

eco-congregation

England and Wales

Spring 2007

Newsletter



Eco-congregation news

Change of management for Eco-congregation England & Wales! As from 1st March, Eco-congregation (E&W) will be managed by A Rocha UK, not the Arthur Rank Centre, although my good relations with ARC will continue, as the office base will still be ARC. However, day to day management and support will now come from ARUK. Coming under the umbrella of an organisation committed to environmental issues, and bigger than Eco-congregation in terms of its active churches and friends means more help with developing the project, applying for grants, as well as a new family to get to know and work with! **I will send out separately in March details of my new telephone number and email address.**

I will still be based at:
Eco-congregation
Arthur Rank Centre
Stoneleigh Park
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ

Eco-congregation Award winners:

Clun Methodist
St Andrew's Methodist, Worcester
St Nicholas Sevenoaks
St Luke's Derby
Selly Oak Methodist, Birmingham (2nd Award)
Barnstaple Parish Church (2nd Award)
Congratulations to all these hardworking churches doing inspiring things in the churches and communities. Examples of activities the churches have been getting on with are:

- running an eco-club for young people with an organic garden and healthy eating tuck shop
- community recycling in church building
- professional energy audit of church leading to use of underfloor heating
- rare breed sheep keeping the grass and brambles under control on rear churchyard
- church bookshop has many books on 'green' issues
- work with local council on energy saving education
- notices round the church to 'Switch it off'
- regular 'green tips' in church publications
- church visit to local recycling processing plant
- work together with other churches to raise awareness
- tree planting sponsored by choir to offset travel to USA
- church venue for local environment group
- careful management of species rich churchyard
- promotion of local pool of eco information
- making public transport info available to people
- church walk on Rogation Sunday - liturgy on creation care and many more besides!

Churches info sheet on energy saving and renewables

Information sheet for churches on energy efficiency and questions to ask about renewables - this is downloadable from the website: www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales then click on 'free resources' and Module 7 Greening the cornerstone. It is one of the additional resources listed. Thanks to Matthew Rhodes of Encraft for writing this. Also you will find a lot of other resources on this page - take a look as I keep adding bits of information as I become aware.

Stop Climate Chaos Prayer of Commitment

The prayer written by David Pickering and used in one of the services which happened that day is available on the Christian Ecology Link website: www.christian-ecology.org.uk/scc-service.htm:

Prayer of Commitment

For the Earth's sake, for our children's sake, for God's sake

Oceans warming

Ice caps melting

Calming, caring God

Help us act to still the storm

For now, for ever

Storms destroying

Chaos reigning

Calming, caring God

Help us act to still the storm

For now, for ever

Planet shaping

Hope rising

Calming, caring God

Help us act to still the storm

For now, for ever.

Take Practical Action to stop the 'killer in the kitchen' - a suggestion for Module 12: Global neighbours

Indoor smoke from domestic fires claims 4000 lives a day in the developing world, yet the international community is failing to act. Join Practical Action's campaign to tackle the 'killer in the kitchen'.



Around the world, poverty condemns nearly half of humanity to cook using fuels such as wood, dung, charcoal and coal. The dependence on these fuels is leading to alarming levels of deforestation and land degradation in many poor countries, and results in two million tonnes of biomass going up in smoke every day. And the smoke from burning these fuels turns kitchens into death-traps, responsible for 1.5 million deaths every year – a life lost every 20 seconds. Women and young children are the principal victims as they spend many hours a day cooking by the fire, inhaling levels of smoke over 100 times the recommended limit.

The international community has acted to combat other major threats to health in developing countries such as unsafe sex and dirty water and sanitation. Yet smoke, the killer in the kitchen, has been largely ignored. Practical Action (formerly ITDG) is working with poor communities to develop simple solutions to the problem, which reduce levels of smoke as well as cutting the amount of fuel needed for cooking and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, this is a global problem which needs a global solution, and the international community must do more to tackle it.

Please take action today and send the enclosed postcard to the International Development Secretary, calling for international action to address this neglected killer. Alternatively you can send an e-version of the postcard here: www.practicalaction.org.

