

TOGETHER

The FREE magazine from the Diocese of Rochester | Issue 6 | Spring 2020

GROW | ENRICH | RESOURCE

COVER STORY: CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION | PAGES 12-13



EVERYDAY
FAITH

CLIMATE
CRISIS

CHATHAM
PRAISE PARTIES

www.rochester.anglican.org



Rose fights thirst every day.
This is her climate crisis.

Drought is pushing Rose and her family to the brink.

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As we begin to see the shoots of new life around us, it's hard not to be even more concerned about the crisis facing our beautiful world.

As a family of faith, we are on a journey to take better care of God's creation, and so the steps we can take as Christians to do this are at the heart of this edition.

In the **Inside Track (p5-7)** you'll read about churches finding sustainable solutions to community issues, while in **Focus On (p12)**, we meet the 'green' churches showing we have a responsibility for God's world. Head to our **centre-spread (p14 -15)** for some top tips on how to encourage your local church to be an Eco Church too!

As we ourselves follow the national Church's #LiveLent – Care for God's Creation materials, our **Resources (p20)** and **Review (p21)** sections are sure to give you some environmental and practical ideas this season.

Why not join us on the journey?

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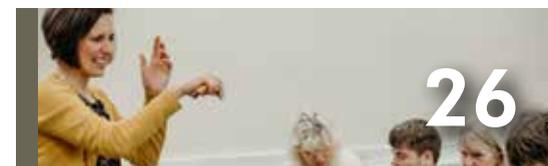
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New uniform exchange supports families in Erith

For many families, keeping up with the constant demand for school uniform can be a struggle.

At Christ Church, Erith, a new monthly uniform swap is hoping to make things a little easier.

Jacki Clement, the project worker for the church, says the idea came about after she noticed the huge amount of lost property left at her granddaughter's primary school.

"Erith is a relatively deprived area and many families struggle, so it gave me the idea of starting a clothing exchange. The school was very happy to help."

Jacki's role is one of the new posts funded by a £1.39 million Strategic Development Fund grant the Diocese received last year from the national Church.

She explains that parents with any outgrown uniforms are invited to donate items to the swap:

"Everyone is welcome to come and take whatever uniform they need, no costs involved. They can also stay for a cup of tea and a biscuit."

The exchange is just one of a number of projects she hopes to run to encourage more people to engage with the Church.

REV MOTHER MONICA CAMERON WITH JACKI CLEMENT



BAGS2CHURCH

Unwanted clothes have been collected by the bagful as part of a funding-raising and sustainability effort at St John, Higham. The unwanted textiles are given to Bags2Schools, to be sold on to wholesalers across the world, reducing the amount of textiles sent to landfill sites, and earning money for the church at the same time.



WELLBEING ON THE MIND

St Augustine, Gillingham welcomed local agencies to share their expertise about mental health at their regular Place of Welcome Café in February. As part of Mental Health Awareness Day, the mental wellbeing of children and adolescents was the main focus. Organisers said: "It was great to get so many professionals together."



NEW CHAPLAIN TO SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE

The two parishes of St Mark and King Charles the Martyr in Tunbridge Wells were delighted to welcome Jennie Cuthbert as a dedicated Anna Chaplain in the area. Anna Chaplaincy is a pioneering ministry that seeks to support older people and those with end of life issues.



HEAVY METAL CHURCH

Aiming to reach out to those who feel alienated by traditional Church, Medway's first heavy metal church 'Fire & Blood' has arrived. Rob Byrne, one of the founders said: "Our launch party went very well! Most who came were totally unchurched." Monthly meetings will now take place at the Tap n Tin nightclub, Chatham.



BATS IN CHURCHES

(C) HUGH CLARK/ WWW.BATS.ORG.UK

It is estimated that over half of the country's 13,000 parish churches may shelter bats, offering roosts to eight different species. At the same time, bat numbers are dwindling – by up to 60% in some cases – causing concern about ecological balance.

When a church building is home to bats, they are protected by law. It's not always an easy relationship, however, as their presence can mean lots of time and energy – and often money - working out how best to respond to their presence.

The Bats in Churches Project aims to help churches to co-exist in harmony with their bats, as well as involving local people.

St Mary Magdalene, Longfield, is one of 100 churches around the country involved in the project.

Paul Thomas, churchwarden at St Mary Church, says that the first sign of bats in the church was their droppings.

"We applied for a small grant from Bats in Churches to set up a project. Our 'bat detectorists', Claire Boothby and Rachel Arnold, went into action with special equipment to try assessing the numbers and

species involved - in this case, brown long-eared bats - ahead of the launch of their Bats in Churches 'citizen science' survey this coming summer."

The 'citizen science' survey aims to help understanding of how and why bats are using churches across the country, and so help shape support. Everyone can get involved.

"Most churches get along fine with their bats", insists Honor Gay of the Bats in Churches project, 'but it's important to remember that individual churches need individual solutions, and that's where the Bats in Churches project can help, working alongside parishes and communities."

St Mary's parish has found the project has generated a great deal of interest in bats and their relationship to church buildings, and among future plans is a special eco-service in church later this year.

