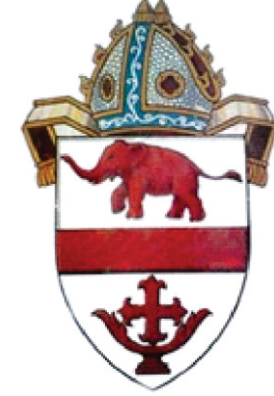


Diocese of Kurunagala
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குருநாகல் மறைமாவட்டம்



Environment Policy
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சுற்றுச்சூழல் கொள்கை

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Church of Ceylon

Acknowledgements:

Compilation: Ven.George Melder, Dr.Lakmini Illangasinghe,
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Anthonythasan, Ms.Andrea John, Rev. Rasika Abeysinghe and
members of the Diocesan Environment Committee.

Translation: Mrs. Lakdini Panditharatne, Mr. Chandra Kumar

Annex 2 - Duties of church groups

| | |
|---|---|
| Church | <p>First week of June as a special service focusing on God's Creation</p> <p>Organize active environment committees in every church including youth and children.</p> <p>Organize all activities in an eco friendly environment using biodegradable products. eg. No Polythene and plastics</p> <p>Mothers' Unions, women's organizations, self employment projects such as small industries eg. Cloth bags, paper bags, coir industry, handloom industry, Rattan and other products, earthen ware, Jute etc.</p> <p>Avoid polythene decoration. Avoid polythene.</p> <p>Use the mature leaf for palm crosses on palm sunday. Use the mature leaf.</p> <p>For decoration as it will reduce the yield of nuts.</p> <p>friendly method we need in buildings.</p> <p>Think of changing the existing electricity to solar power.*</p> <p>* Initiate in high consumption churches initially with others to follow soon after. ADB loan may be possible.</p> |
| Vicarage, | Encourage clean, pleasant vicarages with home gardens. Utilize lands to provide income to the householder. Eg. Fruit trees, Coconut and spice gardens, vegetable garden, flower gardens etc. |
| Priests, Deacons, | Educate the Congregations to be more responsible in environment friendly ways. Develop their spirituality to be responsible stewards of God's Creation |
| Church groups: Church environment committee Sunday School, Youth Fellowship Womens and Mens Fellowships, Other groups | <p>Protect and nurture your church environment.</p> <p>Be responsible parishioners, thinking positively in environment friendly ways.</p> <p>Make the area pleasant with flowers, trees and income generating plants as much as possible.</p> <p>Use a special day for planting a tree in the church garden, name it for future references.</p> |

Resolution : Adoption of the Environment Policy of the Diocese of Kurunagala.

Where as

- the Environment Committee of the Diocese of Kurunagala having drafted and prepared a Diocesan Policy on the Environment;
- Having discussed and approved at two deanery level meetings in Kurunegala, and Anuradhapura, and due to postponement of the Kandy Deanery meeting during the lockdown in May 2021, the policy document was sent by email to all clergy and obtained approval.;
- Having approved by the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Kurunagala;

We the Representatives of the Diocesan Council of Kurunagala resolve that the Environment Policy of the Diocese of Kurunagala be adopted at the Annual Sessions of the Diocesan Council of Kurunagala.

