

Chronicle

September
2018



Harvest Services
Sunday 23rd
September
St James Beauchamp Lane
10 am

Sunday 7th
October
St Francis Hollow Way
10:30



Serving God,
Cowley and Headington

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A celebration of the
Feast Day of
St Francis
Sunday 30th September
St Francis Church
10:30 am
Hollow Way
OX3 7JF



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A word from the Rectory

Again, the year seems to be passing so quickly can you believe September is here already? Here is a bit of an update of things around the parish.

Staffing: Cowley is a place with such opportunities. We have been running with a vision for Cowley becoming a training parish—a place where people can grow as children of God and particularly develop the skills needed to grow the kingdom of God. A year ago, we had David join us as an Apprentice Vicar. He is training with St Mellitus College and, the Lord being our helper, will be with us for another 21 months prior to being ordained. In June, Revd Gemma Beesley joined us as a curate. This was, for her, the first post following ordination. It is a post where she will rapidly come to grips with the role of being an ordained minister and will increasingly take a lead in parish matters. She will be with us for between 3 and 4



years. This week Fiona Bennett joins us. She is a 'Time for God' volunteer who will be with us for a year and is staying in the rectory and will get involved in a variety of activities around the parish.

When you see her, do

welcome her and ask her all about it.

Between such individuals you see a real commitment by the diocese and parish to development and growth. That goes alongside the week by week discipleship and

training that we are involved in.

Our own discipleship program. We are committed at both St James and St Francis to helping faith grow. As the autumn turns we have a Christian introductory course (Alpha) and a course about the 10 commandments (Pilgrimage) coming to a close.

Our new venture will look at the big story of God's love for us found in the Bible. One start for this will be The Bible Big Story day on Saturday 22nd September. It is being led by a friend of Revd Mark Oxbrow, Paul Thaxter. It will be a brilliant day. Do come along. It runs from 9:30 to 4 pm with lunch and



refreshments provided. There is a signup sheet in church, or you can book via 'Event Bright' (there is a link on our web site).

Later this term we will start using some Bible Society material – 'The Bible Course'. The Wednesday home group kicks off with this but other opportunities will follow.

Developments with the congregation plant in the old URC Church. Planning with St Ebbes Church for this continues. There should be some suggestions for the Bishops Mission Orders linked with it appearing in the next few weeks. Revd Geoff and Revd Vaughan Roberts (the Vicar of St Ebbes) are currently working on these. St Ebbes are actively looking to appoint a leader for the future project in the next weeks.

Plans for a toilet in St James Church.

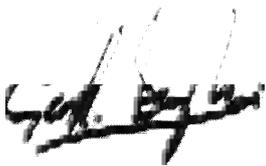
We are having some conversation with the church architect in the first weeks of September.

Confirmations.
There is a deanery
Confirmation
Service planned for
Wednesday 14th



November. If anybody is interested in either being welcomed into the church of England from another denomination, or being confirmed, please speak to me.

As we start another busy season may God bless us individually and as his family



Benson Cottage

From the Editors

Sally Hemsworth and Nicki Stevens

“Start by doing what’s necessary, then do what’s possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible”

St Francis of Assisi

A week before preparation of this Chronicle three/four articles had been received. There was an air of despair in the Editorial Team - after a lovely long hot summer everyone had relaxed and now, with the cooler weather we needed to get to work and encourage. We started with what we had, made a few nudges and enquiries, and low and behold we had a Chronicle – what seemed to be impossible had happened. The above quotation covers the scenario exactly!

Holidays are on the horizon when a group of parishioners and friends are going to Eastbourne for a short break. Group

holidays were a major feature in the Parish a few years ago and we hope this holiday proves successful and is the first of many.

The Parish diary is very full with all sorts of events – do take advantage of as many of them as you can. In a recent handout from Mind (for better mental health) it stated that there were five simple steps that are known to improve mental health and wellbeing – Connect; Be active; Take notice; Keep learning; and Give. This is what the church family does all the time – so enjoy all the activities that are set out in The Chronicle, in the Link and on the notice boards at both churches and the church centre.

One exciting thing is that Rosanne Butler’s Book “An Affectionate Look at Cowley throughout the Ages” is at the printers and will shortly be available to buy. The Editorial Team is particularly proud that a series which featured over three years in The Chronicle is now going to be published. Well done to everyone who encouraged this, to the Friends of the Old School for its help with funding, and, of course, to Rosanne for writing it.

