

Eco Church – Your (Methodist) Church Caring for God’s Earth

‘Whatever happens to the earth at the time of the Lord’s return, one thing is clear; it was created in love by God, who continues to care for it. As Christians, we can surely do no less.’

These were the words of Martin Pett, of Trinity Church, Lewes, as he began his address to a 300-strong audience gathered in the crypt of St Paul’s Cathedral in London recently. He went on to explain how the congregation at Trinity have gone about establishing caring for the environment as an integral part of their everyday work and witness.

Martin was speaking at a special event to mark the launch of [Eco Church](#), a brand new award scheme for churches who understand, and want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God’s earth. Eco Church has been developed by [A Rocha UK](#) – a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world – as the successor to Eco-Congregation for churches in England and Wales (Eco-Congregation continues to operate in Scotland and Ireland). A Rocha UK’s vision for Eco Church is for the scheme to create a vast network of churches as local centres of creation care in the community – shining beacons of hope for a brighter environmental future. This vision was endorsed by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams who, speaking at the launch of Eco Church, welcomed the new scheme as part of a ‘tectonic shift’ in Christian thinking through which environmental concerns will ‘embed more deeply’ in church culture.

Methodist churches were well represented among the list of Eco-Congregation Award-winners and a number have already registered in the few weeks since the launch, so it is hoped that many more will now embrace Eco Church, which has been designed to be more accessible and less of an administrative burden than its predecessor.

At the heart of Eco Church is a unique, online survey that enables participating churches both to record what they are already doing to care for God’s earth, and to reflect on what further steps they can take to that end. The survey covers all areas of church life: Worship and Teaching; Management of Church Buildings and Land; Community and Global Engagement; and Lifestyle. As a church completes the survey they collect points towards an Eco Church Award at Bronze, Silver or Gold level. In order to qualify for an Award, churches must attain the required standard in each of the areas covered by the survey that apply to them. Accompanying the survey is a whole new suite of online resources to help and support churches to undertake the recommended actions.

Churches apply for an Award by downloading and completing the simple application form. Award-winning churches receive a certificate to mark their achievement and have the option of purchasing (at cost) an Award plaque fashioned from recycled church pews.

To participate in Eco Church all you need to do is register your church online at www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk, and then start completing the online Eco Survey – it’s that simple!