



Creation Matters

Let God enjoy his creation (Psalm 104,31)

Launch of the Newsletter of the Southampton Eco District

Picture taken at the:

Ventnor Botanic Gardens, Isle of Wight

What is an Eco District?

Newsletter of the Southampton Eco District group:

<https://www.sdmc.org.uk/resources/eco-church/>

Welcome to this first edition of 'Creation Matters', the newsletter of the Eco group of the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. We aim to bring you examples of concern, hope and inspiration that you may use in ways appropriate to you and your communities. Our main means of doing so are:

through our webinars, Creation Mondays,

through this newsletter, Creation Matters, (underlined text is hyperlinked to a web page or email)

through reviewing the guidance of The Methodist Church and of A Rocha UK about the tenets of being an Eco District,

through an annual review of the Environmental Policy of our District.

We can offer advice or connections to other churches with similar interests to help you take steps on your pathway of Creation Care. Contact us via

ecodistrict@sdmc.org.uk



Active Hope

A new Gold Eco Church award

In July Mortimer Methodist Church in the Basingstoke and Reading Circuit became the 37th church in England and Wales and the 6th Methodist church to be awarded an Eco Church Gold Award. Congratulations to the Eco Church team at Mortimer, shown here with Sara of A Rocha UK. It was great the award could be made while Revd David Shaw was in post.



EcoChurch is the survey-based scheme of A Rocha UK to guide churches on the path of creation care

Sara of Eco Church wrote this to the whole team: “You have a great Eco Church team which works well together in sharing ideas and supporting projects. It is so clear that the principles of Eco Church are integral and woven into the church and community.

We both left our time with you encouraged by all that you are doing and the stories you shared!.. There were so many highlights veg planters.... free food pantry.... 2 minute sessions at church services.... open churchyard with wildlife friendly space..... engagement with the Greening Mortimer Initiative.

Your open churchyard was an absolute joy to walk around - great to see the wildflowers, the hedges, the bird boxes, the mini pond, the beetle habitats, and all the other ways you are creating a wildlife friendly space.”

It was a privilege and a joy to be one of the assessors. **John**



Active Hope

A family session of Funday Sunday

Once a month at Romsey Methodist Church we run Funday Sunday. It's a bit like Messy Church. These are the activities we ran in a session on Caring for Creation. Our sessions are 1 hour 15 minutes long. We usually have a cooking craft for the kids to make something to eat – but this month we made something for the birds instead. We made bird feeders by mixing lard and bird seeds together and squashing it into a yogurt pot. We tied string round them so they can be hung up in the garden.

During our snack time, we watched the creation story within the cheeky panda video. We helped each family to make a bug house together to take home. We had simple wooden boxes and used PVA to stick in sticks, bamboo cane and fir cones. And we made little pipe cleaner bugs and snails. As we talked about God the creator, we celebrated our own creativity by having an area for junk modelling, lego building and duplo building. We also had playdough, but we didn't have time for that in the end!



Cheeky Panda video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf6f0xrVzl>

<https://www.romseymethodist.church/children-families/>

For the church, we made a bug house together outside. We found some pallets which we cut in half and fixed together. We then filled them with logs, sticks, bamboo canes, fir cones, dried leaves and moss. And for our display board, we talked about and collaged endangered animals. At the end of our session, we listened to "God of Science" by Rend Collective. And talked about what we could do to help the environment. **Meghan Elkin**

What's going on?

Creation Mondays

John Ray Initiative

This monthly webinar series was initiated by Revd Margot Hodson, the Director of Theology and Education at the John Ray Initiative and an Associate Vicar of the Shill Valley and Broadshire Benefice in Oxfordshire. Margot led us through Lament, Hope and Wisdom, reflecting theologically on the environmental crisis. She has provided us with an excellent booklist. Contact our [ecodistrict](#) email for more information.

Climate Stewards

Our second webinar was led by Revd Ian Souter, on 'Why be an Eco District'. There will be a synopsis of this in the next edition, and a video of Ian's talk is currently being edited for publication.

360oCarbon

The next webinar is to be given on Monday, December 11 by Adrian Frost of Climate Stewards on Carbon Calculators. If you want to learn how to estimate the carbon footprint of your church, and of yourselves, then this is a great opportunity for you. After all, Adrian designed these tools to help churches.

Creation Mondays webinars

Creation Monday webinars are scheduled on Monday evenings from 7 pm to 9 pm. The program is available on Eventbrite. Please book in advance to receive details of the appropriate link on Zoom. There is plenty of time for small discussions following the main address

Steps towards an Eco District

In 2019 the Synod of Southampton District agreed to start on the Eco District track. Post pandemic, an Eco group started to determine the stages on this track. The District Policy Committee (DPC) agreed to the text of the Environmental Policy in spring of 2023, and this was endorsed by Synod. The policy will be subject to an annual review by our DPC.

In October there were 41 churches in our District that were registered as Eco Churches. Of these 19 had received awards. The number of awards had exceeded the threshold for a Bronze award, and so the District has made application for a Bronze award. The result is anticipated before the end of the year.

John Evans, Eco District champion