

Journey with



THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE CHURCH AT CARRS LANE



Good news for God's earth?

Responsible living as church and individuals

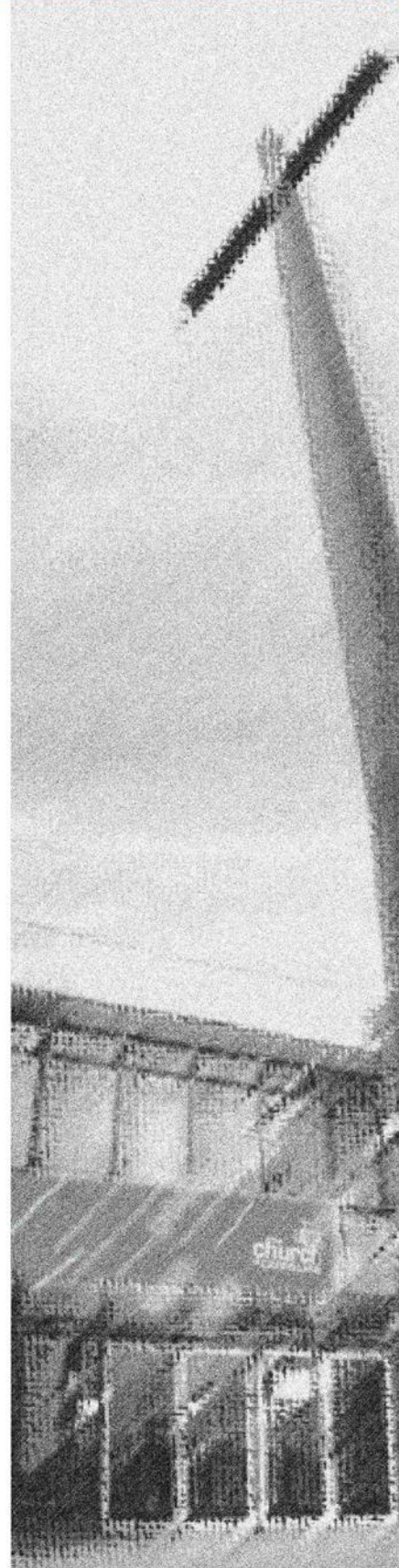
Becoming an eco church - what more can we do?

News from friends and organisations

United in Jesus | serving the city

The home of a partnership of Christian ministries

Autumn 2019



Contents—September 2019 (Autumn Issue)

Title	Page
Pastoral Letter	1
What sparked my interest in eco-things?	3
Diary of an eco-warrior	5
Pause for thought 'snippet'	7
Are we an eco community?	8
Sorting the rubbish – a personal reflection.....	9
Prayers for reflection	11
Beyond Belief 'snippet'	12
Any questions, with Bishop Jack Spong	13
Singing the faith - the continuing story of our hymns	14
Prayer as a connection to God	16
Tabor House Report	18
Commitment for Life Stories from Israel & Palestine	19
Traidcraft Stories and News - Organic, Ethical and Sustainable.....	21
News (inc Carrs Lane Counselling Centre).....	25
Regular Activities at Carrs Lane.....	27
Helpful Recycling Contacts at the Church at Carrs Lane.....	28
Recycling for Good Causes.....	29
Know your Recycling Symbols	30



Cover picture:

Design by Annca, used with direct permission and under the terms of the Pixabay licence - <https://pixabay.com/photos/nature-earth-sustainability-leaf-3289812/>

Next issue of Journey:

Deadline for contributions: Sunday 24 November.

Theme: *Welcoming Hope*

Pastoral letter

Dear Sisters and Brothers

At the end of June, I attended a day conference at The Friends' Meeting House on Bull Street in Birmingham city centre which focused on the current global environmental crisis. With the title of 'No Planet B' (a linguistic play on the phrase "No Plan B"), the conference included presentations and workshops led by people from a range of Christian organisations, such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and the A Rocha Eco Church movement. The purpose of the day was threefold: to connect participants with world issues; to offer suggestions of practical action for church congregations; and to consider how individual Christians can make a difference in their own local communities.

I mentioned the conference the following Sunday morning during morning worship at The Church at Carrs Lane, when the theme of the service was 'Prayer as Connection' (this was the first in a series of acts of worship about prayer which ran throughout July). In my sermon I talked of an understanding of prayer as a means of opening ourselves to a sense of oneness with the Sacred, with each other as human beings, and with the whole of Creation. At the end of the sermon I referred to an encyclical letter written by Pope Francis that had been mentioned on several occasions during the 'No Planet B' Conference: 'Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home'. The letter begins:

"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord". In the words of the beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us . . .

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her . . ."

The challenge of the conference and this encyclical letter made me think about my oneness with Creation, my fellow creators and our Creator, at a time when the concerns about the future of 'our common

home' are being shared by the public and politicians, alike. No longer a fringe issue and preoccupation of those derided and dismissed as 'Tree Huggers' and 'Eco Warriors'. The prophetic warnings of Greta Thunberg, the direct action of 'Extinction Rebellion', and the visible signs of climate change backed up by scientific evidence, have confronted us with the harsh reality that we are killing our God-given world, and there is 'No Planet B'!