We hope you enjoy this month’s Chronicle. If you have seen this, enjoyed it, and have not yet subscribed, please consider doing this. You can contact us or the Parish Office and this will be arranged. Of course, contributions to the next Chronicle would also be welcome.



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Verna, CAP Money Delegate
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BIBLE SOCIETY 'MORE THAN A BOOK' REGISTRATION

If you order anything on line or by phone from the Bible Society, please use the unique Parish reference number 12044 *or* select the 'Parish of Cowley' from the drop down menu when placing an order and we will benefit from the 'More than a book' cash back scheme. It's that easy! We earned £3 from an 'Open the Book' resources order,

Do look at the on line shop – Bibles, prayer books, cards, courses, fiction, dvds etc.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/>

The Word – Posters in Churches

The yellow A3 posters featuring the Word that you may have seen in St. James Church and Church Centre and St. Francis Church were inspired by a sermon given by Mark Oxbrow on 4th February this year. In the sermon Mark introduced us to three key words which play a central role in the message of the New Testament. They are Image (or eikon in Greek), Wisdom (sophia) and Word (logos). Image appears 23 times in the books of the New Testament, Wisdom 51 times and Word a staggering 330 times.

In this short article I am aiming to unpack more of the meaning behind the word 'Word' and the nuances it has in Greek and Hebrew. Ho Logos (The Word) and Towrah, in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, are more or less equivalent words in the Bible.

However, because of the different cultures and languages they sprang out of, Towrah and Logos carry some contrasting meanings. The roots of Hebrew culture were connected to the land and its cultivation, but were also embedded in nomadic ways, as in the examples of Abraham's wanderings, and the exodus from Egypt. So, Towrah has meanings such as to water, to lay foundations and to shoot, as an arrow.

If we contemplate these meanings they link up directly to some key teachings of Jesus. For example, the parable of the sower pictures the Word of God falling on fertile soil, where it produces much fruit after being watered, through prayer, and by reading the scriptures.

Again, the shooting of an arrow reminds us that scripture, the Word of God, hits the mark, in that it reveals to us what the human condition is, and how Jesus has come to deliver us from that condition of sin. By the way, the Greek word for sin refers to an

arrow falling short of its target.

Moving on, ancient Greek civilisation, although based on agriculture and slavery, eventually generated a highly educated, intellectual culture which gave birth to the first Western philosophy. So Logos, although meaning, first of all, word, evolved into the idea of thought, or reason, or expression. The New Testament speaks of Jesus as the Word of God, who communicates to us the thoughts, the reasoning, and thus, the character of God Himself. The more we contemplate the character of God as revealed to us by Jesus, the more we should be transformed into the likeness, or image of Jesus.

Thank you for reading this.

John Booty

Lesley Weston

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Those long, hot summer days...

As well as frog spawn appearing in the pond, one of the other signs of spring I look forward to every year is to see the beautiful pink almond blossom on the tree in the High next to St. Mary's Church. I was really saddened to see half of it fallen and leaving a bare stump. It is a real brute of a stump and I wonder what is to become of it and the rest of the tree in the months to come. There is another, younger, almond tree in the grounds of St Luke's (now the History Centre). I wonder if it, too, will become a venerable specimen.

One theory of the fate of the tree has been the drought and heat we have been enjoying (?) this summer. Hot days certainly slow me down and I am glad I am able to choose what and when I do stuff. I don't envy those who have to work in the heat. I am not a person who sits in the sun to get a tan but I have been in shorts in the garden and on the allotment.

My other half and I were watering the plot regularly either early in the day or evening and have had good crops of courgettes, beetroot, peas, French beans and runner beans. The pumpkins have gone mad so there will be some for Halloween for the grandchildren. Our freezer is also bursting with raspberries. These I open freeze on a tray before bagging so they don't clump together. I have also made raspberry ice cream, sorbet and raspberry ripple ice

cream by running a puree through a lemon ice cream base. I also just love them as they are with a bit of cream.

I was disappointed, again, with the apathy of other allotment holders in not taking part in the flower, fruit and veg show at the Elder Stubbs Festival. We have had a bad season for some crops but I did manage six entries. My pumpkin was the only one and bagged first prize for heaviest pumpkin, inevitably, but there are loads of bigger specimens on the site. My mismatched collection of 10 runner beans was also a solo entry which gained a conciliatory "highly commended". Loads of folks have runner beans, where were they?

