



A four-week course
for parishes &
other groups

CHRISTIANITY & CREATION GREEN DISCIPLESHIP FOR CORNWALL

Week 4: Taking Action

NOTE: For this session each participant will need a copy of the Ten Pledges leaflet and the Green Church Kernow Award Scheme obtainable from Church House, Truro, TR4 9NH or www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/social-action/environment/green-church-kernow-awards



DIOCESE OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH

WEEK 4: TAKING ACTION

Last week we looked at some of the ways in which the church has responded to the environmental crisis in recent decades. We continue that theme this week but now we aim to bring the issues closer to home as we consider specifically the ways in which we may feel that we as individuals or as churches are called to take action.

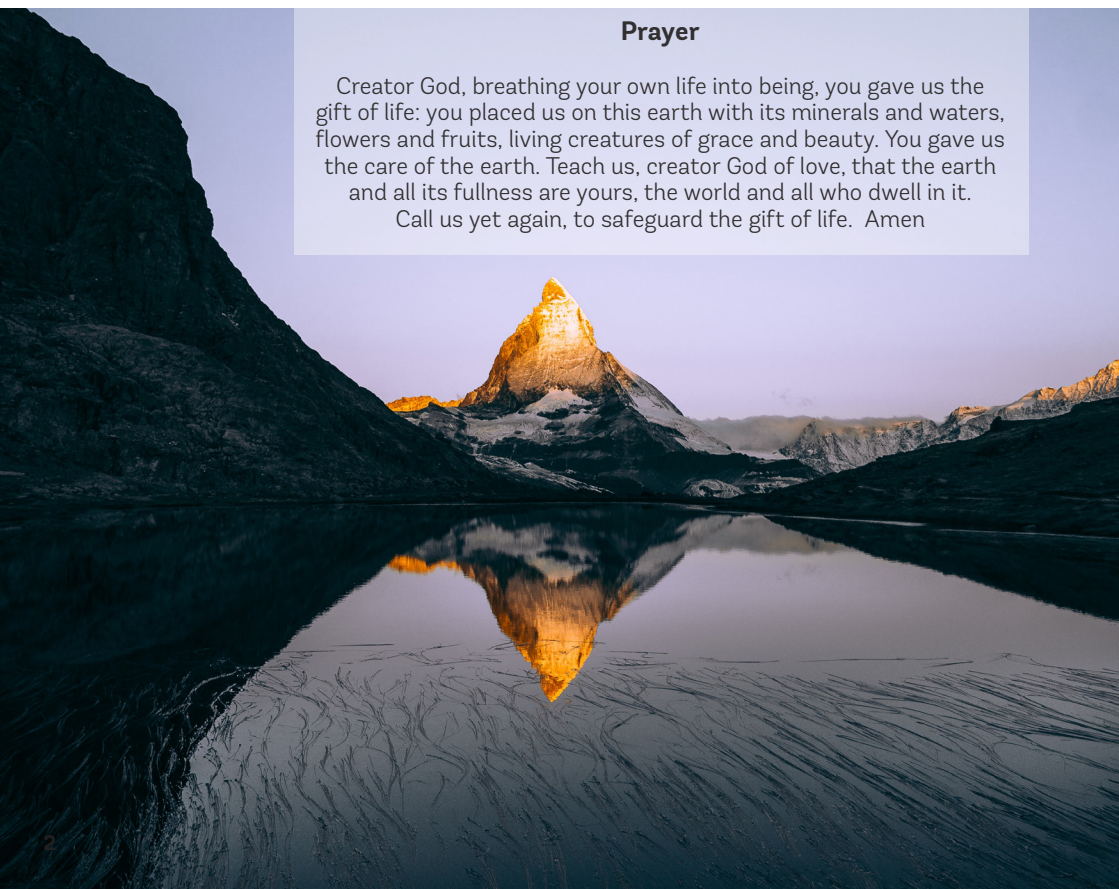
At the end of last session you were invited to reflect during the week on the extent to which you feel that yours or your church's response to the call to care for creation has reflected the attitudes of stewardship, eco-justice and/or a sacramental approach. Spend a few moments now talking together about any thoughts that have occurred to you in this area.

