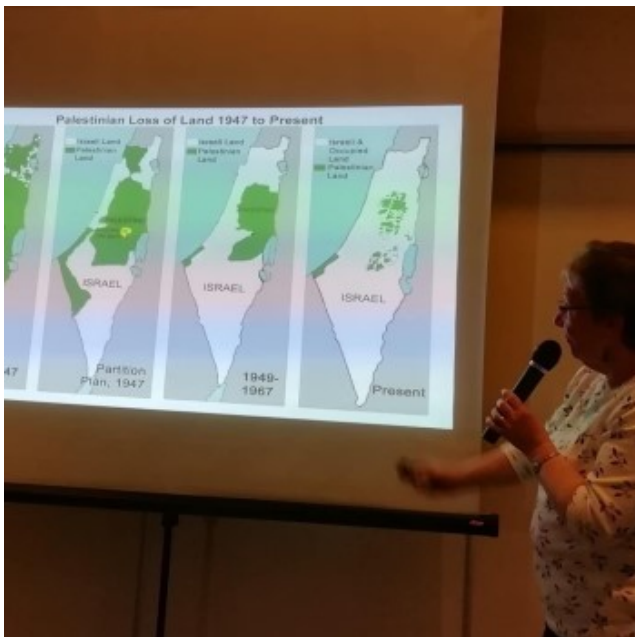


A TASTE OF PALESTINE – BUT IN OUR LADY & ST JOSEPH OF THE AIRE VALLEY

A personal reflection on a trip to the Holy Land by Annette Mitchell, Moira Smith, John Mazzucchi

About 40 people gathered at St Mary & St Monica's Church, Cottingley, Bingley, to hear an illustrated talk on the current situation in the occupied West Bank territories and take part in a discussion.

Father Sean opened the proceedings and led the meeting in prayer. After welcoming everyone, Moira Smith described the group's visit to Bethlehem, in October 2019, where they had visited the Church of the Nativity and other sites, as part of a tour organised by the **Amos Trust**.



Moira explains how much land Palestinians have lost since 1947

John Mazzucchi then took over to describe the group's visit to Hebron, a divided city where tension could be felt. Annette Mitchell showed pictures of their visit to a farm about 9Km from Bethlehem, where the owners had to live in underground caves.

Annette provided some additional comments about their trip:

The Amos Trust is a Human Rights organisation, committed to challenging injustice. Their 'Taste of Palestine' trip allowed us to meet with people, learn about their culture and food and see how life is for them living under occupation - whilst also having the opportunity to visit many of the Holy sites and churches.

It was a very different experience from the diocesan pilgrimage as regards to the types of places we visited and the people we met. We visited a refugee camp in Bethlehem, had tea in the Banksy Hotel, visited date farms and picked olives in an olive grove. We were able to taste freshly made olive oil after watching the extraction process in the olive factory. We visited spice shops, bakeries and women's co-operatives where we had the opportunity to buy lots and eat lots!

We saw how resilient the people are, wherever there is a barrier they find a way to surmount it. We met a Christian farmer living near Bethlehem who has been struggling since 1991 to keep his farm. He has set up a project for peaceful resistance called The Tent of Nations inviting people to his farm from the International community to be involved with projects on the farm. It was very moving when he spoke about asking our friends to visit the living stones not the dead stones.

Travelling around the towns and countryside it became very obvious how the Palestinians suffer an unequal distribution of water as water tanks were visible on all of their rooftops but not on the rooftops of settlements – where there is piped water. We were very careful using water and aware of the lack of water available to Palestinians. Visiting the old city of Hebron, we became instantly aware of the tension and presence of soldiers everywhere, even on the rooftops.



Eager anticipation of the lovely Palestinian food about to come their way!

We spent wonderful evenings at Liwan culture cafe very near the guest house. Here we had lovely food, drinks and even ice cream. It was a great opportunity to soak up the atmosphere whilst supporting the local people. It was the most incredible and memorable trip and the people were welcoming and hospitable throughout our visit.



