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*Psalm 24*

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Greetings and Peace from the Bristol District.

We are living in significant times as humanity tries to come to terms with impact of global warming resulting from human actions and behaviour. The effects are already far reaching, and all life on this small planet is suffering, and will suffer more significantly, if we do not act and react promptly .

Here in the Bristol District the effects are already being felt with flooding on the River Severn reaching unprecedented levels in the recent past. As sea levels rise in the future, we will find that a lot of low-level land (*including Methodist properties*), will be flooded. This letter is an open letter of encouragement to ask you to be proactive in the positive choices you will make for the future, as we know that many of you are already doing.

Our faith story starts with a glorious creation narrative, where God's Spirit broods over the waters, brings life in so many forms, of which we as humans are one part. This faith story locates humanity in a Garden, a site of beauty and abundance, reflecting the creator. Without labouring this point, we are given many opportunities of looking after creation in better ways. Christian tradition contains the narrative of another garden, as Mary encounters the risen Christ, mistaken as a gardener. Jesus's ministry is laced through and through with the stories of care for animals, plants and people. Our faith narratives conclude with yet another vision of a garden at the centre of the river of life, in a new heaven and earth.

St Paul understood the demise of creation, "*that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God*". We pray, "*thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven*". Humans are inextricably linked with the corruption of this created glory, but we are always met with Grace and so we are given responsibility to look after creation.

Can you as a District:

1. Support actions which will care for creation in a proactive way?
2. Lobby our Government, which is hosting the COP 26 talks in Glasgow, for lasting commitments to care for our planet?
3. Individually take steps 'to tread more lightly upon this earth'?

This is a complex problem, but one to which we are called to action by the faith which is at the centre of being in a relationship with our Creator God.

Please do all you can, in all the ways you can, because our common life depends on your action.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Dr Jonathan H Pye M.A.    Noel Sharp    Revd John A G Kime

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