

There are two more things we can do. We are already experiencing the early results of climate change but the most devastating effects are felt by the world's poorest people, who have done least to cause the problem.

We can all help by **giving what we can** to the wide range of Christian and other agencies that bring relief and help communities to adapt.

And last, but not least, we can **influence others**. For example, it might be by talking about it in our family, community, workplace or church, or signing petitions or contacting your MP. If your church isn't registered as an Eco Church ask your leaders about it. Influencing others will multiply the difference you make by your personal pledges.

Taking it further

Different people will be able to respond in different ways. What is easily doable for one person may be too costly or difficult for another. Those who already have a 'green' lifestyle may be ready for commitments that would feel too much for someone who's new to the challenge. You will know what is right for you just now.

If you wish to explore more ideas for action, the Diocesan Environmental Webpage **https://sheffdio.org/environment** is a good place to start. Here, you can look up a bigger range of options, some easy and others more challenging. Additional resources will be added as they become available.

Offer your pledge as part of your worship and ask God for help as you discover more of caring for God's creation. And enjoy God's world – with gratitude, wonder and awe.

Because *"the earth is the Lord's and everything in it"* (Psalm 24.1)

Lights for Christ

An introduction to environmental pledges

THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD

This leaflet is for you if you want to make creation care a part of your Lights for Christ Personal Rule of Life – or if you care for the natural world but aren't sure where to begin. It's to encourage you and to help you figure out how to make a practical difference.

Why it matters

The evidence is overwhelming. We are facing a massive global crisis. Each year we are seeing more of the impact of this crisis across the world. Urgent action is needed.

But we're not only responding to an emergency. Our concern follows from the commandment to love God and neighbour. If we love God with everything about us, we'll love God's creation. And if we love our neighbour as ourselves, we'll put ourselves out for justice for our neighbours around the world who are already at the sharp end of the environmental crises.

Our relationship with God's created world touches on all three aspects of our Diocesan vision to **receive**, **walk in** and **reflect** the light of Christ (For more about Lights for Christ, see **www.sheffdio.org/lfc**). The Bible says that Christ is the firstborn of creation and that all things hold together in him. So our attitudes to the created world and how we live within it are part of our relationship with Christ.

Our Diocese has a policy committing us to radical action and we are an awarded A Rocha Eco Diocese. We're encouraging our local churches to become Eco Churches. And the actions of our individual members will have an even bigger impact. For those who commit to being Lights for Christ it's also about our Personal Rule of Life.

In the context of our care for God's creation and as his followers:

- **Receiving Christ's light** includes being aware of the created world, learning from it and seeing God in it.
- **Walking in Christ's light** includes living in gratitude, wonder and awe at creation and holding lightly to money and possessions. We are content with enough.
- **Reflecting Christ's light** happens when we're seen living in harmony with the natural world and responding to injustice.

So how can I respond?

We're each able to respond in different ways. So we encourage you to choose what would be appropriate for you, to do it with prayer and then to commit by making specific pledge(s). If you're developing a Personal Rule of Life one of your commitments might be to take on environmental pledges from the list opposite.

The best place to start is to be more aware of the natural world – to notice it more, appreciate it more and see more of God's glory in it. Then we should listen to what the scientists are telling us about the effects of the carbon gases we are pouring into our atmosphere, the pollution we are creating (including pollution from plastic) and the loss of plant and animal species we are causing.

Awareness should lead to action. We're suggesting eight areas of everyday life, from which you could choose one or more responses.

1. **Food** – eat more plant-based meals and less meat, especially red meat.
2. **Clothing & other things we buy** – think before you buy. Do I need it or do I just want it? Can I buy second hand/pre-loved items?
3. **Ethical buying and banking** – look out for the Fair Trade logo if buying tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, bananas, flowers or wine.
4. **Packaging** – reduce plastic in your shopping e.g. keep a reusable bag with you and buy fruit and veg loose or in paper bags.
5. **Recycling** – make full use of recycling bins for kerbside collections.
6. **Energy and water** – turn the heating down. You could reduce it by 1 degree and, instead, put a jumper on if you need it.
7. **Travel** – walk, cycle or use public transport where possible, you could start with a car-free day, and reduce any flying.
8. **Land and gardens** – use window boxes, containers and gardens to grow insect-friendly plants e.g. lavender, geraniums, catmint or let part of your garden go wild.

You may be doing some of these things already. For ideas for your own pledges: see **https://creationcare.org.uk/resources**

Other actions of your own

When you have decided which actions you want to take you might want to highlight them above and keep this leaflet as a record.

You may want to know what will make the biggest difference to the environment. One way to find out is to use an online tool known as an **environmental footprint calculator**. Our footprint comes from all the things we do that have an impact on our planet – the energy we use, what we buy and what we eat. The World Wide Fund for Nature has a simple one, at **https://footprint.wwf.org.uk**. Some of the biggest changes we can achieve are around food, home energy and travel.