

**“To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and
sustain and renew the life of the earth”
– the fifth Anglican mark of mission**

Love into Action: let's go green for God!



Cathy Rhodes
Diocesan Environment Advisor
Sheffield Diocese
6 March 2021



Workshop plan

- Introductions: please use the chat which I will save, am recording too
- Overview of key issues
- Responding to the climate and ecological emergency: voices of young people
- Sharing your experiences and discussion
- Some ideas to start with...
- Being outside!
- Your ideas...including 12 June Eco Church conference
- Resource guide for reference
- *Note re Covid: follow current guidelines



A climate emergency

- Greenhouse gas emissions doubled since 1980. Average global temperatures rose by at least 0.7°C – climate change impacts nature at all levels.
UN 2019
- Extreme weather events, sea level rise and changed rainfall patterns are severely impacting millions of people across the world.
anglicanalliance.org



eu



uiuc.edu



Getty images

What is the church doing?

- The Paris Agreement 2015 aimed to keep global temperature rise 'well below' 2.0°C and to pursue efforts for a 1.5°C limit.
- Radical action is needed and organisations are adopting ambitious targets: In 2020 the CofE voted to aim for net zero carbon by 2030
- Other churches are declaring emergencies, stating plans and targets



churchofengland.org



Church Times



churchofengland.org

An ecological emergency

- Our planet's wildlife populations have plummeted by 68% since 1970.
WWF Living Planet Report 2020

- This loss is a direct result of human activity and constitutes a direct threat to human well-being in all regions of the world.

UN IPBES Plenary 2019



Guardian



UNEP



National Trust

Why should Christians act?

For the sake of...

- people living in poverty
- the earth and all living things, which are precious to God
- ourselves as our wellbeing is linked to that of the wider world



A Rocha

...and ultimately for God's sake.

Ruth Valerio



Archbishop of Canterbury:

'The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the world to look at how we have been living and operating...the pandemic has also revealed our capacity for change; the opportunities for repentance; the potential for hope amidst suffering. We have learnt much about our interconnectedness, and our need for one another. It has been a revelation to many of us: we cannot go on as we have been.'

'I speak as a Christian. Jesus teaches us that there are no greater commandments than to love God and love our neighbour. To abide by those commandments as a Christian today is to step up to the challenge of climate change and connected environmental crises.'

Solomon Islands schools strike



Fishlake flooding in 2019: over a month's rain in 24 hrs



Climate Justice: loving our neighbour as we love ourselves



'And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'

Micah 6:8

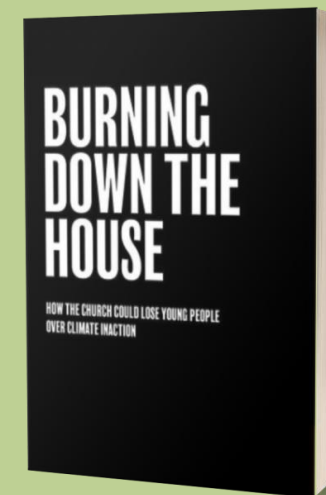
Why respond? Voices of young people:



- <https://weare.tearfund.org/burning-down-the-house/>



Listen to voices of young people at the launch:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?utm_source=WeAreTearfund+Climate+Research+Follow+Up+%28YEG%29&utm_campaign=5868bfecfo-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_02_23_11_22&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a3ea8b7a92-5868bfecfo-33443256&v=TmddtAsan24&feature=youtu.be

At 34:55 minutes (intro) to 39:45 minutes voices of young people are heard with some headline numbers at the end.

Six key asks:

1. Acknowledge... ..climate change as a central issue:

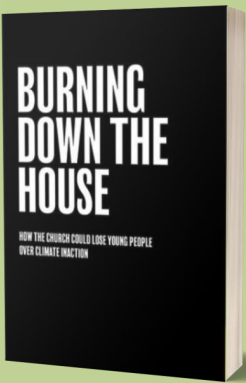
Unashamedly & create a culture where responding to climate change is central

2. Support...individual and corporate activism:

Encourage activism in church, take action eg ethical investment

3 Release...young people in their giftings

Support young people to use their gifts to act justly for all



Six key asks:

