

eco-congregation

England and Wales



November 2004

Hello!

It's difficult to believe that I've been cycling into The Arthur Rank Centre since May! I've had many conversations with folk who are plugging away with trying to weave creation care into the life of their church, and heard many inspiring stories.

I hope that this newsletter gives encouragement and resourcing to enable you to continue this vital work of the Kingdom. Also, if any of you do talks about Eco-congregation, I have display material which you can borrow. Four A1 laminated panels or a banner stand all of which look stunning! Just let me know.

With all good wishes

Jo

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PS If you have an email address and could receive future newsletters via email, please email me and let me know! It saves paper and postage!

First Eco-congregation Award winners in the South West!

Barnstaple Parish Church

This church made particular use of liturgical opportunities in the church calendar, for example, environmental Lent disciplines (see next column), beating the bounds, and liturgies with a green focus such as an Eco-day on healing the brokenness in creation. And lots more! The local assessor described the work as 'a jewel of Christian eco-action in the heart of the community'!

St Thomas' Salisbury

The garden of St Thomas' House was converted into one that is sustainable, attractive to wildlife and able to be used by various Church and community groups. The church has become a focal point for the city on Fair trade. Brilliant!

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Operation Noah comes to Nottingham!

An interfaith event took place with Christian, Jewish and Muslim young people finding out about climate change, and taking part in the Operation Noah campaign. Two professional artists were employed who helped the young people design posters about the issue.

During this 4 day event, the first day was spent getting to know each other and meeting Mr Noah, who explained the problem of climate change. God has asked him to build another ark, because of rising sea levels. The young people said they would help.

Day 2 was spent learning life skills (shelter building, craft skills, and learning about endangered species). Then a day was spent working together at a local Nature Reserve, pruning trees, clearing rubbish and collecting brushwood to build animal hives.

They all set sail on Day 4 and voyaged round the world, rescuing people from devastated areas and saving endangered species. Mr Noah released a dove and when all was safe everyone came ashore.

What a fantastic event!

What could **your** church do to bring together young people in your local community?

Lent with a Difference!

Barnstaple Parish Church saw a good idea (developed by Lichfield Diocese) and used it in their own church: using the tradition of Lenten Discipline to highlight how we can live differently, and care for creation.

The young people were encouraged to recycle waste in week 1, save water in week 2, save energy in week 3, buy local food, and eat more fruit in week 4 and walk, cycle more in week 5 and given specific creation care ideas to do in week 6 (pick up litter, put out food for the birds, sow wildflowers in the garden etc).

Adults were challenged too with many suggestions for action during each week in Lent.

What could **your** church do to include care for creation in the worship life of your church?

St Michael's, Ashton on Ribble, Preston:

- hosted an 'energy roadshow' with the Borough Energy Efficiency Campaign to offer advice on reducing energy consumption and keeping warm in winter.
- put on a composting workshop with a local HDRA consultant in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

Who could **your** church work with to inform and get people active in creation care?

Eco-Congregation Award – affirming the church – witnessing to the world

Did you know that....

Christians Aware is holding its Annual Conference on "Faith and Environment" at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, Herts. from 7-9 January 2005.

Email: barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk or telephone 0116 254 0770 for more information.

The Diocese of Chichester has launched a specialist **website** on all aspects of Christian stewardship ... the most comprehensive in the C of E. See <http://stewardship.diochi.org.uk/> There's a 'Caring for Nature and the Environment' Page (click on 'God's Creation') with links to all the sites you would expect, including Eco-congregation.

Climate Change: How Christians Respond

- Conference
- Saturday 26th February 2005
- St Andrew's Church, Hatters Lane, High Wycombe
- Key speaker: Sir John Houghton and Canon Claire Foster
- Workshops and displays
- Final address by the Bishop of Oxford.

More details from <http://www.sageoxford.org.uk/climatechange.htm>

TearFund is encouraging its supporters and campaigners to reduce their contribution to climate change by changing to a renewable electricity supplier, Good Energy.

Is this something your church could do? You might first have to reduce the total amount of electricity used, and use the benefit gained to buy renewable. Have a look at the Friends of the Earth league table of those supplying renewable electricity, on: http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press_for_change/choose_green_energy/

TearFund is campaigning on earth care issues under the banner 'Whose Earth?' with some good resources for churches. Have a look at the website www.tearfund.org click on campaigning then 'Whose Earth?' or phone 0845 3555 8355.

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JRI (the John Ray Initiative) is putting on a half-day conference:

Biodiversity

at St Peters, Vere Street, W1
(the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity)
on Wednesday 1 December 1pm-4.30pm

The two speakers have both worked in the Amazon rainforest, Rocio Alarcon (who is Ecuadorian, is a specialist in plant biodiversity, tribes and tribal medicine) and Sir Ghillelan Prance FRS, former director of Kew Gardens and is currently scientific adviser to the Eden Project. Cost: £15, including sandwich lunch, payable in advance to the JRI office (cheques to The John Ray Initiative) JRI, Room QW212, Francis Close Hall, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ.

