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Faithful Advocates:
Faith communities and environmental activism in Scotland

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PhD Politics
The University of Edinburgh
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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work. I confirm that I designed and carried out all aspects of this thesis myself. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree or other professional qualification.

Signed:

Alice Hague
31 July 2017

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List of acronyms

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CCF	Climate Challenge Fund, a Scottish Government grant programme to cut carbon emissions via community-led projects
CofS	Church of Scotland
CO_2e	Carbon dioxide equivalents, a unit for measuring carbon footprints.
COP15	Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen, December 2009.
COP21	Twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris, December 2015.
CSH	Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, Edinburgh
CST	Catholic Social Teaching
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK)
ECS	Eco-Congregation Scotland
FBO	Faith-based organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
kW	Kilowatt, a unit of electrical power
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (Bible)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SCIAF	Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
URC	United Reformed Church
US/USA	United States of America

WCC	Wardie Climate Champions, an environmental project at Wardie Parish Church.
WPC	Wardie Parish Church, Edinburgh
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Abstract

This thesis investigates local-level environmental activism in faith communities, and aims to understand what explains environmental advocacy by Christian faith communities. It asks why Christian communities are participating in environmental advocacy, and identifies the motivations and practices behind their engagement. Faith-based organisations and faith communities are increasingly active in environmental advocacy, both through high-level interventions, and local-level action. While high-level engagement often attracts widespread attention, as in the case of the Pope's 2015 environmentally-focused encyclical, the engagement of locally-grounded faith communities is often overlooked, both in academia and practice.

This thesis aims to fill that void by exploring faith-based environmentalism from the perspective of the local faith community. It takes an ethnographic approach, based on twelve months of participant observation in three Christian congregations in Edinburgh engaged in environmental action. Building on earlier studies of religion and ecology and religious environmentalism, this thesis argues that environmental engagement is explained by theological motivations, and also by practical factors expressed and experienced in the social context of the local faith community. Theologically, faith communities base their environmental engagement within a broad framework of justice, understanding the natural environment as God's creation, and aligning a Christian responsibility to 'care for creation' with recognition of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on those least equipped to respond. Yet theology alone cannot explain this advocacy. Engagement is motivated by a sense of community and, more pragmatically, is also explained by everyday issues that reflect the reality of life in a faith community. It is in the social context of the faith community that these factors are brought together. Above all, the research findings emphasise the importance of community, understood both as people and place, as a key underlying factor explaining engagement.

By highlighting the central role of community in environmental advocacy, this thesis offers insight into religious environmentalism that prioritises the everyday, 'lived' experience of religion, and articulates the importance of the social context in which religion is practiced for understanding engagement.

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This thesis is dedicated to Darlene Kelley, and Kirsty Bailey. Two wonderful women who loved to learn, and who brought me much joy. Miss you, my friends.

Preface

It is a wet and windy Saturday morning in late November 2015, and I am standing on the Meadows, a popular area of public parkland in the centre of Edinburgh, preparing for Edinburgh's Climate March. The march is part of the Global Climate March being held around the world to mark the start of the crucial UN climate change negotiations in Paris. I am with Sam, a member of Saughtonhall Church, whom I have come to know over the past year through my research into churches and environmental advocacy. We have just come from an ecumenical service organised by Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS) ahead of the march, and are looking around for people we might know. Attendance at the ECS-led service had taken everyone by surprise: Sam and I, and various other "younger" people known to the organisers, were asked to give up our seats to create space for participants who continued to arrive even after the service began. Extra copies of the service sheet and songs had been hurriedly printed in the few minutes before the service began, and those of us standing at the back of the building still found ourselves looking over others' shoulders to try to follow the words. Alastair McIntosh, activist, speaker, Quaker, and theologian, spoke about Jesus calming the storm and Peter stepping out of the boat.[1] He talked about the heaviness that people might be bringing to the march, and the sense that what people do might feel like so little in light of the challenges of climate change. McIntosh asked an interesting question: what differentiates faith groups from the secular forces that will also be marching today? Is the aim simply to demonstrate alongside *Friends of the Earth* and *Greenpeace* and others? McIntosh indicated something more: the work of people of faith is to stand alongside such groups, as he said, not in order to replicate, but to bring in a deeper understanding so that, come what may, our humanity may be deepened. McIntosh referred back to Peter stepping out of boat: in the biblical story, Peter doubts and questions his action in stepping out, before Jesus responds and says 'fear not'. McIntosh concluded: as we face climate change we also have to 'fear not.' Because God is with us. That is the discipline that we must carry forward.

Back on the Meadows, Sam is holding a bright yellow sign she was given as she left the worship service. On it, the words "Love mercy, do justice, walk humbly"; an

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[1] Matthew 8: 23-27

excerpt from Micah 6:8.[2] She happily poses for a photograph, and continues to look for an Eco-Congregation Scotland banner, keen to meet and march with others who are also gathering because of the connection between their Christian faith and their understanding of the need to take action on climate change. The rain continues to fall heavily. Just ten minutes before the march is due to start, I look around and wonder whether the weather might be putting people off attending. We nervously comment that the crowd does not seem very large. Sam mentions in passing that she has never been on a political march of any kind before. Beside her, a small group of retired women are gathering, wrapped in waterproof gear suitable for a hiking expedition in the Scottish mountains. I notice that gradually, from all sides, people start to arrive. I see flags – Eco-Congregation Scotland, Tear Fund, the Scottish Green Party, the Scottish Labour Party. I notice SCIAF (the Scottish Catholic aid organisation) has a banner; someone else is carrying an empty tent with "climate refugees" written on it, while another has a self-made placard stating "I've never seen a polar bear: but I'd like to." One person is dressed as a panda; another is carrying colourful balloons. I begin to notice familiar faces, from the congregations with which I have interacted over the course of my fieldwork, and ECS regional network meetings. The Head of Policy for WWF Scotland walks past me with his family, and I recognise a staff member from Friends of the Earth as well. A PhD colleague from the university stops to say hello. We find the ECS banner, and head over to greet people. I recognise a small group from Wardie Parish Church, one of the churches in this study. One member comments to me that the last time she was on a march was for *Make Poverty History* in 2005. Four people from the Church of the Sacred Heart have also joined us by now, holding home-made placards stating "Justice and Peace: Save our Earth" and "Love our Planet: Sacred Heart Green Group". The crowd continues to grow. I notice a group nearby arriving by bicycle: one of them is carrying a handwritten sign "Scottish Humanist Society."

Suddenly the sound of bagpipes approaches, and the arrival of a group of pipers sends out a clear signal that the march is about to begin. The driving rain continues to fall, but the atmosphere is good, the crowd is large and diverse, and an estimated five thousand people begin their march towards the city centre. As we set off, we reflect that

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[2] Micah 6:8 reads: "And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

we are marching in partnership with hundreds of thousands of people all over the world on a Global Climate March, calling for international action on climate change.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Global Climate March in November 2015 was organised by activists across the world on the opening weekend of the crucial UN Climate Change negotiations in Paris. Six years on from the disappointing outcome at the Copenhagen climate summit, hopes and pressure were high that the meeting at Paris might deliver meaningful international agreement and action to reduce carbon emissions, and set the world on a better course to addressing climate change. The frustrations of civil society actors about their lack of influence at Copenhagen (Fisher, 2010) resulted in a range of reactions. This included the refocusing of efforts by global NGOs such as *Greenpeace*, and an awakening of activism by smaller civil society organisations concerned about the increasingly evident effects of climate change on a wide range of social and economic issues. Faith-based actors were part of this groundswell of concern (Jacobs, 2016: 318-19). One of the faith-based civil-society actors present at the Paris negotiations was a small group of five representatives of Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS), a network of Christian churches across Scotland engaging in environmental action in their congregations. In the months leading up to the Paris negotiations, ECS developed a baton relay, sending a wooden baton made from recycled church furniture and bearing the message "Churches in Scotland demand a deal in Paris!" around churches across Scotland. The baton was presented to the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, at the Scottish Parliament prior to the climate negotiations, and then made its way to Paris (by train) where it featured in an interfaith event attended by Christina Figueres, then Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC,[3] and other delegates to the negotiations.

Seven months earlier, in April 2015, I had been present at the ECS annual meeting in Falkirk, where the Scottish Environment Minister Aileen McLeod launched the baton on its relay around churches in Scotland as "a message of hope" about climate change. In May 2015, I sat in a church service in a small church in Edinburgh, as the minister shared reflections about journeys and pilgrimages. He then introduced the same baton to the congregation, explaining that it was on a pilgrimage across Scotland that would end at the climate negotiations in Paris in December. The baton was passed

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[3] The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the full title of the UN climate change process.

round the congregation, and people were encouraged to hold it and pray for the climate negotiations. The sermon that day included a call not for "a political revolution… in the name of saving the planet…" but instead a plea to encourage world leaders "to treat it [the planet] with care and respect, for its sake, and for the sake of the creatures who inhabit it, and for the sake of God's love for creation." This small, wooden baton thus created a connection between churchgoers in Edinburgh, and the international leaders who would gather later that year to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change.

This leads to the question of why faith-based organisations and churches are claiming an activist role on the issue of climate change? Why does a congregation in Edinburgh give time during a Sunday service to talk about international climate negotiations? How does this action tie in with the other activities of the congregation? These are some of the questions that this thesis seeks to answer. It offers an in-depth portrayal of environmental engagement by faith communities in Edinburgh, and offers extensive analysis of how and why those communities take action on environmental issues in their local context.

The involvement of faith-based actors in taking political action on issues of social and economic concern is not new to churches and communities in the UK. The abolition of slavery in the UK is arguably an 18th Century example of what today would be recognised as faith-based activism (Brown, 2006). More recent examples include the development of the fair trade movement through organisations such as *Traidcraft* (Clarke et al, 2007) and the campaigns in the late 1990s and early 2000s for 'third world' debt relief (*Jubilee 2000* and the *Make Poverty History* campaigns), which gathered support from a wide range of national and international development organisations (Pettifor, 2006:299-300; Sireau, 2009). The integration of climate change and environmental issues in the actions of faith communities follows in the footsteps of these activities, as the economic and social impacts of climate change and environmental harm are increasingly recognised as adding another layer of complexity to many existing challenges of international development (Saunders, 2008; Rootes and Saunders, 2016). But do faith communities offer a distinctive approach to environmental issues? What can be learned from the study of faith-based communities' environmental engagement that can inform our knowledge about environmentalism more broadly? These issues will be addressed throughout the thesis.