To find out how to get involved with the 'citizen science' survey visit: www.batsinchurches.org

PRAISE PARTY ARRIVES IN CHATHAM

Space Rockets have been seen landing recently over St Paul with All Saints, Chatham, bringing Chip Kendal and his praise party team to lead a series of Praise Parties for local children and their families.



An initial bid from the Diocesan CYP Fund of just under £4,000 has resulted in three Praise Parties, at two of which Chip led families in prayer, worship and bible stories. This was followed by training for the local church teams for them to carry on the excellent work begun.

The small dedicated church team have since hosted a fabulous 'Don't get the Hump' Epiphany Praise Party, where over 100 children and their families enjoyed a wonderful afternoon that included encountering Jesus through worship, games, bible stories using puppets, and finishing with a picnic tea.

With two more planned for later in the year, it has been amazing to see the impact of a small grant, a few volunteers and a lot of enthusiasm that is continuing to grow both in numbers and faith.

To find out how you could apply for a grant from the CYP Fund, supported by the Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/under18s/children-and-young-people-cyp-fund/

YEAR OF PILGRIMAGE

Did you know that 2020 is officially the 'Year of Pilgrimage'?

As part of the celebrations, Rochester Cathedral is encouraging people to make a pilgrimage and be part of their 1400 year old history as a place of spiritual journeying. In collaboration with the British Pilgrimage Trust, they have launched four 1-day pilgrimage routes, each named after a significant figure in the story of Rochester Cathedral. Find out more at: www.rochestercathedral.org/pilgrimage





THE REV SIMON COUPER

CONFIDENT CONVERSATIONS

Our daily lives are often very full. Full of things to do. Full of meetings and deadlines. Full of places to be. Full of people to meet. So, where can God be found in our daily lives? It's a question members of St Paul's Church in Beckenham have been reflecting upon as part of the national Church of England initiative called, Everyday Faith.

'The people of St Paul's Church are the real strength, the real ambassadors. It's about how they can take the message out into the week. I'm trying to make people more confident.'

Simon Couper has been the vicar at St Paul, Beckenham, for nearly three years. Sporting pistachio trousers, a beard, and a dog collar, he is an interesting blend of tradition and innovation.

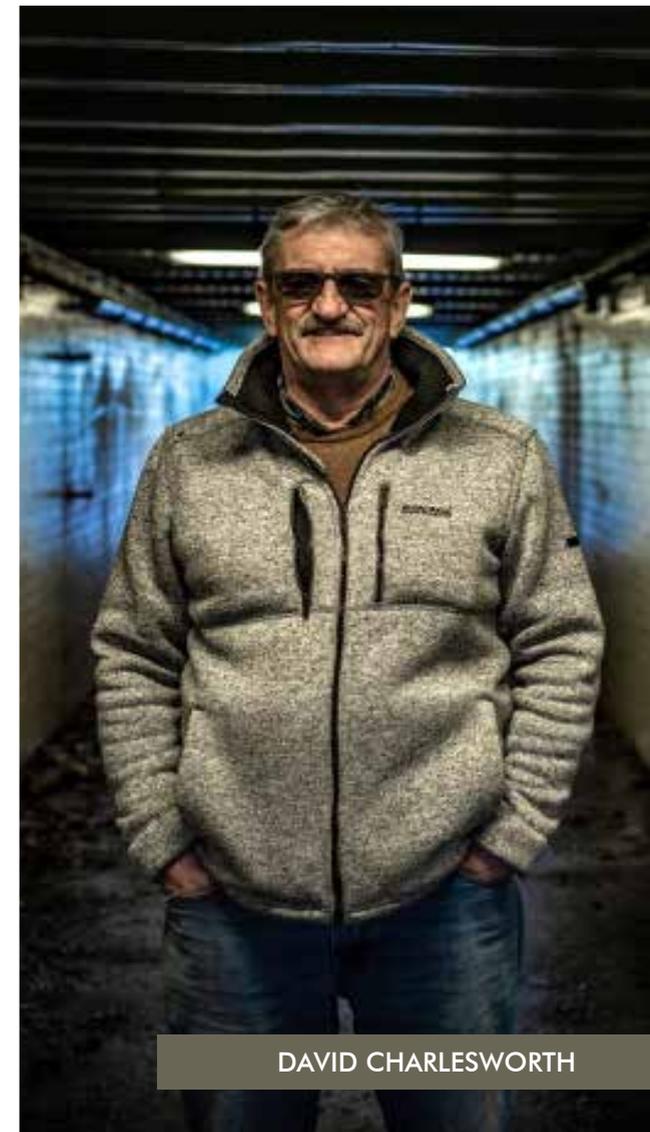
'This is my first incumbency,' he says. 'My vision for my ministry is to "love God" and "love your neighbour".'

'The way that plays out is shaped by context, by the people you minister alongside and to. It's about encouraging everyone to think about the difference Jesus makes to their everyday life, and to be authentic.

'I'm keen to encourage people to see that they're already really well connected – as much as you should see the church as family, it shouldn't be your only contact.

I encourage people to pursue other interests. Be involved in music, in a book club, because of your genuine passion for piano or literature.

No one is an island. They're already in the



DAVID CHARLESWORTH



MARION BLAKELY

business of being an ambassador for Jesus, it's just a matter of being conscious of it.'

