

Ethical Buying Guide for churches

Loving God and neighbour through our purchasing decisions

Contents

	Getting Started & Ethical Issues		Encouraging Others
	Specific Products		Campaigning For Change
	Practical Tools		Prayers
	Case Studies		



What, and how, we buy has an impact on the world around us

Money and possessions belong to God and are held in trust by human persons in community. Money and possessions must be managed in the practice of justice, that is, for the good of the entire community.

Walter Brueggemann, Money and Possessions, 2016

Our spending decisions as consumers have an impact on the world around us.

Are churches consumers? We may shy away from that label, but to enable our worship, serve our neighbours and equip ourselves for the work of God's kingdom, we spend money, we interact with companies and we take part in the wider economy.

From the tea and coffee that fuels friendship and conversation, to the electricity that lights our buildings for services and community activities – we make choices about what to buy, where to buy it from and when to limit our buying. What do our purchasing decisions say about our beliefs and values?

What do we know about the businesses we buy from? We would not deliberately choose to give money to someone who mistreats their workers or to a company that contributes to the destruction of the world's rainforests, but if we don't pay attention to our spending, we may be doing just that.

Developing an ethical purchasing policy is a practical step your church can take to connect your spending decisions with the change you want to see in the world. Whether that's a commitment to sourcing Fairtrade products, reducing your carbon footprint, or asking companies you buy from to put people and planet first – your actions can make a difference.

This guide will help you explore ethical purchasing in your church, wherever you are starting from. It's part of a set of resources, developed for the Money Makes Change programme, to help Christians connect their faith and their finances, for a fairer, more sustainable world.

We would love to hear how you use this resource. Please get in touch with us at info@justmoney.org.uk if you have questions, feedback or a story to share.

Rosie Venner, Money Makes Change Programme Manager
October 2021

Getting started

This section will help you start a conversation about ethical purchasing in your church. It includes some short reflections, suggested actions and questions for discussion. You could explore these with a small group, with your finance team or church council as the first step towards developing an ethical purchasing policy.

Why do we need to think about what we buy?

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12

Our discipleship as Christians is about the whole of our lives. We offer ourselves, our gifts and resources to God, the source of everything. We seek to love God and our neighbours more fully.

Our use of money should not be seen as separate from this. Our spending decisions are not neutral. We relate to others through those decisions and it's possible that the choices we make are harming those made in the likeness of God.

Within local churches, our financial decisions are part of how we participate in God's mission. We can love others, restore relationships and pursue justice by making thoughtful decisions with our purchasing, as we do with our giving.

The need for Christians and churches to make ethical choices with money is greater than ever.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made us increasingly aware of the complexity of supply chains and of our reliance on workers and producers around the world. In local communities, we've witnessed the impact of low pay and poor working conditions. We've seen the best and the worst of how companies can behave.

We also face a climate crisis and the loss of natural habitats. What we buy has contributed to that, and we all need to take steps to protect God's creation.

Matthew 7:12 is clear that in 'everything' we do, we should treat others as we would want to be treated.

Our purchasing decisions, rooted in Biblical principles, can be a tool we use to shape a more hopeful, fairer future for everyone.

Collectively, churches in the UK have stewardship over millions of pounds. Anglican cathedrals alone spend around £50 million a year on goods and services, including maintenance and restoration work ([Ecorys analysis 2021](#)).

Imagine if churches' spending decisions helped shape a fairer society and protected creation for future generations. Imagine if churches consistently called on the businesses they buy from to work for the common good.

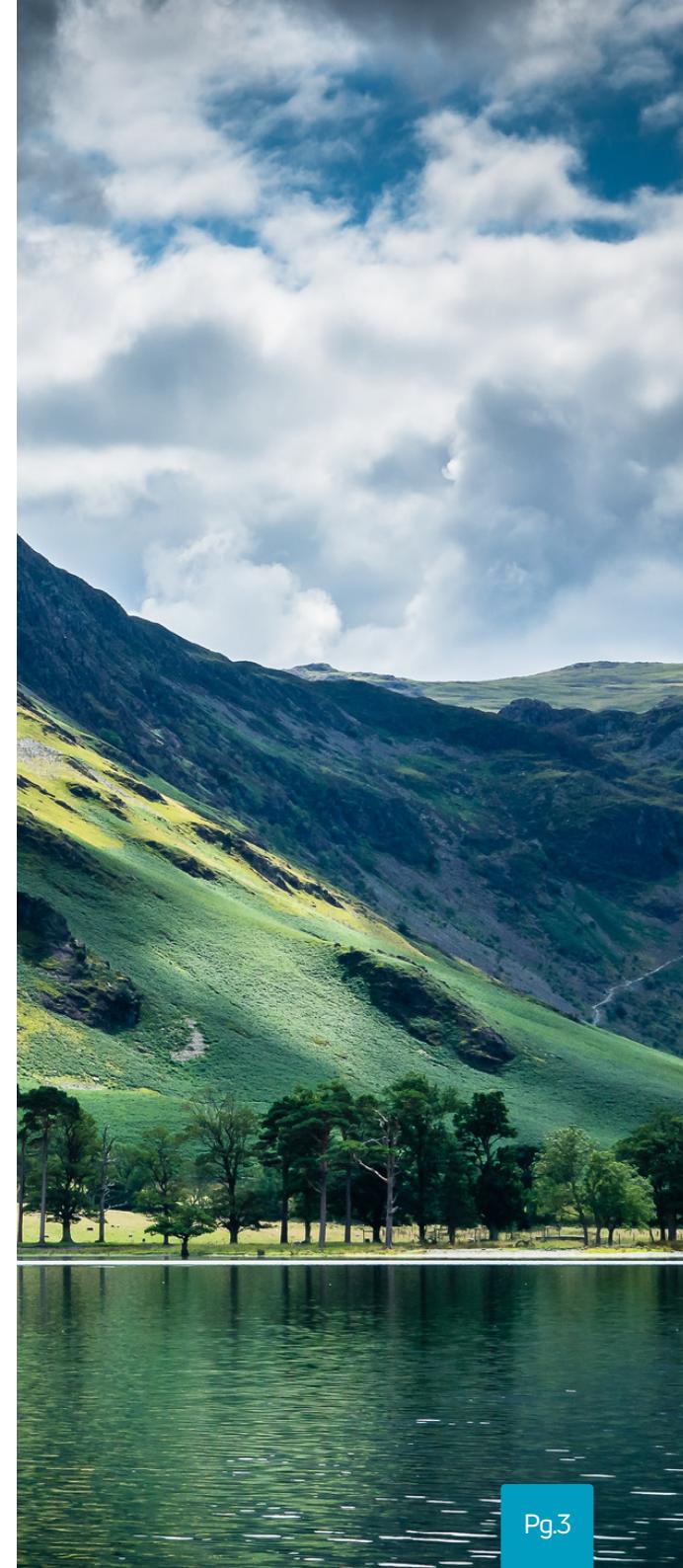
Take action

Take some time to look at your church's expenditure. Find out how much your church spends on goods and services each year.

