

# Our Climate is in Crisis!



## **We need to act NOW!**

### **Please read on...**

Because You and I, as part of God's family, have a responsibility to take of the world we live in, a world that is in danger from the consequences of climate change.

Genesis chapter 1 tells us that "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good!" There is now very considerable scientific evidence that humanity is doing serious damage to our planet – and this is NOT GOOD!

This leaflet, written by St Luke's Sustainability Team, gives you a summary of the key issues the world is facing. It urges us to take seriously anything we can to individually and together to help make a real difference.

**Revd Canon Mark Slater, Vicar, St Luke's Church St Albans**

# Our Climate is in Crisis – We need to Act!

It was 30 years ago that scientists alerted governments for the need to change - if the global average temperatures increased by just 2 degrees, it will become *catastrophic* for much life on earth. Since then, we've seen the introduction of LED lights, wind farms and electric cars, but at the same time, carbon emissions have *increased* by 60% and global average temperatures risen by over 1 degree.

## Fossil Fuels and Greenhouse Gases

The Industrial Revolution (1750's) saw the dramatic rise in the use of fossil-fuels (coal, oil & natural gas). When burnt, these fuels release carbon into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse-gas, trapping the sun's rays and heating up the earth's surface. This is global warming.

Scientists explained all this 30 years ago, advocating a move away from these fossil-fuels (which cause over 50% of all greenhouse-gas emissions) to new energy sources. Today, the world consumes a staggering 100 million barrels of oil every day. We should be *reducing*, not *increasing* the use of fossil-fuels.

## Global Average Temperature

The earth's ecosystem is finely balanced - any *small* change will have a *high* impact. As global temperatures rise, the impact on nature gets more and more pronounced, even triggering 'tipping points' when the impact becomes unstoppable, causing further temperature changes (e.g. loss of polar ice to reflect heat away from the planet). The speed and extent of the change, leaves nature simply unable to adapt.

## Targets

In 2015, world leaders signed up to the Paris Climate Agreement - to prevent the global average temperature increasing above 2°C from pre-industrial levels. The agreement sets out the need for wealthy countries to reach zero emissions much earlier than poorer countries, to enable them to raise standards of living as well as reaching the climate goals.

In 2018 Greta Thunberg hit news headlines with her school strike, and parts of London brought to a standstill by Extinction Rebellion. The UK parliament led the way by being the first country to declare an environment and climate emergency. It agreed to step-up it's plans for addressing climate change by targeting net-zero emissions by 2050.

But many feel this does not go far enough.

## Urgency

Across the UK, 120 councils have declared a climate emergency, of which 70 (like St Albans District Council) have set a target date of 2030 (20 years sooner than the UK target of 2050). Extinction Rebellion quote more alarming predictions, wanting the UK to be carbon neutral as soon as 2025. The lack of progress over the past 30 years, means rapid change is needed to slow down, stop, and ultimately reverse our impact on the climate. In Dec 2018, the UN said decisive action was needed within the next two years (i.e. by the end of 2020)!

## Further Reading

Hear what **Greta Thunberg** has to say - why the rules need to change:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAmUIEsN9A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAmUIEsN9A)

**David Attenborough** pulls no punches when he says we are facing a man-made disaster on a global scale, which could lead to the collapse of civilisations and extinction of much of the natural world! Watch the BBC programme on Climate Change – the Facts: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9WyLPgyuqo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9WyLPgyuqo)

Listen to a hard-hitting message from **Roger Hallam** (co-founder of Extinction Rebellion) explaining the risk of social and ecological collapse and reasoning behind civil disobedience: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=O\\_g3zoL8TFU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_g3zoL8TFU)

Read **Christian Aid**'s explanation from a biblical perspective:

[www.christianaid.org.uk/news/climate-change-whom-do-we-stand](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/climate-change-whom-do-we-stand)

And most briefly, ex-archbishop **Rowan Williams** endorsing direct action

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aOc1oeBzk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aOc1oeBzk)

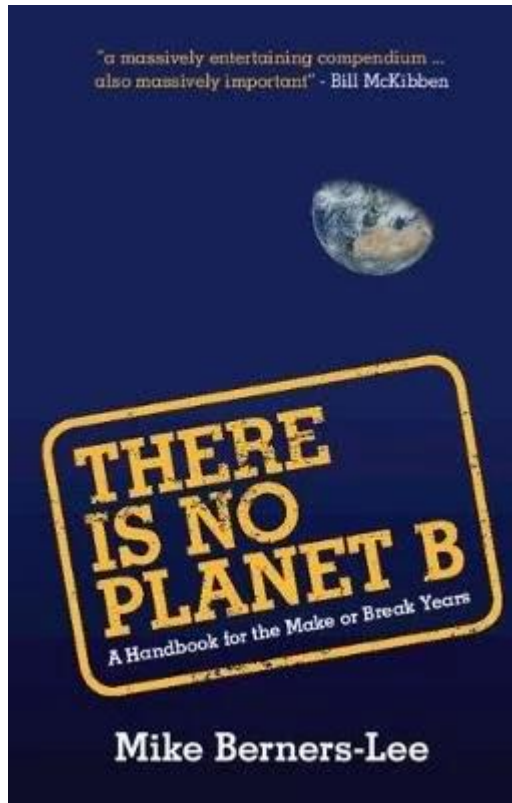
## What can we do?

We have already been trying to moderate our own lifestyles. We must continue to do this, but individual lifestyle changes are just not enough. We also need to be informed, and to spread the word (through social media and word of mouth).

In addition, many of us can also get involved in campaigning for action to avoid the looming disasters and fight for justice for the poorer countries.

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Sustainability Team, St Luke's Church, St Albans



## There Is No Planet B

Feeding the world, climate change, biodiversity, antibiotics, plastics – the list of concerns seems endless. But what is most pressing, what are the knock-on effects of our actions, and what should we do first? Do we all need to become vegetarian? How can we fly in a low carbon world?

... what on Earth can any of us do?

Fortunately, Mike Berners-Lee has crunched the numbers and plotted a course of action that is practical and even enjoyable.