



# ENGAGING WITH THE SEASON OF CREATION

## The Diocesan Environmental Group (DEG)

Each Diocese of the Scottish Episcopal Church is charged with creating a group to support church communities in implementing the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP). The resource below was produced by the Environmental Group of the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway for the Season of Creation 2023.

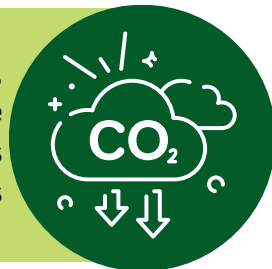


## Rooted in Scripture

From Genesis to Revelation, we hear how God calls us to protect creation and love one another. To support our efforts towards Net Zero, the DEG has included prayers and scripture references to deepen our engagement.

## Net Zero Action Plan and the Church

We believe the church is a community of believers, not simply the buildings in which we worship. While the NZAP focuses largely on our buildings, this resource includes both personal and communal ways to engage.



## The 10 Points of Guidance

We will highlight the 10 Points of Guidance from the provincial Net Zero action plan, pointing out a few "quick wins" that you can try to have a positive impact on your environmental footprint.

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# 1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY & 2. CLEAN ENERGY

## Scripture to Ponder - Genesis 1-2; Genesis 8:20-9:17

We are called to "till and to tend the garden" (Gen 2:15). And what's more, the covenant God made with Noah clarified that the rainbow was "the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations" (Gen 9:12).



Draft proof any gaps where heat might escape. This could include doors and windows or lofts and crawl spaces.



Wash clothes at 30°C or below and avoid using a tumble dryer whenever possible.



Switch appliances completely off rather than relying on standby. Many modern appliances (computers, televisions, microwaves...) leach power even when they are switched "off".



Change over lightbulbs to LEDs and switch off lights when leaving a room.

## The Lord be with you...

Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures.

Help us to become instruments of a new creation,  
Founded on the covenant of your love.



- *The Cry of the Earth*



### 3. THRIVING BIODIVERSITY

#### Scripture to Ponder - Psalm 148

What does it mean that all of creation is called upon to praise the Lord? How would praise from "all mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars, every wild and tame animal, all reptiles and birds..." manifest?



#### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Spread native wildflower seeds on a patch of your garden or replace a section of lawn with a wildflower section. It will save you time mowing and support birds, bees, butterflies, and other small creatures.
- ✓ Consider replacing the cleaning products you use with more natural alternatives. Pay special attention to ingredients that can cause harm to the environment and its inhabitants.
- ✓ Start a compost heap or compost bin! That single lump of decaying matter can become a whole ecosystem of worms, beetles, flies, woodlice, amphibians, and even reptiles like slow worms.

#### The Lord be with you...

The garden is rich with diversity  
With plants of a hundred families  
In the space between the trees  
With all the colours and fragrances.  
Basil, mint and lavender,  
Great Mystery keep my remembrance  
pure,  
Raspberry, apple, rose,  
Great Mystery fill my heart with love,  
Dill, anise, tansy,

Holy winds blow in me.  
Rhododendron, zinnia,  
May my prayer be beautiful  
May my remembrance O Great  
Mystery  
Be as incense to thee  
In the sacred grove of eternity  
As I smell and remember  
The ancient forests of earth.

*Chinook Psalter*



## 4. ACTIVE TRAVEL

### Scripture to Ponder - Acts 9:1-19

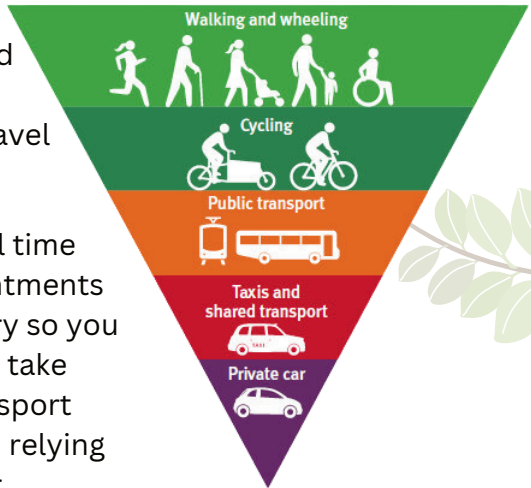
The conversion of Saul/Paul is one of the better-known stories in the New Testament. What can we learn about our own lives and interaction with climate justice through the lens of this story? What scales do you have over your eyes? How might God clear your vision to "walk the road" seeing clearly?



