 2 miles, and a mile is often about 20 minutes of walking. Why not walk or cycle rather than use your car, even factoring in the extra time needed?
- Turn down your home thermostat. How necessary is it to sit in shirt sleeves in winter rather than wear a comfortable jumper? It's not about freezing at home

or being inhospitable to guests, but just setting the home temperature to eco-friendly level.

- c) Purchase Carbon Damage Mitigation Certificates. It's a wild west of an unregulated market out there for such, but I can suggest Neno Macadamia Trust's certificates (do check yourself if you are happy before purchasing) – see <https://www.nenomacadamiastrust.co.uk/NMTCarbonCalculator.html>. Not only will you be offsetting your carbon from travel and domestic energy, but the macadamia trees planted offer smallholder farmers in Malawi a sustainable cash crop, food security and a reduction in land desertification. Now that's a win-win all round!
- d) Reduce meat and dairy consumption in the diet – this accounts for up to 25% of the average Briton's carbon footprint.

We are going carbon neutral as a church from 2021. The PCC have committed to budgeting for Carbon Damage Mitigation Certificates from the Neno Macadamia Trust. This is also your opportunity to think through how you can reduce your carbon footprint, live more sustainably and become more eco-friendly.

**-Richard Hibbert and Martin Hamilton**



# How is our Church 'green'?

"As chair of RIG I always say that the biggest donor to Christ Church is HMRC - completely true - we get far more from them than any single donor. We have another very unusual donor as well - the sun.

Really? Why is a tabloid newspaper giving us cash? Should we really be accepting this I hear you say. Well look again - "sun" starts with a lower-case letter. It has nothing to do with the press. I am referring to that bright object that appears from time to time in the sky ....

Yes really. When you next come from the Russell Park end of Denmark Street, look at the flat roof of the church. We have a large bank of solar panels which were installed nearly 10 years ago. As well as providing lots of electricity to us, and any excess goes into the grid, we also make nearly £5k per annum from feed in tariffs - which was the government's way of incentivising organisations at the time to put up solar panels. We got a grant from the council for half the cost of the panels and have long since generated sufficient funds in excess of the remaining cost - so they help to fund the church's day to day activities.

We may be able to go further - if prices of solar panels continue to drop. RIG has explored whether to introduce some sort of battery technology to store the power, and possibly put more panels over the new halls. As of yet we cannot make the numbers work - but we will continue to look at this over the next few years."

**-Richard Lindley\***





# Women in the Shadows



**HOPE FOR JUSTICE**

Change lives. End slavery.

You are invited to join Jude Hamilton and Will Eves for Hope for Justice, Bedford's five weekly workshops on Women in the Shadows – four women's true stories about being enslaved in the UK.

## Who's it for?

Christians who want to engage with a challenging subject, to be better informed and to feel empowered to act. This subject could be emotive and shocking – it's about the real lived experience of women in UK slavery today. Please consider this before you book.

***Please note, this is not a programme aimed at women specifically – we want as many men to attend as possible!***

## When?

Thursdays 7.30 – 9pm September 9<sup>th</sup>; 16<sup>th</sup>; 23<sup>rd</sup>; 30<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup>

## Where?

Christ Church Halls, 140 Dudley Street, Bedford MK40 3SX. Careful adherence to government guidelines will be in place and the event will be held via Zoom, if necessary.

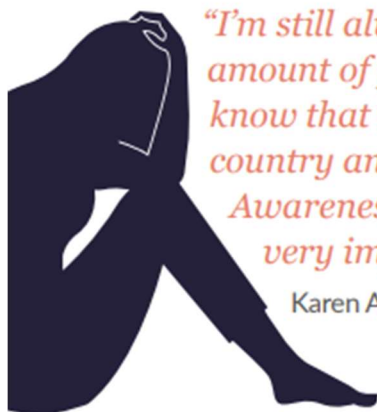
## What is it?

Each session includes an introduction, a five-minute video, an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the issues, a Bible passage and a prayer. Log on to the Clewer Initiative website to find out more.

## How do I participate?

Participation is by pre-registration only in order for us to provide an appropriately sized room and refreshments. Please email [antislavery.bedford@gmail.com](mailto:antislavery.bedford@gmail.com) to register.

We ask for a contribution of £10 for the course to cover venue costs and refreshments. This is payable via contactless payment on arrival at the first session. Places are limited.