The theme of this edition of 'Journey' is 'Good News for God's earth?', a question that ties the heart of the Christian message to the current global environmental crisis. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Good News of the Kingdom of God on earth – the New World where love, peace and justice reign. For so long the Christian Church has interpreted this message of Jesus in terms of human relationships with little regard to our connection with the rest of Creation. An exception to this is Saint Francis, who embodied Good News for God's earth by honouring the whole of life, both great and small. Derided and dismissed as a madman in his time, Francis of Assisi stands before us as a Christian who can help us to be pragmatic proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ here and now. So, let us pray with him, "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us . . ." then, act accordingly.

Peace be with you

Neil

What sparked my interest in eco-things?

While I was at college, I learned that the church to which I was going to be sent was the first Methodist Eco-congregation (the former name of Eco-church) in the country. So, in my final term, I read some eco-theology. It was all very interesting but it resonated more in my mind than in my life. Then, towards the end of my first year at the church, Evesham was flooded quite severely, my manse and my church both filled with six feet of water. I felt a bit like Jonah in the belly of the whale: ancient texts resonated in new ways; my view of life shifted a little.



Photo: Amy Cook



Photo: Amy Cook



Photo: Andy Brister



Photo: Andy Brister

One of my first thoughts was realising how lucky we were: both the church and the manse were well insured; people in the dry part of the town rallied round. It was 2007, the year when the Africa flood was one of the worst and most destructive floods in recorded history, with 14 countries affected. Sitting in my neighbour's house, warm and dry, I watched pictures on the TV of people clinging to trees in the middle of

vast expanses of swirling dirty flood water. They were across the world from me. We had both been scared. The difference was that there were plenty of people around to bail me out, both literally and metaphorically. Climate change can't be held responsible for one freak occurrence in nature but the increasing number reflects a change that humanity can do something about. Eco-theology wasn't a matter of me finding God in the beauty of nature (although I find this to be true too); it became a matter of justice and community.

For me, being part of an Eco-church implies three things. First, it means I want to play my part in small ways, cutting my consumption of oil, meat, plastic and so on. Second, it means that I need to challenge the comfortable systems of which I am a part; systems which allow the northern part of the world to take more than our fair share of the world's resources and contribute more than our fair share to the pollution of our planet: so, although I find it hard, I have to act politically. Third, it means that in my worship, I want to thank God for the creativity which gave us this planet, say sorry for my profligacy and ask for help that as a community and a creed we might learn what it means to live in harmony with the rest of God's ever-expanding creation. Yes, being part of an eco-church is big stuff, exciting and challenging and just possibly life-changing. Carrs Lane Eco-Church count me in!

Caroline Homan

Diary of an eco-worrier

Thinking about plastic

Watching David Attenborough's Blue Planet and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's War on Plastic (BBC 1) has, for me, raised the volume and the urgency of the message about climate change and environmental degradation. Now, my supermarket shopping trips bring on a feeling of panic as I see the pile of single-use plastic growing in my shopping trolley. So, I've tried to read and understand more about the issues associated with single-use plastic.

We know supermarkets and food manufacturers generate a huge amount of the single-use plastic which makes its way into and out of our homes. They argue that it preserves the quality and shelf-life of our food which would otherwise go to waste and create an even bigger carbon footprint. However, even after increasing their environmental pledges, little more than half of supermarket plastic-based packaging is easily recycled. In some supermarkets, it is much less than half. The rest is difficult to recycle or is un-recyclable. This is much less than I had supposed, so I realise I haven't really understood the recycling information on packaging.

The website recyclenow.com is a useful source of general and local information. It explains the on-package recycling information in some detail. (See symbols on the back cover)

So, what should the supermarkets and food producers do?

Which? Magazine (July 2019) suggests supermarkets should use more (why not all?!) recyclable plastic, label it correctly (which they don't always do at the moment) and make sure shoppers understand how to dispose of it correctly.

The magazine doesn't discuss alternatives to plastic, such as paper bags or card trays, nor does it mention offering fruit and vegetables loose. I find at the moment, where fresh produce is loose, the only packaging available is a plastic bag!

Most supermarkets have signed up to WRAP's (Waste and Resources Action Programme) UK Plastics Pact which commits them: a) to ensure 70% plastic packaging is effectively recycled or composted by 2025; b) to eliminate problematic single-use plastic packaging by 2025 and; c) to use only recyclable packaging and to label it correctly so it can be disposed of appropriately. This would seem to iron out some of the inadequacies of our current system in the UK, but five years seems a long way off and I've seen very little to write home about in the last two years in my local supermarket.

However, as we get more information about how rigorous and ethical our recycling arrangements are in the UK (much plastic being sent around the world and then dumped or burned, polluting the recipient countries) we must ask ourselves if:

- a) recycling plastic is the main answer to problems with plastic, particularly as it involves so much energy;
- b) we can leave it to food producers and waste management companies to sort it out;
- c) our government(s) will have to have much more oversight of recycling.

What can I do?