Discussion questions

How does your church's spending on goods and services compare to other areas of expenditure like giving?

How does your giving help you to love and serve others? Have you considered the impact of your spending?



Making the connection, transforming your spending

Unless it's simply formalising what you are already doing, implementing an ethical purchasing policy will usually require changes in behaviour. There may be lots of different people involved in buying things for church activities. There may be a cost involved in committing to more ethical spending decisions.

It's important to reflect together on the 'why' before you discuss the detail of what your policy will cover. Try to make the connection between your spending and your vision and mission.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:35

How could your spending support the changes you want to see in your local community or the wider world?

For example, if you are exploring ways to serve your community, you could reflect this in your buying by choosing to support local businesses. Perhaps you've seen how low paid jobs affect members of your congregation. How will this inform your spending decisions? You could choose to always ask new suppliers whether they pay the Real Living Wage.

Here are some other ways that you could connect your ethical purchasing policy with your church's wider work:

Our church vision

"We encourage people to learn and grow in their discipleship"

"We care for creation"

"We believe in putting God's love into action around the world"

"We want to transform unjust structures"

Reflected in our ethical purchasing

"We regularly explore ethical spending in our teaching and preaching and help people connect it with their faith"

"We buy our energy from a green supplier"

"We buy Fairtrade products to ensure that farmers and producers around the world are paid a fair wage"

"We campaign for a fairer tax system and look to buy from companies that have the Fair Tax Mark"

An ethical purchasing policy that connects with, and is inspired by, your church's wider mission is more likely to be translated into action. How will you help people see that connection?

If ethical products and services are more costly, this may mean cutting back on other areas of spending.

If there are choices you make because they are simply more convenient or have never been questioned, you may need to take a step back and think about what criteria you will use to make different, more ethical decisions.

Take Action

Look at your church's mission action plan or any similar documents or statements that articulate your church's vision and values. Think about the issues that you feel energised about as a congregation and want to respond to.

Discussion Questions

What transformation do you want to see in your church, your local community and the wider world?

How could the positive choices you make with your spending help you respond to challenges you see locally or globally?



Reviewing your church's spending and looking forward

Every economic and political theory or action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one's own human potential.

Pope Francis

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.
(Jeremiah 29:11)

Churches and other faith communities have been influential in movements for trade justice, in ethical investment, and in campaigning for the Living Wage.

By making ethical choices with our spending and engaging with the businesses we buy from, we can help tackle inequality and start to shape a more sustainable economy.

Where we choose to spend money can be a witness to the kind of society we long for – where everyone has a 'future with hope'.

A church budget can tell us a lot about our hopes for the future:

- what our priorities are
- how we feel called to serve our communities
- what, and who, we have chosen to invest time and money in

Looking at our expenditure and where we choose to buy products and services from, should paint a picture that is aligned with these hopes for the future.

There may be some easy decisions to make and some that will take more time. Developing an ethical purchasing policy may be part of an ongoing conversation you have as a church, something you revisit as you learn and grow.

Your policy can help you communicate your commitment to ethical spending not just with existing and new members of your congregation, but with others who use your building, and the wider community. It reflects the journey you are on towards loving God and serving your neighbours more fully - so do share it and review it regularly.

Take Action

Make a list of the products and services that you buy regularly as a church.

Discussion Questions

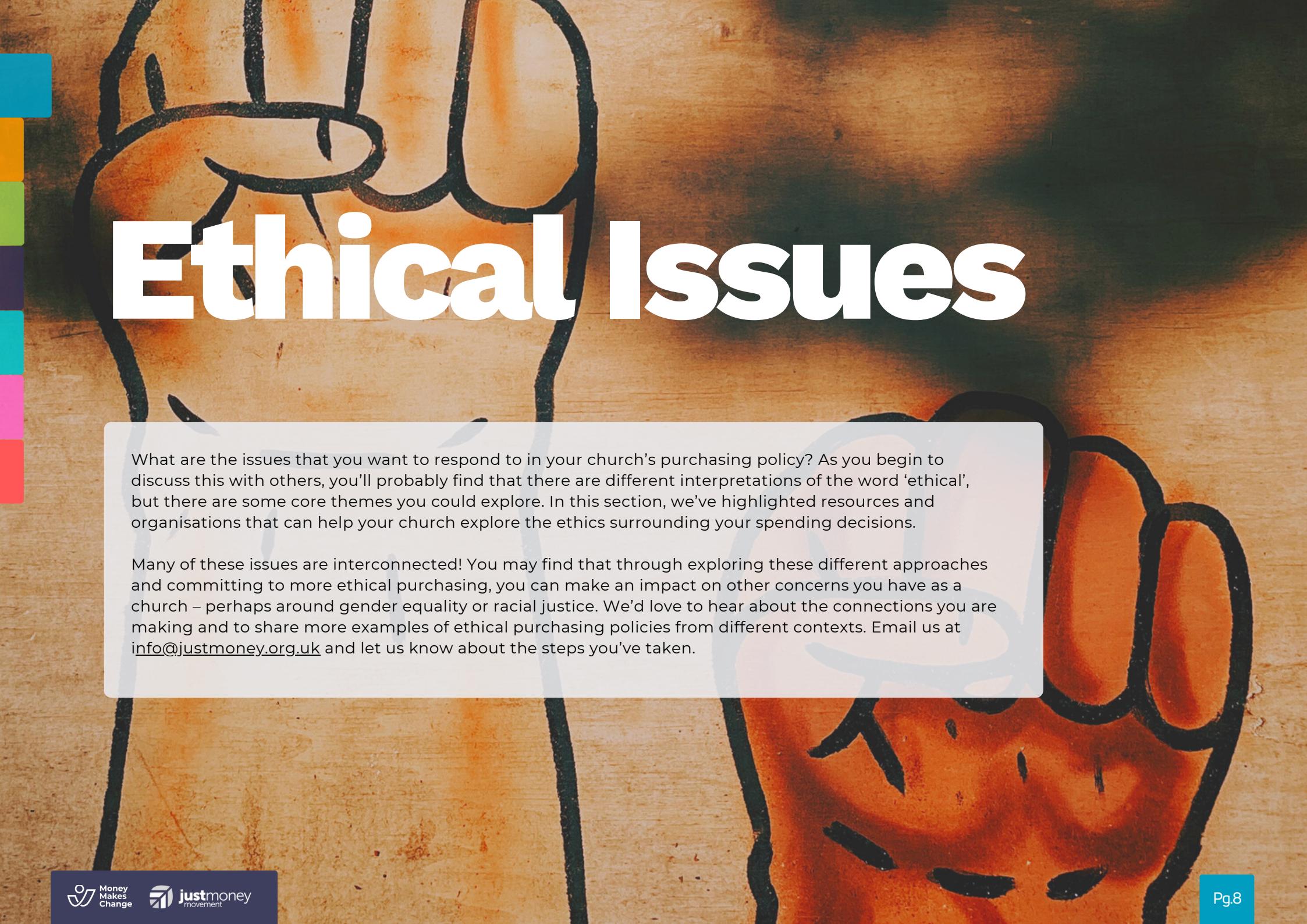
How do your spending decisions reflect your hope for the future?