The principal research question of this thesis is *what explains environmental action by faith-based communities?* The thesis addresses faith-based environmentalism from the perspective of local faith communities in Edinburgh. It considers how congregations integrate environmentalism in the everyday understanding of their community life, what it means to 'be' a church together, and analyses how churches understand environmental issues as part of the broader concerns of their faith. Building on a tradition of research in religious environmentalism (Gottlieb, 2006a), also known as religion and ecology (Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brien, 2011b: 5-12),[4] this study first finds that environmental engagement is driven by *theological concerns*. It identifies the well-established theological motivations of creation spirituality, caring for creation, and environmental/eco-justice[5] as motivating factors for environmental engagement (Kearns, 1996). Moreover, it asserts that a Christian concern for justice, not just environmental- or eco-justice, is the principal motivation for engagement. Secondly, the research in this thesis identifies the role of *pragmatic factors* in explaining engagement. Congregations exist both as communities that gather to worship God, and as everyday institutions with budgets, buildings, and people (Hauerwas, 1983: 107). This research illustrates that these pragmatic factors of everyday church life, in particular the role of leadership and of volunteers, also explains environmental engagement. Thirdly, the thesis offers empirical evidence of the centrality of *community* as an explanation for environmentalism by faith communities. Community provides the opportunity for environmental engagement, and participation in environmental action builds and strengthens community. Community is also the social context in which the theological motivations and pragmatic factors for environmental engagement come together and intersect, to enable engagement to take place. I argue that *community* is a major underlying factor that explains environmental engagement; without community, there is no faith-based environmental engagement.

My research approach, like much of the research in religion and environmentalism, is fundamentally interdisciplinary. I adopt a social scientific methodology, grounding my research in understanding faith-based environmentalism as

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[4] Jenkins and Chapple (2011) discuss different aspects of the study of religion and ecology that include different religions, as well as a range of understandings of nature, environmental and environmentalism.
[5] There are differing interpretations of environmental justice and ecojustice, yet the phrases are often used interchangeably (e.g. Gottlieb, 2007). This will be addressed in more detail later in the thesis.

participation in politics through the practices of everyday life. I thus set my research within a wider consideration of environmental politics and environmental activism. Yet the study of faith communities and organisations naturally leads to significant interaction with material from congregational and religious studies and divinity. My own professional career has included significant experience in both of these fields, and as such, I bring a practical interdisciplinary perspective to a similarly interdisciplinary academic endeavour.

My approach in investigating the everyday experience of environmental action in churches is based on ethnographic methodology, most specifically participant observation, as it is through participating in ongoing aspects of church community life that the more mundane, less explicit, aspects of congregational life are brought to light. In this study, I explore faith-based action on environmental issues in three congregations belonging to different denominations (two Protestant denominations, one Roman Catholic church), in Edinburgh, Scotland. The churches investigated throughout this research have demonstrated commitment to environmental action through their long-standing membership of Eco-Congregation Scotland, an ecumenical, Christian environmental organisation that aims to support churches in engaging in environmental issues in their local context.[6] In exploring faith-based environmental action within the social context of the church as experienced by its members, I argue that one of the most fundamental aspects of church life, the faith community, is an important foundational concept and lived reality that is often overlooked as a motivation, and space, for environmental action.

This research also adds much-needed geographical diversity to a field of knowledge dominated by studies undertaken in North America. Scholars of religion and ecology have wrestled with apparent causal links, or lack thereof, between religious beliefs and environmental attitudes for fifty years (see chapter two) but the vast majority of this work has been with samples based in the USA. More recent research has brought a more diverse geographical perspective to discussions (see for example Hagevi, 2014; Kim, 2016; Morrison, Duncan and Parton, 2015; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay,

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[6] More information about Eco-Congregation Scotland is detailed in appendix A.

2014), but, while acknowledging the continued focus on Western Christianity, the U.K., and particularly Scotland, is heavily under-researched in this area.

A further contribution of this thesis is methodological. As I will show in chapter two, there is a significant body of literature that addresses religion and environmentalism, mostly through a quantitative, sociological lens that seeks to determine correlation or causation between theological beliefs and environmental attitudes and behaviours (Proctor and Berry, 2005). Much of this literature developed in response to an article by historian Lynn White Jr. (1967) implicating the beliefs and practices of 'Judeo-Christianity' for many of the world's environmental problems, and seeks to establish whether White's thesis was empirically accurate. This research offers interesting insights about how theological beliefs shape environmental attitudes and behaviours (Taylor, Van Wieren and Zaleha, 2016a: 318-330), although a shortcoming of much of this survey-based research is its basis on individualised, fixed-time perspectives that fail to take account of the social context in which religion is experienced (McGuire, 2008). Much of this research also generalises findings about "Christianity" with little reflection the diverse range of socio-political contexts in which people of faith live their lives. By taking an ethnographic approach, instead of seeking to make generalisable claims based on a quantitative research approach such as that prioritised by e.g. Taylor, et al (2016b: 1002), I offer depth, insight and understanding about the social phenomenon of congregation-based environmental action in its social context.[7] This approach ties with more recent trends in studies of religion and ecology (Campbell, 2011:188-189; Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brien, 2011: 252), and adds to the small number of existing ethnographic studies of distinct and somewhat set-apart faith communities (e.g. McFarland Taylor, 2007; Vonk, 2011). My research instead engages with the 'everyday life' of churchgoers in Edinburgh. At the time of writing, I am only aware of one other ethnographically-based study that investigates environmentalism within 'regular' faith communities (Shattuck, 2016), and again, this is based on research in North America.

The most significant empirical contribution of this thesis to the literature in religion and ecology is the evidence of the central importance of *community* for faith-

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[7] The cases in this study have been selected for their potential representativeness in the Scottish context, an important factor in establishing the ability of the study to provide insight into the broader phenomenon being studied (Gerring, 2007).

based environmental engagement. Community is identified both as a space and place for engagement, and also with respect to the relational aspects of community that drive and undergird environmental action. This thesis also makes a methodological contribution, through the adoption of participant observation as the principal method of data collection, as outlined above. The centrality of *community* is evident in particular due to insights from the ethnographic approach taken in this research, and through data gathered through ongoing participation in the everyday aspects of life in a faith community. The social aspects of community are identified as driving factors in studies of congregations (Ammerman, 2005; McGuire, 2002), volunteering (Cnaan, 2002, Wuthnow, 1991), and environmental activism (Bomberg and McEwen, 2012; Hawken, 2007; McIntosh, 2008; McIntosh and Carmichael, 2015). *Community* is also alluded to in earlier research on the potential contribution of religious environmentalism to environmentalism more broadly (Gorringe and Beckham, 2013; Gottlieb, 2007; Rasmussen, 2013). Yet in studies at the intersection of religion, ecology and environmentalism, *community* is overlooked as a motivation for, and outcome of, environmental action; community is often simply presumed to exist, and only occasionally is the social context discussed as a distinct issue that affects engagement (Djupe and Hunt, 2009). The findings of this research instead reveal the central role of community as a foundation for religious environmentalism, and as an avenue through which engagement is practiced.

1.2 Research Questions

The principal research question guiding this research is *what explains environmental engagement by faith communities?* The aim of the research is to consider the factors that affect environmental engagement in a community of faith – a community that exists and gathers for purposes other than environmental activity or concern. This distinguishes this research from, for example, studies of community-based environmental action through community gardens (Nettle, 2014) or community energy projects (Bomberg and McEwen, 2012), while also offering insight along with these studies, into community-level environmentalism. The intention is firstly, to investigate those communities that are engaging in environmental issues in some way, and secondly, to seek to understand what it is that drives and sustains engagement, and how that engagement is realised.

A secondary research question investigates whether intergenerational concerns help explain environmental action in Christian communities. Intergenerational justice is increasingly receiving attention within discussions of climate change and sustainable development (Gardiner, 2006; Oxford Martin Commission, 2013; United Nations, 2012) as the impacts of present-day behaviours are being recognised for how they will negatively impact future generations' livelihoods. Christian voices are adding to these discussions (Abraham, 2009: 67-68; Agius and Chircop, 1998; Bouma-Prediger, 2001: 128; Muers 2003; 2008; Northcott, 1996: 314-316). Most recently, Pope Francis addressed the theme of intergenerational justice alongside consideration of the principle of the common good in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* (Francis, 2015: #159-162).[8] Theologian Michael Northcott (2011: 46) argues that the Christian doctrine of the Communion of the Saints is a narrative for human sociality that connects the stories from past generations to the present, and suggests that such a link with the past can also create a better sense of connection with future generations (Northcott, 2012: 2).[9] A secondary research question of this thesis asks *what intergenerational concerns are observable in faith-based communities in relation to climate change and environmentalism?* The secondary research questions seek to provide depth of understanding to the principal research question, that itself aims to explain how and why faith communities undertake environmental action as part of their church life.

Box 1.1 Research Questions and Aims

Primary Research Question:

What explains environmental engagement by faith communities?

Aims:

To gain a greater, in-depth understanding of what motivates people to engage in environmental issues in a faith-based context, and how they put their concerns into action.

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[8] An encyclical is a formal teaching document within the Catholic Church, often issued by a Pope in response to issues of current societal concern (Hornby-Smith, 2006). *Laudato Si'* is discussed in detail in chapter six.
[9] Northcott (2012) refers to this as 'Ancestral time', which is the overarching theme of the multi-disciplinary research project funded by the AHRC (AH/K005456/1) to which the research in this thesis contributes.

Secondary Research Questions:

What motivates engagement in environmental action within a church context?

Why do communities become involved in environmental issues?

Why is environmentalism adopted as a practice within a community, and how is this practiced?

What intergenerational concerns are observable in faith-based communities in relation to climate change and environmentalism?

1.3 Thesis overview

The thesis develops as follows. In chapter two I offer a critical review of the relevant bodies of academic literature, setting my research within the context of what is commonly referred to as religion and ecology. I highlight how religion and ecology emerged as an area of research through addressing two particular issues: theological teachings about environmental issues in the scriptures and traditions most particularly with regard to the Christian faith, and social science-based investigations about causal links between religious beliefs and environmental attitudes and behaviours. I also illustrate how this foundationally multi- and interdisciplinary area of research is seeking to define itself more solidly as a research field with an established body of literature and informally agreed-upon topics of debate, while also expanding its reach through embracing new understandings of religion, and of the intersection between religions and ecologies (Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brien, 2011: 6-9). I argue however, that if religion and ecology is to continue what Bauman, Bohannon and O'Brien refer to as its 'inherently interdisciplinary' nature (2011:9), it has to draw from, and speak to, additional fields of study, as insights from the study of social movements, interest groups, and congregations can enhance and develop the understanding of faith-based engagement in environmental issues. The risk is that, in defining itself too narrowly as *religion and ecology*, it becomes the preserve of a much smaller academic interest group, especially given the lack of empathy that some social scientists have for religion or its adherents (Stark and Finke, 2000: 18-21).

In chapter three, I discuss the research design and strategy, and explain the aims and approach I take in the research. I discuss the criteria for case selection, briefly

introduce the three cases studied, and provide information about the data collection and analysis process adopted throughout this study. Chapter four then proceeds with a more detailed introduction to each of the three cases studied for this research. Chapters five, six and seven contain the body of empirical research that contributes to this thesis. I present the data in a case-by-case basis, maintaining the integrity of the research experience of three very different congregations, each participating in environmental action in a distinctive manner.