How do I translate my 'worrying' into action? I know that buying products with less packaging, and recycling everything I can, cuts waste to landfill, saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. As I do my weekly shop, I am trying to read the recycling labels before I buy, and gathering as much loose produce as I can into the trolley. The till operators are very patient about corralling it onto the scales. I try to remember to have a carrier bag with me wherever I go. I am trying to remember to explain to people what I'm doing and why. Not very good at this. I have decided we can do without soap dispensers – there was nothing wrong with bars of soap in the first place. There is a place in Digbeth (The Clean Kilo) where I can take empty (plastic) containers and buy refills (the washing up liquid is good). However, I think many people would find this not easy and quite expensive.

These are very small measures, I know, and will have little impact on their own.

“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it”

(Mahatma Gandhi)

I know people who are doing a lot more than this. I suppose it's only worth doing if I am involving others and getting others involved.

Joining the Carrs Lane Eco Group is part of it.

Christine Tudor Jones

Pause for thought

In these troubled times, words of wisdom from Joseph Addison, English essayist, poet and politician (1672-1719):

'The voice of reason is more to be regarded than the bent of any present inclination.'

Wishful thinking?

Are we an eco community?

This is the question posed by the New Eco Church Survey that we - Amina, Martin, Jan, Caroline and I - are trying to respond to. Amina shared in an earlier church meeting some of the questions in this survey, which include such areas as worship, buildings, lifestyle and community and global engagement. Now our 'eco group' is beginning to meet regularly to reflect on these areas and to come up with new and effective responses. The good news is that in many ways – individually and collectively - we are doing well. For example, we sell and use Fairtrade products, the CLFT runs a jewellery & currency recycle scheme, we participate in a toilet twinning scheme, encourage the reduction of car use, invest church funds ethically, encourage the users of the building to reduce energy consumption and recycle packaging.



However, we can't stop here. As the recent heat wave demonstrates, we are now living in a time of climate change, and our sea, air and land are being degraded daily. Our eco group will explore what more we could do. We hope the green theme of this month's harvest festival will bring belief and action together when we acknowledge the beauty of God's creation and our role

in caring for it. On a more practical front, our recent first meeting focused on how the church might extend our recycling by offering collection points for glasses, crisp packets and ink cartridges, for example. These will seem like very small beginnings, but if you have seen or heard of any practical steps you think we could adopt to reduce waste of resources we use or own, please share them with us. We would also welcome thoughts about increasing our community and global engagement.

Christine Tudor Jones

Sorting the rubbish - a personal reflection

Rebecca and Eugene's wedding celebrations finished with a barbecue on the beach. About 60 friends and family turned up with three barbecues on the go and snacks, beer and soft drinks being enjoyed in abundance. The sun was shining, children and adults played on the beach and a few of us cooled off in the sea. Towards the end of the afternoon, as people started to drift away, I started to clear up, wanting to leave the beach at least as clean as we had found it. I filled half a dozen or so black bags with the remains of burgers, plastic packets, cans and bottles and put them in the car to take home.



Langland Bay © Colin Smith and licensed for reuse under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)

Rebecca has always been very careful about recycling and Swansea County Council have an extensive recycling system from kerbside collections to recycling sites. So, it was clear - I had to sort the rubbish.

As I went through the bags, the bottles were rinsed and the solid plastic was washed, there was very little left for the black bag – yes, just one, with several bags of glass and plastic. Reaching into the black

bags was horrible! Everything was covered in sand and various greasy and sticky substances, but the bottles were quickly rinsed in running water and drained before being put in green bags and the plastic cartons were washed in warm soapy water before being drained and put into pink bags.

As I made my way through the rubbish, pictures of enormous landfill sites came to mind, and particularly those pictures which include children and young people gleaning for anything that they may be able to sell. I knew what was in my black bags - more or less - and while not pleasant, it was not dangerous - no broken glass, no nasty bugs on the food waste yet, no corrosive chemicals or noxious fumes, but these children are picking thorough dangerous waste which can be extremely harmful to their health. I was in my kitchen with clean running water to rinse the glass and plastic which then safely drained away. In so many parts of the world, there is no clean, running water and drains are open, attracting rats and insects that spread disease.

During a trip to Kenya a few years ago, I was taken on a walking tour of Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa. This was not a usual tourist visit! I noticed a team of people standing in open drains, clearing out the rubbish. In the Mathare Valley slum, a group of young people known as the Green Heroes clear rubbish regularly to make their environment safer for all who live there.

This is a far cry from a beautiful Gower beach, but we are connected with so many people across the globe, and my experience was a reminder to pray for all those who sort rubbish.

And what of an eco-wedding? Oh, yes, but that's Rebecca and Eugene's story to tell!

Jan Scott

Prayers for reflection ...

**Most high and glorious God
Bring light to the darkness of my heart.
Give me right faith,
certain hope and perfect charity.
Lord, give me insight and wisdom,
so I might always discern
your holy and true will.
Amen**

Sometime in the early 1980s I came across the American singer John Michael Talbot and his simple settings, mainly of Psalms, played solo to his acoustic guitar on the album *Come to the Quiet*. Talbot is a Franciscan brother and for the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' birth in 1982, he released an album called *Troubadour of the Great King*. Included is this setting of St. Francis' prayer of guidance or discernment. Originally written by St. Francis it continues to be used by those seeking to test a vocation or otherwise seek to understand God's will in their lives.

