



Eco-Congregation Scotland Newsletter

Issue 12

Winter / Spring 2008

Helping you to care for God's creation

Editorial

The Review

The Eco-Congregation Programme has grown substantially since its launch in Scotland in 2001. There are now over 170 Eco-Congregations across Scotland, over 250 in England and Wales and an increasing number across the world, including North America, Africa and Australasia. Numbers of participating churches continue to increase.

The Eco-Congregation Steering Group for Scotland met in November 2007 and agreed that the time was right to review progress to date, celebrate the successes of the Programme and explore how the Programme should now develop. Stakeholders from the Eco-Congregation Networks around Scotland, supporting churches, partner organisations and a representative from Eco-Congregations in England were invited to a meeting at Stirling Baptist Church on the 19 January 2008.

A summary of the main points that came out from the meeting is enclosed with this newsletter. These points represent only the start of the review process, not its culmination. The Steering Group is aware that many members of Eco-Congregations in Scotland, England and beyond are interested in participating in this discussion.

We therefore need and welcome your views and comments. Please use the response form to feed back on how you think Eco-Congregation should develop to help you, your church and your community care better for God's creation.

You can download a copy of the full report of the day, including presentations from:

www.ecocongregation.org/scotland/news

News

The Answer Lies in the Earth....

A novel form of heating that literally takes heat from the cold, wet earth and converts into warmth is finding favour in new church developments in Scotland. Bankfoot Church in Perthshire and a new church hall

in Bridge of Allan near Stirling are now installing 'ground source heat pumps'. The system works like a reverse refrigerator taking heat from the ground and transferring it through underfloor heating to buildings.



At Bankfoot Church, which is currently under construction (see picture), the system is being installed as part of an energy efficient design. In Bridge of Allan it is being used to heat a new church hall and to heat an existing hall through wall mounted fan assisted radiators. These two new developments join Westray Church in Orkney which installed a ground source heat pump (described in a previous issue Eco Congregation Newsletter) to suggest a new direction for church heating.

Among the advantages of ground source heating are:

- it is a low carbon, low impact technology with no chimneys, no pollution and little noise
- it can provide heat all year round (and cooling if necessary)
- while the installation costs are high, grants maybe available and the running costs are low

The Church at Bankfoot will also embody a range of recycled materials in its construction. The Minister, Iain McFadzean said:



"The opportunity to build a new Church does not occur often and we have seized this opportunity to show just what can be done to reduce our energy consumption and offer a wonderful place for worship in the heart of the local community."

For further information on how ground source heat pumps work see:
<http://www.betterplanet.co.uk/Better%20Planet%20UK/Heat%20pumps.html> For practical advice about renewable energy installations and grant assistance for your church see
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland>

HIV, AIDS and Climate Change



It looks idyllic – blue skies, palm trees, padi (rice) fields. The reality in this corner of Tamil Nadu, South India, is far from idyllic. Local villagers are very poor and have few amenities, with no public transport to get them to the nearest clinic or government office, which may be 30 or 40 km distant.

But at least they have had their two crops of rice annually. Until the past few years, that is. From time immemorial farmers in India have depended on the reliability of the monsoon rains. No longer. Parts of Tamil Nadu and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh have experienced lengthy periods of severe drought.

To earn cash to support their families men (and sometimes women) will travel hundreds of kilometres to work on construction sites as labourers. They are badly paid and housed and find some relief in cheap alcohol and cheap sex. It takes little imagination to understand how sexually transmitted infections and especially HIV are spread in such circumstances. When the man returns home to his village, his wife is at risk of infection. Perhaps their next child is born with HIV as a result. Meantime, while the menfolk are away, some of the women may have been so desperate to feed their children that they earn cash by walking 25 km to the interstate highway and selling sex to truck drivers.

For some of us, climate change may still be about changing light bulbs, recycling and using our car less. For villagers in South India, it's already a matter of life or death.

Nigel Pounce: Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project Co-ordinator
The Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project
www.churchofscotland.org.uk/hiv/aids supports several community-based HIV prevention and AIDS care programmes in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Please Support a Strong Scottish Climate Change Bill!

The Scottish Government has recently published its proposals for a Climate Change Bill. This Bill isn't just important to Scotland, it could have a world-wide impact. The proposals are for the most progressive climate change legislation in the world. If every developed country followed this example, then together across the world, we could really tackle climate change.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to make your voice heard. The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition (www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org.uk) brings together more than 50 organisations concerned about climate change including the Church of Scotland, SCIAF, Christian Aid, WWF, Friends of the Earth, RSPB, Greenpeace, Oxfam, Tearfund, and UNISON.