D. N. Karunaratne

Proposer : D.N. Karunaratne/Secy, Diocesan Environment Committee

S. Yatawara

Seconded : S. Yatawara / Council Member

Message by the Bishop of Kurunagala and Presiding Bishop, Church of Ceylon

"Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them." Psalm 89: 5,11

Dear Sisters and Brothers Stewards of God's Good Creation,

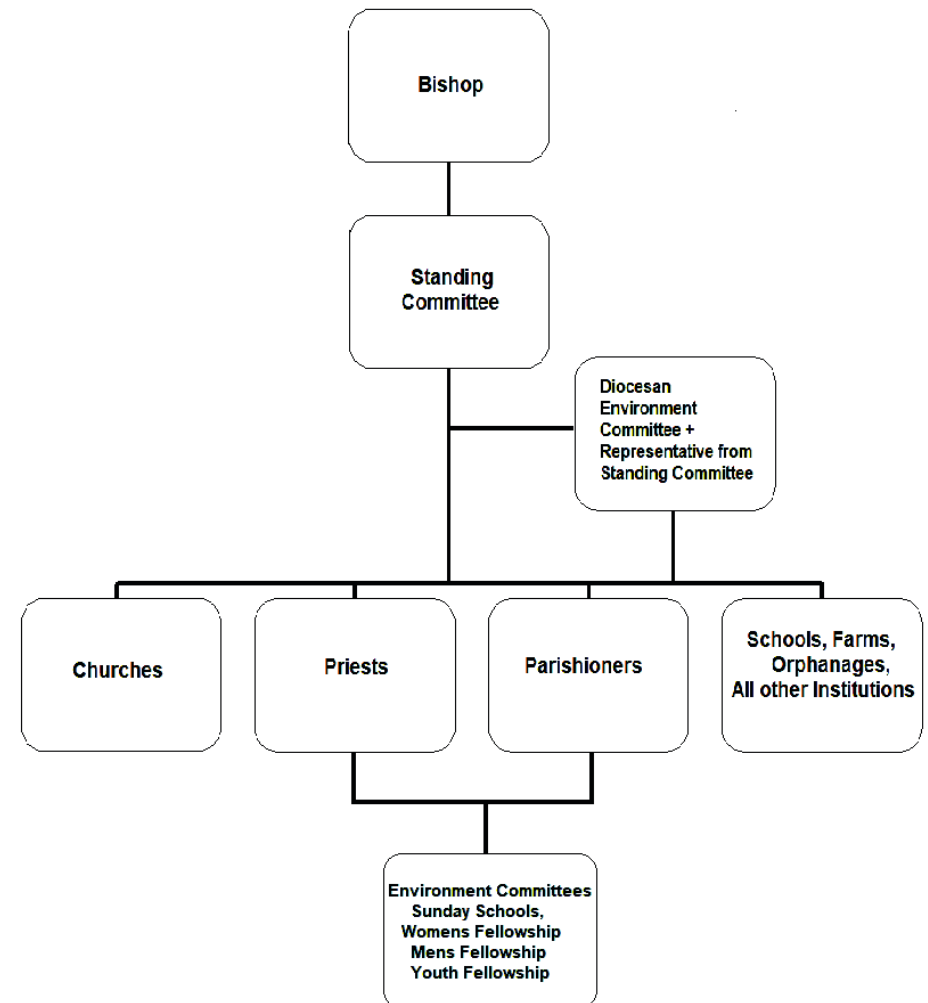
We have heard of the statement 'the environment does not need us, but we need the environment'. When we see and hear of the recent human-made disasters that threaten the environment and also when we experience its consequences, more than ever this statement becomes relevant to us all.

Human beings, who according to our faith, were put in charge of caring for this wonderful environment have forgotten their roles and have instead; chased after development and exploitation of resources. This is one truth we cannot forget, put on hold or discard. As a Church we must realize that we have sinned, from nations to individuals.

We must act now in realizing this role of stewardship and acting for the preservation and sustainability of God's creation. Realizing the fifth mark of mission of the Anglican Communion 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth' and we as a Diocese which was founded in the splendence of nature, commit ourselves, our parishes and our policies towards this intention.

With the dedication of the Environment Committee of the Diocese, we now present to you the 'Environment Policy' of the Diocese, for

Annex 1- Administrative Officers and stake holders



-
- IV. Avoid disturbing the surroundings with noise pollution
 - V. Conduct awareness programmes for the church sextons/ helpers/ parishioners, and church environment committees on the implementation of the policies.

Strategy 5d: Conduct craft and home gardening programmes for the parishioners.

Challenges

- Teach crafts as self employment projects
- Make home gardening into an income generating process
- Seeds belong to the earth, therefore plant or throw them to soil.

Initiatives

- I. Use Eco friendly material in construction projects- eg. Bricks not cement blocks.
- II. Employ natural fibers in craft projects.- use of paper, cane, wood, jute, coir etc.
- III. Train children to appreciate helping out in home gardening projects.
- IV. Use earthenware pots for cooking, clay filters for drinking water etc.
- V. Make our Churches and homes active Eco friendly institutions.

circulation, reflection, implementation and furtherance of the ministry of caring for God's good creation.

This policy has been compiled with reviews, discussed at deanery levels, proposed at the Diocesan Council held on 30th October 2021 and was unanimously accepted, and We hereby give consent and authorize it as our commitment towards stewardship and as a guideline towards all our mission work within the Diocese.