Where are you already made positive choices?

Are there any obvious gaps or areas of spending you want to explore further?

How will you share with others what you are doing?





Ethical Issues

What are the issues that you want to respond to in your church's purchasing policy? As you begin to discuss this with others, you'll probably find that there are different interpretations of the word 'ethical', but there are some core themes you could explore. In this section, we've highlighted resources and organisations that can help your church explore the ethics surrounding your spending decisions.

Many of these issues are interconnected! You may find that through exploring these different approaches and committing to more ethical purchasing, you can make an impact on other concerns you have as a church – perhaps around gender equality or racial justice. We'd love to hear about the connections you are making and to share more examples of ethical purchasing policies from different contexts. Email us at info@justmoney.org.uk and let us know about the steps you've taken.

Caring for creation

**God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.
(Genesis 1:31)**

Many churches start thinking about ethical purchasing because they want to reduce their carbon emissions and environmental impact. Your policy might cover the electricity and gas that you buy, the food you serve, and specific items like cleaning products and paper, plus how you educate others about greener spending choices.

The [Eco Church scheme](#) (or [Eco Congregation](#) in Scotland and Ireland) should be your first point of call for reflection and action. Use A Rocha's [Eco Church](#) survey and resources to identify any areas of your spending that impact on the environment. You may find that the process of developing an ethical purchasing policy helps you along the way to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award!

Overconsumption puts huge demands on our planet. You might be familiar with the phrase 'reduce, reuse, recycle', but there are other steps you could consider in your purchasing policy too. You can 'rethink' (do we need it?), 'refuse' (we choose not to buy x or y), 'rehome' (what will we do with things we no longer need?) or 'repair' before you get to the recycle stage.

[Green Christian's Plenty! course](#) is a great resource if you want to explore the topic of consumerism in more detail.



Buying from businesses that do good

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)

What do you know about the businesses you are buying from? Who benefits from the profit they are making? The structure of a company and who it is designed to benefit can be a good guide to its ethics and values. Part of your ethical purchasing policy could be to, where possible, buy from businesses that have a positive impact.

- **Co-operatives** are businesses owned and controlled by their members, to meet their shared needs. Co-ops are committed to values like equality, honesty and social responsibility. There are co-ops in lots of different sectors – food and drink, farming, utilities and more. Find a co-op [here](#).
- **Social enterprises** are businesses that have a clear social or environmental mission and reinvest or donate their profits to create positive change. There are over 100,000 social enterprises in the UK, so there's bound to be one near you. Find a social enterprise [here](#).
- **Certified B Corporations** are businesses that seek to balance the interests of their shareholders with the interests of wider society. B Corps you may have heard of include Cafédirect, The Big Issue and Divine Chocolate. Find other B Corps [here](#).

Supporting local economies

How does your buying support your local community? What proportion of your expenditure is spent locally?

Buying from local businesses – whether that's a corner shop, a market stall or a local co-operative – has lots of positive effects. It helps support employment and job creation in your area and ensures that small, diverse businesses survive and thrive. Money spent locally tends to stay in the community for longer and can help improve financial and social well-being.

Depending on the products you buy, the carbon emissions and food miles may also be much lower if you buy locally rather than buying online or from a big company.

Standing up for fair wages and working conditions

Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

(James 5:4)

Many of the products we buy may be produced by people trapped in modern slavery or by workers who are not paid a fair wage. Our global economy hides this from us. A cheap product is marketed as a good bargain to us, but we know nothing about the life of the person who made or grew it. Do they earn enough, not just for the basics of life but to live fully?

There are steps you can take to stand in solidarity with those who grow or make the things we consume. This could include asking companies what they are doing to end modern slavery in their supply chains and looking for independent accreditation like the FAIRTRADE Mark which guarantees the farmer or producer was paid a fair wage.

Products to pay particular attention to include cocoa, tea, coffee, cotton/clothing, mobile phones and other electronic goods, fish and flowers. You can research the most ethical options via The Good Shopping Guide or Ethical Consumer. Here in the UK, you can choose to buy from companies that pay the Real Living Wage.

"Sadly, slavery and exploitation affects products around the world. From children mining the cobalt used in our mobile phones, to the people trapped in debt bondage to pick the tea leaves sold in our supermarkets, to Uyghur Muslims in China forced to pick cotton to supply many of the biggest global brands, slavery taints many of the products we use in our daily lives."

www.antislavery.org/what-we-do/work-supply-chains

Championing tax justice

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. (1 Timothy 6.10)

Tax can be used to create a fairer, greener society, providing revenue for the things we all need, like education, health and housing. Yet today's tax system fails to deliver, at both national and global level. Weak regulations mean it is still too easy for large companies to avoid paying their fair share.

