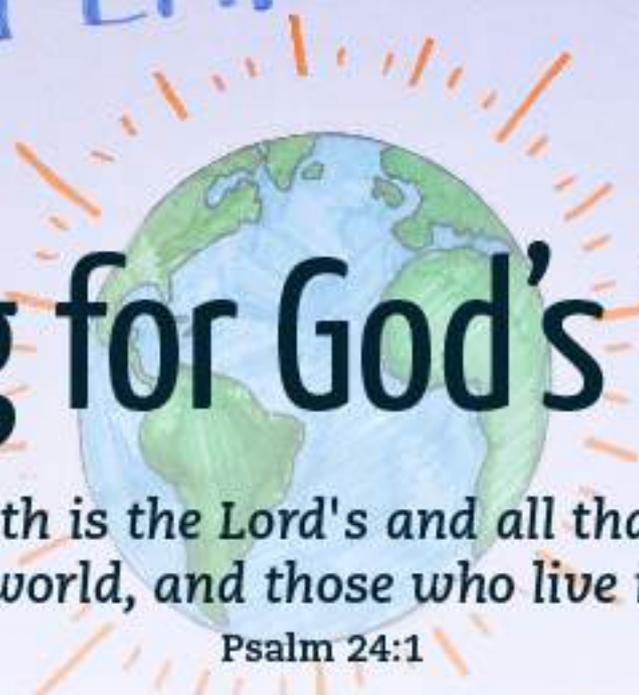


St John's Lindow

# INTOUCH

Summer 2019

THERE IS NO  
PLANET B



## Caring for God's World

*"The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it"*

Psalm 24:1

The topic for this magazine is 'Caring for God's World'.

Since the very beginning God gave humanity the responsibility of caring for the world he had created. We were '*made in his image*' (Genesis 1:27) – not sharing a physical likeness but sharing his rule; God has put us in charge over the rest of creation. Since humanity's rule derives from God it should draw its shape from him. So when God said '*fill the earth and subdue it*' (v28) that was never a mandate for exploitation and destruction. Our rule over creation was to be marked by loving care, with the best interests of the subject(s) as a primary concern, like God himself.

Tragically ever since humanity's rebellion against God (Genesis 3) that image is flawed; humanity's rule that was once perfect harmony is now damaged and deranged, marked by frustration, toil and sin. The evidence of that upon the world is clear to see – not just the threat of climate change, but the spoiling of the earth's resources more widely. Vast areas that were once fertile are now deserts or dustbowls (deserts have increased by 150% in the last 100 years); our rivers, lakes and oceans are badly polluted by humanity's waste.

In our 'Theology Corner', Beth Saunders gives several coherent reasons why Christians are to be 'carers of creation'. Indeed those who believe the Bible have stronger reason for doing so than any environmentalist – the world has

been placed in our care by God himself!

But let's be clear that the environmental damage of today is only one symptom of a deeper problem (war, poverty, broken relationships are other symptoms of the same problem).

The fundamental problem is that humanity has turned its back on the God who made us and is no longer following the maker's instructions. Only the good news of Jesus Christ that '*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ*' (2 Corinthians 5:19) is the answer to that underlying problem of our world. Only that message has the power to change the human heart.

Christians not only have the strongest reason to care, but also, by God's grace, the only answer to the real problem. Everything else is just sticking plasters – good and helpful, but not tackling the underlying disease.

Yours,  
Simon



## SKETCHY THEOLOGY

BY BEN HOLLINSHEAD

**"SHE HAD BEEN REDUCING HIS CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR YEARS!"**



Marc Hollinshead: So Pauline, tell us a little about yourself.

Pauline: Well Ray and I have always been wildlife people. Every morning we feed the birds and field mice outside before feeding ourselves! We also look after our own plants.

Marc: That sounds wonderful! I know you've always been very much in tune with nature in South Africa as well.

