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5th June 24

MCI Conference 2024



Over the bank holiday weekend, we went walking and swimming on the North Antrim coast . The sun shone, the views were magnificent and the wildflowers were abundant. In the World Heritage Site that is the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast, the treasures of creation felt safe and cherished. This coming weekend, I head 'up north' again, this time to Methodist Conference to help present the revised Environmental Policy, along with my colleagues from a sub-group of the Council on Social Responsibility. It feels challenging, a bit like swimming in the cold sea at Dunseverick. The aim of the Policy is to encourage congregations to re-commit themselves to Christian Stewardship in the face of climate change and environmental degradation. Conference has a packed agenda and so do those who will be asked to implement the new policy. We know there is goodwill, but the detail of the practical action steps that are needed are unlikely to be met with jubilation. Please pray for the Church's continuing endeavours to care for all creation, to pursue ecological and environmental justice, and to do so in a way that will be visible and inspirational.

Maureen Rowan – Eco Congregation Coordinator

12th June 24

Updated Environmental Policy approved for the Methodist Church in Ireland

At Conference on 8th June, the updated MCI Environmental Policy, developed by a working group of the Council on Social Responsibility, was approved. The Policy sets out the Church's Statement of Faith in respect of God's world and teaching, making clear commitments on care for all creation and pursuit of environmental justice. The updated policy places greater emphasis on practical implementation than heretofore. A central element is the eight minimal measures for which Church Councils are encouraged to draw up action plans. The measures are intended to be realistic and achievable, providing an opportunity for motivated congregation members to ensure that the good environmental practices that they apply at home become visible in church life.

There is no Plan B.

The EU Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that 2023 was the hottest year on record and that all days were one degree warmer than pre-industrial levels.

The UN Environment Programme reports that the planet is experiencing a dangerous decline in nature: one million species are threatened with extinction, soils are turning infertile, and water sources are drying up.



Full details of the Policy and the accompanying Implementation Checklist will be available on the MCI website soon.

26th June 24



Last week the Eco Congregation Notes didn't make it to the Announcements. Suddenly it was Wednesday and the deadline had passed. For several days, people in need of international protection were among the local community, wondering where they could pitch their tents without being attacked. Climate action seemed a long term aspiration. People needed to be fed, and local pubs had to be asked for access to toilet facilities for homeless asylum seekers. Yet everything is connected. We do not know the stories of the newest arrivals to the neighbourhood of our church, but they are unlikely to be what is termed "climate refugees". Most people currently displaced by climate disasters are given refuge in their own or neighbouring countries. The people in tents around us here are more likely to be fleeing here from poverty or some of the 110 armed conflicts going on globally. As our country struggles to support existing numbers of people in need of international protection, it is important to keep in mind that a further 1.2 billion people could be displaced globally by 2050 due to climate change and natural disasters. Agencies such as UNHCR remind us that it is not too late to act, to cut emissions, to minimize further global heating. The insulation work beginning this week at Wesley House represents a 'stepping up' of our efforts for climate action. Reaching 'net zero' carbon will take longer and cost much more, but determination and persistence is vital. Sir David Attenborough tells us: "If we bring emissions down with sufficient vigour, we may yet avoid the tipping points that will make runaway climate change unstoppable."