

I believe, along with vast majority of scientists that global warming and climate change is happening and is largely caused by human activity – carbon emissions.

We have just had the warmest year on record – global temperatures have reached 1 degree C above pre-industrial temperatures and is on track to rise much further – some scientists think that unless we take drastic action we are on track for 4 degrees – which could be disastrous for life on this planet. Already we see what scientists have been telling us will happen: extreme weather events; droughts in California and in many parts of Africa; fires in Australia; hurricanes in Southern USA which have been more frequent and more devastating; floods in Japan and also in our own country – last December saw the warmest and wettest ever recorded, with widespread flooding – bringing misery to thousands – 16,000 homes flooded.

We need to wake up and realise we are entering a new climatic age. It's a great challenge to humanity – will we survive?

I believe it's also a great challenge to the church: will we be like most people – either in denial, apathetic or just resigned – saying there's nothing to be done (which is really an excuse to carry on as usual) or will we give a lead to help people to face the reality of a world where the climate is changing fast and we only have so much time to make big changes to our life style – reducing our carbon emissions, etc.

The earth is God's precious, fragile gift to us – we have been poor stewards – we have done so much damage. Many animals and birds are threatened with extinction and everything is threatened by global warming.

For me the Christian faith is to do with the real world, helping me to cope with what is happening, helping to make the world a better place. Otherwise religion could rightly be called a way of burying your head in the sand – hiding from reality.

There was a Conference in October 2015 'Saving our Planet'. 130 people came in the morning and there were 2 keynote speakers. Approximately 65 attended the afternoon workshops. Our local MP (Edward Garnier) could not attend but another local MP (Alberto Costa) came and he spoke during the lunch break.

PLANS

1. We have a Planning Group which is going to be called 'Eco Church Harborough' and it is hoped to recruit a few more people so that every church is represented on the committee.
2. Andrew Quigley and I are going down to London during January to St Paul's Cathedral where Rowan Williams will be speaking.
3. A Rocha (a Christian based organisation caring for the environment) is launching Eco Church (successor of Eco Congregation). Churches will need to register on line and then begin completing the online survey to show how they are caring for God's earth: in their worship and teaching, in the way they look after their buildings (and grounds if applicable) in their community engagement at local and global level and in the personal lifestyle of members.
4. We will be contacting all churches in the area – aiming to get everyone signed up to become an ECO Church (you can go for Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards ...)
5. An **Any Questions Evening** – venue to be finalised – has been arranged for 15th April and Edward Garnier is hoping to attend. It is important to put pressure on our politicians – they have to give the lead – the present government is giving very mixed signals. It is hoped that we can get a very strong panel (local councillors, environmental experts, etc). Please attend if you can.