As previously we open our session with a reading and a prayer

Read Ps 104: 1–12 (this whole psalm is a wonderful hymn of praise for God in creation, but it is quite long so group members might like to spend some time with it themselves later in the week). You might like to use something of the natural world - flowers or fruit, nuts, stones, sand etc as a focus for people to look at as the passage is read. Or you could just use the photograph below.

Prayer

Creator God, breathing your own life into being, you gave us the gift of life: you placed us on this earth with its minerals and waters, flowers and fruits, living creatures of grace and beauty. You gave us the care of the earth. Teach us, creator God of love, that the earth and all its fullness are yours, the world and all who dwell in it.
Call us yet again, to safeguard the gift of life. Amen



This week's study falls broadly into two parts:

What can we do as individuals?

What can we do together as churches and the Church?

Our reflections will be based on the leaflet 'Connecting me with Climate Change' produced as the Green Church Kernow scheme by environmental consultants, Climate Vision, and the Diocese of Truro. It is designed primarily for use in Truro Diocese and the Methodist Church in Cornwall, although it has been used by Christian groups of all denominations.

Every participant will need a copy of the leaflet for this session.



LEFT: Under floor heating going in at St Wenn Church in 2016

RIGHT: Cyclists leave from Truro Cathedral in November 2015 to take the message of support for Climate Control to the international summit in Paris.



ACTIONS AS INDIVIDUALS - THE 10 PLEDGES

This exercise should take up to half the total session time with the other half of the session devoted to consideration of the Green Church Kernow Awards (see next page). Leaders will need to decide exact timings and whether to allow work in small groups for the whole time or whether to do small group work first and then share reflections in plenary - either way is good!

On opening the leaflet you will find a list of Ten Pledges to combat climate change that individuals can do at any time.

Spend a moment reading them through.

As individuals, tick any of the pledges that you have already done or are already doing. Share the results within your group.

Now, in your group work down the list of pledges from 1 to 10 and discuss the potential significance of each one in your life. Perhaps those in the group who have already done that pledge might be able to say something about how easy or difficult it was for them to do.

Are there any of the pledges that you feel really are impossible for you to do? Why? Are there any of the pledges that you feel you really could do today? What might be stopping you?

We all have different circumstances in our lives and this is not meant to be a judgemental exercise. Perhaps for those pledges that you find really challenging, there might be some steps that you could take in the right direction, even if you cannot at present complete the pledge. For example, in a rural county like Cornwall, it can be very difficult to cut our car use and if we work shifts there may be no buses at the times we need to travel. Or it may be the case (though not definitely) that switching our electricity tariff to green energy may be more expensive - which doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, but it may mean we have to plan carefully.

One of the questions underlying this exercise is the extent to which we are prepared to make sacrifices and the amount of inconvenience we are prepared to tolerate in the interest of reducing climate change.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

What are the aspects of Christian theology that we might draw upon as we consider this more sacrificial style of living?





GREEN CHURCH KERNOW

ACTIONS AS CHURCHES: THE GREEN CHURCH KERNOW AWARDS

www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/social-action/environment/green-church-kernow-awards

If you open the leaflet fully, you will find details of the Green Church Kernow Awards scheme, which all churches in Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly and the C of E parishes in Devon are invited to work towards. Churches of other denominations may also apply for the awards.

Activity is invited under three headings: Christian Living, Community and Resources. We look at these headings in a moment, but first read through the award scheme information below to familiarise yourself with it.

By achieving three recommendations from each of the three categories – CHRISTIAN LIVING, COMMUNITY and RESOURCES – you are eligible to receive a Bronze award certificate and sticker to display in your church.

