



THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Purpose

This document is intended as an aspirational statement from within Saint Matthews to Saint Matthews' parishioners, starting us on a journey of engaging seriously with our mission and responsibility to others in regard to the climate crisis.

Who are we?

St Matthews is a theologically progressive Anglican inner-city church in *Tāmaki Makaurau* Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand and close neighbours to *Te Tāpui Atawhai* (the Auckland City Mission). We acknowledge *Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei* as *mana whenua*.

St Matthews has for over 150 years spoken out publicly against injustice, standing with those disenfranchised and joining our voices to protest against issues that significantly impact the moral and ethical good of our society.

What is the call of our time?

There is a compelling and urgent call to act to preserve our planet, a call to participation and possibility. As people of faith we live both with hope for the future and the reality of humanity's shortcomings.

Our response to climate change presents the greatest moral, theological and spiritual challenge in human history to date. It is in our best interest, and in the interest of generations that follow, to join with efforts to slow down this rise in atmospheric, oceanic and land surface temperature. We need to live and act differently so that all can live well.

We recognise that the climate crisis is a result of human civilisation transgressing planetary boundaries and creating ecological overshoot; and that it cannot be addressed while preserving unconstrained economic growth.

We believe, as inheritors and inhabitants of this planet, that children are important stakeholders, and their voices must be heard. We applaud the responses of youth leaders and their challenge to us all. We need to ask ourselves, "Are we being good ancestors to the generations of the future?"

There is a climate crisis that is a direct result of human activity. The potential for mitigation also resides within human capacity. We must choose to change and act to mitigate this crisis. If not, we participate in the destruction of this planet. As a parish we commit to act collectively and individually in the expectation that it is possible to turn the tide.

Our decisions

- Decide to do somethingdo something/act
- Decide there are alternatives and expect them
- Expect and invest in innovation and new initiatives
- Decide to accept some personal inconvenience for the collective good
- Decide to expect change, to make it our choice
- Decide to reframe our theology to help us think differently about our place on Earth and in the world

Act collectively

- **Education and communication:** Provide scientific and theological education to ourselves and others.
- Reframe our theology in ways that relocate humans within planet Earth and in relationship to our understanding of God
- Present concerns and ideas on the digital platform for discussion.
- Encourage and work with the Diocesan 'Sustainability Fieldworker'
- Encourage and support each other in working individually in our homes and places of work and recreation and with our families and friends.
- Participate in the 'Eco-Church NZ' activities of the Anglican Auckland Diocese
- Influence those who are undecided about how they can respond to climate change.
- Be alert to disinformation and corporate 'greenwash'.
- **Advocacy and voting:** Advocate with central government for policies that lower emissions and enable adaptation to a changed climate
- Advocate with local government for a low emission, low-cost public transport system
- **Investing:** Consider the human and environmental impact of church investments.
- **Energy use:** Reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and transition to use of renewable energy sources.
- Decarbonise church operational activities.

Act individually

- **Education and communication:** learn about the issue and how to talk about it with family, friends, and neighbours.
- Reframe our theology in ways that relocate humans within planet Earth and in relationship to our understanding of God
- **Energy use:** consider how to cut down individual energy usage.
- **Waste:** consider consuming less and reducing our waste streams
- **Personal transport:** consider how to reduce fossil fuel transportation, use public transport and active transport and seek alternatives.
- **Diet:** consider reducing meat intake and converting to a locally sourced seasonal plant-based diet.
- **Flying:** be mindful of the carbon emissions generated by flying and join carbon offsetting schemes when flying is necessary.

Response to the climate crisis, November 2021

- **Investing:** make personal investments (including pension schemes) that care for people and the Earth.
- **Advocacy and voting:** consider supporting taxation and welfare regimens to support individuals and families with least wealth and fewest resources who are most impacted by climate change
- **Giving:** support aid to our Pacific Island neighbours who are suffering the impact of extreme weather events and rising sea levels
- Carbon sequestration: consider planting native trees where appropriate
- Avoid “virtue signalling” (publically supporting the cause but doing nothing)

Some scientific realities

The recent (August 2021) United Nations IPCC Assessment Report AR6, after reviewing extensive scientific evidence, concludes that there is no hope of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels if we do not commit to effective action now. National commitments made at COP26 in November 2021 are entirely inadequate to meet this call. Therefore, action by civil society is both essential and urgent.

Already in our closest geographic region the disastrous consequences of a near 1.2 degree rise above pre-industrial levels is threatening the viability of more and more low-lying Pacific Island nations.

All of us will be affected by changes in the global climate. Those with least wealth and fewest resources will be affected first and worst with impacts on:

- housing
- food and water security
- supply chains for food, clothing, and shelter
- conflict and the potential for mass migration
- reduced support by those with more disposable income who would otherwise support them.

Accepting the Challenge

Wisdom, expressed in faith traditions and cultural practices such as the Māori practice of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) inform a call to action and mutual support. We can joyfully accept this challenge for we know the future of our planet and its descendants is at stake.

Resources

AR6 Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) <https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/>

Eco-church NZ <https://www.ecochurch.org.nz/>

Pacific voices <https://www.manamoana.co.nz/pacificvoices/>

Greenfaith <https://greenfaith.org/>

Jim Antal, 2018. Climate Church, Climate world. Rowman and Little

Matthew Fox et al, 2018. Order of the Sacred Earth. Monkfish

Sallie McFague, 2008. A New Climate for Theology: God, the World and Global Warming. Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

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Michael Mann, 2021. *New Climate War: The fight to take back our planet*. Public Affairs.

Elizabeth Alison, Toward a Feminist Care Ethic for Climate Change: *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* Vol. 33, No. 2. October 2017

Seniors Climate Action Network (Facebook)

David Attenborough videos

Al Gore, 2021. *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*

Writing Group

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