May the peace of God our Creator, Sustainer and Sanctifier direct and empower us, as we become God's instruments of healing and restoration of the integrity of Creation.

Rt Revd Keerthisiri Fernando
Diocese of Kurunagala
Feast of St Andrew 2021

Message from the Archdeacon

“O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches”. Psalm 104:24

A Christian is the ultimate result of God's creation. The bible teaches us that God created us in his image to be the caretakers and guardians of his magnificent works. From the very beginning of creation, we have seen that man holds a great responsibility and respect for the creation, and he understands it correctly. Therefore, we need to delve deeper into whether the responsibility we have received for creation is only as a guardian or are we responsible for improving and conserving the environment.

Now more than ever, preserving God's creation which we are entrusted with, requires much concern and urgency. The media constantly reminds us of the rise in sea level due to melting glaciers, global warming, and the destruction of the planets' fauna and flora. The mission of Archbishop Bartholomew I the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church and Pope Francis, the head of the Roman Catholic Church who spoke out strongly in this regard, is to be commended immensely. (Launch of the Universal Declaration of the Environment). Universal Anglican voice recognizes the exploitation and promotion of the environment as one of the five key areas in its mission. This need was recognized at the 2010 Lambert Conference and we have been invited to fulfill our commitment and new vision for the environment as a prime duty.

The Bishopric of the Church of Ceylon, Kurunegala has been active in contributing to an eco-friendly mission for over 70 years, and it is a great achievement to be able to further consolidate and systematically make it a policy in 2021. In this sense, we are far ahead of the dioceses in many of the richest countries in the world, and it is a great achievement that from the grass root level up to the Bishops contributed in the study, discussion and compilation of this policy.

Challenges

- Educate the clergy on the importance of living in harmony with the environment
- Teach children in school, Sunday school to appreciate the environment.
- Educate children to always use environment friendly material.
Eg. Lunch boxes instead of lunch wrapped in polythene sheet.
- Avoid plastic products

Initiatives

- I. Conduct workshops and awareness programmes on environment involving if possible, government officers (Grama Sevaka, Economic Development Officers, school teachers, Agriculture or Forest Dept. officials)
- II. Organize nature excursions to appreciate the beauty of nature
- III. Assign tasks that increase student involvement in environmental projects like recycling and waste management at home.
- IV. Increase spirituality through the wonder of God's creation.

Strategy 5c: Taking care of the living environment at church, vicarages, Schools and other Institutions

Challenges

- Conduct Home gardening projects
- Maintain the cleanliness, beauty and pleasantness in the living surroundings
- Develop a state of belonging to the living quarters during the service tenure.

Initiatives

- I. Grow produce that can be used by the grower. eg, fruit trees and vegetables
- II. Beautify the home garden with flowering plants.
- III. Make use of the time spent in the quarters/vicarage to inculcate a feeling of home.

-
- IV. Avoid clearing forest areas for human occupation. Have areas earmarked for commercial purposes
 - V. Seeds are created to be planted. Do not throw them away, but plant them in the soil.

Policy Objective 5 - Conduct Environment Appreciation Programmes

Strategy 5a: Celebrate Environment day with praise and thanksgiving in worship.

Challenges

- Thanking and Praising God for the beauty of our country.
- Educate all parishioners about benefits of a healthy environment.
- Appreciate the blessings of God, given free to us every day, sunlight, clean air, fresh water etc. in practical programmes.
eg : nature excursions, field programmes.
- Involve children and young people in outside activities more.
eg. Youth Fellowships

Initiatives

- I. Celebrate Environment Sunday in all churches during the 1st week of June.
- II. Incorporate a few sentences on environment in intercessory prayers every Sunday.
- III. Incorporate 5 minutes of Sunday school time to discuss the virtues of creation.
- IV. Plant a tree commemorating special days of the church, the institution or at home (Baptism, confirmation, or birthday) and teach children to care for their special plant.