Plan trips in advance and research available travel methods.



Build travel time into appointments in your diary so you can walk or take public transport rather than relying on your car.



### The Lord be with you...

Holy God, Mother of all, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go: preserve those who travel and keep us ever mindful of the impact our travel has on your created world. Surround all who venture out this day with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them, in safety, to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





## 5. ZERO WASTE

### Scripture to Ponder - John 6:1-12

*"When they all had eaten their fill, Jesus instructed them to gather up what was leftover so nothing would be wasted."* We worship a God of abundance who provides to us in abundance. How we receive and share that abundance directly impacts the created world and all of God's beloved children.



**REJECT:** Consider whether you really need a product before you buy it. Reject single-use plastic items and think critically about those which are packaged in plastic or other wasteful wrappings.



**REDUCE:** When you *must* purchase products take steps towards reducing their use through efficiency or alternative approaches.



**REUSE:** Shop second-hand, first! An easy way to reduce the impact of your purchases is to shop locally at charity shops before looking towards the high street or online shops.



**RECYCLE:** Consider the packaging materials when making purchases and whether modules within the product can be recycled back into biological compost or technical reuse.



**RESTORE:** Rather than replacing items that are wearing out try to repair them. Look into local repair cafés or groups if you don't know how to fix something.

### The Lord be with you...

God of life, we praise you for the beauty of creation, its richness and variety; yet, through greed and ignorance, we scar your world with plastic waste and throw so much away. Make us more like Jesus, treading gently on our common home, and breathe your Spirit on us, that we may care more deeply for your Earth. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- The Rt Rev Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich



## 6. SHARED GOVERNANCE

### Scripture to Ponder - Ecclesiastes 4:9-16

Working together is crucial as we consider restoring the riches of Creation through environmental justice action (like reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions), just as it is in so many areas of life. God did not create us to stand alone. How might you join or lead efforts in your community to work towards change? Whose voices are being left out of the conversation and how could you invite them in?



It will be impossible to measure our impact unless we know where we began. Calculating our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be a key part of the journey. Tools will be provided to support congregations in doing this.



**DID YOU KNOW?** Many energy companies will provide free or low-cost electricity & gas monitors you can keep at home to help you see your energy use in real time. These can help you reduce your footprint (and your bills) by showing you what appliances and habits are using the most energy.



**A friendly competition:** Why not invite your friends to join the emissions reduction journey? You could measure each household's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to set a starting point and then challenge each other to reduce by a certain percentage by a given date.

### The Lord be with you...

God of blessings, the universe sings of your glory. Deepen our gratitude for all you have made and awaken in us a renewed commitment to care for the earth and each other. Inspire all our leaders from around the Province with openness to listen to those most affected by climate change and with courage to act urgently and wisely, so our common home may be healed and restored so all people, and generations to come, may delight in it.

- Adapted from the COP27 Climate Summit prayer from the EcoJesuits



## 7. TRAINING & EDUCATION

### Scripture to Ponder - Proverbs 1:20–23, 33

It can be tempting to take the easy way sometimes: to rely on what we think we know rather than diving into the uncomfortable and sometimes frightening reality around us. But there is freedom in the wisdom that comes from knowledge.



#### TOP TIPS



There are many resources available to learn more about the climate crisis and a faithful response to it. **Eco-Congregation Scotland** is a wonderful resource for those church communities deciding where to start on their Net Zero journey.



Research local groups engaging with environmental action and help to raise awareness or support their work by volunteering, fundraising, and event organising.



