

view to issuing robust advice that the Methodist Church entirely divest from fossil fuel industries (coal, gas and oil) by Conference 2020, and seeks to invest a significant and growing proportion of its portfolio in renewable energy and infrastructure investments that will urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.'

Global warming and climate change is also a major concern of the insurance companies, who estimate that at the present rate of global warming by the year 2100 insurance payouts could soar to a staggering 20% of global GDP. Mark Cullen of the Association of British Insurers has said that global warming 'could lead to insurance becoming impossible to get.'

This modest step of divestment from fossil fuels by the church will witness to its God-given tasks of caring for the planet, and standing alongside the most vulnerable locally, nationally and globally, and "with those who are not... with us today." (Deuteronomy 29 v. 15), the future generations.

New online eco surveys

Stratford, Evesham, Henley and Mickleton churches have now completed online surveys with Stratford scoring between Silver and Gold, and Mickleton coming close to Bronze. To find out what is involved please visit:

<http://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/o-survey-non-saving-example/>

More important than scoring points, those who have undertaken the survey have discovered ways in which existing actions could be extended and new initiatives which could be considered, such as the Stratford toilet-twinning scheme.

Do you use solar energy?

The EcoTeam would like to find out how much energy is being generated by churches and individuals in the circuit. We already have the figures for Stratford but we know that quite a few church members have installed either solar PV panels or solar hot water and would like to calculate the total renewable energy generated. Please let the EcoTeam know if you have solar panels and, if possible, how much energy you generated in last year.

Electric cars are the future

By the end of 2016, more than 637,500 plug-in electric passenger cars and vans had been registered in Europe, with over 100,000 in the UK. Almost 80 models are now available with prices starting at £13,000. If you are thinking of changing your car, it is now worth exploring the options further.

Being more bee-friendly

Native bee populations continue to decline as a result of habitat loss and toxic chemicals. Without them, our environment and economy - including our food - are in trouble, especially in the Vale of Evesham. They are vital to pollinate our fruit and vegetables. Several organisations are now running bee conservation programmes. Stratford has already planted insect-friendly plants in the church garden, and Mickleton is considering developing a bee-friendly area behind the church. You can request a Bee Saver Kit from Friends of the Earth.

(<https://www.foe.co.uk/page/get-your-bee-saver-kit>)

Contact details: ecochurchse@gmail.com



ECO CHURCH

EcoNews 8 May 2017

Stratford & Evesham Circuit of the Methodist Church

Caring for God's Earth



The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.' Psalm 24 v1

Eco Circuit gathers momentum

EcoChurch is the new environmental award scheme encouraging churches to make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and to respond in the life of the church, the lives of individuals, and in the local, national and global community. **EcoCircuit** is the programme adopted by the **Stratford and Evesham Methodist Circuit** which is encouraging all eight churches to embrace caring for creation as an integral part of their church life and to demonstrate this through practical action. Churches like Evesham and Stratford which have already achieved top awards, are in the process of reassessing their eco-credentials by undertaking the new online assessments. Concern for the environment has also been identified as one way in which churches could establish links with the community in the new Birmingham District's **'Churches without Walls'** initiative.

Our EcoChurch Commitment

New business sized eco-cards were distributed at the last circuit meeting, together with a matching church poster, for folk to take as a reminder

of the second 'great commandment' to love one's neighbour, as well as some practical actions they can take to demonstrate their care for creation.



Stratford & Evesham Methodist Circuit
Circuit EcoChurch Programme



Committed to
loving our neighbours as ourselves
and to being good stewards
of God's creation

Caring for the Earth
www.stratfordandeveshamcircuit.org.uk/ecocircuit

Our **EcoChurch** commitment

- avoiding wasting water
- eating locally grown food
- promoting cycling & use of public transport
- encouraging energy saving and using green energy
- ending church investment in fossil fuels
- campaigning for a sustainable world
- protecting animals and plants

'The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it' Psalm 24 v1

Third Annual Eco Gathering

You are all invited to our third eco gathering at Colemans Hill Farm on Saturday June 3 to mark UN World Environmental Day. Its slogan this year is **'Connecting People and Nature'** and this Circuit summer picnic is a chance to relax and enjoy

the spectacular Cotswold countryside, meet with old friends and meet new ones, and savour a bring and share tea. The guest speaker this year will be Deborah Tomkins from Green Christians. A poster about the event will be circulated soon.

Going green saves money too

Through its continuing efforts to be energy efficient in the church premises and to share its concern for a better world, Stratford Methodist Church is both saving money and improving lives.

