

Welcome to the autumn edition of our newsletter. This newsletter is produced by the District Eco Group which contains representation from most of the circuits and areas within the Bristol District. If your circuit is not represented please get in touch as we would love you to join us!



Congratulations to the many churches which have achieved awards since the last newsletter: Horfield, Yate and Zion United (bronze) and Victoria (silver) in Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit; Hucclecote (bronze) in Gloucestershire Circuit; Yatton, Pill and Christchurch Clevedon (all bronze) in Gordano Circuit; Bath Road Swindon (silver) and Sheldon Road Chippenham (bronze to silver) in North Wilts Circuit; Glastonbury (bronze) in Somerset Mendip Circuit. This is tremendous progress, and well done to all!

COP26

A great deal has already been written about the vital COP26 conference in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November, and you can find information and encouragement on websites such as Green Christian <https://greenchristian.org.uk/cop-26-glasgow-2021/> or Christian Aid <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved-locally/scotland/preparing-cop26>. The Iona Community has produced the following prayer:



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

We pray for world leaders as they prepare for the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November. Loving Creator, at this moment in the earth's history, when humanity must take account of Earth's destiny, give to those leaders who gather in Glasgow a sense of urgency, a perception of necessity and the wisdom and will to secure the health and wellbeing of the world at whatever cost to wealth, political advantage or prestige, and give us all a vision of a world restored to full health that is worthy of all those yet to be born and worth all the work, sacrifice and commitment which is ours to offer. © Wild Goose Resource Group

A Good News Story – Yatton



Yatton Methodists first started to think about Ecochurch in early 2019, when we formed a group. It was initially difficult to think about how Ecochurch was relevant to us. Were we "good" or "green" enough to be an EcoChurch? Did it fit in with the church's mission priorities? In the face of the worsening climate and ecological emergency, and clear signs that humanity is taking Creation for granted, we decided to just start the journey.

Ecochurch is a list of 170 questions. The questions are more about behaviour, preaching and teaching and the ways in which we work with and show our love for our communities as they are about solar panels and bike racks. For every question, there are obvious ways to improve.

Yatton filled in the form and discovered that we were doing well on most points, but we could improve the way we look after the small amount of land around the church. We put in a compost bin, someone donated a bug hotel, and the gardeners in the congregation donated cuttings from flowers that are particularly beneficial for bees and butterflies for the church's flower bed. We told Ecochurch and they asked for a little evidence, and we achieved Ecochurch Bronze in July 2021. We are now working towards silver.

All churches should try the questionnaire and see how they get on. A neighbouring church was able to reach Bronze with no additional work. Getting an award is a great encouragement and witness, and I encourage everyone to try it and see. *John Brenton*

Spreading the word in Bristol and South Gloucestershire

When Westbury on Trym Methodist Church gained its silver Eco Church award in 2018 other churches in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit asked us to tell that story and say something about the Eco Church scheme. We put together a PowerPoint presentation and with adaptations and updates we have shown this to a number of churches in the Circuit. During lockdown we met via Zoom but more recently we have led morning worship which incorporates Eco Church information focussing on a Climate Sunday or a Harvest service. We have found this a useful way of spreading the word about Eco Church and we have been supported by the Circuit Our Calling – Service group which takes the lead on environmental matters and which prepared the environmental policy adopted by the Circuit Meeting. *Pauline and Mike Culshaw*

Bristol District Synod – an Environmental Policy

At the Bristol District Synod on 11th September ‘The Earth is The Lord’s’ was the heading to the agenda and we considered the role of Christians in caring for creation. Rev Mike Perry of environmental Christian charity A Rocha led an inspiring and wide ranging consideration of the theological basis for creation care and described the Eco Church project, a practical way for churches to show their care for creation and challenge themselves to do better. Jane Stacey from Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol described that church’s journey towards a Silver Eco Church award and John White from the Hazelnut Community Farm project in Bristol described a pioneering way of being church through growing and tending a community garden. Rev Noel Sharp introduced the District Environmental Policy which was debated and adopted by Synod. The Policy will shortly be available on the Environment Group page of the District website. As a District we have taken another step on our journey towards becoming an Eco District.

Living to Love God’s World

The Lifestyle element of the Eco Church survey means involving everyone in the church in considering the effects of their lifestyle on the planet. Ian Souter has written in the Slack forum describing a booklet produced in Peasedown St John entitled ‘Living to Love God’s World’ about developing a greener lifestyle. He is happy for this to be used as widely as possible. You can download the booklet in a suitable form from the Slack forum under Useful Resources to Share. If you are not yet a member of Slack please contact us for an invitation.

Facebook Group



We now have a public Facebook group where you can share ideas, ask questions and discuss anything relating to the Bristol Eco District. You can visit the group by following this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/526479268456099> or simply by searching for Bristol Methodist Eco District. The aim of this group is to share information and ideas to help our churches and individuals to live more sustainably.

Please visit the group and join in discussion – it helps to spread the news of Eco Church across the District and further afield!

Events

The Society for Ecumenical Studies: **Care for Creation** Saturday, 23 October on Zoom. *A day with UK and Global perspectives looking at the theological issues around care for the environment ahead of the COP26 summit in November 2021.* To book, please go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/care-for-creation-tickets-164846577551>

John Wesley’s New Room in Bristol is hosting a series of online Wes Talks and on 25th October at 7.30pm Rev Noel Sharp and Hannah Brown of JPIT will discuss **Climate Change: Why Does COP26 Matter?** Details on the New Room website <https://www.newroombristol.org.uk/events/>

Please feel free to copy this newsletter or any parts you feel relevant to your situation, and use it in church notices or magazines.