In the garden, the young fruit trees I planted 2 years ago are having their third season. The peach tree had 3 peaches, the Victoria had about a good dozen plums, the pear tree has 7 pears and one of the apple trees has 8 apples with the other apple tree bearing nothing. My other half complained that I allowed foxgloves to grow too close to this tree. I do think he is right but I love foxgloves and they were a great show in June.

Soon it will be time to be thinking of next year. The seed catalogue has already arrived and I will have to think what to grow for the 2019 Plant Sale!

Joan Coleman

YOU'RE INVITED

to a dynamic day of discovery that will give you a fresh way to look at the Bible. Using multimedia, colourful symbols and humour, Paul Thaxter from CMS will take us on a journey from Creation to Christ, exploring who's who, what's what and where we all fit into the Bible's Big Story. **You won't want to miss it!**



The call in action

A photograph of Paul Thaxter, a man in a dark shirt, standing with his arms outstretched on a large graphic of the book cover for 'The Bible's Big Story: Our Story'. The cover features a map of the world and various icons. A white text box is overlaid on the bottom of the image.

Saturday 22 September 9.30am. - 4pm.
St. James Church Centre, Beauchamp Lane,
Cowley
Facilitator: Paul Thaxter, Church Mission Society
Lunch provided Donations welcome

AN APPEAL FROM THE FOOD BANK

The Food Bank is still in need of certain items – if you are able to help with any of the following there are collection boxes at both churches and the Church Centre for donations. Please help.

Tins of Fruit

Tins of meat

UHT (long life) Milk

Drinking Chocolate

Spreads

Fruit Juice (long Life)

BASIC toiletries e.g. toothbrushes, shower gel, shampoo, soap, toilet rolls

Tins of Puddings

Tins of veg, not baked beans and Tomatoes

Coffee

Jam

Sugar

Congratulations to Jane Benyon on her long walk to raise money for CEF.

Cowley Women's Institute

We escaped the hustle and bustle of the city by going on one of Salter's Steamers in August. The tranquillity of the river Thames soon had us relaxing. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the wildlife and the beautiful scenery between Oxford and Abingdon.

Early in September we are going to Didcot to explore the Orchard Centre and catch up socially. The talk of our first meeting, after our summer break, is about tea, coffee and

chocolate and how it came to Britain. Following this talk we may view our refreshments differently and perhaps appreciate them to a higher degree.

Cowley WI welcomes women of all ages over 18, so please come and have enjoyable afternoons with us. We meet from 2pm – roughly 4:15 pm in St James Church Centre the third Wednesday of each month.

Sarah Lawrence, Secretary to Cowley WI
wicowleyoxford@yahoo.com

CHRONICLE

Editorial Team- Sally Hemsworth,
Nicki Stevens

Deadline for the next edition:
Monday 24 September 2018

If possible, please send entries by
email to Sally at

chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk. Paper contributions should
be left at Parish Office for the
attention of Sally.

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SAFEGUARDING

As Christians, we are all of course committed actively to protecting and safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults. As a Parish, we are on track to ensuring that all our current Parish officers and volunteers who have regular contact with or the chance to influence children, young people or vulnerable adults *and/or* who have access to confidential information *and/or* who visit parishioners in their homes, comply with the latest Anglican training requirements.

The Basic awareness course (C0) will be repeated next on Tuesday 18 September, 7.00-9.00 at St James Centre or the Rectory.

The Foundation course (C1) can be studied on line at home and it's a much better presentation than the C0, which thankfully is due to be revised, but there will also be a face to face delivered C1 on Saturday 6 October, 10.00-12.30 at St James Centre, organised through the Diocese and led by trainer Sue Newling. All those who must take this qualification – children and young people's workers, those visiting homes on behalf of the Parish, Church Wardens, leaders of group activities – have been given the information and asked to sign up. We have also invited other local and Deanery churches.

From now, all new volunteers for the Parish will be required to complete some basic forms, a declaration and take the C0 course. Anyone else who recognises that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility is welcome to study a course – speak to Lesley Williams, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Lesley Williams 01865 779562 07982 439828
safeguarding@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

Shaun Guard
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is working towards becoming a Fairtrade parish – where possible, we use only Fairtrade products please support us in this

Film Club at the Centre

Despite it being August when several of our members were off on their "hols" our last club evening was a great success. More than half of our members came along and enjoyed "The Benny Goodman Story", which has stood the test of time since it was first screened, admirably.

