

Overview

Biblical references

Mark 12:30–31 (NIV)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.”

Introduction

The climate and nature crises are profoundly unjust, with the most devastating impacts affecting the poor and vulnerable who have done the least to cause the crises. We are called to love our neighbour, and so it is our responsibility to them and the places they live, wherever they are, to demonstrate love for people and nature by advocating for a more just world (Micah 6:8). While there is much that we can do as a church body, our impact will be even greater when we work with others to bring about local and global change.

This survey category is about what your church is doing collectively as a body in terms of advocacy and action. Messages are more powerful when voices are joined with others and we speak collectively. Wherever you are on your journey with social and political engagement, this survey category is an invitation to the next step, whether that looks like starting a conversation in your church, joining local events engaging in social and environmental justice, or joining a campaign for nature.

Terminology

For consistency, the survey uses two main ways to refer to concern and care for the Earth. Reference to 'creation' and 'creation care' points to our interdependence on, and responsibility for, our God-given common home. Reference to the climate and nature crises signifies our recognition that urgent action is required. In addition, the term 'environmental issues' is used to refer to the wide spectrum of problems we face locally and globally.

Commitment and link to your Environmental Policy

At the outset of every category the Eco Church survey asks your church to recognise the climate and nature crises and demonstrate a commitment. A vision or mission statement can be a great place to acknowledge our role as Christians to care for and protect the Earth. An Environmental Policy is an excellent way for your church to present your recognition and outline the commitments you are making.

See **our corresponding information sheet** on Creating an Environmental Policy and Net Zero Action plan, and **editable example policies** that you can adapt for your church. You can find these documents in the [Buildings and Energy category](#).

The first question of the Community and Global Engagement category states: *'Our church recognises the impact of the climate and nature crises and has a plan or strategy to take action LOCALLY and/or NATIONALLY and/or GLOBALLY.'*

Having a strategy or simple plan will help your church take action in this area. You will need to think about your context and your priorities for action and engagement. As a church, we encourage you to have the conversations necessary to build an understanding of the issues, locally, nationally and globally and consider:

- your commitment to act for justice for the climate and nature
- ways to turn this commitment into action
- ways in which impact can be measured

Themes in Community and Global Engagement

This survey category encompasses the following themes:

Theme 1: Awareness raising – getting people on board

Here we ask about how you raise awareness and get people 'on board' and involved with environmental issues. How they recognise the different strands of environmental justice – local, national and global and the many ways that you could get involved. Some churches are very much a part of local or 'place-based issues' campaigning, while others may be more familiar with supporting more generic campaigns for overseas justice issues with national or international organisations. Additionally, consider how you raise awareness and who you engage with, including politicians, and collaboration with other local groups. As Eco Churches, we recognise that what happens at a local level, at a national level and at a global level are all important strands of how churches can raise their voices and demonstrate their actions to speak into these different spheres of influence.

Theme 2: Taking action

- Advocacy, including working with elected representatives
- Engaging individuals

Taking action is key. There are so many examples of the kinds of action you could be taking; some are encouraging congregation members to write a letter to an MP or to join your church on a nature walk, or maybe it's about making people think about where church money is saved and invested.

Theme 3: Communication

How you communicate about what you are doing is important – how and what methods you use to engage, share the actions you take as part of your Eco Church journey and inspire others. This is both internally in your church and more widely. Sharing stories is a key way of helping others along their journey too.

Additional comments

At the end of each survey category is an opportunity for you to add additional comments. Please make use of this space to expand on any of your answers, including where you have ticked 'other', and anything else related to this survey category.

Resources and information

You can access all [Eco Church resources](#) via our website, as well as resources relating specifically to the [Community and Global Engagement category](#). Most of them are referenced below according to the themes in this category.

Awareness raising

[Sustainability Movements and Initiatives](#)

[Engaging with the Local Community](#)

[Community Clean Ups](#)

[Local Conservation Work](#)

Advocacy, including working with elected representatives

[Campaigning](#)

[Council Climate Scorecards](#)

[Engaging with your MP or other elected representatives](#)

[Engaging with International Environmental and Climate Change Issues](#)

Engaging individuals and accessing nature

The research presented in Natural England's paper – available to download – on [Creating More Accessible Green & Blue Spaces](#) delves into the utilisation of green and blue spaces (GBS) by individuals with visual impairments.

Natural England's [People and Nature Survey Analysis: Report of Findings](#) illustrates the inequality in access to green space and nature in England – available to download.

The Welsh government published a report showing the [barriers ethnic minority groups face when visiting outdoor spaces](#).

Accreditation schemes

[Fairtrade and other Accreditation guidelines](#)

[B Corp Certification](#)

Local/national/global events

[Great Big Green Week](#)

[Earth Hour – March](#)

[Earth Day – April](#)

Food

[Sustainable Food Provision in Churches](#)

Finances

[The Green Investment Declaration](#) is an initiative developed by [Operation Noah](#) and [JustMoney Movement](#) to support churches and other faith institutions across the globe to increase their investments in climate solutions and lead the way in building a greener future.

[The Finance Innovation Lab](#) report on purpose-driven finance shares a financial system that is democratic, sustainable, just and resilient, where institutions have a social and/or environmental purpose embedded within them.

Credit Unions are ethical, not-for-profit financial institutions and keep money within a community. They can thus promote financial inclusion with the advantage of not financing fossil fuels or paying out to shareholders. You can [search UK credit unions here](#). The UK government provides a list of certified [Community Development Finance Institutions \(CDFIs\)](#).

Communication

[Promoting Eco Church to other Local Churches](#)