**Whitley Methodist Church**

**Top Lane, Whitley**

Eco Church is A Rocha UK’s award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God’s earth, in different areas of our life and work.

The areas covered by award scheme are:-

**1. Worship and teaching. 2. Management of church buildings. 3. Management of church land. 4. Community and global engagement. 5. Lifestyle.**

A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world, both as a response to the biblical mandate to care for the earth, and as a demonstration of the Christian hope for God’s world.

Churches have a huge part to play in caring for the earth - loving God and all he has made should impact everything in our church lives. That is why A Rocha UK developed Eco Church, the award scheme for churches in England and Wales.

Eco Church has been developed as the successor to Eco-Congregation for churches in England and Wales (Eco-Congregation continues to operate in Scotland and Ireland), and is run by A Rocha UK in partnership with Christian Aid, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and Tearfund. Their vision is for the scheme to create a network of churches as local centres of care in the community for a better environmental future.

This vision was endorsed by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams who, speaking at the launch of Eco Church at St Paul’s Cathedral in January 2016,(when they received the first Church Bronze Award), welcomed the new scheme as part of a ‘tectonic shift’ in Christian thinking through which environmental concerns will ‘embed more deeply’ in church culture.

They were followed, very soon afterwards, by Lyme Regis Baptist Church, York Minster, and Collier Row Methodist Church in Romford, all of whom also gained Bronze Awards. The Award scheme begins with Bronze progressingto Silver and Gold.

Since its beginnings in 2001, A Rocha UK has been practically involved in nature conservation. Their first initiative was the transformation of a derelict and degraded plot of land in the London Borough of Hillingdon into Minet Country Park. Following on from the success of Minet, A Rocha UK is now engaged in many another urban conservation initiatives.

Here at Whitley Methodist Church we felt that we too have a part to play, therefore we applied under the 5 headings above. We were thrilled to find that we have qualified for the Bronze Award, with the help of Eco Church and A Rocha UK we are now working towards the Silver Award.

Keep Safe

Gill Fletcher

Church Secretary

08/20