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**THE MINISTER WRITES ...****Pentecost Sunday Hope!**

Dear All,

This year, Pentecost Sunday, Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, we hope will be a particularly special day as we are aiming to return to our church sanctuary for worship that day. Having carefully considered our reopening once again, the Deacons feel that this will be a responsible and apt date to work towards. It is also in line with the advice given to us by all the URC Synod Moderators. This hope is, of course, subject to local infection rates remaining low and will involve us following the same rules as in the autumn time last year, but if it is possible, what a wonderful way to mark the birthday of the Christian Church this year as we gather once again to worship God!

I know some of us would love to be back sooner than this; hopefully this target date can still be good news to you, even if it's a few weeks later than you would have hoped. I am also aware that some of us, for very understandable reasons, will be waiting a little while longer before rejoining us in the sanctuary. As ever, we will continue to be as inclusive as possible and there will only be one service each week. The service on the service sheet, distributed before the Sunday will be the same as the service in the sanctuary on Sunday, with the only likely addition being a short family talk most weeks for the children in the church.

Additionally, while we are not yet planning to livestream our service, we do hope that most weeks there will be a video of the service in the sanctuary available Sunday afternoons by email and DVD/CD for those not able to attend. As with all our other videos, the weekly video of our service will be uploaded to the 'Christ Church, Ipswich' YouTube channel and this can be found on our church website too. I hope these plans will help us all to feel as connected and blessed as possible as we move forward as a church family in what has been a difficult time for many.

For now, as the Season of Easter continues and moves towards Pentecost, I pray that the hope, joy and peace of the risen Lord will be a comfort and a strength to you and your loved ones. I close with an Easter Season prayer from the Church of Scotland's '*Book of Common Order*':

Almighty and eternal God,  
the strength of those who believe  
and the hope of those who doubt,  
may we, who have not seen, have faith  
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,  
who is alive and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen

Every blessing,  
*Neil*

## THE LEPROSY MISSION



A quick note to let you all know that taking Gift Aid into account, we shall be sending in excess of £800 to the Leprosy Mission's "Unconditional Appeal". Further details in the June Comment.

So a really big thank you to all who so generously donated and a special thank you to Neil, Rob and John who made the whole thing possible in lockdown. It was also good to get Helen Walton, our Regional Organiser involved.

A date for your diaries – World Leprosy Day at Christ Church for 2022 will be on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March and the service will be taken by Helen.

Again many thanks

**ZOOM to Zimbabwe**

with **christian aid**

**11th May 2021**  
**2 pm**

**Updates, Music,  
Food & Friendship**

Email Suzanne for link  
[suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk](mailto:suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk)

**Hosted by**  
**Commitment for Life**

## CHRISTIAN AID - THE 300,000 STEP CHALLENGE



The climate crisis hurts us all, but people living in poverty battle the worst of it. Every day they walk further and dig deeper to survive. This May, we invite you to put your best foot forward and take on our 300,000 Steps Challenge.

It's simple - take 300,000 sponsored steps during May to raise vital funds for communities battling the worst of this climate crisis. This is on average 10,000 steps a day and can be done alone, or as a family or group. Each step you take could help people like Rose in Kenya, who struggles daily to provide enough food for her family.

Details of how to register and collect sponsorship can be found on the Christian Aid website.



### CHRISTIAN AID - ROSE'S STORY

Rose is caught in a cycle of climate chaos. From severe drought to flooding, extreme weather robs her of what she needs to survive: a reliable source of water. Your gifts could help communities build better earth dams to harvest more water; sow drought-tolerant crops that grow even with the fewest of drops.

When she was a child, Rose remembers how often the rains would fall, giving fruit to the baobab trees and providing plenty of nutritious food to eat. Now, the rains are totally unreliable. The climate crisis has galvanised extreme weather and Rose's community are feeling the brunt of it. For months at a time, Rose and her family lives with drought.

Rose strives to provide for her grandchildren who live with her. She does all she can to give them happy childhoods, like the times she remembers when there was plenty of food. But the climate crisis is driving her to the brink. In times of drought, Rose sets out on a long and dangerous journey every morning to collect water for her family. She walks on an empty stomach. 'Because I am old, I can't walk very fast. When I get home, I just rest in the evening. I have no energy to do anything else,' Rose says.

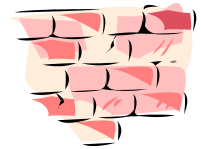
Even when the rains do come, relief for Rose is often short lived. There is a nearby earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home and it should be a lifeline but it's not deep enough for everyone's needs and runs out of water too quickly. Imagine how dispirited Rose must feel watching the rain fall for days, only to find the dam empty just a short while later. What's more, the rains are much heavier than they should be, putting Rose's community at risk of flooding.

