

# eco-congregation

England and Wales

Spring 2005



Greetings!

The Church of England has debated environmental issues at the General Synod (see the report produced for the debate: 'Sharing God's Planet'). The United Reformed Church had a similar debate last year, as has the Methodist Church in the past, and the Baptist Union has an Environment Policy, all pledging action on creation care. We need to push the church hierarchies to deliver on statements made at a national level, but we cannot do this without working ourselves at the local level. So keep going! You have the backing of the organisations...

We need to be aware of the signs of the times, too. And with the public more aware than ever of environmental issues, now is the time to speak out. It is always the time to act.

With all good wishes

*Jo*

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

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!

## Latest Eco-congregation Award winners:

### Redhill Methodist Church, Surrey

- ❖ systematic lighting survey and replacement of bulbs
- ❖ installation of a 'creation window' to aid worship and reflection

### St Michael & All Angels, Ashton-on-Ribble, with St Mark's, Preston

- ❖ new water meter installed
- ❖ composting workshop
- ❖ energy roadshow for community

### St Mary's and All Saints, Rivenhall with St Francis, Silver End, Essex

- ❖ management of churchyard for conservation, including 'grasshopper strips' providing a refuge from mowing for wildlife
- ❖ Nature and spirit retreats

### Rothwell Methodist Church, Northamptonshire

- ❖ active support of One World Week
- ❖ monthly recycling sale
- ❖ young people leading the way in creation care!

### Evesham Methodist Church – for the second time!

- ❖ recycling is now a way of life for church members
- ❖ impact on community about green issues + recycling

**GreenSpace is a not-for-profit organisation set up to help those committed to the planning, design, management and use of public parks and open spaces (see [www.green-space.org.uk](http://www.green-space.org.uk)). Here is an excerpt from their newsletter – could your church run events in your local park to encourage people to get outside and enjoy their green spaces?**

### Community Events Programme update - Park It!

Park It! is a major new project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and organised and delivered by GreenSpace. Running for the next three years, GreenSpace will develop a series of innovative and exciting community-led events in partnership with community groups, Friends of groups, local authorities and other organisations.

Park It! will run until October 2007, with events taking place in each of the three summers. This summer will see 12 regional events, one in each of the English regions, and a further three in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. A further 12 will take place in different locations in 2006. As the culmination of the project in 2007, there will be three major national events across the country.

We will shortly be announcing the 12 sites which we will be working with in the summer of 2005. If you'd like to find out any more about Park It!, the events or any of the resources which will be developed, the team can be contacted on 0118 946 9060 or email [parkit@green-space.org.uk](mailto:parkit@green-space.org.uk).

### Online events diary

GreenSpace is developing an 'Events Diary' which will feature as part of GreenSpace Online. This will list events taking place in parks across the whole of the UK, and is designed to become a one-stop shop for anyone wishing to find out about them and where they are happening. When the Events Diary is up and running, you will be able to advertise your events for free, as well as being able to search for events run by other community groups and local authorities.

Before we develop this resource, we are interested in finding out about the type and range of community-based events out there, from evening bat-walks to family fun days and much more. If your group has been involved in organising events in the past, or plan to do so in the future, please let us know a few details about your experiences and the types of events you've worked on.

### Get dumped cars towed away for free

For a short period, dumped and abandoned cars will be shifted from your doorstep without charge by 189 councils across the country, which is part of an effort to stop wrecks being dumped on the streets and in the countryside. This is part of a new drive organised by Keep Britain Tidy and was set up after research showed that some councils were spending over £80,000 a year shifting abandoned motors. To check if your council is involved in this programme, visit <http://www.encams.org/News/newsRelease.asp?ArticleID=98&Sub=0&Menu=0.26.12.60>. If your council is on the list, and you know of an abandoned car, you should ring them to get them to remove it for free.

**STOP PRESS!**

Zion United Reformed Church in Northallerton have just been give their second Award!

## Did you know....

**Event at Lee Abbey, Lynton, Devon Tel: 0800 389 1189  
For the Beauty of the Earth**  
4th to 8th April 2005 (Mon–Fri)

**Rev. Dave Bookless**, Director of Christian environmental charity **A Rocha UK** will help people focus on enjoying, understanding, and caring for, God's amazing creation. Times of Worship and other activities will be included, and of course there are 280 acres of Lee Abbey estate to explore as well.

