

Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) report to ACC17

Climate change is an emergency

The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. *Romans 8.22-25*

Introduction

1. The hope proclaimed in the Gospel, includes hope for all creation, because all creation is groaning under abuse. The world's leading climate scientists have warned that there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.¹ The WWF report informs us that since 1970, human activities have led to a decrease in animal populations of almost 60 per cent.² We do not have to look far to attest to the Apostle Paul's words describing the groaning of creation and the longing for liberation from abuse and indignity.

The whole creation waits breathless with anticipation for the revelation of God's sons and daughters. *Romans 8.19*

2. Creation is waiting for us. Any church that claims to proclaim and live the Gospel in the world – what Saint Paul calls “the first fruits of the Spirit”, has no choice but to engage the powers and structures of bondage, wherever they are, and be an active agent of the flourishing of creation, bearing and embodying the hope held out in the Gospel. Creation care, environmental health and the mitigation of the negative impact of climate change, confronting the economic system that places priority on economic growth and profit, disregarding the impact on people and planet, cannot and should not be relegated to the work of a few green activists or enthusiasts. It is the work of all the people of God, because it is the work of the Gospel.

Activities of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network

The world doesn't change one person at a time. It changes as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what's possible.
Margaret Wheatley

Eco-bishops

3. During the Season of Creation 2018, bishops, women leaders and youth leaders from 17 dioceses in Southern, East and Central Africa, united by a passion for climate justice, gathered to discuss the impacts of climate change in their areas and to look to the future. Their worship, reflection and discussion were guided by the theme 'Adaptation, Mitigation, and the Witness of the Church in an Era of Climate Change'. They made a call for ecological justice to be high on the agenda for Lambeth; see <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/335878/1809-acen-eco-bishops-urgent-cry-for-ecological-justice-v2.pdf>.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report>

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-environment-wildlife/wildlife-populations-plunge-almost-60-percent-since-1970-wwf-idUSKCN12R00F>

4. Bishops and other delegates from the six countries in the Anglican Church of South America met to discuss joint action on the “rapidly mounting issues of global climate change and environmental destruction.” The Bishop of Argentina Greg Venables, the Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church of South America, called the meeting together with the support of ACEN and Anglican Alliance

Season of Creation

5. ACEN is part of the Season of Creation Initiative in partnership with the World Council of Churches, Global Catholic Climate Movement, Lutheran World Federation, World Evangelical Alliance and A Rocha, to encourage Christians around the world to celebrate the Season of Creation/Time for Creation during the month of September. www.seasonofcreation.org

Lenten Fast for Creation

6. Every Lent, ACEN prepares a 40 day Fast focussing on practical actions that we can take to reduce our impact on the earth. Last year we had a Carbon Fast for Lent and in 2019 “Less Plastic for Lent” to combat the use of single use plastic. <http://www.greenanglicans.org>

Online sermon resources

7. In partnership with Anglican agencies, is assisting in the production of an ecumenical on-line resource based on the Revised Common Lectionary with sermon and liturgical notes for each Sunday. The theme of the notes focusses on Care for Creation and Sustainability. The Anglican Communion will provide materials for six of the months, with voices from around the Globe. <http://www.sustainable-preaching.org/>

United Nations

8. The Anglican Communion has recently become accredited with the United Nations Environmental Programme as a Major Stakeholder. A delegation of five Anglicans will attend the upcoming United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi.
9. The Episcopal Church sent a delegation to the United Nations Climate Conference in Poland (COP 24), under the leadership of Bishop Marc Andrus.

Social Media

10. The Anglican Communion Environmental Network seeks to connect people involved in caring for creation via social media. We share news about what Anglicans are doing as well as keeping Anglicans up to date on environmental news. We currently have the following reach:
11. Green Anglicans Facebook : 37,800 followers from 45 countries.
12. Green Anglicans Twitter: 3,402 followers.

Young Green Anglicans Movement

13. The movement of young ‘Green Anglicans’ which started in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa has spread to Central Africa, Kenya and Congo. Through links with Portuguese speaking countries, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil and the Lusitanian Church in Portugal have also become part of the movement via the Green Anglicans – Rede Lusófona.

Highlights from around the Communion

Young People rising up

Look into the eyes of your children and grandchildren and do what you need to do to preserve the world for their future.

Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba

14. *Sri Lanka*: In the Diocese of Colombo, 450 children participated in an Environment Art Competition. This was to create awareness and concern on environmental concerns among Children.
15. *South Africa*: The Diocese of Cape Town incorporated environmental education into holiday clubs which were run by churches to keep the children safe during the holidays.
16. *Pakistan*: SPSD is a small-scale Christian faith-based organisation, working at grass root level in five districts of South Punjab, Pakistan. They run Green Climate Clubs and have a Green Schools Project to engage children with nature.

Engaging Clergy

A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

The Primate of the Anglican Church of Congo, the Most Revd Zacharie Masimango Katanda

17. *South India*: A Camp for Green Clergy and Teachers was organised by the Ecology Department of the Church of South India, held at the Eden Eco Spirituality Centre in Kerala.
18. *Mozambique*: In the Diocese of Lebombos, theological students from the seminary started their academic year with a quiet day on Chizvane beach.
19. *South Africa*: The Diocese of Saldanha Bay organised a day conference for women clergy. Remembering 13-year-old St Agnes, they reflected on the young women who are leading environmental social movements. How can we as the church support and amplify the voice of young women for social change?