With a reliable source of water, people like Rose would be free from long, painful journeys. They would be able to grow fresh vegetables to eat and would be able to protect themselves from the dangers of coronavirus. With such dire need, every last drop of water that falls in Rose's community is precious.

People like Rose need every last drop to survive this climate crisis. Your gifts will help ensure they can.

## OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

It feels so good to see the world waking up again. Bulbs flowering, trees in leaf, blossom everywhere, sun shining (between April showers), the twice daily 'rush hour' and school runs gathering pace, with the promise of more good things as summer approaches.

Happy Easter Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord!

Oh how I missed the wonderful Easter hymns this year. The gardens at St Pancras need a haircut and I am glad to see things growing there (not all weeds), including some lovely wild flowers. We cleared the bramble patch behind the church a while back and nature is returning to form a more manageable range of species for us to enjoy.

This month Pope Francis has asked us to pray for those in charge of finance to work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers. I think he means reducing poverty and environmental damage. Of course economies have been impacted by the pandemic and recovery will require economic growth but this has consequences for the ecosystems around the world.

I am reading 'Let us Dream' by Pope Francis, written during the Covid pandemic. He says that "to come out of this crisis we have to see clearly, choose well and act right. Let us talk about how. Let us dare to dream." He speaks of truth and love, respect and service. Ordinary people changing society. For me I think that means more garden tidying and litter picking, amongst other things.

I hope our congregations will return fully face to face soon, supporting each other towards greater faith and communion.

With prayers for you all, God bless.

## ECO-CHURCH CREATION CARE

As promised, here is a further list of suggestions as to how we can all reduce our use of plastic, especially single-use plastics. You will not think that all of these ideas are possible or appropriate for you, but maybe there is something here that will resonate with you as a change you, personally, could make.

1. Buy in bulk to minimize or eliminate packaging. This goes for food and drink as well as cleaning supplies, toiletries, hardware items – anything that may come in plastic packaging.
2. Avoid overpackaged, processed and frozen convenience foods. Stay clear of the three tomatoes sitting on a Styrofoam tray and covered in plastic cellophane.
3. Shop at markets. Fresh food markets are not only often cheaper and fresher than supermarkets but they sell fruit and vegetables loose. Don't forget to take your reusable bags.
4. Use bar soap instead of shower gel. This is an easy change to make. If you are feeling keen you can even make your own soap bars.
5. Choose lotions and lip balms in plastic-free containers.
6. When something plastic in your kitchen needs replacing, consider what you might replace it with. A dish brush can be replaced by one with a wooden handle and compostable bristles. If you need to purchase a new blender, for instance, try and find one made of glass.
7. Use natural cleaning cloths instead of plastic and synthetic sponges. Compressed natural cellulose sponges are often sold without any plastic packaging.
8. Choose clothes made from natural fibres. Synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when washed. When buying new clothes look for organic cotton, wool, and other natural fibres.
9. Buy clothing second-hand. Buying clothes second-hand not only saves you money but ensures that the second-hand clothes you purchase have an extra long lease of life.
10. Do a clothes swap. Look online for local events or get advice on how to set up your own. Take a look at sites like Get Swishing.
11. Invest in quality. By doing this you are minimising the demand for cheap items that end up in landfill. In the long run it will save you money.
12. Request zero plastic packaging. If you're buying clothes online ask the retailer if they can reduce or remove plastic packaging.
13. Put a "No Junk Mail" sticker on your letterbox This will reduce the number of letters with plastic windows. It will also reduce your paper waste.
14. Make it from scratch. Try and cook as much as possible from scratch and take your own sandwiches and snacks when you go out.
15. Avoid wet wipes containing plastic fibres which don't break down like toilet roll, despite often being described as flushable.
16. Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new. Check second-hand shops, Freecycle or Freegle. Look for sharing groups locally.
17. Buy second-hand plastic-free furniture. There's lots of advice about repairing, upcycling and finding good wooden or metal furniture online.

18. Don't buy new CDs and DVDs. Stream or download music, shows, and films online, buy second hand or borrow them from the library or friends.
19. Avoid plastic pens and giveaways. Try using a refillable fountain pen or pencils.
20. Bring your own toiletries when travelling. Skip the free travel size shampoos, soaps, and lotions offered by hotels. Instead, fill up your own reusable travel-size containers at home.
21. Avoid the Mini-bar snacks and drinks. Not only incredibly expensive but they all come in plastic packages or bottles. Even if you can't avoid plastic entirely, you can resist single-serving sizes.