



CARING FOR CREATION A SIMPLE GUIDE

God's hand is behind all that exists; God's love and generosity easily seen within it. But human actions increasingly plunder and misuse world resources, and we live with the consequences. What do we do in our lives to live in closer harmony with God's intention for the whole of Creation? Are we seeking a more simple way of living that might allow others to share more fully in God's generosity?

How might we contribute to the earth's fruitfulness and sustainability?

A PRAYER FOR CREATION



Creator God, in love you created all that is and blessed it:

'It was very good'.

In love you gave humankind the role of being your stewards in caring for Creation.

*In love, forgive us those times when we fail to care; restore in us your blessing that we may work with you towards the transformation of your world, through Jesus Christ its head.
Amen.*



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Many things we are conscious of through our own experience, through reading and through news reports;

- Disturbed weather, causing extremes of flood and drought, put water supplies and food production under stress.
- The weight of scientific evidence suggests that use of fossil fuels pollutes the atmosphere and raises CO₂ levels. This increases global temperature which is melting Arctic (and probably Antarctic) icecaps resulting in rising sea levels and changes in oceanic behaviour.
- Our use of plastics (which are virtually indestructible) and our careless disposal of them is causing contamination of oceans and the human food chain.
- New (and old) extractive industries, using toxic chemicals, cause risk of pollution of water courses.
- Nuclear power, though low in CO₂ emissions, creates almost indestructible toxic waste that persists for millennia.
- Pollution and depletion of the natural environment is resulting in irreversible loss of species of fauna and flora. This can cause disconnections in the food chain, which could threaten the survival of humanity.
- Economic and financial systems, are increasing the gap between rich and poor people world-wide.

There is imbalance and disorder in many parts of our world, the whole planet is suffering, and human life is challenged.

Is this what God wants for humanity and Creation?

That question should prompt a response from each disciple of Jesus Christ:

“ It's not that I can make all the difference, but what is the difference I can make?

If I can say to someone on the other side of the world (already suffering from climate change), 'I am seeking live differently for you', it will help them to trust and give them grounds to trust in the future. ”

Rowan Williams speaking of the South West Dioceses Lent Carbon Fast 2015

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Creation matters because it is God's Creation, not humanity's:

The Earth and everything on it belong to the Lord.

The world and its people belong to the Lord. Psalm 24.1

God's generosity and creativity is seen in the abundance, diversity and beauty of creation. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible point to a relationship between the world and those who live in it, such that when the world prospers, so do those who inhabit it. The converse is also seen to be the case, and an indication of a withdrawing of God's favour.

God creates a world where relationships are important. Not just relationships between people, and between us and God, but also the relationships we have with Creation itself. God puts us into a stewardship relationship with Creation; not a relationship where we just get as much out of it as possible. Stewardship means a God-centred relationship with Creation, not a self-centred relationship.

The way we treat Creation often strays wildly from God's purpose. Our actions often give rise to injustices:

- injustice to future generations by causing global pollution, deprivation of natural resources; and not least the consequences of climate change;
- injustice of poverty, inflicted on the poorest nations and the poorest people in all nations - fuel poverty, food poverty, resource poverty;
- injustice inflicted on the rest of Creation by the unprecedented destruction of natural ecologies and species.

This is in total discord with God's saving justice - God's righteousness - intended for the world's salvation.

As disciples of Jesus Christ on the Way, we can pray and act ourselves - by God's grace and mutual support - into alignment with God's saving justice for all Creation.

“ The present challenges of environment and economy, of human development and global poverty, can only be faced with extraordinary Christ-liberated courage. ”

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby

A GREEN 'WAY OF LIFE'

“ It is one of the Five Marks of Mission that we should treasure God's creation. ...

... what are our motives concerning the environment – and how in touch are we with our motives and how real are we being as we ... get involved? Is it about recreating, are we restoring or re-making, or are we engaging in recreating, or are we simply in some political faddish mode, or are we in some simple financial what's-in-it-for-me mode...? ”

✧ *Tim, Presidential Address at Diocesan Synod, 9 November 2013*

A Christian understanding of our stewardship of all creation calls us to:

- recognise our personal responsibility to care for creation.
- include in our daily prayer and devotions a focus on creation
- prayerfully seek to safeguard the God-given integrity of the world, the environment, its plant and animal kingdoms.
- be alert to the possibilities of working to bring justice to the lives of the poor and all humankind
- wherever possible to bring renewal where there is suffering and where land and habitats have been devastated.
- take action and responsibility for our own impact on the earth, by switching to renewable energy and by using ideas contained in leaflets such as 'Nine Ways to live gently on the earth'.

*God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.
Genesis 1.31*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
Genesis 2: 15*

“ Our responsibility is to cultivate and care for the earth in accordance with God's command (Gen 2:15). We are called not only to respect the natural environment, but also to show respect for, and solidarity with, all the members of our human family. These two dimensions are closely related. ”

Pope Francis

NINE WAYS to live gently on the Earth

These 'Nine Ways' are from a "Green Christian" leaflet. More information on membership and action at: www.greenchristian.org.uk

Don't fly

- Information about Carbon offsetting guidance can be found at www.climatestewards.org

Drive less

- When you have to drive, make sure you do so efficiently.

Limit your electricity use

- Turn lights off and use low energy light bulbs (LEDs use least) and don't leave appliances on stand-by.

Use your LOAF!

Buy and grow some food that follows the 'LOAF' principles for food:

- **L**ocally produced,
- **O**rganically grown,
- **A**nimal friendly and
- **F**airly traded.
- try to buy British fruit and veg in season and support local shops.

Repair, re-use, borrow or share rather than buying new

- Use your own shopping bags, use sustainably sourced wood.

Limit your gas or heating oil use

- Insulate the house and turn down the thermostat.

Save and cherish water

- Use water butts, fix leaks, install a meter.

Reconnect with the natural world

- Go for a walk.
- Get wet.
- Dig the earth.

Exercise citizenship

- Campaign to protect the Earth.



CONTACTS

Andrew Yates, Social Responsibility Officer:

E: Andrew.Yates@truro.anglican.org

T: 01 872 274 351

Richard Hopper, Secretary to Diocesan Environment Core Group:

E: RichardHopper@btinternet.com

Resources

EcoChurchSouthwest is a collaborative venture between the six Anglican dioceses in the south-west, 'working in partnership for a low carbon future'. www.ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk

Truro Diocese Environment web page and Environmental policy:

www.trurodiocese.org.uk/mission/community/environmental-issues

Truro Cathedral offers practical commitments for the environment:

www.trurocathedral.org.uk/hot-topics/top-ten.php

Shrinking the Footprint: The Church of England's national environmental campaign which supports the Church's 42 dioceses in reducing their carbon footprint. www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint

Eco Congregation: helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and respond in practical action.

www.ecocongregation.org

Operation Noah: an ecumenical Christian charity providing leadership, focus and inspiration in response to the growing threat of catastrophic climate change. www.operationnoah.org

Two books which may be helpful;

The Bible and Ecology by R. Bauckham (2010)

Environment by R. Valerio, R. (2008)



DIocese OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH