

eco Congregation Scotland

Eco-Congregation is an ecumenical programme to help churches make the link between environmental issues and their Christian faith and respond in practical action in the church and wider community.



A Climate for Harvest

How your church can stop climate chaos this autumn

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Editorial

“Making Poverty Permanent?”

This stark question on the cover of the Christian Aid magazine introduces their new report on climate change. The poor are already suffering because of climate change, and we are risking every other species and ecosystem for the sake of our own lifestyle. This dishonour to God the Creator and friend of the poor should put Christians in the forefront of action on climate change, in both personal lifestyles and national policy.

Make Climate Change history!

Scottish Christians are showing they are not powerless in the face of climate change. The 124 Eco-Congregations and 38 award-winners are developing the programme in vibrant new ways from the grassroots. We want every church member in Scotland to sign the Stop Climate Chaos pledge at this year's Harvest Festival (p.2). There are some excellent new resources on Climate Change written especially for churches (see p3).

Eco-Congregation needs your support more than ever

The grant from the Scottish Executive Sustainable Action Fund, which has funded the programme for the last three years, came to an end on 31 March 2006. A further application did not succeed but we have partial funding from the Church of Scotland and SRT Trust until 31 March 2007 and some help from Keep Scotland Beautiful. This is not sufficient to support and nurture Eco-Congregation's grassroots energy in the long term, by developing regional networks, providing materials and training for promoting the programme locally, editing newsletters and developing the website. We are now urgently seeking ways to find the £40-60,000 needed annually to run the programme. If you can offer experience in seeking trust and other funding or can suggest possible sources please get in touch as soon as possible.



Eleanor makes the Stop Climate Chaos pledge

A Climate News for Harvest

New-look Newsletter

Help Stop Climate Chaos

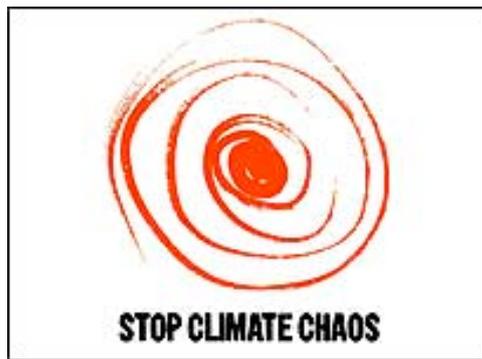
While we topped up our tans in an unusually hot July, billions of people around the world are threatened with poverty and starvation, as climate change disrupts their harvest. Ultimately, it's the harvest on which we depend too.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is asking you to think about climate change when you celebrate Harvest Festival this October, by asking every church member to **make the Stop Climate Chaos pledge**.

The pledge is being made by thousands of people in Stop Climate Chaos' member organisations, including Christian Aid, the World Wildlife Fund, CAFOD and many others. The pledges will be gathered from all over Scotland and taken by a team of Sustrans cyclists to London where they will be given to Prime Minister Tony Blair to demand:

- 3% reductions in UK emissions each year;
- a peak and decline in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2015;
- a limit on global temperature rise of 2°C.

The 2006 Church of Scotland General Assembly "invite all Church members to make a Stop Climate Chaos pledge as a sign of commitment to the world's most vulnerable and our responsibility to care for God's creation".



Stop Climate Chaos volunteer **Rachel Nunn** will be contacting churches to find out if they are willing to take part at their Harvest Festival, but she would be delighted to hear from you first to tell you more about the campaign, answer your questions, explain how you can get involved and send you pledge cards. You can contact her by email at Rachel@stopclimatechaosscotland.org or call her on 01786 479 057.

We would like to provide churches with prayers or liturgies which help people to consider the link between climate change, global justice and harvest. If your church has produced material which you are happy to share, please send it to us and we will put it on our website.

We hope you like the new format for the newsletter. With a circulation of over 800, posting it requires unaffordable time and cost, so to make best use of financial and environmental resources, most of you will be receiving it by email. Please ensure you tell us if you change your email address.

If you have received the newsletter by post **but are not a registered church contact**, to receive future newsletters you **must** either email ecocongregation@srtp.org.uk with your current email address, or register your church.

Registered churches can continue to receive newsletters by post, but tell us if you would prefer email – easier to send, in colour, to your green team!

We welcome new recipients of the newsletter. If it has been forwarded to you, contact us (p.4) to receive future issues.



Report 2003-2006

Our report is sent to all registered churches. This is a colourful celebration of all that churches have achieved through the Eco-Congregation programme in the past three years. Writing the report has inspired us: we think it will inspire you too to take action in your church, in creative and relevant ways. Register on the programme to receive your copy, or download it from our website at www.ecocongregation.org/scotland.

Register your church

Registering on the Eco-Congregation programme is easy and free, gives your church access to free resources, the chance to be part of a local network and to work towards an Eco-Congregation Award. It's now easy to register at www.ecocongregation.org/scotland, or contact us (see p.4) for a form.

Award Winners

Congratulations to nine new award-winning churches, taking the total to 38!