In chapter five, I discuss how a small, stable Protestant church community integrates environmental concerns in their weekly spiritual practices, and how individual initiative builds on that theological foundation, to integrate environmental practices within the practical aspects of building and facility management. I examine how the community understands its engagement as the practice of *creation care*, which itself is a response to a theological foundation based on experiencing God through the awe and wonder of creation, known as *creation spirituality*. I show how theological reflection guides their decisions, and argue that environmental actions become an everyday reality of community life, an example of everyday environmentalism (Schlosberg and Coles, 2016), which itself raises questions about how to sustain action over a long period of time.

Chapter six discusses the case of a large Catholic church in the city centre with a long history of environmental engagement. This chapter addresses the importance of integrating environmental concerns within the broader theological teachings of the church, and in particular, highlights how the traditional Christian concern for *justice* motivates and shapes engagement. In this chapter, I also draw attention to the influence of more practical or pragmatic aspects of congregational life. I illustrate how leadership, both at the local level and at a high level, has an effect on guiding and enabling environmental practices and initiatives to take hold, and examine the challenges of sustaining volunteer engagement and commitment over a longer period of time. In this chapter, we begin to see more explicitly how theological and pragmatic factors intersect to explain environmental engagement.

In chapter seven, I again reflect on how environmental issues are understood within the broader framework of church community life, both theologically and practically. I illustrate how a healthy, active congregation that emphasises translating

theology into practice easily incorporates environmental concerns within its existing frames of reference, yet balances that with a strong, pragmatic awareness of the financial costs and drivers of action. In this chapter I draw particular attention to the role of *community* in explaining environmental action. I argue that community is important both in terms of community as *place*, and community as *people*. In particular, I show how the congregation uses environmental activity to adopt a more outward-facing perspective and emphasise how engaging in environmental activity can build a stronger sense of community externally. I also show that such activity fosters enhanced internal relationships, strengthening the existing church community through the action of working together on what could be considered a non-traditional initiative for a congregation.

Chapter eight draws common findings across the cases for discussion. This is not a comparative research study: three cases were selected for representativeness (as examples of churches from across the city), and to enhance knowledge, through selecting 'best case' examples of environmental engagement. Yet I discuss common themes and point out differences to highlight the insights and implications of this research. In particular, I build on understandings of creation spirituality and creation care, and show how the communities integrate environmental issues within their existing theological framework of justice. I also illustrate how intergenerational concerns are represented most prominently in the Catholic community. I discuss the broad set of practices adopted across the churches, and illustrate the role of pragmatic factors such as leadership and volunteers, that help to explain and facilitate environmental engagement. I emphasise the importance of *community* as a motivation for, and outcome of, environmental engagement and argue that scholars of religion and ecology often overlook this foundational aspect of church life. I illustrate instead that community is a fundamental underlying factor that helps to explain environmental engagement by faith communities.

Finally, I argue that the intersection of theological, social and pragmatic factors that explains environmental engagement represents the reality of everyday religion in a way that larger-scale survey-based research of the type extolled by Taylor and colleagues (Taylor, 2016; Taylor et al, 2016a; 2016b) often overlooks. I also contend that religion and ecology, while strongly interdisciplinary in nature, could benefit by moving beyond

a central focus on environmental issues, and acknowledge insights from studies of congregations and faith-based activism more broadly. This will create a more interdisciplinary audience for research in religion and ecology, and will also strengthen its interdisciplinary foundations as a research field. I close this thesis in chapter nine, where I consider the implications of these findings more broadly, and indicate areas for future research.

1.4   A note on terminology

As an interdisciplinary research project, I draw on language that is used in different ways across disciplines. Additionally, as a study that focuses on the everyday aspects of people's lives, I also use terminology that might have a broad use in everyday terminology, but a much more specific or more tightly-defined meaning in the academic context.

Faith-based communities, faith communities, churches and congregations

In this thesis, I use *faith-based communities*, *faith communities*, *churches* and *congregations* somewhat interchangeably. These terms are used to denote the group of people who meet on a regular basis for religious worship and other events. *Church* can also refer to a physical building,[10] although I have tried to ensure that the context is clear in each case. Where church refers to a denomination that represents a large number of church communities, it is capitalised ('the Catholic Church'). I use *faith-based communities* and *faith communities*, to move the reader's attention beyond an institutionally-defined group and denominational sensitivities, and to adopt language that is more widely used in academic literature.

Congregations/churches/faith communities are often included within a broad understanding of *faith-based organisation* (FBOs). In an academic and practical context, the terminology of FBOs is used to denote non-governmental organisations that engage in political and/or social action, and have a foundation based in some way on principles of faith (Beaumont and Cloke, 2012:10). There is significant debate about the definition of FBOs, and indeed whether such a term is helpful, given the vagaries of its meaning

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[10] The Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland also use *parish* to denote the locality for which a church is nominally responsible. I have generally avoided using the terminology of parish however as even when churches in this study have defined parish boundaries, attendees do not necessarily reflect those boundaries. In the Catholic context, *parish* is used in place of *church* to refer to both people and building (e.g. Agliardo, 2014; Cunningham 2009:16-18; Ryan, 1996).

(James, 2009). Questions abound for example about how to differentiate between the many organisations that claim to be faith-based (Sider and Unruh, 2004), and Bretherton (2010) has raised concerns about power relations and intentions inherent in the use of 'faith' and 'faith-based'. Yet Beaumont and Cloke's definition of an FBO as "any organisation that refers directly or indirectly to religion or religious values, and functions as a welfare provider or as a political actor" (2012: 3) is strong and inclusive, and helpful for this research. There is heterogeneity within this definition, and an understanding that FBOs are not necessarily churches or religious institutions, but are often registered charities. Areas with a long-standing history of engagement by FBOs includes international development (Clarke, 2006; James, 2009), and the provision of social-support services (Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Clarke, 2006; Cloke, Beaumont and Williams, 2013; Snyder, 2011). Increasingly, FBOs also engage directly in political activism (Wuthnow and Evans, 2002). In the U.K., FBOs are often national-level organisations that both deliver a particular function, and focus on political lobbying (Beaumont and Cloke, 2012: 10-11). Eco-Congregation Scotland is one such example. Yet local-level congregations, the core focus of this thesis, are also distinct from FBOs: the principal reason for their existence is not social and/or political action (although that might be part of their existence). Instead, congregations gather for the purposes of worship and community, with spirituality at the centre (Ammerman, 2005). In this research, I refer to faith-based communities, churches and congregations, rather than FBOs.

Environment, nature, creation

A second point to note is my frequent use of *environment* in this thesis. When I began the research, my aim was to study *climate change* advocacy by churches. Yet it soon became clear that research participants frequently considered climate change and environmental issues as 'two sides of the same coin'. If anything, environmental issues dominate conversations more than climate change. As such, my research field broadened to include environmental themes more broadly. Within academia, terminology for religious engagement or response to environmental issues is often referred to as 'religion and ecology' (see for example, Deane-Drummond and Bedford-Strohm, 2011; Grim and Tucker, 2014; Gottlieb, 2006; Jenkins, Grim and Tucker, 2017). The language of *ecology* in these academic circles takes its meaning from *oikos*, meaning household (Rasmussen, 1996), but also referencing economics – *oikos* is often

used to refer to the economy (the organisation) of the 'planetary household' (Clifford, 2006: 248). Fredericks and O'Brien (2011: 44) suggest that *ecology* includes "a general idea of interconnectedness and its moral value." Yet *ecology* is not language used by research participants; instead, they talk of the *environment*, *nature*, or (God's) *creation*[11] and use these terms interchangeably, something that is common in the Christian tradition (Watson, 2010:128). In doing so, participants are speaking of a world "created, sustained, and daily loved by God" (Wirzba, 2015). In popular usage, environment is often linked with nature, suggesting something 'natural' and 'out there' (and thus not human), whereas *ecology* is a scientific term for the study of organisms within an environment (Slack, 2005: 106). Although they have become interconnected through the association of 'eco-' with anything environmental, I use 'environment' most frequently throughout this thesis, as it represents the language that resonates both with my research participants, and with the broader academic fields of environmental politics and environmental ethics, to which this thesis also speaks.

Practice and engagement

A third point, which is important in light of my research question, is terminology of *practice*. Practice refers to what people do: how they live out their lives. Margaret Miles (2006: ix), referring historically to the ways people learned to shape their lives around Christian ideas, attitudes and values, explains that the integration of thought and practice was what defined 'the religious self' (2006:90). Hence the practice of faith is an important factor in the definition of faith and religion. With regard to climate change, sociologist Elizabeth Shove argues that practice and behaviours are often used interchangeably (2010:1279). I emphasise that this thesis does not address practice from an in-depth sociological position. I engage with the concept of practice as an understanding of 'what people do in society' with a nod to Bordieu (Rey, 2007), but my interest is in everyday practices from the position of the practice of faith. In the contemporary context, Beaumont and Cloke (2012: 23) emphasise the importance of seeking to understand religion and faith as "a move from faith simply as personal belief to faith-as-practice"; this 'faith-as-practice' is addressed in this thesis.

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[11] Creation was popular in the Protestant churches studied, but less so in the Catholic church. This is addressed in more detail later in the thesis.

Action, advocacy, and activism

Finally, I come to questions of *action*, *advocacy,* and *activism*. All are encapsulated within this thesis, and are used to understand the ways that people and congregations practice their faith in an environmental context. My research began with an idea about *environmental activism* by faith-based communities. Political activism and faith-based activism are often used to refer to any form of engagement in the public and/or political sphere, particularly with regard to issues of social justice (e.g. McIntosh and Carmichael, 2015; Norris, 2002; Oelschlager, 1994:186; Smith, 1996). Yet while environmental activism is understood in academic circles as anything from attending protests and signing a petition to sorting waste for recycling (Dalton, 2015), it can also refer to a more radical type of behaviour that is distinct from 'environmentalism' or the daily practice of environmentally-significant behaviours (Stern, 2000). While all contribute to the global environmental movement (Hawken, 2007), my participants would not identify as environmental activists (some were keen to point out that they were not "eco-warriors" for example). As such, I also adopt the terminology of environmental advocacy, action and engagement, to represent their commitment to active concern and participation in environmental issues, but without allusions of radicalness.

In summary, in this opening chapter, I have provided a broad overview of the content of this thesis. I have outlined the research aims and strategy adopted, and illustrated how these derive from the research question *what explains environmental engagement by faith-based communities?* In the following chapter, I offer a critical review of the literature of religious environmentalism/religion and ecology, and highlight how this thesis builds on and adds to the body of existing research.

