

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

### A Statement of Principles by the Scottish Episcopal Church

The whole of creation belongs to God. As human beings we are part of that whole and have a responsibility to love and care for what God has entrusted to us; so that we may experience God's delight to gift peace and abundant life. Recognising the interdependence of human beings with the rest of creation means the ethical basis of our living, as individuals and communities, rests on respect rather than control of our living planet. Accordingly, for the pursuit of social and environmental justice, we need responsible and sustainable stewardship as well as a dialogue with modern science and technology. Our quest is a proper faithful response to the potential harm that destructive living brings.

Understanding too, that our primary task, as Church, is the work of mission and serving Christ's Kingdom. This means that we have a responsibility as stewards of creation to live sustainably for the welfare of future generations and the world we are privileged to enjoy, especially in Scotland.

The SEC is continuing to shape its Whole Church Mission & Ministry policy and this now offers the context for a Statement of Principles concerning environmental sustainability and its place within the mission of our Church.

These following Principles require us to accept an obligation to develop and learn about sustainable living.

- Our daily thanksgiving, prayer life, and worship should acknowledge the wealth and beauty of God's creation.
- Sustainability has to be applied to an environment that is constantly shaped by the forces of a dynamic Earth.
- Pressure on sustainability from economic expansion and an increasing human carbon footprint cannot be ignored.
- Exploitation of human and material resources, the global energy demand, and uncontrolled consumerism undermine the basis for sustainable living in Scotland.
- A dialogue with modern science & technology is required to address global sustainability issues.
- Understanding the systems that sustain life as a whole should shape our responses and actions for sustainable living.
- Natural biodiversity of the land mass and its surrounding seas is a precious resource which we lose at our peril.

To ensure environmental sustainability in all SEC activities and minimise the risk of environmental damage, General Synod approved the following Motions which had been proposed by Church in Society Committee:

***Motion 12:*** *That this Synod accept this Statement of Principles.... so as to encourage action by its Dioceses and its Charges recognising the targets set by the Scottish and UK governments [Scottish Government - 42% reduction in emissions by 2020, UK Government 50% reduction by 2025, both governments 80% reduction by 2050]*

***Motion 13:*** *That this Synod encourage each Diocese and Charge to conduct its own environmental sustainability audit using the form recommended by the Church in Society Committee and to identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption to help the SEC become a more environmentally sustainable Church.*

***Motion 14:*** *That this Synod request Diocesan bodies responsible for the care of church property to consider that the recording, monitoring and encouragement of energy use improvement is an integral part of the environmental sustainability audit and that if appropriate this be considered in the context of quinquennial building surveys.*