Pauline: Oh yes! Ray worked over there for many years and the different scenes we saw there were beautiful. God's beauty is everywhere. When just looking at the mountains we were in awe of God's creation and used to think "How has God planted those mountains there?" It's amazing.

Marc: It sounds like a beautiful place. What would you say was your favourite part of South Africa?

Pauline: Our special place is definitely Kruger National Park. You can so easily see God's work there as you see the animals in their natural habitat. Something so beautiful and it was all by God's hand! Ray and I were also part of a camping club and we used to go out once a month to different places, some of which we would never have seen by ourselves. I feel so privileged to have been part of something like that.

Marc: I'm getting jealous just thinking about it! What an amazing life it must have been. What brought you to Christianity in the midst of all this?

Pauline: A good friend of ours sadly passed away, and at the funeral the verse of Matthew 23:33 spoke so clearly to me. I remember it was November 1977 and I was looking out of the window and saw an actual beam of light coming to me! It was then when I realised the Holy Spirit blessed me with God's love.

Marc: What a beautiful way to come to faith. Did you have a good church out in Africa?

Pauline: We were incredibly blessed at Grace Baptist Church. Pastor Merrington took us under his wing and we basically became family. The teaching we got there definitely put us in good stead!



Marc: Brilliant news. It makes me wonder what took you away from all of that!

Pauline: Well we didn't actually leave through choice. Due to my mum needing support, my sister asked us to come and help and we eventually had to leave South Africa behind. It was the hardest decision we ever had to make. However, we were lead to St Johns and haven't looked back since!

Marc: I can see that South Africa will always hold well cherished memories for you. What's your fondest memory of St Johns?

Pauline: Funnily enough it was when Simon was ordained! I remember him saying it was God who placed him in that position and it was all his work, and I just thought "Yes!" We found an amazing evangelical church and having watched so many grow, we feel like a family and completely at home.

Marc: I'm so thrilled for both you and Ray. You've really blessed us all!

Pauline: Well the Lord has truly blessed us! We've seen his beautiful creation and think it's incredibly important to take real care of it. All of my strength is found in Him and I'll continue to wake up every morning and thank him for his Earth.

Marc: I think that's a wonderful way to end our time. Thank you, Pauline, for taking the time to share some of yours and Ray's story with us.

# MISSION UPDATE

*Rob, Claire, Barney & Toby Law*

Firstly, a big thank you! Writing as your newest mission partners, we'd love to take this opportunity to thank you for your gospel partnership we've already shared in the past few months.

We are moving to Naples in Italy for an initial period of 3 years to join a small local church in the task of evangelism. The church, named Chiesa Evangelica Neapolis, was started by Mark and Jane Oden in October 2016, and it is Italian-speaking and for Italians.

It is still June as I write this, so we're speaking in the future, but our departure day has shifted forward recently and is currently planned for the week beginning 19th August – so we may be in Naples already as you read this!

We visited St John's in March and were so touched by the warm welcome we received from you all. We'd love to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves a bit more as a family and to share the vision behind our move to Naples.

Claire was a Social Worker for Adults until moving into looking after the boys full-time when Toby was born and Rob teaches English as a Foreign Language.

We have two boys; Barney will be 3 by the time we fly out to Naples, and Toby will be nine months old. Settling Barney well in an Italian-speaking school will be one of our main concerns in the first few weeks and months.

As you might imagine, it is extremely hot in Naples. In fact, the day before I wrote this, I heard it was 40 degrees: So if you feel hot this summer on holiday, or on a boiling summer's day in the UK, we will be somewhere that is most likely even hotter!

Those of you who have visited the area may well



remember how bright it is in Naples, as well as hot. The sun beats down on the city. As you look across the Bay of Naples towards Vesuvius, Pompei and Herculaneum, the water shimmers. Naples is bright; full of life, full of light.

Spiritually, though, Naples is a city in the dark, in desperate need for Jesus, 'the light of the world' (John 8:12). Nominal Catholicism and superstition are widespread.