Eco-Congregation has really come of age with the first church in Scotland gaining a second award. Awards last for three years and **St John's Church in Hamilton** has carried on their good work begun

in 2003. The committed Green team are continually moving the programme forward, encouraging each church member to reduce their global footprint, and taking the message out through their strong links to the local community.

www.stjohnshamilton.org.uk



New planters as part of a project to make the space around St John's grow

Craigsbank and East Craigs in Edinburgh celebrate Environment Sunday in June each year. Craigsbank has greatly increased energy efficiency by ongoing careful management of the zoning and timing facilities in the heating system. Good environmental practice in catering includes the use of china cups, Fair Trade and home baking and green cleaning products. The churches support local and global charities such as the Garvald Centre.

St Columba's, Blackhall in Edinburgh produces a community newsletter for every house in the parish, containing regular environmental articles on topics as varied as the Real Nappy Network, environmental footprints and supporting the church's recycling initiatives. These include furniture for the homeless, mobile phones, printer cartridges and over 2000 pairs of spectacles. Environmental thinking is integrated into worship and church management. There are links with the Eco School, Community Association and Traffic Forum.



Environmental pledges on St John's tree

St John's, Edinburgh have really taken the Eco-Congregation into the heart of their church life, launching the programme with a conference, open to all, on the theme of 'Earth be Glad'. They have published an attractive and informative leaflet on the same theme, which many other churches are now using. Among many practical initiatives they recycle paper, use recycled paper, environmentally friendly cleaning materials and compost garden waste. www.stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk/green

The two linked churches of **Burnside Blairbeth** have a comprehensive church environmental policy. This allows them to make the link between their Christian faith and environmental issues in worship, house groups and with young people in church and in local schools. They support a range of recycling activities and have put up bird boxes and done a biodiversity survey in church grounds.

Dyce Parish Church formed "Earth Keepers" to promote and support creation care. They used Module 4 for Bible study. To enable Earth Keepers to carry out environmental projects and invite speakers, they held a sale to raise funds. See the article on www.ecocongregation.org/scotland



Dyce Earth Keepers taking bark rubbings

The young people of **Stirling Methodist Church** compiled an environmental audit of the church and presented it to the Church Council with recommendations which were acted upon. The church has shown a huge commitment to fair trade, initiating the Stirling Propeller Group, whose high profile and effective campaign led to Stirling's achievement of Fair Trade City status.

Iona Abbey with the **Macleod Centre** and **Camus** bring creation themes into worship, but also bring worship into the appreciation of nature through grace at each meal and the weekly pilgrimage around Iona. Staff's environmental awareness "rubs off" on the huge number of volunteers and guests, for example the hot water bottles in rooms as an alternative to radiators and encouragement to use public transport to the island. The Abbey has made a huge contribution to creation spirituality across Scotland and beyond. www.iona.org.uk

Abbotsford Church, Clydebank make imaginative and creative use of natural objects and symbols in worship and have new, innovative and inspirational liturgical material written by the minister (see www.abbotsford.org.uk). They have introduced a wide range of recycling and energy saving initiatives available to both members of the congregation and hall users and produce their own Eco News newsletter to encourage action.

Networks

We are developing regional networks to bring together Award-winning, registered, and interested Eco-Congregation churches together.

The three pilot network groups are beginning to take shape. **Perth** have appointed a chair and secretary. **Glasgow** has four office-bearers and is investigating setting up a bank account. **Edinburgh** agreed that the five award-winning churches would take the lead in organising meetings.

They are also organising joint events. **Perth** are considering a postcard campaign about climate change funded from the proceeds of their winter talks and St Matthew's Green Kirk Day. **Glasgow** has had a speaker from Friends of the Earth on energy efficiency and conservation, and are planning future talks. And **Edinburgh** is planning an event for churches on micro-renewables.

Other networks are beginning to emerge. St John's in Hamilton is planning a South **Lanarkshire** network. Award-winning churches in **Aberdeen** are organising talks and workshops for newly registered Eco-Congregations. In **West Lothian** they are running a stall at the local environmental fair. Churches in the **Highlands** are keen to form an e-network to exchange information. If you would like to know more about networks or would like to form one in your area, get in touch!

Resources Review

There is a really exciting range of new environmental materials for churches on Climate Change and for Worship. Use them every week, or splash out and have a big special service using everything at once!

For Tomorrow Too



This booklet from Tearfund explains, from a Christian perspective, the causes and impacts of climate change and what you can do about it. It's clear, practical, and every church member should have one. You can also

have fun with their Climate Change Pentathlon www.tearfund.org

Cost: Free!

To order: Phone 0845 355 8355

The Climate of Poverty

In this important report Christian Aid show from their work how climate change threatens development goals for billions of the world's poorest people.



Cost: £5

To order: Phone 08700 787 788 or download it free: www.christian-aid.org.uk/climatechange

Don't forget to order your Stop Climate Chaos Pledges (p.2)

Hope for the Planet

A Rocha's exciting worship and study pack for 2006 is in the form of a CD Rom including service orders, OHP masters, specially written songs and drama sketches, powerpoint presentations, a 5-week study course and specially recorded music and visuals. There is also a bonus DVD with four films.