Although we are losing members through ill health, lack of mobility, etc (and we do sadly miss these dear friends) our membership still holds strong as new people get to hear about us and are keen to join.

This month's film has as its star a born-and-bred Cowley "girl", namely Maggie Smith. The other stars are Kevin Kline and Kristin

Scott-Thomas and the film is entitled "My Old Lady". This is not to be confused with "The Lady in the Van" which was included in one of our earlier programmes. The story is described as "A witty charmer" and " ...full of funny twists and turns". Without spoiling the theme, the main gist of the story involves a young man who inherits a valuable Parisian apartment only to find it is occupied by a very persistent old lady (guess who plays that part!). I hope members will find it full of as much delightful fun as I did when I first saw it.

Rosanne Butler

DIARY NOTICE for the final BIG BREKKIE for the year. We considered trying a Saturday morning brunch but for this one will stick to our usual Sunday, twixt the 8.00 and 10.00 services.

It's SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER, 8.45-9.45 – a pre-Advent feast with a porridge, bacon butties & scrambled egg menu, along with the regular crumpets, toast, croissants.



CHRISTIAN AID QUIZ AID <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

It's a long time since our CHRISTIAN AID QUIZ AID on Friday 29 June but we thought you should know who, of the 7 enthusiastic teams, won through to take the 2018 championship title: impressively it was the same team as last year, albeit with a different name : 'Six short planks' – definitely a misnomer – comprised Doug & Margaret Craig, Philip & Lorna Hind and two other well informed friends. They were 4 points ahead of 'Ladies of a certain age', closely followed by 'Just us' and 'Late arrivals'. Rosanne as usual challenged and entertained us with the 8 rounds on: *who said that? - the Queen - around the world - general knowledge - art & design - faiths - how many? - sport*. There was of course no cheating and only a couple of challenges to the Quizmaster's authority! Thanks to her and Frank, the recorder.

Most importantly, we raised £275 for Christian Aid..

The Season of Creation is an annual celebration of prayer and action to protect creation. It is celebrated by Christians of all traditions, and the leaders of faith traditions have [encouraged](#) the faithful to participate.

The Season of Creation is celebrated annually by tens of thousands of Christians around the world. Seasonal events are hosted on all six continents with celebrations in local communities, ranging from prayer services to litter clean-ups to public advocacy actions.

The season begins September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and runs through to October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology in many traditions. The theme of this year's celebration is "walking together", a shared journey to better care of creation.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are on a pilgrimage to better care of creation; we share a common role as stewards of God's creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with its wellbeing. We have a moral and spiritual opportunity to care for our common home, and for the sisters and brothers who suffer when it is harmed.

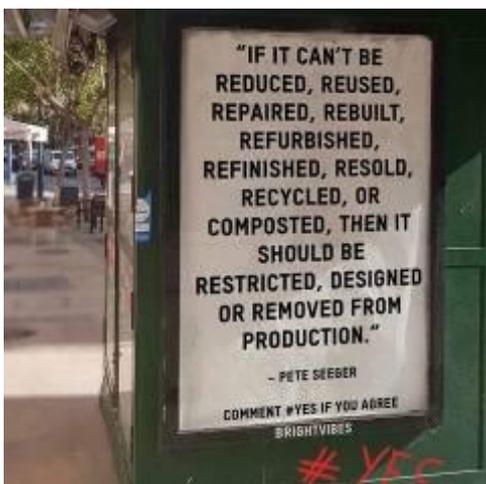
God our creator, you have made us one with this earth,
to tend it and to bring forth fruit:
may we so respect and cherish all that has life from you,
that we may share in the labour of all creation
to give birth to your hidden glory AMEN

We pray in thanksgiving for Mother Earth, in whom all life is rooted,
Brother Sun whose energy radiates life,
Sister Water who nurtures and revives us,
and co-creatures with whom we live, and for whom we are called to till and keep this garden.