Eco-Congregation Scotland and the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition urge you to make your voice heard. One way you can do this is to visit the WWF Scotland website where you can feed in your comments to the Scottish government. Visit www.wwfscotland.org.uk/climate and make your views known. It should take you no more than two minutes.

WWF would like as many people as many people as possible to tell the Government that they support a strong Bill - if you are able to distribute postcards to allow members of your congregation to sign up to a strong Bill, please contact Julie Stoneman, Campaigns Officer, WWF Scotland on 01350 728200 or jstoneman@wwfscotland.org.uk, who will send some out to you.

Evaluation

Last year, in order to assess the impact of the Eco-Congregation in Scotland, we commissioned an independent evaluation. The evaluation was carried out by Simon and Alexandra Cran-McGreehin of St Andrew's University. Our thanks to all those of you who responded to the questionnaires sent out.

The full report of the evaluation is available on request but a brief summary of findings is given below.

Environmental Action:

- In every case churches joining the programme showed an increase in environmental activities since registering.
- Award winning churches outperform registered and non-registered churches.



Eco-Congregation had a **“good” impact** on the environmental work of the church in areas such as children’s work, low energy light bulbs use of disposable cups, recycling points, community projects and Fair Trade. ***The evaluation found that the programme had “massive impact” on the advice given to members of the congregation.***

However, the programme was found to have **“no” impact** on areas such as use of green electricity, eco-friendly cleaning materials, energy efficient heating and overseas work.

Use of Resources:

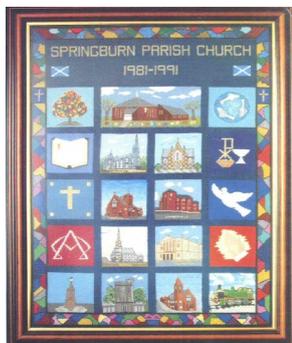
- **Most used:** Module 1 - Audit
- **Next most used:** Module 2 - Worship, 4&5 - Young People, 7 - Practical Management
- **Least used:** 12 - Global issues

The majority of registered churches used fewer than half of resources

The evaluation demonstrates that the programme has a positive impact on churches and congregations and is effective in bringing environmental matters up the agenda and encouraging action in churches. The evaluation also shows that there are a lot of churches out there doing things but not registered. It would be good to bring them in to widen the movement to share knowledge and experience.

Award Winning Churches

Picture from www.springburnchurch.org.uk



Springburn Parish Church The minister has preached a series of sermons on a caring for creation theme. They have a range of recycling projects which are open to the local primary school. In the church low energy light bulbs have been installed and they are planning to improve the efficiency of their heating system. The church grounds have been improved for birds. Their well used tea rooms use Fair Trade tea and coffee.

St Andrews Erskine Church, Dunfermline

In worship the church has had two weekend long Celebrations of Creation. The first weekend was themed around Noah’s Ark and concentrated on caring for God’s Creatures. The second involved creation/environmental activities. There were activities all day Saturday and a Family Service on the Sunday. Having a new church building enabled them to incorporate many features in the fabric that were environmentally sound in the building. A Parish Eco Awareness Day, hosted in the church, was a major effort to reach out to the local community.

Belhaven Church, Dunbar have integrated environmental issues into their worship and children’s work and held a special service on a visit to Lindisfarne. They have an "eco-garden, created and maintained with help from the youth organisations. The garden is well used by both church and community. They have a fair trade stall and have promoted their creation care message through an exhibition in the local John Muir Birthplace museum and by showing the Al Gore film, "An Inconvenient Truth".

Kilmore and Oban – Second Award!



Pictures from www.obanchurch.com

This church has four buildings including a church centre. They have continued their continuing efforts to recycle a large range of items, especially batteries where they have become a centre for collection in the town. The church has been instrumental in helping Oban become a Fair Trade Town. They have shown great initiative in both trying to reduce the number of plastic bags used in supermarkets and in promoting the Eco-Congregation by producing and selling organic cotton bags printed with the Eco-Congregation. They also undertook a poster campaign to promote the programme to all other Church of Scotland Congregations. They may now be looking into feasibility study on the use of renewable energy in all their buildings.

News from the Networks

We now have 9 Eco-Congregation networks established and several more “embryo” ones waiting to grow. Network meetings are open to all. If your church isn’t yet active, come along and find out how to get involved. Alternatively, if your church has been undertaking caring for creation projects for many years, come and meet like minded folk and share your expertise. The dates of forthcoming network meetings are listed in Dates for Your Diary. If there isn’t a network near you, get in touch and we will help you set one up!

Aberdeen organised an introductory Eco-Congregation workshop at Queen’s Cross Church on 4th November. The workshop was a big success with over 30 people attending.