2   Religious environmentalism and faith-based activism

In this chapter, I present a critical review of the relevant bodies of literature to demonstrate how my research is situated within, and adds to, existing knowledge. I begin by illustrating how faith-based environmentalism is growing in its profile with regard to international political issues, and show how in the context of the UK, where Christianity is the historically dominant religion, that engagement builds on a long tradition of faith-based engagement in the public sphere that continues to this day. In the second part of this chapter, I present an overview of relevant existing research within the subfield commonly known as *religion and ecology* or *religious environmentalism* and demonstrate how this work, in the broadest sense, has two major themes. The first of these is ecotheology, in which scholars interrogate scripture and engage with theology and ethics from an environmental perspective, and/or provide theological critique of the environmental challenges facing global society today. The second broad area is the social scientific study of religion and religious belief, and questions of whether such beliefs engender, or hinder, environmental sensitivities and behaviours in people. I demonstrate that, with some notable exceptions, the majority of this second area of work is dominated by survey-based research. I critique how the use of surveys in this manner prioritises individualised-level responses to abstract questions about environmental behaviours or attitudes, and illustrate how the principal outcomes that can be drawn from this is that the results are inconclusive.

To answer my research question *what explains environmental engagement by faith communities*, I then draw extensively on Kearns (1996) and her descriptions of creation care, creation spirituality and ecojustice as theological motivations for religious environmentalism within Christianity. I show how these descriptions have been revised and reinforced over twenty years of research, and continue to dominate the field. I then supplement these motivations by introducing the concept of intergenerational concern, a strong theme within the secular environmental movement (Ball 2003: 543; Connelly et al, 2012: 40-41; Gardiner 2006) and increasingly articulated in ecotheological writing, both looking back and drawing on connections with previous generations (Northcott 2009:70), and looking forward to the potential lives of future generations (Muers, 2008; Francis 2015). I show that intergenerational concern is rarely discussed within the social scientific literature that addresses religion and ecology. I then outline my intention to

investigate whether intergenerational concerns motivate engagement in faith-based communities.

I also argue that, despite its foundational precepts as an interdisciplinary field, the study of religion and ecology has created its own disciplinary silo and in doing so, has overlooked knowledge about the social aspects of religion and the religious experience strongly established in earlier studies of religion and of faith-based activism more broadly. I suggest that studying faith communities and the everyday practice of religion provides important insights often missed within studies of religious environmentalism. I close this chapter by demonstrating how my research adds to and extends present knowledge in religious environmentalism in an interdisciplinary manner.

2.1   Religion in the public sphere

In May 2014, Christina Figueres, then Executive Secretary to the UNFCCC, and the person charged with corralling the world's governments towards a climate change treaty to stabilise greenhouse gas levels and prevent dangerous climate change, wrote an article in *The Guardian* entitled "Faith leaders need to find their voice on climate change" (Figueres, 2014). Stating that "saving the Earth and its peoples from dangerous climate change is an economic, social and environmental issue – and a moral and ethical one," Figueres called on faith groups and religious organisations – churches, mosques, synagogues and temples – to take action to urge governments to sign a new climate agreement. The article continued: "overcoming poverty, caring for the sick and the infirm, feeding the hungry and a whole range of other faith-based concerns will only get harder in a climate challenged world." In raising the profile of the moral and ethical aspects of an issue that has been dominated by scientific evidence presented through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since its foundation in 1988,[12] Figueres was calling on the estimated eighty-four percent of the global population who identify as religious (Pew Research Centre, 2012), to recognise climate change as a concern that intersects with the core tenets of their faith.

Lobbying governments and taking action on the issues of concern that Figueres raises is not a new venture for faith-based communities. International organisations such

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[12] The most recent report from the IPCC is the Fifth Assessment Report, issued in 2014, which again stresses the impact of the human influence on, and "unequivocal warming" of, the global climate system (IPCC, 2014).

as Oxfam, the Red Cross and Red Crescent all have a strong religious element in their foundation, even if that is not a focus of their activities today, while many other well-known international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are strongly supported by people who are motivated by their faith convictions (Ganiel & Jones, 2012:307). In the UK context, while there is a "strong, secularist critique" (Furbey, 2009:21), and some measure of hesitation or suspicion about the motivation and role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in the public sphere (Cloke, Thomas and Williams, 2013:3, 14; Davie, 2015), churches and FBOs have a long history of involvement in social issues and political activism (Dinham and Jackson, 2012: 273; Ganiel and Jones, 2012: 307-310). Despite falling attendances, and accusations of irrelevance and of being out-of-touch with contemporary society (Beckford, 1991:52-56; Woodhead *et al* 2004:19; Woodhead, 2014), religions continue to play an important part in UK civil society. In particular, religions are increasingly seen by government as storehouses of resources (people, networks, buildings) with a role to play in response to social issues (Bretherton: 2010: 43; Cloke, Thomas and Williams, 2013: 5-6; Dinham and Lowndes, 2009: 5-6), and often seek to proclaim a moral voice on issues of concern (Kettell, 2009). The cross-party think-tank Demos recently reported that UK citizens self-identifying as 'belonging' to a religious group were more likely to be civically-engaged and politically active than their non-religious counterparts. Indeed, the Demos report explicitly argues that faith-based groups should play an important part in "setting and upholding a progressive policy agenda in the UK" (Birdwell & Timms, 2013: 43; 48). As Cloke, Beaumont and Williams (2013) demonstrate in their diverse selection of case studies, FBO participation in the public sphere in the UK includes social issues such as anti-poverty campaigning, homelessness, drugs, inner-city deprivation and revitalization. Other research highlights the importance of FBOs' work with immigrants and asylum-seekers (Snyder, 2011) and wider issues such as fair trade (Bretherton, 2010: 175-209). Of particular interest to this study, is the growing force of environmentally-focused FBOs in the UK. Development agencies such as Christian Aid, Tear Fund, and CAFOD (the Catholic international development charity), which have direct experience of the effects of climate change in countries in which they work, have recently expanded their focus to include political activism on climate issues (Saunders, 2008).[13] Grass-roots

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[13] Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/climate-justice/Index.aspx Accessed 09 March 2017. TearFund: www.tearfund.org/en-sc/about_you/old_campaign_site/climatechange/ Accessed 09 March

organisations including Green Christian, A Rocha, Eco-Congregation Scotland and Operation Noah also focus on practical and political action with faith-based communities and Christian churches. The major UK denominations have joined the climate debate,[14] and many FBOs are part of campaign coalitions such as The Climate Coalition/Stop Climate Chaos Scotland alongside secular environmental organisations.[15]

These faith-based organisations and denominations, and the people who identify with them, is the constituency to whom Figueres is appealing in her *Guardian* article. The call to engage with climate change as a moral issue is a direct approach to those who see their role as expounding a moral voice in the public sphere and speaking out on behalf of those who do not have a voice (Kettell, 2009; Haynes, 2010). Yet Figueres' call follows a significant level of engagement from FBOs in environmental issues since the 1960s and 1970s in particular. Hallman (1997: 131) argues that the World Council of Churches (WCC) was discussing the concept of *sustainability* as early as 1974, over a decade before *sustainable development* was brought to public attention with the publication of the Brundtland Commission Report (WCED, 1987). In the USA, a report on "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States" from the United Church of Christ (UCC, 1987) is widely acknowledged as an important milestone in the work of the environmental justice movement, drawing attention to the impact of toxic waste sites in the US on poor, predominantly African-American communities (Agyeman et al, 2016: 322-324; Grim and Tucker, 2014: 17-18; Moody, 2002: 242).[16] This long-standing and ongoing engagement by Christian FBOs in the public sphere, and the way that environmental issues, sustainability and concern about climate change have been part of this engagement for nearly fifty years, illustrates a strong foundation in which international

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2017 and CAFOD www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Get-clued-up/Climate-and-environment Accessed 09 March 2017.

[14] The Church of England has diocesan (regional) environmental officers and a major campaign "Shrinking the Footprint," which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, and 42% by 2020 (www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint). The Church of Scotland has an appointed Climate Change Officer (www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/our_other_work/care_for_the_earth) and the Methodist, United Reformed and Baptist churches have a joint campaign on environmental issues, including lobbying on energy and climate issues (www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/ environment) .The Catholic Church in Scotland issued "The Environment: A Scottish Catholic Study Guide" in March 2011. All websites accessed 09 March 2017.

[15] The Climate Coalition (www.theclimatecoalition.org) is a UK-wide network of organisations; Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (www.stopclimatechaos.org) is the equivalent Scottish network.

[16] The environmental justice movement is a grass-roots movement that campaigns against specific, often localised instances of environmental damage that affects vulnerable communities .It also raises awareness of the relationship between a healthy environment and justice and equality for all (Agyeman et al, 2016: 336). Environmental justice is addressed in more detail in section 2.3.

political and environmental issues are connected to the grassroots, community level in which most religious experience is practiced.

Figueres' principal concern is climate change, yet her call for engagement draws attention to the role of religious environmentalism on the global scale. In the following section, I look at existing studies of religious environmentalism, and demonstrate how religion and ecology developed as an area of academic interest from the late 1960's onwards (particularly in the case of Christianity), and was stimulated by a short article by a professor of medieval history in the journal *Science*. I then introduce the two main streams of academic discussion, ecotheology, and social science, and consider how both areas of research contribute to an understanding of religious environmentalism today, to which my research adds.

2.2   *Religion and Ecology* and *Religious Environmentalism*

There has been significant academic interest about a relationship between religion and environmentalism since the late 1960s, when historian Lynn White Jr published an article in *Science* (White, 1967), "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." This article began a conversation about the relationship between religion (specifically, Christianity) and environmentalism that continues to this day (LeVasseur and Peterson, 2017). In the article, more of an opinion-piece than an empirically-grounded argument, White states that "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" for the world's environmental problems which, he argues, comes from a historically Christian worldview that focuses on an "implicit faith in perpetual progress" and a strong anthropocentric focus (1967: 1205-1206). Even though many authors have questioned White's argument from biblical, theological and historical perspectives (see for example Moltmann, 1993: 26-31; Sheldon, 2009; Whitney, 1993; 2015; Vonk, 2011: 14-20), the article became something of the cornerstone of a significant body of research about links between Christianity and environmentalism.

Theological research: Ecotheology

A great deal of this work is in the field of ecotheology, as biblical and theological scholars in particular have responded to White's critiques (Horrell, et al 2010:2; Jenkins, 2009; Whitney, 1993:151; 159-169; 2015:401). Scholars have sought to "retrieve the ecological wisdom embedded in the Christian tradition as a response to ecological destruction and environmental injustice" (Conradie et al, 2014:1). Marlow (2009) for

example provides an excellent overview of the development of what she terms *creation theology* through history, noting the influence of Greek philosophy and the writings of the early church. Pointing to sources in addition to White that stimulated "the flowering of ecotheology" in response to the ecological crises of the 1960s, Northcott (1996: 124-163) identifies three different approaches taken by theologians engaging in ecotheology. These are: a *humanocentric approach*, based on the work of Catholic theologian Teilhard de Chardin which places humanity at the centre and seeks the betterment of nature through human progress; a *theocentric approach*, influenced in particular by Moltmann's work (1993) that emphasises the presence of God throughout creation; and an *ecocentric approach*, drawing on John Cobb's arguments about the importance of overcoming the dualism between humans and nature, focusing on the environment, not humanity, as the centre of being. Grim and Tucker (2014: 87-89) outline key writings by mostly Western theologians including Joseph Sittler, John Cobb, Gordon Kaufman, Calvin DeWitt, Sallie McFague, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Leonardo Boff,[17] Roger Gottlieb, Dieter Hessell, and Thomas Berry, all of whom played an important part in what they call the 're-evaluation' of the Christian tradition's environmental theology, and which they argue has helped to shape "ecologically sensitive attitudes and sustainable practices…" within the Christian faith in particular. A more diverse, global perspective on ecotheology has been encouraged by Hallman (2009), in which the connections between environment and development, and how environmental practices affect the basic needs of the world's poor, are brought to the fore. Indeed, Hallman (2009:3-4) stresses how economics, values, and worldviews challenge Christianity above and beyond White's critiques, and emphasises the impact of consumerism and materialism as the source of many environmental problems, which the global church has not effectively addressed.