St. Francis has been not a companion, but more of a presence, in my Christian journey. Most often he is one like Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King and others – and Jesus himself, who stands as a challenge; a declaration and embodiment of the Reign of God which is not yet and can be if we can be more like him. His is the chosen vocation to a radical lifestyle which is counter to all our society values. It is difficult to pray these words knowing the answer that St. Francis found.

The opening words, in particular, set us in a position which is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. There are echoes of the more famous prayer, "Make me a channel of your peace", which is attributed to St. Francis. This is an emptying, a choice of following. "Put me to what you will" says the Methodist Covenant prayer. This is struggle for most of us and, as a former minister reminded us, becomes intolerable and

unconscionable where people have choice denied them, or taken away from them, or made impossible.

God's true will, however, is love and good and life in its fullness for all people. God guides us in ways of justice and joy and righteousness. God gives faith and hope and love. So we should not be afraid to ask for insight and wisdom.

Through our prayers and the ability to look, listen, and learn, we have moments of realisation. The accumulation of life's insights and reflections and our understanding of the way things fit together is our wisdom. In this way, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we discern our choices in the big and small decisions of our lives.

Peter Woodall

Beyond Belief

Christianity is not about belief, it's about what gives Life.
It's not about the future, it's about the Kingdom now.
It's not about a place to visit, it's about a state of well-being.
It's not about self-preservation, it's about loving wastefully.
It's not about individuality, it's about connectedness.
It's not about mere respect, it's about valuing others.
It's not about being rescued, it's about absorption of wrongs.
It's not about empty worship, it's about living Life to the full.
It's not about the physics of ritual, it's about the Spirit of Life.
It's not about God as a being, it's about the Beingness of God.
It's not about God helping us, it's about us helping God.

Author unknown

Any Questions? - With Bishop Jack Spong

Q: If God is all loving, why do we have disasters like earthquakes, famine and war?

A: Your question has been asked by religious people in every generation of human history and no one has answered it satisfactorily yet. The question points to a logical dilemma. If God is all-powerful then the existence of tragedy would demonstrate that God is immoral. If God is all loving, the existence of tragedy would demonstrate that God is impotent.

I think the problem is actually located in the operative definition of God that people use unconsciously. I call that definition 'Theism'. Theism says that God is a Being, perhaps the Supreme Being, who is supernatural in power, dwelling somewhere outside this world, usually thought of as "above the sky" and who periodically invades the world to accomplish the divine will.

It is that definition of God that, I believe, creates the problem that elicits your question. It is also the definition of God that is universally dying today. Our expanded consciousness has rendered that God to be immoral since God has the power to stop tragedy but does not use it. Our expanded knowledge has rendered that God to be unbelievable since natural laws are not given to miraculous interpretation in history. Does this mean that God has become immoral and unbelievable? I do not think so. What it does mean is that the theistic definition of God that human beings created must now be seen as immoral and unbelievable. That drives us to seek new ways to conceptualize God, a God beyond theism.

I believe that this is the most important task facing the Christian Church in the 21st century. It is too bad that so little of the Church's energy is directed to this task. That lack of energy is a primary sign of the death of the Church. It is the Church fiddling while the Church burns.

Bishop John Shelby Spong, November 2003

Singing the Faith: the continuing story of our hymns

This time we look at three harvest hymns.

No 123: Come, you thankful people come, by Henry Alford (1810-1871)

Born in London into a clerical family, Henry Alford studied at Trinity College Cambridge. In 1833 he was ordained and, by 1857, was the Dean of Canterbury, which he held until his death in 1871. In addition, he had several important appointments, including that of a Fellow of Trinity, and the Hulsean Lectureship, 1841-2.

His literary labours extended to every department of literature, but his noblest undertaking was his edition of the Greek Testament, the result of 20 years' labour. His hymnological and poetical works were numerous and included the compiling of collections, the composition of original hymns, and translations from other languages. As a hymn-writer he added little to his literary reputation. The rhythm of his hymns is musical, but the poetry is neither striking, nor the thought original. They are evangelical in their teaching, but somewhat cold and conventional. They vary greatly in merit, one of the most popular being "Come, ye thankful people, come," published in 1844.

George J. Elvey originally composed the tune St. George's Windsor as a setting for James Montgomery's text "Hark! The Song of Jubilee,". The tune has been associated with Alford's text since publication of the hymn in the 1861 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. St. George's Windsor is named after the chapel in Windsor, England, where Elvey was organist for forty-seven years.

No 126: Praise God for the harvest of orchard and field, by Brian Wren (1936 – present)

Brian is English by birth, American by choice, Reformed by Tradition, Presbyterian by membership, United Methodist by marriage. Brian holds undergraduate and doctoral degrees from Oxford University. He is a Minister of the United Reformed Church (UK). He is a writer, preacher, worship leader and designer, and an internationally published hymn-poet, with entries in most recent denominational hymnals in North America, Britain and Australia.

Some of his hymn poems have been translated into Finnish, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish and Korean.

