



26 March Christine Wetherell

Lent2021

Pharoah wouldn't listen to God, so through Moses, the sheer power of nature was unleashed in a series of devastating plagues. The power of nature is a gift we are only now beginning to understand how to use well.

I recently discovered a letter in a family prayer book from Joyce Grenfell to her 'unofficial' God-child. She wished that he would have a "Discovery of nature; of flowers, of birds and beasts. (just think of the design of a fern, a shell, a petal a feather; of moss and frost patterns!). These are our joy, our heritage, our responsibility to ourselves and to God. I love that thought.

Several years ago, as we approached retirement, David (my husband) and I decided we would try and fulfill a long-held dream – to build our own house. There was one firm condition in our minds – it had to be as energy-efficient as possible, a new discovery of nature. We had no idea where to start, except to take the proverbial plunge and see.

Our research made us realise we were on the back of a new wave of energy-efficient technology. But we had no plans, no plot on which to build. We knew where ideally, near a town, easy access to our friends and family, church and walks and found the ideal plot, with an old bungalow ready to go, and a beautiful but neglected garden. We just felt blessed and bought it the next working day. We planned the design, futureproofed and found a builder who knew more than both of us. It was hard work, most days on-site, endless decisions, the odd major hiccup, but 15 months after the build started, we were exhausted, but in our new home.

So, how energy-efficient are we? To the highest 'Passivhaus' standard. We have no central heating, no gas, generate the majority of our electricity; we have rainwater harvesting, are rewilding parts of the garden, and recycled as many of the original garden features as possible. Badgers, foxes, hedgehogs, toads and newts are regulars, so are increasing numbers of insects, spiders, and birds.

We have shared our experiences with architects, universities, self-builders, friends and family. Our home is more of a gift to us than we ever expected. For that, we are truly grateful and ever thankful for the opportunity we had to fulfil our trust in God and his creation. The power of creation is there not to be defied but to be harnessed as a gift. We know that houses like ours will be followed by many others to come as we learn to steward the earth properly.

Christine Wetherell, member of the Environment Forum

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Genesis 1:28

Information Point

Friends of the Earth is one of the biggest campaigning groups seeking to raise awareness of 'Green' issues in politics and society. Could you add your voice?

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/>