Much of the focus of ecotheology begins with Genesis 1: 26-28,[18] which White implicitly references, and which is the source of the language of 'dominion' and 'subdue the earth' that has been the source of much controversy. These phrases are often interpreted as giving humans domination over the rest of the created world, whereas Northcott (2009: 63) amongst others, argues that instead this biblical passage implies "a

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[17] Boff, from Brazil, is the only non-Western representative on this list.
[18] In Genesis 1:26-28, the creation narrative describes how God gives humans "*dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth*" and tells humankind to "*fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.*"

right and just relation" with the land and other creatures (see also Kearns, 2004: 467-468). Ecotheology has however extended far beyond the early chapters of Genesis, drawing on the whole context of scripture to develop a greater understanding of creation from the biblical narrative (Moltmann, 1993: 53-54). Bauckham (2010) for example highlights other biblical passages including the creation narratives of Genesis 1-3 (not just Genesis 1), the extensive passage about non-human creation in Job 38-41, and the many Psalms in which creation is the focus and humans hardly merit a mention, or do so only within the context of the rest of creation.[19] These passages paint a broader picture of humanity as part of, rather than ruling over, creation. In the New Testament, passages that contribute to creation theology include Colossians 1: 15-20 (where Jesus is called "the firstborn of all creation"), Romans 8: 18-23 (which refers to "all creation groaning" while the earth waits for redemption from God), and Matthew 6:25-33 (when Jesus tells his followers not to worry about the challenges of daily life, but instead to take encouragement from "the birds of the air" and "the lilies of the field" for whom God provides enough food, and to trust instead that God will also provide for them).

Ernst Conradie (2017: 70-74) suggests that Christian ecotheology today is two-fold: "an ecological critique of Christianity, and a Christian critique of environmental destruction." He goes further to speak of an 'ecological reformation' underway in some Christian traditions, although acknowledging that it is a slow process. Conradie also discusses how ecotheology includes different discourses, not just biblical and theological, but language that integrates wider concerns within the Christian faith for a 'just, participatory and sustainable society' (terminology used by the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi in 1975). Setting ecotheology in this wider context expands engagement even further, raising questions of the integration of ecofeminism, indigenous spiritualities, animal theology, and the role of 'earthkeeping' in Christianity more broadly, and developing conversation around ecotheology within interfaith/multi-faith discussions (Conradie, 2017). Many contemporary ecotheologians continue to engage with issues arising in the world today as a result of environmental change. Increasingly these scholars are integrating concerns for justice within an ecotheological framework (Bouma-Prediger, 2001: 156-157; Deane-Drummond, 2011) and asking

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[19] See for example Psalm 8 and Psalm 104.

questions about the ethical frameworks that society will need to respond to future challenges of climate change and environmental damage (Deane-Drummond, 2014; Jenkins, 2009; Northcott, 2013; Rasmussen, 2013; Skrimshire, 2010). Indeed, Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical "*Laudato Si'*: On the Care of our Common Home," was profoundly theological, addressing the effects of environmental damage on human dignity and the most vulnerable in society (Francis, 2015; Hulme 2015). The encyclical was a major contribution to raising the profile of ecotheology in the public sphere, not least through the prominent coverage given to it in the Western press media (e.g. The Guardian, 2015; Stanley, 2015; Sullivan, 2015) and its potential contribution to international climate policy development (Jacobs, 2016; O'Neill, 2016).[20] The field of ecotheology continues to study biblical teaching and what it means to practice Christian living in light of current and future environmental challenges; and to consider how best to facilitate and contribute to such discussions in the public sphere (Deane-Drummond, 2014: 164-165).

Social scientific research

In addition to the field of ecotheology, a second body of academic inquiry developed around the question of whether White's critiques of the Christian faith were empirically accurate, seeking to identify causal links between 'Christianity' (indicated by assessment of individual-level identification with Christianity), and environmental attitudes and behaviours. The vast majority of this research has been undertaken in the USA, and most of it has been quantitative, survey-based studies. Some research results support White's theory by identifying a relationship between religion and lack of an environmental ethic (e.g. Arbuckle and Konisky, 2015; Carlisle and Clark, 2017; Eckberg and Blocker, 1989; 1996; Guth *et al*, 1995; Greeley 1993; Hand and Van Liere, 1984; Tarakeshwar *et al*, 2001; Biel and Nilsson, 2005; Schultz *et al* 2000). Other studies however found a positive relationship between religion and environmentalism (Kanagy and Willits, 1993; Macias and Williams, 2016; Shaiko, 1987; Sherkat and Ellison, 2007; Wolkomir, 1997a; Woodrum and Hoban, 1994). A further number of studies have found no significant difference between people who claim to be religious and those that

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[20] Michael Jacobs, Special Adviser to former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, asserts that the encyclical "galvanised support from faith-based organisations, particularly in the developing world" (2016:319) and made a significant contribution to the global activism that contributed to a new climate agreement in December 2015. Others contest that its reception was not entirely positive (Taylor et al, 2016c: 350-351) or long-lasting (Maibach et al, 2015:4).

do not, or mixed and inconclusive results (Clements, 2012; Clements, McCright and Xiao, 2014; Greeley, 1993; Hayes and Marangudakis, 2001; Kanagy and Nelsen, 1995; Kilburn, 2014; Woodrum and Hoban, 1994; Wolkomir *et al*, 1997b; Boyd, 1999; Peifer, Khalsa and Ecklund, 2016; Sherkat and Ellison, 2007; Djupe and Hunt, 2009).

A small number of cross-national comparisons have also been carried out: Hayes and Marangudakis (2000) found no significant impact of religious identification across their samples in the US, Canada, UK and New Zealand; Dekker, Ester and Nas (1997) similarly found that Christianity does not influence environmental attitudes or cause environmental problems in their study of eighteen countries from around the globe, and Schultz, Zelezny and Dalrymple's study (2000) across thirteen countries in the Americas plus Spain sought to include more measures of environmental concern than earlier research. Results, as with many of the North American studies, focus on a very conservative form of Christianity (based on believing the Bible to be the actual, literal word of God). Hagevi (2014) attempts to analyse the 'societal level' of religion, claiming that a country's dominant historical religious culture affects public attitudes towards the environment. He suggests his findings indicate that so-called Catholic and Eastern Orthodox countries[21] are more pro-environmental than countries with a Protestant culture, although it must also be noted that he uses only one variable for environmental attitude, and also finds that individual religious involvement does not affect environmental attitudes.

With regard to the UK, I am aware of only a very small number of survey-based studies run along similar lines (Hayes and Marangudakis 2000, 2001; Pepper, Jackson and Uzzell, 2011; Clements, 2012). Hayes and Marangudakis (2001:147) found that "at least as far as Great Britain is concerned, Christians and non-Christians do not differ in terms of their attitudes toward nature"; Pepper et al (2011) identified a very marginal effect of religion on what they termed "socially conscious and frugal consumer behaviours", with churchgoers in the southeast of England, while Clements (2012: 913,

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[21] Hagevi classifies Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia as 'Catholic cultures' together with some regions of The Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. Denmark, Finland, the UK, Norway and Sweden are classified as 'Protestant cultures', again with some regions of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. Greece is the only country listed as having an Eastern Orthodox culture (2014:101). His article also refers to 'more secular societies' or those with a 'more secular population' (2014: 91, 98), although does not define which he considers these to be.

915) identified overall that people identifying with the Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland churches (as well as minority, non-Christian religions) exhibited less environmental behaviours than those of no religion, but also that increased attendance at church services was associated with greater environmental concern.

This wealth of quantitative and survey-based research offers substantial insight about the links, or otherwise, between theological beliefs and environmental attitudes and practices. As Taylor, Van Wieren and Zaleha (2016a: 318-330) explain in detail, early studies focused on empirical investigations of White's 1967 thesis about a causal relationship between predominantly Christian beliefs and environmental damage, while more recent attention increasingly focuses on whether the world's religions are becoming more environmentally-aware, the so-called 'greening of religion' hypothesis (Taylor, 2011; 2016). There are, however, questions about definitions of 'religion' or 'religiosity' and 'environmental attitudes' or 'environmental behaviour' that leave cause for concern, not least, which ones are selected as variables and how they are measured and communicated. Clements, McCright and Xiao (2014:90) for example define religiosity according to seven factors: "how religious you consider yourself; the strength of your religious group identification; the strength of your belief in God; how hard you try to carry your religious beliefs over into other dealings in life; how often you attend religious services; how often you pray; and how often you take part in the activities and organizations of a church or place of worship other than attending service." Their findings indicate that that 'religiosity' is positively associated with environmental behaviours, but not associated with what they term 'pro-environmental attitudes or beliefs.' They conclude that there is little evidence of "a green Christianity" in the pews, and instead point to the dominance of political ideology and affiliation as a determining factor in their research. Arbuckle and Konisky (2015) and Shao (2016) also emphasise political affiliations among churchgoers, highlighting the strong connections between faith and politics in the USA in particular.[22] In addition, much of the existing research focuses on a type of conservative evangelical or fundamentalist Christianity, in which biblically literalist beliefs dominate. Such beliefs are often associated with a belief in a seven-day creation (as described in the book of Genesis), a 'dominionist' approach to

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[22] Peifer, Khalsa and Ecklund (2016) also address how politics and religion are heavily interwoven in the US. Their research indicates that greater religiosity ("beliefs, practices and identification" (p.667)) can "mute" the effect of political conservatism with regard to environmental consumption behaviours.

the environment (that God gave humans 'dominion' over the earth, to use it to serve their needs) and 'imminent end-times' beliefs (that the end of the world will include the destruction of the earth). These beliefs which leave little space, if any, for environmental concerns (Barker and Bearce, 2013; Curry-Roper, 1990). Indeed, such beliefs are regularly presented in academic literature as homogenous and widespread: Taylor, Van Wieren and Zaleha (2016b: 1002-1003) for example, use a study of nine evangelical churches in Texas (Carr et al, 2012) to argue that climate scepticism, and beliefs that natural disasters are a result of God having control of nature, are common across Christianity. Yet these are beliefs that Greeley (1993) and Eckberg and Blocker (1996) identify as fundamentalist or sectarian. These beliefs are unusual in the UK (Unsworth, 2016) and are beliefs that are distinct from the more 'mainline' denominations and theologies that are found for example, in the Lutheran or Presbyterian churches in the USA (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA)), or the traditional denominations that dominate in western Europe.[23,24] These mainline traditions have engaged with climate change and environmental advocacy over a long period of time (Kilburn, 2014: 476), as have member churches of the World Council of Churches (Hallman, 1997; Kerber, 2014),[25] thus challenging much of the literature's descriptions of Christianity.

