

Climate Emergency: Policy, Principles and Practice

The Methodist Conference recognised a Climate Emergency in 2021 and set the target to be a net zero emission church by 2030. In Spring 2022 the Yorkshire West Synod recognised the Climate Emergency by passing this resolution:

The Yorkshire West Synod of the Methodist Church recognises a Climate Emergency, which requires urgent action politically, corporately and personally. Yorkshire West District’s Climate Action Group will support and encourage circuits and local churches urgently to reduce emissions. We will review progress annually among our churches as a model for good practice and mutual encouragement. We aim for all churches and circuits in the District to be net zero for carbon by 2030.

This policy aims to set out the ways in which the District will now respond to the resolutions of the Synod and seek to be net zero by 2030. It does this by stating those things the District itself will do and those things which it encourages the Circuits and Churches to do (recognising it cannot direct Managing Trustees whilst noting the urgency of responding to the Climate Emergency). The policy draws extensively on the work done by the Methodist Council and Connexional Team¹. This work has been undertaken in partnership with *Action for Hope*² through their FaithInvest³ scheme and establishes the principles and practical implications for the Connexion of recognising a Climate Emergency.

Through the FaithInvest scheme three areas have been identified in which the Church should act⁴:

- Faith-consistent use of **Assets** including investments, purchasing power, buildings and land.
- **Wisdom** including theology, liturgies and prayer.
- **Lifestyle** including traditions of simple living and pilgrimage.

This policy groups its recommended actions under the same headings identifying both short and medium term actions.

Assets

Time Scale	Actions the District will take.	Actions for Churches and Circuits
Short Term	<p>DA1. Sharing Good Practice:</p> <p>a) Identify centres of excellence in the District</p> <p>b) Identify/appoint Eco-Groups and Eco-Champions in the District.</p> <p>DA2. Monitoring and reviewing progress</p> <p>a) Establishing a baseline against which to monitor annual reductions towards becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Follow this link for tools to do this.</p>	<p>CA1. Sharing Good Practice</p> <p>a) Encouraging local churches to register as Eco-Church / Eco-Congregations. Click here for information.</p> <p>CA2. Monitoring and Reviewing</p> <p>a) Establishing a baseline against which to monitor annual reductions towards becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Follow this link for tools to do this.</p>

¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/action/climate/>

² <https://www.methodist.org.uk/action/climate/action-for-hope/>

³ <https://www.faithinvest.org>

⁴ https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/counc_oct-21_mc21-84-action-for-hope-a-path-to-net-zero_0fnY63Q.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Undertake annual monitoring of carbon use. c) Develop a plan for reducing carbon use to net zero by 2030. d) Identifying tools for churches to assess their carbon footprint and ways to offset carbon use. e) Including carbon footprint review questions on the property returns <p>DA3. Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishing clear criteria for when to meet face to face and when online to reduce car use, increase car-sharing and encourage use of public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Requesting circuits and churches to undertake annual monitoring of carbon use. c) Developing a plan for reducing carbon use to net zero by 2030.
Medium Term	<p>DA4. District Manses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensuring all District manses meet a C energy rating⁵ and, if possible, B by 2030. b) Review and improve manse insulation as soon as practically possible. c) Sell old manses and buy new when and where appropriate by 2030. d) Develop plans for the installation of solar panels, the aim to be for their installation by 2030, at the latest. e) Install electric charging points for electric cars as soon as practicable, and before 2030. Click here for information. f) Review and replace boiler/heating systems with alternative systems (e.g. air source heat pumps) by 2030 <p>DA5. Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) agree funding / loan arrangements that make changes to churches and manses possible to meet the 2030 deadline. 	<p>CA3. Manses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensuring all circuit manses meet a C energy rating and, if possible, B by 2030. b) Reviewing and improving manse insulation as soon as practically possible. c) Selling old manses and buying new when and where appropriate by 2030. d) Develop plans for the installation of solar panels, the aim to be for their installation by 2030, at the latest. e) Install electric charging points for electric cars as soon as practicable, and before 2030. Click here for information. f) Review and replace boiler/heating systems with alternative systems (e.g. air source heat pumps or hydrogen ready boilers) by 2030 <p>CA4. Church Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) Reviewing and improving church insulation as soon as practically possible. h) Installing solar panels and electric charging points at churches for electric cars as soon as possible before 2030 i) Reviewing and replace boiler/heating systems with alternative systems (e.g. air source heat pumps) by 2030 j) Consider the environmental impact, missional purpose and community benefit of our church buildings and act accordingly. This link will assist Churches and Circuits in doing this work: https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-

