DIOCESE OF
LONDON
STEPNEY AREA

Parish Creation Care Plan

This document is an invitation to all Churches and Christians in the Stepney area to be part of the Parish Creation Care Plan and a guide as to how to make that a reality. Our aim is to help Stepney churches to reduce the carbon footprints of both the churches and their parishioners, and to increase biodiversity in their localities.

Why does Stepney need a Parish Creation Care Plan?

Archbishop Justin says, “I speak as a Christian. Jesus teaches us that there are no greater commandments than to love God and love our neighbour. To abide by those commandments as a Christian today is to step up to the challenge of climate change and connected environmental crises.” (2021)

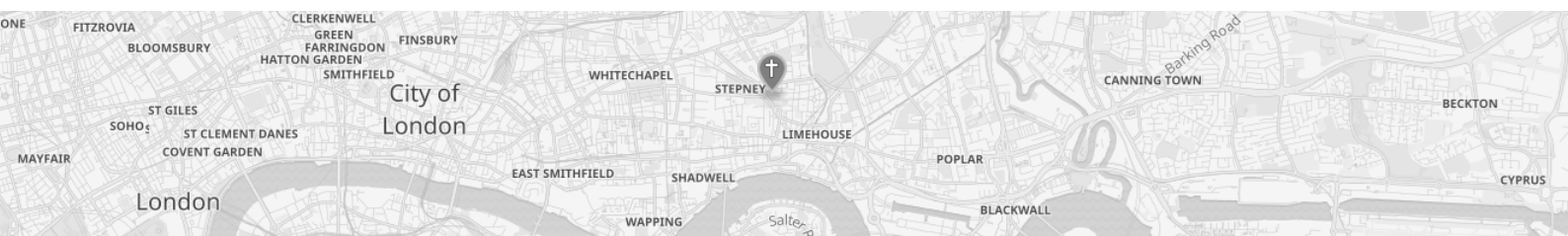
As Christians, Pope Francis reminds us, ”what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (Laudato Si, 2015)

The Fifth Mark of Mission for the Anglican Communion is: “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

In 2020 The Church of England’s General Synod passed a motion that it aims to be net zero by 2030. At this time a statement was given that: “This Synod, recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation, ... call upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, ... to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions ...”

Our London Diocese says: “We believe that care for the natural environment, which is God's creation, is a fundamental duty for all Christians.” Action on creation care is part of the London Diocesan 2030 Vision under Compassionate Communities. Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Mark 16.15”

Stepney Area Vision says: “We want every church to sign up to the Church of England’s carbon reduction targets via the ECO Church movement, Energy Footprint Tool or similar network.”



How can you execute the plan?

1. Commit this plan to God in prayer.

2. Engage the wider church and parish community.

3. Hold a parish discussion group to inform and assess the levels of interest and motivation and identify those with passion and energy to make things happen.

4. Put the plan on an agenda for a PCC discussion.

5. Appoint a Creation Care Group (or sub team of the PCC), comprised of 2 to 8 members, including a Creation Care Champion(s).

6. Register with the Eco-Church scheme at the website www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk and complete an initial survey.
   Bring the results to the PCC for discussion and future goal setting.

7. Create a 3 year Creation Care Action Plan within the existing Parish Mission Action Plan or separately alongside it.

8. Develop a Parish Creation Care Policy for all areas of church life and implement it.



Photo by Ruth Knight

What can we do as Churches?

The Eco Church Scheme breaks down into five areas for action. Here are a sample of examples of actions in each area to get your thinking started...

1. Worship and Teaching: Include Creation Care themes in your church's worshipping life, teaching and education.

For example
• Establish a creation care season in the church calendar over four weeks in September/October, which is also followed in the parish's children and youth work.
• Have a guest speaker and service themed around creation care each year: E.g. Climate Sunday.
• Include prayer for the environment regularly in the weekly intercessions and prayer diary.

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2. Buildings:
Reduce your carbon emissions as much as possible year on year, by greening your buildings, events and administration.

For example
• Switch your church's electricity to a 100% Renewable Supplier. Invite church members to consider doing the same. Measure annually and work to reduce the church's carbon based energy consumption; eg, gas & oil.
• Change to LED bulbs as much as possible

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3. Land:
Increase the biodiversity of your church's land and its potential benefits to human wellbeing.

For example
• Develop outdoor spaces on church premises for increased biodiversity; plants, flowers, insects, birds, bats and develop quiet spaces for people to be in nature, amidst the concrete of the city.
• Grow some food on church land and make the garden pollinator friendly.



4. Lifestyle:
Encourage and enable Christlike personal discipleship and lifestyle responses to creation care within your congregation.

