

spring 2009

eco-congregation newsletter



england & wales

New Co-ordinator for Eco-congregation E&W



We are delighted to announce that David Hughes has been appointed to take over from Jo Rathbone as the new project co-ordinator for Eco-congregation in England & Wales. David is based in Sheffield so that will mean new contact details for Eco-congregation—they will appear soon on the website: ew.ecocongregation.org.

Coming hotfoot from setting up Climate Stewards for A Rocha, David is looking forward to working in the broader environmental arena represented by Eco-congregation.

He says “Christians have so often been the driving force behind big issues like the abolition of slavery and the cancellation of unfair debt. Despite the progress that is being made by all sorts of organisations and individuals there is still a need for Christians to show that we really take seriously God’s command to take care of his creation. We can best do this by practical action in local churches and the communities they support”.

David and his wife Marika live in an incredibly well insulated flat in an old mill in the Peak District near Sheffield. His environmental credentials are incredibly enhanced by his daughter Claire who works as a wind energy consultant in Newcastle. Bird watching and mountaineering keep him entertained when not campaigning.

March for jobs, justice and climate - 28 March 2009

Put People First—*Decent jobs and public services for all ::*

End global poverty and inequality :: Build a green economy

On 2 April the leaders of 20 of the world's biggest economies meet in London to tackle the recession and global financial crisis. But even before recession, the world suffered vast poverty and inequality and faced climate chaos.

A change is needed: a fair distribution of wealth that provides decent jobs and public services for all, ends global inequality and builds a low carbon future. Creating a just, fair and sustainable world is the only lasting way out of recession.

On 28 March thousands of people will march through the streets of London. Will you be there with your church? Find out more from www.bond.org.uk and click on ‘campaigning’. Then do Earth Hour when you get home (see p4)!



PUT PEOPLE FIRST—Jobs, Justice, Climate

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The Big Lunch—Sunday 19th July

Encouragement to live low-impact lives.

David Shreeve, director of the Conservation Foundation and Church of England adviser on the environment has circulated details of a new initiative that will aim to encourage and help people live lower impact lives. He writes:

This is advance notice of an initiative to be launched soon which is being supported by Defra and being organised by a consortium of NGOs and businesses headed by the National Trust and Kingfisher Group. We Will If You Will aims to deliver mass mobilisation of sustainable behaviours encouraging and helping people to live lower impact lives.

The initiative will begin with a seasonal eating and growing campaign which will include The Big Lunch on Sunday 19 July. This is being organised by the Eden Project and aims to encourage as many of the 61 million people in the UK as possible to sit down to

lunch together with their neighbours. The organisers have high hope and great ambitions, but as many streets may not be suitable for being closed to transport this may be a chance for churches to act as hosts, by either extending existing parishes lunches or making facilities available to the community. Since the plan is to encourage local food production some churches may be able to provide space for food to be grown for the lunch, but plans need to be made well in advance.

To quote from the organisers: "On the day itself, for three or four glorious hours, traffic will stop, technology will be switched off, and people will meet, break bread together, discuss, laugh, and feel hope. However the legacy of The Big Lunch is much bigger. Crucially we hope to make permanent changes in these rejuvenated communities by giving people the tools by which they can strengthen activities such improving local amenities and local environments, share resources and support local charities."



Ecocell—a journey in practical discipleship

Are you looking for things to study as a home group? Or do you want to engage your neighbours in trying to live more lightly? Is your church in a Transition Town?

Ecocell is a set of resources from Christian Ecology Link which offers a set of tools to frame and guide your prophetic witness. Units cover issues such as water, transport and travel, shopping and food, waste, energy in the home and each unit is self contained. Units may be linked together to form a complete course.

Pete Redwood is the ecocell coordinator. You can contact him to buy the ecocell resource disc containing all units for only £5. (Cheques payable to Christian Ecology Link please). If you need further help Pete can give it to you. He is available to meet you and your group for the cost of his travel.