Quaker Green Action web pages have a section on how to make buildings less damaging to the environment:

<http://www.quakergreenconcern.org.uk/witnessbuildings.asp>

There are downloadable sheets on energy conservation, light, water, re-use and recycling, sources of heating, cleaning and redecoration, design, construction and extension. Also have a look at their 'Walk cheerfully, Step lightly' which is full of great ideas.

Something for you to collect at church!

Drinks cartons can be recycled! Have a look at the manufacturers website, and download the labels needed for sending off cardboard boxes full of flattened (and rinsed!) cartons:

http://www.drinkscartons.com/docs/recycling_uk.htm
(you have to scroll right down to the bottom of the page).

Chris Stafford, vicar at Croft with Southworth Christ Church and Newchurch, in the Diocese of Liverpool, has had a great book published with a section on the environment in it.

Called **OFF THE PEG ASSEMBLIES** - 30 fully worked-out sessions, it's a must for those of you who bravely go into school assemblies. Using puppetry, tricks and visual aids, all sessions give full preparation instructions, if needed, and were tried and tested on Key Stage 1 & 2 at St Philip's Primary School, Westbrook, Warrington. Published by Kevin Meyhew £15.99 ISBN 1-84417-211-2

Help available in South Tyneside

Laura Atkinson is the Sustainability Development Coordinator for Groundwork in South Tyneside and part of her role is to promote the Kerb-it Recycling Scheme. She is offering to come and run activities and talks for churches in her area. Please contact her! She is on 0191 428 1144 or email lauraatkinson2@hotmail.com

A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers,
half truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice,
oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom,
and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for
those who suffer from pain,
rejection, starvation, and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to
comfort them and to turn their pain
into joy.

And may God bless you with enough
foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference
in this world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot
be done. Amen

A quick guide to what's on around and about

<p>17th Nov London</p> <p>People, Planet and Politics Is economic growth compatible with sustainability? A debate with Michael Meacher, former Minister for the Environment. Other speakers to be confirmed. 7pm Hampstead Old Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, Hampstead NW3 4QP. Admission: £7.00 RSVP and Inquiries to Peter Lang, London Representative for Resurgence 0208 809 2391</p>	<p>27 Nov</p> <p>Buy Nothing Day. Have a look at www.buynothingday.co.uk - its free!! But what a cheap way into looking at issues of consumerism.</p>
<p>17th Nov London</p> <p>Nuclear Power: The answer to Climate Change? Debate organised by Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Bernard Ingham (Supporters of Nuclear Energy) • John Gummer MP • Roger Higman (Snr Climate Change Campaigner, Friends of the Earth) • Jeremy Leggett (CEO, SolarCentury) <p>Stakeholder Forum is arranging an evening debate on nuclear power and climate change. It will take place from 7 pm to 9 pm (refreshments from 6.30 pm) on November 17 at The Window, 13 Windsor Street, London N1 8QG. (5 minutes walk from Angel Tube Station) The seminar will be initiated by some of the leading champions on both sides of this debate. It is a timely debate since the parties to the Climate Change Convention will be meeting the next month in Argentina. £25 To book your tickets visit http://www.stakeholderforum.org jbettis@stakeholderforum.org Tel: 020 7928 6488</p>	<p>30 Nov Grantham</p> <p>Redressing the Balance - Unlocking the Market Place' at Stoke Rochford Conference Centre near Grantham on the A1 on the western edge of Lincolnshire. Organised by Churches Together in All Lincolnshire . Details of conference from Terry.Miller@lincoln.anglican.org This follows on from the successful conference 'Redressing the Balance - Making a Difference Locally' in May 2003 which focussed on Lincolnshire. The Regional Conference will address major issues of sustainability in the context of local and global economies and democratising the food economy, with workshops on practical opportunities for local food activities, the European food dimensions, the growing fair trade industry, the supermarket opportunities and more.</p>
<p>Sat 20 Nov Eastleigh, Hampshire</p> <p>READY, STEADY, GO! - Resources for the Social Gospel! An ecumenically-sponsored event. 10.00 am (coffee from 9.30) - 3.30 pm at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church , Eastleigh, Hampshire (bring your own lunch - tea/coffee provided). Main speaker: Revd Steve Chalke (Founding Director of Oasis and Faithworks). Workshops on housing problems, youth matters, ecological matters, refugees and asylum seekers. Contact David Hinks 01962 624806</p>	<p>1 Dec London</p> <p>JRI half-day conference on Biodiversity, held at St Peters, Vere Street, W1 (the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity) 1pm-4.30pm. Cost: £15, including sandwich lunch, payable in advance to the JRI office (cheques to The John Ray Initiative) JRI, Room QW212, Francis Close Hall, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ (see elsewhere in the newsletter for details of speakers).</p>
<p>26-28 Nov High Leigh, Herts</p> <p>Streams in the Desert High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts. A Conference organised by the Bible Society for those concerned with finding ways to explore our changing culture and to consider practical ways to engage with society. Workshops and plenary sessions on a variety of themes with plenty of scope for input on environmental justice. For details call 01793 418100 or email events@biblesociety.org.uk</p>	<p>2 Dec Oxford</p> <p>AChRE - A Christian Response to the Environment 7.30 pm The Rev Glyn Evans will explore the challenge of Sustainability and Rural Communities Old Marston Church Hall, Elsfield Rd, Oxford OX3 0PR</p>
<p>26-28 Nov Dunblane</p> <p>"The Desire for Speed and the Rhythm of the Earth" at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. The desire for speed is central to the ecological and spiritual disorders of modern society and people and planet are reaching terminal velocity. The rhythm of the earth and of our own bodies carries echoes of the mind of God. Christian spirituality contains powerful resources for helping us resist the quest for speed, to reorder our desires, and to slow down our lives. For more details contact Alistair Hulbert on Tel. 01786 823588.</p>	<p>4 Dec Liverpool</p> <p>Operation Eden, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral 10.30am to 12.00 Noon Dr Edward P Echlin "Jesus Christ and the Environment"</p>