Achieve six recommendations from each of the three categories to receive a Silver award certificate and sticker to display in your church.

Achieve ten of the recommendations listed under 'Christian Living', eight of the recommendations listed under 'Community' and 14 of the recommendations listed under 'Resources' and receive the Gold award certificate and sticker to display in your church and an invitation to a celebratory event hosted by the Bishop and/or Methodist Chair.



CHRISTIAN LIVING

Leaders: take care to ensure that you allow enough time to hold discussion under all the headings on this and the facing page. The idea is to open up the topics so that participants gain an introductory understanding of what might be possible under the scheme, rather than making church-specific plans.

Read through the section headed 'Christian living' in the leaflet.

In groups, tick any that you think your church is already doing (if group members are from different churches, that is a good thing, just tick all the items that any of the churches represented are doing).

Now go through the list and pick out a further one or two that you feel might be easy to implement in your church. Discuss, exploring particularly why some churches may find it easier to do some things than others. What lies behind these differences do you think? Which single item in the list might be the one that you would recommend next to your PCC or church council? Why?

COMMUNITY

Read through the section headed 'Community' in the leaflet.

In groups, tick any that you think your church is already doing (if group members are from different churches, that is a good thing, just tick all the items that any of the churches represented are doing).

Now go through the list and pick out a further one or two that you feel might be easy to implement in your church. Discuss, exploring particularly why some churches may find it easier to do some things than others. What lies behind these differences do you think?

Which single item in the list might be the one that you would recommend next to your PCC or church council? Why?



RESOURCES

Read through the section headed 'Resources' in the leaflet.

In groups, tick any that you think your church is already doing (if group members are from different churches, that is a good thing, just tick all the items that any of the churches represented are doing).

Now go through the list and pick out a further two or three that you feel might be feasible to implement in your church. Discuss, exploring particularly why some churches may find it easier to do some things than others. What lies behind these differences do you think? Which single item in the list might be the one that you would recommend next to your PCC or church council? Why?

RIGHT: Solar panels on Mevagissey Church



CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER

I saw that [our Lord] is to us everything which is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us. And so in this sight I saw that he is everything which is good, as I understand.

And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand....

In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God preserves it. But what did I see in it? It is that God is the creator and protector and the lover.

Julian of Norwich - Revelations of Divine love

Spend a short time together pondering these words from Julian of Norwich and contemplating the great truth of our Christian faith, that God is the creator, protector and lover of all created things—of ourselves and of the whole of the creation within which we live. As Julian says elsewhere 'love is his meaning': The meaning of our whole existence is love.

Close with the prayer over the page:

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer

Creator God, remind us to rejoice in all that is good and beautiful in your world.

Help us to value it and protect it as you call us to do.

Focus our attention on the world as you intended,
where we live in harmony with the world and each other,
in relationships guided by justice and peace.

Give us strength to speak up for your world
and to live lives that demonstrate your kingdom come.

Amen

WEEK 5 & BEYOND

As you look back on the whole course ask yourself: Has it changed the way you feel about the environmental challenges we face? Has it changed the way you perceive the relationship between your Christian faith and our responsibility to care for God's creation? How might you encourage your friends and neighbours and your church to care more proactively for creation?

A first step is to engage with as many of the ten pledges as you can for yourself. But don't wait until you have done them all before talking to others!

In your church we suggest you gather a small group of like minded people and share with them the information in the leaflet about the Green Church Kernow awards scheme. You might like to go through the different sections of the scheme using the suggestions on the previous pages. If you can, come up with some ideas of what you feel your church might do as a start. Take your ideas to your priest or minister and then to your PCC or church council. Again, you could use the methodology in the boxes on the previous page as a template. When you have decided what to do, make sure it is communicated to the community via a noticeboard, church magazine or social media and continue to work to engage as many folk as possible.

If you would like more help, contact the diocesan environmental officer, Luci Isaccson

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