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Dear Friends

“One God and father of all, who is above all and through all and in all”.

I wonder, are you like me just tired of Covid dominating everything? From our discussions on what we can and cannot do, the comparing of the different approaches to the lifting of restrictions, and the words of the experts on what may or may not happen. I am afraid to say that every day I am looking to see if our proposed holiday destination is green, amber or red and wondering if we should try and book an alternative holiday just in case. I really feel for parents and families as the summer holidays are upon us and already many local resorts are either booked or hiking up the prices more than they usually do!

As we come to terms with living through, and with, the aftermath of a pandemic, we look to various sources of information to try and make sense of it all. I do try my best to keep up with the news. I have an app for the Guardian on my phone which every now and again pings with a news story. I never seem to get the opportunity to read all the stories and only ever seem to read the Covid updates, so I am now making a conscious effort not to be too obsessed and to try and watch the news at 10 in the evening. I try and give my attention to other events that are happening in our world and look beyond the distraction of Covid and confusing debates. There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a huge impact and continues to dominate our lives, if we let it, but it can also act as a distraction from other issues that we face.

On Sunday, we heard of how flash floods in London, Belgium and Germany have had a devastating effect on the lives of many. In China, a typhoon has struck; in India, flooding has led to mud slides; whilst, in Iran, there are riots due to a lack of water. In the western parts of the USA, fires have ravished the landscape. Life is being affected everywhere by extreme weather. Here, in the UK, we have experienced, over the last week, a heat wave that has certainly made our lives uncomfortable to say the least and sleeping impossible, but our brothers and sisters across the world have experienced far worse. You don't need to be a scientist or an expert to see how climate change is affecting our lives.

Tonight, when writing this, there was a report of how scientists and experts are proposing a meeting prior to the long-awaited climate change conference, which is due to take place in November this year in Glasgow. Climate change affects all of us and our children, who will inherit our actions that we have failed to take to protect our world.

Whilst we have been speaking of the 'new normal' in our post-Covid world, for those involved with climate change the new normal has come to mean extreme conditions such as temperatures three degrees higher than recorded and flash floods. We are facing many crises all the time, both individually and corporately.

So, how do we as the body of Christ, the Church, respond? As Christians we are called to be stewards of God's creation. There are many initiatives already in place and I know many of you already make a huge effort to recycle, up cycle, and go as green as you can. Many of us are individually doing our best to combat the issue, but how much more could we do if we pool all our efforts together?

The Church in Wales has said that they are committed to reducing carbon emissions and have shown support to the eco-church initiative run by the A Rocha organisation. All six dioceses are registered as eco-dioceses, with Llandaff being awarded a bronze medal, but currently, out of the 224 churches here, only 38 have registered with 15 being issued with awards. We are working towards being carbon neutral by 2030 which isn't that far away. In November, which also isn't that far away, we as a church community will be invited to think afresh about these things and there will be a day of prayer across the diocese.

The pandemic has taught us many things. One of which is how important creation and care for creation is and the positive effect it has on the way we feel. In fact, it's just one of those things that sustains us. We have learned a renewed appreciation for nature and its impact on our wellbeing.

This project was launched in 2016, so it is not new, but, as we see the effects of climate change more and more each day, maybe now is the time to respond not just individually but collectively as the body of Christ. As we become a Ministry Area and pool our resources together, this can only be advantageous in our response.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, we hear St Paul's thoughts on how the body of Christ, the Church community, can function not just efficiently but as a community that responds to the needs of the world around us. This letter, which would have circulated in the region of Asia Minor in the ancient world and was thought to have been written towards the end of his life, holds those typical Pauline thoughts. The opening chapters begin with reminding the people of God's blessings. Just as Moses reminds those in exile that it is God who provides for their needs, something which in times of great trouble can escape our memory. Paul in his beautifully poetic writings speaks of unity for the whole of creation. Then Paul uses the well-known example of how the body can work in harmony. For Paul it's not about personal triumph or about competition, it's about the oneness and wholeness that we share in Christ. We are stronger together where our weaknesses can be transformed, and division has no place.

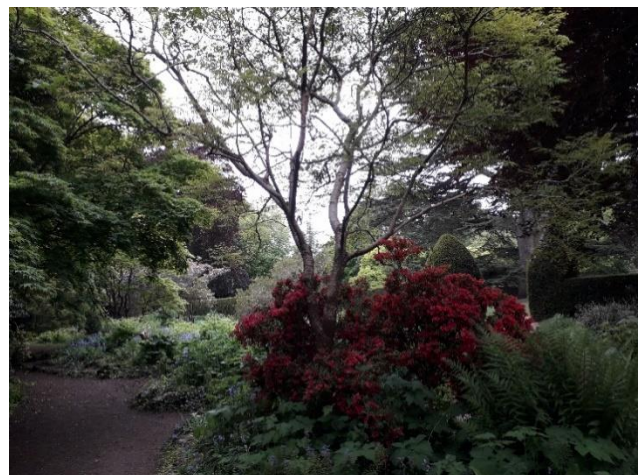
We often think that there is little we can do to affect something as big as climate change. This initiative is exactly that, a way of making small changes sustainable over time. Of course, when it comes to our buildings, there are many things that we may be unable to change, but we should start somewhere. Small changes all count. The initiative provides some practical ideas and encourages all of us to be a part of that change. To make a difference that we all benefit from God's creation and as his people.

We may be recovering from a pandemic but that is a good time to take stock of what's important to us

Could it be that as we become a Ministry Area and our body becomes stronger, we could look towards how we can make those small sustainable changes, that can together have an impact on our community and in turn our world? Just food for thought as it were, as we are part of the body of Christ in this place and look to ways forward to make Gods love visible in our world.

Love in Christ

Belinda



The beautiful grounds at Insole Court