DIOCESE OF
LONDON
STEPNEY AREA

Parish Creation Care Plan

Why do we need this Plan?

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 the following motion: ***"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 and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target ..."***

Our London Diocese says: ***"We believe that care for the natural environment, which is God's creation, is a fundamental duty for all Christians"*****:** www.london.anglican.org/mission/environment/

Action on creation care is part of the **London Diocesan 2030 Vision**: https://www.london.anglican.org/church-and-parish-support/creation-care/

Our own Stepney Area Vision states: ***"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"*****:** https://stepneylives.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Stepney-Vision.pdf, page 6.

How will it help?

This Plan offers a way for parishes in the Stepney Area to make these commitments a reality by:

- reducing their carbon footprints
- becoming more aware of ecological loss and damage
- taking concrete steps to address these issues, through worship prayer and action.



The Plan

1. Include in a PCC agenda the statements and commitments quoted on page 1, with this Plan as supporting material, for discussion and a decision about what action to take in response.
2. Register with Eco Church https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/ if you haven't done so already.
3. Keep track of your carbon emissions every calendar year by filling out the Energy Footprint Tool by 31 July in the next year, via your Online Parish Annual Return. This information will be relevant and important if you apply for a grant or faculty for any energy-saving project.
4. Hold a parish discussion or consultation to inform and assess the levels of interest and motivation and identify those with passion and energy to make things happen.
5. Appoint a Creation Care Champion, or a Creation Care Group as a Committee of the PCC, to lead on this part of your parish's mission, including driving progress through the Eco Church awards scheme, if need be seeking support available through the Area Creation Care Lead.
6. If you haven't already had an energy audit, apply for a free City Bridge Foundation Eco Audit*: https://www.citybridgefoundation.org.uk/funding/eco-audits and take the report to the PCC for discussion and future goal setting.
7. Create a Creation Care Action Plan within your existing Mission Action Plan or separately alongside it.
8. Develop a Parish Creation Care Policy for all areas of church life and implement it.
9. Engage the wider church and parish community.
10. Commit all the above to God in prayer.

** More detailed and in-depth specific energy audits are available if needed, for a fee (usually around £500, and can be obtained from Parish Buying).*
Higher energy-use churches may be offered one of these audits for free or at a reduced cost, as part of the Diocesan Net Zero Carbon support.



Photo by Ruth Knight

What can we do as Churches?

The Eco Church Scheme breaks down into five areas for action. Here are 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 an 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 Area 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 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, so no parish needs to re-invent the wheel.



Resources to help you

In the last few years there has been a substantial increase in the resources available to churches to help them care better for God's Creation. The most important for churches starting their EcoChurch journey are those provided by A Rocha UK https://arocha.org.uk/, who can provide a speaker. Their website also has advice sheets for each of the 90-odd questions that have to be answered when assessing whether a church qualifies for an award: these sheets have links to specific information and examples of what other churches have done.

Other organisations and websites:

Diocese of London: Creation Care: www.london.anglican.org/church-and-parish-support/creation-care/
Creation Care Quarterly Newsletter sign up: http://eepurl.com/iEls1g
Operation Noah: https://operationnoah.org/
Anglican Communion Environment Network: https://acen.anglicancommunion.org
Faith for the Climate: https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/
Green Christian: https://greenchristian.org.uk/
God's Acre: https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/
Christian Climate Action: https://christianclimateaction.org/
Tearfund: https://www.tearfund.org/

Films:

Running a film night can be a good way to engage your church. Streaming via the internet makes it possible to have regular film nights, both to inform and to spark discussion. Examples of films are:

- Project Drawdown's 6 free videos (90 minutes in total) https://drawdown.org/climate-solutions-101
- The Climate Race free at https://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 https://kisstheground.com/kiss-the-ground-film/
- Caring for our Common Home: Global Healing & Global Caring https://faithcafe.org/pages/ourcommonhome 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
- An Inconvenient Truth Al Gore's Powerpoint presentation: old but still accurate

There are many more. Contact your Area Creation Care Lead for more information.

Books:

There are now too many to list, although only a few address climate change from a Christian perspective. There is one of which every church would be wise to have a copy: Greta Thunberg's *The Climate Book* (Allen Lane, 2022). She has collected nearly 100 authors, mostly academics but also journalists and indigenous activists from round the world, to write short chapters about their specialty. The result is both readable, and the best overview of the whole field now available.

- *Renewing the Life of the Earth: Christian discipleship and environmental action* Rachel Mash (Grove Books, 2021)
- *Time to Act: Christian climate action.* Jeremy Williams (SPCK, 2020)
- *Saying Yes to Life* Ruth Valerio (SPCK, 2019)
- *Laudato si': On care for our common home* Pope Francis (St Paul's Publishing, 2015)
- *Laudato Deum.* Pope Francis, October 2023. *Available to download: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html*
- *Saving Us: A climate scientist's case for hope and healing in a divided world* Katharine Hayhoe (One Signal Publishers, 2021)
- *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world* Wangari Maathai (Doubleday, 2010)
- *Active Hope* Joanna Macy and Christine Johnstone (New World Library, 2022)

Secular Organisations:

For example: 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, the Climate Coalition, Transitions Network.

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,
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 each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. Amen.

We would love you to join us as we help Stepney churches to reduce the carbon foot-prints 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 your Area Creation Care Lead , the Revd Daniel Gerrans at

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