



October 2021

Services

Please maintain awareness of health and safety.

Sunday 3rd October Trinity 18

- 8.00 Holy Communion in Chesterton *
- 9.30 Holy Communion in Bletchington
- 9.30 Breakfast Church in Middleton Stoney
- 9.30 Morning Worship in Wendlebury
- 11.00 Harvest Thanksgiving in Chesterton
- 11.00 Harvest Thanksgiving in Hampton Gay
- 11.00 Holy Communion in Kirtlington
- 18.00 Evensong in Weston on the Green *

Sunday 10th October Trinity 19

- 8.00 Holy Communion in Bletchington *
- 9.30 Holy Communion in Wendlebury
- 11.00 Holy Communion in Chesterton
- 11.00 Morning Worship in Kirtlington
- 11.00 Harvest Thanksgiving in Weston on the Green
- 18.00 Evensong in Middleton Stoney *

Sunday 17th October Trinity 20

- 9.30 Breakfast Church in Bletchington
- 9.30 Holy Communion in Middleton Stoney
- 10.00 Zoom service
- 11.00 Morning Worship and baptism in Chesterton
- 11.00 Holy Communion in Weston on the Green
- 18.00 Evensong in Kirtlington *

Sunday 24th October Last after Trinity

- 9.30 Holy Communion in Middleton Stoney
- 11.00 Benefice Service in Kirtlington

Sunday 31st October All Saints and All Souls

- 9.30 Holy Communion in Chesterton
- 11.00 All Souls' Service in Bletchington
- 11.00 All Souls' Service in Chesterton
- 11.00 All souls' Service in Weston on the Green
- 16.00 All Saints and All Souls' Service in Middleton Stoney
- 16.00 All Souls' Service in Wendlebury
- 18.00 All Souls' Service in Kirtlington



1662 Book of Common Prayer services are marked with an asterisk



October's Celebration and Harvest Services

This year, as well as celebrating harvest, we will be holding a series of special services in each village. We invite you to come and enjoy being together, to give thanks for the beginning of the end - we hope - of the pandemic, and for all those, especially our scientists, doctors and nurses, who have done so much to help us all. It will, of course, also be a chance to remember those who have not been so fortunate, or whose lives have been blighted. There will be another opportunity at All Souls' Tide to remember those who have died, but the main emphasis of our services in early autumn will be on Harvest celebration and thanksgiving. Here is the list of services and associated events in October:

Sunday 3rd October in Hampton Gay
11.00 Harvest Service

Sunday 3rd October in Chesterton
11.00 Harvest Service followed by Bring and Share Lunch at 12.00

Sunday 10th October in Weston on the Green
11.00 Harvest Service followed by Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall at 12.00



All Saints and All Souls' Services

Every year at All Souls' Tide we have a chance to remember loved ones who have died, perhaps in the past year, or further back. This year our remembering has a special poignancy, as we will remember all those who have died in the pandemic. Perhaps you have lost someone in this way, or perhaps there is someone in your family, work or friendship circle whom you would like to remember? This is a chance to light a candle for that person.

If there is no-one particular you would like to remember do come as a member of a church to provide Christian sympathy and support to those who are grieving. The dates are on the front page.

Also in October

Harvest Bring and Share Lunch
Chesterton School Hall
12 noon Sunday October 3rd, after the
11am Chesterton Young Families Harvest
service
Auction and Harvest Celebration

Harvest Supper
in
Wendlebury
Sunday October 3rd
Limited number of tickets available

RISE AND SHINE CAFÉ

for all ages

Wednesday mornings 9.15 - 10.45
in Kirtlington Church
with fairtrade stall, rhymes, songs, Bible story



The COP26 Climate Conference will take place in Glasgow in November.
Here is a prayer about the environment:

Forgive us, Lord, for the damage we have done to the earth.
Forgive us that the rivers and seas have been polluted by the
waste of our civilisation.
Forgive us that the air has been turned foul by burning fuel and
radioactive emissions.
Forgive us that flowers, fauna and wild creatures have become extinct through our
relentless invasion of their natural habitat.
Forgive us that we have often valued profit more than the quality
of the environment in which people have to live.

