



Notes of Esk and Tweed Network Meeting

Carlops Parish Church

September 30th, 2013, 7.30 p.m.

The first part of the meeting, attended by approximately 35 people, was a talk from Bruce Ball of Scottish Rural College, on 'Soil, Soul and Sustenance'. His talk covered

- The global problem of soil loss, interacting with climate change
- Ways forward, based on ecological justice, environmental care, food security and the equitable use of time
- Spiritual aspects of soil, including appearance in the Bible as love, emphasising quality of soil, and representing faith
- Relating to the kingdom of God in terms of the inner life, justice and transfiguration
- Action points of taking time, being aware and living frugally
- That the connectedness of soil with the whole of creation is a pointer for how humankind should strive to live

This was followed by a lively conversation in which several of those attending took part.

The 'business meeting' took place after refreshments. Approximately 20 people participated from the following churches: Peebles Old, Eddleston, Lyne and Manor linked with St Andrews Leckie Peebles, Biggar, Penicuik North, Carlops. (All Church of Scotland)

1. Trevor Jamison, Environmental Chaplain for Eco Congregation Scotland, introduced himself and spoke briefly about his work, including his offer to come to churches to lead worship, preach and/or lead discussion or Bible study groups.
2. Mary McElroy led a conversation on increasing involvement in the network. Sadly, Nan Buchan could not do so, following the recent death of her husband. The following points were made
 - The arrival of a new minister at Biggar had been important in encouraging consideration of green issues
 - Mentoring relationships have good potential
 - The minister and Session have an important role in 'giving permission' which encourages new developments

- Network had been helpful to encourage those whose congregation was struggling with eco congregation work, helping them to recognise what they were already doing
 - Ecological issues were a sound base for fostering links between the wider community and the church
 - It would be good to contact other churches, encouraging them on the basis of what they are already doing, perhaps offering a questionnaire/checklist. Identifying the right person to whom to send this is important, as is a personal approach rather than sending a letter/email
 - There is potential to expand the network ecumenically, both with individual congregations and through local 'council of churches'
 - Agreed that Nan and Mary produce a draft questionnaire for use in approaching other churches.
3. Future dates – agreed to maintain the pattern of Spring and Autumn meetings, looking to cover both South and North of the area, looking to dates in April and September 2014. Peebles Old Church was offered as a venue for April and other possibilities will be pursued
4. Possible topics for meetings
- Conversations on current green issues, eg fracking or wind farms
 - Possible speakers were suggested but need to be explored further
5. AOB
- A series of 'Carbon Conversations' proposed in Peebles is looking for participants.
 - Contributions for the Midwives Training Project in Malawi would be welcome as people left the building, having consumed the fine tea, coffee and cakes!

The meeting concluded with a prayer, led by Trevor Jamison