

on the regularity of the seasons and have no cushion to protect them against drought, flood or unusual fluctuations in temperature.

Still there are some who expect that one day soon a technology will be announced which will put it all right. But the sober message is that the disturbance of the world's climate is under way and cannot be stopped. The best we can do is stop making it worse. We can change only three things: change the way we live, change the way we help the victims and change our understanding of wisdom.

It has often been explained that the burning of fossil fuels releases gases into the atmosphere which change the way its temperature is kept in balance. Dr Jim Lovelock, a scientist whose book *The Gaia Hypothesis* shows how the earth and its atmosphere behaves as if it were one huge living creature, regulating and balancing the composition of gases in the air in order to maintain its life. His theory was dismissed by some at the time, but it now is incontestable: Our modern economy and cultures are changing the atmosphere on which life on earth depends.

Even if the world stopped burning fossil fuels tomorrow, climate change would continue to happen for at least the next century.

In the Bible, Pharaoh needed the wisdom of Joseph to prepare for seven years of famine. We have other means of predicting disaster. It means that in order to prevent large scale starvation, we will need to double at least our giving for world development and famine relief for the rest of our lives. If we do nothing, or just carry on doing what we have done so far, all the benefits of relief and development so far will be swept away. This is a hard and uncompromising message, but we must be prepared to hear it.

This change we need realise today is the hardest and will be the most unpopular; we need to change our idea of wisdom. In some ways it is a return to a former wisdom which has been eroded and abandoned. But it is also a new way of combining the best of the old and the new.

Jesus said that when a teacher of the law has become a learner in the kingdom of Heaven, he is like a householder who can produce from his store things both new and old (Matthew 13:52). It won't be easy because there is a huge industry which is dedicated to proving to you that what I am saying now is wrong.

I like the version of Psalm 23 which begins 'the Lord's my shepherd; I have everything I need!' but they want to convince you that you need more things. Satisfied people don't make good customers; their aim is to convince you that you need to buy things you never knew you needed. God knows we all need some things and will need to buy most of them. The wisdom is in keeping the buying of things in its proper place. Jesus taught us that if we make our priority the reign of God and the right relationships which come from that, all the rest will come to us.

There are still some people who question whether climate change is really happening, but they are becoming fewer. There are more people who see it happening but think there is nothing we can do about it.

I believe we need the wisdom of God in this regard more than ever. God's wisdom is proved right by its results, but if we wait for the results of our present folly, it will be too late to save the earth. If we do nothing, in fifty years our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will blame us for our selfish short-sightedness.

Let us all renew our commitment to care for the environment, to care for those who are already suffering most from climate change and to choose the wisdom of God rather than the foolish wisdom of this world.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Leonard

CLERGY

Vicar

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Saints of the Month: June.

- 9th St Columba. Founder of Iona and evangelist of many areas of Scotland. An Irish monk, he was described by his biographer Adamnan as "loving to everyone, happy-faced, rejoicing in his inmost heart with the joy of the Holy Spirit".
- 20th St Alban. First martyr of Britain and erstwhile contender for patron saint.
- 24th St John the Baptist. Contrary to the usual custom, this, his principal feast, commemorates his birth; his death by beheading is also observed, on 29th August.
- 29th Sts Peter and Paul. According to tradition, Peter was martyred in Rome under the persecutions of the emperor Nero. Paul was martyred earlier, also at Rome, but the date is unknown.

Prayer of the Month

Father all powerful, Christ Lord and Saviour, Spirit of love. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love.
One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in your image, close to the world your love brings to life.

SERVICES

All Sundays

8.00 am Said Eucharist
10.00 am Sung Eucharist

6.30 pm Night Prayer

Tuesdays

7.30 pm Said Eucharist

1st Saturday of month

10.00 am Said Eucharist

CONTACT DETAILS

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All Saints, Upper Norwood

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8th June (Saturday): Music Workshop for children aged 5 to 12 in church, 10 am – 4 pm. The day is free and all children in this age range are welcome; speak to Fr Len for details.

Advanced Notice:

Parish pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady, Walsingham. This is planned for May 2020 with a two-night stay, full board. Please talk to the churchwardens if you are interested.

Our regular 'Sunday School':

Small Saints: Every Sunday (depending on staffing) for children up to 10 yrs.

All Saints' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Important Notice

If a parent is considering asking about a Foundation place for their child at All Saints' school they need to let Fr Leonard know well in advance.

Eligibility has to be agreed with Fr Leonard before completing an application form at the school, and is dependent on church attendance.

ALL SAINTS PCC

At the APCM on 28th April, our new PCC was elected for 2019-2020, including the churchwardens. Below is a list of all the members for this year:

#Fr. Leonard Marsh
#Roland Browne
#Chris Chikwendu
#Brenda Coop – PCC Treasurer
#Arabella Coleridge - Churchwarden
#Maureen Crooks
#Mike Hedges - Churchwarden
#Martyn Harris
#Geoffrey Ogbuagu – Deanery Synod (ex officio)
#Bron Panter – PCC Secretary
#Jonas Wontumi
#Tim Wright – Deanery Synod (ex officio)
#Bernadette Ganley
#Kerin (Tom) Knight



THE NEWSLETTER



ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Norwood

June 2019

The Vicar's Monthly Letter

Dear friends,

I can remember when the word 'environment' was a technical term used only in geography, when few people had heard the word 'ecology'---let alone knew what it means---and to call somebody 'green' wasn't exactly a compliment!

When I learnt French, I realised that the root meaning of environment is what you see around you. Despite modern television news, many people only take notice of a small part of what surrounds them.

The crisis we are constantly reminded of today first came to my attention when I read *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in the 1970s. Ms Carson was a lonely voice, warning that if we kept on spraying our crops with pesticides which not only killed agricultural pests but also the birds which feed on them, the day would come when there would be no birdsong left, and trees would bud in a Silent Spring. Hers was a prophetic voice which was dismissed by the agro-chemical industry but a movement began which challenged the major powers. Until then, most people believed that modern technology was always a good thing and anyone who thought otherwise was just being old-fashioned.

But the movement grew, and its prophets were largely secular. One ecologist actually blamed the growing crisis on the spread of Christianity. As long as people believed that divine spirits lived in every tree and river, some said, they treated them with respect. But when Christian missionaries came and taught them that there were no such spirits, only one God in heaven, this new teaching gave them permission to cut down the trees and pollute the rivers without fear.

The criticism may have been valid but the answer was not to stop spreading the Christian Gospel. It was to make sure it was the entire Gospel and the Bible, which includes the affirmation of the Psalmist that the earth is the Lord's and everything that it contains.

That statement underlies the Hebrew sense of the importance of the land where, at its best, land was not bought and sold as a commodity, but used for a while by those who would take care of it.

In Israel, the people did not own the land because it all belonged to God. There are still some places in the world today, considered primitive by most Westerners, where individuals do not own land any more than we own the air we breathe. It works when everyone recognises their share in the responsibility for caring for the earth together.

Today, the threat of major damage to the earth is far greater than the extinction of songbirds. If we need more evidence of rapid climate change, it is there on the news every week. Christian Aid has reminded us that the effects of this rapid change fall mainly on the poor. Subsistence farmers depend more than most