



# Eco-Congregation Scotland Newsletter

Issue 21  
March 2012

## Helping you to care for God's creation

### Editorial

#### Annual Gathering 2012

Our annual gathering takes place on 21<sup>st</sup> April in Bridge of Alan.

The theme this year is 'Behaviour Change', looking at local and global issues of sustainable living. We are delighted to welcome Stewart Stevenson MSP Minister for Environment and Climate Change as our keynote speaker. Full details of the event can be found in the events section of our web site.

This is a great opportunity to meet people from other eco-congregations, find out more about or work and take part in a range of interesting workshops:

- **Malcolm Rooney**, minister at Kirriemuir, will lead a workshop on the challenges of changing behaviour in presbytery based on his experience of promoting climate change action in Angus Presbytery.
- **Dane Sherrard**, minister at Luss, recently attended the International Pilgrimage Conference in Assisi will lead a workshop on green pilgrimage.
- **Andrew Faulk** of Consumer Focus will look at the financial support available to congregations to help them turn their commitment into action, including details of the new 'green deal'.
- **Christian Aid** and SCIAF will jointly lead a workshop on climate justice and international development.

- **Charles Agoboklu** of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and interfaith climate change network of Ghana will tell us how churches in Ghana are helping people respond to climate change.
- **The Green Team of the Scottish Government** will lead a workshop on the Climate Challenge Fund and the opportunities it offers congregations.

The day of the Gathering will also include our AGM. Members of the charity have already been sent their papers for the AGM.

*Gordon Hudson, Manager, Eco-Congregation Scotland*

#### Film Screening after Annual Gathering

##### THE ISLAND PRESIDENT, 12A



(5pm to 7.15pm, MacRobert Centre, after the Annual gathering, 21st April 2012, £5.75/£5.25 concessions)

If you don't have to rush away from Stirling after the conference, join Take One Action Film Festivals, Christian Aid and SCIAF just 5 minutes down the road for a film at the MacRobert cinema (Stirling University campus).

This exclusive, beautiful and politically charged preview screening of *The Island President* ("Astonishing access... Superb" *Variety*) tells the story of 2,000 Maldivian islands being engulfed by rising sea levels and how former President Nasheed of the Maldives dramatically and single-handedly challenges the international community's muddled response to reducing global carbon emissions. We move from playful underwater publicity stunts to an extraordinary behind-the-scenes climax at the 2009 UN climate conference. Check out the trailer here.

Take this opportunity to see it first and find out how you can plan your own screening in the lead up to the Rio Climate Summit in June, or beyond.

Further information and a trailer can be found here: <http://www.theislandpresident.com>

## Go Greener!



Eco-Congregation Scotland has been involved in the Scottish Government's new web initiative [www.greenerscotland.org](http://www.greenerscotland.org). This includes a service called My Green Plan which analyses your current lifestyle and suggests small changes that could reduce

your carbon footprint. You then receive further suggestions by email.

To sign up go here:

<http://action.greenerscotland.org/ecsignup>

## Report published on pilot project with SCIAF

Eco-Congregation Scotland has published a report on last year's pilot project with the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund. The project sought to encourage more Roman Catholic parishes to become eco-congregations and was very successful with one parish even achieving their first Eco-Congregation award.



You can download the report here:

<http://gh.cm/AtXurT>

## News from Churches

### New Registrations

The number of eco-congregations is growing. We would like to welcome the following new eco-congregations:

- Saline & Blairingone Parish Church
- St Peter's RC Church, Edinburgh
- Ness Bank Church Inverness
- St Maelrubha's Church in Poolewe

### Cadder Parish Church Receives their Second Award

We would like to congratulate Cadder Parish Church who receiving a well-deserved Second Eco-Congregation Award.

The assessors particularly commended the congregation for the following:



- Tailoring messages to specific audiences – engagement with groups such as Guild, Men’s group and Sunday Club – and initiatives coming from within these groups.
- Written communications e.g. via the Eco Noticeboard, monthly magazine and Good Shopping Guide help to reinforce and extend these messages.
- Photographic competition for linking faith and the environment, fundraising, and spreading awareness of Eco-congregation all in one project.
- Making detailed calculation of carbon footprint as a benchmark for future progress.
- Planting projects.
- Continuing support of Fair Trade and development of local and international partnerships to support this work.

