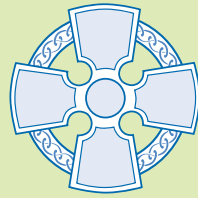


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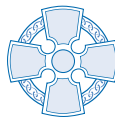


THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Our Christian Calling to Care for Creation

In the shadow of the growing threat posed by climate change and the destruction of species, Christians are rediscovering in scripture the core calling to care for creation.





From our deep concern and responsibility for God's creation and people, we must note:

- the stark warning from the world's scientific community that there are just 9 years left for humanity to have a good chance of preventing 1.5 degrees warming.
- that warming beyond 1.5 degrees represents a threat to the future of humanity, and that even warming limited to that level will wreak havoc upon the livelihoods of countless people across the world.
- that warming beyond 1.5 degrees will have a profound impact on the biodiversity of our planet.

Further information on the science behind 1.5 degrees warming and climate change can be found at <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

In the shadow of this growing threat posed by climate change and the destruction of species, Christians are rediscovering in scripture the core calling to care for creation. The Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission voices this imperative "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth". We are called to care because 'the Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it' (*Psalms 24.1*). God delights in the created world (*Genesis 1.31*) which responds to God in praise (*Psalms 96. 11-12; Isaiah 6.3; Isaiah 47.20; Psalm 150.6*). We recognise God's imprint not only in ourselves (*Genesis 1:27*), but in all creation which reveals God to itself (*Psalms 19. 1-4*) and us (*Romans 1.20*).

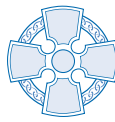
Kinship and responsibility

The first chapter of Genesis describes God creating humans together with other land animals on the sixth day, with both alike given vegetation for food (*Genesis 1. 24-30*). The shared Hebrew root for both Adam and adama remind us of this kinship: Adam was raised from the dust of the earth, human from humus, and gifted life by God's breath (*Genesis 2.7*) along with all other animals (*Psalms 104. 29-30*).

Yet humans are also given particular responsibility to care for creation. Made in God's image we are called to have 'dominion' over creation (*Genesis. 1.26*); to care for it as God does, to serve and preserve the Earth as the Hebrew words of *Genesis 2.15* can be translated, and in the light of Christ's Lordship, to give our lives in service of that in our charge.

Responsibility refused and Earth abused

In recognition of these relationships, God established a covenant of care with all people and every living creature (*Genesis 9.16*), but humans have 'transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth' (*Isaiah 24. 5-6*). And so, the Earth mourned (*Jeremiah 12.4, Hosea 4. 1-3*) and a day anticipated when the Messiah would come and bring a renewal of creation, alongside justice and righteousness in the human realm (*Isaiah 1. 1-9*). Christians recognise this day dawned with the incarnation of Christ.



Reconciliation in Christ

Christ's work of reconciliation is for all creation, as St John reminds us; 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. As St Paul explains "through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross' (*Colossians 1.20*). Jesus brings that peace with the natural world (*Mark 1.13*) that Isaiah prophesied. He calls us to live in harmony with creation through trust in God for basic needs, rejecting acquisitiveness (*Matthew 6. 24-34*), and through the call to justice by love of neighbour.

Humanity renewed; creation restored

Creation longs for humanity to respond to Christ's call that it may be healed (*Romans 8. 19-21*). For then we shall inhabit a new heaven and a new earth where God will again dwell with people (*Revelations 21. 1-3*) and an abundant creation will yield its fruit for all (*Revelations 22.2*). As Christians, we pray God 'your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in Heaven'. This we effect through Faith in Christ by the power of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to share in the joyful task of shaping the natural environment to be a bearer of justice and generosity that reveals the Creator's Love.

The necessity of responding to climate change

Human beings are called to care for creation and each other, yet we are responsible for causing climate change which damages both in equal measure. The destruction of habitats, rising temperatures and more extreme weather that we are witnessing is obliterating the created world God loved into existence, and hampering its ability to reflect and communicate that love, as well as its ability to support human flourishing. Equally, climate change is a social justice issue which affects the world's poorest soonest and most severely. Our call to love our neighbour demands we act, and if the Church is to hold others to account, we must first set our own affairs in order.