4. Communication and support... Leaders to listen and offer emotional and prayer support

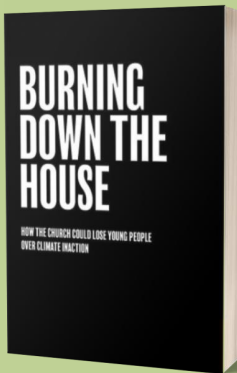
Climate anxiety: lament / grief

Hannah Malcolm: Words for a dying world

5. Theological input... on Sundays and other services

6. Being countercultural.. Take risks, publicly support causes and be fearless

Start with Listen/Learn/Speak/Declare/Act/Pray:
Some ideas follow...



Climate anxiety in 8-16 year olds

- Four out of five said climate change was important to them, with over a third saying it was very important.
- Nearly three quarters said they are worried about the state of the planet right now - 22% say they are **very** worried.
- Nearly one in five had **bad dreams** about climate change
- A similar number (17%) had sleeping and eating affected
- More than half (59%) don't think their voices are being heard
- Nearly two thirds (64%) don't believe people in power are listening
- Over 2 in 5 (41%) don't trust adults to tackle it



Advice on climate anxiety: all apply to our churches/groups/schools:

- Talk to an adult you trust if you feel your worries about climate change are affecting your life too much and making you unhappy
- Taking actions in your own life, however small, can help anxiety or helplessness
- Be involved in positive change - it's easier to control what you do in your life if you feel you can't control the rest of the world
- Join a campaign group or work with friends to build support for causes you believe in - it's great to have their support and have a voice
- Encourage school/family/church to be more eco-friendly.
- Don't compare yourself to others!
- Info at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51644659>



Sharing experience and discussion:

- What have children and young people said to you?
- How did you respond?
- How did you feel?
- Do you think your church/school/faith community is doing enough?
- What barriers are there to putting Love into Action?



Here are some ideas...to start with!

First thoughts

- Methodist church: Methodist.org.uk: Climate Justice for All youth –led campaign towards COP26
- **The Joint Public Issues Team** (JPIT) environment page: Baptist Union, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, working together for peace and justice.
- Catholic church: Laudate Si' & Guardians of Creation project
- Look up A Rocha Eco Church online and think of registering!
- <https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/>
- Contact your Diocesan Environment Officer: churchofengland.org



A Rocha UK Eco Church

- Eco Church is an award scheme for churches run by the Christian charity A Rocha UK. Their vision is to care for creation as an integral part of following God faithfully and loving our neighbours.
- Bronze, Silver & Gold awards are based on results of a free online survey in five key areas:
- Worship & teaching, buildings, land, engaging with local community/global campaigns, & congregational lifestyles.



<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Helpful Eco Church actions. In our church we..

- Celebrate Special Sundays (Environment Sunday, Climate Sunday, Harvest etc.)
- Pray for environmental issues
- Use Caring for God's earth as a teaching theme for youth and children's work
- Encourage native wildlife (birds, animals and plants) on church land eg Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Bug Hotel, Hedgehog Boxes, a pond or wetland area, native wildflowers
- Undertake wildlife (birds, animals and plants) surveys on our land and grow fruit and vegetables on our land
- Join a community clean-up project (e.g. local litter-pick) & reduce, re-use, recycle
- Mark WWF's annual Earth Hour (27 March 20:30)
- Joined Tearfund/Cord 'Toilet Twinning' scheme
- Have a communal Christmas and/or Easter card scheme
- Use Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods... and many more!



Tread lightly on the Earth

- Hold a Climate Sunday service: pray, learn, & raise a loud and united Christian voice for action by governments esp at COP26
<https://www.climatesunday.org/resources>
- The Creation Care scheme aims to encourage households to make changes to care for God's earth in 7 areas of household life eg travel, food, possessions <https://creationcare.org.uk/>
- A great WWF resource is Earth Hour: calculate your environmental footprint & download free My Footprint App for ideas to reduce it
<https://www.wwf.org.uk/earth-hour>
- New resource to help churches respond to the climate crisis, by Tearfund, Christian Aid, A Rocha UK et al
www.climateemergencytoolkit.com: prepare/declare/impact

Tips and pledges

- Start with individual...then household, group, church, community...
- Better start smaller...do just one thing as a start
- Leeds Diocese: 10 youth pledges, with a video
<https://www.leeds.anglican.org>
- Lots more ideas at CCA Belgium Lent Challenge
<https://christianclimateaction.be>
- Invent more Rs: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/> have seven Rs eg
 - Rejoice in Creation: prayer of thanks before meals, enjoy nature.
 - Refuse to believe all adverts say: wait 24 hours before buying.

