The environmental focus has also seeped into other acts of worship, with a regular Eco-Communion at St Helens each month, an Eco-Baptism on the beach last year, and a Mothering Sunday service with pupils which involved planting seeds. Worshippers have also travelled to London to join Christian Aid campaigns to lobby for action on the climate emergency.

Meanwhile, other churches are also responding to climate change. Worshippers in St Andrew’s and Church of the Resurrection in Farlington have pledged to take action towards a greener lifestyle.

Those who attended Advent and Christmas services were given cards on which to make their pledges. And on Epiphany Sunday, 25 cards were returned and offered at the altar as part of the congregation’s giving.

To help with their pledges, a bin runs the Eco-Church scheme and offers at the altar as part of the congregation’s giving. The church has been given a bronze Eco-Church Award by the national Church of England’s launch of #LiveLent 2020.

CHRUCHGOERS at St Peter’s Church in Petersfield are enjoying the benefits of going greener - they are seeing reduced energy bills alongside having cleaner consciences. Worshippers there decided to make environmental improvements to the church building in 2016. They put 27 solar panels on their south-facing roof, helping to generate the energy they need to keep the church heated and lit.

They also replaced all their church light bulbs with dimmable LED lights. Alongside their new, highly-efficient boilers, that mean the church’s heating and electricity bills have gone from £8,500 in 2016 down to £1,750. That’s despite the fact that they keep the church open, lit and heated at a steady temperature every day from 9am until 5.30pm.

And it’s before they get around £600 a year back for the electricity they generate via their solar panels - which can’t be seen from the ground.

The church has tried to make the churchyard an eco-space by putting up owl boxes and looking after trees. Their owl box is actually a recycled car tyre.

They’ve insulated the parish office, which has helped to keep the administration team more comfortable, and are putting in double-glazing. Our diocese also double-glazed the vicarage recently, all of which will save on energy bills too.

The church makes sure that it uses starch cups that biodegrade at church fetes and events - rather than plastic ones. And runs a special project in Ghana, where we have strong links.

Among the local charities helped will be the Sustainability Centre near East Meon, which shares practical solutions to inspire people to preserve our planet. If you know of other local charities that could be helped, please email rachel.houlberg@portsmouth.anglican.org.

The bishop’s senior team are also encouraging churches to take individual actions during Lent to help us think about reducing our impact on the environment. Those daily actions are available on our website at www.portsmouth.anglican.org/environment.

Bishop Christopher, the Dean, our Archdeacons and Diocesan Secretary want to set an example to the diocese by taking some of those actions themselves during Lent. They include taking part in meat-free Monday, picking up litter in their community, recycling items at church more effectively, and buying nothing for a day.

To follow their progress, check the diocesan website or follow @CoFEPortsmouth on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram during Lent.

GREEN IMPROVEMENTS SLASHED OUR CHURCH’S ENERGY BILLS

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Green improvements slashed our church’s energy bills

IN DEPTH: ENVIRONMENT

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