Notes from the Spirituality and Eco-Justice Strand:

As we began, we noted a quote from the Jesuit Palaeontologist, Teilhard de Chardin: *"We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, rather we are spiritual beings on a human journey."* We need to remember who we are.

The blurb for this strand read: Climate change is not just a political or scientific crisis, it is, at its core, a deeply spiritual crisis. Our various spiritual traditions help us to reconnect with the natural world and to remember our place within it. Faith communities offer collective meaning, spaces for ritual, spaces to mark transitions, and opportunities to encounter what is deeper within us and around us.

How might these deeper connections inspire and sustain the eco-movement right now? How might they encourage deeper ecological conversion and the collective action we urgently need?

Three words from Session 1:

1. Struggle: Acknowledging that we are in a deep struggle and this requires us to return to the Source of things; listening to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor which are inseparable;

- There is a unavoidable battle ahead of us which must be rooted in spirituality, multiplicity and diversity. We also need to escape from the 'binary' the either/or, us/them rhetoric.
- What will we do when we win? There is no winning, because with winning, comes losing. There can only be peace. We must move beyond ego;
- Acknowledge the suffering involved in this for all – a trauma which needs healing, a trauma which affects all on a very deep level as the fabric of our world unravels – we are deeply connected to this, even if we are unaware of it. Our faith traditions offer spaces to hold this;

2. Time: This is in relation to **Deep Time**; we are part of a 14-billion-year-old universe, one which continues to evolve; the word *emergence* kept reoccurring. We know now, thanks to science, what it has taken for us to be here, 14 billion years of emergence and within such a short time we are unravelling what has taken time to emerge.

Then there is our own sense of time – the time to do things; there is a paradox here: between the need to slow down to embrace a nourishing spirituality, to reconnect with the earth and the need for urgent action. We can only hold this paradox.

There is a monastic sense of time needed; e.g. planting a Yew tree to make bows but it takes 400 years for the yew tree to be ready; or in indigenous communities – 7th generation thinking. Laudato Si' speaks of intergenerational justice – so there is this ancient wisdom needed right now which must intersect with our politics. We need multi-optional decision making.

3. Awe: Fall in love again with the earth; Embrace a warrior pose (yoga) which means we must show strength but also ease;

Embrace beauty; See again the Divine Spark in Creation; Learn from creation, hear the message of creation, the song and the cry.

Session 2: We noted the difference between the strands – from data centres to Deep Time? We asked – what are the important leavers now? Voter Education, Behavioural Change, what are the positive tipping points – the moments of acceleration we need to hear and support?

We landed on 1. **Leadership** – we need imaginative leadership which embraces understanding and empathy; how do we share this spirituality with those in power? What about the powerless? How do we unlock the access to power for the grassroots?

2. **BEING:** A phrase deeply resonated with us – **Doing** has got us here; if we were **Being** we wouldn't be here – we need to return to **BEING**. We left a chair for the voice of nature – we paused to listen to this voice. We are one.

3. **Why are we?** While our challenge is immense: 20 years to get to zero emissions to avoid 2 degrees of warming – it is also an amazing time to be alive – it is THE challenge – it is us! We are the 'hands and feet' of this.

We are where we are because we have forgotten our Ancient Story. This ancient story is now a New Story about Emergence of our universe and we are where we are because we have forgotten this story which is about the Source of things, the Creator, Beauty, unfolding. If we really grasped this story, we would not be unravelling the vast ecosystems of our earth.

Strand Part 3:

At this point, people were experiencing a lot of grief. There was also the challenge of really wanting something concrete to come out of this.

Words which resonated in this session: the reality of wounds, the need for healing, letting stuff collapse, lament and ritualising lament, processing of grief in spiritual communities, acknowledging the pain our communities have caused.

We have economic solutions to economic problems and material solutions to material problems but this is not working.

We landed on the word **SANCTUARY:** When we think of our immediate and long term future we need a *radical collaboration* or *fierce collaboration;* a sanctuary which involves all disciplines, re-inventing and re-evaluating. The Sanctuary is not necessarily a physical place but a concept where communities come together to process, to nourish, to heal, and to act – putting gifts and talents at the service of all of this. We need places of rescue – for literal climate mitigation, tool kits, but also where the deeper work can take place. And for that deeper work we must engage with our ancient stories, rituals, values and beliefs;