As well as playing in a brass band, David Charlesworth has chaired a local political party and owns two motorbikes. 'These give me opportunities to be open about being a Christian,' he says.

'My inspiration comes from the Ethiopian eunuch. The disciples had instructions to stand on the road. They were invited into the chariot. In our culture it's important that people can see you for what you are, then invite conversation.'

Keith Howick, a patent and trade mark attorney, agrees. 'I think it's very important that people make up their own minds. There has to be an opportunity for people to explore. Then they can have a think, learn more, decide for themselves. Look for conversations where there's an opening.

Sometimes there's an opportunity to drop church into conversations, which sparks questions. If you drop something in, something might come back.

'I was on the Board of Directors of the International Trademark Association. There was an event with 10,000 people. They held a reception for first-time attendees. It was quite daunting for people to come.

'I got talking to a young trade mark attorney. We finished up having had a very deep faith-based conversation. She said, "That's the last thing I expected at something like this!"'

Marion Blakely is an accomplished pianist. 'I think music is a way of expressing one's faith,' she says. 'I want to do it well, for God. I feel that it's a gift I've been given and therefore want to share it with others.

As well as accompanying children and students for music exams and playing for church services, Marion plays for groups like the Red Cross and the Blind Club – familiar songs, with conversation in between.

Afterwards, she says, people come up for a chat. 'They say, "I feel so much better. I really enjoyed your playing and what you said." It's a combination of things, a love of people.

'I think people respond if you're smiley, happy. People will smile back. Sometimes people look worried, but then you smile at them and their whole face changes. It opens the way for a conversation.'

For Hazel Koungoue, conversation is a big part of both faith and life. 'I work with elderly people,' she says. 'I offer care to the community. Everyone is within walking distance from where I live. It's because of my faith that I started my job.

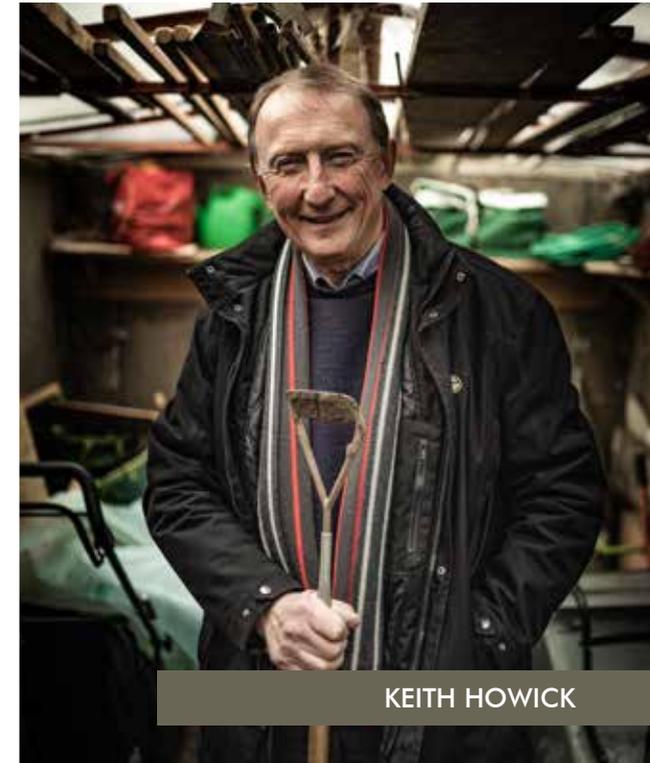
'I've sat with families as people pass away, when a granddaughter has passed her GCSEs, when a child is getting married. I feel incredibly privileged to be doing this.

'I talk to people about faith all the time, and to their families, because I sense that God has sent me there. They are under no illusions about who I am, or whose I am. I talk about how God orders my steps, how he makes the load a whole lot lighter.

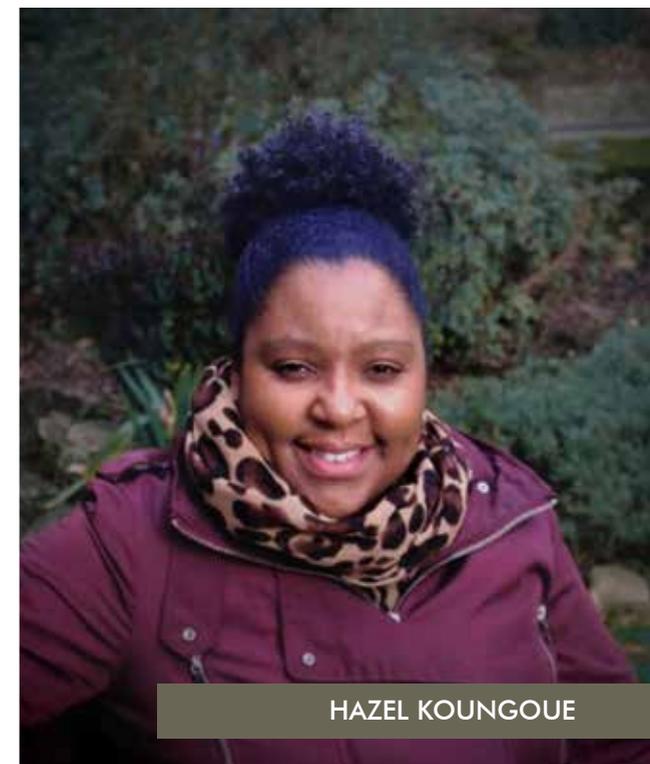
'Evangelism is a big deal for me. Get to know Jesus! Get to know the man Jesus. What he did on the cross is for all of us. At least get to know something about him before writing him off. It's good to find out. People won't know unless we tell them.'