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. AMEN



RECIPES

Blackberry clafoutis (Serves 4)

Ingredients:

- 10g unsalted butter
- 40g plain flour
- 30g caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs
- 200ml semi-skimmed milk
- ½ tbsp sunflower oil
- 225g blackberries
- 1 tbsp icing sugar, for dusting

Method

- ∅ Preheat the oven to 180°C / Fan 160°C / gas mark 4. Grease a shallow, 1-litre ovenproof tart or flan dish with the butter.
- ∅ Sift the flour and sugar into a bowl. Whisk in the eggs one at a time. Slowly add the milk to create a smooth batter. Stir in the sunflower oil and mix well.
- ∅ Put the blackberries in the base of the dish, then pour over the batter. Bake in the centre of the oven for 35-40 minutes until golden on top and a skewer comes out clean. Dust with the icing sugar to serve.

The following is (from Cakes, Bakes, Puddings and Prayers by Susan Over).

Scones of Splendour (makes 6 large scones)
(These are rather richer than the traditional recipe and make a good teatime treat with a home-made preserve)

Ingredients:

- 225 g plain flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 50g margarine
- 50g caster sugar
- 25g dried ready-to-eat cranberries
- 1 medium egg
- 2-4 tablespoons milk to mix



Method

- ∅ Preheat oven to 220°C / 180° Fan / gas mark 7. Grease a baking tray
- ∅ Sift flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the margarine
- ∅ Stir in sugar and cranberries
- ∅ Beat egg, then add it with enough milk to make a soft dough
- ∅ Turn onto floured surface, knead lightly and roll out to about 2 cm (3/4 in) thickness
- ∅ Cut into 6 rounds with a 6 cm (2 ½ in) medium cutter
- ∅ Brush with a little more egg and milk, if liked
- ∅ Bake for 10-15 minutes
- ∅ Cool on a wire rack

Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendour and majesty.
Psalm 104.1 (NIV)

Lord you are awesome, magnificent, splendid. I cannot find words to describe your majesty. Thank you that I can come into your royal presence just as I am with no pretence. I worship you, Lord, for who you are. Amen

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– 9.30 AM ONWARDS AT ST. JAMES CHURCH CENTRE.**



Come and have fun, fresh air and exercise as we prepare the St. James Church Centre garden for another beautiful spring and summer showing. If possible bring your own tools but some will be available. Both heavy and light work available plus coffee and cake.

THE 'IT'S NOT COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES' ARTS EVENT

The call has gone out for commitment to some coordinated Christmas Arts events in Cowley, on a smaller scale than the Christmas tree festival, to Templars Square, groups at the ArkT Centre, Rising Voices and John Bunyan Church but thus far without any firm ideas or a meeting date. Please let Lesley know if you can be involved &/or if you have creative ideas about what it could include in the way of music, drama, visual art..... and where.

Lesley Williams

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UNA'S CORNER

AS I WAS SAYING

It seems a long time ago since the last Chronicle, I remember that I was writing about Father Whye. I invited Father Whye to our parent's Golden Wedding Party and he rang me and said I was quite right, my parents had been married for 50 years, he had looked it up in his diary. He added that it had been a lovely day. Well, I knew jolly well when my parents were married and that it was their Golden Wedding. He came to the party and enjoyed himself and made a little speech. My elder brother and I were married within 6 weeks of each other and we decided on a joint Silver Wedding celebration. Of course, we invited Father Whye. A waitress stood at the door with a tray of glasses of sherry, when she saw the dog collar she backed away and I was most amused to see Father Whye following the poor girl as she backed across the room. He had his glass of sherry and I noticed that he went back for a second one. He smoked heavily and kept going outside for a cigarette. The smoking caused his death in the end although he was an old man by then.

My parents had friends in Kidlington where the one time Vicar lived. My husband and I used to drive my parents over to Kidlington every now and again and we would leave them to gossip about the very old days and we went for a walk around Kidlington. Gordon and I always walked hand in hand. We were progressing back in the hope of a cup of tea when Father Whye came the other way. He stopped us, beaming with

happiness and said how wonderful it was to see two people of our ages walking hand in hand. I replied that as he had married us in St James we felt it was fair enough to walk like that. Father Whye was really touched that we recognised him and that he had married us. He really was a dear man.

When Father Whye moved from Cowley his curate Mr Betton, became vicar. He ran the parish from St Luke's which did not please us very much as we thought the vicar should be at the parish church and live in the vicarage but he was allowed to live in St Luke's House and spend most of his time at St Luke's while a curate lived in the vicarage and worked at the parish church.

After Father Betton left us, I cannot remember exactly where he went but I believe it was a good position. Sadly his son was killed in an accident and one month later Mr Betton died of heart failure.