Our national response: Governing Body Motion 2021

In April 2021, the Governing Body passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency as follows:

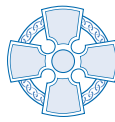
We acknowledge that that an urgent and rapid global response to global warming is now necessary.

We welcome the fact that solutions to alleviate the climate crisis are widely available including renewable technology, sustainable transport options and zero-carbon buildings.

We support the decisions of governments, councils and organisations across Wales to pass motions declaring a climate emergency and setting net zero carbon emissions targets for their local areas.

We should endeavour, through an action plan, to reach a net zero carbon emission position for the activities of the Church in Wales as soon as is practically possible.

Furthermore, the Governing Body requested that the Representative Body prepares an action plan, for consideration by the Governing Body at or before its meeting in April 2022, that sets out how the whole of the Church in Wales can reach a net zero carbon emission position by 2030 or as soon as practically possible thereafter.



Why declare a Climate Emergency?

The UK and Welsh Government have pledged for the nations to reach 'zero carbon' by 2050. Even if the Church in Wales does nothing, we will have to radically change our approach to the environment particularly energy use and transport over the next 30 years.

Many governments (including Welsh Government), Councils and organisations have expressed this intent by declaring a climate emergency.

Discussions with the Bench of Bishops, Standing Committee and Representative Body support the view that the Church should, as a whole Church, make a definite and binding commitment to reach a position where our activities do not add to global emissions. This is often called Net Zero Carbon. Net Zero can be defined as **'balancing the amount of emitted greenhouse gases with the equivalent emissions that are either offset or sequestered.'** (<https://www.edie.net/definition/Net-zero/232>)

In other words, achieving net zero means that whilst we may still produce some greenhouse gas emissions, these will be offset by other measures.

The declaration of a Climate Emergency is a means of making this commitment.

What is contained in the Declaration and Motion?

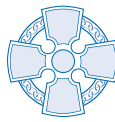
The GB declaration does three things:

1. It acknowledges that the world faces very serious consequences if climate change is not controlled in the future. In doing so it accepts the overwhelming evidence of science.
2. It pledges the Church to work towards a net zero carbon position.
3. It commits the Church to the creation of an Action Plan to help the whole church consider how our intentions can be realised and over what timescale.

What happens now?

The Representative Body has committed resources to ensure the development of the Action Plan. This will involve working with the church at all levels especially Eco Church and Eco Diocese Committees to develop the Action plan. It is envisaged that two working groups will be established to support this work:

- **The Church in Wales Zero Carbon HUB:** this will gather information from across the church, identify key challenges, promote the agenda and connect people across the Church and outside in developing the response. Put simply, the HUB will identify what we need (dream dreams). The Hub would probably develop out of the CHASE group with strong input from Eco Church and Eco Diocese teams.
- **The Church in Wales Zero Carbon LAB:** this will create solutions to the challenges (technical and financial), develop information and guidance. It will connect with others who are addressing the same challenges to learn collaboratively. Put simply, the LAB will work out how we get what we need (make dreams come true).



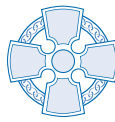
What will the Action Plan address?

The Action Plan will be completed and brought back to the Governing Body in April 2022 – one year after this declaration. The Governing Body's endorsement will be a powerful encouragement to every part of the Church in Wales. The Action Plan would set the target date for zero carbon.

The Action Plan will identify actions based on the attached 'cross for climate action' and will address the following key areas:

1. **Reduce power demand:** Radically reduce heating and lighting in all our buildings; this would involve installing LED lighting, draught-proofing, insulations etc.
2. **Use the right kind of power:** New forms of heating probably based on sustainably produced electricity. This also needs robust supplies to be in place and may include renewable energy production facilities on church land.
3. **Travel lightly:** Travel and transport of staff, volunteers and parishioners to move away from petrol/diesel cars and use technology for meetings etc. Reduce international travel.
4. **Better use of our land:** Enhance biodiversity across our estate by way of 'offset' including tree planting on glebe land.
5. **Zero Carbon Fellowship:** consider the food and drink we share building on our Fairtrade work.
6. **Promote** the zero-carbon agenda in the communities we serve.
7. **Investment policy.**

Continued:



THE CHURCH IN WALES – DELIVERING ACTION FOR ZERO CARBON

This 'cross for climate action' can be used as a basis for each part of the church to think about and plan the actions it can take to reach a net zero carbon position.

