

Holding up the world

Our front cover is by a young Palestinian artist living in Gaza, Azza Shaikh Ahmad. It was painted in 2022 before the ongoing desecration of human lives and land. Could she still produce art so full of vibrant colour and hope now, I wonder? Not that she can paint as her home is destroyed; may she be safe.

All our articles in this issue point to darkening situations, whether it's from geopolitical instability and war, climate and ecological collapse, increasing inequality, the fraying of democratic rights. Can we keep holding up our world to the light? Can we ourselves reflect the light of Christ?

Chris Rose of The Amos Trust writes of the human and ecological cost of the war in Gaza. As he states, it's not enough to hope that things will improve, we must find our focus – where will we invest our passion and energy? Yet he writes: “We cannot fragment our desire for a better world for all are interconnected.”

This interconnection of all of creation, of all actions and issues, is a key message of the Pope's encyclical of 2015, *Laudato Si'* which 10 years on, continues to inspire and challenge. Martin Davis, a Green Christian founder member

celebrates its ongoing legacy in the Laudato Si' Movement, whilst wishing its message was more central to the Church's teaching. Whilst the Church is beginning to awaken to its prophetic calling to serve and preserve our world, is it too little, too late?

Other contributors echo this but give some wonderful examples of what some churches and groups beyond are doing to raise awareness and care for our world: whether lament for polluted rivers with bishops and Red Rebels, making Eco Church a reality, engaging in prophetic protest, and defending the right to do so.

Alan Heeks writes of the need for intentional communities existing beyond the established churches and this will be explored in a forthcoming online workshop. It will also be part of the discussion at our Annual Members Meeting on November 15th with the theme: **Building on the Rock – true resilience for stormy times.**

A vision of *shalom*, of right relationships within our interconnected world: with the divine, with each other and with all of creation, informs all we do within Green Christian. We provide resources and encouragement, fostering communities

that can support and inspire change. Finding our focus, as individuals, as an organisation, within our communities, in our churches, we must also recognise that we can't do everything.

I wanted to ask Azza about her painting and its possible meanings but she is currently uncontactable. To me, her painting says that we are stronger together – holding on, lifting up the world to the light, creating shelter, rejoicing in the joyful freedom of birds – and is that a dove of peace?

If it's possible for us, let's hold onto joy. As I wrote this, the Green Christian Chair, George Dow sent me “a wee Haiku, in these increasingly troubling times”

Tree Haiku

Amidst the chaos

Joyous branches dance skywards

Roots nestle in earth

If we can watch the trees dancing, and can walk freely in peaceful countryside; can we not also give support and speak out for those who can't be heard? Let's hold up the world to the light together. ■



Clare Redfern,
Editor