Taylor, Van Wieren and Zaleha (2016a: 209; 2016b: 1002) rightly emphasise the value of quantitative, randomised studies as a tool for making generalisable claims about connections between religious beliefs and environmental attitudes. Yet they also point to the insight and high level of confidence presented in qualitative studies, despite critiquing such studies for the inability to establish causal relationships (Taylor, Van Wieren and Zaleha, 2016b: 1002). Yet not all research seeks to determine causality, and there is much to learn from studying specific cases that offer insight into a phenomenon (Stake 2003; Crang and Cook, 2007: 14). Sarah McFarland Taylor (2007: xiv-xv),

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[23] Townsend explains that the Reformed theology of the PCUSA, a sister denomination to the Church of Scotland, "affirms that God's people are called to work for the transformation of society" (2014: 200). In the Catholic Church, social teaching centres around the common good and dignity of all people (PCJP, 2012).

[24] One point of distinction for example is climate denial, a view often associated with conservative forms of Christianity in the US (Zaleha and Szasz, 2014). Poortinga et al (2011) find little evidence of climate denial in the UK, although their research does not address connections, or otherwise, to religious beliefs.

[25] Wilkinson (2012) demonstrates effectively that evangelicalism in the US also includes people that represent a more progressive position with regard to climate change, and who, from the position of their evangelical identities, have actively sought to counterbalance climate-denying views within the evangelical movement.

drawing on the work of Meredith McGuire, states that research in religion and ecology has been "surveyed to death," and stresses that surveys presume a fixed and/or institutional religious experience rather than an ongoing process. Proctor and Berry (2005) also highlight the risks of over-reporting with self-reporting behaviours and attitudes in surveys. Djupe and Gilbert (2009) also assert that the individualised nature of survey responses is distinct from the social context in which Western expressions of religion are experienced: the congregation. Qualitative studies, while more limited in number, do reveal extensive information about motivations and practices of environmental engagement in faith communities, and the social contexts in which that engagement takes place.

Qualitative studies have often focused on the macro-level: interviews with elites and analysis of high-level denominational statements about what church teachings say about environmental issues.[26] Such statements are often a call to action to a denomination's member churches, as well as an opportunity for political engagement (e.g. Danielsen, 2013; Douglas, 2008; Marsh, 2013; Smith and Pulver, 2009; Townsend 2013; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay, 2012; Veldman, 2016; Wardekker, Petersen and van der Sluijs, 2009). Yet church members often struggle to see a connection, or fail to see the need to take action, on such high-level statements, even when they are produced by their denomination (Delashmutt, 2011; Townsend, 2013; and Wilkinson, 2012: 88; see also Emerson and Smith, 2000:44, for similar experience with high-level pronouncements on racial equality by churches in the USA). Indeed, the experience of the local church is often detached from such statements (Harris, 2002). These findings highlight the importance of delineating what an organisation or denomination says publicly from what is practiced on the ground: differentiating the words of those at the macro-level from the practice at the meso-level.

Qualitative research has also revealed a more nuanced view of American evangelicalism and engagement with climate change than is often presented in the quantitative literature (Wilkinson, 2012). Yet again, this research often continues to focus predominantly on interviews with elites and faith-based NGOs (Ellingson, 2016; Moody, 2002; Smith and Pulver, 2009) rather than the everyday, lived experience of religious congregations. A few notable exceptions are Sarah McFarland Taylor (2007)

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[26] A denomination is the national body to which a church belongs e.g. the Church of Scotland.

Martine Vonk (2011), and Cybelle Shattuck's (2016) studies, three of the most in-depth examples of qualitative research undertaken directly with faith communities to date.[27] All three authors use ethnographic methods to understand what McFarland Taylor (2007: xi) calls "religion on the ground".[28] Both McFarland Taylor and Vonk however focus exclusively on religious communities that are distinct from the everyday experience of most people of faith: McFarland Taylor (2007: 273) focuses on Catholic religious orders in the US, setting her study in the context of the countercultural experience of sustainable practices, both with regard to everyday society, and the Catholic Church in America more broadly; Vonk (2011) investigates the worldviews and values that drive environmental sustainability in faith-based communities, but these are two Catholic religious orders (Benedictine and Franciscan), and two distinctive communities (Amish and Hutterite). Both are fascinating, long-term ethnographic studies of different way communities can practice sustainability, but both must also be considered as particular case studies that offer insight and understanding, but suffer from a lack of transferability to the social context of a local church community because of the distinctiveness of the social contexts studied. Shattuck's (2016: 68-78) more recent study of US faith communities does address the congregational level empirically (albeit one third of her case studies were still monastic sites).[29] Her results demonstrate the importance of social context when seeking understanding about faith-based environmental action, a factor also identified by Djupe and Hunt (2009) in their studies of Lutheran and Episcopalian churches, and Baugh's (2015) research with African-American congregations in Chicago. Again, however, much of this research is based in North America. Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay (2014) have attempted valiantly to cast a more global perspective on the situation with their edited collection of examples from around the world (again, however, five of the six cases that represent the 'Global North' in the edited collection are from North America). Yet they are restrained by inconsistencies in their interpretation of 'religion' (particularly including institutional

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[27] Additional research with the meso-level include Middlemiss's research (2010) on sustainable consumption practices in a church ecology group and DeLashmutt's focus groups with churchgoers in southern England. McDuff's presentation (2012) of case studies from around the US serves more as an encouragement to other churches to become involved, rather than an analysis of their engagement. Wilkinson (2012:85-110) also includes interviews with churchgoers as part of her wider engagement with evangelical environmental leaders in the United States.

[28] From Danièle Hervieu-Lèger's *religion vécue* (lived religion) (McFarland Taylor, 2007: xi).

[29] Shattuck's fifteen case studies also included Jewish, Christian and Universalist congregations.

religions and indigenous beliefs and practices in the same context), and a somewhat scattergun approach to geographical engagement.

These social scientific studies have been brought together under an umbrella theme referred to as the "Greening of religion hypothesis",[30] the suggestion that "as religious people (or some subset of them) become more aware of negative environmental impacts from human behaviours, they are transforming their traditions in more environmentally friendly directions" (Taylor, 2011: 254). More recent research is increasingly presented not as a response to White's 1967 paper, but instead as an investigation of whether religions are "greening" (e.g. Baugh, 2015; Clements, McCright and Xiao, 2014; Carlisle and Clark, 2017; Veldman, 2016). Taylor and colleagues (Taylor 2011; 2016; Taylor, Van Wieren, and Zaleha, 2016b) strongly question whether attitudes and practices really have changed, and argue that the 'greening of religion' is not taking place. Instead, their proposition is that any 'greening of religion' is not actually a result of theological change, but rather a reflection of societal concerns (Taylor, 2011; Taylor Van Wieren, and Zaleha, 2016a, 2016b; Carlisle and Clark, 2017). This societal concern is important to consider, as it emphasises the social contexts in which people live. By continuing to focus heavily on survey-based research, Taylor and colleagues play down the importance of the social context of religion, and dismiss the activities of those who are engaging in environmentalism from a faith context. At the same time, framing environmentalism by faith communities primarily in terms of whether a religion is becoming more environmentally sensitive, in whatever way that is described, reduces the potential impact of research in this field. In fact, doing so arguably contributes to a continued sense of building disciplinary boundaries that are inward-looking, rather than seeking to promote the multi- and interdisciplinary aspects of research that can contribute, for example, to studies of social movements (Wald et al, 2005), sustainable communities (Middlemiss, 2011a), and environmental politics (Dalton, 2015; Schlosberg and Coles, 2016).

2.3 Understanding Christian environmental engagement

The study of faith-based environmentalism with regard to Christianity includes theological endeavour and social scientific enterprise. It has created a great deal of

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[30] Environmental ethicist Roderick Nash used the terminology of 'greening of religion' in his 1989 book *The Rights of Nature.*

knowledge and understanding about the place of environmental concerns within Christianity, and sought to articulate a relationship between Christian beliefs and environmental attitudes and actions that has proven to be rather more complex and multi-faceted than anticipated. To develop further understanding about environmental engagement by Christian communities, sociologist of religion Laurel Kearns outlined three 'models' or 'ethics' for understanding Christian engagement in environmental activity: a Christian stewardship ethic, an eco-justice ethic, and a creation spirituality ethic (Kearns, 1996). To summarise briefly, the "Christian stewardship" model is grounded in the teaching of Genesis 1:26-28, where God gives humans "dominion" over the earth (see p.24), and is now interpreted as an instruction for humans "to be good stewards and to take care of" the earth (Kearns, 1996:58). The second model, eco-justice focuses on connecting environmental issues with more traditional concerns for social justice in the church. Kearns' third model, creation spirituality, reflects the "awe-inspiring story of the evolution of the universe" (Kearns 1996:60), and seeks an ecocentric approach to understanding creation as a whole, and removing any focus on humans as somehow set apart from the rest of creation. These themes have subsequently expanded and developed (see e.g. Jenkins 2008), with significant overlap across topics, and considerable depth of discussion encapsulated within each category. In this section, I introduce each model in more detail, illustrating some of the key factors underpinning and addressed in each area, and considering how they can help to understand environmental engagement in the church in Scotland today.

Stewardship and/or creation care?

One of the most widely adopted metaphors for understanding environmental action by Christians is the encouragement to practice 'environmental stewardship,' often expressed within the same context as 'caring for God's creation.' One of the leading voices in the US context is Calvin DeWitt, who encapsulates the connection between stewardship and creation care in the title of his book "Caring for Creation: Responsible Stewardship of God's Handiwork" (DeWitt, 1998). R. J. Berry (2006: 1) also links stewardship and care for creation, opening his comprehensive edited volume *Environmental Stewardship* with: "Stewardship is about caring, and the recognition that we care for what we value". Stewardship invokes language of having responsibility, or a duty of care for the environment (Hulme, 2009: 148), and is a transformation of the understanding of dominion from one that gives humans authority to 'rule over' the

earth, to a more nuanced 'steward' role, giving humans responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the earth.[31] Stewardship is an ethic grounded in love for God and for the whole of creation (Bouma-Prediger, 2001; Wolf and Gjerris, 2009), and is strongly articulated in the introductory essays to *The Green Bible* (2008).[32] The concept of stewardship has however been widely criticised by theologians and biblical scholars: Rasmussen (2013:100) highlights how some Christian slave-owners were described as "good stewards" of their slaves, while others emphasise the underlying assumption of a world in which humans are somehow in control of, or set apart from, nature, which is thus understood to exist for humanity's welfare (Bauckham, 2010; Horrell et al, 2010:6; Northcott, 1996; Reader 1994. See Berry, 2006 for a fuller discussion)).