Lunch under an olive tree

Checkpoints and turnstiles are very visible and the local Palestinians have to endure these restrictions daily. A couple of children desperately tried to sell their small items in the street but the streets were mostly empty. There was a feeling of isolation and abandonment here.

We also travelled out of the West Bank towards Nazareth . Here we stayed in a Guest House called Al Hakim, in the old part of the city, not far from the church of The Annunciation where we all enjoyed a Palestinian cookery lesson.

amos  **trust**
justice and hope for the forgotten

The Amos Trust

This organisation works with local and international peace activists, and partners with grass-roots projects, to call for a just peace, reconciliation and full equal rights for all Palestinians and Israelis. It works in other parts of the world as well.

Each year they organise trips to visit their partner organisations, including in Israel-Palestine. More details are available on their website:

www.amostrust.org/

EXPANDING PARISH INVOLVEMENT IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

Who are you?

I'm Sue Parsons and I live in the parish of St Francis of Assisi and the Immaculate Conception, Bradford. I've just been appointed Community Sponsorship Coordinator at Catholic Care, so I work across the diocese and at the Catholic Care Office on the Hinsley Hall site.

What are you doing?

Community Sponsorship is the scheme where local communities – perhaps a parish – supports a refugee family to settle in the United Kingdom and rebuild their lives in a safe environment. The group takes responsibility for providing support for the refugee family for a year, from meeting them at the airport to organising language tuition, and supporting access to medical services, social services, education and employment. Before the refugee family arrives, the Group must also source accommodation for the family to rent and raise funds to contribute towards the initial costs that the family will incur, when they first arrive (e.g. purchasing school uniforms, the first month of rent). The family will be entitled to apply for benefits so they will not need to rely on donations after this initial period.

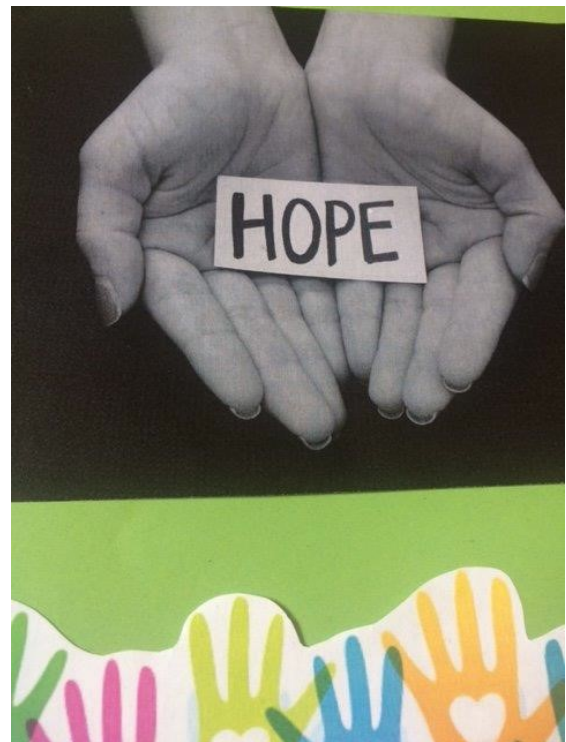
My role is to inspire parishes across the diocese to set up Community Sponsorship Groups and then support those groups to achieve Home Office approval to sponsor a refugee family. The aim is to have 6 of these groups set up by the end of this year.

The benefits of the scheme are huge! Obviously, the family benefit as they move from uncertainty in the Middle East to start a new life in safety in the UK. That, of course, can be very daunting when you're moving to a strange country, where you may not speak a word of the language and away from your support network of family and friends. This is where the Community Sponsorship



Group comes into its own as members support the family and help them settle. And the group also benefits, developing a sense of community, working together and perhaps developing new skills. People who have already welcomed a refugee

family under the scheme speak about how it has transformed their lives and communities.



What interested you in doing this?

I believe that we all have a responsibility towards others – and that's not just about acts of charity, it is about helping others to help themselves – it's about putting my faith into action.