Everyday Faith is an initiative across the Church of England to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday.

For supporting materials and reflections visit: www.churchofengland.org/everydayfaith



KEITH HOWICK



HAZEL KOUNGOUÉ



CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

"This is where we planted it" says Maria, proudly pointing to a young and healthy-looking sapling.

Standing in the churchyard of St Mary, Bromley, the new addition is a Rowan tree, which was planted by the church as part of the Woodland Trust's 'Big Climate Fightback' initiative; a fight against climate change, one tree at a time.

Maria Staines is the church's eco-champion, and the tree planting is just one of numerous steps St Mary's Church is undertaking to reduce their environmental impact and ensure they become more energy efficient and sustainable.

Inside the building they have just installed a new energy efficient lighting system, while their weekly café uses minimal packaging: milk is delivered in glass bottles from the milkman, and they've made the switch back to using ceramic cups and metal cutlery, instead of polystyrene and plastic.

"I've got a particular interest in the environment and how we can cut our carbon footprint and live more sustainably as a church." says Maria, who now sits on the church's decision-making body, the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

"Any project that we're considering, we now try to think, 'how can we make it a more sustainable option?'"

One example is when the church needed to replace some lampshades. Instead of buying new ones from the shop, they put out a message on the church's social media, asking anyone with unwanted lightshades, to bring them in.

They soon received all they needed, providing a much less wasteful, if eclectic, look.

"There is a pack produced by the Eco Church initiative, which we have been using for our inspiration. It covers lots of different aspects like energy usage, the environment and the land around the church, and what we do as individuals at home.

"It's been a really good and helpful way for us to identify what we can work on and it's given us lots of ideas."

St Mary, Bromley, is not alone in its green endeavours.

"People have lost that association with growing things and eating. They think a

"WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LOOK AFTER GOD'S CREATION AND AS CHRISTIANS, IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT WE CAN ACT."

packet of sprouts from Asda is how it happens."

Lesley is one of the volunteers involved in the Edible Ebbsfleet garden at St Peter and St Paul, Swanscombe.

Among the raised beds that now encircle the church hall's car park, Lesley is taking a break from some winter digging, along with fellow volunteer and church member, Lorna.

Edible Ebbsfleet is a community initiative supporting local residents to develop a series of small-scale food growing initiatives along local streets, parks and gardens to promote education on the health benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables.

For the church, it's also part of their understanding of their responsibility towards the environment. Swanscombe is one of two churches in the area, along with St Mary, Greenhithe, to have a garden as part of the scheme.

"The fact that we're encouraging people to come and pick produce when we put a notice up on social media or in the church paper saying, 'the beans are ready to pick now', it's getting that connection going again."

For the Vicar of St Peter and St Paul, the Rev Mark Hurley, getting that connection going again, is important on several levels:

"The environment is a very key issue at the moment. Something we're faced with, particularly in an urban setting, is how do we infill our land? Through this garden, by connecting people back to creation, I am sure we in some ways touch the creator."

Back at St Mary, Bromley, Maria says that, like many, their church is at the start of a journey, but that together small steps can make a big difference:

"Someone said to me the other day, 'Can't we just pray to God and he will make it all better and rescue us?'"

"Well yes of course we can pray, but it's also really important that we use our abilities, our resources, and our initiatives to do something about it. We have a responsibility to look after God's creation and, as Christians, it's really important to



LESLEY, LORNA WITH REV MARK HURLEY ST PETER & ST PAUL, SWANSCOMBE



MARIA STAINES, ST MARY, BROMLEY

remember that we can act."

Both churches feature in a series of six films about environmental projects taking place in churches across the Diocese. The series is a response to the national Church's #LiveLent: Care for God's Creation campaign.

Watch the films and find out more about work taking place in the Diocese on the environment at: www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/environment/

BECOME AN ECO CHURCH

IN 10 EASY STEPS

**“It becomes ever clearer that climate change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face.”
(Archbishop of Canterbury)**

Across the Diocese, we believe that responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God’s creation.

We’re encouraging as many churches as possible to sign up to become an Eco Church and you can help!

Eco-Church is a fantastic initiative helping churches celebrate what they’re doing to

care for the environment and decide what to tackle next.

Through a free online survey and supporting resources, churches are asked to reflect on five keys areas of their life as a church: worship and teaching, buildings, church land, community engagement, personal lifestyle.

Based on your answers, you can become a gold, silver or bronze award-winning church. Here are our top tips for how to get started.