As well as campaigning for tax justice we can choose to buy from companies which pay tax responsibly, particularly the growing number of businesses that have gained the Fair Tax Mark.

Could you shine a light on tax in your ethical purchasing policy and help shape a fairer society? Why not contact a business and ask them to lead the way on tax justice by getting the Fair Tax Mark?

The JustMoney Movement has another programme – Church Action for Tax Justice – calling for a fairer, greener tax system. You can find resources on tax justice for your church here: <https://justmoney.org.uk/speak-out/church-action-for-tax-justice>

It is fundamentally unfair that firms focused on the UK economy – especially small businesses – pay their taxes responsibly while multinational firms create complex schemes to avoid paying what they owe.

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury



Improving animal welfare

The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. (Psalm 145:9)

While there may be differing attitudes towards eating meat, fish and dairy products within your congregation, reducing our consumption of animal products is an important step towards tackling climate change. Buying and serving vegetarian or vegan food could form part of your ethical purchasing policy.

There are wider ethical issues to consider too, around the treatment of animals and how to support farmers who are leading the way on higher welfare farming. The [Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare report \(2020\)](#) recommends that “churches and Christian organisations should seek to shift to higher-welfare sourcing of farmed animal products”. The report also contains a comparison of different animal welfare marks and standards.

Green Christian’s [LOAF principles](#) encourage you to choose Local, Organically Grown, Animal-friendly and Fairtrade products.

Pursuing peace and protecting human rights

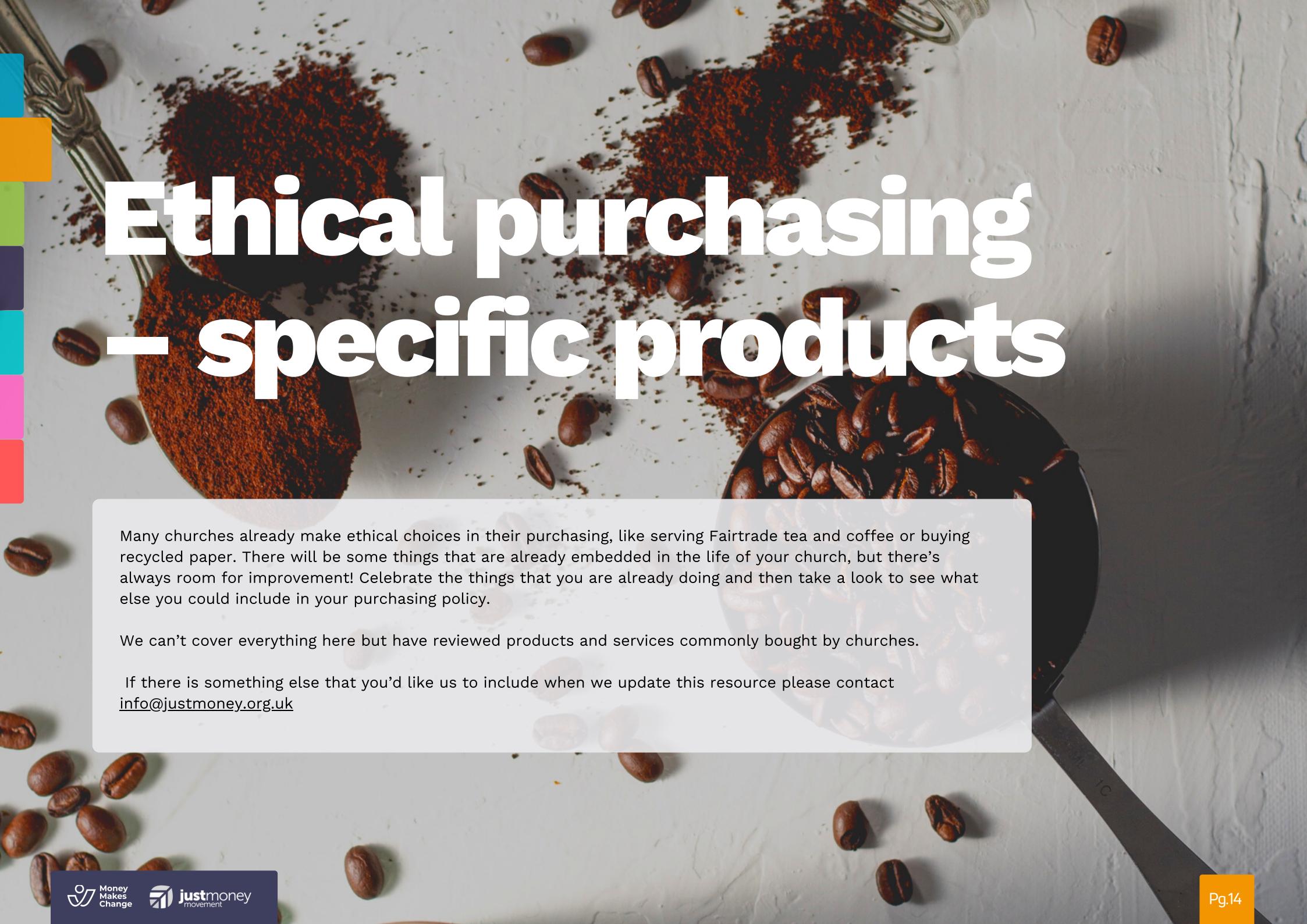
Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it (Psalm 34.14)

What does our purchasing have to do with our calling to pursue peace?

Our spending could be connected with violence and conflict, directly or indirectly – whether that’s through the conflict minerals found in mobile phones or because we are buying from a business that profits from involvement with an oppressive regime or has connections with arms companies. These issues might inform your purchasing policy.

You can use [Ethical Consumer’s guides](#) to research whether the companies you buy from have been involved in human rights abuses, operate in oppressive regimes or are involved in supplying goods and services to the military or arms manufacturers.