Well done!

### Third Eco-Congregation Award to Dunscore Church

Dunscore Parish Church has received their Third Eco-Congregation Award.

We would like to specially highlight:

- Their whole hearted and continuing support for the twinning project with Lumbuto Church in Zambia. This clearly enriches the life of both congregations and brings a different and exciting perspective to their Eco-Congregation

- The commitment to reducing the church’s carbon footprint by 5% a year and encouraging others in the congregation and community to do the same.
- Their use of local produce, which, in turn, supports local producers.
- Setting up and promoting a local Freecycle scheme
- work.

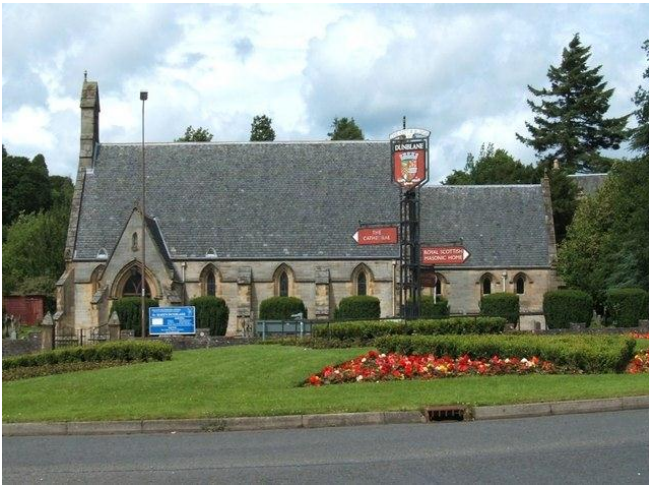


This is the 5th Eco-Congregation Scotland member to receive a third award. We hope many of you will be inspired by this fantastic achievement.

### St Mary’s, Dunblane, gets Climate Challenge Fund grant

Received from Kate Nash of St Mary’s:

“ I thought you may be pleased to know that St Mary’s Dunblane has been awarded a grant from the Climate Challenge Fund of just under £21,000. We are all delighted as this means we will be able to insulate the church hall, double glaze windows, cavity wall and ceiling. We will also be working alongside St Mary’s Primary School and St Blanes Church in a monitoring of energy use. ”



St Mary's is an eco-congregation. There will be more to follow on this as the project develops.

## Gardening Feature

### Could you start a community garden?

Community gardening is beneficial in many ways. It is an activity which can suit a wide range of people from the elderly gent sitting enjoying the sun, flora and fauna to a toddler 'helping' to plant the potatoes. Another great thing to bear in mind is that it can happen on a relatively low budget, from a few planters containing strawberries, tomatoes or geraniums to a couple of hectares with separate areas for herbs, flowers, vegetables, a greenhouse, pond, wildflower and woodland area.

There are health benefits to be gained from working in the fresh air and doing physical exercise, e.g. through digging, weeding and pruning. Gardening and being outside is proven to be good for keeping you mentally well, lifting your spirits and also aiding mental health recovery.

Community gardening brings people together and presents opportunities for new friendships to form. Indeed there are a range of opportunities, provided by community gardening, including re-skilling people of all ages in growing your own food, composting, hard and soft landscaping. Growing produce can lead on to other activities such as eating healthy food together at the site, barbeques and community cooking sessions.

### How to Start a Community Garden

There are several important things to think about when wanting to start a community garden. The first is to get a few committed people together. Form a small group of people who are as keen on the idea as you. You can support each other in the early stages and bring different skills together, for example someone may be a whizz at finances, someone else knowledgeable about legal matters.

The second very important thing is community engagement. Make sure that you have your local community on board. Speak to other people and see if they like the sound of your idea. Hold a public meeting, do a simple questionnaire at the local shop or go door to door in your area. People may be interested in being involved at different levels. Some people may want to help out occasionally; someone else may be able to offer specific skills such as joinery when you are at the stage of putting up sheds or raised beds. Having the community on board will help to ensure that the community garden survives into the future.