1. Visit the Eco Church website
www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk
2. Talk to your vicar for support and approval to register your church.
3. Find others to join you on your church’s Eco Church journey.
4. Discuss Eco Church with your PCC and obtain its approval and support.
5. Register your church online
- no pressure to do anything else at this stage.
6. Meet with others who are also on the Eco Church journey to get some inspiration.
7. Print the survey. Review the questions.
Ask others for help.
8. Answer the questions online as best you can and plan what else you might do.
SUBMIT!
9. Ask your vicar to promote God’s creation from the front.
10. Celebrate your award.



ENDING DOMESTIC ABUSE TOGETHER

Through a series of local events, parishes across the Diocese have been raising awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and highlighting the local organisations and agencies available to support victims, perpetrators and their families.

It's a cold, wet day in November, but a man's voice on a PA system is calmly but insistently cutting through the gloom.

His message to the shoppers on Chatham High Street that day is that domestic abuse is a taboo that must be broken and that, if you are a victim or a perpetrator of such abuse, there is support you can access; change can happen.

Peter Williams, from the Kent Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP), is just one of a number of support services, alongside members of the local church, brought together by the Diocese of Rochester in the high street, to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse.

The event was one of a number supported by local churches across Kent, Medway, and Bromley and Bexley, as well as by St George's C of E School, Gravesend, and St Edmund's Living Well, Centre in Dartford, to mark White Ribbon Day on 25 November - a global day of action to end male violence against women. It also coincided with the United Nation's 16 Days of Activism Against

Gender-based Violence, which ran from 25 November to 10 December.

For Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, who is leading the Diocese of Rochester's support of the White Ribbon Campaign, speaking out about domestic abuse, is an ongoing commitment:

"From estate agents and hairdressers, to doctors and churches, these are places where someone affected by domestic abuse might see information about a helpline, which might set them on the road to getting the help they need."

"In the UK, two women a week are murdered by their current or ex-partner. One in five women have experienced sexual assault.

"Behind these figures lies a whole growing body of threatened violence in online communication towards women, some of which is extremely dark and hostile.

"This is totally unacceptable."

The White Ribbon Campaign invites men in particular to make a promise never to commit, excuse, or remain silent about male violence against women.

However, it also recognises that domestic abuse can occur in many different situations and take many forms: in same-sex couples, by women against men, from physical and mental abuse, to financial and coercive control.

At an event in St John's Church, Hildenborough, guest speaker Ryan Hart is talking about the coercive and controlling behaviour that his father inflicted on the family.

It was abuse which culminated in the murder of Ryan's mother and sister in broad daylight, using a sawn-off shotgun. His father then committed suicide.

Addressing the room full of people, he speaks passionately about the key part that day-to-day services and business can play in providing sufferers of domestic abuse with the opportunity to find the help they need:

"From estate agents and hairdressers, to doctors and churches, these are places where someone affected by domestic abuse might see information about a helpline, or have the 'space to talk', which might set them on the road to getting the help they need."

Back on Chatham High Street, church campaigners are giving out information to members of the public, signposting them to victim support agencies and national helpline numbers.

For Caroline Clarke, Community Engagement and Social Responsibility Advisor for the Diocese of Rochester, spreading the word about the diversity of local support is vital work that churches can be part of:



"While women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than men, the White Ribbon UK campaign does recognise that violence can be perpetrated by women against men, in same-sex couples, and in other settings too, which is why we signpost to organisations that can help people in a variety of situations."

For emergency support please contact: Rape Crisis: 0808 802 9999 / Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327 / Galop - LGBT+: 0800 999 5428 / Women's Aid: 0808 2000 247

To find out more about the work taking place across the Diocese on this issue, please visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/mission/domestic-abuse/ or contact Caroline Clarke on: caroline.clarke@rochester.anglican.org / or on Twitter @communitycaro

CLIMATE CRISIS

Caring for the Earth is a more vital issue than ever. Extreme weather events, failed harvests, mass species extinctions. Creation is crying out. Environmentalist and theologian, Dr Ruth Valerio, asks – how will we, as Christians, answer?

I always find it perplexing when people dismiss the Bible as irrelevant to current issues. The way we treat Creation is one of the crucial topics of our time, and the Bible addresses it from its very first lines in Genesis 1.

This year I've been privileged to help shape the Church of England's #LiveLent campaign with Archbishop Justin Welby.

Through weekly themes shaped around the biblical account of creation, we explore the urgent need for us to value and protect the abundant life God has made.

Why?

Well firstly, our God is a creator God! Unlike other ancient Near Eastern creation narratives, the Genesis account of the formation of the world does not present it as a by-product of the violence of warring gods.

Instead, we see an act of love by a God who creates in order to be with and enjoy his creation and share its wonder with them.

We can sometimes forget this miraculous truth, with the focus so often on God as saviour at the expense of God as creator, when actually the two cannot be separated.

Secondly, we only have to look around us to know that we live in an amazing, wonderful world.

Did you know, for example, that trees are social beings, sharing food with their own species using vast underground networks of roots?

They also communicate above ground using chemical signals to warn other trees of predators who are after their leaves!

The Bible is full of songs and declarations of praise to God for the work of his hands in creation:

"Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit.." says Psalm 148:7-12)

Taking time to reflect on the world and beyond can surely only leave us in wonder at just how incredible our God is and how precious the world is.

But alongside the wonder we see in creation, we also know that it is unmistakably wounded. The earth was damaged by the sin that entered the world through human beings, and it continues to be plagued by its legacy today.

