

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 11th April – **Second Sunday of Easter**

'For such a time as this'

Our Lent course this year was produced by the United Society for Partners in the Gospel – USPG, and explored ecological justice through stories from around the world. So we visited The Philippines, Belize (in the West Indies), Mozambique, India and Japan for inspirational work going on that has stimulated those of us in the Lent groups to work much more purposefully for ecological justice here.

Some of the questions put to us in each session were very challenging and difficult to answer, but we have committed ourselves to developing what we have learned, here at Christ Church. You haven't heard the last of us!

If I share with you one story you will see that though the world teeters on the brink of ecological disaster there is still hope for the future. And that's so appropriate as we celebrate the Easter season.

India faces a huge problem of urban pollution and other ecological issues and it is these that the Church of South India decided to tackle in its thousand schools spread all over the south of the country. In each school the children themselves do an audit of the natural resources that are used by the school so that it can become more efficient in water and energy use, minimising waste and recycling as much as possible. Sixty children form a group in each school to come up with ideas for change. For example, at St Hilda's school in Colmbatore they now harvest rain in large tanks to use for flushing their toilets, watering the garden, washing, and also for steaming food. But the programme is spreading. India's government is so impressed by the work in the schools that it has invited the church's Department for Ecological Concerns to work with the government Department of the Environment to produce a curriculum to use in all its schools. And then, excitingly, a twinning between ten schools in the diocese of Oxford has been set up with ten in India.



One of the challenging questions at the beginning was, 'Describe ways in which you feel responsible for nature, or give examples of practical action you have taken to support it', and then 'How should this impact our thinking, as a church and as a global community?' The churches in this country have a scheme called Eco Church to encourage all churches to think and act more deeply on all aspects of protecting and developing our environment, both here and around the world; and just before Angi left we joined and



did an opening audit of our own. The audit ranged from use of energy efficient lightbulbs to fair trade, from use of the churchyard, for example to grow wild flower meadows, to recycling as much as we can; and from preaching and teaching on environmental issues in services and at Sunday School, to working with others on ecological issues. It was just a start, but there are bronze, silver and gold awards to be won if we decide to pursue this!

Eileen Wetherell

P.S. I know that two small groups managed to meet on Zoom on Sundays and Wednesdays, but have no idea how many others of you tackled the course on your own or with a partner at home. It would be very good to hear from you about your experiences of the material we used and any thoughts you want to share. You could catch me at church or email the church email address. Thanks!