More recently, environmental stewardship has become more associated with more conservative groups in the USA.[33] The theme of *creation care* has developed as a somewhat distinct category (Kearns, 2011: 420), encapsulating many of the expressions of caring for, rather than ruling over, the environment, and of responding to environmental problems as part of a life of faithful service to God (Jenkins, 2008: 77). Today, creation care is probably the major theme described and discussed in the literature about religious environmentalism. It has been suggested that creation care developed as a form of 'Christian environmentalism' to distinguish faith-based environmental action from secular environmentalism (Wilkinson, 2010), and in response to the mutual suspicion between environmentalists and Christians that developed from White's 1967 paper (Marlow, 2009: 4-5; 12; Radford Ruether, 2011: 354). Others argue that creation care creates a strong biblical and theological argument for Christians to engage in environmental issues, a major social movement from which they previously refrained (Ellingson, 2005). The focus is frequently on individual-level actions,

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[31] This understanding of stewardship is drawn from the second creation narrative in Genesis 2:15, where humans are put on the earth "to till it and to keep it" (NRSV).
[32] The Green Bible (2008) is a standard version of the Bible (New Revised Standard Version), with 'environmentally themed' passages highlighted in green (a 'green-letter' edition, produced in response to so-called 'red-letter' versions of the Bible, in which words spoken by Jesus are printed in red). While intended as an awareness-raising project that illustrates the integration of environmental themes across the Bible, it has also been criticised for its heavy emphasis on human responsibility to care for the environment that itself is not a biblical instruction, but rather an interpretation of the Bible (Horrell, 2010; Horrell et al, 2010).
[33] Conservative Christian groups in the US have adopted stewardship language to make their case for an environmental ethic based on stewardship that seeks to use the earth's resources and to "enrich creation" for the benefit of humanity (Cornwall Alliance/Acton Institute, 2000). In 2007, the Cornwall Alliance was renamed as "The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation" (Zaleha and Szasz, 2014).

encouraging people to take care of God's creation (the natural environment) as part of their Christian ethical framework. Creation care is widespread in literature that has an academic focus (see for example Bouma-Prediger 2001, DeWitt 1998; Oelschlager, 1994) as well as that aimed at a general audience (e.g. Brown, 2008; Hodson and Hodson, 2015; Hosenfeld, 2009; McDonagh, 1996; McDuff 2012; Sleeth 2006). It is used across material about environmental concerns produced through the World Council of Churches (Conradie, 2016, Kim, 2016), and Fletcher Harper, Executive Director of multi-faith organisation *GreenFaith* claims that caring for creation is a theological norm across different religions (Harper, 2011:970).

Creation care and stewardship often continue to be used interchangeably by practitioners (see for example A Rocha, 2016, Harper, 2011) and those writing for a lay/non-specialist audience (Brown, 2008; Bouma-Prediger, 2001: 4; McDuff, 2012:7; Harper, 2011; Hosenfeld, 2009), as well as in non-specialist academic literature (Connelly et al, 2012:22-23). The academic terminology in studies of religion and ecology however tends increasingly towards *creation care* as the preferred language to describe the actions of Christians seeking a 'biblical' or theological grounding to their environmental engagement (Kearns, 2011:420; Wilkinson 2010:48).

Justice, eco-justice, environmental justice, climate justice, intergenerational justice?

Concern for justice is a strong motivational factor for traditional/mainline Protestant denominations (Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay, 2014: 300), and the Catholic Church (DeBerri et al, 2003: xi). Traditionally, justice concerns in the church include both the practice of compassion through direct help and support (Ammerman, 1997a: 203, 205; Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 3; Miles 2006: 114, 117-118), and recognition of the need for structural and institutional change (Ivereigh, 2010: 1). Burgess (2012: 46-47) highlights the portrayal of Jesus in the New Testament as a figure concerned with social equality and fighting corporate greed, illustrating concerns for justice in Jesus' teachings in Luke 10: 25-37 (the parable of the Good Samaritan, regularly summarised as "Love God, love neighbour"). Martin-Schramm (2010: xiv) points to Matthew 25:40 and the call to stand up for "the least of these," while Hulme (2009: 163) sets justice in an earlier biblical context, drawing on the prophet Micah's plea to "seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8).

In the context of environmental issues, justice is a way of linking environmental issues into longstanding concerns about social and economic justice in the Christian context (Kearns, 1996: 57; 2011). Concern about social justice is, of course, also a strong motivator that drives the secular environmental movement (Agyeman et al, 2016; Dobson, 1998; Hawken, 2007). Justice has been integrated in language used by the World Council of Churches with regard to environmental issues since the 1970s (Kim, 2016: xiii; Martin-Schramm, 2010: xii). The more specific terminology of *ecojustice* is often used to describe environmental concern within religious communities, emphasising the place of the environment within the social justice traditions of Christianity and embedding creation in a wider theological narrative of the church's response to social concerns (Kearns, 1996:57). Ecojustice represents 'the integrity of creation' within an overriding theological framework of justice, thereby eliciting a response that brings environmental issues into the everyday practice of Christianity (Jenkins, 2008:61-62). The language of *ecojustice* has however failed to expand much beyond religious groups (Moody, 2002: 261). Sociologists Emerson, Mirola and Monahan (2016:219-220) distinguish between creation care as an individualistic response to environmental issues, and ecojustice as a call for a broader, structural approach.[34] Ecojustice is an ethic that links concerns for structural inequalities that result in environmental degradation, such as economic exploitation and resource depletion, with concerns about social inequality, poverty, and the impact of environmental harm and climate change on the lives of the poor (Abraham, 2009:68; Beyer, 2011: 28). Moody (2002: 239-240) argues that ecojustice developed as a concept within mainline protestant churches approximately ten years prior to the mainstream environmental movement adopting justice within their frameworks, drawing attention to the global aspects of environmental injustice at a time when much of much of the environmental movement was specifically concerned with immediate, local environmental issues. Some proponents of an ecojustice ethic have also sought to emphasise the extension of concerns about justice not just to people affected by environmental degradation, but to the rest of creation, both human, and non-human (Bouma-Prediger, 2001: 157-158; Gottlieb, 2006: 9; Moody, 2002: 240; Rasmussen,

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[34] Moody's analysis of the development of ecojustice as a concern in Protestant religious communities emphasises its philosophical breadth, bringing environmental issues into traditional Christian concerns for justice, and expanding the concept of justice to the non-human aspects of God's creation (2002:240).

2001:7). This also partly responds to critiques of anthropocentrism levelled at Christianity and the stewardship model of engagement for example, as discussed earlier.

Language more commonly used within academic discussions to represent similar concerns to ecojustice, is environmental justice (see for example, Armstrong, 2012; Schlosberg, 2007). The terminology of environmental justice is also used by activists fighting against specific, often localised, cases of environmental injustice (Bohannon and O'Brien, 2011; Pellow and Nyseth Brehm, 2013). Taking environmental justice as a social movement in the first instance, the environmental justice movement in the USA is widely agreed to have emerged from a campaign in Warren County, North Carolina in 1982, where civil rights and environmental groups came together to protest the dumping of hazardous waste on land close to a predominantly African-American community (Schlosberg 2007, 46-47).[35] It is a broad movement that continues to be active in fighting environmental racism and poverty.[36,37] In the European context, Agyeman and Evans (2006:194) add that environmental justice includes demands that policy decisions do not adversely disadvantage particular groups or nations, rather than the more bottom-up/local action focus of the environmental justice movement in the USA. At the academic level, environmental justice includes the study of environmental justice movements, and extends beyond that to questions addressing practical and theoretical aspects of environmental justice within politics and policy (Schlosberg, 2007; Agyeman, et al, 2016). While ecojustice reflects what Bohannon and O'Neill (2011:164) refer to as "a theological and ethical ideal that harmoniously incorporates both social and ecological concerns", its use is restricted to religious groups. Environmental justice is more broadly established terminology that includes both a sense of action and political engagement at the local level, and a wider policy principle and framework (Agyeman and Evans, 2006: 201).

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[35] The Civil Rights movement did include environmental concerns in their activities prior to this event (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014: 360).

[36] Recent examples include Flint, Michigan, where unsafe levels of lead were found in the city's water supply in 2014, but largely ignored by state officials, and the 2016-2017 campaign to prevent the Dakota Access Pipeline being routed through Native American land (and safely away from a nearby city) in North Dakota.

[37] Church communities have been an active part of the environmental justice movement: a report issued by the United Churches of Christ (UCC, 1987) for example, was one of the first to use the language of environmental justice (Agyeman et al, 2016: 322).

Increasingly, more specific terminology is being adopted: climate justice is one example, as concerns about justice and equity are raised in recognition of the impacts of climate change on the global poor, and with regard to questions of responsibility and vulnerability in the international climate negotiations (Agyeman, et al, 2016; Hulme, 2010: 49-50; Kerber, 2014; Saunders, 2008; Schlosberg and Collins, 2014; WCC, 2013). Another issue gaining prominence is intergenerational justice, again often in response to the challenges of climate change, in which the impacts of environmental damage caused today will be most significantly felt by future generations (Gardiner, 2006). Described by Ball (2003: 543) as one of the hallmarks of environmentalism,[38] it is also a concern for Christian ethicists (Agius and Chircop, 1998; Muers, 2003; 2008). Martin-Schramm (2010: xiv) places concern for future generations within the context of "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40), while others raise theological and ethical questions of duties and responsibilities to future generations (Abraham, 2009: 67; Bouma-Prediger, 2001: 149-150), and consideration of whether and how compassion and care should extend to future generations (Krznaric, 2010; Wolf, Brown and Conway, 2009). Intergenerational justice is also a fundamental concept in *Laudato Si*, which states: "intergenerational solidarity is not optional; but rather it is a basic question of justice; since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us" (Francis, 2015, #118). McFague (1997: 1), Northcott (1996: 129) and Schlosberg (2007: 115) all stress however that intergenerational concern continues to prioritise concern for humans over the non-human world.

Reflecting this context and use of terminology, Kearns (2011: 417-418; 2012) has recently moved away from 'ecojustice' both as a concept, and as a distinct environmental model motivating environmental engagement in faith communities. Instead, she emphasises that a broader concern for social justice permeates environmentalism in the church today, as people increasingly recognise that climate change and environmental degradation affects agriculture, health, water and poverty. All of these are traditional issues of concern within faith communities as discussed above. Throughout this thesis, I also take this broader view, and adopt justice as an overriding framework for understanding environmentalism in faith communities.

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[38] See Schlosberg for discussion of intergenerational justice as a theme within green political theory (2007: 112-115).