As peace is not just the absence of violence, but about the broader freedoms we all need to flourish, making positive choices with our purchasing can help shape a more peaceful society. For example, purchasing Fairtrade products or supporting social enterprises can contribute towards building peace within local communities. You might want to think about how your purchasing choices contribute towards the biblical vision of shalom, where peace is rooted in right relationships between people and with the earth.



Ethical purchasing - specific products

Many churches already make ethical choices in their purchasing, like serving Fairtrade tea and coffee or buying recycled paper. There will be some things that are already embedded in the life of your church, but there's always room for improvement! Celebrate the things that you are already doing and then take a look to see what else you could include in your purchasing policy.

We can't cover everything here but have reviewed products and services commonly bought by churches.

If there is something else that you'd like us to include when we update this resource please contact info@justmoney.org.uk

Product

Top tips and useful resources

Books

Support your local, independent bookshop. They are usually happy to order in books if they don't have them in stock. If you are buying online, [World of Books](#), [Better World Books](#) and [Bookshop](#) are all B Corps (businesses that create positive social and environmental impacts).

Broadband & email

The big providers may have the best deals, but they are not always an ethical choice, whether that's because of likely tax avoidance or their environmental impact.

- Take a look at the [Good Shopping Guide](#) or [Ethical Consumer](#) for ethical ratings for broadband providers.

Building maintenance and projects

If you have a big building project coming up, think about how your ethical purchasing policy relates to your procurement process. You could include social and environmental impact within your criteria for tendering. Procurement decisions do not need to be made on cost alone, but you will need to be clear about what you are looking for.

Cleaning products

Look at the [Good Shopping Guide](#) for environmentally friendly cleaning products. Reduce your single-use plastic waste by looking for concentrated cleaning products, larger containers or refillable options. If you have to buy in bottles, look for recycled plastic.

Cleaning services

If you are buying in cleaning services from a company, take a look at Clean for Good's excellent [guide to ethical outsourcing](#) which includes questions to ask around wages and working conditions. You could also ask questions about what cleaning products are used, and request more environmentally friendly options.

Product

Top tips and useful resources

Clothing

As a church you probably don't spend much on clothing, but if you are buying t-shirts for holiday club volunteers or your youth group, take time to look for ethical options.

- Where possible, choose 100% organic cotton and Fairtrade certified clothing.

Compost

If you have a church garden or run a community gardening project, and can't make enough of your own compost, choose to buy only peat-free compost. Protecting our peatlands will help trap carbon, control flooding and regenerate habitats for wildlife. After years of campaigning, sales of peat compost to gardeners will be banned from 2024.

- Ask your local garden centres to switch to peat-free alternatives. Most retailers have made a commitment to phasing out peat products but need to act more swiftly.

Computers, Laptops & Phones

There are lots of ethical issues associated with technology products – including the sourcing of raw materials, abuse of workers' rights, tax avoidance and the problem of electrical waste.

- Where possible, choose to repair or upgrade existing equipment. If you can't do this, look for second-hand, refurbished options rather than new items.
- To compare the ethics of different brands, use the [Good Shopping Guide for IT equipment](#) or Ethical Consumer's [Technology guides](#).
- Look for products that are [TCO Certified](#). This independently verified certification covers issues like responsible mineral sourcing, health and safety for workers, energy efficiency and how easily the product can be repaired to extend its life.

Product

Top tips and useful resources

Energy suppliers

Switching to green energy is an important step you can take as a church towards reducing your carbon footprint. If you are working towards an [Eco Church Award](#), you may have done this already!

- Choose a renewable energy company that is investing in new sources of clean energy. The [Big Clean Switch website](#) helps you compare different green tariffs.
- Some churches buy energy through a bulk buying scheme or 'basket' (e.g. through your denomination). If you are not happy with the supplier(s) on offer, talk to the people who run the scheme and push for a greener option.
- The [Fair Energy Campaign](#) believes everyone deserves access to clean energy and fair pricing. If you've switched as a church to a green supplier and want to help households in your church or community to do the same, you can get involved by holding a Switch Day.

Flowers

If your church has a tradition of flower arranging, there are lots of sustainable options. Some churches are setting up [sustainable flower arranging groups](#).

- Look for locally sourced, seasonal flowers. Choose greenery from your garden rather than imported flowers.
- Avoid purchasing plastic-based floral foam. Explore alternatives for supporting flower arrangements – like chicken wire or pebbles.

Product

Food & Drink

Look for the FAIRTRADE mark

Think local and sustainable

Furniture

Top tips and useful resources

The food and drink that we buy connects us to people and places on our doorstep and the other side of the world. Here are some issues to explore.

Fairtrade is about safe working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers. Churches continue to play a key role in the Fairtrade movement.

- Apply to become a Fairtrade Church. If you've already committed to buying Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar, look for other products to use in your church catering.
- You can find the FAIRTRADE Mark on a huge range of products. Find Fairtrade suppliers in the Fairtrade Foundation's regularly updated National Purchasing Guide.

Serving locally and responsibly grown and sourced food in our churches is one way we can help communities thrive and reduce our carbon emissions.

- Use Green Christian's LOAF principles by choosing food that is Locally produced, Organic, Animal friendly and Fairly traded. Buy seasonal food where you can.
- Supporting local farmers is important and can help increase local market demand for higher welfare animal products.

The most ethical choice is to buy second-hand. Wooden furniture, if not sourced responsibly, contributes to deforestation, one of the biggest threats to wildlife and the climate.

- Buy from second-hand furniture shops or social enterprises that refurbish furniture.
- If buying new, look at the ethos of the company you are buying from, and the source of the raw material. For wooden products, look for 100% FSC certified which gives some assurance that the wood comes from sustainable forestry.

Product

Top tips and useful resources

Paint

Where possible, opt for using leftover or recycled paint rather than buying new. If it's just for a small area, someone in your congregation may have a tin or two spare or you can buy from local recycling projects.

- The Good Shopping guide has a [helpful guide](#) to different brands of paint.

Paper products

Reducing your paper use is the first place to start, but if you need to buy paper for printing, photocopying and craft projects there are lots of ethical options.

- Buy 100% recycled paper. The most eco-friendly recycled paper is made from 'post-consumer' waste and is chlorine-free.
- Don't be fooled by the label 'recyclable'. This doesn't guarantee that the paper you are buying is recycled, just that you can recycle it!

