

Caring for creation together

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.
Colossians 3:23a

Caring for God's earth, and all its people, is one of the fundamental ways that Christians show our love for God and for our neighbours. The Eco Church movement aims to harness the power of churches to make a difference. There are now over 7,500 registered Eco Churches, of different denominations, and the C of E strongly encourages participation at all levels.

Eco Churches make a commitment to care for creation in every part of church life. All Saints' made this commitment in November 2020. We complete a survey which scores how environmentally-friendly we are in five categories. When we reached 25% of the maximum score in all five categories we received a Bronze Award (July 2021), and at 50% a Silver Award (November 2023).

Now we would like to go further – will you help us? For an Eco Church Gold Award, we would need to score 75% in all categories, and to show that caring for creation and being an Eco Church really are at the heart of everything we do as a church community.

Here's how we're progressing so far in the five categories ...

1) Worship & Teaching - Gold level

Caring for creation is already an integral part of All Saints' services, prayers, hymns, preaching, teaching, and communications. Please help us to keep this going, and please make it part of your own personal worship and prayers. Praise and thank God for all his goodness to us. Ask him to forgive past failures, and to give us the chance to do better from now on. Pray that politicians, business leaders, and influencers will help us move quickly towards a cleaner, greener future, in ways that are affordable and fair.

To strengthen our Eco Church efforts further, we will be celebrating the C of E's season of 'Creationtide', which runs from the beginning of September until the beginning of October, and which will include our planned outdoor service on 8th September and Harvest on 6th October.

2) Buildings - Silver level

All Saints' is a high energy user, because of the age and character of our buildings, and the intensive use of the church centre. We have already taken some positive steps, like using LED bulbs for all

our lighting. Now we need a full energy audit, looking at different heating options as a basis for an energy management plan which sets targets for reducing our energy use in the short, medium and longer term. We are on a green/renewable electricity tariff, and we'll be considering the option of a green gas tariff as well.

Meanwhile everyone can play a part by saving energy when we can – switching off lights and appliances when not in use, and only having heating on when necessary.

The 'Buildings' category also covers the use of other resources, like water, paper, and kitchen products. In future we won't be using any disposable cups plates or cutlery for church events, and we'll be asking other church centre users to do the same. We're also hoping to use more eco-friendly cleaning products. Again, everyone can help by saving water and paper, avoiding unnecessary waste, and recycling any waste there is.

3) Land (the churchyard) - Gold level

Our churchyard hosts an array of plants and wildlife, and provides good opportunities for people to connect with nature and experience the beauty of creation. In the western churchyard beyond the hall patio, we have made a wildflower area and opened up the woodland, where we are planning to add hedgehog boxes to the existing bird feeder, bird boxes, bug hotel, and homes for solitary bees. Within the woodland is the 'plastic bottles cross', a powerful sign of how faith is central to our concern for the environment. Maintenance is needed in spring and autumn to keep the woodland path clear and to stop cow parsley and nettles taking over the

wildflower area! Help with this would be much appreciated.

4) Community & Global Engagement - Silver Level

This is a wide-ranging category including, for example, involvement with the local community, awareness-raising events, environmental campaigning, and practical support for environmental projects. Actions under this heading include our Eco Church events like 'Love Your Springfield'; engaging with our MP on environmental issues; being a Fairtrade Church; 'twinning' some of our toilets; church members' involvement in local conservation work; and supporting initiatives like the 'Earth Hour' and 'Great Big Green Week'.

But we know there is more we can do. As well as serving Fairtrade tea and coffee, we would like to use more locally-produced, organic and 'animal-friendly' (eg free range) products in meals and refreshments at church. We would like the two remaining toilets to be 'twinned'. And we would like the church and church members to get more involved in supporting environmental campaigns promoted by Chelmsford Diocese and charities like Christian Aid. There are some things which individuals can do, and some things which only governments can do; we need your help to make our voices heard.

5) Lifestyle - Gold level

We know from our annual Eco Questionnaire how much All Saints' church members are already doing to live an environment-friendly lifestyle: please keep up the good work!



Here's a reminder of our 'Eco Church Top Ten' lifestyle tips:

1. Enjoy **green spaces and wildlife**, and take care of them in practical ways
2. Travel greener when we **walk, cycle**, use **buses, coaches, trains** or **car-share**
3. **Use energy efficiently** for heating and electrical items, and use **LED light bulbs**
4. Enjoy some **vegetarian meals**, and eat less meat and dairy food
5. **3Rs: reduce** how much we buy, **re-use** what we've finished with, and **re-cycle** what we can't re-use
6. Try to buy things which are **Fairtrade, eco-friendly and ethically-produced**
7. **Improve home insulation** where possible – loft, walls, windows and doors
8. **Support charities** who care for the environment, and **campaign** for climate action
9. Find out how to **improve our environmental footprint** – go to footprint.wwf.org.uk or to climate-calculator.climatehero.me
10. **Go green with money** through ethical banking and savings – see justmoney.org.uk

Roger McFarland

We are an **ECO** CHURCH

AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

<p>Help us respond faithfully to the climate and nature crises</p>	<p>Worship and Teaching</p>  <p>Embedding creation care in worship, prayer and learning</p>
<p>Buildings</p>  <p>Finding energy efficient and innovative ways to manage our places of worship</p>	<p>Land</p>  <p>Nurturing spaces for people and nature</p>
<p>Community and Global Engagement</p>  <p>Transforming local and global communities and ecosystems</p>	<p>Lifestyle</p>  <p>Living joyfully and sustainably as followers of Christ</p>

Join us in reaching the Gold Award –

get involved #ecochurch ecochurch.arocha.org



To find out more or to share your ideas on Eco Church please go to the website

www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/ecochurch or speak to one of the Eco Church Group – Roger McFarland, Nicky Morecroft, Chris McFarland, Ian Poston, Dave Gauld, Beth Cornish, Ann Salmon.