Strategy 5b: Implement Environment education programmes at Sunday schools and Schools

At the 65th Diocesan Council held on the 30th October 2021, the policy was adopted by a unanimous vote. We express our heartfelt gratitude to His Eminence Bishop Keerthisiri Fernando, and to all the members of the Environment Committee for their support in building such a profound Charter. Covering every district of the diocese, various programs were conducted in a team spirit to promote environment friendly use of church grounds and other businesses resulting in the creation of a specific environment policy. This has led us to a pragmatic approach to the practical study of whether our environment can be regulated simply by having a policy, which therefore, has guided us to a practical program that is adaptable to the modern world. We look forward to the next steps in establishing Provincial Environmental Committees for church landscaping and income generating development. This action is a small attempt to fulfill the Holy Word on the divine glory of the environment and will enable all institutions in our diocese to implement this as well as motivate the modern generation to protect and preserve the environment.

The challenge for us today is to correctly define the responsibility of "stewardship" and to move away from the traditional path and move towards environmentally friendly development processes.

Ven. Rev. George Melder
Archdeacon
Diocese of Kurunagala.

Environment Policy Document

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Policy Objective 4

Policy Objective - Preserve the ecosystem, biodiversity and species variation

Strategy 4a: Strategies to minimize human animal conflicts.

Challenges

- Avoid attracting animals to villages
- Stop poaching
- Avoid encroaching the space of the animals and birds

Initiatives

- I. Organize community programmes to educate the inhabitants on systematic proper waste management to avoid attracting animals
- II. Teach the value of wild animals and why they need to be protected.

Strategy 4b: Avoid destroying the natural habitats and ensure and preserve space for animals and plant life.

Challenges

- Forests are protected reserves
- Avoid cutting trees in the natural habitat for economical purposes
- Ecosystems must be maintained for biodiversity
- Trees are homes for birds and animals
- Seeds belong to the earth

Initiatives

- I. Do not cut trees. Preserve and Nurture them while pruning at proper season
- II. Preserve the areas which are frequented by birds and animals
- III. Preserve plants that are rare and threatened by extinction.

Initiatives

- I. Plant vegetation such as legumes, to fertilize the soil.
- II. Use compostable materials like leaves and household waste to make compost.
- III. Use animal waste such as cow dung or chicken waste to enrich the soil.
- IV. Make use of fertile soil, only for planting and not for construction
- V. Avoid waste created by excess buying of food and cooking in excess.

Strategy 3c: Preserve the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Challenges

- Prevent littering and spoiling the environment
- Stop encroachment of forests
- Leave the natural environment untouched. Think and act, leaving nature for animals and birds.
- Protect mother plant and avoid genetic engineering and modifications

Initiatives

- I. Organize recycling programmes. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.
- II. Provide bins for garbage collection and recyclables.
- III. Plant flowering trees and shrubs which attract butterflies, bees and birds.
- IV. Avoid using chemical sprays for boosting flowers, which destroys insects that help pollination.
- V. Do not use genetically modified plants or seeds, that destroy the inherent natural plants and seeds.

Section A

Executive Summary

**Preamble, Policy Development, Policy Implementation,
Policy Objectives and Strategies.**

i) Preamble

Environmental conservation and environmental awareness is in line with appreciation and becoming stewards of God's Creation. From Genesis, the wonder of the environment and the need for communal harmony was evident up to the New Testament. To educate and enable the Christian community to follow a path of protection and conservation and avoid destruction of the natural processes, an Environmental Policy is seen as a dire need of the times.

ii) Policy Development

The Environment Committee of the Diocese of Kurunagala has been working on educating the church communities for over a period of 20 years. With the expertise of the members of the committee, an environment policy for the Diocese was formulated. The areas of the policy focuses on the need for awareness of environmental issues, the involvement of the entire church community in environment friendly activities and the guidelines required for implementation of the policy.

iii) Policy Implementation

The policy will form the basis for the implementation of the objectives and strategies in the areas related to the environment. Implementation will be under the purview of the Bishop of Kurunagala through the Standing committee and the Diocesan Environment Committee. The responsibilities of the churches, priests, lay workers and parishioners will be coordinated and monitored by the Standing Committee to ensure successful implementation of the strategies to achieve policy objectives. The individuals/organizations/groups responsible for implementation of the strategies are given in Annex 1.

iv) Policy Objectives and Strategies.

Initiatives

- I. Dispose waste water into soakage pits or drains and not into fresh water sources.
- II. Chemical waste and solid waste should not be emptied to clean water sources like streams and rivers.
- III. Recycle plastic bottles without throwing them near water sources (lakes, beach, rivers) etc.

Policy Objective 3 Nurture the earth and the soil for maximum yield

Strategy 3a: Proper landscape management and drainage of soil and wetlands.

