***“I make you hear new things.”***

Isaiah 48:6

If we are honest with ourselves, do Isaiah’s words apply to *our* inability to change our ways?

God says to the children of Israel‘*I know that you are obstinate and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass!’* Isaiah 48:4*.* It would be easy for the people (and us) to dismissed this as old news, or indeed coming from the idols the people have adopted, but God had got in first saying *‘I make you hear new things, hidden things which you have not known”.*

The world *is* full of hopeful green shoots, or ‘*new things*,’ despite the perpetual headline grabbing bad news. Bishop Nick referred to the temptation to avoid the news in his Easter Diocesan letter, but encourages us as Christians to keep engaging with the wide world, whilst remembering Bruce Cockburn’s song ‘Don’t forget delight.’

He says: “There is a lot of noise in the world and in the church at the moment. But, like Jesus hearing the call of blind Bartimaeus *despite the efforts of the crowd to drown him out*, we need to listen for the real priorities of a bleeding world and remember for whom and for what purpose we exist.”

This refers to several topics discussed at the Diocesan Synod in March, including the need to divest our finances from supporting fossil fuel companies, where Bishop Nick said “Your response to fossil fuel divestment might be fed by profound concern for the future of the planet; but it might be driven by a sense of being too small to make a difference. Both approaches – or, rather, drivers find a biblical root: the creation ordinances in the early chapters of Genesis, a vision of the new heaven and the new earth in the Book of Revelation, or the gospel parables which tell us not to despise the smallness of small things.”

As we continue through Eastertide, the New Life message can be heard, smelled and seen, not just in the glad burgeoning of birdsong, the flowering currant, or green haze appearing over our woods and gardens; but also heard, smelled and seen in the reduction of polluting, chugging engines, proliferation of wind turbines, thriving hedgerows and flowering lawns and felt in the homes where insulation and double glazing are keeping us warmer and cooler through the seasons, than ever before.

So, as you witness the explosion of hawthorn blossom and watch the seedlings growing on your windowsill consider how God might be telling you some new green things along your path to reducing the carbon emissions your way of life is responsible for.

Is it a big change, such as looking at who your bank or pension provider invests in, as the Church of England is doing? Taking the train instead of a plane for a holiday? Or something more modest perhaps, such as Meat-free Mondays, or trying some ‘Oatly’ cream on your rhubarb crumble?

Our church has just gained the Eco Church Bronze award. It has taken some endeavour, but by listening in for new things and making small changes we are starting to make a difference in our church.

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