



Update EcoGroup at St. Ursula's

Summary of the Open Forum & Next Steps to Make St. Ursula's a Leader in Caring for Creation

Summary Open Forum 19.1.2025

After the Service the members of the EcoGroup introduced themselves and the initiative. The members are Arno Ratzinger, Marielouise Slettenhaar-Ket, Pieter Perrett, Emmanuel Lehmann, Sue Higson, Helan Marshall, David Marshall, Kathryn Jones (with Alex Hibberts joining us for a while). It was emphasised that St Ursula's has already made significant progress in caring for the environment, e.g. renovations to the building and use of church land, which have led to the Bronze EcoChurch Award. The new group wants to encourage us to build upon that progress, and to strive to achieve the Silver Award. It was also emphasised that the EcoGroup wants to lead with positivity and action rather than judgement and theoretical discussions.

Survey Results & Focus Areas

At the end of the Forum people could share their perspectives via a Mentimeter survey. Almost 50 people participated. The main results are:

- Sustainability and caring for creation is not foreign to the members of the church: +60% say that they have advanced awareness & knowledge of sustainability and that they have taken action already
- Sustainable finance, local projects in Bern, and reducing emissions related to mobility and food are the most demanded areas for improvement and learning

These topics are well aligned with the requirements for the [Silver EcoChurch Award](#). For the award we need to improve in the Lifestyle category (practising and inspiring eco-friendly consumption and behaviours, e.g. avoiding single use plastics) and in the Community and Global category (advocating together with local associations, e.g. organising a public clean up event).

Next Steps

Based on the preferences for engagement we have decided to take the following steps before the summer:

1. We are launching an email newsletter. Roughly once a month you will find practical recommendations and links to interesting resources. Please sign up [here](#). The first edition will come out at the beginning of Lent.
2. We are organising our first global event for Earth Hour on Saturday, March 22nd, 8:30-9:30PM. Join us, and people in cities all around the world, as we turn the lights off for an hour. Use this time for prayer and spiritual reflection. More details will follow.
3. After Church on Sunday, May 25th we will host a session on 'financing green' and 'greening finance'. Find out how you can have a positive impact on your wallet and the planet by choosing the right bank, pension fund or investment opportunity.