For example
• Inform, educate and invite personal responses through sermons, courses, books, films and one-off evenings on creation care.
• Share Christ's call to live simply and consume and throw away less. Reduce, Re-use, Recycle.
• Inform and encourage the church membership to discuss and explore moving to a mainly plant based diet and lower, or eliminate meat consumption, particularly red meat, from their diet.
• Hold a fair energy switch day.
• Avoid the unnecessary use of personal cars, especially when coming to church.
• Join in with local actions and protests for environment change.

What can we do as Churches continued?

5. Community and global engagement:
Campaign for creation care and sustainable living in the local and global community.

For example
• Join and support a environmental charity (some organisations listed under resources below).
• Join on-line campaigns, sign petitions, write letters and lobby your MP and parliament for policies that put ecological and environmental wellbeing at the heart of decision making in all areas of life.

Who is involved in the plan?

This Stepney Area Creation Care Plan has been drawn up by clergy and laity from the Stepney Area and offered for use to each parish, with the support of our Bishop. It is a tool to help parishes assess their environmental response to date and integrate further creation care action planning into the heart of their parish's life and mission.

The plan is merely a framework and provides wide scope for the drawing up different priorities according to the context and circumstances of each individual parish. There are many resources and much knowledge in the Diocese and elsewhere which can help with creation care action planning and each parish does not have to re-invent the wheel.



Resources to help you

Mailing List
Join the London Diocese termly mailing on Creation Care:
www.compassionatecommunitieslondon.org.uk/signup

Speakers

There are a range of speakers available to spread the word on creation care…

- Stepney Speakers: Contact Rev'd John MacKenzie at St. Luke's, West Holloway who is the Area Lead for Creation Care who can recommend speakers. Johns email is john@saintlukeschurch.org.uk
- A Rocha UK can provide speakers. Their website is: www.arocha.org.uk
- London Diocesan Head of Environment and Sustainability: Brian Cuthbertson can be requested on bran.cuthbertson@london.anglican.org

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Films
Running a film night can be a good way to engage your church. Examples of films are:

- 6 free 10min videos E.g. www.drawdown.org/climate-solutions-101
- The Climate Race free from www.climateracefilm.org An inspiring 40 minute film both realistic and hopeful, with contributions from experts and change makers, it tells how humanity can rise to the challenge, and ensure a flourishing future.
- Kiss the Ground www.kisstheground.com
- Caring for our Common Home: www.ourcommonhome.co.uk Global Healing & Global Caring are free film-based events for parishes, groups and individuals. They will inform, challenge and equip people to engage with the vital call to Care for our Common Home.
- Don't look up (2021) - Netflix

Books:

- Caring for creation: Brian Davis (York Course), SPCK, 2020
- Active Hope: Joanna Macey and Chris Johnstone, 2022, New World Library
- Braiding Sweetgrass: Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013, Milkweed
- Renewing the life of the Earth: Christian Discipleship and environmental action, Rachel Mash
- Time to Act: Christian Climate Action, Jeremy Williams, SPCK, 2020
- Saying Yes to Life, Ruth Valerio, SPCK, 2019
- Christian Guide to Environmental Issues: M & M Hodson, BRF, 2017
- Laudato Si': Pope Francis, 2015
- Small Gases, Big Effect: This is climate change, D Nelles & C Serrer, Particular Books, 2021
- SOS: What you can do to reduce climate change, Seth Wynes, Penguin, 2019
- The Care of Creation: Focusing concern and action, Ed RJ Berry, Inter-Varsity Press, 2000
- Sharing God's Planet: a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council, Church House Publishing, 2005
- Sustainable Faith: A green gospel for the age of climate change, NL Bull & M McAllister, Nicola Bull, 2014
- Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world, Wangari Maathai, Doubleday, 2010
- Saving Us: A climate scientist's case for hope and healing in a divided world, Katharine Hayhoe, One Signal Publishers, 2021

Organisations and websites:

A Rocha: www.arocha.org.uk
Operation Noah: www.operationnoah.org
Green Christian: www.greenchristian.org.uk

Diocese of London: www.london.anglican.org/mission/environment
www.compassionatecommunitieslondon.org.uk/themes-of-work/caring -for-gods-creation

God's Acre: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

Secular Organisations:
For example: Transitions Network, WWF, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Fauna and Flora International, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), Soil Association, Compassion in World Farming, Plastic Oceans, Rainforest Rescue.

Prayer for the earth from Laudato Si':

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us

We would love for you to join us as we help Stepney churches to reduce the carbon footprints of both the churches and their parishioners, and to increase biodiversity in their localities.

CONTACT US: If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Rev John MacKenzie on 07929022185 or email john@saintlukeschurch.org.uk