In my work with Tearfund I see all too clearly the impact of climate breakdown on people in poverty, affecting health, food provision and security.

There is a serious and urgent need to address the way we are using and abusing our planet if we are to prevent further wounds being inflicted on the world God created and loves, and that we rely on.

So, if we know that God created a beautiful world that he wants to save from the effects of sin, we as the church must consider our role.

God's mission is to restore the earth to its former glory and bring his kingdom here, and we are called to live prophetically and sacrificially, making decisions that will protect this most precious gift from further harm.

We must be distinctive from the world around us and take the lead in making changes in our lives that acknowledge the wonder and the wounded nature of the place we call home.

The good news is that many churches are - the sleeping giant, as I like to think of it, is waking

up! All around the world churches are taking action, from Huay Mai Duei Church in Thailand getting involved in waste collection in their area where rubbish is a big problem, to church projects right here in Medway and Kent.

And each of us in our churches can do the same and take responsibility for caring for God's creation, standing in the GAP that has been left between how things should be and the world we see, by **Giving** our money, **Acting** to look after the earth and calling on governments to do the same, and **Praying** to see the whole world restored.

So what will you do to care for God's creation, not just during Lent, but beyond?

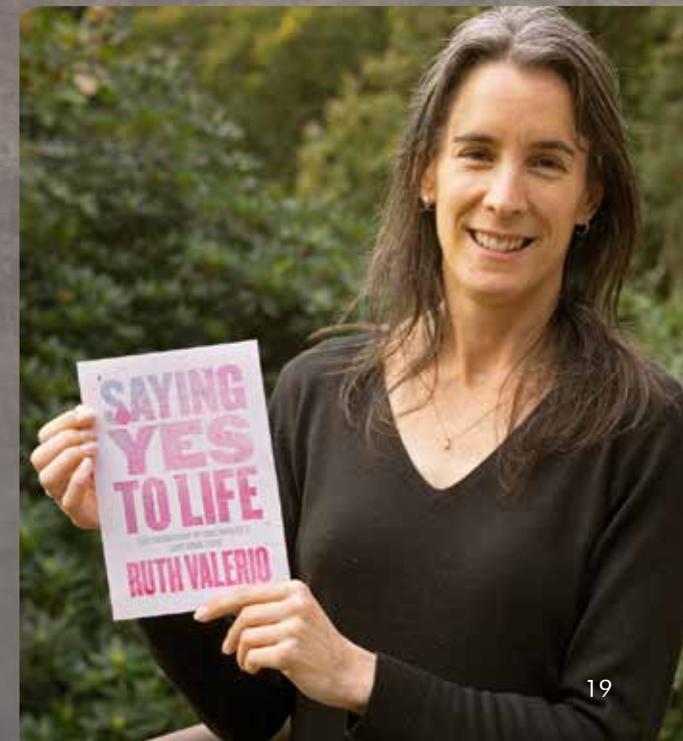
"... There is a serious and urgent need to address the way we are using and abusing our planet..."

Dr Ruth Valerio is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at the Christian relief and development charity, Tearfund.

Her latest book, 'Saying Yes To Life', is perfect for individuals and groups to think, reflect, pray and be challenged together about the environmental issues that are facing the world (www.spckpublishing.co.uk/, £7.99)

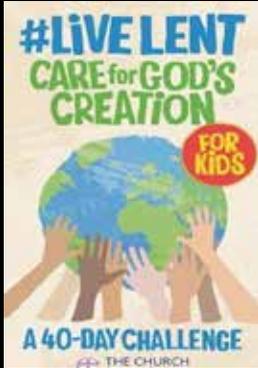
Ruth has recently been installed as Canon Theologian at Rochester Cathedral, at which she gave a talk about the themes in her book.

A live stream of the talk can be watched again on the Diocese of Rochester Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CofERochester/



Lent is a time when Christians reflect and prepare for the celebrations of Easter, following the example of Jesus, who fasted for forty days in the wilderness. Across the Diocese this year, we'll be particularly thinking about our impact on the environment and the lasting changes we can make. Why not join us on the journey?

LENT: LIVELENT - CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

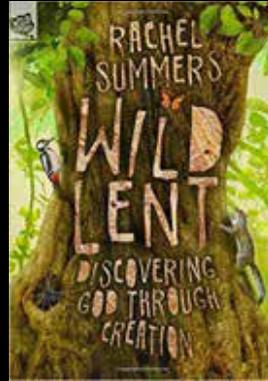


This 40-day challenge focuses on the environment and includes daily 'bite-size' readings, reflections and actions to challenge us to live in a more just and sustainable way. You can also sign-up online for daily reflections delivered straight to your inbox. Beginning on Ash Wednesday (26 February) a version aimed specifically at children and young people is also available.

Price: Single copies (£1.99/Children: £1.50) and bulk orders also available.

Visit: www.churchofengland.org/livelent

DISCOVERING GOD THROUGH CREATION – WILD LENT



Wild Lent will change how we all experience and think about Lent. Forget staying indoors, it's time to get up close and personal with creation and discover God through nature. Make a shadow clock, have a sunrise breakfast walk, walk barefoot . . . and share God's creation with others.