*"I'm still always shocked at the amount of people that don't know that this happens in our country and across the world. Awareness raising is very important."*

Karen Anstiss, Bakhita House

***Come and have your eyes opened and learn how you can be part of the solution as you go about your everyday life. It's so exciting to make a difference!***





# **Ladies ELEVENSES Time**

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September @ 11.00am**

**Join us for a coffee break with a guest speaker:**

## **JUDE HAMILTON**

**Talking about:**

### **‘Modern Slavery and Me’**

**Jude describes herself as an ordinary, middle-class, middle-aged Christian woman sharing the story of a small bunch of people fighting modern slavery in Bedford.....**

**.... a personal journey into making a difference with a huge issue.**

- **uplifting and inspiring**
- **down to earth and practical**
- **a personal story**
- **a simple attempt at kingdom living**



**‘Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loosen the chains of injustice and untie the chords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?’ (Isaiah 58 verse 6)**



### **LET's - Get Together!**

**Watch out for more information in the church notices!!**



# Being a difference maker in God's Church

Each of us is called to be 'ministers' of God's good purposes, finding our role and place in serving and supporting the work of God's church.

Our Diocese supports you in developing your ministry through the Diocesan lay ministry training opportunities for our licenced Reader ministry and 6 commissioned lay ministries, to help you to grow in your ministry and to share the joy and weight with the current lay/ordained team. All the courses below are free for you.

As the incumbent, I'm happy to discuss these opportunities with you so you can best fulfil your true potential in God's purposes and at Christ Church (or further afield – who knows?).

- **leading worship** – the next Lay Leaders of Worship (LLW) course starts in September (via Zoom) comprising of 6 Monday evenings. Bookings close on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September, and booking forms can be found here:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/lay-leaders-worship/>

- **Growing and sustaining ministry among youth and children** – The Lay Leaders for Youth & Children (LLYC) course is a 6 session course coming soon. For more details, contact Revd Phil Bryson, Lay Ministry Officer, on [lmo@stalbands.anglican.org](mailto:lmo@stalbands.anglican.org).

- **Developing fresh expressions of church/new worshipping communities/pioneer mission with those outside the church** – The Pioneer Enabler course is a 1 year course delivered in partnership with the Church Mission Society (CMS). The course starts in September, and the application deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> July. Videos and the application form can be found here:

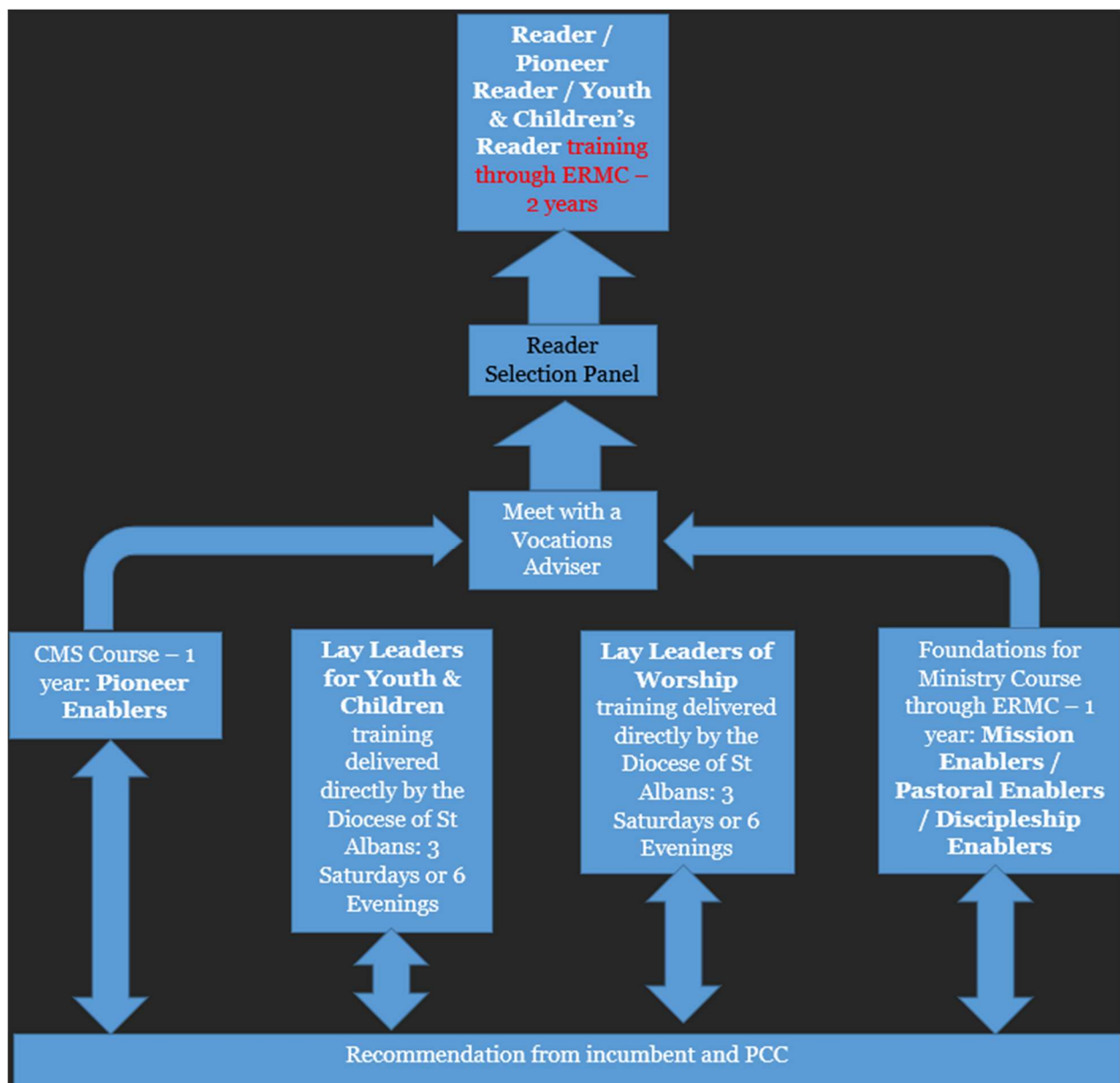
<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/rnp/training/laypioneertraining/>