So, in 2016, I spent three weeks as a volunteer

at the refugee camp in Calais – one of those weeks being the week the French authorities dismantled the camp. It was hard and taught me a lot, not just about the squalor people were having to live in and the horrors that had taken them there, but their dignity and bravery and that what they wanted was a safe life for them and their families and to take responsibility for themselves. And for me, Community Sponsorship is another way of helping people do this.

I think there are times when we see what's going on in the world and feel overwhelmed by what's happening and ask ourselves "What can I do? There's too much to deal with, I can't make a difference." The beauty of Community Sponsorship for me is that it **does** make a difference to a family and a community. I'm reminded of a story I heard about a writer who saw a beach covered with hundreds of starfish which had been washed up and lay dying. A little girl was picking up the starfish one by one and throwing them back into the waves. When the writer challenged her and said that there were so many she couldn't possibly make a difference, she simply bent down, picked another one up, threw it into the sea and said "I made a difference to that one"!

What has this got to do with being a Catholic?

For me, this has everything to do with being a Catholic! Firstly it's about helping others and secondly, it's about responding to Pope Francis' call to action, that every community should welcome a refugee family into their midst.

Are there ways in which people in the Diocese could help you?

Yes! A parish could decide they would like to welcome a family into their community and set up a Sponsorship Group. There's lots of help available, so they wouldn't be on their own. Or, they could offer to help in other parishes, perhaps helping to raise funds or offering their skills to other Groups. If they'd like to find out more, all they need do is get in touch with me and I'll happily come and talk to their group or their parish to give them more information and answer their questions.

How can people contact you?

Email me – sue.parsons@catholic-care.org.uk or phone me – 07702 255113

STOP PRESS! – ANOTHER PARISH GAINS A CAFOD LIVE SIMPLY AWARD

On Sunday February 9th St. Mary and St. Michael in Settle received the Live Simply award.



The photo shows 3 members of the parish team involved in the project receiving the award from their assessor, Michael Emly (from Our Lady of Kirkstall -one of the other Live Simply parishes in the Diocese)

Look out for a full account in the March Newsletter.

GOODBYE AND HELLO

First the Goodbye! – from Joe Burns

What is happening?

I'm retiring from providing paid services to the J&P Commission. I had my 65th birthday recently and have been providing the Commission with my services since mid-2014.



What have you been doing for the Commission?

I put together the newsletters, I developed and update the website and Facebook page of the Commission and I also do most of the admin & marketing around the events that the Commission organises. It is 'goodbye-ish' rather than goodbye in that I still intend to remain involved in the work of the Commission – but on a voluntary basis.

How did you become involved in the first place?

Well, in March 2014 I was 5 months into a permanent job that was so awful that I just resigned. I had decided to set myself up as a self-employed consultant to develop websites and provide management consultancy for smaller voluntary sector organisations – my background was in business and IT project and programme management. When I was telling John Battle (Commission Chair) about this he mentioned that the Commission needed some work doing and that it might be of interest. And it was.

What have you enjoyed most about the work you have done?

I could say all sorts of things but I think the main enjoyment has come (as it has with me for most of the roles that I have had) from working with others to achieve some goal and feeling that I have made a genuine contribution towards

achieving it – that I brought something to the effort that others did not.

What has been your worst moment?

I think it was the first week of doing things for the Commission. The J&P worker, Shelagh Fawcett, had been made redundant in February. My initial brief was to bring the website up to date - as by this time it was late June 2014. I managed to find some handwritten notes that told me how to login to the website content management system. However, when I typed in the web address, I received an error message. It turned out the Commission had forgotten to pay the bill to the company that hosted the website and, just a couple of days before, had taken the website down. It was not a promising start!

What do you think are the main challenges for the Commission, going forward?

Apart from the current political situation? – let's leave that to one side.

Interpreting the 'Signs of the Times' and discerning the 'Just' Gospel response will always be a challenge. Layered on that is the 'demographic cliff' in terms of bringing younger generations through to see the faith context for taking action on Social Justice (my feeling is that younger generations are just as passionate about Social Justice issues as older generations but not many see the relevance of the Gospels in underpinning this action). The Leeds Commission is starting to tackle that through the SPARK Social Justice project that is now running -and my hope is that this will lead to a much wider generational involvement in the work of the Commission.