One reason why Rob will work full-time from February 2020 is because as a family we want to model every-member ministry. A significant number of churches in Italy function with much emphasis on the pastor doing the ministry and the congregation primarily as recipients. We'd love at Chiesa Evangelica Neapolis to model a church where we all minister to each other like members of a body (cf 1 Corinthians 12).

We hope that gives you a flavor of who we are, where we're heading and why.

Much love in Christ from the four of us,

Rob, Claire, Barney and Toby

# ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE? WHY BOTHER?

I wonder if you, too, have been fascinated to see the impact a 15 year old Swedish schoolgirl, Greta Thunberg, has had on popular thinking on climate change? First, Greta protested outside the Swedish parliament building every Friday instead of going to school. Soon she was joined by other young people and very quickly prompted a global movement. Subsequently, Greta has spoken to some of the most influential groups in the world including the UN Climate Change Summit, global leaders at Davos and the R20 world summit and even to our MPs in the House of Commons as well as being nominated for a Nobel prize.

Why has Greta ‘school-striking for the climate?’ She says: ‘Why should I be studying for a future that soon will be no more when no one is doing anything whatsoever to save that future?’

Yet how much more compelling a reason have we, as Christians, to take action in this climate emergency. God made the world and everything in it. He saw that ‘it was very good.’ and instructed his people to take care of it. But we’ve failed to care for the planet and now the UN tells us we have just 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe.

God has also called us to love our neighbour and this involves ensuring justice for our neighbours in poorer countries, those who have done the least to cause climate change, but who are already suffering the devastating consequences.

Paul Bodenham, chair of Green Christian, says ‘After the declaration of emergency in Parliament, it’s now

‘all hands on deck’ – government, business, civil society, faiths, everyone. We urge our fellow Christians to ensure that their church communities grasp their mission, courageously and creatively. Humanity faces profound trouble, and sacrificial choices are necessary if we are going to salvage a future. With faith those choices may just become possible.’

Here at St John’s we’re planning to work with our local community organisations such as Transition Wilmslow and hope to set up a regular Repair Café in the Church Rooms and hold events such as a plastic toy exchange before Christmas. We’re working towards our Eco Church Bronze Award and much of the recent work on our buildings contributes to that. We’re already using environmentally friendly cleaning products, serving Fairtrade, palm oil free refreshments, using recycled paper (and reducing paper use), we’ve built a bike shed for us and our community and we’re exploring other opportunities to reduce waste and plastic.

In addition, as God’s people, we will be asking ourselves how we can make changes in our own lives, how we can honour God individually by caring for the environment. But we recognise how complicated and sometimes contradictory information about action on climate change can be, so soon we’ll be setting up information sharing sessions for ourselves and our local neighbours to support one another in our efforts. In the meantime, perhaps consider some of the suggestions in the middle pages of this magazine.

# PRACTICAL TIPS

A few things we can all consider and do to take action on climate change

## 1 PRAY FOR WISDOM AND ACTION

- For world leaders in their decision making on the climate emergency
- For our local community as we come together to look to make a difference
- For our neighbours in the developing world where effects of climate change are impacting already
- For Christians around the world as we look to live distinctively and take a lead in caring for God's earth
- For ourselves as we commit to honour God good stewardship of the earth and in all areas of lives

## 2 EAT AND DRINK MORE SUSTAINABLY

- Buy seasonal and local vegetables and fruit
- Eat less meat and dairy
- Try some of the wonderful veggie recipes – and get ready for our church family veggie cooking events and our next bake off – for veggie dishes
- Give packaging back to supermarkets
- Buy fair trade and sustainable food – ensure fair payment for growers and discourage further deforestation of the planet
- Carry reusable coffee cups and water bottles - takeaway coffee cups generally are not recyclable and add to the problem of plastic waste

