TAKING CARE OF GOD’S CREATION

An environment policy for Southwark Diocese

‘The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.’

Psalm 24.1
BIBLICAL VISION

We recognise the biblical vision that the environment, in which all humanity and all other creatures live:

- comes to us as a gift from God the Father
- is held together in Christ the Redeemer
- and is given life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are:

- motivated by this faith
- inspired by hope in God’s purpose for creation
- committed to expressing, in transformative action, our love for God, for our neighbours here and overseas, now and in the future, and for the world.

We acknowledge the responsibility God has given us:

- to care for, conserve and replenish God’s earth
- for the well-being of all creatures
- for the flourishing of all humanity.

We acknowledge our part in the brokenness of creation, and that we are called to share in God’s work of healing.

THE CHURCH’S MISSION

We understand the Church’s mission, within the mission of God, includes: striving ‘to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.’ (Fifth Mark of Mission agreed by the Anglican Consultative Council).

We accept the obligations of the Church of England’s Seven Year Plan on Climate Change and the Environment 2009-16*.

This calls for ‘renewed respect and reverence for the natural world, united to practical, determined and unwavering action’, and concludes ‘The service of Christians and others of faith and goodwill can contribute positively to the resources and energy of human beings around the world, to mitigate climate change, adapt to it, safeguard the poor and vulnerable, and conserve life’s richness for the benefit of all.’

*Available on CofE website www.churchofengland.org
OUR PART

We recognise that many people and churches are already engaged in different ways in protecting and conserving the environment.

Nevertheless, we encourage each church member, parish, board, church school, office and committee in the Diocese, Episcopal Area and Deanery:

- to make care for God’s creation an integral part of their worship, life and work
- to celebrate the gift of creation especially at Creation Time (Sundays in September)
- to make a regular review of progress in broadening respect for creation, in reducing our carbon footprint, and in working for a more sustainable economy within planetary boundaries
- to work where possible in cooperation with others in churches and civil society to strive for a more just and sustainable world
- to recognise the rights of all people including future generations, and to ensure the responsible use and sharing of the rich resources of God’s earth.

REVIEW

In order that the Diocesan Synod can monitor progress in the implementation of this policy, we ask every benefice to make a brief progress report to their Deanery Synod each year, and each Deanery, committee, Board and office in the Diocese to make a progress report to the Diocesan Synod each November.

CHURCH RESOURCES

Christian Ecology  www.christian-ecology
Eco-congregation  www.ecocongregation.org
Church of England Shrinking the Footprint  www.shrinkingthefootprint.org
Climate Change  www.operationnoah.org
A Rocha  www.arocha.org
For Creation Time: Liturgical & Education Resources  www.ctbi.org

There are various “Creed and Creation” publications, which a web search will identify

Sharing God’s Planet, CHP, 2005 - a CofE Report
LOCAL ACTION

- Celebrating God’s creation in our worship
- Conserving wild life in churchyards
- Recycling waste; avoiding waste of food
- Reducing dependence on fossil fuels: car-sharing; insulation; thinking about church heating and floodlighting; considering renewable energy tariffs; working for energy efficiency
- Resisting pollutants
- Buying goods and services from suppliers who promote social justice
- Investing carefully and ethically
- Buying local, seasonal goods
- Undertaking personal and church audit of carbon footprint regularly
- Cooperating with other churches and faith groups locally to work with local councils and civil society in promoting environmental awareness and social justice
- Working to reduce transport costs
- Saving water
- Making church buildings energy efficient; avoid energy waste in church offices
- Playing our part in Climate Justice - especially with twinned parishes and diocesan links in the developing world