

FiND Leader February 2017

Time for Action

The Paris agreement on Climate Change agreed at the end of 2015 came into effect on 14 November 2016. Under the agreement, all governments that have ratified the accord, which includes the US, China, India and the EU, now carry an obligation to hold global warming to no more than 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. That is what scientists regard as the limit of safety, beyond which climate change is likely to become catastrophic and irreversible.

Countries have put forward commitments on curbing carbon emissions under the agreement, but a recent report found those pledges would see temperature rises significantly overshoot the threshold, with 3C of warming. Environmental groups have urged governments to do more. In the UK Brexit has dominated agendas and what little the government has said about future policy is far from encouraging. It is time for local groups to take action and surely faith communities are in a good place to take a lead. In the Anglican Church it is our Fifth Mark of Mission “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth”.

Twelve months ago *A Rocha UK* re-launched its *Eco-Church Award Scheme* as an online resource and encouragement to local congregations to take action. <http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>. Many parishes up and down the country including a number in this diocese are now using this scheme. In the autumn *A Rocha* also launched *Eco-Diocese* which they describe as an initiative to encourage diocesan-level engagement with *Eco Church*, and promote parish participation in the scheme. The Derby Diocesan environmental group encourages the adoption of both initiatives – **so please take action now**. Look at the website and make a beginning.

On Sunday 5th February, to mark the first anniversary of the re-launched Eco-church, there is a vision for as many local churches as possible to observe ‘Green Sunday’. It is the first Sunday after Christmas and Epiphany when green hangings and vestments are used in the liturgy, so why not use these as a visual aid of the world around us that we need to preserve. Special liturgical resources have been prepared by Canon Matthew Rushton the Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral. They include materials that can be used at services of Holy Communion or Morning and

Evening Prayer. There is also an Act of Commitment which could be used as a spur to action. <http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/introducing-green-communion/>

If you are looking for other actions to take Christian Aid are offering training evenings for their Big Shift campaign calling on banks to take their investments away from companies that produce fossil fuels: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change/the-big-shift-resources>. Operation Noah have a similar campaign called Bright Now but are also encouraging Christians to be much more engaged in the political debate; it is well worth looking at their website www.operationnoah.org.

The Diocesan environmental group believe that a just response to the climate crisis is foundational to our Christian faith. We encourage you to begin to act now.

Terry Thake
Chair, Derby Diocese Environmental Group

This article is published by Derby Diocesan Mission and Ministry Team. If you would like to receive this publication by email please contact us at rita.brierley@derby.anglican.org or 01332 388684.