

St Paul's Environmental Policy

Background

In October 2021 the Vicar and PCC declared a climate and ecological crisis, setting out our belief that God has given us responsibility to be stewards and guardians of his creation and committing to challenge ourselves and others to take urgent action to tackle this crisis.

The Climate and Ecology Group became an official PCC Team with the purpose of keeping the PCC informed on environmental issues, drawing up plans of action and reporting back to the PCC on a regular basis.

St Paul's registered with A Rocha Eco Church and was awarded a Bronze Award in March 2023.

Denominational commitment

We recognise the commitment made by the General Synod of the Church of England, adopted in February 2020, for the whole of the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

In line with our denomination's commitment to net zero, we have committed to reduce our carbon footprint.

Our principles and values

God created the world and everything in it.

God has created an awesome and majestic cosmos to bring him praise and glory. We are but one part of his created order. Jesus has redeemed the whole earth through his death and resurrection. We have a special responsibility to care for the Earth so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1, NIV).

Our church is committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment.

As Christians it is our responsibility to care for creation, using resources wisely so that climate change is mitigated, biodiversity protected or enhanced, finite resources conserved, and waste and pollution minimised.

Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it... (Isaiah 42:5, NIV).

Seeking climate justice is part of Christian discipleship and practice

Following Christ's teachings means loving our global neighbours and caring for creation. The climate crisis both reflects and feeds off inequality, exploitation and greed: often the communities who are suffering the most from its effects, particularly in the Global South, are those who have done the least to cause it. We will aim to act in accordance with this understanding, making changes to improve our sustainability and to show solidarity with those across the world who are suffering in this crisis.

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8, NIV).

Our Commitments

St Paul's commits to recognising that as Christians we are responsible for the care of God's earth, embedding sustainability in all of our activities and reflecting on the environmental consequences of all our decision-making.

Worship and Teaching

In our worship we will make opportunities for special celebrations of Creation especially during the Season of Creation, and we will incorporate into our regular services preaching, prayers and songs about caring for God's creation.

We will communicate our biblical understanding of responsibility to God for all that is entrusted to us through creation, making the links between poverty, wealth and environmental degradation. We will strive to equip leadership, staff, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility and include caring for the Earth in teaching and discussion for adults, children and young people where appropriate.

Buildings and Energy

We recognise the most important environmental impact will be an ongoing reduction of our carbon emissions. We will seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as much as we can, working toward net zero carbon by 2030 in line with the Church of England target.

All maintenance and any development of our buildings will take account of our Eco Church commitment to sustainability and will strive to meet high environmental standards.

We will make decisions on what and from whom we make purchases in line with our Procurement Policy.

Land and Nature

We will respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action, collaboration and campaigning. We will manage our garden to promote soil health and increase biodiversity. We will encourage the congregation and the local community to enjoy it and to take part in caring for it.

We recognise that imported flowers have a high carbon footprint. We will use seasonal flowers and foliage that are sourced locally or nationally in worship and church life wherever possible. We will eliminate the use of floral foam (oasis) and all similar non-biodegradable and non-reusable products and techniques, while rediscovering traditional and environmentally-friendly methods of presentation and display.

Community and Global Engagement

We will highlight and raise awareness that the climate and nature crises affect the poorest first and worst, so our responsibility is to them and the places they live, wherever they are in the world, to promote justice for people and nature.

Members of the Climate and Ecology Team will attend meetings of Bromley Eco-Church Network in order to learn from and encourage other local churches. St Paul's is also a member of Bromley Environment Network.

We will reduce our waste and recycle as much as possible using the clearly marked bins inside the church and hall and outside in the LB Bromley collection bins. We will also encourage and signpost the use of other local recycling schemes.

Lifestyle

We recognise that we have an impact on the world through the choices available to us and our use of money and resources. We will strive to support our church family and wider community in bringing about positive change and care for God's Earth. We will seek to encourage our church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice.

Our church encourages ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households.

Date agreed: May 2026

Review date: May 2027