



# newsletter

eco-congregation (England & Wales)  
www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales

## Special points of interest:

- How does Eco-congregation work?
- Year of Food & Farming
- Resources from partner MRDF
- Can your church take a lead in your community in going low carbon?
- Details of events
- Recycling info
- Ideas for what your church could do!

## Eco-congregation—helping churches get greening!

The Eco-congregation programme is a good way to weave creation care into every aspect of church life. The process has a beginning, middle and end:

1. Carry out the **church check-up** (module 1) - you can download this from the website under 'free resources'. It helps to affirm what is already happening in your church, and gives you some new ideas. Work out your **action plan** on the basis of the check-up, and make sure that you have at least 3 action points:
  - something **'spiritual'**: how are you greening your worship and teaching?
  - something **practical**: how can you green up your building, land and management?
  - something **community** orientated: how can you green your mission?

Including all these areas means that gradually the church asks environmental questions about how it does everything (rather than seeing 'environment' as something bolted on the side of church life). Now take the action plan to the decision-making body of the church, where the whole church can affirm the process, send off the registration form and order the relevant modules.

2. **Implement** your action plan! It might be helpful to have a small team, which meets regularly and monitors progress. Some churches find it helpful to have someone from some of the key groups in the church on the green team— it helps join up the thinking and planning. The resource modules downloadable from the website under 'free resources' can be a good place to start. Also available on the website are links to other resources which will help you get on with the action.
3. Apply for the **Eco-congregation Award!** There are some very good reasons for applying for the Award:
  - indicates to people in your community that you are taking environmental issues seriously
  - provides an indication nationally of what churches are doing
  - others get to hear your story, which in turn provides inspiration for action
  - the process is affirming for the church, and enables you to encourage other churches in your locality.

Churches that have taken part find that it helps them to engage more relevantly in worship and mission.

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## Resources for the Year of Food and Farming

Food! Everyone needs it! But how much do we know about where it comes from, who is growing it and how?

Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) based at the Arthur Rank Centre are the brains behind the Year of Food and Farming, which aims to reconnect children with food and where it comes from. There are lots of resources on their website: [www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk](http://www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk) and the Arthur Rank Centre have also produced some worship resources specifically for this topic ([http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/news/current\\_news/yff.html](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/news/current_news/yff.html)). Could you introduce this topic to your local school through assemblies?

Why not take it as a topic for the whole church? Most of us are so far removed from the processes of food production that we have little idea of the damage done to the planet by our demands for cheap convenience food. Why not get in touch with a local farmer, and ask her/him to talk about their experiences and difficulties? You could link the global situation in with the trade justice campaign.

## Resources



Methodist Relief & Development Fund

### Lent pack from Methodist Relief and Development Agency MRDF

The climate is changing. Droughts, floods and extreme weather are already having a big impact on the world's poorest people. To stop climate chaos we need to act together and act now.

Care for each other and for the world around us is at the heart of the Christian faith. There are many small but significant steps each of us can take to cut our carbon footprints.

Use MRDF's free study pack in your Lent group, housegroup or

youth group - and don't just change your light bulbs – change your life!

Six easy-to-use sessions including:

- challenging Bible studies and discussion questions
- stories from MRDF partners
- practical ways to respond.

Order or download from [www.mrdf.org.uk](http://www.mrdf.org.uk) or contact 020 7467 5132.

### RE posters for use with KS2

Jackie and Alan Gear used to run Ryton Organic Gardens (HDRA). They are Christians and have produced an excellent poster and activity sheet designed for use in RE lessons for Key Stage 2, about

the Christian responsibility for creation care. They are also suitable for use in children's groups in churches. To obtain a pack, contact:

Jackie Gear MBE  
23 Styleman Way  
Snettisham  
Norfolk  
PE31 7NT

### Kensington Area Conference

If you are into listening to podcasts, then you might be interested in the talks given at a conference in London in September: 'For Creed and Creation'. You can download them from [www.stbk.org.uk](http://www.stbk.org.uk) click on Listen to sermons (left hand menu) then 'Area Conference 2007'.