I also think that the Commission must continue to be open to new ways of working and new ways of involving people – just as it was when it decided to use my services!

Second, the Hello! – from Helen Hayden



Who Are you?

I'm Helen Hayden and I am delighted to have this opportunity to work for the Justice and Peace Commission in the Leeds Diocese. I am one of

the Councillors for Templenewsam in East Leeds. My parish is St John Henry Newman, it is a privilege to not only live in my ward but also that my ward covers a good half of my parish. I am an RE teacher by profession and taught for many years in both Catholic and non-denominational secondary schools. I am active in the parish, in Children's liturgy and I am a Catechist helping children and their families to prepare for the sacraments. Most importantly, I am Mum to Molly (9) and Richie (8)

What interested you about the work that the Commission needs doing?

I was drawn to apply to work with the Commission as it presented an opportunity to combine my communication skills and faith in a very practical and tangible way. I am passionate about Catholic Social teaching. When I was teaching, I could try to inspire young people to put their faith into action. I have missed this aspect of my previous life, so I was very interested in promoting Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values supporting the work of the Commission. The projects that the Commission is

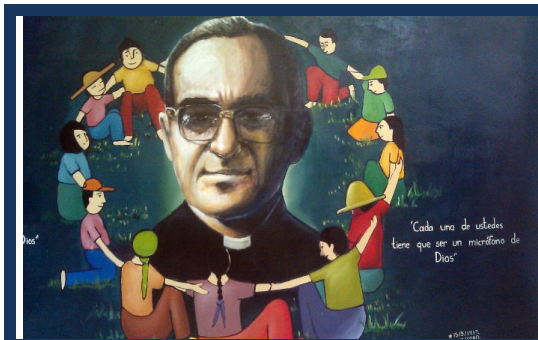
working on- Poverty, Climate Change - align with my work on the Council, through the Climate Emergency Declaration and my daily work mitigating the effects of poverty. In my role as Chair of the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board one of our main aims is to improve the health of the poorest the fastest. Working with the Commission will give me the opportunity to put my faith into action on these important issues.

What are you most worried about?

Replacing Joe! I'm so pleased that Joe is not leaving the Commission, the way he has developed this role is very impressive and I can only hope that I can carry on his excellent work. I hope also to use my experience as a teacher to bring younger people to the work of the Commission. I know from experience how passionate young people are about social justice and we have all seen the school strikes for Climate change. The appetite is there, as Joe says, it is now the time to link it to the Catholic faith and Gospel message.

What are you most excited about?

There are many things that I am enthused about: meeting all those involved in the Commission, working on such important issues that are affecting all of us now, but the poorest the most; raising awareness of the Commission's work especially amongst those groups who may not have been aware previously. I'm also excited about using my communication skills in a faith-based role.



RIGHTING THE WRONG - THURSDAY 19 MARCH

St Benedict's Parish Centre, Aberford Road, Garforth
7:30pm

This is a film about the life of St Oscar Romero. Julian Filochowski – Director of the Romero Trust and friend of St Oscar – will introduce the film.

(Through the Commission, this film was also shown in 2019 – but then it was called 'The Claim')

LITTLE VOICES: BIG DIFFERENCE - JESUS, JUSTICE & JOY IN THE YEAR OF THE WORD

Saturday 04 April 10:15 – 4:30pm

Leeds Trinity University Brownberrie Lane Horsforth LS18 5HD

BOOK A PLACE NOW!



Our Spring Day of Reflection with **John Bell of the Iona Community**.

Do you come out of church thinking ‘well, that’s that over for another week’? Or
‘Going to church doesn’t really link to my life during the rest of the week?’

If you have ever had feelings like this then this day is for you!

John travels across the world giving days like this and we are delighted to have secured him for our day.

