**“Code Red for Humanity”**

*“For I know what plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*  Jeremiah 29:11

At the beginning of August the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its latest report which leaves no room for doubt about the reality of climate change and the urgency for all of us of rising to the moment. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that he IPCC report was no less than *“a code red for humanity”.* He tweeted:

*****”The evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions are choking our planet and placing billions of people in danger. Global heating is affecting every region on Earth, with many of the changes becoming irreversible. We must act decisively now to avert a climate catastrophe.”*

He could not have been clearer. I don’t know about you, but I can sometimes feel overwhelmed by the seriousness of the situation. How on earth (I choose that word deliberately) are we to respond to this? And why, for heaven’s sake (again, a deliberately chosen phrase) is God not doing something about it? Well, as a wise friend once said to me, ‘God will not do FOR us what God intends to do THROUGH us’. We have been equipped by God to respond to this challenge and rise to the moment: we can, through our choices and actions, bring something of the heavenly vision to earth, even now.

Every church is being encouraged to hold a “Climate Sunday” to focus of our worship on the travesties and inequity of climate change. I would like to point you now to 3 practical actions you might choose to take to respond to this ‘code red for humanity’ ahead of the all important COP26 Climate Change Conference which takes place in Glasgow in November.

1. For those of you who like to walk! The **Young Christian Climate Network** (YCCN) have embarked on a walk from Cornwall (where the G7 met earlier in the year) to Glasgow where they will arrive in time for COP26. They will we passing through the Leeds Diocese starting in Marsden on 15th September and leaving from Ripon on 26th September. I will be joining them for a 12 mile stretch of the walk from Birstall to Leeds on Friday 17th September. If you would like to join in you can sign up here: <https://www.yccn.uk/> (You don’t have to be young).
2. For those of you who like to pray! Also on Friday 17th September, as the walkers arrive in Leeds, at 4.30 pm, you can join in with ‘Prayer in the Square’, a gathering of Christians of many denominations in City Square (opposite the railway station) to draw attention to and pray for the climate emergency. More details can be found here: <https://networkleeds.com/events/prayer-in-the-square> Or if you prefer armchair pray try using the Pray and Fast for the climate resources <https://prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/resources/>
3. An action you can take from your own home! Make COP Count is organising a postcard writing campaign which aims to flood 10 Downing Street with messages from all over the country, letting the Government know just how much we care about the way climate change is affecting our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, and asking for the commitments that are needed to support them. <https://makecopcount.org/?page_id=186>

We can’t turn the clock back, and yes, there are some effects of climate change that are already irreversible; but by acting now and acting decisively we can ensure a better future than that will unfold if we do nothing. Each action we take in the face of the Climate Emergency gives us and the rest of God’s creation more reason to remain hopeful.

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