

## Eco-Congregation Annual Report

(for year ending 30 September 2009)

### Area of Responsibility

The eco-congregation group seek to remind the church family that we are meant to be stewards of his world (Gen 2.15). Whilst there are many areas of environmental action that depend on governments, there are many that are our own personal choices. In a world of excessive consumption these choices take us back to the core values of being Christians. "Climate change is not just an environmental issue - it's a threat to people living in poverty." TEARFUND. When considering this statement we believe that the groups ethos fits strongly into the strategy under three categories "worshipping God, loving people and serving the world". The ethos and remit of the group also has powerful synergy with other church activities such as "Just Christmas".

### Summary of preceding year

In the last year the leadership has changed from Andrew Mott to Neil Hollow. Too many people are involved to be mentioned specifically except about activities below. One of our members, Alan Beal, a professional energy engineer has carried out an energy audit on the church building. Victoria Deschampsneufs has organised a reflective prayer walk with the reflective prayer group. The wildlife artist John Busby gave a talk in conjunction with arocha. Victoria also organised the "bike doctor" from the Bike Station to undertake minor adjustments and repairs to congregation members bikes after the morning service. Members of the group held a stall at the activity fair with energy saving and other leaflets on them.

Other activities which involved members of the group (or happened in the church family) included a litter pick up along the Water of Leith and in Niddrie (in conjunction with emerge). Seed planting and distribution of free Ecological Washing up liquid samples at babies and toddlers took place. Ruben's amazing puppet making using recycled materials happened on the church picnic and The Light had an eco-themed evening. Neil has been monitoring the church's energy use on a weekly basis for a year. He and Mark fitted some draught excluders to several church doors. A group of four couples who cycle regularly to church have donated five cycle racks, these will be installed in the next few weeks.

The major disappointment is the lack of any major action on the church's high energy consumption. In addition as a general point we are really good at praising GOD in our songs and prayers for the beauty of creation, but only rarely do we pray through the implications of this (although it was great that the Copenhagen conference was prayed for several times recently). There is some interest in having some kind of harvest festival service. There is scope for increased cooperation with the youth leaders on the issues of the environment.

However, overall we are very encouraged with the way things are going and with what we know is planned by the church for the future in this area. We are also very pleased three members of our congregation are going on official basis to the Copenhagen climate treaty conference. We interact as required with other people and work better with others in the church family than alone, we have found Jessica in particular very open and helpful.

### Targets for the coming year

Our biggest fear is that we only pay lip service to being signed up to being in eco-congregation, however we currently think this is unlikely.

Wish list! Sign up as a church to 10:10 a campaign to cut carbon emissions by 10% in 2010. Gain an eco-congregation first level award (we currently meet the criteria to be awarded this), then start working on the next level. It would be great to find a way to buy some trees for the reforestation program in Kenya initiated by Nobel prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai, which is suffering a climate change induced drought. Most of all we would like the church to engage with what Christian economist Gary Hamel in the 2009 Global leadership summit called the paradigm shift issues of energy security (peak oil), climate change and global food security. These are not just issues that will affect us all, they are also primarily moral issues that should therefore concern Christians. We would like to show a short documentary film on one of these subjects. We would like to use more local food in our meals/lunches together perhaps with some provided by some congregation members. More engagement with the youth organisations, drama, quizzes etc. A youth weekend away at the Camas centre on Mull?

Against his better judgement Neil has agreed to run a one off basic bicycle maintenance workshop possibly with either Dave Hurst (senior), or professional help. We would also be interested in using the church website environmental discussion forums to set up a lend/share/swap service. We are going to carry out a simple purely voluntary transport survey, depending on the results we may attempt to facilitate some kind of car sharing scheme for those who wish to be involved. We are just starting to think about some more cooperation with the reflective prayer group.

### Resource Implications for the coming year

Financially almost none, in fact we hope to use our expertise to save the church money in its heating/lighting bills. Need continuing very minor admin support with sending energy readings and help from the production team to show a documentary film. We would like help from the production team to help engage the congregation, young and old so that creation care is seen as something that's fun, community spirited and part of our calling.