He has numerous publications including seven hymn collections totalling 250 hymns, the most recent being *Love's Open Door* (2009). He is a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. This hymn was written in 1968 and it is set to the tune Stowey.

No 130: We plough the fields and scatter, by Matthias Claudius (1740-1815)

Matthias was born in Reinfeld, Germany, and was schooled in Theology at the University of Jena. However, he found little attraction in it and turned his attention to law and languages. In 1771 he undertook the editing of the literary portion of the *Wandsbecker Bote*, and contributed a number of his poems to the *Göttingen Musenalmanach*. However, during a severe illness in 1777, he realised the spiritual emptiness of his life and he once more found his faith.

While much of his poetry was distinctively Christian in its spirit, and many of his pieces might rank as popular sacred songs, yet he wrote no hymns designed for use in Church. Three pieces have, however, passed into the German hymn-books, all of which have been translated into English, this hymn being one of them.

Im Anfang war's auf Erden was first published in 1782, in 17 stanzas of 4 lines, and chorus, and was translated by Jane Campbell (1817- 1878) in 1861.

Chris Yorke

Prayer as connection to God

I've been to many churches throughout the years and heard a lot of sermons about prayer. I've also heard of different ways to pray. As a child I was taught that it was hands together, heads bowed and eyes shut, that was how you pray. However, as an adult I've found that it doesn't really work for me. In church I sit at the back. When it's time to pray I look over the bowed heads towards the cross. For me, as one of the main symbols in the Christian faith, this is one of the main connections to God.

I have also been told many times that I should find a time every day to pray and that some people do have a time where they sit alone and talk to God. I like many others have never been able to do that. One time during the day that I find myself thinking of others and talking to God is when I'm walking. As a student I find myself walking quite a lot as this is a necessity to get somewhere or if I don't have enough money to get the bus. We live in a great city and Birmingham is fantastic for stimulating the mind and giving me things to pray about!

Many of you know that I have a great love for music and I have on many occasions used music to reflect on life. At the Thursday group for young people I led a session on music. This session focused on six tracks which have a great deal of significance for me. I have always felt that music can be a great connection to God. Music has always given me a chance to think about others and think about a closer connection with people who like the same!

In May I and many others walked during the Birmingham Pride Parade with Christians at Pride. There were lots of amazing moments but there is one that will stay with me for a long time. As we approached Carrs Lane we were stopped to allow people to cross the road. There was a group of anti-pride protestors. Instead of shouting at them and trying to stop them, as a group we started to sing Amazing Grace. As we couldn't move forward, we just sang louder and the crowd joined in with us. The protestors were drowned out and, as we moved, many people thanked us for being there. This more than many things in

recent time has connected me to God. It has been one of the things that many people may not count as prayer, but I believe that anything you do where you think of others or talk to God in any way can count. Living in a city as beautiful as ours makes me think every day about God's love and how lucky people are to have a connection to God. There are many moments in life when it's clear that he loves all of us! God's blessing to you all,
Joe Bullen



Tabor House - from Father Hudson's report

Birmingham Homeless Shelter, Tabor House, celebrated its first anniversary last September. During its first year it expanded the number of beds available, having successfully helped people to turn their lives around. Many guests have moved into their own accommodation, while others felt able to return to their families.

Martin had been living in a tent on a roundabout in a dual carriageway for 14 months until he accidentally set fire to it, losing everything. He then moved his new tent into the deep undergrowth on another dual carriageway to feel secure. He was offered a place at Tabor House, but did not arrive initially.



After months of working with his outreach worker, Martin felt ready to come to Tabor House. That night he went straight to his bed and was very shy. In the morning he took all his belongings away. On the second morning he left a T-shirt, and the next he left a bit more. Martin was starting to feel safe and, by

talking to staff and volunteers, was beginning to trust. He has now moved the last of his items to Tabor House, registered with a GP and set up a new bank account.

He has started to look at his next steps and wants to get a job and his own accommodation. The staff and volunteers continue to support him to get his paperwork in order, after important documents were destroyed in the fire. Martin says that the darkness is lifting now and he can see a future.

If you would be interested in volunteering at Tabor House please ask Diana Cullum-Hall for more information.

Responding to the crisis in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

‘Rebuild my House’

House Demolitions by Israeli forces continue unabated in the West Bank, mostly in the name of security.

On Monday, 22 July 2019, the Israeli authorities demolished buildings in the Wadi al-Humos, the eastern extension of Zur Baher in East Jerusalem.

The move came after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the residents’ appeal and ruled there was no legal barrier to the demolitions. Israel said it would demolish up to 13 buildings, including 14 apartments, the vast majority of which are in various stages of construction.

The buildings were home to two families including 17 people of which 11 are minors. Some of them were built in Area A, with building permits issued by the Palestinian Authority which holds planning powers in those areas. Wadi al-Humos is outside of Jerusalem’s municipal boundary and constitutes the main land reserve for the development of Zur Baher.

The Zur Baher committee estimates that 6,000 people currently live in that neighbourhood – a quarter of the total population of Zur Baher.