For more information on events around the country on a website which is regularly updated, see www.christian-ecology.org.uk which is the website of Christian Ecology Link.

**Trying to galvanise your church into action on your churchyard?
Here are some websites and organisations that might be able to help!**

Yorkshire Living Churchyard Project

Elizabeth Hardcastle runs this project, and has an excellent website, with lots of downloadable and easily understandable information about how to care for churchyards in a way which promotes biodiversity. You don't have to live in Yorkshire to take advantage of the advice on the website!

<http://www.yorkshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/ylc.htm>

Have a look at this helpful article by David Manning:

<http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/living/living.htm> which contains a good introduction and a list of useful publications and organisations.

Cornwall's Living Churchyards

Have a look at another website which has a basic introduction to the care of churchyards with wildlife in mind:

<http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/projects/church/>

Dorset Wildlife Trust run a Living Churchyard competition:

<http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset/projects/churchyards.htm>

Find out more about Luxulyan's Churchyard in Restormel's recent activities:

<http://www.restormel.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9239>

Active group in Durham:

<http://www.communitate.co.uk/ne/neceg/page9.phtml>

The Durham Wildlife Trust Living Churchyard Group offers support to churches to develop wildlife-friendly use of church land. For further information contact Valerie.Standen@durham.ac.uk or Ben de la Mare (0191 386 4313).

For inspiration, have a look at the St Mary Magdalene, Hucknall webpage (an Eco-congregation award winner!):

<http://www.hucknall-parish-church.org.uk/churchyard.htm>

Also check out the St Paulinus churchyard activity in Crayford, Kent:

<http://freespace.virgin.net/stpaulinus.crayford/index.htm>

Lichens factsheet:

<http://users.argonet.co.uk/users/jmgray/churyd.htm>

Have a look at the newsletter of the group that operates in Berks, Bucks and Oxon:

<http://www.bbwt.org.uk/publications/newsletters/churchnews-aug-04.pdf>

Warwickshire's Living Churchyard site has some lovely pictures for inspiration!

<http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/heartofengland/churchyards.htm>

For info about dry stone walls around churchyards:

<http://www.dswa.org.uk/Publications/Leaflets/churchyards.htm>

Read about Faringdon Free Church Cemetery at:

<http://www.faringdon.org/thevirtualtour/fcc.htm>

and St Andrew's Clewer, Berkshire here:

<http://www.standrewsclewer.org.uk/churchya.htm>

'Wildlife in church and churchyard' by Nigel Cooper is published by Church House Publishing (2nd edition 2001) which might be helpful to some.

Books, books, books...

Reduce, reuse, recycle is a book by Nicky Scott which provides an A-Z of how to recycle anything and everything! £3.95 from Green Books tel 01803 863260

Green Living in the Urban Jungle

will be more appropriate for some of you than others! It's written by Lucy Siegle and designed for those starting from scratch who want to green their lifestyle. £7.95 from Green Books.

More webpages...

For younger members of your churches, you could direct them to a new website from Christian Aid, called

www.pressureworks.org which deals with global issues and environmental issues in a way which is much more accessible to youth groups.

Have you come across

www.adbusters.org ? It encourages us to see through commercial spin to the real values that are behind the media and advertising. Not for the fainthearted! This is the organisation behind **Buy Nothing Day** (November 26th this year). What a brilliant way to resist the onslaught of consumerism!!

From 'The Earth is the Lord's – an environmental manifesto from the Bishops of the Church of Sweden 1989':

Christians are called to follow in the footsteps of Christ and live as Reconcilers and Healers in the world. Rebuilders and Co-creators, Stewards and Intermediaries of the spiritual and the material.

Gregory of Nyssa summarised the relationship of people to the earth in this beautiful image:

“The earth is as a living body and the human race is the heart in this body. When the heart becomes sick, it is bad for the whole body – but if the heart recovers the whole body becomes healthy.”