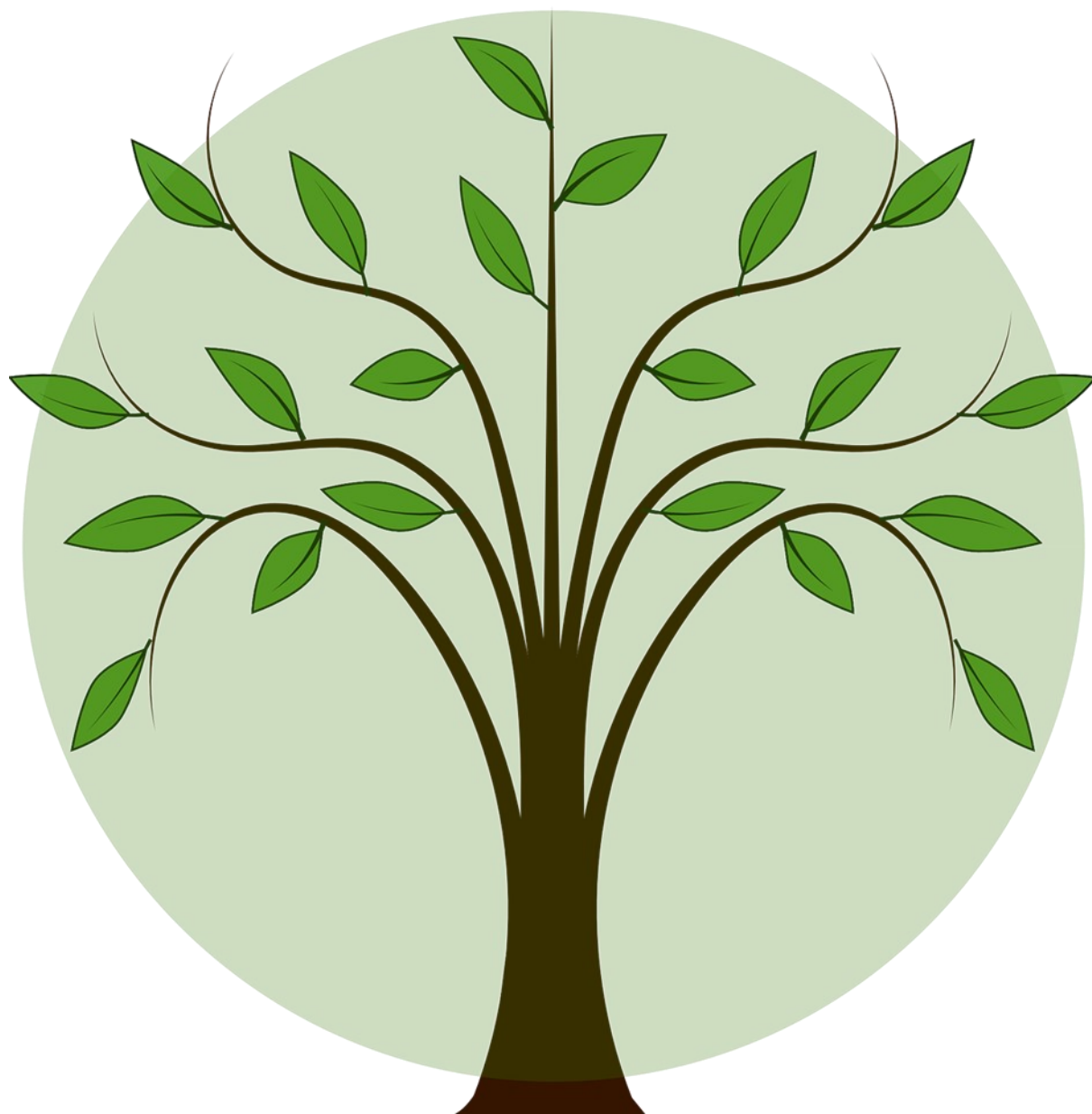


MANCHESTER ECO DIOCESE RESOURCES



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Manchester

CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD

Produced by the Diocesan
Environment Working Group

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Introduction

This is a short guide to responding to climate change. The guide opens up the issues, offers basic information and sets out some next steps possible for everyone; even for those who have only have ten minutes to offer. This is not a comprehensive guide, but is intended to whet the appetite for responding to climate change at home, at church, in our mission communities and further afield.