Author: Rachel Summers

Price: £7.99

ISBN-10: 1848679351

ZERO WASTE DOC

Offering simple, environmental sustainability advice for busy people, Natalie, is a Christian doctor living in West London. She began her zero-waste journey after a trip to India where she witnessed first-hand the impact of pollution. She believes that busy-ness doesn't exclude you from making a positive impact on the environment by living lighter.



Visit: <http://www.zerowastedoc.co.uk/>

Instagram: zerowastedoc



Did you try Veganuary this year? Using plant-based foods to replace meat and dairy is suggested to be one of the easiest, cheapest and most effective ways for us to all cut our carbon footprint. Tom Micklewright leads his church's 'Green Team' at Christ Church, Tunbridge Wells. A vegan for 12 years, he offers his top three plant-based swaps for healthier, more sustainable meals:



COW'S MILK FOR OAT MILK

Rating 5*

Your choice of plant milk is endless, from the well-known soya (the grandfather of plant milk!), to newcomers like almond, rice, cashew, and my favourite, oat.

Oat can be grown in the UK, is the kindest to our planet, using only a third of the emissions of dairy and a tenth of the land and water, and is creamy and delicious.

Your supermarket will have a range of prices starting at £1 for own-brand, but the most delicious is Oatly Barista Edition. Superb in coffee and tea, but a little pricey at £1.80 a litre.



QUORN VEGAN MINCE

Rating 4*

A simple swap to make your traditional spaghetti bolognese with the same great taste but cheaper too. Just replace it with this high protein, low fat, planet-friendly version and watch as your friends and family can't tell the difference!

You can buy it chilled or frozen, from all big supermarkets for £2 per 300g.

Tom's final tip:

A third of all food is wasted in the UK. You can cut your food waste whilst getting to know your community using the free OLIO app. It lets you find local people and businesses who want to give away or collect food, so nothing goes to waste. Free on Android and iOS.



GREGGS VEGAN SAUSAGE ROLL

Rating: 5*

The pastry is so flaky and springy, the sausage so chunky.

As a friend of mine who tried one said, 'Who knew plants could be so tasty?'

Super delicious and kind to the pocket at only £1 - a true vegan fast food heavyweight!

TOP EVENTS NOT TO BE MISSED



THE MUSEUM OF THE MOON

Rochester Cathedral 12 February - 4 March

Museum of the Moon is a touring artwork by UK artist Luke Jerram. A full programme of lunar inspired events will take place at the Cathedral alongside the artwork. Entry to the Cathedral during the day is free but there will be a charge for additional activities and evening openings. Visit: www.rochestercathedral.org



WILBERFORCE WALK

14 March, 9.30am
Keston Parish Church

A 4.5 mile pilgrim walk to raise awareness of Modern Slavery. Walking through Downe to the Wilberforce Oak. All ages and abilities welcome. Email: caroline.clarke@rochester.anglican.org



'SEVENTEEN CHURCHES - The Churches Conservation Trust in Kent'

Wednesday 18 March, 2.30pm
Lenham Community Centre

A talk by John Vigar, author of the book 'Kent Churches' and well-known local ecclesiastical historian. Tickets £8.00 to include tea. Please contact Jill Rutland On 01732 843248 or email jill.rutland@hotmail.co.uk to purchase tickets.



MESSY FIESTA

Saturday 21 March, 9.30am to 15.30
St John's Church Centre, Meopham

A day of inspiration, celebration, conversation, creation and learning for everyone involved in Messy Church. Tickets £5.00 plus the Eventbrite fee. To book visit: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/messy-fiesta-2020-tickets-9206629978. For further info contact Carol at carol.kitchener@messychurch.org.uk



INSPIRE AND EQUIP

23, 26, 28 March, 2pm-4pm
Various locations

Join us for one of these free, two-hour sessions that will explore simple and creative prayer activities for everyone, and to suit a wide variety of styles of worship or prayer. Find out how you can get involved in Thy Kingdom Come in 2020. To book visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/thy-kingdom-come



MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PILGRIMAGE WALK

Saturday 4 April, 11am
Rochester Cathedral to Aylesford Priory

Part of a series of five, fortnightly walks designed to support men from all walks of life. Starting on Saturday 4 April and finishing on Saturday 30 May on the Canterbury Diocese Day of Prayer and Pilgrimage. Please contact Rev Chris Penfold on: teamcjp1@gmail.com



MARRIAGE PREPARATION DAY

Saturday 2 May, 9am to 4pm
West Kingsdown

Getting married? Enjoy some quality time together and get essential advice on how to have a great marriage. Modern, relevant and inspiring. No group work - all discussions private. £25 per couple. For more information, alternative dates and venues visit: www.marriageprep.co.uk



PALM SUNDAY & EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday 5 and 12 April, 10.30am to 11.30am
Rochester Cathedral

The Blessing of Palms and Procession - with at least one donkey - will meet in the High Street at La Providence. Followed by special children's Stations of the Cross (King's Orchard), donkey rides and hot cross buns.

Easter Sunday, join a Children's Eucharistic Service in the Ithamar Chapel, followed by an Easter Egg hunt. Visit: www.rochestercathedral.org/



ONE TO ONE

Claire Langridge joined the Diocese's Safeguarding Team last September as a new Safeguarding Adviser. Now she's settled into the role, we caught up with her to find out more about this vital area of work.

