



Bristol Methodist District

Eco District Newsletter No 2 Easter 2021

Welcome to the second Eco District Newsletter!

It has been good to hear how many churches are embracing Eco Church as a way of addressing the climate emergency. Please feel free to copy this newsletter or any parts you feel relevant to your situation, and use it in church notices or magazines.

Good News! Unity Oldland Methodist Church in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit has gained a Silver Eco Church award and St Mark's Cheltenham in the Gloucestershire Circuit has gained a bronze award – congratulations to all involved in gaining those awards.

Churches in the district which already have awards include: in Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit: Westbury on Trym (silver); in Gloucestershire: Cheltenham Bethesda, Stonehouse, Stroud and Tewkesbury (silver) and Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham St Mark's, Cirencester, Dursley, Nailsworth, Tetbury, Tibberton (all bronze); in North East Somerset and Bath: Stratton House MHA, Southdown Horizon and Nexus (all bronze); in Gordano: Nailsea (silver); in Wiltshire United Area: St Andrew's Devizes (silver) and Whitley (bronze); in North Wilts: Sheldon Road Chippenham (bronze); and in Upper Thames: Wotton Bassett (bronze).

There is a lot to celebrate in the achievements throughout the district. Please let us know through Rev Noel Sharp noel.sharp@btinternet.com or Mike and Pauline Culshaw culshaw@strawberryvision.co.uk if you are aware of any further awards not included here and pass on any good news stories you would like to share.

District Environmental Policy A draft Environmental Policy for the Bristol District (one of the criteria for an Eco District) will be considered at the Spring Synod in April.



Slack, our online forum, is available for discussion and queries, to share good ideas and to celebrate achievements. Everybody who responded to the email which followed the November workshop was sent an invitation to join Slack, but we are aware that quite a number have not yet joined. If you have lost or deleted your invitation and wish to join please get in touch.

Advice on Eco Church If you have questions about Eco Church or about the completion of the survey you can seek advice using Slack - one of the channels is devoted to discussion about progress. The Eco Church website has a page of Frequently Asked Questions, the first of which is a video demonstrating the sign-up process. This link gets you there: <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions/>.

Snapshot: Yatton Methodist Church – working towards Ecochurch “Yatton Methodist Church has been working towards Ecochurch bronze for just over a year, though Covid has complicated matters. We found filling in the workbook quite easy and we were already doing a lot to help us to move towards Bronze. To get there we have a few things to do with the small amount of land we have. We are considering bee- and butterfly-friendly flowers, bug hotels and doing our own composting to get the required credits, but were amazed to find how much we do in the normal run of things that are considered to be good environmental practice.”

We would welcome snapshots from other churches working towards an Eco Church award – please contact us if you would like to contribute your experiences!



COP26 – what is it and what does it stand for? COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and will be attended by over 200 leaders of countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - a treaty agreed in 1994. The last conference, **COP25**, was held in Madrid, Spain, in November 2019 with Greta Thunberg giving a big speech at the event. The COP meeting in Madrid finished with lots of big issues unresolved, but an agreement was made about cutting carbon dioxide - a gas that causes global warming. Each nation agreed to devise a plan to cut their carbon emissions by the next conference in Glasgow.



Climate Sunday Local churches across Britain and Ireland are encouraged to hold a climate-focused service on any Sunday before 5 September 2021. Free resources are available to suit every tradition and style of worship. During their local Climate Sunday, churches are invited to do one or more of three things:

1. **Worship:** Hold a climate-focused service, to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, to pray, and to commit to action.
2. **Commit:** Make a commitment as a local church community to taking long term action to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions.
3. **Speak up:** Join with other churches and wider society by adding its name to a common call for the UK government to take much bolder action on climate change in this country in advance of COP26, and to strengthen its credibility to lead the international community to adopt a step change in action at COP26. The culmination of the campaign will be a national Climate Sunday event on Sunday 5th September this year, to share church commitments and pray for bold action and courageous leadership at COP26.

Climate Sunday has been organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) with support from charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, A Rocha UK, and Operation Noah. To register visit the Climate Sunday website <https://ctbi.org.uk/climate-sunday/>.

Could Churches do More to Fight Climate Change? This was the title of a recent report on the BBC Website. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-56001191>. A recent survey of young Christians by Tearfund and Youthscape suggested that a large proportion of

young people questioned were concerned about climate change, but around two-thirds had never heard a Sunday sermon on the issue.

There was also a good BBC article discussing 5 things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-55437567>

Green energy If your church is looking for suppliers of green energy you might like to look at <https://switchit.money/> You can use this to check if your energy provider, as well as your bank and pension provider is funding fossil fuels.

Workshops There are some excellent resources and opportunities to go to online workshops. Here are some ...

4 week free course on Creation Care – learn more about climate change, the theology, science, the impact on Melanesia and church responses https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/4-week-creation-care-course-tickets-145829458837?fbclid=IwAR2l7EDGSBchiRhzyNiuK3wZlFdBUEFJemq4C66Xhz4roWU-Pc7_MGK0xeo

Tuesday 11 May 2-3.30pm Climate and Pastoral Care webinar: processing grief for the planet. In this Climate Sunday webinar, Eco Church aims to help churches support their congregation in processing and dealing with grief for our planet. Receive more information, and sign up for this free event via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/climate-and-pastoral-care-processing-grief-for-the-planet-tickets-142855242877?aff=erelpanelorg>.



Green Christian (mentioned in the last newsletter) runs a fortnightly series of events on Wednesday evenings, full details of which are on their website <https://greenchristian.org.uk/>. We would particularly highlight:

Wed 7 April, 7pm: What you can do about COP26 with Rachel Mander. To register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8122222222>

Wednesday 21 April, 7pm: Bible Discussion: What does scripture say to believers about Creation Care? With Deborah Tomkins. To register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8122222222>

Joy In Enough joyinenough.org, a companion site to Green Christian, is “a challenge to Christians in Britain, and an invitation to all people of good will, to join in building a just economy within the ecological limits of the Earth.” with more in depth articles about positive change happening around the world.