Organise a movie night with friends and choose a nature or environmental documentary. Many great examples are widely available on streaming platforms online.

### The Lord be with you...

Creator God, we pray for an end to the waste and desecration of your creation; For access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people; And for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Redeeming One, give us the humility and courage to seek knowledge over conjecture; to admit our ignorance, and to repent of our willful misuse of the resources of your world. Turn our new knowledge into wisdom to guide us towards a future of better stewardship of all you creation.

Sustaining Lord, inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom, and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all; That, trusting in your bounty, all people may be empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression. Amen. - *Adapted from Jesuit Resources Online*





## 8. ROOTED WORSHIP

### Scripture to Ponder - Psalm 96

All of our worship should be aimed at praising God for the abundance and grace afforded to all of creation throughout all time. There are numerous psalms in which we hear of the ways that creation praises God. Where have you witnessed creation praising the Lord? How could you bring elements of creation into your personal or corporate worship?



Take it outside! Are there opportunities to engage in worship outside? Head out to the church grounds or a local park. How does the nature of our worship change when we free ourselves of the bounds of a building?



Are there ways your congregation could include creation care and environmental justice in worship all year long?



Consider alternative or creative expressions of worship both at home and in the community. Add prayer time into your daily walk, write intercessions for church while sitting outside at the park, or choose a hymn about creation each Sunday.

### The Lord be with you...

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your beloved community of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

*The Lord's Prayer from The New Zealand Book of Common Prayer*

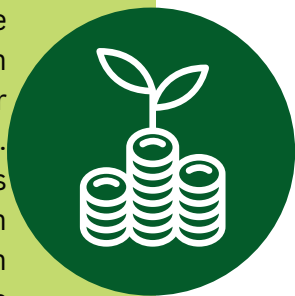




## 9. POSITIVE FINANCES

### Scripture to Ponder - 1 Timothy 6:17-19

How do we define "wealth" or what it means to be "rich?" In this first letter to Timothy, Paul calls on Timothy to direct the "rich" not to rely on their worldly wealth, but to share it and do good works. But if we don't consider ourselves to be "rich" does that absolve us of the need to participate in movements that seem beyond our means. How can we use the financial resources *we have* to build God's kingdom in the world today?



Plan ahead - when will you need a new boiler or heating system? Start saving now so that when the time comes you can invest in an ecological option.



Look into grant funding - this applies at home and church! The Scottish government and the Province have funds available to help with eco improvements.



Encourage your vestry to consider making a budget line for eco improvements on church and/or rectory grounds.

### The Lord be with you...

We thank you, creator God,  
for the goodly heritage you offer us,  
from green downland, to the deep salt seas,  
and for the abundant world  
we share with your creation.  
Keep us so mindful of its needs  
and those of all with whom we share,  
that open to your Spirit we may discern and practice  
all that makes for its wellbeing,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,



- Rev Peter Lippiett



## 10. BUILD A MOVEMENT

### Scripture to Ponder - Ephesians 3:16-20

What could we do if we truly believed that God was in charge and supporting our every movement? How would the invitation to "join us" change if we believed the seemingly small actions of our hands could move mountains? While the GHG emissions of our buildings are insubstantial in relation to the whole climate crisis, we have to consider the impact of our example and of each individual who joins our environmental justice action. Even in our small corner of the world, we have incredible potential if we bring others along with us.



Shout it from the rooftops! For many in our local communities, the invitation to church might be overwhelming, but the invitation to work together for the good of the environment is a universal draw. It could even become a stepping stone towards faith.



Look at what other organisations in your community are doing for environmental justice and come alongside.

### The Lord be with you...

O God of unchangeable love, you see the beauty and worth of all you have created. Through Jesus you come down to us, to turn our hearts to you, to one another, and to all your creation. Heal us, that we may care for your world and see every family, tribe, language and people as an interconnected expression of your grace and glory; so we might work together as one human family to reverse the damage we have caused to this fragile Earth you created in love. We pray these things through Jesus Christ who lives and creates with you the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

– Adapted from *Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, IN*