The third important thing is to find a suitable growing place for your community garden. There are a number of options available here. It may be that there are temporary growing spaces available in which case you may want to grow in containers that can be moved if need be or if you are very lucky it may be that a local landowner is happy for the community to use the neglected walled garden! It may be a case of getting in touch with your local authority to identify suitable land. If you need help with issues related to land such as who to get in touch with within your local authority or lease queries then speak to Sheila at the Community Land Advisory Service:

[Sheila@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:Sheila@farmgarden.org.uk)

0131 225 2080

<http://www.communitylandadvice.org.uk>



The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens has a great website:

<http://www.farmgarden.org.uk>

If you would like a copy of a Community Garden Starter Pack or if you would like to receive an e-bulletin which is for people who are active with or interested in community farming and gardening, please get in touch with Naomi Knights:

Naomi Knights  
Development Support Worker  
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens  
51, Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 2LA  
0131 623 7058  
[naomi@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:naomi@farmgarden.org.uk)

*"We come from the earth, we return to the earth, and in between we garden." - Anon*

### Need help in the garden?

If your church has the idea for a grounds 'makeover' but you need some assistance, BTCV Scotland may be able to help. The environmental charity is currently looking for community projects which it can support in the Glasgow area. Projects could include developing a nature or sensory garden, wildflower or tree planting, or providing other garden features which benefit the church and local wildlife alike.

BTCV can assist with the project planning, help to source funding, and provide enthusiastic staff and volunteers to help congregation members get things done on the ground.

If your church has a garden project in mind, BTCV Glasgow would like to hear from you. Contact Jo Ridley, Volunteer Development Officer, on 07823 444319 or email [j.ridley@btcv.org.uk](mailto:j.ridley@btcv.org.uk)

<http://www.btcv.org/scotland>

## International News

### Looking back to Durban

*We received this from Martin Davis of Christian Ecology Link. It does not reflect our position on these issues, but we thought it was worth letting people read it:*

“ Had you forgotten that South Africa's third city was in the news before Christmas? Or why? To remind you, just in case: the United Nations chose it for the 17th in their annual series of meetings, seeking a binding international agreement to deal with climate change. And, praise God, it ended to some extent successfully. But why should I, as a Christian, bother particularly about this? Because God is the author of all creation: it's taken more than 15 billion years to get us to where we are now on this incredible planet, and we humans are rapidly unravelling it – destroying the creation he has brought into being. Environmental destruction equals heresy, a sin against God and a crime against humanity.

Just cutting my individual carbon emissions in response to this awareness will not resolve our problems, because we need to decarbonise society. That cannot be achieved by energy efficiency alone, or by my altering my life style. Both are necessary components, but the most significant changes will come in the way that electricity is generated, and from manufacturing industry finding alternative energy sources. The problem is that governments have been good at talking up change, but consistently less good when it comes to action.

There is a desperate need for people who have faith in God the creator to start effective lobbying - not

protest, but constructive conversation. We Christians are part of a worldwide network: there are elements of that network, particularly in the USA, which are in denial, but that does not stop the rest of us from working together, and with others who may not normally be thought of as our natural bedfellows. As Jesus said, "Anyone who is not against you is for you." (Luke 9,50)

So, we cannot just concentrate on our own individual salvation – getting ourselves to heaven. We need to inform ourselves about the threats to God's creation, and the opportunities that exist to take action to look after it."

**Note:** Eco-Congregation Scotland is working with Christian Aid and SCIAF to encourage congregations to be involved in their climate change campaigns. For further information visit the Christian Aid and SCIAF web sites:

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/climate-justice>

[http://www.sciaf.org.uk/policy\\_and\\_research/climate\\_change\\_1](http://www.sciaf.org.uk/policy_and_research/climate_change_1)

## Other News

### Use Your LOAF



Christian Ecology Link has just printed some brand new colour "Use your LOAF" leaflets. LOAF stands for food which is:

Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded. You can download the leaflet here:

<http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/use-your-loaf.pdf>

If you would like some printed ones please contact Jill Vogler: [jill-publications@christian-ecology.org.uk](mailto:jill-publications@christian-ecology.org.uk)

If you would like them in quantity 50 or 100 or more for use at an event she can also arrange for them to be sent to you.

## Fuel Efficient Driving



The Energy Saving Trust are currently offering fuel efficient driving lessons which can help your congregation save up to £300 per year on fuel. And if your church spends money on transport and travel costs, you could cut around 15% of your annual fuel bill by ensuring your members drive efficiently. By adopting these techniques, drivers can save an average of 2 months fuel per year, reduce the wear and tear of their vehicles, and decrease the likelihood of accidents.

