

Draft New Diocesan Environment Policy



INTRODUCTION

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation.’”
Mark 16:15

Jesus commissioned His disciples to take the good news¹ of his death and resurrection to all of creation, reiterating the original purpose of humanity to act as rulers over creation. Rulers who are made in God’s image, loving, Christ like rulers, servant kings within the natural world².

We have a picture of the renewed (new) earth when God comes to bring heaven to earth in Revelation 21 where Christ promises to make all things renewed/refreshed (new)³ and physically demonstrated in Jesus’ resurrected body, transformed, but scarred by the infliction of sin⁴.

It is this good news that enables the church to speak into the current environmental crisis. As we seek to love our neighbours who are effected by environmental degradation, be they local, global or generational, we have a mandate to take action in our church buildings, churchyards and in our communities.

Climate disruption is already causing suffering and thousands of deaths globally each year. As it accelerates this is set to increase, with for example, a 1m sea level rise and 50 million climate refugees predicted by 2050. This is also a matter of injustice, as the poor and those least responsible for climate change are often most vulnerable, to its impacts.

Responsible stewardship of creation and our contribution to greenhouse gases, needs, therefore, to be an integral part of our mission and ministry: Living, Loving and Learning.

1. Mark 16:15
2. Genesis 1:26
3. Revelation 21:1-5
4. Luke 24:36-4

VISION

Our vision is:

- For every parish and church school in the Diocese of Leeds to have a ministry and mission of environmental stewardship, both for their own property, through the congregation and in their community, which glorifies God, demonstrates Christ’s love and brings His kingdom within the Diocese
- For the Diocese of Leeds to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommendations, namely 45% reductions by 2030 and be carbon neutral by 2050 (from a 2010 baseline)

- For churches and the Diocese as a whole to be active leaders in climate mitigation and adaptation within their communities, and in so doing preach a gospel of love, hope and renewal that brings people to Jesus, particularly young people.
- For the churches within the Diocese of Leeds to be prepared for forthcoming climatic changes and have appropriately climate adaptation and resilience strategies in place, to ensure the preservation of church heritage and be able to act as of sanctuary within their communities.

MISSION

The mission of the Diocese is to equip confident clergy to enable confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ across our young Diocese. This good news is for all of God's creation and the mission of all Christians.

GOALS

The accomplishment of our mission sits within the goals of the Diocesan Strategy.

- 1. Thriving as a distinctive diocese whose culture is shaped by a shared vision and values**
To be a pioneering diocese, taking a lead in environmental mission. Having a shared vision of environmental sustainability across the diverse contexts within the diocese.
- 2. Reimagining ministry**
For every parish and church school in the Diocese of Leeds to have a ministry and mission of environmental stewardship, both for their own property, through the congregation and in their community, which glorifies God and brings Christ's kingdom within the Diocese
- 3. Nurturing lay discipleship**
All members of our congregations are maturing in their calling as Christians in the whole of their lives and take seriously the five marks of mission. The fifth mark of mission "securing the integrity of creation" is seen as an integral part of discipleship and mission. Nurture courses and small group participation are the norm, people are supported to express their faith and how it relates to environmental concerns outside church, and all is intentionally underpinned by prayer and is witnessed in action.
- 4. Building leadership pathways**
With environmental mission and ministry in mind we have identified processes to attract, discern, train and continuously develop ordained and lay leaders, from nurture to discerning vocation to accreditation, in a way that ensures they leave something behind if/when they move on. Clergy and lay are motivated to take responsibility for their own development, and for training their congregation in sustainable stewardship.
- 5. Growing young people as Christians**
Children and young people are part of the worshipping community of every church and cathedral and are maturing in their faith. They have the opportunity to grasp how the gospel relates to environmental issues of their time.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

All responsible bodies within the Diocese are invited to give due consideration to this Environment Policy and its Guidelines. A number of individuals, office holders and committees will have responsibilities for implementation and monitoring of effectiveness.

The Diocesan Secretary will be responsible for implementation and monitoring within the Diocesan Office and throughout the administrative activities of the Diocese.

Incumbents, Churchwardens and PCCs are encouraged to take responsibility for implementation at Parish level, and it is recommended that each Parish nominates an individual as their environmental champion who will also act as a point of contact with the Diocesan Environment Officer.

The Parsonages Board in conjunction with the relevant incumbent will be responsible for implementation for clergy housing and other properties owned by the Diocesan Board.

Guidance on and monitoring of implementation will be the responsibility of Diocesan Board, the Archdeacons, the Diocesan Advisory Committee, Parsonages Board, the Diocesan Education Committee, the Director of Mission and Ministry and the Diocesan Environment Officer as appropriate, with an emphasis on the adoption of best environmental practice, and the sharing of best practice ideas throughout the Diocese.

The carbon footprint of the Diocese will be calculated annually as accurately as possible by the Diocesan Environment Officer and reported to the Diocesan Board. Reduction targets, and strategies to assist parishes to meet these, will be set over 5 year periods to ensure that the Diocese is at least in line with the IPCC recommended target of 45% reduction by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050 (from a 2010 baseline). The Diocese will work with the national church and other initiatives to support and resource parishes.

This Environment Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, and at least every three years, by the Diocesan Environment Group and Diocesan Environment Officer in conjunction with others as appropriate.