Toilet roll

There are two issues to consider here - how the toilet roll is made and how it is packaged.

- Look for 100% recycled, chlorine-free paper.
- Avoid products wrapped in single-use plastic. You may be able to order in bulk from a wholesaler or zero-waste shop to avoid excess packaging.

If there is something else that you'd like us to include when we update this resource please contact info@justmoney.org.uk



Practical tools

Sample policy

Not sure where to start or how to structure your purchasing policy? Take a look at [this template](#) we've put together. Discuss and adapt it for your context.

[Download editable template](#)

Summary of ethical marks and schemes

Confused by the different marks and certification schemes that can help you make more ethical choices? In this next section, we explore some of the ones you are most likely to come across.



Name

FAIRTRADE Mark

Products

Food & drink, health & beauty products, textiles

What does it mean?

Product meets the internationally agreed social, environmental and economic Fairtrade Standards. Farmers are paid a fair price for their produce and workers are paid a fair wage for their labour. A Fairtrade Premium provides additional funds for farmers and workers to invest as they see fit.

www.fairtrade.org.uk



FAIRTRADE sourced ingredients Mark

Tea, sugar, cocoa, nuts and other products

Indicates that the ingredient named on the tab has been sourced as Fairtrade.



Rainforest Alliance

Coffee, cocoa, tea, bananas

Rainforest Alliance certification is based on environmental, economic, and social well-being standards.

www.rainforest-alliance.org

**Name****Global Organic Textile Standard****Better Cotton Initiative****Soil Association – Organic certification****Products**

Clothing

Clothing

Food & drink,
health & beauty
products, textiles**What does it mean?**

GOTS is a global certified standard for organic fibres, including ecological and social criteria, backed up by independent certification of the entire textile supply chain.

global-standard.org

Better Cotton Farmers produce cotton in a way that is better for themselves, their communities and the environment.

Logo means company sources 10% of their cotton as Better Cotton, with a plan to increase this to at least 50% Better Cotton within five years.

bettercotton.org

Must meet strict European laws about the production of organic food and go further in key areas such as animal welfare, protecting human health, and safeguarding the environment.

www.soilassociation.org



Name

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Products

Forest products e.g. wood, paper, furniture, toilet roll, kitchen utensils

RSPCA assured

Meat, fish, eggs, milk

What does it mean?

FSC certified forests are managed with consideration for people, wildlife and the environment. The FSC label ensures that the trees that are harvested are replaced or allowed to regenerate naturally.

fsc.org

Animals have been reared to strict RSPCA welfare standards. For more information see the Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare policy framework.

www.rspcaassured.org.uk

Living Wage Employer

N/A - applies to businesses, not products

The Real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by over 7,000 UK businesses who believe their staff deserve a wage which meets everyday needs.

www.livingwage.org.uk



Fair Tax

Certified



Corporation

Name

Fair Tax Mark

Certified B Corp

Products

N/A – applies to businesses, not products

N/A – applies to businesses, not products

What does it mean?

A business with the Fair Tax Mark is certified as paying the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time and applying the gold standard of tax transparency.

fairtaxmark.net

Certified B Corporations have high social and environmental standards. They are legally required to consider all stakeholders in the company's decision-making, not just shareholders.

bcorporation.uk



Case Studies

What does it look like to take action on ethical purchasing? Here are a few examples of churches and organisations who are striving to live out their values through their purchasing decisions, including links to policies and statements available online.

If you've developed your own ethical purchasing policy, please contact info@justmoney.org.uk and help us share examples of best practice to inspire more churches to take action.

St John's Hartley Wintney

St John's ethical buying policy was initiated by their Creation Care team, but involved others from the wider congregation too. It connects with their Eco Church work, Fairtrade commitment and concerns around animal welfare. They researched the most ethical options for toilet rolls and printer paper in order to make recommendations with costings to their PCC.

[View Ethical Buying policy here](#)

"We believe that as part of our care of creation we should act in a way that demonstrates good biblical stewardship in all areas of our corporate life. We are a Carbon Neutral organisation but do not track the wider Carbon Footprint of our supply chain. The decisions that we make when buying can therefore positively influence this and other ethical and environmental issues such as protections of habitats and biodiversity, animal welfare, other environmental impacts and fair employment practices. This will involve sourcing all the products we use in a way that: reduces miles travelled, encourages good animal welfare, reduces harmful impact on the environment, both direct and indirect, and takes into account the environmental cost of waste and end of life recycling."

High Street Baptist Church, Tring

"We recognise that we live in a world where injustice is prevalent. This policy seeks to encourage the church to consider wider societal and justice factors in its purchasing as a response to Scripture and the outworking of our Christian faith. The church seeks to encourage all church members and the wider community to adopt similar principles."

[View Ethical Purchasing policy here](#)

This purchasing policy is rooted in the church's long history of concern for climate justice. What started out as the work of a few passionate people, is now part of the church's DNA. The policy formalised what was already happening but helps communicate the church's commitment to new members and to others outside the church.

As a church, they have achieved the Eco Church Gold Award, and the attention they've given to their spending and use of money has been integral to this. They are starting to see the wider impact of this work as individuals in their congregation have chosen steps to take at home. Their church cleaner has switched to eco-friendly cleaning products and now uses these elsewhere too!

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has developed a set of fiscal stewardship principles that include a commitment to ethical purchasing. They strive to reduce their environmental impact and to make a tangible positive impact on workers' lives and working conditions.

[View Fiscal Stewardship principles](#)

"God invites us to be stewards of his creation and his grace, and responsible spending is a commitment to live a healthy, happy life together with God and others. Our stewardship of financial resources should embody justice, love, and the safeguarding of creation. The teachings of Jesus challenge us to make lifestyle choices that are often countercultural.

Therefore, our second stewardship principle is that: We will strive for the highest standards of ethical behaviour and will act with honesty, integrity and transparency in our fiscal interactions. Adopting this principle – based on biblically-based ethical standards – may mean that some decisions lead to an increase in our expenditure or lower possible returns on investment, but our primary consideration must be ensuring our decisions fulfil Kingdom values."

Ferryhill Parish Church, Aberdeen

This church's policy has an environmental focus, reflecting their commitment as an Eco-Congregation.

