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| **From Eco-church to Eco-Diocese** **by John Green and Cathy Rhodes** |

*The Diocesan Development Day 10th October 2020 (on Zoom)*

Zoom is a great leveller - over 150 people from across the Diocese gathered on-line for the annual Development Day but for once, those on the eastern edge of the Diocese didn’t have to travel to join in, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the event! St John’s Ranmoor was well represented at this event and the final act of worship was led by Matthew and Cathy with the choir of St.John’s singing “The Lord is my shepherd” by Goodall. ( link below)

The highlight of the day was a presentation by Ruth Valerio, the global Development Director for Tear Fund, the Christian aid agency. She wrote this year’s Archbishop of Canterbury Lent book - “Saying Yes to Life”, which looks at the six days of creation from an ecological perspective - sea, sky, land, plants, animals and humans.

She asked us the question: Why should we care? Her answers were:

-For the sake of people living in poverty, as we worship a God of justice calling us to lift people out of poverty

- For the sake of the Earth, which is precious to God - mass extinction of species is a reality now.

- For our own sake, as we recognise how our wellbeing links to the wellbeing of the natural world.

- For God’s sake, the foundational reason flowing through all these, with threads of our calling to care for creation and support social justice

She likened this to an unbreakable triangle linking us to God and the land and reminded us that the we are earthly creatures. Adam comes from the Hebrew word “adamah” meaning the earth.

*How should we and the church respond?*

From her global experiences Ruth reported that the church is awakening to climate change and described church environmental projects in Thailand, Australia and the USA. One third of the world’s population is Christian so there is great potential for change. There is a link below to a Tear Fund video about an Ethiopian project.

When answering this question – Ruth quoted Micah 6:8 - “act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God” The practical steps we can take are in

- Teaching - about environmental care, biodiversity loss and our global ‘neighbours’

- Giving - who can we support and are they responding to climate chaos? Where does our money go?

- Praying - for the **world**, as well as it’s people, alongside taking action.

- Speaking out - about re-building our economic model, ‘rebooting’ our world

- Living it out - shopping, food, travel, energy use, waste and plastic reduction

We all know this devastating pandemic has meant understandable delays and cancellations affecting local and national events highlighting the Climate and Ecological Crisis. The hope is that we can now build on the momentum from the Development Day. Bishop Pete announced that Sheffield is registered as an Eco Diocese as part of the A Rocha Eco Church programme, and the Diocese plans to rebook the cancelled Eco conference for June 2021.

In the meantime there is much to do with our own Eco Church projects so please look out for opportunities to get involved in the coming months and have a look at the links below. Things can seem hopeless and there is anxiety and fatigue all around and within us. But to ‘live out’ our response to the climate and ecological emergency and ‘act justly’ there are things we can do now, with the help of God, so please keep praying.

*Things we can do now: these links will be on the church website and in mailings*

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Learn from and be inspired by the **Tear Fund video** about Ethiopia, and signing the Climate Coalition declaration calling for a greener recovery at:

[https://www.tearfund.org/about you/action/the world rebooted/](https://www.tearfund.org/about%2520you/action/the%2520world%2520rebooted/)

Calculate your carbon footprint using the **WWF carbon footprint calculator**, to learn how we may tread more lightly on God’s earth.

https://[footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/](http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/)

Join the global **Count Us In project** at <https://steps.count-us-in.org/>

This records your savings of carbon emissions in an accumulator. There are 16 areas for action

that include flying less, walking more and cutting waste. The website can add your savings to the accumulator that, as of 14th October, 12,788 people are taking 53,107 steps to reduce their emissions saving 727,086 kg CO2 so far this year. We will be writing more about this in next month’s issue.

For more inspiration watch beautiful pictures of our area and listen to our amazing choir in their virtual recording of Goodall’s ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ at:

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsChurchRanmoor/>