These actions are seen by many as more evidence of the impunity displayed by Israel as an occupying force rather than a state that treats all its citizens equally. A video showing the destruction can be viewed [here](#).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=39&v=eX2ZJwQCULU

GAZA: A Film Review

GAZA is a masterfully crafted portrait of Palestinian life, offering a rare chance to be immersed in the heart of this tiny strip of land.

The film succeeds in showing the lives of ordinary people who courageously keep going in the grimmest of conditions in a world where, as someone puts it, there is a “wall between the people of Gaza and life itself.”

We see a young woman practising the cello, a young man recording rap tracks, a theatre director rehearsing a performance piece, and a fisherman brooding over the dire conditions of his business - he may not fish more than three miles out, leading to a pitifully meagre catch.

The sea is the one border that ought not to be overwhelming for the people of Gaza, but is almost as unforgiving as the Israeli border crossings. This is a sober and even angry film about a people living under a brutal political occupation.

GAZA was released in the UK on 9 August 2019.

Commitment for Life is dedicated to the equal treatment, safety, protection, education, and well-being of every person in Israeli Occupied Palestinian Territories. Please pray for Kevin & the other URC members travelling to IOPT in SEPT.

[Commitment for Life is the Global Justice Programme of the United Reformed Church in the UK](#)



www.urc.org.uk/cfl



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Update from Robin Roth, CEO of Traidcraft, (from his July 2019 Bulletin)

When I first started at Traidcraft three years ago, I talked to several Fairtrade leaders about the need for organic farming to be a part of our mission and I was bemused by their reactions. The most common were, “Organic farming? – There’s no health benefit to consumers.” And “British consumers will never buy that story. Organic food is a middle-class, niche market.”

To say that I was non-plussed is an understatement, but I have slowly come to understand how organic farming, with all of its extraordinary benefits for farmers and planet, has been so wildly misrepresented in the UK that it seemed to exist in the no man’s land between witchcraft and straight out crazy.

And now, three years later, quite suddenly everyone is talking about plastic, pollution, climate crisis, ocean degradation and fossil fuel dependency. And equally, people are also finally taking about biodiversity, organic and bi-dynamic farming, re-forestation and the circular economy as possible antidotes. This debate is hugely overdue, but it can also seem a bit overwhelming. **Quite what am I supposed to do as an individual in this sea of sudden information about the climate?**

Well, on the one hand **there is every cause to panic**. As Greta Thurnberg, the remarkable, 16-year-old girl from Sweden, whose solitary school strike has turned into an international movement, said recently when she was visiting the European Parliament;

“I want you to panic... I want you to act as if the house was on fire. I have said those words before and a lot of people have explained why that is a bad idea... A great number of politicians have told me that panic never leads to anything good and I agree. To panic, unless you have to, is a terrible idea. But when your house is on fire and you want to keep your house from burning to the ground, then that does require some level of panic.”

On the other hand, *just* panicking doesn’t lead us to a solution, and it is imperative that we all find one.

The science behind climate change is not disputed (99.5% of all research scientists are in alignment) but it is frequently denied. Science denying will get us nowhere, of course, and scaremongering even less. What we need is a clear-eyed understanding of what we can all do as individual and as communities.

At Traidcraft, we are thinking through what it would mean to become a 1.5°C company (1.5 degrees of warming above industrial levels is what we can still achieve without irreparably harming the ecosystems that we depend on for life – we are already at 1.1°C and rising). The answers are all small ones, but taken together they make big differences: **eating less meat, eating more vegetables, eating more local food, travelling less by car and plane. These are not huge sacrifices, but they are conscious decisions.**

In recent weeks we have been talking a lot about transparency, and you may be wondering why the theme is suddenly all about the climate?

Well, the food industry is fantastically, almost sublimely ‘intransparent’. The less you know about where your food comes from, the more corners can be cut, and the more profit can be extracted from the farmers at the start of the chain. It’s time to be honest about the food we eat and what it costs the earth. **Global food production is responsible for 30% of all greenhouse gases, and the single major cause of deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution and chemical pollution.** A significant element of this is a consequence of mass rearing of livestock (less meat is good for you and the planet) and the use of chemical fertilisers (this topic is huge, and is worth another bulletin article in itself).

By supporting small scale organic farmers who recycle their own waste products into healthy compost and who do not spray their land with excessive Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium (NPK farming), you are **genuinely supporting heroes who are fighting climate change.** “A middle class niche?”, “Of no benefit to the consumer?” Or perhaps **an essential survival strategy for the planet?**

Traidcraft has been working for decades to support small scale, sustainable and organic farming practice. We have even pioneered compostable packaging in the UK in our Eat Your Hat range (also on special offer this month, so treat yourself and **stick some additional fingers up at the hugely exploitative confectionary market**). We know where our priorities are, we know where our food comes from and we are invested in protecting the precious communities we work with and we acknowledge their (and our) debt to the land.

Contributed by Joan Davies

Great Taste Awards

Great Taste is the world's largest and most trusted food and drink award.

They put thousands of varieties of food drink to the test each year, with a panel over 500 experts blind tasting products, well as straightforward and impartial feedback from chefs, buyers, food writers and retailers. You can receive a 2- or 3-star accolade, with 3-stars being most highly respected seal of approval.



or
of
as

1-,
the

This year, 12,000 products were entered and reviewed, and only 200 were awarded the 3-star accolade. So, you can imagine our delight to discover that our Traidcraft Breakfast Blend Tea was one of those products!