Useful websites:

www.eco-justice.org (US site with church resources)
www.Generous.org.uk (UK site for individuals wanting different things to do to live more generously, and do it together)
www.livesimply.org.uk (UK site of CAFOD/Progressio encouraging individual action)
www.livinglightly24-1.org.uk (A Rocha site for encouraging individual action)
www.columban.com/maecotheo.htm (UK site: online reading recommended by the Columbans)
www.piczo.com/paynemark (one Eco-congregation contact told me about his son's website - and here it is!)
www.GreenSeniors.org (ever thought you were too old to start campaigning? Be inspired by these active retirees!)
www.direct.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndGreenerLiving (UK site with lots of other links on all aspects of greener lifestyles)
www.fcrn.org.uk (UK Food Climate Research Network research on food chain issues)
<http://climatechangeaction.blogspot.com/2007/01/contraction-and-convergence-short-video.html> (great short video about Contraction & Convergence)
www.creationchallenge.org.uk (The Methodist/URC network)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk (defra site for individual action)

Events

There is now a link on the Eco-congregation website direct to the What's On page of the Christian Ecology Link site. This is the most comprehensive list of national environmental events amongst the churches in the UK.

Network for Peace AGM and speaker

Guns and greenhouse gases: War, Peace and the Environment
Saturday 10th Feb. 2007 at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London.

Speaker - Dr Stuart Parkinson of Scientists for Global Responsibility.

mail@networkforpeace.org.uk www.networkforpeace.org.uk

JRI conference (www.jri.org.uk)

Trinity College, Bristol: "Environmental Decision-Making. Does Theology Help?" 10th March 2007.

Speakers include Dr John Bimson (Old Testament, Trinity College Bristol) and Ian Arbon (Fellow of IMechE). Enquiries to JRI office: QW212, University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ. Tel 01242 714821

Climate Change Champions! Do you care about God's creation? Would you like to learn more about energy efficiency, renewable energy and environmental opportunities for your home and church? How to do an audit? How to inspire and engage others in your church? Where to start! Come to a training day to share ideas and find out more...

Saturday 10th March 10am – 3.30pm, Springdale Methodist Church Wolverhampton

Saturday 17th March 10am – 3.30pm, Shrewsbury United Reformed Church

Free to attend – Free light lunch – Free handbook

All welcome! Any church! Please help spread the word to others!

RSVP Katherine Shepherd at Marches Energy Agency for information or by 2nd March to book a place:

Katherine@mea.org.uk, 01743 246007

Lifestyles One person's lifestyle, another person's life: How do our choices impact on the Global South?

The Ecumenical World Development Consultation 2007

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire 21-23 March 2007

Featuring: Peter Heslam, Sir John Houghton, Joe Kapolyo, Andrew Simms and Elaine Storkey

This year's theme emerges from the growing awareness within the churches of our choices impact on the world, and addresses the relationship between care for creation and care for humanity. Through talks, theological reflections, workshops, discussion groups and worship the delegates will explore:

- Our use of natural resources
- Our use of wealth

- Our attitudes to growth and wealth

This conference will be a great opportunity to do some more structured thinking about the links between 'development' and environmental issues. All welcome!

Contact Helen Garton, Christian Aid, 35-41 Lower Marsh London SE1 7RT 0207 523 2048 for more information. You can download the leaflet from the Eco-congregation website home page (www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)

Sarum College, Salisbury: "Why should Christians Care for the Planet?" Saturday 24th March 2007

Led by CRES and JRI Associates, Dr Martin Hodson, Rev Margot Hodson and Dr Michael Morecroft.

Bookings to Fiona Hulbert, fh@sarum.ac.uk or 01722 424838.

The Scargill Community, based at Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales, runs a programme of retreats and events, many of which have an ecological theme. This year, Scargill's summer festival will explore the interconnectedness of life in all its wonder and beauty, Satish Kumar (editor of Resurgence magazine) will be a keynote speaker. Details at www.scargillhouse.co.uk, click on "Programme".

One Planet – Fit for Life? Caring for the Natural World

Weekend Workshop led by Mary Colwell & Seán McDonagh s.s.c. Mary Colwell is a producer at the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol. Seán McDonagh is a Columban missionary priest and well-known ecological writer and activist.

The weekend will be interactive, with times of reflection, discussion prayer and liturgy and make use of Emmaus' beautiful gardens.

Date: 18-20 May 2007 **Cost:** £130 residential

Location: Emmaus House, Clifton Hill, Bristol BS8 1BN

Start/finish times: Begins with supper, 6.30 pm, Friday evening; ends with 1 pm lunch on Sunday.

