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Generous God, you provide all that we need to follow and serve you, as you make your love known throughout the world. Fill us with your light, so that it spills out wherever your love takes us. Amen.

A greener church

Part 1 – energy

by David Shreeve

David Shreeve MBE is Executive Director of the Conservation Foundation and was Environmental Adviser to the Archbishops' Council. Here he offers some ideas on how churches can become greener.

Very few people complain about churches being too warm! Good energy sense is good financial sense, too. We take our kneelers for granted, but what about some celebratory draught excluders? New lightbulbs can save energy and so can new boilers, but whatever the age, a regular service will help its efficiency. On cold days the congregation should be encouraged to sit closer together

in an area which is easy to warm quickly. Electrically heated pew cushions mean warmth is exactly where it is needed. Remember outside, too – those floodlights should be on a timer, adjusted regularly throughout the year and focused on the church, not the sky. Simple things can make a difference to energy use and they should all be done before thinking about solar panels and turbines. Beware of the sales representative, get good advice. Having a south-facing roof is only the beginning and is the easy bit.

You can get help and advice at: www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme

John Witcombe reflects on Luke 2:22-40

Throughout the dark, short days of January we've been reading of God's light sparkling in our troubled world, bringing hope to those waiting for redemption. This week we'll be celebrating Candlemas – the Feast of the Presentation. We have come, as it were, full circle from the beginning of Epiphany when we heard about the Baptism of Christ and how Jesus responded to God in adult obedience.

In the Presentation, we recall the obedience of Mary and Joseph, bringing the infant Jesus into the Temple to fulfil the Law. As we ponder this young couple making their way into the Temple courts, we also imagine Simeon and Anna, with a lifetime of waiting rewarded with the sight of God's promised Saviour, still a baby, but carrying in himself God's reconciling love, ready to reach out in forgiveness to a hurting world.

This is the continuing message of Epiphany – that God will provide what the world needs, and will be known to those who go looking for God – be they young or old, poor or rich, families, singles, from whatever background.

Those who come to Jesus find themselves part of a new family, with all the rewards and challenges that brings – but it is this family which is the hope of the world. Will you be a part of it? Will you play your part? God has called you into the light of Jesus Christ and you are invited to carry that light wherever you go.

Understanding Ordinary Time

by Alan Jefferies

Tomorrow marks the beginning of Ordinary Time. Alan Jefferies explains what that means and its significance in the Christian liturgical calendar.

Briefly put, Ordinary Time is that which falls outside the major Christian celebrations of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. The term is derived from the Latin *ordinalis*, referring to numbered weeks. Ordinary Time is divided into two parts – the first beginning after the Baptism of Christ in January and continuing until Lent, while the second follows Pentecost and lasts until

Advent. The liturgical colour is green, symbolising hope and spiritual vitality.

During Ordinary Time, Christians are invited to reflect on the teachings and ministry of Jesus, drawing lessons from Gospel readings that help to deepen discipleship. Despite its name, "ordinary" doesn't mean mundane. Rather, the focus is on the growth of the Church and the everyday life of faith. It's a time for Christians to live out their faith in daily routines, nurturing a steady, enduring relationship with God through prayer, service and community life.

“ This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

Luke 2:34-35