## 3 BUY LESS AND BUY TO LAST

- Buy less! Recycling is great, but it's better to reduce what we buy and reuse/repurpose things before we look to recycling as a solution
- Buy things that will last much longer and can be mended
- Avoid buying cheap clothes and check out the local charity shops

*“Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation.”*

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

# 4 FIND OUT MORE

- Come along to one of our information sharing events where we pool our ideas and grapple with questions about reducing waste, single use plastic, transport, energy and food miles.
- Watch BBC TV catch up:
  - Sir David Attenborough 'Climate Change – The Facts'
  - 'War on Plastic with Hugh and Anita'
- Read a bit more around the issue – see Althea's book review for a start.  
Other books to consider are:
  - Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living by Nick Spencer
  - Mike Berners-Lee 'There is no Planet B – A Handbook for the Make or Break Years'

# 5 MAKE A FEW CHANGES AT HOME

- Switch to an energy provider that is as close to 100% sustainable as possible
- Line dry rather than tumble dry whenever possible
- Avoid pesticides in the garden – they kill bees and other essential pollinators
- Look for alternatives to wet wipes – 90% contain plastic
- Explore services such as Freegle and Olio where we can find new homes for things we no longer need.

# 6 HAVE A THINK ABOUT TRAVEL

- Try walking more, cycling, skateboarding or any other kind of person-powered travel for short journeys
- Consider different ways of commuting: Is car sharing a possibility or public transport?
- If flying somewhere, consider offsetting your carbon emissions online

*"We are the first generation to understand, in full and terrifying scientific detail, that we are testing our world to destruction. And we are the last [generation] to be able to do something about it. If we do not act, our children and grandchildren will not be able to sort out the mess; that is the problem."*

# RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

News & updates from the  
St John's church family!



**The wedding of Camilla Scott & Jonathan Travis.  
Ros & Stephen, with the rest of their family,  
Ben, Emily & Charles**

**Simon & Dede and family enjoying  
the benefits of their recent birthday gift!**





**A crazy barn dance with international students!**



**David & Wendy Watts' golden wedding anniversary with members of their family**

## As Long as the Earth Endures: The Bible, Creation and the Environment

Edited by Jonathan Moo and Robin Routledge

This is the book for all those saying “isn’t this just a secondary issue for Christians?” However, it is definitely not a bedtime read. It is a collection of papers from the Tyndale Fellowship Conference July 2012. As expected in a discussion between academics, they don’t all agree, in fact the afterword discusses how we may live with this disagreement.

Alistair McGrath sets the scene with the doctrine of creation, and reminds us that theology is about seeing things as they really are, as God sees them. The second paper reflects on God’s intention for creation, as expressed in Genesis 1-2, and our responsibility, as God’s representatives, to maintain what God has initiated. In Chapter 3 Robin Routledge looks at the Fall, the significant change in the created order which has come about because of human sin.

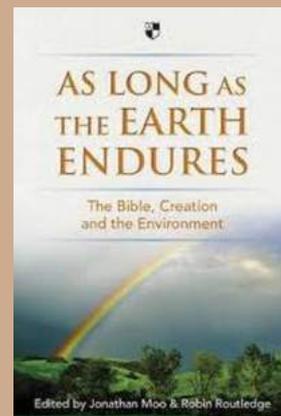
The current disorder is a frustration of

God’s purpose, and as creatures in God’s image, we should seek to bring order to the present chaos. Other chapters take the eschatological viewpoint and explore the question of continuity/discontinuity between the present cosmos and the new creation. Continuity would reinforce our responsibility to care for this creation, but others argue for “de-creation” and the transitory nature of the present creation.

If these things concern you, please read it, and let’s all remember “to see things as God sees them”!

Is he happy with the present situation?

It seems doubtful.



## NEW FACES

Say hello to some of the newer members of St John’s!

