

Eco Church

Whitton Team churches sign up for Eco Church

A Rocha UK is a Christian Charity. Their vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully.

The Whitton Team is helping them to bring this vision to reality by participating in their Eco Church scheme. For an introduction to the Eco Church scheme watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/vPkxLkjiJm>

The scheme covers 5 key areas:

Worship and Teaching
Buildings
Land
Community and Global
Lifestyle

How can you get involved?

This will only happen if we take what we have learned about what the bible says about caring for creation and demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. This means taking steps beyond those taken in the church building and looking at our own lifestyles.

A lifestyle audit is a great place to start

WWF offer a simple to use online calculator [LINK - <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>] to help you calculate the size of your environmental footprint. It covers 4 key aspects of your life – food, travel, home and stuff.

You can also find information about conducting a lifestyle audit in this A Rocha Lifestyle Audit Guide [LINK - <https://3ak4be452es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Lifestyle-Lifestyle-Audit-v2.pdf>]:

Once you have calculated your footprint you can start to look at ways to reduce it in each of the above areas.

Food

We should all be aiming to eat food that is good for people and the planet. This means healthy, ethical and sustainably produced food. When buying food always try to consider the simple 'LOAF' rule – Local, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairtrade.

A Rocha offer this guide to food [LINK - <https://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/food/>] which covers buying it, cooking it and growing it. They have also produced this lifestyle guide to food [LINK - <https://3ak4be452es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Lifestyle-You-and-Your-Food.pdf>].

You can find out more information about how to source food ethically by visiting the Fairtrade Foundation website [LINK - <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>].

Travel

The way you and your family get around can have a big effect on your environmental footprint. One of the biggest ways to cut down your emissions is to take no-fly holidays. There are many other actions that you can take such as swapping the car for walking or cycling on short journeys and using public transport rather than jumping in the car. A Rocha offer more useful tips and information in their lifestyle guide to travel [LINK - <https://3ak4be4522es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Lifestyle-You-and-Your-Travel.pdf>].

Home

The way we heat and power our homes is another huge part of our environmental footprint. Reducing your footprint should be approached in two ways:

Firstly, looking at where energy is currently being wasted and what energy saving measures could be put in place. This might be insulating your home so that less energy is needed to heat it, making sure appliances are switched off when not being used or installing energy saving lightbulbs.

Secondly, look at where your energy is currently coming from. Unless you are on a 100% renewable energy tariff your energy needs are contributing to climate change as fossil fuels are burned to provide you with power. Switching providers and looking into generating your own electricity with solar panels are both great ways to reduce your environmental footprint. Both Money Supermarket [LINK - <https://www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/green-energy/>] and Compare the Market [LINK - <https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/renewable/>] have renewable energy guides to help you with the switch to renewables.

For more information and tips read the A Rocha lifestyle guide to energy [LINK - <https://3ak4be4522es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Lifestyle-You-and-Your-Energy-v2.pdf>].

You can also find useful information about energy saving at home from the Energy Saving Trust [LINK - <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>].

Stuff

We often think about our energy use when looking for ways to cut our carbon footprint. But what about all the things that you buy. Have you ever considered how much energy and other resources it takes to produce everything that you buy? Doing an audit of your spending habits can be a great way to identify ways to become more environmentally friendly.

Are you constantly looking for the latest gadgets and upgrading your phone whenever a new model is released?

Do you change your furniture every time you get bored of the look of it rather than waiting until it wears out?

Do you find yourself constantly surfing the internet for bargains that you are not even sure you need?

Is your wardrobe stuffed full of clothes that you don't even wear?

Thinking about what you buy and whether you could cut down could be a great way to reduce your impact on the planet.

More places to find information

The following is not a complete list of what is out there but if you are interested in taking your environmental journey further here are some great resources.

Blogs:

The A Rocha blog [LINK - <http://blog.arocha.org/en/>] is a great place to find regularly updated content on a range of green issues.

Ruth Valerio's christian faith and spirituality are central to her life, and from this bedrock comes a deep desire to work for social justice, equality and ecological flourishing. She shares her journey in this blog [LINK - <https://ruthvalerio.net/>].

Christian environmental organisations:

A Rocha

A Rocha UK [LINK - <https://arocha.org.uk/>], founder of Eco Church, is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world.

Eco Church South West

In response to globally recognised ecological concerns across the South West, the Church of England is challenging a destructive culture of ease and wastefulness. Eco Church South West [LINK - <https://ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk>] aims to provide resources to churches and church members who seek to address these issues.

Operation Noah

How should Christians respond to global warming? Should the church be involved with politics? How do Christian values relate to climate change? Operation Noah [LINK - <http://operationnoah.org/>] aims to tackle these questions in several ways including theology, campaigning, prayer and partnerships.

Tearfund

Tearfund is a UK Christian relief and development agency. They have some useful lifestyle advice [LINK - https://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/action/lifestyle/] on their website.

Christian Aid

Christian Aid holds a vision of a better world, free from poverty and climate change. Where everyone has enough to eat and can live without fear of their home being destroyed. Visit the Christian Aid website [LINK - <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-campaign>] to find out how you can take part in one of their climate change campaigns.

We are always looking for new ways to make our churches and our community more eco-friendly. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved please get in touch by emailing el.williamson@hotmail.co.uk.