Cost: £10

To order: Send a cheque to A Rocha UK, 13 Avenue Road, Southall, Middx, UB1 3BL

Creationtide material

Liturgical material for 2006 has been published by European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN). It takes the form of a series of biblical meditations accompanied by short prayers.

Cost: Free!

To order: Download it from www.ecen.org or send us a C5 SAE for a paper copy

Don't forget the worship material produced by our award-winning churches at www.abbotsford.org.uk and www.iona.org.uk.

Grants for Breathing Places

Have you been inspired by BBC's Springwatch programmes to create a 'breathing place'? Whether you have a patch of gravel between two buttresses or an extensive graveyard, you can welcome wild-life to your church. And there are grants available to help you! Download the booklet from www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces or find a printed copy in your local library.

Christian Ecology Link EcoTeams

This is a practical, community-based activity that helps households to reduce their impact on the environment and to save money. EcoTeams are small groups of six to eight people who each represent their household. The EcoTeam meets once a month for approximately 4 months. At each meeting EcoTeam representatives share experiences, ideas and achievements on the environmental actions that they have taken. Volunteer Facilitators are needed. If this is an opportunity for you then get in touch with Chris Walton.

GreenEditor@aol.com or Tel: 01502 713020.
www.globalactionplan.org.uk

Dates for your diary

August

5-20 Marine Weeks

www.wildlifetrusts.org

18-20 Bird fair

www.birdfair.org

21 Glasgow network meeting

7.30pm, Wellington Church, University Avenue

September

1 Creationtide begins

download material from www.ecen.org

2-10 Organic Food Week

www.soilassociation.org

3 West Lothian Environment Fair

Almond Valley Heritage Centre, Livingston from 12-4pm. Eco-Congregations are running a stall.

9 Green Day at Kemnay Church

Join Kemnay Eco-Congregation in Aberdeenshire for a 'Green Day' at their Church Centre. Morning walks and picnic in Fetternear Woods from 10am. An afternoon of Green talks, quizzes, displays, advice, tea and homebakes from 2pm.

10-18 Red squirrel week

www.wildlifetrusts.org

16-22 European mobility week

www.mobilityweek-europe.org

16-24 Welcome to Walking Week

www.ramblers.org.uk

22 European car free day

www.22september.org

23 National Moth Night

www.nationalmothnight.info

23-23 Oct Seed gathering Season

www.treecouncil.org.uk

27- 1 Oct European Christian Environmental Network

Sixth Assembly in Flamslatt, Sweden.

October

1-31 International walk to school month

www.walktoschool.org.uk

4 St Francis Day

World animal day
www.worldanimalday.org.uk

9 Last day of Creationtide

www.ecen.org

21 Apple day

www.commonground.org.uk

22-29 One world week

www.oneworldweek.org

November

22-3 Dec National tree week

www.treecouncil.org.uk

25 Buy nothing day

www.buynothingday.co.uk

December

1-3 Tree dressing day

www.commonground.org.uk

February

5-12 Scottish Environment Week

This is an occasion for environmental organisations to raise awareness with the Scottish Parliament (www.scotlink.org). To

complement the programme of events in Holyrood, we would like churches to engage MSPs in their constituencies. Could you invite them as a VIP to an event? Challenge them at an environmental question-time? Send them your congregation's 'green dreams'? To get involved, contact the LINK Parliamentary Officer, Jane Herbstritt, 0131 225 4345, jane@scotlink.org.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust organises a wide variety of events (www.swt.org.uk/events) and Christian Ecology Link lists environmental events (www.christian-ecology.org.uk/whatson.htm)

The Diary page on our web site is regularly updated with new events. If you would like more information about an event but cannot access the relevant web page, please contact us.

Prayer

Our prayer this month is by Roddy Hamilton, Minister of Abbotsford Parish Church, Clydebank

Wheat and Tares

there is a waiting
that wrestles hard against human longing
impatient with time
pained by love's time
not being ours

a waiting
shaped by God's slow patience
for the harvest
watching the wheat and tare shimmer together
as silver eddies sheer across the field

a waiting
cradled in the not yet
expecting us to live with the now
live with the here
and in such purpose
awaken the flesh of the Realm of God

Contact Us

The Eco-Congregation Co-ordinators are always pleased to hear from you. Please contact us for a programme introduction pack, advice, encouragement, items for the newsletter or website, or just a chat!

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Email: ecocongregation@srtp.org.uk

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Society Religion and Technology Project
Church and Society Council
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Margaret Warnock

Phone: 01786 471333

Email: margaret.warnock@ksbscotland.org.uk

Eco-Congregation Scotland

Keep Scotland Beautiful

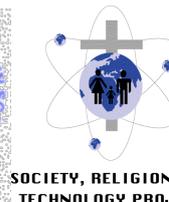
Livilands Lane

Stirling FK8 2BG

Website

For information about the programme, how to register, resources to download, news, links, and more, visit our website:

www.ecocongregation.org/scotland



Eco-Congregation Scotland is delivered by a partnership between Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Society Religion and Technology Project of the Church of Scotland. It is endorsed by most major denominations and Action of Churches Together in Scotland.