

Eco-Congregation Ireland

Eco-Congregation is an environmental programme for churches, available to all Christian denominations throughout Britain and Ireland. It developed through a partnership between the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and the environmental awareness charity "Going for Green" (now ENCAMS).

Eco-Congregation Ireland has been developed in co-operation with four churches - the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church, and the Society of Friends (Quakers) - whose ecological representatives are in touch with the many groups operating in Britain and Europe. The programme is available to all parishes with a keen interest in environmental issues and offers resources and support to help them to take practical action in the context of their Christian faith.

A simple environmental audit is provided to help congregations assess what they are already doing and to determine future priorities. They are then encouraged to download the appropriate resource modules which aim to integrate environmental care into different areas of church life. Each church will normally choose three modules on which to concentrate for the year from a list including: Worship and Teaching, Children's and Youth Work, Property and Grounds Management, Finance - Purchasing and Waste, Personal Lifestyles, Working with the Local Community and Thinking Globally.

Eco-Congregation Ireland is an internet initiative and therefore all resources are free and can be downloaded from this website. The modules are designed to enable congregations to become self-sufficient and monitor their own progress. Just register your interest with us and we will send you a starter pack, which includes a special Eco-Congregation Ireland folder and Module One - an environmental audit. Once you have completed this audit, you are on your way to becoming an eco congregation!

What is the aim of Eco-Congregation?

Eco-Congregation aims to encourage churches to celebrate the gift of God's creation, to recognize the interdependence of all creation, and to care for it in their life and mission and through the members' personal lifestyles.

What does Eco-Congregation Ireland offer?

In Ireland, Eco Congregation has been developed in co-operation with four churches - Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland. It offers three key components:

1. Resources - designed to fit into and enhance church life and mission and downloadable from the website.
2. Support - suggesting ways churches might avail of local specialist help such as local authority environment officers and environmental centres.
3. Award - to affirm churches good environmental work and witness this to the local community.

Is Eco-Congregation Ireland just about 'green' issues?

Yes and No! Though the project was designed to help churches tackle environmental issues, participating churches have reported that it also boosts church life and mission, links us to those who suffer most from the degradation of our fragile planet, contributes to community building, stimulates church life and is enjoyable!

How do I get my Church involved?

Undertake an environmental audit of your church to identify its existing good environmental practice and prioritize areas for development. Eco-Congregation Ireland provides a church's environmental check-up ([Module One](#)) with a mainly tick box format.

To download the churches environmental check-up, visit the website. Once you have downloaded your chosen resources, distribute them amongst appropriate people/groups in the church and use the ideas to green your churches life and mission

How much will it cost our church?

Eco-Congregation Ireland resources are available free of charge to churches across Northern Ireland and the Republic. Once they have agreed to begin the programme, each church will be provided with a folder in which they can keep all their environmental material. This folder is also free of charge and can be ordered by contact with one of our church four representatives (see "Contacts page"). After completing the environmental audit ([Module One](#)), the church can then simply download their desired modules from this website.

What resources does Eco-Congregation Ireland offer churches?

The resources have been designed to fit into existing church organisational structures to support and enhance the life of local churches. It is recommended that churches draw on ideas and resources from at least three modules, but they are welcome to download more. To see the available modules, please visit the website

How can I gain an award for my church?

The Award is designed to recognise the environmental achievements of churches and witness these to their local community. To qualify for the Award, which will be independently assessed, churches should undertake projects/initiatives in spiritual, practical and community focused areas. Please retain supportive evidence of activities such as orders of service, magazine articles, posters, photographs of activities, reflections from members for the assessment. Following receipt of the application an assessment visit will be arranged. Successful churches will receive a plaque.

Some useful websites :

www.ecocongregationireland.org

www.ecocongregation.org/scotland

www.molua.org.uk (award winning Eco Congregation church in Belfast)

www.christian-ecology.org.uk (organisation for Christians concerned about the care of the environment – check out Operation Noah)

www.arocha.org (Christian nature conservation organisation)

www.ecen.org (European Christian Environmental Network)

www.christian-aid.org (see campaign for climate change programme)

<http://www.trocaire.ie> (overseas development agency of the R.C. church)

www.ecounesco.ie (Ireland's environmental and youth organisation)

www.globalfootprints.org (educational website which promotes the values and aims of development education and global citizenship)

www.carbonfootprint.com (how to reduce one's impact on the environment)

www.stopclimatechaos.ie (coalition of development, environmental, youth and faith based organisations).

www.climatecare.org (how to off set carbon emissions including air travel)

www.enfo.ie (public environmental and sustainable development information centre)

www.earthcharter.org (a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century)

