

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

(a) Does your church support the work of aid and development agencies which care for both people and the earth?

(b) Is church income invested in ethical funds?

- Avoid allowing it to be used to finance activities of which you do not approve.

CEL RESOURCES

CEL produces separate leaflets on topics relevant to issues raised in this environmental audit eg. Climate Change, Energy Use in Church Buildings, Biodiversity, Water, Green Transport, Ethical Investment and Green Shopping etc.

CEL Resources lists the various ways CEL can help you in working for a greener church. A Guide to Sources lists books for the general reader and useful organisations.

These leaflets are free but donations towards printing and postage are welcome.

Green Christian is CEL's magazine containing news, articles, readers' letters, book reviews and a great deal more CEL members receive it three times a year.

CEL's website has many helpful ideas for churches, including all the topic leaflets listed above, Green Sermon Notes for the Sunday readings of the Common Lectionary, a monthly Prayer Guide and details of CEL campaigns and conferences. It has material for worship based on the LOAF principles for food.

Churches can register with CEL's free ChurchLink scheme and receive a complimentary newsletter twice a year.

JOIN CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Send £18 standard (low income £10) or £28 family/corporate, or a donation for church membership (recommended amount £25) to CEL FREEPOST, SE 8672, 9 Nuthatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 5ZZ. Cheques payable to CEL. For more details about CEL contact CEL, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER. Tel. 01524 33858. Email. info@christian-ecology.org.uk

Send for copies of this leaflet to CEL Resources, 40 The Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JG.

Please send a donation to cover cost of printing and postage, or at least an S.A.E.

You are welcome to photocopy it if you acknowledge CEL. September 2005.

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(c) Do you discern the 'signs of the times' in terms of ecological change?

- List the social, political, economic, ecological and technological changes that you are aware of from the last 15 years. How have these affected your own lifestyle, and that of fellow church members and workers? God's purposes are revealed in such moments!

Videos: The Operation Noah video is free on request but donations are welcome. How Green is Your Church?, a 15 minute video on practical steps for a sustainable lifestyle, is available for hire (£3.50 per month).

Send orders for leaflets and videos to CEL Resources, 40 The Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JG.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Caring for God's World, produced by two London dioceses, is a comprehensive environmental audit with detailed checklists. Contact: Revd Chris Brice, London Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU.
- EcoCongregation, helps churches show their care for God's creation in spiritual and practical ways with a series of modules and an award scheme to assist local church environmental action. EcoCongregation, Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ. 024 7685 3061. www.ecocongregation.org
- The Witness of our Buildings, by the Society of Friends, has useful and distinctive material. Contact: Anne Adams, Quaker Green Concern, The Folly, Yarpole Lane, Luston, Herefordshire HR6 0BX.


**CHRISTIAN
ECOLOGY LINK**

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT FOR CHURCHES

To live sustainably we need to examine the activities of organisations as well as our personal lifestyles. Many companies now carry out environmental audits in order to identify ways to minimise their impact on the environment. This leaflet has questions to ask when conducting an environmental audit of your church, followed by suggestions for action.

MATERIALS

(a) Does your church use recycled paper for letters, news-sheets, magazines & orders of service?

- Recycled paper is much improved in quality. Try it!
- Manilla (brown) envelopes are cheaper, often recycled, & involve less bleaching than white envelopes.
- Use envelope re-use labels.
- Use scrap paper, printed on one side, for writing notes, hard copies of emails, drawing & painting.
- Buy wood for building work, fittings and furniture from sustainably managed forests.

(b) Does your church avoid disposable products and those with excess packaging?

- Save cartons and boxes for use by schools, playgroups, youth groups and Sunday Schools.

- Use glass bottles and china cups and plates rather than disposable ones; re-use glass containers, e.g. making jams for church functions; jars for storing nails, etc.

ENERGY

Does your church conserve energy?

- Low energy light bulbs cost more initially, but last up to 8 times longer and use one fifth of the electricity used by ordinary bulbs.
- Loft, roof and cavity wall insulation reduces heat loss and pollution from fossil fuel burning.
- Schedule choir practice, flower-arranging, or cleaning for Saturdays or Mondays when the church is warm anyway.
- Switch the church electricity supply to clean, renewable energy. Send for details of CEL's climate change campaign — Operation Noah. Visit www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah

PURCHASING

(a) Does your church think about the type of food and drink you serve?

- Organise a LOAF meal at your church where all the food is Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded. Use your LOAF!
- Encouraging the provision of vegetarian dishes and free range and organically grown produce is good for people, animals, plants and wildlife.
- Try to buy locally, to bring trade to local retailers and growers, which reduces the number of 'food miles' (and thereby the cost and pollution caused by transporting food over long distances).
- Encourage the use of herb and fruit teas.
- Ask your church catering helpers to supply Traidcraft tea and coffee, or Cafe Direct. This ensures the growers receive a fair price for their product. Look for the Fair Trade mark.