John has a way of re-telling familiar Gospel and bible stories that enables us to see them in a new light. More than that, he makes the connection between those stories and what it means for how we live out our life day to day.

If you have a cosy religious life now (Church provides an escape from the ‘real’ world), then don’t bother coming – you’ll find it too challenging. The Gospels that John Bell talks about are quite disturbing – they could change your life!

If there isn’t a notice about it in your church, then you can download a flyer from our website – on the page for the event in our website events Calendar – or, again, email us and we will post one (or several!) out to you

As with all J&P events there is no standard charge to come along – but there will be a collection on the day.

BUT

we do need people to book a place by using our Eventbrite page for the event (or if you don’t like websites then please email the J&P office to make a booking).

**How to book a place via Eventbrite? - either search for it on Eventbrite or type in
www.tinyurl.com/johnbellinleeds**

REFLECTION: ECOLOGICAL AND COMMUNITY CONVERSION

#139

We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature.

#158

In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the Common Good immediately becomes logically and inevitably a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.

#164

Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan

#217

We need an ecological conversion



#219

Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds

The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion

Paragraphs from Laudato Si by Pope Francis

NORTHERN DIOCESES ENVIRONMENT GROUP

by Joe Burns

This group has been meeting a couple of times a year for the last two years. It is a way of sharing information on the work being done about the Climate Crisis in the northern dioceses (by which I mean Liverpool, Lancaster, Salford, Leeds, Hallam, Middlesbrough and Hexham and Newcastle). Mark Wiggin, Caritas Director for the Salford Diocese has kindly hosted these meetings at their wonderful conference centre adjacent to Salford Cathedral.

The last meeting (at the end of January) was an opportunity to find out more about what is happening at the level of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Usually the meeting comprises a bit of a 'go round' on what is happening with one or

two keynote speakers. For this meeting Edward de Quay of the Environmental Advisory Group of the Bishop's Conference was given most of the time available. Some of the key points that he made about the national scene were as follows:

- Bishop John Arnold (Diocese of Salford) has the responsibility for the Environment in the Bishops Conference; he has pledged not to travel by air for leisure purposes. He is also developing the *Laudato Si* Centre at his home at Wardley Hall as a place where people can be inspired to take up the call to action set out in *Laudato Si*.
- There is a push to have an Environment Officer in each diocese. Edward is very interested in the Diocesan Environment Policies that are being developed across England and Wales. The environment officer would be the person with responsibility in a diocese for making sure that the policy is implemented.

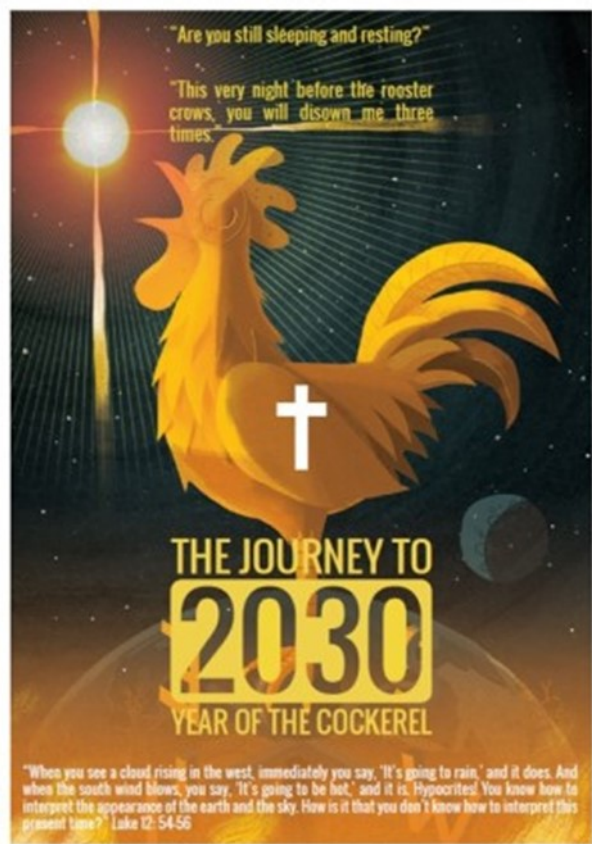


Attendees at the meeting - with Edward de Quay (Centre right – and, yes, he really is young!)