AT CARRS LANE SOON - WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER



It's that time of the year again – Traidcraft are out and about on the road and cannot wait to see you all! We have a jam-packed itinerary running throughout September, so if we're heading to a venue near you, why not pop along and say hello.

We hope to be joined at each event by friends from our sister charity, Traidcraft Exchange, as well as other partners. To help us plan logistics and refreshments at each venue, please register online. Links to designated Eventbrite pages for your tickets and details of each venue can be found below. The timetable for each event is as follows:

16:00	Doors open
16:00 – 18:30	Browsing stock, network with other Fairtraders and retailers, grab a brew
18:30 – 19:15	Talks and presentations
19:15 – 21:00	Continue browsing and networking
21:00	Close



If you'd like to come along, please use the Eventbrite link to sign up:

Ethical Consumer Survey

Traidcraft is delighted to announce that their 100% recycled toilet tissue has been named of the most ethical on the market in the Ethical Consumer Survey!

★ The 3-ply tissue is made from recycled paper, saving trees being cut down and requiring less water to produce. Even the wrapper is made from LDPE plastic, and can be recycled with your shopping bags. Stick it in supermarket's recycling bin and it might end as a compost bin, padded envelope, or even tiles!



one

be
your
up
floor

FairPalm – the sustainable, organic palm oil

Palm oil is a hidden ingredient in around half the products on sale in the supermarket. Most comes from large plantations that are grown at the expense of natural rainforest and are hugely damaging to the environment.

Palm oil has qualities which differentiate it from other oils, such as its high melting point and the fact that it yields more oil per area of land than any other oil. It takes 6-8 times more land to produce the same volume of sunflower or rape seed oil, and ten times more land to produce the same amount of soya. This makes the case for stopping palm oil altogether and switching oils very problematic.

But FairPalm is different.

FairPalm is grown by smallholder farmers in West Africa - oil palm plants are indigenous, grow naturally alongside other crops and where the farming community often possess a few palm trees as part of their multi-cropping, small holder farming.



where
crops,
trees as

“At Traidcraft, we know fair trade isn't only about people – it's about being fair to the planet, too.

And so, we have FairPalm. Organic, Fair Trade, small holder cultivation, fair to farmers, grown in harmony with the environment. Its why we think palm oil can be GREAT for our planet and is why we will always champion it. It's a palm oil revolution.”

ALL PRODUCTS CAN BE ORDERED FROM THE CARRS LANE FAIR TRADE SHOP

News

*Dear Friends of Carrs Lane,
It has been a blessing with
all, and we do appreciate
kind and generous
support.*

*We are really touched by
good Christian fellowship
will bring it to Bexhill and
it with the people there.*

You are welcome any time to visit us!

May God bless you all,

Love from Heon, Myung, Yuki and Terry Jin



Image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay

*you
your*

*your
and
share*

Dear Journey Reader,

Carrs Lane Counselling Centre Ltd has recently launched a new initiative, called “Friends of Carrs Lane Counselling Centre”, which aims to support the work of the Centre. A leaflet has been published, giving more information: these are available at Carrs Lane, and if you receive a postal copy of *Journey*, you will have received a leaflet with this issue. Please do give it some consideration - and mention it to others, too, if possible.

Thank you!

Tim Batty, Administrator, Carrs Lane Counselling Centre Ltd
On behalf of the Trustees of Carrs Lane Counselling Centre Ltd



JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

the church at CARRS LANE

A spectacular Christmas treat by Springs Dance Company

Dance, drama and pantomime, hilariously funny yet thought-provoking, great for people of all ages, a bridge between contemporary life and Jesus's birth...

at The Church at Carrs Lane
Saturday 21st December at 3.30pm
0121 643 6151; www.carrslane.co.uk

Running time:

Tickets:
Adult: £10
Child: £5
Family: (2+2) £25

A Christmas Treat!

Springs Dance Company returns with its 23rd Advent tour of Journey of the Magi. This popular, Christmas production is loved by all for the enjoyable, warm, easily-relatable story told through the wonderful performances of its outstanding dancers.

“Forget The Nutcracker, Springs Dance Company’s Journey of the Magi is the best Christmas show I have ever seen! I went along to see it one dark, wet and dismal night in Birmingham and I came out having been touched, amused and moved to tears. Journey of the Magi looks beyond the tinsel and trappings and reveals the real meaning of Christmas.” David Bintley CBE, Artistic Director, Birmingham Royal Ballet

Saturday 22nd August, retired minister Peter Pierce, his wife Pat family, celebrated their marriage years at a lunch party in Westminster Hall, Cambridge. son, Jonathon reflected on his parents’ achievement indicating had either one of them been in government, the country might be better state!

Peter praised his wife’s ability to keep his feet on the ground when the demands of church life became too great. Westminster Hall training college for URC ministers was where Peter received his training. The college has recently undergone refurbishment.