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to a life of faith.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Archbishop Justin Welby

20. *Malawi*: The Diocese of Upper Shire formed a partnership with Gigawatt Global to install a small scale industrial solar farm on church land, providing electricity for the local community and sustainable income for the Diocese.
21. *England*: In the 'Big Shift Campaign', 5,500 churches in the Church of England have changed their source of energy to renewable energy providers. Seven hundred church buildings now have renewable energy installations such as solar panels.
22. *The Episcopal Church* has committed to planting 'Paris Groves' at its Episcopal Schools and 85 Camp and Conference Centres. Each confirmand and baptism candidate is encouraged to donate a tree at one of the centres.
23. *Kenya*: The Diocese of Mumias launched the Green Anglicans movement, opening a diocesan tree nursery. Bishop Wandera, Anglican Development Services and inter faith representatives attended the event.
24. *Burundi*: The Anglican Church of Burundi is concluding its tree campaign, and with the support of Dioceses, local administration and the community have planted around 800,000 trees.

Investments and Divestments

We can do this. I know because I saw people of every nation, faith, age and race stand with the Standing Rock Sioux as they struggled to turn back a pipeline that threatened their sacred lands and their water supply. *Primate of The Episcopal Church, the Most Revd Michael B Curry*

25. *Canada*: The Responsible Investment Task Force of the Anglican Church of Canada has prepared guidelines, 'Investing with a mission: A guide to responsible investment and church funds'
26. *Church of England*: A mining disaster in Brazil killed 169 people when a dam filled with by-products (tailings) collapsed. The Church of England Pensions Board issued a joint call for tailings dams to be controlled. The Brazilian Government has since announced no new upstream tailings dams are to be built.
27. *Ireland*: At its General Synod, the Church of Ireland made a significant advance to end its investments in all fossil fuels. It voted to exclude fully by 2022 companies with a turnover of greater than 10 per cent from fossil fuel production.

Responding to Climate Change Disasters

Three of the five nations named by the United Nations as anticipated to be under water by the end of the century are within the Diocese of Polynesia.

Archbishop Emeritus Dr Winston Halapua, former Bishop of Polynesia

28. *Episcopal Relief & Development*, in partnership with ten Anglican partner agencies, has published a toolkit called 'Pastors and Disasters'. This manual equips Anglican partners with tools to prepare for and mitigate against disasters. It enables churches to mobilize communities, building on existing local capacity to identify and address environmental hazards and vulnerabilities, and to become more resilient.
29. *Lambeth Roundtable on Climate Change Migrants and Refugees*: A gathering of academics, diplomats, faith leaders and faith-based organisations met at Lambeth Palace hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to explore migration caused by climate change. Central to the day were contributions from Oceania, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean where people are affected and responding to sea level rise, to see what can be learnt in the search for effective responses.
30. *Church of South India*: During devastating floods a group of young people known as 'cyber warriors' organised a rescue helpline call centre reaching out to those in need through social media, with a Facebook group 'Kerala Flood Rescue Facilitating Group'. Collecting information on survivors, they located them on Google maps and shared this with rescue teams.

Combatting Plastic

We face enormous challenges to do with housing, clean water, environmental protection, ecological and bio-diversity, and climatic pollution. There is no future in being outside of these discussions: truly caring for our city and our part of creation means being part of the way forward and part of its future. *The Primate of Hong Kong, the Most Revd Paul Kwong*

31. *Congo*: Green Anglican Congo–Katanga Diocese organised a day for young people to reflect on our biblical mandate to care for God's Creation (Genesis 2.8-17) followed by a pick-up of litter. The young people committed to go forth and educate others.
32. *South Africa*: The Diocese of False Bay, which is named after the Bay, started a campaign called 'Protect False Bay' where young people and children gathered to clean up and protect the oceans.
33. *Lusitanian Church, Portugal*: Green Anglicans from the Lusophone Network took part in the 'Saving the Oceans' day in Porto. They led a workshop called 'Sustainable Planet' with different

sessions for adults and children. They were joined by Bishop Jorge Cabral afterwards for the clean-up on the beach.

Food security

People in Australia often look to the example of the First People of this country whose history provides very good examples of how to live sustainably - restricting hunting, gathering and certain forms of agriculture to certain periods in order to allow replenishment of what has been taken. *Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Most Revd Dr Philip L Freier*

34. *South Africa*: The Diocese of Cape Town held a “Conference on the Land” and provided a Lenten course on Land “the Earth is the Lord’s” including sessions on degradation of the land, food security and re-distribution of the land.
35. *The Episcopal Church*: The Diocese of Olympia has appointed an Agrarian Missioner. The basis of the Missioner’s work is ‘Harvesting Abundance: Local Initiatives of Food and Faith’.
36. *Swaziland (Eswatini)*: By embracing permaculture farming methods, the Diocese of Swaziland was able to keep its vegetable gardens going right through the severe drought of 2018. Organic low-tillage farming methods use much less water.

ACEN Steering Group

37. The ACEN steering group is chaired by Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya (Swaziland), and members are Bishop Jason Selvaraj (West Malaysia), Bishop Bertin Subi (Congo), Bishop Zac Niringiye (Uganda), Dr Mathew Koshy (Church of South India), Dr Andrew Leake (Northern Argentina), Melanie Mullen (The Episcopal Church), and Revd Canon Rachel Mash (Southern Africa). The steering group is grateful for the support it has received from Revd Canon Terrie Robinson (to the end of 2018) and Revd Canon John Kafwanka (since the beginning of 2019) at the Anglican Communion Office.