

How one parish celebrated the Season of Creation last year

The parish of Our Lady and St Edmund's in Abingdon joined in this global ecumenical celebration for the first time last autumn, having made a concerted effort to become a *Live Simply* parish, basing everything we did firmly on 'Laudato Si – on the Care of our Common Home'.

Throughout September an **action calendar** was promoted, suggesting a prayer, reflection or action for each day, similar to the more common Lent calendars. These actions ranged from refusing unnecessary packaging, to reassessing how we travel; from lighting a candle for victims of ecological disasters, to considering changing one's electricity provider; from enjoying the local bee-beds, to praying for the courage to challenge those who abuse God's creation.

A **garden produce sale** raised money for homes for the dying destitute in India, at the same time as sharing our resources as a parish community. The annual **Car-less Sunday** invited parishioners to car share or come to Mass on foot, bike or scooter. The youth groups produced a beautiful lectern cloth.

On our **Creation Prayer Walk**, we reflected on extracts from Laudato Si at various stops in the town -among the trees of Abbey park, by the water of the Thames, in the garden of the house that welcomes refugees, in the children's playground, realising '*just how inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace.*'

The season ended on St Francis's feast day with our hosting an **ecumenical service** in thanksgiving for the wonders of our world and our commitment to care for it, to which we invited the local ecology group as well as members of other churches. By great serendipity, a local musician had recently composed a work based on the Canticum of St Francis, which we were able to include in the service, and we completed the celebration with a **simple shared meal and Climate Quiz** with our fellow Christians in the town.

This year we cannot meet as a community but are looking at the ways in which we can still celebrate the Season of Creation – online, in Creation Walks in the local environment which we have appreciated all the more during lockdown, in our individual actions and campaigns, and in the liturgy of our live-streamed Masses.