Booking forms, accommodation details & all further information: Angela/Fiona: administration@emmaushouse.org.uk or directly from our website: www.emmaushouse.org.uk
Telephone: 0117 9079950

Storm of Hope - Christian Ecology Link Celebration of 25 years and looking towards the future

Saturday July 7th 2007 - All Hallows by the Tower, London

Year of Food and Farming in schools Sept 07 -July 08

Colleagues of mine here at the Arthur Rank Centre are heavily involved with helping schools to make links between food and farming by producing resources to enable this to be looked at throughout the school curriculum. Could you be involved through contact with your local school? Could you help reinforce the message through what your young people are learning about in church about care for creation? To register your interest or find out more about the plans for the year, and how you can play a part, please contact FACE. You can email us at: Fiona@face-online.org.uk or write to us at: FACE, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ, or phone us on: 02476 853089 or 0208 203 5510.

News

New Animal Ethics Centre at Oxford

From Prof Andrew Linzey: "More than 40 theologians - out of 100 academics from 10 countries - have agreed to become Advisers to the new Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics – www.oxfordanimaethics.com - which aims to put animals on the intellectual agenda.

The Centre is the world's first academy dedicated to the enhancement of the ethical status of animals through academic publication, teaching and research. Academics world-wide from both the sciences and the humanities will be eligible to become Fellows of the Centre. It will act as an international, independent think tank for the advancement of progressive thought about animals."

A doctoral degree for Fr. Sean McDonagh

Sean McDonagh has written about environmental issues and the link to global debt and poverty for decades, and his achievements were recognised recently by the award of a PhD. His books have been pioneering in developing an ecological theology, covering many areas: GM, debt, water, death of species, and most recently, climate change. His passion arose from living in the T'boli hills in the Southern Philippines where he saw the tropical forests being plundered with appalling consequences for the T'boli people and the natural world itself. His influence is felt far beyond the Catholic Church of which he is part, and his thinking has profoundly affected the development of an ecological theology.

The Ringsfield Hall Trust

...seeks a part-time Education Officer at its Eco-Study Centre in Suffolk. They are looking for someone who

- ✓ has a passion for the nurture and care of children
- ✓ wants to teach children and young people in schools, churches and the locality (and adults too) engaging them in the issues of justice, peace and creation care
- ✓ could be dedicated to sustainable development and simplicity in the context of an open creative, imaginative slightly chaotic and exciting way of life
- ✓ knows that helping to run an independent charity and residential centre is hard work, never ending, thankless, funny, satisfying and fulfilling
- ✓ is willing to work with an open Christian community

10-15 hours per week £16,000 per annum pro rata

For more information about their new Education Officer post starting on 1st March, contact: the Centre Directors, at Ringsfield Hall, Ringsfield, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 8JR or info@ringsfield-hall.freereserve.co.uk or 01502 713020

Books

"Good Food Stories - our choices make the world of difference" by Tony Hodgson Published by Shephard - Walwyn (Publishers)Ltd £7.95 ISBN 0856832456
Stories about local food initiatives around the world, primarily in the UK.

"50 reasons to buy fairtrade" by Miles Litvinoff and John Madeley shows how consumers can benefit both people and the planet and can improve and even save lives. Read this inspiring guide and start helping to change the world today. Contact Helen Griffiths at heleng@plutobooks.com or 0208 374 6424. Published in time for Fairtrade Fortnight on 26th February.

"Changing Climate, Changing Church" Edward Echlin's latest writing is a condensing of his wisdom of the ecological life of Jesus, and the challenges presented to the church in the light of the current crisis. It is published by Catholics for a Changing Church. Send £2 per copy (cheque payable to "CCC") to Simon Bryden-Brook, The Secretariat, Catholics for a Changing Church, 1 Carysfort House, 14 West Halkin Street, LONDON SW1X 8JS

"Green Building Bible" I get quite a number of requests from people who want to make their church buildings greener. The second volume of the Green Building Bible is now out, and subjects covered include ...

- low energy design
- contemporary green building
- regulation
- renewable energy
- materials

Do recommend it to your church congregations, friends and colleagues. It is available from the website www.greenbuildingbible.co.uk cost £17.

Questionnaire on recycling- Jon Hale

Please find enclosed a questionnaire from Revd Jon Hale. He's doing some research on the extent to which the church is taking a lead in encouraging recycling, through provision of recycling schemes. Could you please help him by completing the questions, and sending them straight back to him (not to me!). Many thanks.