Contact details

Do feel free to contact a member of the ministry team if you would like to chat over anything, or a churchwarden if you would like information

Ministry team

Rector: The Rev'd Gareth Miller
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Associate priest: The Rev'd Nick Ktorides
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Retired priest: The Rev'd Dr Paula Clifford
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Licensed Lay Minister:
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Children and Families' Co-ordinator:
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To send information, articles, news etc to the
Benefice Bulletin contact
joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com

If you are reading this in a printed version, do also look on the website
www.akemanbenefice.org.uk or email joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com for the rest of
the Benefice Bulletin, which contains...

- Focus on COP26 and Climate Change
- News from across the Benefice
- Notices

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Peter Driver 01869 350569
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Benefice Bulletin FOCUS - the environment.

The COP26 summit is approaching. What does this have to do with us?

Climate change and theology: a personal journey by Paula Clifford



In January 1993 the *Braer*, a ship carrying 85,000 tonnes of crude oil, ran aground off Shetland and broke up. Back then I was a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day and this was the only time I had to change my prepared script, at very short notice, because the whole of the next day's Today programme was to be given over to coverage of the environmental disaster that was emerging.

The challenge for me was to find a theological hook for what I needed to say, and I honestly didn't know where to look. In the end I turned to Romans 8: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only creation, but we ourselves ... groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies", a passage I used to suggest that the destinies of humans and nature were inextricably linked.

Had we known more about climate change back then the emphasis would, I suspect, have been less on environmental damage and more on the fact that the disaster happened during the most intense extratropical cyclone on record for the North Atlantic. A few years later I went to work for Christian Aid and found that my new colleagues were all too well aware of similarly unprecedented events: since the early 1980s farmers in central America in particular had been reporting an increasing number of extreme weather events that were devastating their crops, their livestock and their livelihoods. And of course there were many more reports to follow – rising sea levels in the Bangladeshi delta, droughts in Africa and soaring temperatures in parts of India, all of which directly affected some of the world's poorest people.

A major part of my work in the early 2000s was to lead a communications team in making all this known to the churches in Britain and Ireland (Christian Aid's key supporters), to chair the group that would launch a major campaign on climate change, and, once again, to grapple with the issue of theology. By then, of course, Christian environmentalists were beginning to put out their own messages, which typically built on God's promise to Adam in Genesis 1, that he would "have dominion" over all living things on the earth. So the climate crisis was put down to a failure in human "stewardship" but, it was suggested, we could still mend our ways. Nothing wrong with that, except that this approach mostly failed to take account of the issue of climate justice, which was at the heart of the work of the international development agencies: the injustice that global warming caused by carbon emissions was having the worst effect on the people who had done least to cause it. It was imperative that their suffering should be acknowledged and addressed.

In late autumn of 2006 I was invited by the World Council of Churches to attend that year's COP, which was held in the vast UN compound just outside Nairobi. It was there that all the WCC delegates sat down together one balmy afternoon and evening to debate (with the help of the famed Elephant beer) what a theology of climate change should look like, and this eventually led to my publication called, once again, "All Creation Groaning". What I remember even more vividly from

that time, though, was the intense anger of representatives of developing nations that was directed against the polluters of the global North, and their demands for compensation. “Give us the money [for adaptation] and get out”, cried the Kenyan Environment Minister, rather undiplomatically. I imagine similar sentiments will be expressed at the Glasgow COP as well.

The theological approach that I followed then, and continue to hold to, was a relational one, derived (for those who need to know) from the covenantal theology of the great German theologian Karl Barth. This is based on the conviction that there is a oneness, an interconnectedness, between people, creation and God, that has been present since human history began. In short, if our relationship with creation becomes flawed (through unrestrained pollution, say), then our relationship with one another is damaged (as the poorest countries well know) and so too is our relationship with God. It is in this breaking of relationships that sin lies, and as Christians we are called to acknowledge that and work to heal them. That is a huge task, and one which the church has largely failed to recognize.