What is the problem?

Climate change is “persistent or long-term changes to the weather around the Earth caused by pollution. Examples include increased global temperatures, irregular weather patterns, shrinking polar ice caps, etc” ([Jargon Buster](#)). By pollution, we mean “the presence in, or introduction into, the environment of a substance which has harmful or poisonous effects” ([Jargon Buster](#)). Whilst some pollution is naturally occurring, most is down to us and the direct impact we are having on our planet.

This is the view of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#). Ecologists take it further. They argue that we have had such an impact that climate change can be measured using a new period of geological time called the ‘Anthropocene’. The Anthropocene is a period in the recorded history of our planet that shows our impact and the damage we are doing, by polluting the earth. By responding to climate change, we are setting the record straight and ensuring our impact is as small as possible.

How do we respond?



The challenge we have been set is to remove as much pollution as we produce. Achieving this is referred to as reaching 'Net Zero'. In 2020 the Church of England General Synod passed a motion to deliver Net Zero by 2030. From here, we will each walk this road. We will journey together. We will serve one another as we go. There are many things we can do. And everything that we do will feed into the wider story of transformation that we tell as individuals, parishes, mission communities, deaneries and Diocese, of our journey to Net Zero.

Our call to respond to climate change stems from being a part of creation, made in the image of God, and joining in the mission that God is calling us to. We are all different and have different skills and talents, and so the contributions that we make to our journey along the road will be different, too. The contributions that we make, however small we perceive them to be, will add up to make a big difference. These changes relate to our personal choices, which shape our homes, our family life, the experience of our children at school, and our work places.

We might begin by mapping our carbon footprint, using a smart meter in our home. We might choose to cycle or walk, which can reduce our travel by car, or switch to electric travel or public transport. We might 'go green' by switching our energy provider.

Or we might switch to a vegetarian or vegan diet and reduce our food miles (or carbon footprint) for the food we eat. We might wash clothes at 30 degrees as opposed to 40 degrees. We might even map the footprint of our white goods, which will reduce our impact on the climate too. If they are locally produced, it is helping the planet.



We might choose to speak out against those who are impacting the climate negatively. Write to our MPs. Divest from companies that support fossil fuels. Consider how we might ensure our voice is heard, and the cost we are willing to count for serving the mission of God in response to climate change. Remember, this is a global issue. Our actions at home respond to climate change in solidarity with others around the world.

Individual action is just the start. We can organise ourselves locally in lots of different ways. Map the energy footprint of our church buildings.

The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) equips us to map our impact on the climate and offers data to guide our next steps. In 2022, 190 churches in Diocese of Manchester engaged with the EFT. So 60% of our churches have the following information available:



- ◆ Sources of energy used by the church, including the nature of the supply and how much the church is paying for it.
- ◆ The church energy rating, akin to a house energy performance certificate, showing the scope for improvement.
- ◆ The building measurements and layout, which can guide the narrative in terms of the unique challenges churches face in terms of heating.
- ◆ Person hours, which gives weekly attendance, ideally beyond the scope of the weekly service book, including any social action projects, and an initial impact measurement.

Start an Eco Church. In October 2022, 118 churches in the Diocese of Manchester were already registered with the Eco Church programme and 46 had received either a Bronze or Silver Eco Church award.

- ◆ Together we can consider how our worship and teaching, buildings, land, community and global engagement, and lifestyle can be oriented to respond to climate change.
- ◆ If a church has already completed the EFT, then the church is already moving towards the Bronze Eco Church award.
- ◆ The award scheme is not just a badge to wear. It shows others on the road to Net Zero that we are committed to responding to climate change.

Become an Eco Champion for an area. Across the Diocese of Manchester we are recruiting and resourcing an Eco Champion per mission community in order to mobilise the whole Diocese to respond to climate change. We can each be part of a network of like minded people who want to live out their faith with others made in the image of God, joining in the mission of God, through leading the march to Net Zero.

We all have a part to play in responding to the climate emergency. So join in. We need everyone!