(Liz Cummings)



On
and
of fifty
Their
that,
in a

Regular Activities at The Church at Carrs Lane

SUNDAYS

Morning Worship	Every Sunday at 10.30am with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month
Church Meeting	Third Sunday at 12 noon
Singing Group	Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

WEEK DAYS

Prayers in the Lounge, all welcome	Monday - Friday 07:30am and Monday - Thursday 7.00pm
Lunchtime Healing Service	Every Wednesday 1.15pm
Thinking Allowed	First Thursday at 10.15am
Central House Group at Carrs Lane	Third Wednesdays at 6.30pm
Coffee Drop-in	Fridays from 10.30am-12.00pm
Carrs Lane Choir Practice	Fridays at 7.00pm
Carrs Lane Players (drama group) - enquire via Clerk	Fridays at 7.45pm
Charity Knitting Circle	First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00pm
Carrs Lane Walking Group	usually meets monthly, see notice board
Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop	Wednesday - Saturday 10.30am - 2.30pm and most Sundays after morning worship
Counselling Centre	by appointment Monday & Wednesday 10am - 5pm; Tuesday & Thursday 10am – 7.30pm

Enquiries to clerk@carrslane.co.uk

Helpful Recycling Contacts at the Church at Carrs Lane

Some friends at church are able to take some items for recycling to their collection point. If you would like to bring things for the people listed below, please limit this to the advertised dates:

- Last two Sundays in October 2019
- Last two Sundays in January 2020

Recycling contacts around the UK – see terracycle.com

There are also some Birmingham-based organisations which collect specific items for recycling, also listed below:

Recycling Contact	What they can take to a collection point
<i>Jan Scott</i>	Crisp packets (clean)
<i>Gill Barfield for Lush UK</i>	Bottle tops – box in the kitchen
<i>Ruth Yorke</i>	Toothbrushes (inc electric ones)
<i>Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop c/o Joan Davies</i>	Jewellery, coins and currency, mobile phones, cameras and gadgets, stamps (see inside back cover)
<i>Peter Cummings</i>	Tools and sewing machines – for Tools for Self-Reliance/Africa
<i>Jill Veitch</i>	Oddments of wool for knitting group
<i>Moseley Exchange, B13 8JP</i>	Plastic bread bags
<i>St Helen's Church, Solihull, B91 2DA</i>	Pet food pouches/packets (clean)
<i>Perry Beeches Baptist Church B42 2HF</i>	Biscuit, cracker and cake bar wrappers
<i>Morrisons at Sheldon B26 3PU</i>	Dishwashing, cleaning and fragrance flexible packaging
<i>Stirchley Library B30 2JT & Warley Baptist Church, Oldbury</i>	Baby food pouches (clean)

Items we recycle

Jewellery

Unwanted gold & silver
 including damaged items
Costume jewellery
 Watches



Coins & Currency

Banknotes & Coins
 Any currency UK or foreign
 of any age/unchangeable
 currency



**NO Ink or
 Toner Cartridges
 Thank You**

Mobile Phones, Cameras & Gadgets

Mobile Phones . **Video Cameras**
Old Film Cameras . Digital
 Cameras . **Sat Navs**
Game Consoles . Games &
 Accessories . **iPods**
MP3 Players . Tablet Computers



Stamps








Loose / Single Stamps
First Day Covers
 Presentation Packs



Donors: Please place your items in the box provided in the foyer.

Funds raised will go to Traidcraft Exchange

Useful Recycling Symbols from recyclenow.com

	<p>'Widely' means the majority (70%+) of local authorities have arranged to recycle this plastic. The commonest and most easily recyclable plastic is PET (polyethylene), used for bottles and trays. There are 6 other types of plastic packaging (HDPE, PVC, LDPE, PP, PS, and combination plastics). LDPE, used in carrier bags and plastic wrappers (e.g. bread, bananas, toilet rolls, magazines) may show this logo too – though they need to be taken to supermarkets which have carrier bag recycling banks.</p>
	<p>It usually applies to the lids and covers of yoghurt pots, for example. Unfortunately, it is found on blue and black food trays, which Sainsbury's seem very fond of. Another very common kind of not-yet-recycled packing is the salad bag and crisp packet: in other words, all 'crinkly' plastic bags.</p>
	<p>This applies to packaging collected by 20-70% of local authorities. This is the least helpful logo, I find, as it doesn't usually come with any information about the type of plastic used, so how do we check? Is there someone sitting in a Birmingham City Council Office ready to listen to my description of my yoghurt pot?</p>
	<p>The 'green dot' looks promising but actually just tells you the producer has made a financial contribution towards recycling in Europe.</p>
	<p>This means the packaging is capable of being recycled but doesn't say how widely or what kind of plastic it is. I've found this mostly on plastic bags (LDPE) which can be recycled at some supermarkets: they can end up as bin liners, plastic furniture and floor tiles.</p>
	<p>This seedling logo means it's industrially compostable – some magazine wrappers have this. These wrappers will contaminate other recycled plastics, but it can go in the recycling garden waste boxes.</p>
	<p>This plastic can be home composted, if you have a compost bin.</p>

Contact details for The Church at Carrs Lane, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX

Email: clerk@carrslane.co.uk Telephone 0121 643 6151

www.carrslane.co.uk