

REACHING NET ZERO: RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Reducing Carbon Emissions Across the Whole of Church Life

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

WHY?

The National Synod of Wales affirms that care for creation, a just and sustainable relationship with the earth, and an active concern for the whole of God's good creation are fundamental Gospel commitments.



We know that human activity is responsible for the degradation of the earth through climate change. This is not the way that God would want it to be. It is harming the web of life, the balance of nature, and impacting most heavily upon the poorest people of the world. It has created a climate and nature emergency.

We seek to care for creation and to enable the earth to flourish by considering the ecological impact of everything we do. The urgency of the climate crisis demands that we all take immediate action in accordance with God's will for creation and for the sake of future generations.

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

- a) sign up as Eco Friends in your congregation to take a lead and form a small group: <https://www.urcwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Church-Eco-Friend-role-description.pdf>
- b) take a look at the Synod's Eco Church Starter Questionnaire: [Click here to download](#)
- c) register your church on A Rocha's Eco Church scheme: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>
- d) contact Eileen, Synod Green Advocate, with any questions or ideas
greenadvocate.urcwales@urc.org.uk

NET ZERO – there are lots of resources to help you take action

We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, produced by activities such as burning fossil fuels and destroying peatlands, to as close to zero as possible. If no more carbon is added into the atmosphere than the amount removed, global emissions will be 'net zero'.

1. Consider your church's energy use: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/buildings/>
2. Make plans to reduce your carbon emissions:
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/net-zero-carbon/>
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Environmental-Policy-and-Net-Zero-Carbon-plan.pdf>
3. Measure your church's carbon footprint: <https://climatestewards.org/carbon-calculators/>
4. Tell everyone in the church and community what you're doing.
5. Review your progress year on year

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 videoconferencing for meetings.
- Use public transport or bikes where possible.
- Car share when you can.
- Fly rarely.



INVESTMENT

- Divest your church investments from fossil fuels:
<https://www.operationnoah.org/bright-now-campaign/church-divestment/>
- Support investment in renewable and clean technologies:
<https://greeninvestmentdeclaration.org/>

HELPFUL RESOURCES

<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/greenerchurch/>

<https://www.tywicentre.org.uk/>

<https://egin.org.uk/>

Contact Joel Sainsbury, Synod Property Officer, at joel.sainsbury.urcwailes@urc.org.uk or 07977211893 for advice and support. If your building is listed, planning consent may be required for certain changes.