⁵ The current requirement of CPD p.805

		churches/property/net-zero-carbon/assess-your-building-energy-usage/ k) Build local relationships with environmental interest groups to nurture support, joint action and provide, where appropriate, meeting space for encounters, awareness raising and action.
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Wisdom

Time Scale	Actions the District will take.	Actions for Churches and Circuits
Short & Medium Term	WD1. Practical reflection a) Putting climate action as a standing item on meeting agendas b) Encourage conversation about climate change, connecting this to evangelism and the need for personal change c) Connecting climate change to MWOL – worship and the care of creation d) Resourcing house groups for studying the Bible and theology around climate change – Bible month focus on creation e) Offering training events with speakers for climate services, development days, presbyteral synod / climate conference WD2. Worship a) encourage the importance of place and pilgrimage locally for outdoor worship that connects physically us to the Earth b) Holding special services and “wild worship resources” for Creationtide, Earth Day c) Identifying and sharing useful resources	WC1. Practical reflection a) review how many buildings are needed to make ministry and mission practicable while reducing our carbon footprint b) Putting climate action as a standing item on meeting agendas c) Encourage conversation about climate change, connecting this to evangelism and the need for personal change WC2. Worship a) encourage the importance of place and pilgrimage locally for outdoor worship that connects physically us to the Earth b) Holding special services and “wild worship resources” for Creationtide, Earth Day etc

Lifestyle

Time Scale	Actions the District will take.	Actions for Churches and Circuits
Short Term	LD1. Communication a) Synod – to regularly include good news stories about local actions b) District website to include resources for responding to the Climate Emergency including measuring tools, eco church resources etc.	LC1. Discipleship a) Encourage members to integrate climate change into personal prayers b) Raising awareness through easy ways individuals can respond to the Climate Emergency for example Being an Ethical Consumer.

		<p>LC2. Practical action for all - invite local churches and circuits to encourage members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Know their carbon footprint – and target carbon reductions b) Insulate homes properly c) Use green energy in their homes d) Encourage reflection on diet and consumption, develop changing habits among members. e) Connect to nature – e.g. wildlife friendly gardens, “No Mow May” for the bee population f) Recycle more g) Commit to greener transport – car sharing and public transport h) Second hand shopping
Medium Term	<p>LD3. Energy Supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Green energy supply and travel for the District Office <p>LD4. Catering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increasing availability of vegetarian catering and locally sourced produce. 	<p>LC3. Energy Supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider green energy supply and travel for the circuit and churches <p>LD4. Catering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increasing availability of vegetarian catering and locally sourced produce. <p>LC5. Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide information about eating locally sourced produce / being an eco-consumer b) Visits – to recycling/waste centres/regenerative agriculture farms

Resolutions for DPC.

1. The DPC Agrees the policy and commends it to the Synod.
2. The DPC agrees the appointment of Richard Walsh, as an environmental rep, to the District Property Committee.

Agreed by DPC on 23rd February 2023

Agreed Feb 2023	Policy approved by DPC
Review Feb 2025 – (our next DPC).	<i>Review comments and approval</i>
Review Feb 2027	<i>Review comments and approval</i>
Review Feb 2029	<i>Review comments and approval</i>