

Climate change

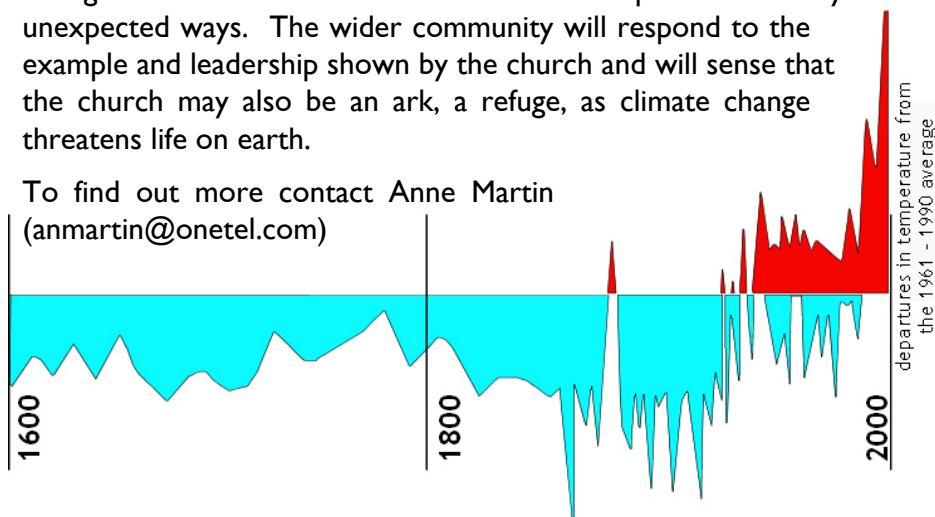
Talk of climate change is everywhere — in the media, in politics, and even across the garden fence as earth reveals unseasonal patterns. We are finally waking up to scientific reality. The amount of CO₂ pumped into the atmosphere by human activity is driving up global temperatures and unless we radically reduce these emissions this century will see a rise of at least 3 or 4°C and large parts of the globe will no longer be able to sustain life. The urgency to cut our carbon-excessive lifestyles has become all too clear.

How are churches responding to this huge moral issue? In preparing this resource, I found some wonderful stories of churches transforming their thinking and their behaviour. The overwhelming truth is that our relationship with God is intimately interwoven with the earth and the creatures of the earth — all parts of God's creation. The Bible is the Maker's instruction manual on caring for the earth.

The 'Action Kit for churches' that I have prepared provides theological, liturgical and prayer resources, along with measures that churches and individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint. It pulls together information from Christian programmes such as EcoCongregation (started by the URC), Operation Noah, CEL, agencies and other denominations.

What has become clear is that when a church embarks on energy-saving initiatives its environmental concern can spill over in many unexpected ways. The wider community will respond to the example and leadership shown by the church and will sense that the church may also be an ark, a refuge, as climate change threatens life on earth.

To find out more contact Anne Martin
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From Adrian Bulley, Wessex Synod Moderator

Dear friend,

The Christian faith is about new life.

Into a world for which faith had largely been distilled into a set of rules that had to be kept, Jesus brought love, life and freedom. He touched people's lives, taught them of God's love and forgiveness, and transformed them into men and women of faith and action. Even his own death could not silence him, and because of his resurrection and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit fifty days later, his followers were empowered to continue his ministry and extend it to new peoples and new communities.

July will mark the end of District Councils within the decision-making and oversight structure of the United Reformed Church. In their place, the responsibilities of the thirteen Synods are being enhanced and – I hope – those Synods will be revitalised and refocused.

In Wessex we've put plans in place which will ensure that the functions of District Councils are fulfilled, largely through four new committees (Area Synod Pastoral Committees) to which each of the 144 churches in the Synod will relate, and through which decisions will be made about the best use of our ministerial resources. We're also employing new staff (two Development and Support Officers – Martin Manley and Peter Hurter) to encourage personal and professional growth, offer support and ensure that the stated purpose of the Synod – 'to assist the local church in its response to God's call to mission, as expressed in the Five Marks of Mission' – is fulfilled.

This is a big change, and we may well not get it right first time, but it is my prayer that the changes being implemented will breathe new life into our churches, their people and our ministers.

Please pray that this may be so.

With very best wishes,