- At this time, we don't know what the carbon footprint is of the Catholic Church in England & Wales. Westminster Diocese has produced a way for parishes to calculate their carbon footprint – but there has been no systematic measurement of this across the country.
- Green Energy in parishes, through the diocese inter-fuel arrangements, is in place for most dioceses now – but it is not common in Catholic schools yet. The situation here is more complicated with the creation of many 'Academy Trusts' which are independent entities.
- The Bishops have decided that there will be a Climate Sunday - in September this year, during the Season of Creation.

- COP 26 is in Glasgow later in the year. Some delegates from France and Germany intend to walk across most of England and into Scotland and the diocese through which they pass will be invited to provide hospitality for them

Edward, himself, has an interesting background. Prior to his current role, along with his brother, he lived in the diocese of Arundel & Brighton. After the publication of *Laudato Si* they set up a group called the 'Ecological Conversion Group'. Out of this has grown a whole programme of work called 'The Journey to 2030'. This is all about recognising the huge importance of the Climate Crisis for us as Christians. They have developed a set of resources to help parishes find out more, create a sense of urgency within the Church and promote the most effective actions in our race against time (hence the use of 2030 in the title – the year by which we must significantly curb our greenhouse gas emissions.



Edward felt compelled to point out that the cockerel on the front is nothing to do with the Chinese Year of the Cockerel! It is a reference to the story of St Peter and the cockerel - to emphasise our denial of Jesus in the signs of our times.

FIND OUT MORE and DO MORE

Many individuals and groups across the diocese are already taking action on Climate Change. If there is one near you then why not join them? The Commission is in the process of setting up a Climate Change Action Group – to help guide the Commission in what it can do. We would welcome you to join with this. Email the office for more details.

The 'Journey to 2030' guide can be downloaded from the website set up specifically about this goal:

www.journeyto2030.org/

The Ecological Conversion Group also has a website

www.theecg.org/

Westminster Diocese has developed a tool for helping parishes assess their carbon footprint. This is now available for download from the Climate change page on our website.

Another great source of information and ways of measuring your parish's carbon footprint is by using the tools provided by the Carbon Trust. Many are aimed at Small & Medium Enterprises and, with a bit of imagination, a parish can fit into that categorisation of organisation.

www.carbontrust.com

LIVERPOOL *Laudato Si* Resource

Praying with the Gospels, stories from around the world and excerpts from *Laudato Si'* for use with groups.



Archdiocese of Liverpool
Justice & Peace Commission

CAFOD
Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development

Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission, in conjunction with CAFOD, have produced a wonderful new resource for creation time and for Lent – with over 30 individual sessions with pointers for discussion.

This resource makes it easy for any parish group to take up the challenge of thinking more deeply about the messages of *Laudato Si*, how they relate to Catholic Teaching and to think about what more we can all do as individuals and parish communities to take more care of our 'Common Home'. It's worth a tenner of anyone's money.

See:-

www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/resources/

ACTION FOR LIFE ON EARTH

17 19 July

Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick
Derbyshire



- How is the Church responding to the Climate Crisis?
- *Do you want to change through 'ecological conversion' and create change locally, nationally and globally?*
- *Do you want the opportunity for reconceiving the justice & peace movement to meet current and future challenges?*

Whilst it is not a cheap weekend, this conference brings together over 300 people from across the UK to explore our Climate Crisis and our Christian response. These conferences also provide a much-needed assurance that we are not alone in the church in calling for more radical action. Five years on from *Laudato Si*, we are now learning that ecological conversion is a matter of life and death for many people.

The weekend comprises some keynote speakers, workshops, mass on Saturday evening, a 'Just Fair' and it has a separate programme of activities for young people.