Edinburgh The network is interested in promoting action on an Edinburgh wide basis and invited Janice Pauwels from Edinburgh City Council to their January meeting. They are also exploring the idea of a city-wide conference, planned for next October see <http://www.edinburghclimate.net/conference.html> The date of the next meeting is not yet confirmed, contact Heather McHaffie h.mchaffie@rbge.org.uk or Tel 0131 552 5026 for information.

Glasgow The January meeting departed from the usual format when one of their members gave an excellent presentation highlighting Burn's attitude to the environment emphasising nature and deploring man's inhumanity. For their March meeting they are inviting a speaker from Cartside Green Space, whilst in May the meeting will move to Langside Church, where they have carried out extensive work on their grounds.



The network is planning to become involved in the HOPE 2008 activities and this will be discussed at the June meeting.

Highland and Moray this network needs more members, if you are interested in being linked with other Eco-Congregations in this area contact Margaret Warnock

Orkney Attempts are being made to establish an "e-network" here. Contact Margaret Warnock, if you think you may be able to help.

Perth The efforts of this network to draw in other churches seem to be paying off with four recent registrations from the area. At their last meeting the network had a speaker from Perth & Kinross Council to answer queries about recycling plastic and the Council's plans for waste disposal in the future. They are due to host a One Planet Living workshop on March 5th see www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanet/ophome.aspx. The next network meeting will be on 30th April.

South Lanarkshire Cadzow Parish Church are planning to hold a workshop themed on Climate Change to revitalise this network. Contact Adrian Shaw if you are interested in hearing more.

Stirling recently hosted a lively One Planet Living workshop given by WWF. The workshop produced some valuable networking and exchange of local information.

West Lothian and Falkirk the next meeting will include a speaker from the Energy Savings Trust.

European Christian Environmental Network

The September ECEN assembly is in Milan in and will consider Climate Change. This ecumenical gathering will:

- update Christian environmental activity in Europe
- discuss topics of current importance
- relate to local issues in the host country
- share in worship and on a theme of God's creation
- engage in theological reflection carry forward the programmes of the working groups share materials and experiences
- share materials and experiences

Contact Eleanor Todd at webeditor@ecen.org to find out more.

Keep in touch!

For environmental and financial reasons the main circulation of the newsletter is now by email. Please ensure you keep us informed of any changes to your email address. Registered churches still receive a copy by post but let us know if you would prefer email – it's in colour, and you can forward it on to your green team. We welcome new recipients of the newsletter. If it has been forwarded to you, email ecocongregation@srt.org.uk to receive future issues.

Register your church

Registering on the Eco-Congregation programme is easy and free. It 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 for a form.

Resources Review

Christian Aid's Cut the Carbon Campaign see www.christianaid.org.uk/stoppoverty/climatechange/index.aspx

Operation Noah has a new website: www.operationnoah.org which includes many valuable resources. Operation Noah has appointed Ann Pettifor as their new campaign director and recruited Mark Dowd – documentary film maker, who famously challenged the Archbishop of London not to fly for a year on the Channel 4 documentary "God is Green"

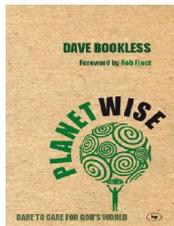
Livesimply www.livesimply.org.uk this CAFOD campaign asks you to look hard at your lifestyle, and to choose to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. You start by making a *livesimply*

promise to change one thing in your life and get others to do the same.

Climate Challenge this UK government website www.climatechallenge.gov.uk gives a lot of information about climate change. It also suggests some very helpful ways of engaging with people who may not yet be interested in the issue (see the section on communicating climate change).

New Resources from A Rocha

A Rocha UK's Environment Sunday Pack for 2008 -



"**Planetwise**" is now available. Also, Dave Bookless's book of the same title is now available. Further information from:

www.arocha.org.uk/planetwise.htm

Kingfisher's Fire by Peter Harris A Rocha founder Peter Harris tells his story and spells out his vision. Published by Monarch Books, January 2008, £7.99 ISBN 978-1-85424-848-0

Cherishing the Earth by Margot and Martin Hodson (Monarch books, £8.99). This book puts Jesus at the centre of a sustainable lifestyle. It calls for Christians and others to become more involved on their communities and lobby for change in the wider world.



Education and Action towards Sustainable Living

Forth
Environment
Link

The following new books are all available on free loan from Forth Environment Link Resource Centre. Email resources@forthenvironment.org or Tel 01786 44921

A Moral Climate - the ethics of global warming by Michael S. Northcott: (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007) £12.95 ISBN: 9780232526684 256pp. Read a review of this important book by Jo Rathbone, Eco-congregation coordinator for England and Wales on the Ekklesia website at: http://books.ekklesia.co.uk/product_info.php?products_id=1965

Contraction & convergence: the global solution to climate change (Schumacher Briefing No 5) by Aubrey Mayer

Heat: how to stop the planet burning by George Monbiot

Climate change begins at home by Dave Reay

The rough guide to ethical living by Duncan Clark

They also have free copies of the '**The pocket green guide for Scotland**' available on a first come first served basis.



