

## **Bishop Auckland and Shildon Methodist Circuit**

### **Environmental Policy**

*The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*

Psalm 19:1

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

Caring for creation is one of the ways in which we as churches, can share God's love with others, challenge injustice and help people in our own communities and beyond. In 2019 the Methodist Conference recognised that we are facing a climate emergency.<sup>1</sup> The Conference has also set an 'aspirational target' to be 'net-zero' by 2030, as detailed in the *Action for Hope* roadmap and the *Faith Plan*.<sup>2</sup>

*God our creator, you have made us one with this earth to tend it  
and to bring forth fruit. May we so respect and cherish all that has  
life from you, that we may share in the labour of all creation to give  
birth to your hidden glory, through Jesus Christ. Amen*

Janet Morley, *All Desires Known* (SPCK, 1992)

### **Background**

The Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit acknowledges the climate emergency and that we face an existential threat. We recognise that this requires immediate and significant action.

The Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Meeting seek to encourage, enable and equip ministers, worship leaders and preachers, church leaders and members to take action in response.

### **The Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit policy is to:**

- Ensure our Methodist response to the climate crisis is given high priority in our worship, discipleship and theological reflection, in line with God's heart for the flourishing of all God's creation.
- Ensure concerns about the destruction of bio-diversity and natural habitats are also given high priority in our worship, discipleship and theological reflection.
- Use our assets including buildings, land and resources to reflect and prioritise our care for all God's creation, now and for future generations.
- Let the Methodist Way of Life and call for climate justice inform change in our corporate and individual lifestyles.
- Work together to tackle the climate and bio-diversity crises.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/methodist-church-recognises-a-climate-emergency/> (accessed 07/07/25)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/action/climate/action-for-hope/> (accessed 07/07/25)

### **The Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit seek to:**

- Encourage the taking of responsibility as Christians for the care of God's earth and promote care for and restoration of the environment as part of the key message of God's love in worship and teaching.
- Encourage churches to hold an ECO Sunday.
- Address environmental issues as a separate agenda item for the Circuit and churches.
- Encourage churches to embed care for God's creation in our decision making.
- Encourage churches to be registered as ECO Churches, working towards Bronze and Silver awards.<sup>3</sup>
- Register our intent and then aim to become an Eco Circuit<sup>4</sup>
- Explore ways in which we can move towards 'net-zero' impact.
- Reduce the detrimental impact of our buildings and our use of them on the environment, including educating our congregations and others who use our buildings to ensure the most effective, efficient and eco-friendly use of them.
- Encourage churches to seek out sustainable energy solutions.
- Encourage use of land around our buildings in ways which benefit the environment and the community.
- Engage with other organisations in seeking a fairer, more environmentally friendly world.
- Engage with the political process to generate action.
- Incorporate responsibility for leadership on eco and environmental issues in the role of one of the appointed Circuit Stewards.
- Recognise that our actions impact the world and so encourage individuals to live well and considerately in connection and interaction with God's creation.

### **The Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit will support these aims by:**

- Prayer
- Sharing stories of steps being taken in church and Circuit meetings and magazines, newsletters and on social media.
- Using the Action for Hope resources available from the Methodist Church.<sup>5</sup>
- Using the resources from other organisations such as Operation Noah,<sup>6</sup> The Methodist Zero Carbon materials<sup>7</sup> and A Rocha.<sup>8</sup>
- Reviewing this policy annually at the summer Circuit Meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/> (accessed 07/07/25)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/denominational-awards/eco-circuit/> (accessed 10/07/25)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/action/climate/action-for-hope/> (accessed 07/07/25)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.operationnoah.org/> (accessed 07/07/25)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/the-connexional-team-of-the-methodist-church-becomes-the-first-carbon-literate-church-group/#:~:text=On%20Thursday%2012%20June%2C%20alongside%20national%20and%20international,a%20target%20of%20becoming%20net%20zero%20by%202030.> (accessed 07/07/25)

<sup>8</sup> <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/> (accessed 07/07/25)