Email the office if you would like a Booking Form

Some of the key people involved with the conference are:



CHRISTINE ALLEN Director of CAFOD – Conference Chair

CAFOD have been at the forefront of the Church's response to the Climate Crisis and Christine will bring this to bear at the conference

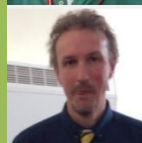


LORNA GOLD will speak on 'Climate Generation: Awakening to our Children's Future'. Lorna is a Scottish-Irish climate campaigner and author. '*Laudato Si*' Project Coordinator with Trocaire, she is also Chair of the *Laudato Si* working group of the Irish Bishops' Conference and vice-chair of the Global Catholic Climate Movement Board.



FR EAMONN MULCAHY will speak on 'From the heart of the Church: Francis' gospel vision for integral humanity'

Fr Eamonn is Director of Spiritan Mission and Retreat Animation.



MARK ROTHERHAM will speak on 'Framing the global economic-ecological crisis: integrating ecological and economic change'. Mark has wide experience in the design and delivery of ecological education. His works include films, exhibitions, courses and retreats that explore new directions for Christian spirituality.










MARTY HAUGEN is in charge of Liturgy at the conference

Marty is an American liturgical compose, pastoral musician and workshop presenter. You will find many of his hymns in 'Laudate' and 'Celebration'. Many of those hymns focus on justice issues and our response as Christians.



EVENTS

 Wed 19 Feb	INVESTING FOR PEACE – MORALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT <i>Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, Leeds 18:00 – 20:00</i> This is a Sabeel Yorkshire meeting. Refreshments will be served at 6.00 p.m. with the presentation due to start at 6.30 p.m. The speaker will be a member of War on Want from London.
 Sun 23 Feb	CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY <i>National</i> This Church Action on Poverty Sunday, through your gifts and prayers, CAP can give people living in poverty the opportunity to speak truth to power. Hold a soup lunch, take a collection, use their worship resources to reflect and pray for change. See https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/
 Wed 26 Feb	ASH WEDNESDAY CLIMATE CRISIS PRAYER WALK AND PROTEST <i>Gather at Millennium Square Outside the Museum, Leeds 10 am until 12</i> An ecumenical event organised by Christian Climate Action. They comment <i>As part of this climate pilgrimage we will stop and reflect at a number of symbolic locations (Peace Gardens, Civic Hall, War Memorial) to pray, repent and lament together before engaging in a nonviolent creative protest.</i>
 Thu 27 Feb	CLIMATE AND TRAVEL – Everyday Activism <i>Leeds Church Institute, 20 New Market Street, Leeds LS1 6DG 18:00 – 20:30</i> An opportunity to meet with other Christians and discuss the challenges and joys of travelling whilst we experience a Climate Crisis. Food available from 6pm and the meeting proper will start at 6:30. Please email anna.bland@ywmethodist.org.uk to let her know if you intend to join in.
 Thu 19 Mar	FILM SHOWING: 'RIGHTING THE WRONG' <i>St Benedict's Parish Centre, Aberford Road, Garforth 7:30pm</i> This is a film about the life of St Oscar Romero. Julian Filochowski – Director of the Romero Trust and friend of St Oscar – will introduce the film. (Through the Commission, this film was also shown in 2019 – but then it was called 'The Claim')
 Mon 30 Mar	CLIMATE CRISIS: HEARTACHE TO HOPE <i>St George's Church, Great George Street, Leeds LS? ??? 18:30 – 20:30</i> An ecumenical service about our climate crisis. An opportunity to lament the way we have treated our Common Home, hear how Catholics and other Christians have responded and to commit ourselves to further action to care more for God's creation.
 Sat 04 Apr 2020	LITTLE VOICES: BIG DIFFERENCE – JESUS JUSTICE AND JOY <i>Leeds Trinity University, Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth 10:15 – 16:30</i> A day with the well-known broadcaster and liturgist John Bell , of the Iona Community. A real inter-generational day to explore issues of social justice through stories and singing. Free to attend but please book a ticket through our Eventbrite page for this event – you can find the link on our website.

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database.

See our website for full details of these and other events that may be of interest