

Caring for Creation.....

Our consumption of the earth's natural resources is unsustainable and is contributing to climate change - especially through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), industrialised agriculture and deforestation. The impact of our energy-hungry lifestyles in the UK is being felt by people across the world, in particular by poorer communities who tend to suffer the worst effects of climate change - drought, flooding and extreme weather events - despite contributing least to the problem. As people of faith, we have a responsibility to act out of love: love for God; love for creation; love for our family, friends and neighbours; and to live in a way that protects the earth's natural beauty and resources for future generations.

But it can seem overwhelming. How can I make a difference in the face of such a global problem? Where do I start?

The good news is that there are relatively small things we can do which make a big impact. And almost every thing we need to do to fight climate change improves other aspects of life too.

Renewable energy from the sun and wind is plentiful and clean, it does not pollute air and water, offering significant environmental and public health benefits over fossil fuels.

Saving energy in our homes, and making them more energy efficient, benefits the planet and our bank balances.

Eating less meat and more vegetables can improve our health and that of the environment.

Buying locally-produced, seasonal food and Fairtrade produce generally means less intensive farming methods and pesticide use, which maintains healthy soil and stronger, healthier communities.

Increasing our knowledge about climate change, and informing ourselves about **how our money is invested**, empowers us to take action to create a more equitable, sustainable world.

Understanding what makes us happy, can **reduce our need** for things, and change our priorities.

We can decide to **reduce our carbon footprint** by walking and cycling more, and flying less. And spending **more time outside** helps us appreciate creation, which in turn will inspire us to do what we can to ensure its future.

None of us can do it alone, but we can all do something to change our lifestyles and start taking steps towards a hopeful and sustainable future.

Start small. Choose a pledge that feels manageable. Then try another....and another. Everything we do will have a knock on effect, influencing others around us. This is a journey to travel with others - small acts are greatly magnified when we act together!

And please share your stories of what you're doing - and how you're doing it!

Talk to one of the Eco Church group or email:

ecochurch@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk

.....10 pledges to make a difference

RENEWABLE ENERGY

I pledge to switch to a supplier of 100% renewable electricity.

www.greenelectricity.org

FOOD

I pledge to eat less meat, more locally-produced, seasonal food and to reduce the amount of food that I waste.

www.meatfreemondays.co.uk

TRANSPORT

I pledge to walk or cycle more instead of using the car, and cut down on flying.

www.1010uk.org/carboncrush

SAVE ENERGY

I pledge to reduce the energy and water I use at home and look at ways of reducing my heating bill.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

KNOWLEDGE

I pledge to find out more about climate change and learn about ways to live more gently on the earth.

www.climate.nasa.gov/evidence

DIVESTMENT

I pledge to find out more about divesting my money from fossil fuels.

www.gofossilfree.org

GRATITUDE & CREATIVITY

I pledge to simplify my life, value what I have and re-use, repair, borrow/share items where possible.

www.storyofstuff.org

THOUGHTFUL BUYING

I pledge to buy less plastic and to think about the environmental and social impacts of potential purchases.

www.thegoodshoppingguide.com

STAND UP FOR THE WORLD

I pledge to pray, write letters, sign petitions and take part in campaigns to support positive action against climate change.

www.christianaid.org.uk

GET OUTSIDE

I pledge to spend more time outside appreciating the natural world.

www.wildlifetrusts.org/StayWild

*I am delighted that **Eco Church** is becoming central to our life together for the Church in Westcott. The issues of Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability are crucial for the wellbeing of all throughout the world, and are central to the Christian faith.*

Simple 'love for our neighbours' should tell us we need to act, but caring for the environment is also integral to our understanding of who we are in God. We believe in a loving God who is the creating and sustaining force in the world, and whose glory is reflected in the creation. We understand that our humanity is inextricably linked with the environment; if we get our lives right with God all is well, but if we do not, disturbance, strain and stress occur.

Our faith tells us we have to act, but not despair. There will be the 'renewal of all things' (Matt. 19:28), a 'new heaven and new earth' (2 Peter 3:13), glorious harmony between God, man and Nature (Rev. 21). Responding to the challenge to live sustainably can help us to live well and be fulfilled, as we recognise that increasing wealth does not necessarily increase our happiness, but that caring for creation is integral to living as people of faith in the world.

I hope and pray we find God's liberation in being Eco Church.

Alan Jonas
Vicar of Westcott

Further Resources

The Church in Westcott is registered with **Eco Church**, an award scheme which helps us look at all aspects of how we walk on God's earth, and to take seriously our responsibility to love our neighbour, locally and across the globe.

Find out more at:

www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

For more on a Christian response to climate change: www.operationnoah.org and www.greenchristian.org.uk

For a way of offsetting your carbon footprint: www.climatestewards.org

To engage in campaigns to reduce poverty and work for climate justice: www.tearfund.org

Contact us at:

ecochurch@holymtrinitywestcott.org.uk

www.holytrinitywestcott.org.uk



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A simple guide