

## Care For Creation Service

### 8am Service

#### Interviews with members of the Environmental Group

A

Why I belong to the Green group

I consider myself to be very privileged to live where I only have to look out of my windows and I can instantly see the majesty of creation and watch the wonder of the changing seasons. Yet this majestic creator is the same God that I call Father and who cares for me with all my silly cares and concerns.

How can I therefore possibly worship the Creator and not treat with respect, care, and thoughtfulness the world He has made?

Whilst it is not necessary to be a Christian to have a sense of care for our world, for me, however, it is impossible to be a Christian and not feel a sense of responsibility for the well-being of our world.

I also feel that I should not be guilty of failure to care for God's creation through ignorance, and find that the group helps provide me with information, food for thought and prayer, and the chance to discuss issues of concern with fellow Christians.

B

When Iris and Claire suggested starting an environmental group I was keen to join, in the hope of learning more about difficult issues such as climate change, conservation and sharing of resources, and fracking for gas.... and many more.

However, it is so huge and overwhelming. What part can I play? What can I do?

I am a gardener and can provide an environment suited to bees, butterflies, beetles, woodlice, hedgehogs and birds.

I have a nettle patch so butterflies may lay their eggs, a woodpile for beetles, millipedes and woodlice. I do not clear leaves under shrubs so hedgehogs and insects can shelter. I try to grow flowers and plants for bees - not the sterile bedding plants from garden centres. I feed the birds and have evergreen bushes to provide shelter.

Of course, it does not all work as birds will not share my raspberries and strawberries with me and pigeons decimate my greens unless I cover them. Snails and slugs are a perennial problem and we have had the 'world' collection of these this year.!!! They must have a purpose in God's creation?

But I can try to be a steward of this little bit of God's creation.

C

Why I am part of our church environmental group

Over the last 30 years, I have seen the loss of bees, butterflies, nightingales, thrushes. I no longer hear the dawn chorus which used to be deafening. I know things are changing far more rapidly than we expect.

30 years ago I was teaching what scientists predicted would happen in our world due to the release of greenhouse gases. They predicted rises in temperature, greater instability in our climate, more storms, droughts and floods, all of which we are seeing now.

I am part of the environmental group because I wanted to think about and discuss how as a Christian I should respond to all these changes.

Does it matter what I do?

Does God mind about the changes we have caused?

Do they make Him angry or sad?

Each Sunday we say that everything in heaven and earth belongs to the Lord, so when we cause animals and plants to become extinct are we stealing from the Lord? We know He made everything and behold it was good. By our actions are we destroying this goodness.

I know that our lifestyle is wasteful. I know that in the West we consume far too much. All this is leading to climate change.

I know too that this change is causing massive suffering to innocent people, who in no way caused it. We are told to love one another. So how should we respond to these challenges?

D

I found on the internet a report on the official C of E news website from the 15th Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-15) is meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, earlier this month. If you follow this link you will be able to read the whole report. <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/archives/4084>

Briefly, Anglican Bishops and Archbishops fronted a public forum in New Zealand on environmental change. They called on Anglicans everywhere to show moral courage in tackling its cause and impacts.

The South African Archbishop said, "This is not a social problem, it is not an economic problem, it is not an environmental problem, it is a moral problem and it needs a moral response."

One of the panel told the forum that there was still massive inequity in terms of water and food consumption, and use of energy, in different parts of the world; Archbishop Rowan Williams agreed and said that Christians should not consider environmental issues "a secular fuss imported into the church". Followers of Christ should not "shrug our shoulders when we are asked why there is not sufficient food or safe, clean water...That is not how Christians should react. That is why this is a matter of faithfulness to our creator and redeemer."

In response to questions from the floor as to what Christians could do to begin changing their lifestyles, panel members said that, while the issue of environmental problems seems overwhelming, individuals and parishes could at least make a start. Suggestions included eating less meat, working to mitigate carbon footprints, and discussing energy use in the parish.

At the end of the evening, one of the Archbishops presented a challenge: "What this evening was all about was water, food supply and energy. What is your faith response?"