[View Purchasing Policy here](#)

"We recognise that consumption of any item no matter how small adds to the destruction of our natural environment by creating carbon emissions as a by-product during production, transportation and disposal. Consequently, we accept it is the responsibility of all of us to consider our environment when making a purchase.

Before making any purchase, we should ask ourselves the following questions: Firstly, do we need the item at all? If the answer is yes, can we buy a version produced using sustainable resources. How should we dispose of it when we no longer need it: can it be recycled?"

Clean for Good

Clean for Good is a social enterprise founded by St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, in the City of London. They have a detailed purchasing policy that reflects their values.

[View Ethical Purchasing policy here](#)

In their outsourced services, Clean For Good "actively seek to work with Living Wage Employers (LWEs) and always ask new suppliers if they pay the Living Wage or more to all employees, whether LWEs or not. We also look for additional evidence of fair pay and good working conditions – e.g purchasing telephone services from the Phone Co-op and using taxis via Taxi-App."

Stourbridge Quaker Meeting

"We evaluate all suppliers for ethical, environmental and living wage credentials, and purchase electricity from a 100% renewable supplier. We are part of the Fairtrade movement, minimise use of plastics and maximise recycling."



Encouraging others

By fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute...we can, to a certain extent, change the world. Dorothy Day

'Doing' ethical purchasing well will never be enough on its own to address the root causes of inequality or the threat of climate change, but it can be part of our commitment to a fairer world and a more hopeful future. Martin Luther King Jr once said: "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." We may not see the immediate impact, but the small actions that we take with our spending help shape a society that is more just.

One role that churches can play is to be movement builders – to inspire others through our actions and encourage them to join in. Interest in buying ethically has grown in recent years with more people buying Fairtrade products, reducing their use of single-use plastics and switching to green energy tariffs. It can only be good news if more organisations and households start to think about how their spending impacts on people and planet.

Within your own church, you can encourage people to make ethical spending choices as part of how they live out their faith – at home or at work. You might do this through preaching, teaching, newsletter articles, blog posts or inviting individuals to share what they are doing.

Read on to explore ways you can help grow the movement beyond your own congregation.

Other local churches

Think about engaging with other churches in your area when developing an ethical purchasing policy. They may have existing policies you could discuss and adapt, or you may inspire others to start exploring the impact of their purchasing too. Share the policy you've developed and explain the process you went through.

What could you do together? Group buying in bulk can be a cost-effective way of sourcing more ethical products, especially for smaller churches. Is this something you could explore?

A bigger step might be to explore whether you can meet the ethical procurement needs of your church, and other organisations in your area, by exploring a social enterprise or cooperative model. This could be a cleaning business, a bakery, food co-op or gardening services. The [HeartEdge](#) network is doing interesting work in this area.

Within the wider church

What do you know about the purchasing policies of your wider church network or denomination? There may be opportunities to influence and encourage others to develop ethical procurement policies. How can you be like 'salt and light' in the example that you set locally?

If you buy products and services through a church buying scheme, check the ethical and environmental credentials of suppliers. If you are not happy with what is offered, contact the scheme and ask them to consider alternatives.

In your community

Encourage users of your building to consider their own purchasing decisions, for example their use of single-use packaging.

Share what you are doing. You could have a display that explains your own positive purchasing choices, and the reasons for any changes you have made. Show what it means to put your faith into action.

Make your policy available on your website for others to view.

Working with local schools, colleges and universities

Your local school, college or university may already be taking steps to make more ethical purchasing decisions. Could you share ideas and learn from the work they are doing? If this isn't something they've explored yet, you could support them in taking action.

Useful resources for schools can be found through the following schemes:

- [Fairtrade Schools](#)
- [Eco Schools](#)
- [Food for Life Schools Award](#)

Buying together from ethical wholesalers might be another way you can work with a local school, for example to source cleaning products and refills.

The charity [Students Organising for Sustainability](#) promotes ethical procurement on campuses. The areas they focus on include:

- Plastics and other single-use waste
- Zero-waste/unpackaged retail
- Sustainable food
- Clothing
- Palm oil

Find out more about their work [here](#).



Campaigning for change

Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:9)

Speaking out is an important part of ethical purchasing. Just as we can take action by getting our own house in order (looking at our own spending) and by building the movement (encouraging others to spend ethically), we can also speak out on the issues we care about, engage with companies and campaign for change.

A very simple step to take, if you are switching suppliers, is to **contact the company** and let them know why you are leaving. Be specific about your reasons and about what would need to change for you to choose to buy from them again. The same applies if you choose to boycott a particular brand or business. You could do this directly via an email or letter – or more publicly and creatively. Get in touch via info@justmoney.org.uk if you'd like support with this.