- **Leading in the missional, pastoral or teaching ministries of the church** – Foundations for Ministry is a 1 year course delivered in partnership with the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) with content made available online to be accessed when convenient each week. The course covers the Bible, Christian beliefs, and issues affecting our world. We facilitate a zoom session each term to relate the content to the specific ministry focus (Mission Enablers, Pastoral Enablers, Discipleship Enablers).

The course starts in September and the booking deadline is 19<sup>th</sup> July, the booking forms can be found here: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/foundations-lay-ministry-course/>

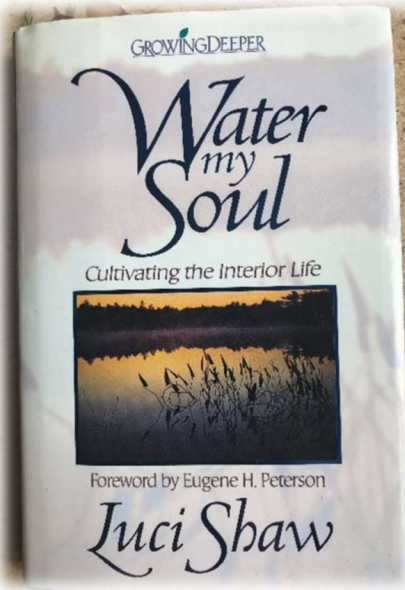
- **Reader ministry** – a key lay leadership role in the church and community covering worship leading, teaching, preaching, pastoral care and mission. Either Foundations for Ministry or the Pioneer Enabler course usually act as a prerequisite course for Reader training, which then continues with a further 2 years delivered in partnership with ERM. We now have a Pioneer Reader pathway and a Youth & Children's Reader pathway with some specialist modules for those whose Reader ministry would focus on pioneering or youth and children respectively.

The flowchart shows how these courses relate to each other. Any questions, ask Richard Hibbert or John Bell, who will be pleased to consider the way ahead with you.





# Water My Soul-Book Review



My Grandfather gave me this book to read as life the last few years has been an almighty struggle. It presented a wonderful picture of how God picks us up and nurtures us through the most challenging, unexpected, disappointing, painful and lonely times in our lives. It is a deeply honest account written by Luci Shaw in 1998, the description of which is 'Cultivating the interior life'.

This isn't a work of fiction but one of a compilation of her reflections on us as cultivatable soil.

Luci Shaw was freshly widowed and she bravely dares to share the emotional pain of bereavement she was suffering and the periods of the unknown which had surrounded her. However, using the natural world and gardening as metaphors she presents the raw realities of life,

It's weeds, its droughts, it's times of ploughing, sowing, waiting and watering. The hard work, the need for refreshment, the long dead winters but the little shoots that despite adversity come through. I think it's a beautiful picture of life with our loving God as the faithful Gardener. After all the garden of Eden was where the bible started, so I think it is genius of her to come from this angle.

One of the parts that truly caught my attention was this excerpt. It describes the relationships we should have with each other within the Christian family. We all can benefit, support and embrace each other.