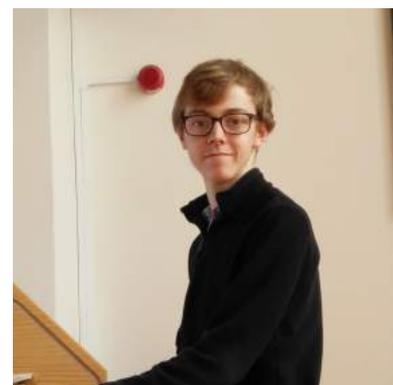


### Megan Dent

After moving away for university and spending a couple of years working in London as airline Cabin Crew I moved back to Wilmslow in September to start my job in Manchester. I currently work as a Paralegal and I am training to be a Solicitor. I joined the Christianity Explored course at St John’s in January and am really enjoying continuing to explore my relationship with God along with the warm welcome and sense of community I have felt at St John’s.

### James Jackson

Hello, I’m James, I am 19 years old and have been coming to the midweek groups here at St Johns for 7-8 years! I’ve just resat a few exams from my A levels and next year I’ll either go to university or get a job. Currently for a job I trade various commodities in mainly Forex markets. In my spare time I enjoy playing the piano and the organ, reading, making things, watching football and playing various sports! If you see me around, feel free to come and say hi!



## Glorifying God through creation care

The Lausanne Movement, founded by the likes of Billy Graham and John Stott, issued their Cape Town Commitment in 2011 and it expressed:

*"If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says 'Jesus is Lord' is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ."*

They are bold enough to claim that creation care is a gospel issue and should therefore be of concern to Christians. Why? I will present five reasons why caring for creation should be a concern of all Christians.

1. The goodness of creation: one of the first things the Bible teaches is that creation is good and blessed, and belongs to God. In Genesis 1 we see creation declared as good before humankind was created. The Psalms are full of expressions of the goodness of creation, Psalm 104 says that creation reveals the glory of God, it belongs to God and it praises Him. All species have value to God, even if they seem irrelevant to us.

2. The Stewardship Commission: Later in Genesis (1:26-28, 2:15) we read that humankind have been given a special task, to rule over creation and subdue it. This dominion is not domination, rather it is to bring into shape, to enable fruitfulness and productivity. We are to mirror the perfect rule of Jesus, a ruler who served.

3. The fallness of creation: In Genesis 3 we see how nature and creation is marred by human sin and this sin affects how we enact God's command to rule over creation, leading to exploitation and degradation. As Christians we know sin is not God's will so we are to fight its effects. In Romans 8 we read that all of creation is affected by the fall and is longing to be free from the bondage and decay that human sin has subjected it to.

4. The restoration of creation: In Romans 8 we read that when Jesus returns, not only will our bodies be redeemed, but nature too. A parallel here can be drawn to Moses in Egypt when the blood of the lamb spread across the doorposts saved not only the Israelites, but also their animals. The account of the flood is very instructive about God's priorities concerning nature. Genesis 6-9 places great emphasis on preserving the diversity of life and we read repeatedly that the rainbow covenant was made not just with humankind, but with every living creature.

5. For our evangelism: Herman Bavinck says, "the world in which humans have been placed leads them not away from God but to God. It is a creation of God, a mirror of His perfections, a manifestation of His ideas." Through creation we can see God's wisdom and power (Romans 1:19-20), His provision (Psalm 104:27-30), His glory (Psalm 19:1-6), His care (Psalm 65:9), His righteousness (Psalm 50:6) and His kindness (Acts 14:17). If creation continues to be destroyed, won't something that so marvellously praises God and points to Him be silenced?

Exercising responsibility for creation should be a task for all disciples of Jesus. In our actions, habits and prayers we should be thinking whether we are glorifying God and honouring the glorious gift He has given us in this earth.



## ABOUT BETH

Beth grew up in the youth groups here at St John's, was a student at Aberystwyth and is now doing a PhD there, looking at faith-based international volunteering and its relationship with social and environmental justice.

# AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME

## Sundays

10am

Lord's Supper on third Sunday

6.30pm

Lord's Supper on first Sunday

## Homegroups

Sept 8	<b>Meeting Jesus</b> Who is this man? Luke 9:18-27	<b>Meeting Jesus</b> Who is this man? Luke 9:18-27
Sept 15	<b>The King's Identity</b> Luke 9:28-36	<b>The King's Identity</b> Luke 9:28-36
Sept 22	<b>The King's Power</b> Luke 9:37-50	<b>The King's Power</b> Luke 9:37-50
Sept 29	<b>The King's Call</b> Luke 9:51 - 10:24	<b>The King's Call</b> Luke 9:51 - 10:24
Oct 6	<b>The Secret of Eternal Life</b> Luke 10:25-37	<b>The Secret of Eternal Life</b> Luke 10:25-37
Oct 13	<b>Harvest Thanksgiving</b> All Age Parade	<b>Too busy to Listen?</b> Luke 10:38-42
Oct 20	<b>How to Pray (1/2)</b> Luke 11:1-4	<b>How to Pray (1/2)</b> Luke 11:1-4
Oct 27	<b>How to Pray (2/2)</b> Luke 11:5-13	<b>How to Pray (2/2)</b> Luke 11:5-13
Nov 3	<b>A Kingdom Divided?</b> Luke 11:14-28	<b>A Kingdom Divided?</b> Luke 11:14-28
Nov 10	<b>Remembrance</b> No Middle Ground Luke 11:29-32	<b>No Middle Ground</b> Luke 11:29-32
Nov 17	<b>Not Religion!</b> Luke 11:33-53	<b>Not Religion!</b> Luke 11:33-53
Nov 24	<b>Whom to Fear?</b> Luke 12:1-12	<b>Whom to Fear?</b> Luke 12:1-12
Dec 1	<b>Christmas Preparations</b> Getting Ready Luke 1:1-25	<b>The Comfort of Hope (1/3)</b> Romans 8:16-27
Dec 8	<b>Birth Announcement</b> Luke 1:26-38	<b>The Comfort of Hope (2/3)</b> 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
Dec 15	<b>Nativity Presentation</b>	<b>The Comfort of Hope (3/3)</b> 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
Dec 22	<b>Carol Service</b> Luke 1:39-56	<b>Traditional Carol Service</b>
Dec 24	<b>Kids Carols (4pm)</b>	<b>Midnight Communion</b>
Dec 25	<b>Family Carols</b>	

Meeting in various homes, on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's work and encourage one another.

### Luke: Meeting Jesus

During the summer our homegroups are linked to our Sunday series.

The groups will begin on 12th Sept and finish on 28th Nov (omitting 31st Oct, half term)

Dates given are for Thursdays (full details published on weekly newssheet).

Additionally, a women's bible study meets at 9.45am on Wednesdays, and a men's bible study meets at 6.30am on Fridays.

### Monthly Prayer Breakfasts

Sept 7, Oct 5, Nov 2 and Dec 7 on Saturday mornings, 8.30-9.45am, Church rooms.

Please join us for the most important meetings we have as a family – this is the powerhouse of the church.

## Special Events

Sept 14	<b>Who Let the Dads Out?</b> Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am	Nov 2	<b>Who Let the Dads Out?</b> 10am-4pm, Manchester
Sept 21	<b>Men's Breakfast</b> Alderley Edge Golf Club, 8.15am	Nov 9	<b>Northern Womens Convention</b> Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am
Sept 27-29	<b>Youth Weekend Away</b>	Nov	<b>Evergreens Lunch</b> Church Rooms, 12.15pm
Oct	<b>Evergreens Lunch</b> Church Rooms, 12.15pm	Dec 14	<b>Who Let the Dads Out?</b> Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am
Oct 12	<b>Who Let the Dads Out?</b> Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am	Dec 14	<b>Nativity from Scratch rehearsal</b> Church Rooms
Oct 13	<b>Visit of International Students</b> Church Rooms, 12pm - 3pm		