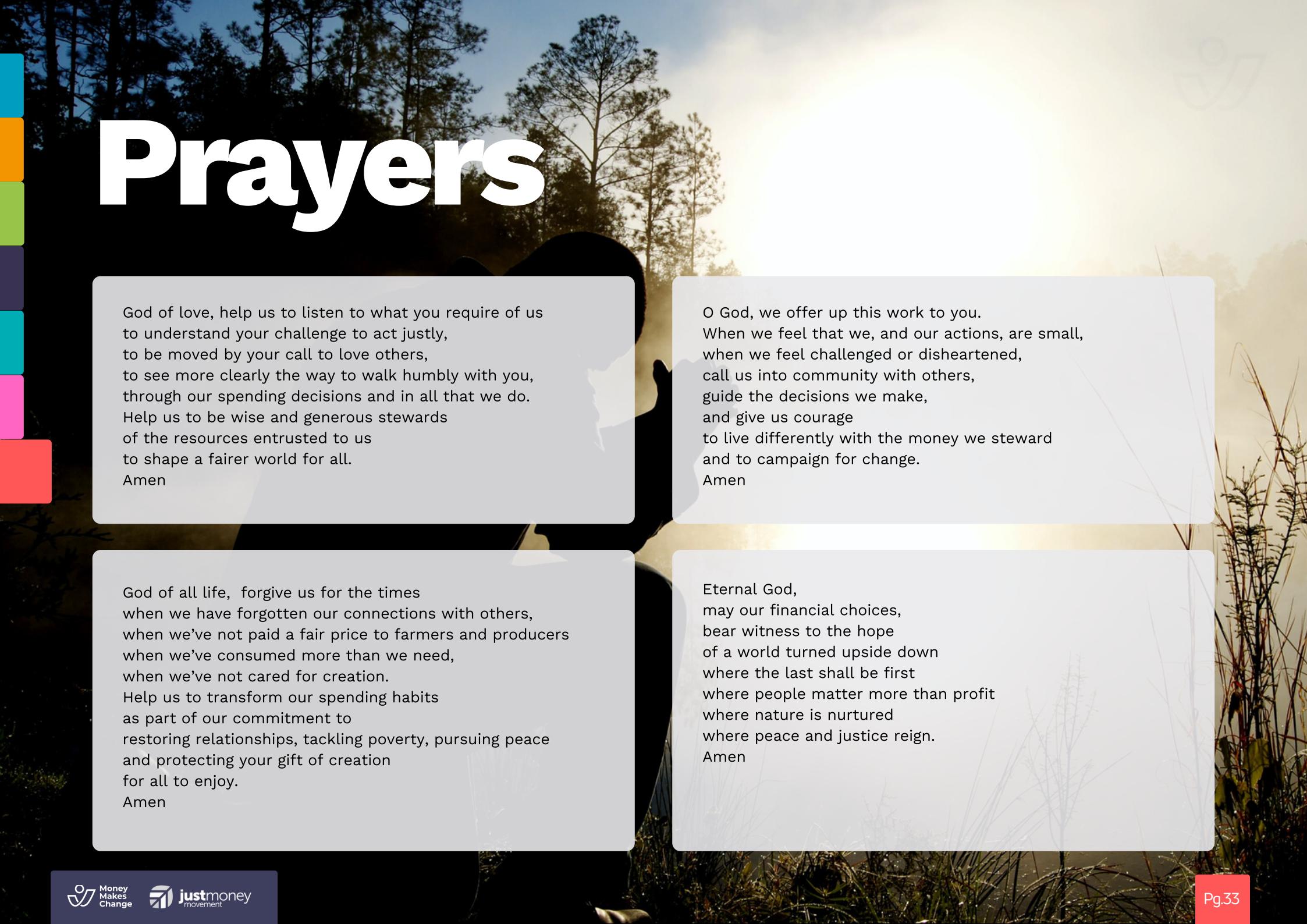
You can also **engage with your elected representatives**. Contact your local councillor or MP and share your ethical purchasing policy with them. Ask them what they are doing to encourage ethical procurement by public bodies, and what action they will take to ensure more companies consider their social and environmental impact. Find out whether there are issues that they are particularly interested in as it helps to find some common ground.

Here are some other actions you can take that connect with issues we've explored in this resource. You don't have to act alone! There are lots of organisations and campaigns ready to support you to speak up.

- Take part in [Fairtrade Fortnight](#) and engage with [Fairtrade campaigns](#). Demand a fair deal for farmers and workers who produce our everyday foods and goods.
- Campaign for the rights of garment workers with [Labour Behind the Label](#).
- The mining of minerals like tin, tungsten and gold is fuelling conflict around the world. Before buying an IT product, ask the supplier what they are doing to ensure that minerals in their supply chain are sourced responsibly. Demand from customers for greater transparency can push companies to behave better.
- Ask companies you buy from about their tax practices and encourage them to get the [Fair Tax Mark](#). The [Fair Tax Foundation](#) has a template email you can send [here](#). Run an event or Tax Justice themed service during Tax Justice Week. Invite your local MP to come along! Check out our [Church Action for Tax Justice](#) programme for more resources.
- Talk to companies in your local community about the [Real Living Wage](#) campaign. Listen to members of your church and community who are on low wages and support them in speaking up for fairer pay.
- Find out what the companies you buy from are doing to reduce their carbon emissions. Point them towards [Business Declares](#) or [B Climate Tools Base](#) for resources to help businesses work towards net zero emissions.



Prayers



God of love, help us to listen to what you require of us to understand your challenge to act justly, to be moved by your call to love others, to see more clearly the way to walk humbly with you, through our spending decisions and in all that we do. Help us to be wise and generous stewards of the resources entrusted to us to shape a fairer world for all.

Amen

O God, we offer up this work to you. When we feel that we, and our actions, are small, when we feel challenged or disheartened, call us into community with others, guide the decisions we make, and give us courage to live differently with the money we steward and to campaign for change.

Amen

God of all life, forgive us for the times when we have forgotten our connections with others, when we've not paid a fair price to farmers and producers when we've consumed more than we need, when we've not cared for creation. Help us to transform our spending habits as part of our commitment to restoring relationships, tackling poverty, pursuing peace and protecting your gift of creation for all to enjoy.

Amen

Eternal God, may our financial choices, bear witness to the hope of a world turned upside down where the last shall be first where people matter more than profit where nature is nurtured where peace and justice reign.

Amen

Get in touch

If this resource has helped you take action in your church or if you would like support in getting started, please get in touch with info@justmoney.org.uk - we would love to hear from you.

Support us

The JustMoney Movement (previously known as ECCR) is a charity working towards a world where money is used to shape a fairer, greener future. We currently run two programmes: [Money Makes Change](#) and [Church Action for Tax Justice](#). Our resources are free for churches to use. Supporting us with a one-off or regular donation helps us produce more resources like this and equip more churches and individuals to take action.

We are grateful to all our individual supporters, funders and partners who enable our work, including Barrow Cadbury Trust. You can find out how to donate to our work here: <https://justmoney.org.uk/donate>

Next steps

If thinking about your church's spending has sparked an interest in connecting your faith and your finances, why not explore the other Money Makes Change resources? <https://justmoney.org.uk/money-makes-change-hub>

Developing an ethical purchasing policy could be one step you take as part of the **Money Makes Change Pledge**. The Pledge gives you a framework for reflecting on all areas of your church's use of money. <https://justmoney.org.uk/resources/money-makes-change-pledge-toolkit-for-churches>



JustMoney Movement is a trading name of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), a company limited by guarantee (registered in England) number 02764183. Registered charity number: 1139618. Our Money Makes Change programme is supported by a grant from Barrow Cadbury Trust, a registered charity (1115476).

www.justmoney.org.uk