Eco-info:

Ecoflow

Revd Chris Stafford in Warrington says: "Ecoflow is a magnet attached to the boiler to increase efficiency. It works on gas and oil fired boilers anywhere (in homes, churches, halls... etc). On any boiler, some fuel is wasted and passes straight through the system into the atmosphere without actually being used. Fuel passing through a magnetic field apparently appears to allow the fuel to react better with oxygen and in doing so the fuel is burnt more completely. The boiler thus reaches temperature more quickly... and is thus more efficient. So pollution is reduced, and less fuel is used. They've done tests on the ecoflow at Hengrave Hall (reported a 14% saving in fuel consumption over a 5 month period) and at Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes (over 20% saving).

Apparently they can fit similar magnets (called motoflow) to cars so they burn petrol more efficiently. Cars are reported to have a better torque / increase in power, and have fewer harmful emissions, and a cleaner engine at the end of the day as fuel is burnt up efficiently! I was skeptical at first - but now we have an ecoflow on our boiler, I have to say that the hot water is hotter and the boiler does seem to reach temperature more quickly."

Reuse Networks

www.reusenetworks.org.uk

This initiative is one step on from Freecycle, and encourages people in neighbourhoods to link together to lend/give/sell items to prevent them going to landfill and to prevent people buying things that can be borrowed easily between neighbours. Could you set one up in your neighbourhood? Contact Lise Andreassen on reuse.netwks@btinternet.com or via the website.

Tetrapak recycling

www.tetrapakrecycling.co.uk

Some councils are now recycling cartons, otherwise, new address to send them to (you have to cover postage, though):
Recycling - Tetra Pak
c/o Perrys Recycling
Showground Road
Bridgwater
Somerset
TA6 6AJ

Did you know?...

Pass on 'green' news to Premier

...but preferably to the correct e-mail address: mynews@premier.org.uk not whatever I said in the last newsletter! Sorry about that. www.premier.org.uk click on "Events" & "Billboard". Premier now goes nationwide via the internet & digital TV etc

Water in non-plastic bottles

Amid concerns about the amount of waste from plastic bottles used for bottled water & that small amounts of plastic hormone-disrupting chemicals such as phthalates could leach into the water, Belu Water - founded last year - now produce water bottles from made from CORN STARCH. These are totally biodegradable. They leach only tiny amounts of harmless natural lactic acid, which is in the body anyway. The article says Belu Water is available from Waitrose. Belu say on their website that all their profits go to clean water projects. www.belu.org/home.asp

The Keswick Convention

...has produced an Environmental Action Plan to ensure that all its operations are environmentally friendly. You can see the Plan at www.keswickministries.org

Lifecycle analysis of pv cells

A recent literature review of all the lifecycle analyses of photovoltaic cells comes to the conclusion that roofmounted pv cells at a domestic level produce the amount of energy required in their manufacture in about 4 years. Read it at: <http://www.energybulletin.net/17219.html>

National Footprints

Daily Mail 15.10.06 "YEAR BY YEAR, HOW OUR GREED DEVOURS THE EARTH"

Every Briton uses the equivalent of 6 football pitches of the Earth's resources a year. Experts warned yesterday that our demand for land, water & food - plus the space we need to dispose of waste - is far out-stripping supply.

The 'ecological footprint' calculated by the WWF is based on the amount of land needed to graze animals for our food, raise crops & grow forests for timber. Britain's 14-acre average in the 14th highest in the world. The WWF's latest report "Living Planet" says the worst offender is United Arab Emirates at almost 12 football pitches a head a year. The average American consumes 9.5 pitches. Heating & building homes, food packaging & its waste & the cost of distributing food makes up over a fifth of our global footprint. Travel is the 3rd biggest component, including fuel, making & exporting vehicles. Paul King WWF's director of campaigns said "We urgently have to face the fact that we cannot continue to exhaust the Earth's natural reserves..."

Energy payback time

All energy systems produce an energy debt. Using this data it is possible to calculate the energy pay-back time - the time it takes for the energy system to produce as much energy as it consumes over a full life-cycle. If we assume a nuclear power plant operates for 40 years using today's uranium ore grades (very favourable), the energy pay-back time is 6-14 years. For photovoltaics in the UK it is 4 years and for wind it is less than 1 year.

<http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefings/energyfactsheet4.pdf>

Turn off the engine!

