

Caring for the Environment



**‘GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND INDEED,
IT WAS VERY GOOD.’**

1 COR 12:27-28 (NRSV)

**‘THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF, THE WORLD
AND THOSE WHO DWELL THEREIN’**

PSALM 24

Followers of Christ have a special motivation and call to care for the environment. Of course, this call is not unique to Christians, nonetheless as God loves creation, so the children of God are called to do the same.

The Anglican Communion has five marks of Mission.

- 1 To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**
- 2 To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**
- 3 To respond to human need by loving service**
- 4 To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation**
- 5 To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

Of these, the last clearly speaks of the call for Christians to care for and safeguard creation. God has clearly placed humans in a position of responsibility over creation. We recognize that all created things belong to God and that we are accountable to God as stewards of this amazing creation. God commissions us to rule over the creation in a way that sustains, protects, and enhances His works so that all creation may fulfil the purposes God intended for it. We are called and commissioned to manage the environment not simply for our own benefit but for God’s praise and glory. To reduce pollution and waste, to nurture diverse ecosystems and to tread lightly on the earth – it’s a tall

order when we live in complex structures that reduce our choices, and when the impact of our actions aren’t always clear.

However, failing to care for the environment in which we live results in suffering for all of God’s children, and perhaps most especially, those who live in poverty. In our own country this may mean lack of choice in energy suppliers, food waste and food miles (cheaper food is often shipped across the world), keeping inefficient cars and appliances as new models are financially out of reach and having to shop in cheaper, less ethical shops. We all live in complex global structures and making green choices and decisions is a complex business.

This in turn has a negative impact on the other marks of mission: climate change has a larger impact on developing parts of the world and reinforces unjust structures; large scale industrialisation leads to some parts of the world experiencing plenty, whilst others are in need, thus undermining any loving service and the message of the Gospel that we would hope to share. Pope Francis has called the global failure to act on climate change “a brutal act of injustice toward the poor”.

There are of course numerous small things we can do in our everyday lives that help protect God’s creation, such as conserving energy and reducing waste, being careful about where and how we shop for food and clothing, and how we travel and heat our homes and churches; in doing this we are answering the call to love our neighbours and the world. As church communities we can lead the way in active advocacy for change, and through the Eco Church Scheme, become a sign of hope and justice. As churches we can join together so our small individual acts unite to become something bigger, having a larger and more significant impact, in our communities and globally. Churches with wild church yards, solar panels on their hall roofs and with preaching and teaching on climate, will inspire and be a beacon for change.



FOUR KEY VALUES UNDERPIN THE DIOCESAN VISION OF LIVING GOD'S LOVE

- Imagination
- Joy
- Generosity
- Courage



As we face the reality of climate change and the need for radical and urgent transformation in how we all live together as global citizens, all of these values are necessary as local churches take seriously their call to be good stewards of God's marvelous creation.

GDPR

One key step in seeing how much carbon your church is using and comparing it to similar churches with the Energy Footprint Tool.

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/energy-footprint/>

The data provided by this tool will help us all better understand energy usage across the Diocese and build a better national picture which will help the whole Church of England on its journey to net carbon zero by 2030. The diocese will then help you work towards reducing your energy footprint – saving both carbon and money.

To support this important work The Church of England has produced some really helpful resources on the path to Net Zero:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church/practical-path-net-zero-carbon-churches>

Our own St Albans DAC also has lots of useful advice for parishes – many of which will save both environmental impact and financial cost:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Advice-to-parishes-on-NZC-based-on-the-DAC-strategy.pdf>

AN EXERCISE FOR PCCS AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Typically, in these Mission Tree booklets, we provide here a practical exercise designed to be an item of discussion at a PCC meeting. This takes the form of some self-reflective questions. However, for this fruit of the Mission Tree we recommend you take a look at the questionnaire devised by A Rocha for their 'Eco-Church' award. This questionnaire is in a very similar format to the other questionnaires that are part of the Mission Tree resources, the one difference being it is longer (97 questions in total). Therefore, it will not be possible to complete in a PCC meeting unless there are very few or no other items for discussion. Nonetheless,

you might discuss this fruit of the Mission Tree at a PCC, and provide copies of the questionnaire from A Rocha in advance. At the meeting your action point can be the creation of a small working group or an Eco-Champion who considers the questionnaire and so works toward the bronze, silver and gold Eco Church awards.

The A Rocha questionnaire can be found as a downloadable pdf at: <https://bit.ly/3v9CMvw> and or you can signup to begin the process of working toward becoming an eco church at <https://app.ecochurch.org/signup>