Challenges

- Avoid soil erosion
- Maintain soil stability
- Leave fertile soil for agriculture
- Preserve wetlands for rain water absorption.

Initiatives

- I. Grow suitable trees to prevent soil instability
- II. Maintain drains for water flow on slopes to avoid soil erosion
- III. Do not fill wetlands for agriculture or construction to prevent floods

Strategy 3b: Protect and preserve the Agricultural land and improve fertility of soil by natural processes and waste management.

Challenges

- Good land management and sound agricultural practices.
- Grow soil enriching plants.
- Use biodegradable material to improve soil nutrition
- Management of solid waste and recycling non degradable materials

Initiatives

- I. Avoid use of chemical sprays
- II. *Stop smoke producing processes like burning waste and setting forests on fire.
- III. Consciously reduce vehicle emissions by walking or cycling if you live nearby or sharing a vehicle with another parishioner in your area.
- IV. Convert general electricity to Solar Power in churches, vicarages, schools and other institutions

Policy Objective 2 Provide clean water in abundant supply.

Strategy 2a: Conservation of water resources and frugal use of water.

Challenges

- Identify catchment areas of reservoirs and waterways
- Use less water where possible
- Avoid water wastage as every drop is precious.

Initiatives

- I. Growing trees in catchment areas to ensure the water sources do not dry out.
- II. Plant trees along the banks of rivers and streams.
- III. Use water sparingly for bathing, washing clothes and cars, watering the garden etc. minimizing wastage.
- IV. Check for leaking taps and overflowing water tanks and fix them.
- V. Reuse of waste water within the household

Strategy 2b: Awareness to minimize and prevent water pollution.

Challenges

- Proper disposal of waste water and management of liquid waste
 - Avoid dumping of chemicals and garbage into waterways.
-

Policy Objective 1 - Ensure the purity of the atmosphere for the benefit of all citizens

Strategies: (a) Growing trees in strategic areas for air purification.
(b) Controlling harmful emissions to the environment and developing and converting to Solar Power Electricity.

Policy Objective 2 - Provide clean water in abundant supply.

Strategies: (a) Conservation of water resources and frugal use of water.
(b) Awareness to minimize and prevent water pollution.

Policy Objective 3 - Nurture the earth and the soil for maximum yield

Strategies: (a) Proper landscape management and drainage of soil and wetlands.
(b) Protect and preserve the Agricultural land and improve fertility of soil by natural processes and waste management.
(c) Preserve the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Policy Objective 4 - Preserve the ecosystem, biodiversity and species variation

Strategies: (a) Strategies to minimize human animal conflicts.
(b) Avoid destroying the natural habitats and ensure and preserve space for animals and plant life.

Policy Objective 5 - Conduct Environment Appreciation Programmes

Strategies: (a) Celebrate Environment day with praise and thanksgiving in worship
(b) Implement environment education programmes at Sunday schools and schools.
(c) Taking care of the living environment at church, vicarages, schools and other Institutions
(d) Conduct craft and gardening programmes for the parishioners.

Section B

Diocesan Environment Policy

Objectives, Strategies, Challenges and Initiatives

Policy Objective 1 Ensure the purity of the atmosphere for the benefit of all citizens

Strategy 1a Growing trees in strategic areas for air purification.

Challenges

- Selecting trees suitable for the terrain
- Mitigating deforestation
- Ensuring the health of the trees
- Protect and nurture the existing Plants and Trees in the natural environment

Initiatives

- I. Preserve, protect and nurture the existing fully grown trees
- II. Plant type of tree/shrub to suit the terrain (mountainous slopes, flat land) and the climatic condition (eg. Wet zone, dry zone etc.)
- III. Care for the health of the plants by pruning during the rainy season and fertilizing at proper times with organic fertilizer.
- IV. Replant/ replace trees that need to be cut down. Grow replacement trees up to 5ft in height before cutting the tree.
- V. Authority and advice to be obtained from the Environment Committee before cutting down grown trees in diocesan properties. Selling of diocesan property to be only on approval by the standing committee.

Strategy 1b Controlling harmful emissions to the environment and developing and converting to Solar Power Electricity.

Challenges

- Controlling emission of toxic gases and prevent burning of waste that emit harmful gases
- Minimizing carbon dioxide production
- Generating electricity through coal power is harmful to the environment