Contact Pete at:
41 West Bank, Scarborough YO12 4DX
01723 353640
predwood@christian-ecology.org.uk



Hope for Planet Earth tour 2009

Following on from the success of last year, A Rocha is again a core partner in the exciting national tour, **Hope for Planet Earth**. A Rocha is involved alongside others including Tearfund, Christians in Science, John Ray Initiative and Share Jesus International.

Coming to a venue near you (see details below), the tour will again be a fast-paced multimedia event. There will be information about the science of climate change, about the impacts on the poor and the planet, about what the Bible says, and what we can all do practically. To find out more visit

www.hopeforplanetearth.co.uk

It would be great to see you there, and why not bring your friends too? Whilst the event has a clear Christian framework it is deliberately suitable for those who may not share such a faith. Tickets can be booked through the website or by calling 020 8781 1740.

February dates:

Mon 23rd	Hamilton	Hamilton College, ML3 0AY
Tues 24th	Edinburgh	Morningside Baptist Church, EH10 4DB
Wed 25th	Selkirk Selkirk	High School, TD7 4EW
Thurs 26th	Newcastle	Brunswick Methodist Church, NE1 7BJ
Fri 27th	Harrogate	Starbeck Methodist Church, HG2 7LH

March dates:

Mon 2 nd	Manchester	Salford City Academy, M30 7PQ
Tues 3 rd	Wirral	St. Luke's Church, Hoylake, CH47 2BF
Wed 4 th	Coventry	Blue Coat School, CV1 2BA
Thurs 5 th	Cheltenham	St. Matthew's Church, GL50 3PL
Fri 6 th	Reading	Reading Community Church, RG30 4NX
Mon 9 th	Poole	Poole Grammar School, BH17 9JU
Tues 10 th	Worthing	St. Andrew's High School, BN14 8BG
Wed 11 th	Cambridge	St. Bede's School, CB1 3TD
Thurs 12 th	Tunbridge Wells	St. John's Church, TN4 9LG
Fri 13 th	Ealing	St Martin's Church, W3 9SG

Eco-congregation newsletters—more sustainably!

We would like to save money, and save the planet! So all future editions of this newsletter will **only** be published on the website—ew.ecocongregation.org—not by post. This will save 6 reams of paper, 1500 envelopes and an awful lot of time!

So... do we have your email address? If you don't think that we do, then PLEASE send it to us. We will send out reminders that the newsletter has been put on the web.

If you are not on email, could you enlist the help of someone else in your church? Ask them to send their details

(name, address, email and the name of the church and denomination) to: ecocongregation@arocha.org

This will ensure that someone will receive an email when the next edition is posted on the website.

Don't forget that the website is regularly updated. It has a host of additional info, for example: lots of contacts and links on every module page (see under 'Free Resources), blog for news as it comes in, FAQ, list of Award winners (with their activities), and an events page (send us details of your up-coming events!).



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Earth Hour: 8.30pm 28 March 2009

Earth hour: turning off your lights for an hour to show your concern about climate change to decision makers. WWF are promoting this—last year 50 million people turned off lights in 35 countries.

In 2009, WWF's Earth Hour marks the launch of our 'Global Deal Campaign' in the lead up to the international negotiations being held in Copenhagen in December under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These negotiations are critical for our planet's future: they must reach a strong international agreement to go beyond the first Kyoto Protocol commitments, which end in 2012.

You could play a vital role in leading and championing action on climate change in your local area.

Could you:

- publicise this event to your communities and encourage their participation
- publicise this event on your own web page and provide a link to the

Earth Hour website.

- Encourage church members to turn off the lights at home.
- Ask your members to organise events locally.
- Encourage groups to take part in the activities soon to be added to the WWF website for community groups.

WWF would value an early indication of your interest in taking part, and what form your support for Earth Hour might take. This support will form part of the 'foundation' on which we can build to encourage councils, communities, businesses, schools and the general public to help us reach our billion target. Please contact our Schools and Community Relation Team - via Donna Neale (email dneale@wwf.org.uk or phone 01483 412492).

