

ENVIRONMENT POLICY of the Diocese in Europe

The Environment and the Mission of the Church

The Five Marks of Mission express the fundamental purposes of the church in a succinct way. They are backed by the Anglican Consultative Council, the Lambeth Conference of Bishops and the General Synod. In brief, they are evangelism, nurturing discipleship, helping the needy, struggling for justice, and caring for the environment. In full, the Fifth Mark is:

‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’.

Theological Basis

The Genesis stories show the creation as inherently good. Humans are given dominion (stewardship) over it (Genesis 1.28) and are to care for it (Genesis 2.15). One result of the Fall, however, is enmity between humans and nature (Genesis 3.15). Later, the prophets dreamed of a time when humanity and the natural world would live in harmony with each other (Isaiah 11.6-9). In the New Testament Jesus often drew on nature to illustrate his teaching (Matthew 13), and St Paul sees redemption on a cosmic scale (Romans 8.18-25).

Today we realise that ‘dominion’ has too often been interpreted to mean exploit, treat violently, use for human ends. We now understand it to mean be responsible for, nurture, manage sensitively and to recognise that there are limits to the extent to which we should use and take from the natural world. We are increasingly aware of our inter-relationship with the natural world and our dependence on it. Taking the long view, our redemption is not complete until it includes that of the whole creation. This gives us a powerful motivation to heal our broken relationships with the natural world. The following clauses show how we can take further steps to put this into action.

Key Tasks for our Diocese, our Chaplaincies, Communities and Individuals

We affirm the Fifth Mark of Mission (‘to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life on earth’) as a central part of our life, work and mission.

1. At Diocesan Level

1.1. We will take environmental concerns fully into account in our mission, worship, study, education, training, pastoral, administrative and other programs and projects.

1.2. We subscribe to the goal of the Church of England’s ‘Shrinking the Footprint Campaign’ to reduce our carbon emission to 40% of 2008 values by 2050 and will encourage all chaplaincies to take necessary steps to achieve this.

1.3. We will observe Creation Time to be celebrated between the 1st September and the second Sunday in October every year and encourage all chaplaincies to do likewise

1.4. We will appoint a person as our Environment Officer and encourage him or her to bring environmental concerns forward on a regular basis.

1.5. We will identify environment issues in our towns, countries or the Diocese as a whole, and devise appropriate action on them.

1.6. We will seek appropriate information from Christian environmental groups and keep abreast of current thinking.

1.7. We will consider the environmental aspects of all our policies and plans, and accept that additional costs may be incurred.

1.8. We will hold a formal debate or discussion on environmental issues and policies at diocesan level at least every three years

1.9. We will pay attention to environmental concerns in our banking and investment policy, and continue to pay regard to the national church ethical investment policy.

1.10 We will undertake an 'environmental audit' of our premises and property and devise appropriate plans to care for the most significant aspects of the natural world which are our responsibility. Specifically, we will make an energy audit at least every three years and seek to save energy, wherever possible.

1.11 We will encourage the use of environmentally-friendly forms of transport and offsetting of carbon emission.

2. At Chaplaincy, Community and Individual Level

2.1. We will take environmental concerns fully into account in our mission, worship, study, education, training, pastoral, administrative and other programs and projects.

2.2. We will identify environment issues in our chaplaincies, archdeaconries or the Diocese as a whole, and devise appropriate action on them.

2.3. We will undertake an 'environmental audit' of our premises and property and devise appropriate plans to care for the most significant aspects of the natural world which are our responsibility. Specifically, we will make an energy audit at least every three years and seek to save energy, wherever possible.

2.4. We will ask our members to consider their personal impact on the environment in their daily lives.

2.5. We will support the work of local and national environmental organisations, as appropriate.

2.6. We will encourage the chaplaincy council, architects and contractors to take environmental concerns fully into account in repair or construction work.

2.7. We will include environmental concerns in our worship and teaching, especially observing the period of Creation Time between the 1st September and the second Sunday in October, each year

2.8. We will encourage the use of environmentally-friendly forms of transport and offsetting of carbon emission.

2.9 We will encourage the reduction of consumption and the recycling of waste.

2.10. We will endeavour to appoint a chaplaincy environment officer.

A Prayer

Almighty God,
Give us reverence for all creation
and respect for every person,
that we may mirror your likeness
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect (2nd before Lent)