Ponder on R for Resistance. Christians have a long tradition of resisting evil, wherever we find it, environmentally, socially, and politically. What should we be resisting today, and how?



Count us in:



- Count us in: <https://www.count-us-in.org/16-steps/>
- Most effective actions, aim to inspire 1 billion people
- You can see how much carbon you save

FLY LESS	WALK AND CYCLE MORE	DRIVE ELECTRIC	EAT MORE PLANTS
CUT YOUR WASTE	SEASONAL AND LOCAL	SWITCH YOUR ENERGY	GET SOLAR
INSULATE YOUR HOME	DIAL IT DOWN	GREEN YOUR MONEY	REPAIR & RE-USE
CLOTHES THAT LAST	TALK TO FRIENDS	SPEAK UP AT WORK	TELL YOUR POLITICIANS

Schools

- Let's go zero 2030: 165 schools joined the campaign so far
<https://letsgozero.org>
- Eco Schools: silver/bronze/green flag: 7 steps/10 topics
<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>
- Churches Count on Nature (A Rocha/Caring for God's Acre)
<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk> Video and lots of resources, many link to National Curriculum
- Schools Climate Education South Yorkshire: support students, teachers, schools in climate education & reducing school's carbon emissions . Plan a summer conference <https://www.scesy.org.uk/>



Outdoor Worship: top tips

by Lu Skerratt

<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/a-spring-of-hope>

<https://engageworship.org/ideas/outdoor-worship-stations>

More detail in resources at end of presentation

- Lean into the seasons
- Scope out your space
- Frame liturgy around space/area/country
- Encourage people to move, create and play
- Make it fun, welcoming and inclusive



Outdoor Worship: top tips

by Lu Skerratt

- Zoom in, settle yourself, breathe
- Sharing and hospitality
- Listen to your community
- We're all part of creation
- Think about when you are not there



Discussion

- Your ideas please!
- Experiences to share..
- Questions & comments
- What would be helpful to include for you and children, young people and families at the 12 June A Rocha Eco Church conference hosted online by Sheffield Diocese?



And finally...

- On 12 June 9:00 – 14:00 Sheffield hosts a free online ecumenical A Rocha Eco Conference at the end of Churches Count on Nature Week. We would love volunteers to lead workshops for children's and young people.
- Please contact Mike North or Cathy at:
environment@sheffield.anglican.org
- For inspiration watch Enid!
<https://youtu.be/6PgPd4VCgDo?t=3659>
- Thank you for listening and taking part!





Resources: good place to start

- Oxford Diocese new Eco hub for knowledge, action, reflection, help desk and net zero zone

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/making-a-difference/environment/ecohub/>

For Theology and reading:

- resources on the environment and the theology of creation care for children, youth and adults:

<https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources.aspx>

- Books, podcasts, reflections for 18-30 yo:

<https://www.yccn.uk/resources>

Church Times podcast: Hannah Malcolm



More Theology and reading:

- Tim Howles - Responding Faithfully to the Environmental Crisis: Christianity at the Time of the Anthropocene. A six-session programme for 13-18-year-olds
<https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/let-there-be-stuff/>
- Diocese of Bristol. Climate Change and the Church - a young person's response: Speech on environmental programmes
<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/news/climate-emergency-young-persons-response-climate-change-and-church.php>
- And to find out what the Church of England is doing:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/views/environment-and-climate-change>

Information and actions: resources

- Writing letters for COP26 <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/creationtide/get-your-voice>
- Young Christians Climate Network: action-focused community of young Christians in the UK aged 18-30, choosing to follow Jesus in the pursuit of climate justice. YCCN are planning a relay to COP26. <https://www.yccn.uk/>
- Climate Stewards: Christian group with helpful resources including presentations, on website calculate carbon footprint and offset as well. <https://www.climatestewards.org/>
- NASA - Climate Kids: facts and data for children, and a good animation <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko6GNA58YOA>

