

## Overview

### Biblical references

#### Psalm 24:1–2 (NIV)

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

#### Matthew 22:37–39 (NIV)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

#### Genesis 1:31 (NIV)

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

### Introduction

We worship a God who loves the Earth he created and calls us to care for it. Doing so is part of our worship and witness as we respond to a creation that is groaning (Romans 8:22). Churches participating in Eco Church come from a broad variety of traditions which, while bringing enormous breadth and richness, makes it challenging to craft one survey that covers the language and practice of every tradition – so please interpret the questions within your specific context. And perhaps be open to trying something new from another tradition.

Collective worship is an integral aspect of most churches. Many of the questions in this survey category relate to aspects of collective worship including special services, music, preaching and prayer. The format for teaching within our churches can take many forms, such as preaching during collective worship, small groups, preparation courses, and working with children and young people. This section asks churches to consider who we are and whose we are, and our rightful place as a part of creation, not apart from and certainly not above it.

### 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 acknowledge 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.

Question 1 of the Worship and Teaching category states: *'Our church recognises and teaches that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to the Christian faith, life and worship and has made a formal commitment to A Rocha UK's Eco Church award scheme.'*

A church's commitment to engage with creation, and take action to help protect it, is fundamental. How and what this commitment looks like can be/will be interpreted in different ways by different churches, as 'formal' will look different in each setting. It may be that you have agreed at a meeting (e.g. PCC, Church Members' Meeting) to engage with Eco Church and strive for awards. An important part of making a commitment is declaring this statement clearly as part of the identity of the church. You might, for example, share this statement within your church, on minutes, or on your website:

*'We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship. We are committed to responding to this by participating in the A Rocha UK Eco Church award scheme.'*

From this statement, your Environmental Policy can be developed.

## Themes in Worship and Teaching

This category encompasses the following themes:

### Theme 1: Worship and Prayer

- Aspects of worship: lament, preaching, prayer/intercession
- Where and how we worship: outdoors, pioneering models
- Worship resources: flowers, candles, wine, etc.

### Theme 2: People

- Equipping and training leadership
- Pastoral care responding to environmental concerns
- Affirmation of environmental ministry

### Theme 3: Teaching and Discipleship

- Creation care is part of baptism/confirmation/membership preparation
- Creation care is part of children's/youth/schools' work
- Creation care is part of courses and home group study
- Environmental speakers

## 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 further information 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 [Worship and Teaching category](#).

## Services and worship preparation

### [A Rocha International](#)

Creation care resources for churches, educators and individuals ranging from prayers, reflections, presentations and Bible studies.

### [A Rocha UK – Connect with God's creation over Lent](#)

Ideas for Lenten activities.

### [Choose Life](#)

This website contains printer-friendly liturgies for you to adapt and use in your own context.

### [Climate Sunday](#)

A legacy of resources for church services and worship following on from the preparation for COP26 in 2021.

### [Green Christian](#)

An ecumenical organisation, which has among its vast resources a section on 'Worship materials' which includes prayer guides, sermons, plays, hymns and more.

### [Greening the Lectionary](#)

A website full of resources for preaching through the Church of England lectionary in the context of the current climate and ecological emergencies.

### [Plastic, packaging and waste in floriculture](#)

This guide is to help anyone who works with flowers become more aware of the issues surrounding plastics, packaging and waste and to make better choices. It is a helpful addition to the resources from [Sustainable Church Flowers](#).

### [Salvation Army](#)

Resources to support you as you care for creation.

### [Time for Creation](#)

Liturgical resources for Creation and the Environment.

### [The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity \(LICC\)](#)

Resources to help you explore the topic of everyday earthkeeping with your small group.

### [The Methodist Church](#)

Theological resources, worship materials and prayers in response to climate change.

## Music

### Cry of the Earth – Diocese of Canterbury

A piece of music about the changing environment and all that live in it.

### Doxecology – Resound Worship

An album of contemporary worship songs combining praise (doxology) and ecology – thus 'doxecology'.

### For the Warming of the Earth by Mark Porter

In this book, Mark Porter draws on more than 40 interviews with activists, songwriters, Christian leaders, and musicians to explore what it means to develop new Christian musical practices for a time of ecological crisis.

### 'Song of The Coat of Hopes'

A song to accompany the Coat of Hopes – a patchwork garment that continues to journey and tells stories.

### Song of the Wheel

A Songbook & CD of chants for the Forest Church Year by Alison Eve.

## Creation Time

The Season of Creation is dedicated to God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life. Here are some ideas to encourage your church family to step outside during the season of creation and connect with God through nature.

### A Rocha UK

A Rocha UK's suggestions for prayers, worship and orders of service for your Season of Creation.

### Prayer walk

Pause for a while and pray. Use all your senses to draw close to the Creator as an act of worship, prayer and praise.

### Season of Creation

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment together. During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

### Step outside and connect with God through nature

A Rocha UK resource to encourage your church family to step outside and connect with nature.

## Creation care in preparation for baptism/confirmation/membership of a church

A Church of England baptism liturgy

Diocese of Oxford baptismal liturgy

## Lament, grief and eco-anxiety

[Climate Grief and Pastoral Care: Processing Grief for the Planet](#) hosted by A Rocha UK.

A resource written by A Rocha UK staff on [pastoral care and climate grief](#).

[Borrowed Time](#), a small group resource from Green Christian

*Deep Waters* provides a faith-based framework within which anxieties and fears about climate change and biodiversity loss can be expressed and explored together.

[Eco-anxiety blog](#) from A Rocha International

Also, see our corresponding resource on **support and training** to learn more about how to support eco-anxiety. You can find this in the [Worship and Teaching](#) category.