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Use **recycled paper** for your church notice sheet/service sheet! And shop around for the best deals. Could you buy in bulk and sell on to other churches in your area? Contact Premier Paper who might be willing to talk! 0121 313 7444.

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The Daily Telegraph published a letter from Elliot Morley, Environment Minister on 20.11.04 in which he states that:

- ❖ The UK produces enough waste to fill the Royal Albert Hall every hour.
- ❖ Recycling aluminium uses 80% less energy than extracting new aluminium from the ground.
- ❖ Recycling 1 ton of paper saves enough energy to power the average 3-bedroomed home for a year.
- ❖ Recycling 1 glass bottle saves enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes.

Evesham Methodist Church raises hundreds of pounds through collecting aluminium cans. Could your church get into recycling and raise money at the same time?

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### ***Big green boiler scheme***

<http://www.green-boilers.co.uk/> offer huge discounts on a range of condensing boilers (according to their website!). Their helpline is: 0800 028 28 55

Condensing boilers are the most efficient type of boiler available. They convert over 90% of fuel into heat, compared with the 78% that a new standard boiler can manage. Condensing boilers do exactly the same job as a conventional boiler. They come in a range of finishes and are as easy to fit into your existing system as any other boiler.

#### **How do they work?**

Conventional boilers burn fuel in a combustion chamber, surrounded by a water jacket. This heats the water, which is then circulated around the heating system.

Unfortunately, not all the heat produced by the burning is used to heat the water. Much of it is lost to the surrounding air, and more disappears up the flue.

Condensing boilers use an extra heat exchanger, or a larger main heat exchanger, to scavenge heat from the flue gases. Less heat is lost, making the boiler more efficient.

**At a recent event it was pointed out that underfloor heating is the most efficient way of heating space – and that ground source heat pumps (making use of the constant temperature underground) is also extremely efficient, so if you are planning upgrade to the heating, think radical!**



### **Top tips for cool churches**

All of the ideas below apply to any other buildings which your church may manage, such as the church hall. As you consider each tip, make a note of how you would go about it, who should be asked to do it, and what long-term arrangements it might need. Remember you might need to discuss alterations with a denominational official.

- Use the building efficiently – don't heat the whole church if you don't have to
- Cure draughts. Search for them on a windy day. Then draught-proof doors and windows, leaving enough ventilation to keep the building dry
- Consider installing cushions for comfort and warmth inside the church
- Install low-energy light bulbs wherever possible
- Set heating controls so that comfort is reached as people arrive, and they turn off as the service ends
- Discuss with organisers of other user groups if they could schedule their activities for Saturdays or Mondays, so that the building is already warmed
- Take advice on the scope for installing insulation from the church's architect or Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Set up a lift share scheme, and promote it not only to people with infirmities and disabilities, but also able-bodied member of the church
- Install cycle racks

These tips are from the 'Cool Church Toolkit' produced by Operation Noah, which offers plenty more advice and ideas on combatting climate change. Download it direct from the Operation Noah website: [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah) - why not have a look? There are lots of other resources there to help you get climate change issues across to your church.

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### **Bulk Purchasing for Churches**

Could part of your activity to care for creation involve bulk purchasing and offering cheaper energy efficient bulbs to other churches, community groups or individuals? Perhaps you could launch such a ministry at Candelmas!

One mail order source which is good value is Ultima lamps. Mark Boulton from Cheltenham offers this service to his local churches. He suggests contacting [jeffrey.wang@akhter.co.uk](mailto:jeffrey.wang@akhter.co.uk) direct (mention Mark's name). If you live near Mark, you could call him direct for smaller quantities: 01242 674839.

## Climate change and the churches

You might like to read the suggestions I made to churches in Oxford Diocese for practical ways to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions:

<http://www.oxford.anglican.org/door/content.php?id=1482>

## Worship resources

Thinking of a tree service? I have one ready made! Though not written by me. Please email me and I can send it to you: [ecocongregation@rase.org.uk](mailto:ecocongregation@rase.org.uk)

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

## Sharing God's Planet: A Christian vision for a sustainable future

ISBN No: 071514068X

Price: £5.99

The earth is ailing and human beings are responsible.

