

# All Saints' Church Eco-Bulletin

## December 2022

Doom & Gloom or “Strength for today & bright hope for the future?”

### **Environment Group update**

Following the Serving All Saints' Fair recently held, we are delighted that we have “signed up” 4 new members. We are meeting together this month and will be devising our forward action programme. If you would like to be involved but did not sign up, you will be most welcome to join us. A few people have indicated their support but felt unable to commit to join the group at present. If you are in this category do get in touch as we are sure there will opportunities to give occasional specific support which will require less of a commitment but be nonetheless invaluable. Speak to Clive, Kathy or Felicity. Contact details are at the end of this bulletin.

In the February sermon series and elsewhere we have sought to emphasise the need for the whole Church to embrace the vision and forward programme to achieve and maintain A Rocha Eco-Church status and to arrive at Carbon Net Zero by 2030 as per Leeds Diocesan recommendations. We will keep you fully informed and hope to produce Eco-Bulletins on a more regular basis. We would welcome your suggestions, feedback, and contributions on any aspect of this wide reaching and essential programme. There are a number of things we can do as individuals within the scope of own lifestyles/feelings on social justice issues etc and this will be a focus as we work to becoming an Eco-Church. If you would like to know more about either of these programmes do look at the websites [www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk) and [www.leeds.anglican.org/environment](http://www.leeds.anglican.org/environment)

### **COP27 Egypt**

According to those present there were loud cheers for the announcement of the agreement in principle to establish the new Global Loss and Damage Fund but there are ongoing concerns that the wealthier developed countries, who have created the great majority of the harmful emissions, will not provide the necessary funding required in a timely year by year basis. This agreement is aimed at directly helping developing countries hit by major climate change impacts. The agreement brought back to some leaders memories of the £10billion/year fund established at the 2009 Copenhagen summit. One leading politician commented that the past decade has seen a history of broken promises. Some good news though is that certain leaders present recognise that COP28 must come up with specific ways of raising the necessary funds and suggestions were made at COP27 of how this might be achieved via the World Bank and the IMF mechanisms.

The commitment to a 1.5degrees limit on global warming achieved in Paris and ratified in Glasgow (COP26) remains in place but with a recognition that we are currently on course for at least 2 degrees of global warming unless the pace of introducing all the solutions which exist is radically enhanced. Much work is needed to achieve the 1.5degree limit. The good news is that according to a Professor of Climatology speaking recently on BBC Radio 4, the world has the technology to deliver -we need to apply it.

### **COP15 – Montreal 7<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> December**

A brief explanation of COP numbering may be useful here! Last month was the 27<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties or COP27. This month we have the 15<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Conference of the Parties or COP15.

Originally planned to be in China, COP15 was moved to Canada and rescheduled due to Covid. Although this is a separate conference to the Climate Change one, there are huge linkages between biodiversity loss and climate change. The world negotiates biodiversity targets only once a decade so targets will be agreed now for the rest of the 2020s.

Biological Diversity or Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth from the tiniest bacteria to the largest mammals. The air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat all rely on it. The earth is one ecosystem with all its parts and species (including humans) interdependent. The late scientist James Lovelock called this Gaia.

In addition to climate change, world biodiversity faces four further threats, namely changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of natural resources, pollution and invasive species.

“From the Amazon to Australia why is your money funding earth’s destruction?” is a recent article in the Guardian newspaper (30<sup>th</sup> November 2022) which states that there are three sectors of industry that appear to be the most responsible for the collapse of ecosystems and loss of wildlife. These are fossil fuels, fisheries and farming. In 2021 governments directly subsidised oil and gas production to the tune of \$64bn ((£53bn) and spent a further \$531bn (£433bn) keeping fossil fuel prices low. The latest figures (from 2018) for global subsidies for the fisheries sector, amounted to \$35bn/year, over 80% of which goes to large scale fishing. Farming subsidies amount to \$500bn, the great majority of which pay little regard to environment protection.

The expansion of livestock farming is one of the greatest (possibly the greatest) cause of biodiversity loss and, according to the same article “now threatens some of the richest habitats on Earth, among which are forests in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Columbia, Brazil, Mexico, Australia and Myanmar. Meat production could swallow 3million sq. kms of the world’s most biodiverse places within 35 years. That’s almost the size of India.” Bear in mind too that one third of the food produced is wasted. We cannot continue to exploit the natural world in this way. A case in point is the continued destruction of the Amazon Rainforest – the so-called lungs of the earth- for beef production.

#### **Sir Davis Attenborough asks – “can we create a planet that provides a home not just for us but for all life on earth?”**

Many thousands of species of animals, birds, insects and plants are at risk of extinction. Numbers and statistics are not everybody’s cup of tea, but the examples below, just a sample of many, many more, may illustrate how dire the situation has become.

- Giraffes, key pollinators and seed dispersers as they browse from tree to tree, now on the ICUN red list as vulnerable. Numbers declined by almost 40% from 1995 to 2017 and have no doubt declined further since then.
- Sumatran rhinos declared extinct in Malaysian Borneo
- In the UK (one of the least diverse countries in the world) a 50% decline in woodland butterflies since 1990; 40% decline in moths; 15% of species threatened with extinction; 90% of ponds disappeared during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; a 216cm rise in sea level since 1900. Data from the 2019 State of Nature report.

Click on this link <https://youtu.be/iHqys2hW6cQ> to see Chris Packham’s video about the dire straits of the world’s biodiversity.

It is a fact that earth’s survival depends on the survival of all other creatures, small and large. Humans might have evolved to the top of the chain but we cannot survive alone and in isolation. We must take responsibility for ensuring the survival of all creatures and plants and create a planet that can provide a home for all God’s creation.

There are many success stories which prove that the tide can be turned on species loss and these are to be celebrated. But time is running out. There are ever more species requiring help and protection as the human population continues to increase and dominate the world, exploiting it to its own ends.

Finally, apologies for a rather lengthy bulletin but there was a lot of information to impart.

We wish you all a very merry Eco-Christmas and a New year filled with Eco-resolutions! Suggestions to follow in the next bulletin.

From the Environment Group.

If you have any comments, queries, suggestions or would like to become involved with the group [please contact [clivebrookplanning@outlook.com](mailto:clivebrookplanning@outlook.com) [kathrynallen82@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kathrynallen82@yahoo.co.uk) or Felicity [fjb01@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:fjb01@globalnet.co.uk)

If you would like to support a world charity instead of giving or receiving presents this Christmas, you might like to consider The World Land Trust which buys land all over the world to provide safe habitats for threatened species. The brainchild of John Burton who sadly passed away recently, the charity is endorsed by Sir David Attenborough who says that 'The thing to do is to facilitate local people owning and having responsibility for their land and the success of the WLT in bringing this about has been phenomenal. It's got that firmly in focus and that is why I support the WLT.'

Please pray this week and next for a willingness to set challenging targets, for promises to be kept and for the world to co-operate together as nations gather for COP15.

And finally, a prayer

God of creation, who loves all he has made and all that has evolved,  
Open the eyes of your people,  
That your love might be reflected in our care for the planet,  
Though Jesus Christ who walked this earth and called us by name.  
Amen

The Rt Reverend Nicholas Baines

Bishop of Leeds