Find out more from www.wwf.org.uk click on 'How you can help' then WWF's Earth Hour 2009.



Rainwater harvesting tank being sunk



Stories from the churches

Recent Eco-congregation Award winners **Christ Church Chiselhurst** had a major extension opened in September 2008, which included these features:

- refurbishing and reusing the church hall floor
- ground source heating for the new build
- substantial insulation installed in the refurbished building together with secondary glazing
- rainwater harvesting for loo flushing.

There are great opportunities to build in environmental features if you make that the aim of your design. These are the sorts of things that you could think about:

- design making most use of natural light (sun pipes?)
- maximising insulation (ceiling, walls, floor) to minimise future fossil fuel use
- ground or air source heating, with underfloor heating
- other renewables (eg wood fuelled boiler, solar thermal for hot water)
- low impact building materials (eg use wood, and reduce use of concrete)

Funding opportunities and other ideas are listed on the Module 7 page under Additional Resources. Examples of what churches have done there too.

Worship material needed for Module 2 re-write!

Eleanor is rewriting Module 2 Celebrating Creation, and would like to include lots of worship ideas from Eco-congregations around the country. Have you had any good ideas which have worked well in your church? She has listed some headings below. Any contribution under any heading is great, and it doesn't matter if what you have written doesn't fit the headings. Don't be modest: a little idea might be just the thing to get a new congregation started. She needs as much material as possible to get going!

Please pass this on to anyone who might be able to contribute, and send material to:

eleanormharris@googlemail.com
by 15 March or sooner if possible!

Material for module 2: ideas and resources for worship:

- Your stories of ways in which you have explored environmental themes in worship. You could describe one special service, an annual programme, or changes to the regular service.
- Prayers, liturgies, songs, dramatic items etc you have written.*
- Worship with the five senses. How have you used food, decorated the church, used music, dance, made

banners, worshipped out of doors etc? (pictures welcome)

- Hymns, anthems, songs you find good for environmental services (if possible include title, author and which book/number)
- Other environmental worship resources (books, websites etc) which you have found useful
- Short quotations: anything that's made you stop short and think about your attitude as a Christian to the natural world. These could be biblical but think much more broadly than that: anything from St Augustine to Winnie the Pooh. Ask around the congregation!
- Ways you have explored environmental themes in the eucharist.
- Off-the-wall, lateral thinking ideas.
- Ideas which didn't work or you wouldn't consider using, and what was wrong with them (she won't include these as such, but it will help the editing process!)

*Unfortunately you won't receive any royalties but your copyright will be respected. We will stipulate that material may be used freely in worship but not for commercial purposes, and your authorship should always be acknowledged. If you prefer you can ask for material to be included anonymously.



Eco-Twinning initiative from ARC

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) are encouraging churches to team up with places in Africa which are experiencing devastating climate change. This first hand experience given to the church directly may well be a stimulus for people to change their lifestyles, and reduce their carbon, and their oil dependency.

The idea is for a relationship to develop between the churches, and for the church this end to get involved

practically through financial support of a particular project.

The projects have been offered by the All Africa Conference of Churches to enable training, finance and solidarity through twinning.

Is this something that your church might be interested in? For more information visit www.arcworld.org, or phone 01225 758004 or email arcworld@arcworld.org

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Climate Change Day of Action—Thurs March 19th

Fighting for a fair deal for the world's poor—Thursday March 19, from 12noon in Coventry.

Organised by Christian Aid, Cafod, World Development Movement and Stop Climate Chaos.

In December the most important climate talks in history will take place in Copenhagen. We have a matter of months to convince Gordon Brown and other world leaders to put the world's poor at the heart of the agreement.

Make sure your voice is heard by those in power: join Christian Aid, CAFOD, the World Development Movement and the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition for a Climate Change Day of Action.

In a joint service at 12noon with Christian Aid and CAFOD, you can listen to renowned NASA scientist Dr James Hansen define how our actions

are affecting people around the world and the Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones, on the theological response to climate change. You can also hear about the real impact of a changing climate from people living through its effects every day.