5 ways to reduce unwanted mail

<http://www.wasteawareunwantedmail.org.uk/>

A **list of the most common myths about global warming** with links to articles in New Scientist giving a scientific response can be found at:

<http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/dn11462>

Prayer

This prayer was written by members of the 'environment' workshop at the recent [Churches Together in Cheshire](#) Forum 2007 event.

In the eco-footprints of Jesus

*Creator God,
let us walk in your footsteps
with footprints that heal rather than harm
this planet that You have placed in our trust.
We offer our care of creation to You,
not as an act of desperate self-preservation
but as our devotion of worship
to the one who has made it.
Amen.*

Quote

Below is an excerpt from Al Gore's lecture at the Nobel Prize Ceremony, Oslo, December 10, 2007.

"The way ahead is difficult. The outer boundary of what we currently believe is feasible is still far short of what we actually must do.

The future is knocking at our door right now. Make no mistake, the next generation will ask us one of two questions. Either they will ask: 'What were you thinking: why didn't you act?' Or, they will ask instead: 'How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?'"

Photos please!

If you, or anyone in your congregation, has taken any photographs of Eco-Congregation activities and is willing to share them, please get in touch. We are always looking for good photographs illustrating the work of Eco-Congregations in order to promote the programme and for use in the newsletter.

If you have any events coming up – please remember to take a camera!

Dates for your diary

March

25 Feb – 9 Fair Trade Fortnight
www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved_fairtrade_fortnight.htm

- 5 **Perth Network – One Planet Living Workshop**, 7.30pm North Church Contact: Morag Green 01738 643459 or greenup@tiscali.co.uk
- 6 **Falkirk and West Lothian Network**, 7.30pm, Torphichen Church Hall. Contact Adrian Shaw
- 8 **Gardens, Greenspace and Graveyards for biodiversity**



St Matthews Misson Hall (St Matthews Church), Tay Street, Perth.
Rachael.Higgins@dundee.gov.uk
Tel 01382 433042

- 20 **Earth Day** (see also 22 April)
www.earthsite.org
- 20 **Tree Council's Tree Care Campaign** runs Mar-Sept www.treecouncil.org.uk/
- 22 **World Day for Water**
www.unesco.org/water/water_celebrations/
- 31 **Glasgow network meeting**, 7.30 pm in Wellington Church. Contact Margaret Warnock

April

- National Spring Clean, Scotland**
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/index.asp?page=255
- 21-27 **Real Nappy Week**
www.wen.org.uk/rnw/you_can_do.htm
- 24 **Stirling Network Meeting** joint meeting with Stirling Presbytery. Contact Margaret Warnock
- 22 **Earth Day** www.earthday.net
- 30 **Perth Network Meeting** 7.30pm St Matthews. Contact Morag Green 01738 or greenup@tiscali.co.uk 643459

May

- 1st Sunday **International Dawn Chorus Day**
www.wildlifetrusts.org/
- Various - **Walk in the Woods**
www.treecouncil.org.uk
- 4-10 **Compost Awareness Week**
www.compost.org.uk
- 12-16 **Summer Walk to School Week**
www.walktoschool.org.uk
- 17-25 **Scottish Biodiversity Week**
www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk
- 31 -21 **June Wildlife Week**
www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=places:events:wildlifeweek

June

- 2-8 **Recycle Now Week**
www.recyclenow.com/

- 5 **World Environment Day** www.unep.org
- 7 **National Moth Night**
www.nationalmothnight.info
- 8 **World Oceans Day** www.mcsuk.org
- 12-15 **European Green Week**
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/home.html>

July

- 26-27 **Big Tent - Stewardship Festival**
www.bigtentfestival.co.uk/

Last Sunday International Bog Day
www.swt.org.uk

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 webpage, please contact us.

Contact Us

To enquire about the programme and request an introduction pack contact:

Alan Whitson

Phone: 0131 225 5722

Email: awhitson@cofscotland.org.uk

Eco-Congregation Scotland
Church and Society Council
121 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 4YN

For advice and support contact:

Adrian Shaw

Phone: 0131 240 2250

Email: ashaw@cofsctoland.org.uk

Address as above

OR

Margaret Warnock

Phone: 01877 330182

Email: margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk

Eco-Congregation Scotland
Keep Scotland Beautiful
Livilands Lane
Stirling FK8 2BG

Website: www.ecocongregation.org/scotland

Eco-Congregation Scotland is delivered by a partnership between Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) and of the Church of Scotland. It is endorsed by most major denominations and Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS).