In the summer of 2008, at the end of a year that I spent on secondment to Lambeth Palace as Archbishop Rowan’s advisor on climate change, I attended the Lambeth Conference of bishops, where we laid on all kinds of workshops and discussions on different aspects of the climate crisis. It was not a success: by and large the bishops were just not interested, although the Archbishop himself and the then Bishop of Oxford were a huge support to me. Among the more hostile ones were all but one of the Australian bishops, despite the terrible and worsening droughts in their own country.

At the same time, the Church of England, working out of Church House, Westminster, was running its own campaign, urging people to turn out some lights and not to use too much water when cleaning their teeth. They based this on the fond hope that if everyone did a little, other people would be led to do the same – problem solved. Sadly people are not that altruistic, as the current pandemic has shown us all too clearly. There was also an understandable but ultimately forlorn hope that the church could “take a lead”; this persisted for quite a few years, but despite the involvement of some well-intentioned and highly placed individuals, from the late Duke of Edinburgh downwards, the voices began to fall silent.

Since then, though, we have seen a growing and welcome understanding that lifestyle changes are part of our Christian lives – as we seek to repair our failed relationships. But this alone will not resolve the climate crisis. People have asked me for years, “what can I do?” and my answer has always been the same: “use your voice”. We can’t all afford electric cars, we can’t all afford to shop in the most sustainable way. But we do all have a voice: a voice that we can use in conversation with parliamentary candidates and with local councillors; a voice that we can add to online petitions organized by campaign groups and environmental charities; a voice that we can use to challenge local and national decision-makers. And that is of crucial importance, because a global crisis demands a global approach – through legislation (the UK’s Climate Change Act 2008 was the most advanced piece of lawmaking of its time), international treaties, local regulations. We can and should hold our elected leaders to account when their actions fall short.

This, I believe, is the necessary outcome of a theological model that echoes the question put to Jesus: “who is my neighbour?” Relational theology responds that my neighbour is a farmer in El Salvador whose crops have been destroyed by hurricanes, a family in Bangladesh whose rice fields have been contaminated by sea salt. Relational theology reminds us that together with all our neighbours we have a relationship with the created world that is in urgent need of being set right. And when that is done, our relationship with God our creator is surely strengthened.

What is the church saying about all this?

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople issued a joint message released recently, saying that climate change is “an immediate and urgent matter of survival”. Their plea is that “As leaders of our churches, we call on everyone, whatever their belief or world view, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us”.

To see the full text of the “Joint Message for the Protection of creation” go to <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sites/abc/files/2021-09/Joint%20Statement%20on%20the%20Environment.pdf>

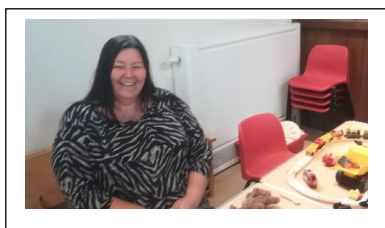
Some practical guidance for churches can be found in the Climate Emergency Toolkit. An audit of energy use (as completed by Kirtlington) is a good place to start... See <https://www.climateemergencytoolkit.com/>

What are we doing as individuals? Our roving reporter asked some of the people happily sipping coffee at “Rise and Shine” two questions on this:

1. What do you think about climate change?
2. Are you making any changes in your life in response to it?

Liz from Kirtlington

Yes, by default we have become vegetarian as we have a son with a degree in Environmental Science and another doing Earth Science, so we come under pressure, and are very aware. There are heated debates at home, because they are radical in their opinions but not necessarily practical in their solutions! Get rid of all plastics, how???

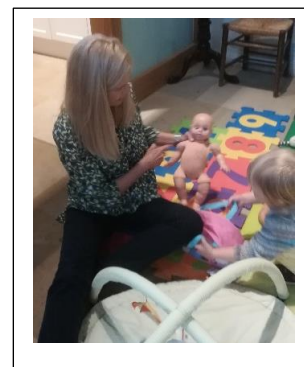


Natasha from Bletchington

It's a worry. But no, we haven't really made many changes apart from trying to switch off lights to save electricity, and trying not to use the car too much.

