

Thoughts from the Manse 16th October 2020



Last Sunday we celebrated Harvest in the strange virtual world in which we are living. It was good to take time to reflect on creation amid this pandemic which at times feels more about destruction. As Christians we recognise that we are partners in creation and have a responsibility to ensure there is something to hand on to future generations. We also have a responsibility to encourage fair shares for all of creation's bounty. There are commodities that we treat as infinite and yet, we are aware that many of the earth's resources are not infinite and need to be cared for. We cannot keep plundering and polluting.

Recently, our kettle developed a leak and we had to replace it, the choice does seem infinite with all the variations you could dream of and more. However, as we researched one thing became apparent there are far too many plastic kettles on the market and some ridiculously cheap ones which seem almost in the disposable category! I am sorry to say that it was a plastic kettle that we were replacing and yet our kettle history has been mostly metal, from that early Russell Hobbs metal kettle that nearly everyone had in the seventies and eighties. I am please to report that we once again have a metal kettle.



Many kettles these days have a quick boil facility to encourage us to save water and energy by only boiling what we need. It is estimated that during the pandemic we have brewed an extra 28 million cups of tea, boiling the amount of water needed, rather than filling the kettle, could save £46 per year, as well as saving water. It is an important aspect of our green living. Water is not infinite. We are all aware of WaterAid and other charities which seek to bring clean water into the lives of all people, but I wonder if we forget that being careful with water is part of the deal. In the UK we use



approximately 142 litres of water per person per day, imagine if you had to carry that from a well. It is estimated that in ten years' time, 2030, there will be a 40% shortfall in the fresh water needed across the world. It takes 650 gallons of water to produce one cotton tee shirt. So, even as we shop, we have a responsibility to make sure that tee shirt is one that will last.

There are lots of books and programmes about decluttering and during lockdown many people took the opportunity sort possessions. Decluttering is perhaps a part of our throwaway society, buy cheap and replace but that was not the way of my parents who bought the best they could afford in the hope that it would last them a lifetime. There are times when something breaks and many domestic machines are not built to last the way they used to be, so when something breaks we need to encourage our local councils to recycle as much as possible, and preferably in this country. I think we have all seen the mountains of plastic waste we thought was being recycled littering and polluting other countries and it is not sustainable, not ethical, simple not right. There is something like £8 million pounds worth of precious metals dumped each year in the form of electronic equipment, platinum, and gold amongst them. Surely, we cannot afford to waste precious metals.



As we take stock during this pandemic, let us remember those days of worldwide lockdown when the skies cleared and people breathed more easily, when birds and animals began to re-inhabit their lost areas and creation seemed to calm. Let us remember that we must play our part if the world is to recover and life on earth be sustainable. We can do this by making a conscious decision over how and what we purchase, encouraging recycling and re-using, and being more aware of the water and energy we use every day.



Live lovingly, live responsibly, help sustain the planet.