In the third year after refurbishing the church premises, Stratford has reduced its annual CO² emissions and carbon footprint by 50% from 27.5 tonnes (2012) to 13.5 (2016). The annual electricity consumption of 14,307 kWh was offset by 9,413 kWh from the solar panels, and 5,531 kWh from ground source heat energy. Income from the solar PV tariff was £1,575 and from ground heat pump was £130, so the actual fuel expenditure was only £1,901, about **21% of that in 2012**. Gas used was 64,875 kWh, similar to the consumption in 2015. The total fuel bill was £3,606 which is about 40% of what we paid in 2012 - a substantial reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

80,000 litres of rainwater were used to flush the toilets instead of tap water, and as one of the aims of being an Eco-Church is to help to build a just and equal world, we responded to the Tearfund appeal for Toilet Twinning. In gratitude for having better toilet facilities in the refurbished premises, we raised £900 to twin 3 school toilet blocks in Sierra Leone, Chad and Uganda and 3 individual latrines in Liberia, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Could your church consider doing this? Find out more from:
www.toilettwinning.org/

As a Fairtrade Church we continue to promote using Fairtrade refreshments in the premises and have a monthly Fairtrade stall after Sunday service and a special service in Fairtrade Fortnight.

As the use of the church premises has been steadily increasing since the redevelopment, our church premises should be sustainable for our Church mission in the years to come.

New EMC repair café

'Don't despair, we repair' is the slogan of a new project Transition Evesham Vale set up in Evesham's market square. Sadly the 'ImaGine' premises have now been taken back for a commercial let, so the new home of the monthly Repair Café is in one of the downstairs halls at the Church. Open from 10 am till 2 pm on the second Saturday of the month, it aims to repair electrical goods, clothing, watches, bikes, and can sharpen knives and shears and various other goods. Not everything can be mended, but it does save many items from going to landfill. After a successful launch in March, it was a bit quieter in April. Look out for the next repair days on May 13th and June 10th during the coffee morning in the Welcome Area. It is dependant on donations towards coffee, lunches and travel for the volunteer repairers.

Fiji: climate change is for real

In March Dr Julia Edwards, a Mission Partner with the Methodist Church in Britain, came to Evesham Methodist Church to share her experiences about the effects of climate change in Fiji. In response to an article in the Methodist

Recorder on 'The mystery of climate change' she writes:

" Alas, often the conclusions of the leading 97% of climate scientists continue to be questioned, allowing those who wish to sidestep the topic at a personal level. All this at a time when millions of people worldwide are already experiencing the impacts of climate change – this, to me, is the real 'mystery' of climate change. In the Pacific, people are suffering from the effects of climate change today; they are not concerned with debate. They know that questioning future climate predictions is superfluous when climate change is already a daily reality.

The Pacific Ocean is warming at a faster rate than any time in the past 10,000 years and warmer seas are causing extensive coral bleaching, with the resultant decimation of both dependent fish stocks and the dependent livelihoods of islanders. Warmer seas are also contributing to unprecedented sea-level rise in a region where the majority of the population are coastal dwellers. Consequently, low-lying communities are being forced to relocate because of rising seas, and in this part of the world, governments and the Church are already working together to help protect the rights and dignity of those people moving because of adverse conditions".

The urgent call from Christian Aid to politicians: 'to put climate change at the heart of their plans for government' recognises the injustices of climate change and the urgent need for action by all of us, based on a moral and spiritual conviction.

Reducing fossil fuel use

As the previous section indicates, the impact of human-induced climate change is already being experienced around the world, often affecting the poorest communities most severely. The impacts, which will increase, include reduced food security, drought, famine, severe flooding and extreme weather causing devastation, fires, heat-waves, disease and migration of populations. One response of the church should be to divest itself, over a reasonable time frame of three years, from its climate damaging investments in fossil fuels. The funds released should partly be reinvested in the clean, renewable, energy producing technologies of the future.

The Memorial from our Circuit to Conference 2017 will be proposed at the Birmingham District Synod on 6th May. Revd Audrey and Margaret Fuller have kindly agreed to propose and second. The the full resolution which reads as follows:

' This Circuit Meeting welcomes the Transition Initiative Pathway on global warming supported, among others, by the Methodist Finance Board and the Church of England, but fears that its targets in relation to timing and holding temperature increase to 1.5 degrees are seriously insufficient. It further fears that fossil fuel companies are an increasingly risky investment. It therefore requests that the Methodist Council oversees a process, in company with the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI), with a