This report explores the causes and consequences of human damage to the environment and suggests how Christians can respond. It argues that to perceive the earth as alien and inert matter to be exploited is fundamentally wrong. Human beings are part of God's one whole creation in which they have a unique role, as does every other bit of creation.

*Sharing God's Planet* outlines:

- The development of thinking that permitted environmental disfigurement
- The levels and effect of human activity in the atmosphere, the water systems of the earth, the soil and the world of living organisms
- Biblical and theological perspectives to underpin a Christian ecological theology.

This book contributed to the Synod debate on climate change in February 2005. It includes practical exercises, discussion points and activities for individuals and churches.

*'A great little book to set you thinking.'* David Bellamy

The full text of *Sharing God's Planet* is available as a download from the Church of England website: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/sharinggodspanet.pdf> or available from Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3NZ  
Phone: 020 7898 1451

## Bishops write new book on rural issues.

A new book "Changing Rural Life" has been published by SCM Canterbury Press (£19.99 ISBN 1 85311 599 1). Written by 14 Bishops from rural parts of Britain, it looks at the underlying rural issues and reflecting upon the part that the countryside plays in a predominantly urban society. It includes a challenging endpiece from the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is useful for all those working in rural communities and with rural churches. Discounted copies can be obtained from ACORA, Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ ([katrin@rase.org.uk](mailto:katrin@rase.org.uk)) at £18 including p&tp. Cheques payable to ACORA Publishing.

## Ideas for creation care in worship

### Environment Sunday - 5 June 2005.

Many churches worldwide are choosing this time of year to focus on God's earth and our responsibility for it. A Pack of Worship Resources is available from A ROCHA UK at <http://en.arocho.org/ukconsunday/index2.html> or by post from A Rocha UK, 13 Avenue Road, Southall, UB1 3BL.  
An optional donation of £3 is suggested for each pack.

### Global Week of Action on Trade Justice - 10-16

April 2005. Part of the 'Make Poverty History' campaign. For more information, including Worship Resources for Sunday 10th April, visit the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance Website at [http://www.e-alliance.ch/gwa\\_resources.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/gwa_resources.jsp)

### World Debt Day - May 16<sup>th</sup> is organised by the Jubilee

Debt Campaign, The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Street, London, N1 6HT. Tel.: 020 7324 4722. Worship and other resources are available at the Jubilee Debt Campaign website [jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk](http://jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk)  
Perhaps you could highlight the issue of ecological debt (see Andrew Simms book which can be downloaded from the New Economics Foundation website: [http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z\\_sys\\_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=65](http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=65))

### Sea Sunday - 10 July 2005. An opportunity to remember

and pray for those who work at sea, and the people who support them. Resources are available from the Mission to Seafarers at <http://www.missiontoseafarers.org/seasunday.php?h=5> and the British and International Sailors Society at [http://www.biss.org.uk/richtext.asp?page\\_id=29](http://www.biss.org.uk/richtext.asp?page_id=29) Why not use Sea Sunday as a way in to looking at the environmental consequences of overfishing the seas, or our demands for prawns and the impact on mangrove swamps in Asia?

### One World Week - 23-30 October 2005. The theme for

2005 is 'Promises, promises!' [www.oneworldweek.org](http://www.oneworldweek.org) - PO Box 2555, Reading RG1 4XW. Tel: 0118 939 4933  
E-Mail: [enquiries@oneworldweek.org](mailto:enquiries@oneworldweek.org)

## Faith in Rural Communities: contributions of social capital to community vibrancy ?

Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer for the CofE at the Arthur Rank Centre is looking for rural communities (maximum 3,000 population) with churches and / or chapels that are active but also reasonably representative of the type of community in the area. She says: 'We all know that churches and chapels play a very important role in rural community life and contribute significantly to the social capital of the settlement. The nature of this role however has not been well researched. This new project, a partnership between Coventry University and the Arthur Rank Centre, funded by Defra, seeks to discover, describe and assess the relationships between individuals and groups within a congregation and the wider community that contribute to the wellbeing of the community.'

Some of the projects on conservation in churchyards in rural areas have contributed to social cohesion by involving other groups in a village rather than just churchmembers. Or perhaps you hold a farmer's market in your church? Could you help Jill? Please give her a ring on 024 7685 3073 if you think you can help. It is specifically rural churches that she is looking for. By March 21<sup>st</sup> please!