From: "Hillingdon People" Nov. 06 "LOCAL AIR QUALITY"
Idling vehicles result in needless exhaust emissions that cause smog & climate change which are linked to lung disease & asthma. An idling vehicle will produce 80% more pollution than one in motion. 10 seconds idling uses more fuel than turning off the engine & restarting it. Take part in the "Switch off your engine campaign." Schools in the London Borough of Hillingdon have been offered free signs asking drivers to switch off their engines while stationary. Drivers should turn them off while waiting outside shops, schools & workplaces etc. as this would make a big difference to air quality. www.hillingdon.gov.uk
Could your local authority do the same?

Quote

"There is nothing in our Christian faith which allows us to escape the monumental decisions and destinies of history. We must contend against evil, even though we know that we are ourselves involved in the evil against which we contend.....We must work for the greatest possible justice in human society and yet know that sinful self-interest will corrupt every scheme of justice which we elaborate" Reinhold Niebuhr

Funding

Do please remember that all contributions to the running of Eco-congregation are gratefully received! Contact Jo to find the best way of going about this, if you would like to make a donation. Methodist Relief and Development Fund continue to be the mainstay of the funding, with contributions from Hymns Ancient & Modern Trust, Marches Energy Agency

Lent Course - The Earth in Our Hands

'This course is not just for lent, it's for Life'

Prepared by Churches Together in All Lincolnshire Environmental Group, and BBC Radio Lincolnshire. This is an invitation to join together in planet Earth care, to act locally and think globally'. The course calls on us to proclaim an ecological Gospel of hope and action for the planet, drawing off the rich resources of the Bible in both Old and New Testaments. The 5 Sessions include interviews with people committed to environmental action. Themes include : Home is where our eco-effort begins, Tread

lightly on the Earth, Living consciously and simply consumer choice and trade justice, Waste is a misplaced resource & living in harmony with the natural world, and Building ecological communities. Introduction and roundup by the Bishop of Lincoln & Terry Miller CTAL, Chaplain for Environmental Issues. 16 page full colour Course booklet £2.00 each (plus p. & p.), free CD, backed by weekly radio programmes and BBC website. <http://www.ctal.org.uk/>

Prayer from the Christian Ecology Link Community of Prayer:

"Be content with what you have..." by Joyce Dinham
Creator of the Universe,
Lover of all that you make,
We thank you for this marvellous world
Which you have given us for our home.
Help us to show our gratitude
As much by our lives as by our words.
We acknowledge that so often
Our best efforts are tinged with greed,
The desire for more and different things;
And, at our worst we wholly disregard
The needs of others in this world.
Our greed is nothing less than theft
From those who have no power against us -
People, animals and nature's store.
So much we once have done in ignorance;
In these days we have no excuse.

Continue, Lord, to open our eyes
To the enormity of our deeds,
And our hearts to the suffering and despoiling
Which those deeds have caused.
We ask forgiveness, Lord, from you;
From the children, women and men
Whose hurts have come from us;
And from every animal, plant and rock,
The skies above and the good earth itself,
Which nourishes and sustains us all.
By the power of your Spirit
May we change the way we live,
And walk again in your healing ways,
O Creator of the Universe,
And Lover of all that you make.

Would you like to join with others who are praying and working for caring for the environment? There are 2 examples of such groups: one is the **Christian Ecology Link Community of Prayer** (the commitment is to pray at the same time on a Wednesday, and to contribute to a growing collection of prayers on the website, of which Joyce's above is one). Also there is the CEL Daily Prayer Guide, again available from the website: www.christian-ecology.org.uk

Also **A Rocha UK** have a Friends scheme to which you can sign up, and become part of the A Rocha family. Look on the website www.arocha.org.uk, or look at the Living Lightly commitment www.livinglightly24-1.org.uk

Eco-congregation website

Please note that I am in the process of putting lots more information on the Eco-congregation website, and it will hopefully provide a much fuller repository of all things useful to becoming an Eco-congregation. Eventually it will be redesigned to be much more interactive, and easier to update. I hope at that stage to keep a regular blog of all the bits of information that come my way. So please keep going back to the website, and particularly the home page, and the 'free resources' section. Under each Module heading, I'm gradually putting more and more information which I hope will be useful. For example, under Module 7 I have put lots of information sheets to do with heating systems, examples of renewables projects in churches, and so on. If you find useful info, please let me know and I'll put it up!