*'Once again, the persistence and perseverance of trees tells us something about our own lives. Redwood trees have an almost uncanny ability to survive the holocausts of forest fires, retaining vital green foliage in spite of having the hearts literally eaten out of them by the flames. Madrona trees, those cinnamon-red, thin skinned trees that decorate the cliff rocks of the pacific coast, are able to embrace with young, healthy tissue their dead or damaged branches, the new growth, smooth as a well-tanned human arm, contrasted with the striated, grey deadwood, not rejecting it, but filling in the breaks and gaps and making the old wood a part of the pattern of the whole. Here are lessons for us in the human community; the old and the young need and benefit each other; age has important lessons for youth, and youth can invigorate age with its enthusiasm.'*

I think this addresses beautifully the problem we have with each generation not understanding the previous generation. The decisions they make or the different moral stand points. Either way we must learn to support each other to grow, all whilst learning lessons from everyone who surrounds us. At the same time remembering that as a Gardener God can step back see the bigger picture,

notice which plants are being strangled or where we can grow best. However, one of our biggest struggles is surrendering with trust. After all, has not the Gardener got a better view of the bigger picture than the small plant does in the ground? "It is not hard for me to draw the parallel in the growth of the soul. The reason God should take over control is to free us from our own destructive patterns and to release us into joy." Luci addresses topics such as self-examination, mankind's need for control, order and chaos. Despite being in a pile of ash like Job there is hope for green growth.

We don't discuss how we grow or that different seasons in life create opportunity for God to grow us, rearranging and stripping us back ready for his plans.

"You can't leave a garden to look after itself. Imagine that you had to leave town for any number of good reasons and that your back garden has been abandoned for a period of weeks or months. What can you expect when you return? Will you find the garden has continued to bloom and control itself in the way you the Gardener have planned or will it have reverted to weeds and wildness?" If we open our eyes, we see the wonder that surrounds us in His creation, but also in us as He refines us.

Luci suggests the wilderness is a territory of uncivilised, unmanaged nature. Not an easy place but one we are often called to and when we surrender, a place of great learning. I think using the wilderness is a clever way of describing the realities of life; the vulnerability, dependence and preparation time in the wild can stimulate growth in us. None of it bad and often our relationship deepens with God when our dependence grows.

I want to leave you with one last excerpt that stood out to me, make of it what you will. "But I don't ever want to stop growing. And even death, inevitable as it is, will be just one more growth spurt into the future, one more growing edge, one more leap into the light. Remember, we don't die into death. We die into life! As Floyd Lotito says in Wisdom, Age, and Grace: "Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp, because the dawn has come."

#### Questions to ponder asked by Luci Shaw:

During the past 18 months many of us have experienced solitude, silence and a time of waiting. I thought these questions were pertinent in allowing us to unpick these challenges for good

What work has solitude to do in me?

How can silence grow my soul?

What is God's purpose in allowing me this waiting time of emptiness and inaction?

**-Erinna Pilbeam**

# Journaling Prompt-

“Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased  
with ourselves, when our dreams have  
come true because we have dreamed too  
little, when we arrived safely because we  
sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things  
we possess, we have lost our thirst for the  
waters of life, we have ceased to dream  
of eternity and in our efforts to build a new  
earth, we have allowed our vision of the  
new heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture  
on wider seas where storms will show  
your mastery, where losing sight of land,  
we shall find the stars.

We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes;  
and to push into the future in strength,  
courage, hope, and love.”

**-Sir Francis Drake**



## PLEASE CAN YOU HELP US?

Impact has been successfully working in Bedfordshire for thirty years. During the Covid-19 pandemic, through the online material we have sent into schools and churches, more children than ever have heard the Good News.

As we want even more people to hear about and support this successful work for the Lord, we are looking for persons who would be able to help us in the following areas

- To raise our profile, as well as promote IMPACT to still more schools and churches.
- To help us with our fundraising, something we believe is necessary to enable IMPACT to take the Good News to even more children.
- To help with IT, media and web design.

If you feel that you have the skills needed for the above and would be willing to give of your time to help us, then please contact us for more information at [chair@impactbedford.org.uk](mailto:chair@impactbedford.org.uk)

Thank you







## SUNDAY SERVICES

**9:00am and 10:30am** Morning Services

(We request that face masks are worn at the **10:30am** Service)

**10:30am** Livestreamed on Our YouTube channel

**7:00pm** Sundays@Seven



## CONTACTS:

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**Dawn Hire** 07788 687011

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www.ccbedford.org

**Join us at Christ Church**  
**Denmark street, Bedford**

