

Church carbon offsetting programme

Why we care about carbon dioxide (CO₂)

Carbon dioxide emissions are one of the main causes of man-made climate change. We believe that this is important for Christians because:

- 1) we are mandated by God to care for His creation and climate change is driving species to extinction and breaking down vital ecosystems;
- 2) the impacts of a changing climate, such as drought, extreme temperatures, violent storms and floods hit the poorest and most vulnerable populations the hardest and we are commanded to care for the poor;
- 3) those hardest hit by the consequences of climate change have often done the least to cause the crisis; this is an injustice and we are commanded to act justly.

Because of this we want to reduce the CO₂ emitted by the church and help our church family do the same.

This summer the eco-church team is focusing on travel and our collective carbon footprint.

With the summer holidays fast approaching, many of us will be looking forward to a well-earned break. Time with family and friends, resting, and the opportunity to explore somewhere different are really important, but often involve travel by plane or car, which in turn increases carbon dioxide emissions. We have been exploring ways for us to offset the carbon dioxide from our travel by investing in the Church on the Heath's Green Fund.

Offsetting does not prevent the carbon dioxide that cars or planes emit from entering the atmosphere. However, offsetting is an option that can benefit the environment in significant ways.

First, choosing to offset could mean investing in projects that aim to take CO₂ out of the atmosphere for example by planting trees or restoring peatland.

Second, choosing to offset could mean investing in projects that help other people or organisations reduce the amount of CO₂ they emit through the use of renewable energy.

Thirdly, finding out the cost of our carbon dioxide or just thinking about these emissions as part of our lifestyle can be a strong motivator to make a few changes to our habits.

The Church on the Heath offset programme is based on the second of these. In 2022, we

established the Green Fund to invest in reducing the church's carbon footprint. The great news is that so far the church has raised enough funds to install solar panels (hopefully coming this Autumn) that will enable us to create our own renewable energy, but there is more we can do.

We are inviting the church family to use this carbon calculator created by the Christian climate charity, Climate Stewards, to calculate the carbon emissions from their holiday travel:

<https://www.climatestewards.org/offset/>

The calculator will tell you how much carbon dioxide your travel will cost. The calculator is based on £25.00 per tonne of CO₂ (tCO₂). Once you have done the calculation you can donate that amount to the Church on the Heath Green Fund by xxxx.

Of course, you might choose to donate directly to the Climate Stewards or round the amount up or down depending on what you can afford. Here are a couple of examples from the Eco Church team.

Katie flew to Dubai with 3 other family members to visit her brother. That's 7.22 tCO₂ and a donation of £180.40.

The Williams family are travelling to the Isles of Scilly in July. That's 164 kgCO₂ for the drive and 6 kgCO₂ for the ferry, a total donation of £4.25.