Michelle from Bicester

We are thinking about it; we want to take more action but are not exactly sure how. One of the things the whole issue about gas shortage made us realise is how we've got to be choosy about how we wean ourselves off our 20/30 minutes showers, and use energy, and what changes to make to our daily lives. We all have to do our part, but we get fed up with politicians making promises and then not implementing them or delaying - non-one wants to be the first mover.



Nick from Kirtlington

I have made no changes at all, primarily because the problems are so massive they need central planning. I already have an electric car because we've been encouraged to have them for the last 20 years. I don't fly at all now, because last time I did I was so aware of the extreme waste of all the resources. Human beings are by nature lazy, and reluctant to change, and so it all needs strong leadership. I contributed to the Insulate Now campaign, who are blocking the M25, because I'm a big fan of direct action politically. You can criticise them, but I don't have any confidence in the political establishment to deal with the whole thing, and the example our leaders give is poor.



Lydia from Kirtlington

One thing I'm doing is washing at a lower temperature, the lowest the machine will go. I think we should, and need to do that, plus it saves me money. With church, we are reducing the temperature of the underfloor heating, having taken advice, and the radiators will pull up the heat for services and special events. We'll be looking into draught-proofing and keeping the windows closed but Covid means we can't do that immediately.



Fiona, recently moved to Kirtlington

We have just reached the tipping point on climate change, and it's sad that the powers that be aren't doing anything about it. We hardly eat meat any more, especially beef, which is sad, and won't fly. I never use the tumble drier and have reduced ironing, but I don't know what the answers are. We are going to heat only the areas we are in and wear a lot of clothes in winter!

Elaine, working in Kirtlington, educated in S. Africa

I'm very obsessed about it; both here and in South Africa there are lots of problems, it's getting drier and drier so I recycle and try to use as little power and water as possible. I think more could be done especially by big industry. My brother thinks it's a conspiracy and climate change is part of a natural cycle, but I can see the evidence of pollution and waste, and that it's scientifically proven.



A very busy September across the Benefice

There were some very happy gatherings to celebrate harvest, in **Middleton Stoney...**



and in **Kirtlington...**





...where Joanna Clifford was presented with some French plant pots and a generous cheque to thank her for her work as Children and Families Coordinator.

and a very successful fete in **Chesterton**, which raised a stunning £830.



Other events:

Saris and Tea

Have you ever wondered how it is that sari-wearing Indian women manage to get their sari to look so elegant and stay that way throughout the day? The audience at the Sari and Tea event held in St Mary's Kirtlington in aid of Akeman Benefice funds was shown how - and some of them had a transformational go at it themselves, as the photos bear out! Not easy with an 8-metre length of material and only the occasional surreptitious safety-pin allowed!. Since there are apparently 80 ways to wear a sari we felt we were justified in adding to them when pleats wouldn't pleat and tucks didn't tuck, but I think you'll agree the results are great, and congratulations to those who had the courage to give it a go.



Shuba prepares Jill, our model



Lots to learn and look at

Thanks to Shuba Ktorides, whose idea and inspiration this was, we heard about the origins, development and varieties of saris and saw some amazingly gorgeous examples which made us feel very drab by contrast. Gemma Maybank showed a wonderful short clip of her brother's wedding to an Indian lady, and we drooled over the clothes they had worn for the occasion. Much fun was had by all as we ate some of the vast array of

cakes on offer including some authentic very pretty rosette cookies made by Nick. The bonus of a sari is clearly that there are no waistbands.

The take-home opportunity was some lovely creations upcycled from sari material, from Fairtrade at St Michaels in Oxford, so some early Christmas presents were bought!

If you want to know more about those, or about the Breast Tax story then stop me and ask sometime...

Joanna Clifford



A wonderful end result!



CHESTERTON YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

Still delighted to be back in church, we welcomed our young families back for our September service. Masks continue to be encouraged to protect the more vulnerable in our community, but the feeling of normality is creeping slowly onward.