## ***Could your church be the community focus for an energy project?***

If your church is considering major work, why not think about including state of the art energy efficiency measures and/or energy generation from renewables. There is often more grant funding available for environmental projects, for example, the **Community Action for Energy (CAfE)** is a pilot programme from the Energy Saving Trust that is designed to promote and facilitate local community-based energy projects.

CAfE is a network of people who share a common interest in community energy projects and ideas. Membership of the network is free and by joining you can keep up to date with news on community-based energy initiatives, as well as hearing about funding opportunities, free training sessions and other news from the network.

The Community Support Panel is a panel of experts with a wide range of backgrounds, which can provide free consultations for community energy projects. Advice is available through an on-site visit or via phone and results in the generation of a short project specific report.

The Community Action for Energy (CAfE) Support Panel can provide an initial half day of free support to help you:

- Develop your community energy project;
- Build partnerships, and
- Find funding for your project.

Further support may then be available after the initial half day consultation.

<http://www.est.org.uk/cafe>

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## ***Reflection Gardens [www.reflectiongardens.org.uk](http://www.reflectiongardens.org.uk)***

Are you planning an away day? Why not take a group to enjoy a fascinating set of gardens created to encourage encounter with God through his creation? It is near Rugeley in Staffordshire, and run by Revd Chris Polhill, and Anglican Vicar in Lichfield Diocese, and her husband, John.

There are five gardens, within 500m<sup>2</sup> that follow the Christian Spiritual journey using the ideas of St. Ignatius. Each garden also expresses an ecological concern so that there can be a dialogue between the spiritual journey and ecology, and that each can inform and enlighten the other. The Five gardens are, The Loving Creator, The loved and forgiven sinner; Discipleship; The Passion; Resurrection.

Contact Chris and John direct:  
Revd Christine and Mr John Polhill, Reflections, Little Hayes,  
Beaudesert Park, Cannock Wood, Rugeley WS15 4JJ  
Phone: 01543 674 474 Email: [polhill@surfaid.org](mailto:polhill@surfaid.org)

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## ***Recycling ideas***

Why not collect those plastic film envelopes that magazines sometimes come in? Then send them off to :  
Polyprint Mailing Films Ltd, Mackintosh Road, Rackheath Ind. Estate,  
Rackheath, Norwich NR13 6LJ, UK

Ensure there are no paper labels stuck on and mark for recycling.

## ***Environmentally friendly ideas for hatches, matches and dispatches***

### ***Hatches***

Why not get your church to buy some cloth nappies and give them to families expecting babies, to try and persuade them not to use disposables? There are lots of different types available now, and this will save families hundreds of pounds, as well as preventing us from downing in nappy-filled landfill sites.

### ***Matches***

Thinking about getting married?

- ❖ Consider having a wedding reception that reflects care for creation – food that is Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded! Traidcraft do very reasonably priced Fairtrade wine mail order.
- ❖ Use recycled paper for those invitations!
- ❖ Try not to purchase flowers grown in Africa or South America using cheap labour and flown in, but rather flowers or foliage from this country.
- ❖ Do you really need all those things on your wedding list? Or could you request donations to a charity? At least make sure that any appliance purchased is the most energy efficient one.
- ❖ What about buying a wedding dress from Oxfam?

### ***Dispatches***

- ❖ Has your church got any land which could be used for green burials? How about developing an area for wildlife conservation which could be managed to increase local biodiversity, and also be used for people who want to reduce the environmental impact of their death?
- ❖ There are plenty of environmentally friendly coffins available now (for example <http://www.eco-coffin.co.uk> is a firm based in Leicester making eco-caskets and coffins).

It is such a shame too, to think that those wanting a more environmentally friendly funeral have to go outside the church, when the church might be leading the way! Could churches provide rather more imaginative and creative funeral services, involving families much more in the whole process?

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### ***Home group study course***

How about using a course from Coventry Diocese (based on an original course from Hereford Diocese) for your home group? It is a challenging course, designed to encourage people to make changes in lifestyle which reflect our love for our Creator and the Creation gifted to us. Can you take up the challenge? It is available to be downloaded from the Coventry Diocese website: [http://covdioc.webspace.fish.co.uk/pdfs/env\\_lent.pdf](http://covdioc.webspace.fish.co.uk/pdfs/env_lent.pdf)