



**Diocese of Canterbury**  
**CHANGED LIVES ☉ CHANGING LIVES**

## **Diocese of Canterbury Environmental Policy 2019**

### **Introduction**

The biblical stories show creation to be a gift and inherently good, but this is not reflected in how we Christians treat our environment. Humans are appointed by God as stewards of life on earth, and yet our actions have contributed to the widespread extinction of species. Now, human-induced climate change (the biggest environmental challenge we face) is damaging the most vulnerable people on earth and could ultimately jeopardise our very existence. Representatives of the major faiths, including Archbishop Justin Welby, said climate change has already hit the poorest of the world hardest and urgent action is needed now to protect future generations<sup>1</sup>. Thus the environment has become an issue of justice and survival which churches and communities can no longer ignore.

In his lecture on ‘Christian hope’<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Justin Welby said: “Each person is involved in a complex web of relationships beginning with the relationship that is within the Trinity; then the relation between God and humanity, relations within the human family, with the environment and with the natural world”. Thus our relationship with the natural environment is integral to our relationship with God.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams wrote: “For the Church of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is therefore central to what it means to be a Christian”. Care for the environment should therefore be a central component of our Christian practice.

### **Our mission and commitment**

The Diocese of Canterbury is registered as an Eco Diocese. The Diocese believes that care for creation is fundamental to its mission and is committed to:

- Affirming the fifth mark of mission “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life on earth” as central to our worship, life, work and mission.;
- Striving to honour God-given vocation to care for the earth and for its people with whom we share our lives.
- Endeavouring to ensure that all our actions in the service of God are informed by an understanding of how they in turn impact on others through their effects on the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5569/archbishop-joins-faith-leaders-calling-for-action-on-climate-change>.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture on ‘Christian hope’ given in Moscow on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017. Available at: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5907/archbishops-gives-lecture-on-christian-hope-in-moscow>.

## **Our principles**

As Christians we live by a creation mandate to be good stewards of God's world: Genesis 1:26-31 and celebrate with the Psalmist that "The Earth is the Lord's".

The Christian charity Operation Noah sums up a Christian response to climate change as needing to be Faith-motivated, Science-informed and Hope-inspired. As a Diocese we hold on to this three dimensional approach to engagement with environment issues.

### **Faith-motivated**

God's creation is a gift and we have a duty to care for it and the wellbeing of all creation matters to God. We must repent for the damage we have done to the earth. We also believe that climate change is about justice, because the poor of the world – those who have done the least to cause it – are already suffering the devastating consequences of climate change. Acting on climate change is about loving our neighbours: that means those in other countries and future generations.

### **Science-informed**

Science is crucial to an informed faith. It does not answer the moral or spiritual questions but it helps us understand the issues we need to deal with. For Christians, science is a way of understanding what we can of God's creation, through using experimental methods and drawing inferences from these to the best explanations we can find.

### **Hope-inspired**

Climate change is one of the biggest issues confronting humanity. So how do we sustain hope in the midst of fear and denial? Hope in God motivates us to take action that can lead to transformation. By God's power at work within us, God is able to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine.

Within this three-dimensional approach we are committed to the principles of:

- Complying with environmental legislation.
- Taking action to address environmental issues, particularly climate change (e.g. by reducing diocesan carbon emissions).
- Minimising the use of finite natural resources (including water) and using, as far as possible, renewable or recycled resources.
- Minimising waste (including avoiding the use of disposable plastics) and applying the principle of: reduce, reuse, recycle.
- Minimising energy use from travel (e.g. avoiding the need to travel and where travel is necessary using public transport, using electric cars, cycling or walking).
- Applying ethical and green procurement procedures and using fairly traded and environmentally friendly products.
- Praying about and campaigning on environmental issues.

## Our aims

Our aims are:

- To lead the Diocese in caring for creation and in demonstrating good environmental practice.
- To join with the wider Anglican community, other denominations and faiths in supporting pro-environmental initiatives, including the Church of England Environment Programme<sup>3</sup>.
- To encourage churches and others within the Diocese to take action in caring for creation and to register as Eco Churches.
- To provide information and resources to support action for the environment by all, and to encourage the sharing of good practice.

These aims will be achieved through the delivery of the Environmental Action Plan.

## Review

Responsibility for this policy lies with:

- Archdeacon responsible for Communities and Partnerships (Stephen Taylor)
- Diocesan Environmental Officer (Teresa Redfern)

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Environment Working Group, which will also be responsible for overseeing the action plan.

Environmental policy review schedule			
Policy reviewed	DEO Reviewer:	Date of DEO review:	Date approved:
Diocesan Environmental Policy for Canterbury 2010 & Canterbury Diocese Statement on the Environment and Action Plan November 2015	Teresa Redfern	2/2/18 & 16/3/18	
Environmental Policy 2019			30/3/19 by Diocesan Synod

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<sup>3</sup> Previously known as the Shrinking the Footprint Campaign.