**Giving-Up Gas.**

Both our Church building and Meeting Room currently have gas boilers for heating their radiators and hot water. Both are on their last legs and will need replacing soon. There are some lovely, cheap, efficient new gas ones out there, but…

In accordance with The Church of England’s pledge to reach carbon net zero by 2030, churches are being strongly encouraged to replace gas and oil systems with electric ones. These could be one, or a combination of several of the following: electric combi boilers, solar panels, in-pew electric heaters, under-floor heating, electric wall heaters, ground or air source heat pumps.

Although it is true that not all electricity is generated using renewable sources such as wind or solar at present in Britain, the trend and indeed the *necessity* is for us all to stop using *any* fossil fuels as soon as possible.

However…the price of electricity is currently around four times the price per unit of gas! ‘Why would we do such a thing, when churches are so strapped for cash?’ I hear you cry.

Our Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer Group’s ‘watchword’ for Lent is Jesus’ reply to Thomas when he says, ‘But Lord, we do not know the way!’ How familiar does that sound?

**‘I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life’** Jesus says. **John 14.6. ‘I AM…the Life.’**

As churches we want to be an example of Jesus’ teaching in the community; doing *the right thing* in how we live our lives and run our churches.Are those habits affecting the lives of our neighbour, whether they live in the Maldives, disappearing under rising sea levels, or in the Calder Valley, where serious flooding has occurred six times since 2000, ruining businesses and homes?

So, when the C of E’s fifth mark of Mission says “**Safeguard creation**: Protect the environment and sustain life on earth”, our first immediately useful act can be weaning ourselves and churches off fossil fuels.

At a macro level, you will hear people say, ‘What’s the point of my doing anything when China is still using so much coal?’ China’s use of renewable energy has actually soared in the last decade. Now, their installed capacity for renewables is 50%, and growing: but, like Britain they need new infrastructure to use it all. They also produce 80% of the world’s solar manufacturing capacity.

At a micro level, in my kitchen, knowing that *I am using gas every time I turn on my hot water tap at present,* I ask myself, ‘could I do this job with either cold water, or boiled water from the kettle, instead? The answer is almost always yes! If we can afford to use electricity instead of gas, let’s do it, and buy our electricity and gas from a supplier who works to increase our renewable capacity, such as Ecotricity who ‘Turn your bills into mills.’

For churches, the Church of England’s scheme to help is called ‘Give to Go Green.’ Many churches have benefitted from this match-funding enterprise in the pilots run in this Diocese. A nationwide version will be rolled out in 2026, but in the meantime, there are other funds available to help churches. Did you know that the Government will contribute as much as £7,500 for a new air source heat pump through its BUS (Boiler Upgrade Scheme), for example?

For smaller ways to instantly ‘green your church,’ why not join the 40% of churches in the Diocese who are part of Arocha Eco Church:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Or search the Diocese of Leeds website for help in becoming a sustainable church:

<https://www.leeds.anglican.org/our-faith/environment/getting-started/>

Here’s a video from the Church of England explaining options:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjJzTepOIUI>

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