His church put in a Memorial window for Mr Betton - it showed two hands in prayer. Gordon and I went to Morning Service in that church years ago to see the window. We were welcomed and when we said we came from Cowley they led us straight to the window. It was very beautiful.

When St Luke's church was closed the space which used to be the vestry became St Luke's chapel. Years ago the choristers and the ministers processed from that vestry up the second aisle, across the back of the church and down the centre aisle - with the choir singing lustily.

When we had a reunion of the choir for one of Brian Tidy's anniversaries (the organist of course), a number of elderly men came and chatted about the old days and two ladies were present. Apparently they too sang in the choir but they were not allowed to wear robes or process; they had to hide behind the choir

so that they could not be seen. Girls were never in church choirs in those days.

Times have changed somewhat since those days and our present singing group have no male members. Any gentlemen like to volunteer to join the group? You would be very welcome.

PRAYERS

With Geoff and Mary away over the summer holiday for two weeks, Gemma and I were left to say the daily offices in the morning. The daily offices are said each day in every church that is part of the Church of England. Prayer is at the heart of the church and all of us can join in saying these prayers, so please feel free to join us Monday – Saturday at 8 am in St James Church.

With it being summer and very hot, we decided to move the daily offices around the parish, so we could pray more publicly and be a public witness for Christ.



This is a very simple mission work that we can all enjoy doing. Whether it is going out into parks with a Bible and sitting there and praying for the places and people walking past, or, with winter coming, going and praying in pubs and coffeehouses, such as Wetherspoons. On a cooler morning, Gemma, Jason and I enjoyed a "Morning prayer breakfast" there, where we had the opportunity to share God's love with two young men who had just returned from a lad's week in Marbella.

This is the heart of the work that Jesus would have done - he would go out into the community and meet with people and share Christ. We took spare service booklets so that any people passing by could join us and we had the opportunity to meet with people and talk about Christ and the church here in Cowley.

We would love for you to join us. Whether it is 8am in the church, or whether you join us in prayer in your own homes, on your journey to work or school, whilst doing your shopping or visiting with neighbours and friends. As we begin afresh after the summer holidays, let's go forward more prayerfully and expect to see God move in our parish.

David Benskin



Why I Care about the Environment

Margot R Hodson

How it all began

Dutch Elm disease galvanised my teenage ideals. I grew up in Somerset and had a long journey to school across the edge of the Somerset levels. The tall majestic elms marked my way for the first few years of secondary school. Then one by one they began to succumb to the dreaded disease and by the time I left for university, most of the elms had been felled. The disease was imported to Britain on infected logs. The damage came from a new very virulent fungus (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) and was spread by bark beetles. Within ten years 20 million elms had died, and the familiar landscape of my childhood had been changed forever. Meanwhile, I had helped to form a local Conservation Corps and left for university to study Geography. It was there that a deepening Christian faith wove together with my concern for nature.



Those Elms were lofty prophets of what would happen to the rest of the planet. Today, we are in the midst of major biodiversity loss and extinction. There is an accelerating pace of deforestation worldwide. Exposed hillsides are vulnerable to subsidence and in tropical areas, the soils are quickly degraded. In many places, denuded scrub and landslips have replaced fertile forests. In addition, the impact of climate change is catapulting every creature on Earth into an unknown and unpredictable future. Is there any hope?

Environment and hope

My recent project is on environment and hope. This came out of a chance conversation with a friend, Ruth Valerio. Twelve years ago, we knew the global environmental crisis was serious but we both had hope that the world governments would agree to bring in the changes necessary to bring us back from the ecological brink. As the years wore on with no agreement, that present hope began to fade. We found instead that we started looking toward the future hope summed up in Revelation 21 and 22. This promised a bright ultimate future, but what did it say for those who are struggling with environmental difficulties today? As the hope project gathered pace, we reached toward a third 'robust hope' as summed up in Romans 5: 'we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope'. This is a hope that can endure whatever the circumstances. It brings the ultimate hope of restored harmony of creation into the present. This enables us to be hopeful, even when things seem hopeless.

As Christians we have the immense privilege of glimpsing new creation. Our faith gives us sights of leaves of the tree of life that heal the nations (Revelation 22). We are brushed by the spray of the river of life as it gushes forth from the throne of God to restore and renew creation. Not only that