## Is your community 'going low carbon'? Is the church taking part?



You may have heard of the Ashton Hayes community, coming together to 'go zero' (ie reduce their collective carbon emissions). Could your church lead the way to doing this in your community? This is what Stirling Methodist Church has been doing. What a fantastic mission! If you are in a rural area, you can link in with the **Rural Community Carbon Network (RCCN)**

This initiative will raise the awareness of the actions that rural communities can take in response to the climate change

challenge. It builds on existing, isolated community action and will support other rural groups who wish to take collective action by providing access to an online panel of experts, good practice new media toolkits and a mentoring service linked to a small grants programme. RCCN will also link up existing groups with nascent ones for peer-to-peer support and knowledge transfer through events, twinning and online.

Have a look at the RCCN blog

on <http://ruralnet.typepad.com/rccn> where you can also download the Ashton Hayes 'Practical Toolkit for Communities Aiming for Carbon Neutrality'. Or look at [www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk)

Could your church take a lead in such a project? Is something happening already, and the church needs to get involved? If your church is wanting to get more involved in the local community, what better opportunity!

## Ideas for your churchyard

### Managing for biodiversity

Which are flowers native to your part of the world? Put 'postcode plants' into Google and find out at the Natural History Museum site.

### Finance

There is finance available for bigger projects: Gildersome Baptist Church has recently been awarded £10,000 from SITA - greenprints to do an environmental project with local young people.

### Allotments

How about some allotments? The church at Queen Camel used some reserved churchyard land to develop theirs, and, recent Award winner St Leonard's Balderstone have the local school vegetable garden in their churchyard. Members of the church donated equipment, expertise and support. The cook from the school has used the produce in school meals!

### Quiet gardens

Many churches are developing areas of their churchyard for

others to enjoy, encouraging people to engage with God through contemplation. There are a number of labyrinths appearing—in one church, it was made out of autumn leaves.

**Caring for God's Acre** is a charity in Herefordshire encouraging churches to engage with other groups who would be interested in helping to maintain the churchyard: natural history groups, heritage groups, adult education groups, etc. For advice contact them on 01568 611154 or [www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk)



Allotments at Queen Camel on reserved churchyard land

## Events: London, and Bristol

### Redeeming Creation, the heart of environmental mission.

Will you be in **London** in **November**? If so, and if you are concerned about the environment, you might well enjoy attending The London Lectures this year, held on Thursday evenings throughout the month. The subject is 'Redeeming Creation – the heart of Environmental Mission', and the four lectures will cover the biblical basis for environment care and action, and how Christians might resolve the debate around social action and evangelism.

The prestigious London Lectures are held at The London Institute

for Contemporary Christianity, St Peter's, Vere Street, London W1G 0DQ. This year's guest speakers are Peter Harris, International Director of A Rocha, and the Rev Dr Christopher Wright, International Director of the Langham Partnership International.

Tickets can be booked in advance or paid for at the door: £6 each. Series tickets - £20 for the series of four. Further info from: [Julie.Vickery@btconnect.com](mailto:Julie.Vickery@btconnect.com)

### Sound of Many Waters

This is a year long exploration of the need to care for the environment happening at Clifton Cathedral in Bristol, drawing on Catho-

lic teaching, insights, and networks. Two events have taken place already, and here are details of the other events happening over the next year:

**Night Vigil of Reconciliation & Reflection for Creation:**  
Friday 15th February 2008

**Dawn Chorus & Owl Prowl - Spring Has Sprung - Let's Explore:** Sunday 6th April 2008

**Saints & Sustainability**  
**United Nations World Environment Day:** Thursday 5th June 2008

**Celebratory Conclusion:**  
Weekend of 4th & 5th October 2008

Have a look at the website:  
[www.soundofmanywaters.org](http://www.soundofmanywaters.org)



## Conferences: 3 Nov , Lancaster; 12 –14 March, Swanwick

**“Keeping the Ark afloat: All Hands on Deck”** A conference on environmental justice  
**Lancaster 10am—4.30pm**  
**Saturday 3rd November**

organised by Christian Ecology Link and the Lancaster Diocesan Faith and Justice Commission. Speakers:

**Prof Leo Pyle** - climate change and the challenge of sustainability  
**Ellen Teague** - consequences of climate change  
**Sr Margaret Atkins** - theological plus workshops

Contact Margaret McSherry on

01524 383081 or Laura Deacon on 01524 33858 for more details.