Films and video examples

- **Thank you for the Rain** (Christian Aid), Kisilu Musy, a Kenyan smallholder farmer films family life and the human cost of climate change: hold a watch party or community screening with notes for discussion and reflection
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/TYFTR%20Watch%20Party%20and%20Community%20Screening%20Guide%202021.pdf>
- **2040**: 'Accessible, informative and optimistic look at solutions to the climate crisis...2040 is a rare climate documentary with an optimistic message'. Host a screening for a fee eg £50 for schools <https://togetherfilms.org/2040-screenings>
- **Sālote**: thought-provoking animated film of a Polynesian girl witnessing effects of climate change by Operation Noah who have lots of other resources here too.
<https://operationnoah.org/resources/salote/>

Eco Church resources

- Help with engaging your local school on environmental issues:
<https://3ak4be4522es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community-and-Global-Engagement-How-To-Engage-Your-Local-School-On-Environmental-Issues.pdf>
- EcoChurch Worship and Teaching Resources. A collection of worship and teaching resources, sorted into prayers, songs, sermon outlines, youth materials, and small group resources.
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/>



Outdoor worship: more resources

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/outdoor-worship>
- The Earth Cries Glory: Daily Prayers with Creation – Steven Shakespeare
- Forest Church: A field guide to spiritual connection – Bruce Stanley
- Creative Ideas for Wild Church – Juno Hollyhock + Mary Jackson
- World Worship – Rachel Summers
- <https://www.muddychurch.co.uk>
- The Iona Abbey Worship Book
- www.mysticchrist.co.uk

If you'd like to get involved in Sheffield Forest Church please email sheffield.forest.church@gmail.com or search Sheffield Forest Church on Facebook.

Outdoor worship: Top tips in full (1)

- **Lean into the seasons:** the seasons and the liturgical year are a great way to express our love for nature and the world around us. Taking notice of the changes (weather/colour of leaves/birds etc) can really help connect the physicality of outdoor worship with creation spirituality.
- **Scope out your space:** Before starting any form of outdoor worship, look at the space you are intending to use. What is unique to your area? What wildlife thrives in your space? Being intentional about the space you are using and the gifts it already has is an excellent way of caring and appreciating nature.
- **Frame your liturgy around your space/local area/country:** Christ centred outdoor worship is not just doing 'church' outside. Create and frame your liturgy around your context, local area and the unique elements of nature you experience.



Outdoor worship: Top tips in full (2)

- **Allow and encourage people to move around, create and play:** A vital part of any outdoor worship is encouraging people to enjoy the space that they're in. What can you create using the space around you?

If it's a flat piece of grass, can you create a labyrinth out of sticks?

If you're in a wooded area, can you create bird feeders?

If you have a pond, can you get tadpoles?

The opportunities are almost endless!



- **Being outdoors is fun – not a chore:** try and make your space as welcoming and inclusive as possible. How can you make people's experience easier?
- **Zoom in, settle yourself, breathe:** In any outdoor worship ground yourself first. Help people to connect with the world around them through breathing, planting their feet firmly on the ground and moving their body. This can be a fun way for people to connect with prayer and to keep children engaged.

Outdoor worship: Top tips in full (3)

- **Sharing and hospitality:** How can you share food, drinks, conversation and play together?
- **Listen to your community:** In your church and local community, how would people like to use the space? What would benefit them?
Would people like a prayer garden?
Do some members of your church want to create a church allotment?
Can you reforest an area that has previously been cut back?
Would you like to keep bees?
Can you create a wildflower meadow?



Outdoor worship: Top tips in full (4)

- **We are all part of God's creation**, and all elements of creation have an essential job to do. Remember you are a steward, not a king. Keep this at the heart of all of your outdoor worship plans.
- **Think about when you're not there:** How can people access your outdoor space when there isn't worship happening?

Can you create prayer stations to put around your space?

Could you create places to sit out of old logs?

Could you leave some (biodegradable) ribbons out so people could tie them to a tree with intentional prayers?