After the service you can take action by joining members of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition on a march around Coventry City centre at 1.30pm. Finally, at 2.30pm, there will be the chance to say 'No to coal!' at E.ON's UK headquarters with members of the World Development Movement or to meet CAFOD partners affected by extreme changes in climate in Cambodia and Kenya and Kenya (in Coventry Methodist Central Hall).

Register for this event by emailing campaigns@christian-aid.org or calling 020 7523 2264.



Launch of Operation Noah in Coventry in 2004

Thinking of a wood-fuel boiler for your church?

Then you need to know about the Fifth Round of the Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme funded by the Department for Energy and Climate Change. The purpose of the Scheme is to promote the efficient use of biomass for energy, by stimulating the early deployment of biomass fuelled heat and biomass combined heat and power projects. It will do this by awarding capital grants towards the cost of equipment in complete installations.

This round is for England only.

It is aimed at businesses, organisations and charities in the commercial, industrial and community sectors that are considering investing in biomass-fuelled heat and/or combined heat and power projects, including anaerobic digestion.

There is no minimum grant aid in any one application and the maximum is £500,000 per installation.

Please note that the deadline for the receipt of applications is 16.00 on the 30th April 2009

All enquiries should be addressed to biocapitalgrants@aeat.co.uk

For information about this grant fund, have a look at the website: www.bioenergycapitalgrants.org.uk where you can find guidance notes, an application form, FAQs, etc.

Eco-congregation—investing in the future

The Eco-congregation programme is changing people and places around the country. The encouragement to weave environmental issues into every aspect of church life is bearing fruit as people begin to change their habits, and realize that looking after the planet is part of our worship, discipleship and mission.

Would you like to support this exciting venture? We would like to be able to communicate with all those churches which have not come across Eco-congregation, and give time to those who don't think that creation care is a priority.

Could your church give a regular do-

nation to ensure that other churches can discover the resources and support that the programme offers? Do you know of any grant giving body which may be able to give a donation or grant? Could anyone that you know give some time to help fundraise?

Please do get in touch if you know of anyone able to help in any way.

And in the meanwhile, please do consider giving something yourself to enable the development of the programme.

Thank you.



Supporting Eco-congregation England & Wales

Could you support Eco-congregation England & Wales financially?

Could you or your church give either a one off donation, or regularly, to help support the work of greening the churches?

Please complete the form with your details and return to the address on the right. Thank you. For setting up regular giving, please contact the office.

Name _____

Address _____

email _____

Please make any cheques payable to **“Eco-congregation”**. This is held in a separate budget head overseen by A Rocha UK who manage the programme.

Gift Aid declaration:

I would like A Rocha UK (Registered Charity No 1089276 to treat all donations since 6 April 2000 and future donations as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise. I understand I must pay an amount of Income Tax of Capital Gains Tax at least equivalent to the tax that A Rocha UK claims on my donations in the tax year.

Please tick:



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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 (Registered Charity 1089276)
13 Avenue Road
Southall
Middlesex UB1 3BL

The Eco-congregation England & Wales office is at Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. Jo Rathbone is the part time co-ordinator of the programme, and editor of this newsletter. David Hughes will be taking over at the beginning of April. His office will be in Sheffield.

All material is freely available from the website: ew.ecocongregation.org
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 'Eco-congregation'. Thanks.

Find lots of resources on the web:

www.ew.ecocongregation.org

Communications—let us know your email address!

Do we have your details correct on our database?

For example, if you are receiving a hard copy of this newsletter, it means that we do not have a working email address for you. Please email us, giving these details:

Your name
Your address
Your telephone number

Email address
Name of your church
or
Name of your organisation

Denomination (if relevant)

Please send these details to:

ecocongregation@arocha.org

and we will update our records accordingly.

We will only use these details to contact you about newsletters, and occasionally if there events coming up in your region in which you might be interested.

If you are not on email, could you find someone in your church who is, who could receive communications on your behalf? It's a great way to widen the circle of those involved! Ask them to email in your details.

