REACHING NET ZERO BY 2030

Reducing Carbon Emissions Across The Whole Of Church Life

WHY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US and HOW CAN WE GET THERE?

WHY?

As Church, we affirm that care for Creation, a just and sustainable use of the world's resources, and a concern for the environment are fundamental Gospel commitments.

We know that human activity is responsible for the degradation of the earth through climate change. This is not the will of God. It is harming the web of life, the balance of nature, and impacting most heavily upon the poorest people of the world.

The urgency of the climate crisis demands an immediate and rapid, large-scale reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It is vital that societies manage the transition to low carbon economies now and phase out dependence on fossil fuels.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US?

The URC Environmental Policy updated at General Assembly 2022 states '*urgent action should be taken to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life, with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030'.*

THINGS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- sign up as eco friends in your congregation to take a lead and form a group
- register your church on the Eco Church scheme https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/
- read the URC Environmental Policy https://urc.org.uk/environmental-policy/
- contact Eileen, the Synod Green Advocate, with any questions or ideas greenadvocate.urcwales@urc.org.uk)

NET ZERO:

Net Zero means the amount of CO_2 emitted is balanced by equivalent removals.

Here are six key steps to help churches on their journey to net zero …

a) measure our carbon footprints https://360carbon.org/
b) plan our response https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church/practical-path-net-zero-carbon-churches
c) reduce our carbon emissions and set emissions reduction targets year on year
d) offset what's left over https://www.climatestewards.org/
e) tell everybody what we've been doing; share our actions in the church and community
f) review our progress

REACHING NET ZERO … HOW CAN WE GET THERE?

There are actions that nearly all churches can take to reduce their carbon footprint. They are relatively easy and a good place to start. Every positive action is a step closer to net zero and will encourage a conversation about our own personal carbon footprints. Remember - it's not all or nothing! Our momentum will grow as we act together as churches and individuals.

BUILDINGS

- Maintain roofs, gutters, downpipes, drains and taps.
- Draught proof windows, doors and floorboards.
- Insulate pipework and roof spaces.
- Carefully think about which spaces are heated at what times.
- Consider creating a smaller (separately heated) space for smaller events.
- If your appliances fail, replace with A+++ appliances.

ENERGY USE

- Switch to 100% renewable electricity and 'green' gas.
- Replace all light bulbs with LEDs
- Install thermostatic radiator valves.
- Install heat/motion sensors to activate lights.
- Use a smart thermostat system.
- Seek professional advice if you are considering solar PV panels, solar slates, an air or ground source heat pump; under pew heating.

TRAVEL

- Minimise unnecessary travel.
- Consider making greater use of video-conferencing for meetings.
- Use public transport or bikes where possible.
- Car share when you can.
- Fly rarely.

INVESTMENTS

- Divest your church investments from fossil fuels. https://brightnow.org.uk/
- Support investment in renewable and clean technologies.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.urc.org.uk/greenerchurch

https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church

https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/climate-change/how-to-improve-energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-wales

https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings/

https://www.spab.org.uk/file/maintenance-checklist-places-worshipdocx-2

Contact Claire Boot, Synod Property Officer, at claire.boot.urcwales@urc.org.uk or 07421 455671 for advice and support. If your building is listed, planning consent may be required for certain changes.