(b) Does your church use environment-friendly cleaning products?

- Although a little more expensive, they are now widely available.
- In general avoid chlorine-based bleaches, phosphate-based detergents and any cleaners not 100% biodegradable.
- Use recycled toilet paper, tissues and kitchen rolls, available from suppliers such as Traidcraft and most supermarkets.
- Try to use LESS cleaner and detergent: they all have some impact.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

(a) Does your church use creative and positive language in its worship?

- Where possible, use words in your services which portray nature, and people of all sorts, as God's beloved creation.

- Choose hymns that do not reinforce the theology of human domination over nature, but emphasise stewardship, care for God's creation and the joy of nature.

(b) Do you arrange regular environmental acts of worship?

- The first Sunday in October is Animal Welfare Sunday. Harvest, Easter, Rogation, Christmas, Lent and Advent all offer special opportunities to reflect on the importance of nature to us, and to God. See CEL's 'One Bread' and Harvest Services.
- 'Creation Time' takes place from September 1st to the second Sunday of October. Worship resources are available from the European churches at www.ecen.org and from America and Australia at www.seasonofcreation.com
- Worship can be enhanced by incorporating symbolic acts such as tree-planting, using local water, soil, rocks, timber, and organic bread or wafers and wine.
- Outdoor services can help our sense of being close to the earth and to God.

(c) Have you or your minister read any books or articles recently on Christian views of environmental issues?

- Many past and contemporary writers have valuable insights into the nature of our relationship with God and the earth.
- There are many books now available on Christian theology and ecology — see CEL's 'Sources' leaflet.

(d) Does our responsibility for God's world feature in the regular preaching and teaching of your church?

- Sunday School and other teaching materials and ideas are available from many organisations.
- Invite members of CEL and other environmental organisations to come and speak at services or meetings.
- Encourage your church to become a local church member of CEL or enquire about our free ChurchLink newsletter



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

(a) Does your church relate positively to the local community?

- Buildings and land can be shared for local events, encouraging social participation and reducing barriers of isolation and loneliness.
- Small Christian cells and groups, meeting in people's homes, help people share their ideas and reach out to the community.

(b) Is your church readily accessible?

- Make it possible for disabled people to have access to the church. Ramps, handrails, audio-loop systems, disabled toilets, etc. can be provided. (For information contact Church Action on Disability, PO Box 10918, Birmingham B14 7YD.
- How welcoming does your church appear to people? Perpetually closed doors give the impression of withdrawal from the world.

(c) Is your church involved with local environmental initiatives?

- Forge links with local environmental groups, the Local Authority's sustainability network, and with other groups interested in environmental concerns.
- Publicise local events such as recycling collections, farmers' markets, or conservation events in your magazine or church notices.
- Involve young people in the parish, Sunday School, local schools, youth groups and uniformed organisations in environmental projects.

(d) If your church has an outreach, or justice and peace group, does it include care for the local environment in its work?

- Suggest inviting a speaker to give a talk on Christian environmental issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

(a) Does your church have arrangements to recycle its waste, or on site recycling facilities?

- Some churches have recycling collection points in their grounds.
- Aluminium, batteries, carpets, clothing, computers, coins, furniture, mobile phones, oil, paint, paper, plastic cups, fridges, specs and sunglasses, telephone directories, cartons — all are recyclable.
- Funding for local recycling projects could come from a landfill site tax credit scheme in your area: www.ltcs.org.uk.

(b) Does your church encourage car-sharing or walking and cycling to church,

- Arrange a local Car Free Sunday.

(c) Are your church grounds managed sustainably? Is there an area set aside for wildlife?

- If your church has no grounds, why not rent an allotment as a communal enterprise, and grow organic vegetables for your harvest festival!
- Plant trees on your grounds or in the neighbourhood.
- Support A Rocha's 'Creation Sunday' in June. Details and Pack: A Rocha, 13 Avenue Road, Southall UB1 3BL.
- For details on managing churchyards for wildlife, contact the Church & Conservation Project, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Warwicks CV8 2LZ or your county wildlife trust.

POLITICAL PRESSURE

Does your church make contact with the local council, MP or MEP on issues concerning the environment?

- Politicians need to be reminded of issues which concern us: letters to local papers can also highlight environmental issues.
- Monitor changes in your own environment, e.g. tree and hedgerow loss, dumping of waste, etc — and make such issues known!