



## How to start a Local Group

Jesus told his disciples to 'preach the good news to all creation' (Mark 16.15) — and Creation certainly needs good news today. Thankfully, more and more Christians are hearing God's call to care for the Earth, and seeking out others who are beginning to hear it too.

Such groups of ordinary people are vital signs of the kingdom for our times. As we know, they can transform the Church and change the world. Several towns and Churches already have Green Christian Groups.

This briefing paper explains how you can start a local group and plant a sign of hope in your community.

There is no charge for becoming a Green Christian group, though we would expect some of the organisers to be members.

## First steps

Have a chat with our Local Groups Contact. She can arrange for you to be sent some free leaflets and magazines.

Ask people you know who share the same ideas, whether they would be interested in starting a local Green Christian Group in your Church or a group of Churches.

Share your thoughts with your minister, priest or Church leader and suggest writing a short article for the weekly Church news-sheet or bulletin.

Leave leaflets and copies of our magazine *Green Christian* at the back of church.

If you have a suitable opportunity, such as an outreach committee or women's fellowship, tell them about Green Christian and our campaigns particularly LOAF, our campaign for food that is Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded, and our *ecoce//* programme for carbon reduction.

Another idea you could share with them is Eco-congregation, the Churches' environmental programme. This encourages Churches and their members to make appropriate practical and spiritual responses and get an Award to show what the Church has done.

## Involving others

Once you have gathered a small group, and you have decided the sort of things you want to do, you could contact other Christian worship communities in your district, tell them about Green Christian and ask if they would be interested in belonging to a Green Christian group in your district.

Contact secular groups like Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, CPRE and various Wildlife trusts. Some of their members are Christians who might be interested in joining a Green Christian group. They might also be able to help you arrange talks or field trips. Is there a Transition Town movement in your area? The Green Christian *ecoce//* programme could be a useful way to engage local Churches in transition thinking.

## What a Local Group can do

No two local groups of Green Christian are the same, but here are some of the things you might consider.

- talks and visits
- use Green Christian's *ecoce//* programme
- communal meals
- a litter pick at a local beauty spot
- a trip to an organic farm
- tree planting
- promote Green Christian and other Christian environmental campaigns
- help members make their Churches more eco-friendly
- hold a service with a 'green' theme
- make church grounds wildlife-friendly
- hold a stall at local and regional events
- organise a session for writing letters to local MPs, newspapers etc. Make it special by offering Fairtrade tea and home-made cakes to all who participate
- promote discussion on local environmental issues
- give talks to local Church groups
- produce a newsletter — keep everyone informed of what is happening.
- **Green Christian can support you in the following ways**
- supply posters and leaflets.
- provide a speaker
- offer five additional copies of each issue of *Green Christian*
- small projects grant scheme

To find out more contact the **Local Groups Contact**: Write to Green Christian Local Groups, Isobel Murdoch, Hopp House, Back Lane, Old Bolingbroke, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 4EU or phone 01790 763603.

Visit our **website**: <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/> to discover:-

- [Green Christian's monthly prayer guide](#).
- Posters to print out for display in church.
- A list of [Green Christian local groups](#)
- [Green Sermon Notes](#) for the Sunday readings of the Common Lectionary.
- [A list of environmental events in Churches throughout the year](#).
- [Short monthly articles](#) for use in Church magazines.
- Examples of practical action taken by local Churches around