There seemed to be lots of notices this month, but the one to reiterate here is that we are having a **Harvest Bring and Share Lunch** in the *School Hall on Sunday October 3rd* @12noon after the 11am Young Families Harvest service. We will also have an Auction and a Harvest Celebration from the children. It should be really good fun and a lovely way to celebrate harvest within our community. Do spread the word and **COME ALONG!**

Btw – We would love donations of things to auction – across the ages please.

We celebrated one birthday, which was Oliver. Happy Birthday Oliver – It was lovely to be able to sing Happy Birthday in Church again.

Our first hymn, Give me Joy, was followed by our prayers, where we thought about the people in Afghanistan, and also about being kind and welcoming to strangers here. We were then treated to some lovely music on the organ by Bella – she beautifully played ‘Ode to Joy’ for us, which bodes very well for our Harvest Celebration! This led nicely on to our story of the Kind Stranger, or The Good Samaritan. And, for the first time in months and months, the children were allowed to come and sit at the front next to me. It’s good to be back!

Our activity was to act out the story, and I must say, we have some budding little actors in our midst! Which again, bodes very well for our up and coming harvest production. Our second hymn, Kum Ba Yah, was a chance to reflect on the content of the service. To have compassion for others, be welcoming to newcomers and take time to be kind to others. *Acts of kindness cost nothing to give but can be priceless to the receiver.*

We closed as always, with the Lord’s Prayer and our YF’s prayer. We happily stayed on afterwards for refreshments and a chat... which again, is the first time in a long time.

Sue Ashdown



Catching Fire at the Olympics!

On Saturday 4th September, 24 children and their families converged on Kirtlington Quarry to celebrate the start of the new school year with a blast of energy! In our bubbles, we crafted Olympic torches for the opening ceremony and processed to the official music. We then began the activity circuit, throwing discus and javelins, performing balance beam routines, hockey challenges, ball relays, three legged races and more. The 'cereal hoop transfer relay' using spaghetti held in the mouth was incredibly funny and challenging, and some of us found great joy in watching the 'diving competition' where the soft toys performed some spectacular moves.



It was a thrill to see grandparents, toddlers and junior school children all having fun in this free community event. When the closing ceremony and prizegiving came around, we reflected on the Israelites in the desert seeing God's flame close by to them at night and knowing that he was with them and helping them be brave and trust in His strength. We left clinging onto well-deserved medals reminding us that whilst Olympics athletes are very dedicated and committed to excellence, we don't have to strive to earn God's love: He looks at us and sees precious gold.

Well done to the participants, and many thanks to Gemma for organising, and all those Olympic superstars who aided the event to happen.





New 'Rise and Shine Café' pours out a warm welcome

Wednesdays in termtime, St Mary's Church, Kirtlington 9.15-10.45am

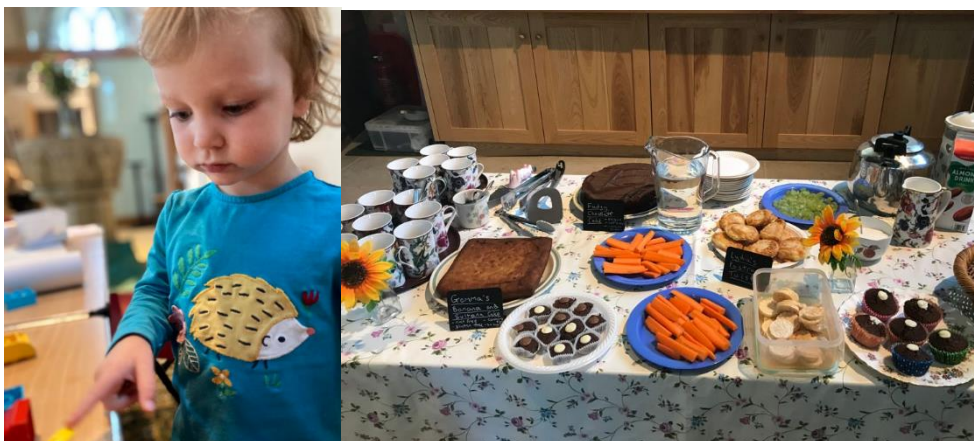
Our intergenerational café in Kirtlington Church is a space where all ages and the whole community are welcome to have a natter and be refreshed. We've got plenty of room to welcome those in need of a break, some caffeine, and some conversation. That could be parents on the school run, those who are retired, people who are working from home, or those caring for preschool children. We've had 3 buzzing café mornings each Wednesday so far, and it's been really encouraging to see locals from the villages and newcomers being able to connect and support each other, whilst enjoying the historic church architecture.

