

A flourishing environment

Our LIFE vision for the Diocese of Gloucester commits us to being advocates for flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation. The environmental part of this vision is underpinned by the Fifth Mark of Mission, “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth.”


Care for the environment is a vital part of our responsibility as Christians and we are building a culture of eco-responsibility which runs through every area of our diocesan vision.

We believe that it is our Christian responsibility to work for the good of the environment and that care for the whole of creation is core to the work of the Church as a whole. We share some of the ways that Christians are making a difference across our diocese.




Leadership

Eco Church for all



We invite every church to register for A Rocha's Eco Church scheme. We are working towards becoming an Eco Diocese, and supporting churches to take steps to becoming an Eco Church. You might want to think about registering your church and starting to take steps towards your Bronze, Silver or Gold award. You may well find that you only need to make minor changes to reach bronze level. This can help give you a boost as you work towards silver and gold accreditation. To get started and find out more, you could come along to an Environment and Eco Church Workshop. This is a practical workshop for churches that want to get started or explore the next steps. St Andrew's Churchdown has received a silver Eco Church award for their practical work to care for creation. As part of the scheme they have introduced clothing recycling schemes, a car share scheme, a community garden and ensure that caring for God's creation is included in their regular worship timetable.





imagination

Churchyard wildlife gardens

Children in Coberley have been using Environment Fund money to look after nature in their local churchyard. A £250 grant from the Diocese of Gloucester Environment Fund has given children at Coberley Church of England Primary School the chance to create bird feeders and plant a wildflower garden in St Giles' churchyard. Looking ahead, the next project will be the School Eco-Project, which will focus on protecting the environment. As part of this, litter picks are planned, to keep the churchyard tidy. If you would like to be one of the many parishes benefitting from a £250 Environment Fund grant, you can apply for one of these [#grantsforgardens](#) on the diocesan website.

Thanks and praise

Creationtide is celebrated between 1 September to 4 October across the Diocese as a way to be thankful and recommit to our responsibility to care for the world. In our schools, parents have warm memories around harvest festivals and want their children to do the same. Two thirds of parents say that there is value in children participating in Christian Harvest Festivals today. Year 3 and 4 pupils at Primrose Hill Primary Academy in Lydney put on an annual harvest play at Holy Trinity Church and join in worship with the local team.





imagination

Forest Church

Many people find that they are closest to God when they are out in nature. Forest Church connects people more closely to creation and reminds us that we are God's stewards with responsibility to care for the environment. The Revd Cate Williams, our Mission and Evangelism Officer, says "Increasingly I find that I pray better outdoors, that being in the natural world is what best helps me to slow down from the busyness of daily life in order to reconnect with God and to earth myself in what is truly important." To find out more about Forest Church, contact the Revd Cate Williams, cwilliams@glosdioc.org.uk

A loo to last

When churches recognise the need for a toilet, there are lots of ways to minimise the environmental impact. In Elkstone, the church has put in an eco loo, of the Finnish composting type, in a building made of Herefordshire oak and built to last for 200 years. There are various different types of eco loos and you can find more information to help you make the right choice for your setting at www.greengloucestershire.org.uk/resources/trench-arches/

faith

We turn to God

Franciscan Prayer is one of eight new Pocket Prayer guides to help deepen and enhance individual's prayer life. Franciscan prayer uses all your senses to immerse yourself in creation, through the Holy Spirit. The booklet (available online through the diocesan website) helps you to ground yourself in nature and feel the power of God moving through the whole of creation. Katherine, who works in the Communications Team at the Diocese, said, "As humans we are deeply entwined in God's creation, but sometimes think of ourselves as being somehow superior or separate. God has made all of creation connected and the more that we are able to recognise this, the more that we will feel a sense of peace."

Getting out there to make a difference

Pauline Farman, a member of the Churn Valley Benefice has been going out litter picking at least once every week for the past seven years. She said, "We are only caretakers of this world and we are not doing a very good job. I can't do anything much physically about Syria and things like that, but I can make a difference here in my own area in this small way. This is God's creation and I can't do a lot in the world, but I can do this to make a difference. Creatures live here. God never gives us on us, despite the mess we make of the world." Caring for creation is part of Pauline's Everyday Faith – how she lives out her faith every day in the situation that she finds herself.



faith

Think before you print

The communications department at the Diocese of Gloucester are moving towards a digital first concept. Lucy Taylor, Director of Communications and Engagement said, "This absolutely does not mean that we won't continue to provide hard copy communications materials when appropriate, but that our first consideration in planning will be how our materials will work online. 67% of people in the UK are on social media (Avocado Social, Social Media Statistics for 2019). Of all internet users in the UK, 78% of them use Facebook and YouTube isn't far behind. It's just one way of reducing the amount of paper and printing, and meeting people where they are."

engagement

Gloucestershire Churches Environmental Justice Network

meets four times a year to discuss issues like carbon fasting, fracking, zero carbon churches and sustainability. It's coordinated by the Revd Arthur Champion, who is the Diocese of Gloucester's Environmental Advisor. It's a place where Christians share ideas and challenge each other to live out their stewardship of the planet more effectively. Contact achampion@glosdioc.org.uk or visit www.green Gloucestershire.org.uk to find out more.

The Good & Faithful Servant

is a property management company which develops new, high specification homes in the Diocese of Gloucester. Their founding principles included a strong commitment to the environment and an ethos of exceeding current environmental standards. Colin Scorer, Good and Faithful Servant's Project Manager said, "Consideration for the environment runs through everything that we do. We will always try to exceed the building regulations – we try to use renewable energy, install low water usage equipment and minimise light pollution. We use mature planting schemes, choosing 3 - 4 m high trees instead of smaller saplings and are very careful to ensure that the best native plants for the site are chosen. It does cost more, but it looks great, is better for the local environment and wildlife and supports the local community."