**National Rural Conference: Swanwick 12—14 March**  
**“Sustainable Countryside – The Christian Responsibility”**

When the temptation is to think merely about maintenance this conference aims to look forward to a sustainable future:

- for our churches, our environment, our agriculture
- for our countryside

**Main Speakers:**

**Sir Donald Curry KB, CBE,**

**FRaGS** is the Chair, Sustainable Farming & Food Implementation Group.

**The Rt Rev Alan Smith** is Bishop of Shrewsbury

**The Rev Prof Timothy Gorringe** is professor of Theology at the University of Exeter

More information and Booking forms are available on The Arthur Rank Centre website at:

[http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/training/rural\\_conference\\_2008/booking.pdf](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/training/rural_conference_2008/booking.pdf) or phone 024 7685 3060.

*For more details on other Christian environmental events, go to [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk) and click on 'Events'.*

## Waste recycling

The first place to look if you are wanting to get into recycling is Rev Jon Hale's site:

**[www.earthresources.org.uk](http://www.earthresources.org.uk)**  
He has a background in waste management and there is lots of information on his site.....

### Efreeko.co.uk

If you are surrounded by unwanted items that you would like to give away, if only you could find someone to give them to, then efreeko.co.uk might be one way. It is simply a website where people can list unwanted items, and search for items that they

need. Those receiving the items either have to collect or pay for postage.

It's free to register, free to use, and everything on the site is FREE.

“Giving useable items away to folks who have a need for them rather than sending them to landfill sites is essentially what efreeko is all about” says Jo Passmore, web developer, committed Christian and co-founder.” We believe passionately in people giving to people

and efreeko not only enables and smooths that process, but in turn helps reduce the massive amount of perfectly good 'stuff' that ends up in landfill sites.”

There are **other similar sites:**  
[www.freebay.uk.com](http://www.freebay.uk.com)  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and plenty of others. Check out other sites on the Module 8 page under 'free resources' on the Eco-congregation E&W website: [www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales](http://www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)



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[www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales](http://www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)

Arthur Rank Centre  
Stoneleigh Park  
Warwickshire  
CV8 2LZ

Phone: 024 7669 2491  
E-mail: [ecocongregation@arocha.org](mailto:ecocongregation@arocha.org)

## The Churches' Environmental Programme

Eco-congregation provides a framework to get churches involved with environmental issues. Start with the church check-up (module 1), draw up an action plan, download the modules, get on with the work, and then apply for the Award!

Set up initially in partnership with Encams, it is now a project of:

**A Rocha UK**  
13 Avenue Road  
Southall  
Middlesex UB1 3BL  
Registered Charity 1089276

The Eco-congregation office is at Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

All material is freely available from the website:

[www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales](http://www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)

It is helpful if you register your church after working through the church check-up (so that we can build up a national picture), and receiving the Award is a way to publicise your activities, and encourage other churches to get involved!

All donations gratefully received: please make cheques payable to 'A Rocha UK'. Thanks.

**Find more resources on the web:**

**[www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales](http://www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)**

## Recent Eco-congregation Award winners

Congratulations to these churches which have received their first or second Award:

- **St Leonard's Balderstone**
- **Boldmere Methodist**
- **Ponteland URC**
- **St David's Eastham URC**
- **Redhill Methodist**
- **Christchurch Ross-on-Wye**
- **Crediton Methodist**
- **Old Bolingbroke Methodist**
- **St Paul's Chichester**
- **West Worthing Baptist**

This represents a fantastic amount of work by hundreds of people, all working to green the life and mission of their church.

Here are some of the things that churches gaining their Award have been busy with:

- 'Spiritual'**
- eco commitments made by congregation in a service

- using home made organic communion bread
- Time for Creation over 4 weeks looking at earth, air, fire, water
- green hymn written by children and set to music
- family service where everyone made a depiction of God's creation

### Practical

- bought melamine 'crocker' for use in church
- cycle stands fitted
- recycling unit in church foyer
- 25% cut in electricity usage
- water heater replaced
- adjacent field managed sustainably
- trees planted in church yard
- use and distribute low energy light bulbs

### Community

- Ecology Fayre held over 2 days for local people
- eco issues spreading out from congregation to local work places and community groups
- showing Al Gore film to local people
- green Christmas workshops
- publicising local council recycling facilities and getting people to use them
- church people volunteering to conserve natural habitats in the local area
- gardening club run by church members for local primary school with allotment being in church grounds
- monthly parish walks organised by church, open to all

Please consider applying for your Eco-congregation Award—it helps to keep the issue on the agenda!