The homemade treats like Gill's tiffin and sausage rolls, Lydia's chocolate drops or Joanna's banana and choc chip loaf are very popular, and we've got plenty of steaming ground coffee, and a range of teas to suit all tastes. Preschoolers and babies have activities to engage them and so far we've played with pouring lentils, an ice cream counter, duplo, trains, playdough, magnetic building blocks, a play café and cars. Safely-prepared and healthy snacks and squash are on offer for the children. We shine best together and it's been a pleasure to see the generations mixing, wisdom and understanding being shared and people feeling so at home in church.

At 10.30 we end with a rhymetime, singing and an active telling of a Bible story. So far we've enjoyed books like 'In the Swamp by the Light of the Moon' and 'Monkey Puzzle' and active retellings of Psalm 23 and parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. It's a delight to witness the little ones enjoying the actions, bouncing around and bringing their liveliness to our mornings. We've been ending our sessions so far with the song 'Big Family of God', reminding us all that whatever our age and wherever we're at on our journey, we are each known and loved.

We'd be delighted to welcome you and your neighbours and friends next Wednesday- so why not come along and be encouraged!

If anyone would like to join the team, bake for Rise and Shine, or offer feedback, please contact gemmamaybank.akeman@gmail.com



News from Wendlebury

There was another dry stone wall morning on Saturday 25th, demolishing and rebuilding another section of wall.

Sue Jacobs will be organising two more days (rebuilding) in October, before we pause for Winter. If anyone from the other parishes want to join in / learn and do 'Community Outreach' in their churches whilst also saving money and making the churchyard walls look loved then they should come along / get in touch with us or Sue and / or just turn up! Future dates will be advertised.

Wendlebury Community Choir began rehearsals a few weeks ago in St Giles' for the December Concert - keep eyes open for more details / **date TBC.**

The Howard family held a wedding in the Church on Saturday 18th September, all went well and the couple were blessed with good weather.

The Harvest Celebration took place in St Giles' on Sunday 26th followed by light refreshments in the churchyard. (report in next Bulletin)

The village Harvest Supper to be held in the Village Hall had to be re-arranged (due to unforeseen circumstances) for Sunday October 3rd. Tickets are available but limited.

and from Bletchington...



The annual Ride and Stride event took place at the beginning of September. Its purpose is to raise money for the upkeep of the many historic churches in our area. This year one of the participants was Bishop Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester who completed his bike tour of fourteen churches with a visit to Bletchington.

And more from Kirtlington Church, which hosted an Art Workshop on the theme “Imagine the future you would like to inhabit” and punters of all ages spent 3 happy hours in the process, led by Jack Cowley, prize-winner of the WWF competition on this theme. As the Sustainable Kirtlington display pointed out, our environment can be changed by thinking creatively about “What If” rather than the despair of the current “What is”.



The Art Workshop was part of the village’s contribution to...

during which there was a display in church on the theme of climate change with some chilling facts and some encouraging ideas.



Notice:

**Friends of St Mary's
Volunteers needed**

Could you help for as little as 1 hour a month/week

We are looking for cake/biscuit makers
church cleaners/polishers
flower arrangers, café helpers
gardeners and fundraisers
also

Church key rota people 1 or 2 weeks a year to open and close our church

Your help would be greatly appreciated

If interested please email: kirtlington.akeman@gmail.com or speak to
Ann Mowat or Lydia Boodell

Exploring faith

We hope to run a group over the winter period for those who would like to explore the Christian faith or be prepared for confirmation. Please let Gareth or Paula Clifford know if you are interested or know of someone else who might be.

Please send in contributions to the November Benefice Bulletin to joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com by 24th October.