Can you tell us a bit about your role in the Diocese?

I work with other members of the Safeguarding Team, to develop and deliver our safeguarding strategy across all aspects of the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Rochester.

Ensuring that allegations of abuse are appropriately referred to the statutory authorities is central to my work. I also provide advice and support to survivors and victims of abuse, as well as ensuring that those that pose a risk are appropriately supported and managed.

I like 'getting out and about' around the Diocese and am looking forward to meeting many more of the clergy and volunteers who we support and advise.

It sounds busy!

My role is extremely busy, but very varied and rewarding and no one day is the same!!

I've recently also been asked to lead on Safer Recruitment & DBS, Spiritual Abuse, and Risk Assessment & Management within the Diocese, so I am looking forward to contributing to policy and practice around these areas.

Are there any challenges ahead that you see?

There will always be challenges within this demanding role. However I view this in a positive light, as it will enable me to develop new skills, knowledge and working practices.

The Safeguarding Team is going through a period of transition; Janice Keen retired as Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor at the end of last year. But with Greg Barry, the new Lead Safeguarding Adviser, I am looking forward to contributing towards the development of policy, practice and procedure around Safeguarding within the Diocese.

What were you doing before you joined the Diocese?

I worked for many years within the Prison and Probation Service supporting and advising offenders on rehabilitation. I have also worked in both primary and senior schools as a school-home support practitioner, advising and supporting hard to reach families, focusing on education and attendance.

We heard you also worked for the military.

Yes, I worked with military personnel to advise and support those that were due to leave the Armed Forces and prepare for civilian life. The role gave me the opportunity to work with personnel at all

levels, from administrative staff to Military Base Commanders.

So, what do you like to do to relax?

Cooking takes me to my comfort zone!!

What's your signature dish?

Definitely, Spicy Chicken Lasagne, Beef Madras or a good old roast dinner!

Who have you been particularly inspired by?

I take inspiration from many things. I am particularly inspired by some of the people that I have supported in the past and their fortitude through incredibly difficult times.

Have you got a favourite quote?

I really like this one – 'The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.' - Helen Keller

Are you musical at all?

Little known fact is that I used to sing many years ago for a music producer. I recorded an EP in my early 20's and did a live PA at The Orange Club in Kensington! My children still don't believe me!!

Who would you most like to meet?

Too many people to list!

Have you experienced sexual, physical or spiritual abuse in the Church?

WE VERY MUCH WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
You will be taken seriously and there is support we can offer

Please call in confidence either our Safeguarding Team on 01634 560 000 or the NSPCC on 0800 80 20 20

Visit www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/post-case-review/
The Church of England in Medway, North and West Kent, and Bromley and Bexley



It was in 2017 that Sarah Mann says that God started to ‘unsettle my roots’. Feeling restless in her job as a SEN teacher in a local primary school, it was conversations with God that led her to take up the conductor’s baton for The Music Man Project in Kent and Medway.

“For a number of reasons, each day had become a real slog. I remember saying to God ‘This can’t be right, there must be more than this!’ and prayed, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do? If it’s to stay – give me the strength, restore my joy and enthusiasm... but if not, show me what it is you want me to do’.

That same week, quite out of the blue, a colleague suggested I look up the Music Man Project, a music education service for people with Learning Disabilities, saying “You’ll love it!”.

Music Man is about recognising that everyone has the potential to achieve – regardless of ability. We want to give people with learning disabilities the same opportunities as mainstream musicians and empower them to see what they CAN do, rather than focus on their limitations.

Excited by what I read, I felt compelled to contact the Music Man Project that evening and ask whether there was a project in Kent. I was amazed that within an hour I’d had an email back, saying

there wasn’t, but they would love one!

That set the ball rolling. It was a big step – however, God is always ahead of the game.

My faith in Jesus is at the centre of everything that I do; it inspires my thinking, my actions and the things that I say, and the Music Man Project speaks to all of this. Through it, I can be Jesus in the community – shining for Him, showing love and compassion, building confidence and spreading a bit of joy through music and song.

One parent told me that she comes away each week ‘buzzing after her daughter has been at the project’ and that it must be all the positive energy.

God has certainly led me to this point in my life. It’s like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, where each of my skills, experiences, people I’ve met and jobs that I’ve had in the past have come together and are useful in running this project. Nothing is wasted!

For more information about the project visit: www.themusicmanproject.com

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The egg that shares the Easter story

The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010 with the support of churches and schools.

Ten years on, the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects.

Nearly £275,000 has been donated to charitable projects with Fairtrade Premium fees paid to farmers allowing them to buy everything from school books and solar panels to providing fresh water.

To order call 01948 831 043 or visit www.realeasteregg.co.uk

PRAYER FOR CREATION

Thank you, God for making this wonderful world.

Be with us this Lent and help us to love you and to care for your creation.

Thank you, God for the light and energy that we use every day.

May all countries act swiftly to reduce energy use and combat climate change.

Help us make small differences where we can.

Father, help us to follow your Son Jesus in loving and serving other people, and in caring for the animals and the earth you have entrusted to us.

Amen

