



## Welcome to the first edition of Ely Cathedral's Environmental Newsletter.

The big news is that Ely Cathedral is now a silver award winning Eco Church! The award covers five areas:

- worship and teaching
- buildings
- land
- community and global engagement
- lifestyle

We're already at gold level for worship and teaching and land, so our next challenge is to move forward on the other areas.

RENEW is the group heading up this work on behalf of the congregations, the staff and the wider Cathedral community.

RENEW came into being on 3 April 2019. From 2018, a small group of people had met on the first Saturday morning of the month to pick up litter around Ely. Canon Vicky Johnson, with Cathedral staff, then led two hugely successful Science Festivals, out of which came a 'green communion' and prayer services for the environment and as a response to climate change.

Recognising the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Canon Vicky, with activists from the congregations, started the process which has resulted in our silver award.

This is fundamental to our Christian faith. The fifth mark of mission of the Anglican communion is:

**To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.**

RENEW now has an Executive Group, who lead the five sub-groups, and who meet with Cathedral staff three times a year.

This Newsletter is one way in which we can keep everyone informed about what the challenges are and how we are working towards meeting them. We will also include ideas about how we can all be part of sustaining and renewing the environment.

**This is too important to leave to just a few people. It requires us all to do our part.**

## Today is Earth Day

**The first Earth Day was held on 22 April 1970, 50 years ago.**

50 years ago, Americans realised that they did not need to accept that air pollution was the 'smell of prosperity'. In 1962, a New York Times bestseller, *Silent Spring*, had raised public awareness about the effect that industrialisation was having on all living creatures and the environment, and of the inextricable links between pollution and public health.

A junior senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson, and a congressman, Pete McCloskey, recruited a young activist, Denis Hayes, to lead a teach-in on college campuses. Hayes saw the potential of this, and built it up into a national event, encompassing a wide range of organisations, including faith groups, representing concern about oil spills, air pollution, toxic chemical and sewage pollution, the impact of pesticides, and the loss of wilderness and the extinction of wildlife.

And so came about the first Earth Day. 20 million Americans – farmers and students, urban and rural communities, business and labour leaders, Republicans and Democrats, young and old, rich and poor – demonstrated their concern about the impact of industrial development on the earth and on human health through rallies and demonstrations.

The result was the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and a slew of environmental laws.

**Twenty years later, in 1990 - Earth Day went global.** Denis Hayes organised a major campaign for the whole planet, mobilising 200 million people in 141 countries. This provided a platform for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

**Earth Day 2000** celebrated the new millennium with worldwide activities in 184 countries. **By 2010**, however, it seemed as if the world was going back to the bad old days pre-1970. Climate change deniers were encouraged by a well-funded oil lobby, politicians whose horizon didn't stretch past the next election, and a divided environmental community.

### **So where are we today, in 2020?**

In the midst of a global pandemic, it could be easy to think that we have more important matters to deal with, than worrying about environmental concerns and climate change.

### **That would be quite wrong!**

The pandemic is making clear how connected we are with humans across the globe. Not only that, most new infectious diseases come to humans from animals – both wild animals and livestock. That should not be a surprise, given that we too are animals, part of the created order.

In our rush for economic growth, we trample roughshod over the earth, neglecting other life forms.

Our current crisis is due in no small part to our failure to respect God's creation.

Climate change means that natural habitats are changing, and species are moving to new habitats, creating opportunities for new diseases to arise where populations are susceptible to unfamiliar bacteria and viruses.

Our health is tied up with our environment. There is no existence for any of us unless we live in an environment which supports it.

*Information about Earth Day from <https://www.earthday.org/history/>*

## What do we need to do?

The five stages to disaster are:

1. Deny that it's happening.
2. Blame someone else for it.
3. Claim that it's not that bad.
4. Claim that solving the problem will cost too much.
5. Spread gloom by saying it's too late anyway, and that nothing we do will make any difference.

Stage of Denial	Coronavirus	Climate Change
<b>Stage 1 It's not happening</b>	"The Democrats are politicizing the coronavirus ... This is their new hoax" - Donald Trump	"It's a hoax; I think the scientists are having a lot of fun." - Donald Trump
<b>Stage 2 It's not our fault</b>	"China is to blame because the culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that, these viruses are transmitted from the animal to the people" - Sen. John Cornyn	"China does not do anything to help climate change. They burn everything you could burn; they couldn't care less" - Donald Trump
<b>Stage 3 It's not that bad</b>	"One day like a miracle it will disappear" - Donald Trump	"[The climate] will change back." - Donald Trump
<b>Stage 4 Solutions are too costly</b>	"We cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself." - Donald Trump	"I think the climate change is just a very, very expensive form of tax." - Donald Trump
<b>Stage 5 It's too late</b>	"It is going to spread further and I must level with you ... many more families are going to lose loved ones before their time" - Boris Johnson	"The climate apocalypse is coming. To prepare for it, we need to admit that we can't prevent it." - Author Jonathan Franzen

*Taken from The Conversation, 21 April 2020*

**Climate change IS happening.**

**It IS our fault, as much as it is the fault of many others.**

**It IS that bad.**

**Not solving the problem will be even more costly.**

**If it is too late, then the human species is doomed – we have to act now.**

**Future Newsletters will help us to focus our efforts to make a difference.**

<https://www.elycathedral.org/social-justice/social-justice-and-the-environment/renew>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/668996277287429/>