### How much does it cost?

The training, which normally costs around £400 per day, is currently available to eco-congregations from your local Energy Saving Scotland advice centre at £80 per day plus VAT for 8 individual training sessions, which works out at £10 plus VAT per person.

**How does it work?**

An approved fuel efficient driving instructor provides the car and insurance, and comes to your workplace on your chosen date. The training takes around 50 minutes per driver and the instructor ensures the training is enjoyable and focused on the techniques needed to drive more efficiently.

The next steps

Call your local Energy Saving Scotland advice centre on 0800 512 012 to find out more, or tell them you're interested in booking a day of 8 sessions. We will take you through the practical steps involved in delivering the training.

**Earth Hour 2012**

This year's WWF Earth Hour is at 8:30pm on Saturday 31st March 2012. Eco-Congregation Scotland is working with WWF Scotland to promote this event to churches which encourages people to switch off their lights for one hour.

WWF Scotland say:

“WWF's Earth Hour is a simple idea that's quickly turned into a global phenomenon. Hundreds of millions of people turning off their lights for one hour, on the same night, all across the planet.

But it's not to save an hour's electricity. It's something much bigger. WWF's Earth Hour is about people coming together to put the focus on this brilliant world we all share – and how we need to protect it.

Not just for an hour a year, but every day”

Eco-Congregation Scotland says:

“We would like all churches to take part in Earth Hour (you don't need to be an eco-congregation) as a sign to the wider community that care for creation matters. Climate change is a justice issue – our misuse of natural resources has a much greater effect on poor people in developing countries than on us.

Even if your church buildings are usually closed on a Saturday evening, we'd like you to consider holding a short, candle-lit Earth Hour service. By promoting your service through local newspapers, newsletters, posters etc, you can make connections with new people and local organisations.”

To download the the Eco-Congregation / WWF – Earth Hour tool kit (PDF file) go here:

<http://gh.cm/yvFzCi>

**Edinburgh Festivals: Green Venue Initiative**

Eco-congregations from around Edinburgh whose buildings act as venues met recently with the Edinburgh Festivals Green Venue Initiative.

The Edinburgh Festivals Green Venue Initiative is an ambitious pilot programme promoting sustainable venue management as part of a wider Edinburgh Festivals environmental strategy. The festivals are supporting venues to help shape a future that is

sustainable, that respects and enhances the environment and that puts Edinburgh firmly on the road towards becoming the world's greenest Festival city.

Congregations who act as venues are being encouraged to see their letting as part of their ministry rather than purely a commercial venture. When an audience is welcomed into the church building they are part of the community, and encouraging them to recycle and behave sustainably, even in small ways, counts as a community engagement activity in the Eco-Congregation Award.

For further information see:

<http://www.efgreen.co.uk>

## Methodist Covenant

In some branches of the Methodist Church, this covenant prayer is recited every new year as a way for congregants to renew their dedication to God's service. This is part of one of the modern versions:

*Christ has many services to be done;  
some are easy, others are difficult;  
some bring honour, others bring reproach;  
some are suitable to our natural inclinations  
and material interests, others are contrary to  
both.*

*In some we may please Christ and please  
ourselves,  
in others we cannot please Christ except by  
denying ourselves.*

*Yet the power to do all these things is given us  
in Christ, who strengthens us.*

## Keep in touch!

For environmental and financial reasons the main circulation of the newsletter is by email. Please ensure you keep us informed of any changes to your email address.

We welcome new recipients of the newsletter. If it has been forwarded to you, to receive future issues email [scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk)

### Register your church

Registering on the Eco-Congregation programme is easy and free. It gives your church access to free resources, the chance to be part of a local network, and to work towards an Eco-Congregation Award. It's easy to register. Contact us for a form or visit <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org>

### Enquiries

To enquire about the programme and request an introduction pack contact:

Gordon Hudson

Email: [manager@ecocongregationscotland.org](mailto:manager@ecocongregationscotland.org)

Phone: 0131 240 2274

Eco-Congregation Scotland  
121 George Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4YN

For advice and support contact:

Margaret Warnock

Email: [margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk)

Phone: 01877 330182

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