

## Reflections on the Eco Church journey from silver to gold

*by Linda Percival, Environmental Advocate for Chelmsford Deanery*

The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey. *Deuteronomy 2:7a*

**Well done All Saints' on becoming a Silver Eco Church! I hope you have enjoyed celebrating your achievement. It's impressive that your wonderful Eco team is now looking at your journey from silver to gold. I will be overjoyed when (not "if") you achieve it.**

I find myself looking back to when my own church (St John's Moulsham) reached silver. My first thought was that we could rest a while and enjoy the warm glow of having reached silver. My second was that we couldn't possibly reach gold with our draughty, listed Victorian building, where every quinquennial review seemed to delight in bringing a whole new list of repairs needed. Sound familiar?

Here's a warning for you – God won't let you stop here! Getting to bronze may have felt at times like a box-ticking exercise. But something changes when you achieve silver. By now there is a deeper, embedded understanding of the importance of the work you are doing. God has called us all to be stewards of His great gift of Creation. When we see and feel the impact of climate change, with extreme weather and temperatures

having such a terrible impact, especially in the poorer global south, the commandment to love our neighbour has never been more important. God is calling us all to lament the damage we have caused and for each of us to do all we can to make the world a better place. All the improvements you have made in church, in your community and in your own lives mean the world is already a slightly better place. Imagine that multiplied across all our churches.

Where do you draw the strength to continue? The best advice I heard was during a pre-protest church service where Ruth Valerio from Tearfund was speaking. Her passion for her own sense of responsibility for looking after the earth was summed up as "the four Ps":

- give **Praise** to God for the gift of creation;
- **Pray** always for the world and your strength to act;
- **Prophecy** the future (what happens if we take no action?); and
- **Protest** – speak out, join Christians in protest against the actions of governments and large companies who persist in damaging the earth.

When you reach gold, take time to look back at your journey and all you have achieved with God's help. By working in harmony with God, blessings will flow.

Tread the earth lightly my friends. And do use the prayer for Eco Churches:

O Lord our God, who brought your people into a good land,  
and sends showers of blessing that the earth shall yield its increase;  
flourish within us your gift of faith that, in our worship, our churches, our communities and our lives,  
we may honour and renew your creation and join in obedience with the wind and the waters,  
the wilderness and the desert,  
the birds of the air and the fish of the sea,  
and all created things to give glory and praise  
to the image of the invisible God,  
the first born of all creation,  
Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

*To find out more or to share your ideas on Eco Church please go to the website [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church) or speak to one of the Eco Church Group – Roger McFarland, Nicky Morecroft, Chris McFarland, Ian Poston, Dave Gauld, Beth Cornish, Ann Salmon.*



## **This month's eco suggestions**

- Enjoy **green spaces and wildlife** and take care of them in practical ways
- **Use energy efficiently** for heating, lighting and electrical items, and use **LED light bulbs**