



Environmental and Ethical Policy of Capel St Mary Methodist Church

31.01.2022

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Capel Methodist Church

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1. Overview

This document lays out principles and policies for Capel St Mary Methodist Church to follow in relation to environmental issues facing us in light of the current climate emergency. It also addresses wider ethical principles we should be considering in order to live out our faith in a way that is consistent with the faith we profess and the character of the God we worship. This is part of our wider public witness and an act of worship to the God we serve.

2. Biblical basis

God, the Creator of all things, rules over all and deserves our worship and adoration (Ps. 103:19-22). The earth, and, with it, all the cosmos, reveals its Creator's wisdom and goodness (Ps. 19:1-6) and is sustained and governed by his power and loving-kindness (Ps. 102:25-27; Ps. 104; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3, 10-12). Men and women were created in the image of God, given a privileged place among creatures, and commanded to exercise stewardship over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:5) As sin came into the world through humanity, it corrupted God's creation (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20—21). It also corrupted us as humans, leading to our selfish decisions causing further damage to the creation we were supposed to be stewards over (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:8-20; 9:6; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Christ's atoning, redeeming death for his people, reconciling us to God (Rom. 5:10-11, 15-21; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 1:19-22) goes hand in hand with His role of delivering the earthly creation from its bondage to corruption (Rom. 8:19-23). Indeed, Christ even involves fallen humans in this work of restoring creation (Rom. 8:21).

3. Scope

This document looks at the following broad areas of Church life:

Purchasing decisions, reducing waste & promoting recycling, building management, using and sourcing energy, money & investment, land use, leadership, our worship & teaching content, engagement with our community and the wider world.

In addition to addressing these issues directly in relation to the Church itself, it also touches on how we, as a Church congregation, can live consistently. Therefore it considers some issues relating to the way we live during the time we are not at Church (lifestyle & transport).

4. Principles

God delights in His own moral character, which is supremely good, unchanging, and eternal. His moral standards for human beings flow from His moral character, and therefore they apply to all people and especially to us as Christians, seeking to please Him and bear faithful witness to Him.

- God is love, so He commands us to love others (1 John 4:19).
- He is creator God, and has appointed us as stewards to care for the world and all in it (Gen 1:26-28)
- He has particular regard for the humble, the down-trodden, the widow and the orphan, and commands us to live that way too (James 1:27)
- He is truthful, and He commands us not to bear false witness (Titus 1:2; Exodus 20:16).
- He is compassionate, and commands us to practice compassion and forgiveness to others (Eph 4:32)
- He is holy, and He commands us to be holy (1 Peter 1:15).

In order to apply these moral characteristics to the way we live as Christians and the decisions we make as Church, we need to do so prayerfully and using reason. The issues we face in today's interconnected world are often complex and discerning the best course of action can be difficult.

The policies laid out in this document are intended to embody these principles. However, they cannot hope to be exhaustive and where decisions facing the Church are not covered here, God's commands should be used from first principles to help make decisions.

5. Policies

5.1. Purchasing

- 5.1.1. We will follow the 'LOAF' principles (Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly, Fairly traded).
- 5.1.2. We will purchase fairly traded products where available, including tea, coffee and cocoa products. Sugar will be UK grown and produced, or where imported, will be fairly traded.
- 5.1.3. We will support local businesses where possible.
- 5.1.4. We will avoid purchasing products derived from intensively farmed animals.
- 5.1.5. We will buy higher-welfare animal products and avoid products tested on animals.
- 5.1.6. We will buy environmentally friendly cleaning and sanitary products.
- 5.1.7. We will try to minimise unnecessary packaging with products we buy, particularly single-use plastics and non-recyclable materials.
- 5.1.8. We will purchase products and services which demonstrate the best ethical credentials e.g. anti-slavery policy, green policy, recycled packaging, recycled paper, local producer.

5.2. Waste & Recycling

- 5.2.1. We will continually reduce our reliance on single-use plastic.
- 5.2.2. We will make recycling bins available at the Church and encourage their use with clear labelling.
- 5.2.3. We will avoid the use of disposable, single use cups, plates and cutlery where possible.
- 5.2.4. Over time we will aim to reduce the amount of waste we generate.

5.3. Buildings and energy

- 5.3.1. We will ensure that the purchasing of our utilities is obtained through companies that prioritise renewables, green energy and sustainability even if this is at a higher cost.

- 5.3.2. We will ensure the building is as well insulated as possible within the constraints of the fundamentals of the building we have, and ensure any new work goes beyond minimum standards for energy efficiency.
- 5.3.3. We will look for practical opportunities to generate zero carbon energy on the premises (solar panels, heat pumps etc) e.g. when upgrading or replacing existing heating systems.
- 5.3.4. We will use energy efficient bulbs and lighting wherever possible (e.g. LEDs etc)
- 5.3.5. External lighting will minimise light pollution and will be on timers or motion sensitive to ensure they are not left on unnecessarily.
- 5.3.6. We will monitor our use of water and electricity and seek to minimise these over time, where possible.

5.4. Money & investment

- 5.4.1. We will ensure church bank accounts and investments are with companies that have an excellent ethical track record.
- 5.4.2. We will ensure savings and investments are in funds with green/ethical policies, including but not limited to avoiding investment in arms, gambling, fossil fuels and tobacco. Ideally, they should comply with the ten principles of the UN Global Compact (covering areas such as human rights, ethical treatment of workers, protection of the environment and anti-corruption).

5.5. Land

- 5.5.1. We will use our garden and green space to encourage wildlife habitats.
- 5.5.2. We will avoid the use of harmful chemicals (pesticides, herbicides or fertilisers) in the management of our land (excluding paths and driveways).
- 5.5.3. We will actively encourage Church congregation and the wider community to use church land for recreation/contemplation.

5.6. Leadership

- 5.6.1. The Church will appoint or support a group within the Church to organise and promote green issues to the wider congregation.

- 5.6.2. The Church will assign particular responsibility for climate action to a member of the leadership team who will work with the above team and others to ensure the policies in this document are carried out.
- 5.6.3. The Church will carry out an annual survey of the Church congregation on green lifestyle issues in order to understand where we are at, track progress and highlight potential areas for further input/support.

5.7. Worship & Teaching

- 5.7.1. We will ensure that our Church Sunday teaching programme regularly touches on themes of good stewardship, caring for the earth and living ethically.
- 5.7.2. This will be supported by also considering these themes in our worship songs, prayer topics, home groups, children's work, website, notices etc.

5.8. Lifestyle & Transport

- 5.8.1. We will install bike racks at our Church and promote travel to the Church by walking, cycling or other sustainable, low-carbon means.
- 5.8.2. We will promote lift sharing to Church, and encourage Church members to adopt this practice more widely.
- 5.8.3. We will support Church members and attenders in their worship of God by encouraging them to make similar commitments to those above in the areas of buying goods, reducing waste, improving energy efficiency, reducing their carbon footprint, ethical investment, use of green space / gardens etc.

5.9. Wider Engagement

- 5.9.1. We will promote and encourage the principles outlined in this document to our wider community.
- 5.9.2. Our Church will support other organisations locally, nationally and globally that work in support of these principles.
- 5.9.3. We will encourage and support local initiatives to improve our environment (e.g. litter picks etc).
- 5.9.4. We will look to get accreditation from wider organisations working in these areas, e.g. registering as a Fair Trade church, looking at the ECO-church scheme etc.