Creation spirituality and creation theology

A third model of environmental action in faith communities is often described as *creation spirituality* and represents an effort to move away from the anthropocentric view of Christianity critiqued by White, to a theological understanding that embraces a more eco-centric view of the world. The origins of *creation spirituality* are frequently attributed to the writings of Matthew Fox (particularly *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (1988)) and Thomas Berry (*Dream of the Earth* (1988)),[39] although Northcott (1996:147-150) also points to James Cobb's 1972 book *Is it too late?* as a significant influence in drawing attention to dualisms between God and nature, and humanity and nature, that have persisted through the modern era. Authors such as Joseph Sittler, who theorised a 'Theology for Earth' and called for a more equal relationship between man [sic], nature and God (quoted in Grim & Tucker, 2014) are also credited with a significant input into the concept of creation spirituality.[40]

Crediting Fox, Berry, Sittler, and others, with the development of a creation spirituality is a relatively contemporary reflection on the literature. Jewish and Christian thinkers have been engaged in creating and understanding a theology of creation that has a theocentric worldview since the first century. Marlow (2009: 21-34) gives a strong overview of some of the earliest theological expositions of creation theology, including Irenaeus articulating God as Creator of all things in the second Century, and Augustine's commentaries on Genesis that 'acknowledges the goodness and immanence of God as demonstrated in the beauty and completeness of creation" in the fourth Century.[41] Marlow also shows how writers in the Middle Ages reflected on the natural world as a way to know God beyond the scriptures, and draws particular attention to St. Francis of Assisi, the 13th Century monk who described animals and birds as brother and sister. St. Francis is widely known for preaching to, and encountering God in, the natural world (Acocella, 2013; Marlow, 2009:37-41), and was the inspiration for Pope Francis' choice of name (Catholic Herald, 2013).[42]

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[39] See Grim and Tucker, 2014: 87-95, McDonagh, 2016: 137-142, and Taylor, 2011:5-8 for more information on Thomas Berry's influence in particular.

[40] Creation spirituality is also known as creation theology, or creation-centred spirituality (Gottlieb, 1996: 274-276).

[41] Augustine's ultimate focus is the relationship between God and human, rather than the environment.

[42] Lynn White Jr (1967: 1206-1207) devotes almost one-sixth of "The Historic Roots of the Ecologic Crisis" by calling for Christians to embrace St Francis as "the patron saint of ecology". Pope Francis

Creation spirituality has been criticised within some parts of Christianity for going beyond orthodox teaching and preaching a sort of pantheism,[43] or 'cosmo-centrism' (Johnston, 2013: 121) that some say shifts the focus of worship beyond God to nature.[44] Indeed, this represents one side of the apparent mutual suspicion between environmentalists and Christians: in the broadest terms, some environmentalists are said to have adopted White's critique of Christianity, while some Christians are hesitant about what they feel is 'nature worship,' or reverence for nature rather than God (Agliardo, 2014: 183; Johnston, 2013: 111).

The work of leading biblical scholars and theologians, however, has sought to emphasise how a creation spirituality can be biblically grounded and theocentric, putting God at the centre (see for example Moltmann, 1993; Bauckham, 2010; Moo & White, 2014). Moltmann's influential *God in Creation* (1993) draws on Jewish and Christian traditions, as well as the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Newton, and others to emphasise the importance of considering "the whole testimony of scripture, not merely Genesis 1 and 2" (1993: 53). Moltmann encourages a world view in which humans understand themselves as members of "the community of creation" (1993: 31). Bauckham (2010) echoes this call through his presentation of a biblical metanarrative that takes passages from the Old Testament including Job 38-41 and some of the Psalms, as well as New Testament excerpts such as Matthew 6: 25-34, as a foundation for understanding humanity as 'fellow-members' (with non-humans) of the community of creation. Theologian Celia Deane-Drummond (2006) articulates how a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world can evoke praise of God and a deep sense of spirituality (factors that Walker-Jones (2009) also discusses in the book of Psalms), while Norman Wirzba portrays the world as "created, sustained, and daily loved by God" (2015:3), engendering a response of love that seeks to nurture, heal and reconcile.[45]

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himself speaks of St Francis of Assisi as "my guide and inspiration" in *Laudato Si',* and devotes three paragraphs of the encyclical to his life and teachings (2015, #10-12).

[43] Fox (1988: 212) critiques the 'personality cult' of Catholic worship (the context to which he was writing) that focuses on the priest rather than "the stars, the atoms and the galaxies" for example. See also Northcott, 1996:155-157.

[44] Hayhoe & Farley (2009: xi) for example feel the need to say "We're Christians. We don't worship the earth. We worship the Creator of the universe" in their book about climate change written for a conservative Christian audience, and the title of Campolo's 1992 book is "How to Rescue the Earth without Worshipping Nature."

[45] Political scientist John Dryzek critiques some of these responses as examples of what he terms "green romanticism", arguing that having an attitude that nature is sacred or worthy of love does not necessarily lead to sufficient action (1997: 161-162; 169)

Kearns (2004: 478-479) identifies an understanding of creation spirituality that raises the importance of cosmological "revelations of the universe" above traditional biblical knowledge, and highlights that a wide variety of spiritual traditions including mysticism and indigenous spiritualities are included in her definition. Jenkins (2008) integrates "a spiritual communion of humanity and earth, assumed into personal experience with God" (Jenkins, 2008: 93) and emphasises the correlation of the Christian story with the cosmic one (Jenkins, 2008:98). Authors like Thomas Berry also continue to have a broad, popular influence in some Christian communities (McFarland Taylor, 2007: 5-8).[46] I have emphasised that a more biblically-grounded, theocentric element is now also strongly evident within the theme of creation spirituality, one in which humanity is considered part of 'the community of creation', and reflects a sense of awe and wonder that nurtures the experience of God for the believer. I adopt such a perspective throughout this thesis.

2.4 Summary

The study of religion and ecology/religious environmentalism is an active area of research, yet has significant gaps which need to be addressed. I have shown how studies in the Christian context, fall into two very broad categories. The first is ecotheology, as theologians seek to "retrieve the ecological wisdom embedded in the Christian tradition" (Conradie, et al, 2014: 1), and to develop an understanding of how that tradition relates to contemporary environmental issues and challenges. A number of dominant themes emerging from this work have been outlined, and are often brought together and expanded in reflections and statements issued by denominations and faith leaders. There appears however to be an assumption by denominations of a correlation between such statements and the theological understandings, and subsequent practical responses, of churches at the local level (Chaplin, 2016). Yet one of the challenges identified by many authors is the gap between what religions say about environmental issues at the macro-level, and how it links to the theology that is taught and expressed on the ground (Ayre, 2014; DeLashmutt, 2011; McGuire, 2002: 106; Taylor et al, 2016; Veldman et al, 2012; Wilkinson, 2012).

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[46] Berry was a Catholic priest, and McFarland Taylor's work refers to his popularity in her study of Catholic women's orders.

A second category of academic literature is more empirical in nature, as researchers have sought to understand how and whether people who identify with a particular religion are more or less environmental than others in society, who might not identify with a particular faith.[47] Within this wealth of social science research, western religions, specifically Christianity, dominates,[48] as does the North American context, and in particular, studies of North American evangelicalism. Yet much of this research is also filled with questions about ambiguous definitions of religion and religiosity, and diverse descriptions of environmental attitudes and behaviours. The manner in which much of this existing research has been undertaken is weakened, as it removes religion from the social life in which it is undoubtedly contextualised, and demands a fixed-time response to an ongoing process (McGuire, 1997, in McFarland Taylor, 2011, xiv-xv). An additional, specific criticism of some of the previous research in this area is the broad assumption that theological motivations or beliefs can be expressed most easily by a measure of belief in biblical literacy. This belief is a theological understanding associated with a particular section of predominantly white, evangelical Christianity from the American south whereas, in reality, beliefs and motivations are much more "multi-faceted, diverse and malleable" (McGuire, 2008: 5) than survey-based research allows or assumes.

There are significant gaps to address in the study of religion and ecology/religious environmentalism. Firstly, there is a need to move beyond questions about links between specific religious beliefs and environmental attitudes. The evidence to date is ambiguous and inconclusive (as early as 1995, Kanagy and Nelsen commented "It is an understatement to conclude that our understanding of the relationship between religiousness and environmental concern lacks clarity" (1995: 36)). The attempt by Taylor to characterise and dismiss a "greening of religion hypothesis" (Taylor, 2011) is unhelpful, as it suggests that the value of faith-based environmental action is only worthy of academic, or practical, interest, if it is shown to be widely practiced by all

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[47] A third body of non-academic literature that could also be considered in this context is the lay-oriented, practically-based literature aimed at churchgoers and faith leaders. This literature often combines information about contemporary environmental issues with theological reflection and suggestions for practical engagement. Examples include Brown, 2008; Campolo, 1992; Hosenfeld, 2009; McDuff, 2010; Merritt, 2010; Moo and White, 2014; and Spencer and White, 2007.

[48] Jenkins (2009) suggests that the dominance of studies of Christianity in this area of research is a result of Lynn White Jr's specific criticism of Christianity, and the religious and academic response to his assertions.

representations of a particular faith group; or if academic enquiry is understood as a way to analyse the effectiveness, or otherwise, of translating theological beliefs into practice. A better way to investigate faith-based environmentalism is to seek analysis and understanding of why people in faith-based communities might become active in participating in issues of environmental concern, and consider how that concern is expressed. I contend that such a 'greening of religion' hypothesis also reflects an attempt to create a stronger disciplinary boundary around studies within religion and ecology, a historically interdisciplinary field. Doing so reduces the opportunity to expand the impact of studies in this area which, in addition to being of interest to those already engaged at the intersection of religion and environmentalism, can also offer insight to studies of environmentalism and environmental politics, for example, particularly with regard to community-level engagement in environmental activism, and to studies of religions and religious communities more broadly.

A second priority for research in this area is to move beyond surveys and to engage with the everyday practices of environmentalism with a faith context. Schlosberg and Coles (2016) suggest that small community-based movements are practicing a "new environmentalism of everyday life", while Dalton (2015) suggests that what he terms 'conservation-behaviour' – the willingness to recycle and change to more sustainable lifestyles, is increasing as a form of environmental activism, over and above traditional forms of political activism. These are the activities with which faith communities engage, as will become evident in this thesis. A similar perspective is gained from other studies of religious communities: McFarland Taylor (2007) emphasises the importance of understanding 'religion on the ground' to gain insight and understanding into the everyday practices of people of faith, as mentioned earlier, while Meredith McGuire (2008:13) emphasises the importance of grasping the complexity and fluidity of peoples' practice of religion "in the context of their everyday lives" for gaining understanding of religion. Such research will also cast light on the relationship between the significant amount of scholarly ecotheology that has been undertaken and the 'ordinary theology' (Astley, 2002) represented through the beliefs and practice of churchgoers. Finally, given the overwhelming dominance of studies based in North America, and the diverse ways that Christianity is reflected around the world, there is a strong need to integrate more geographical diversity into future studies. This will enable greater understanding of the different contexts in which Christianity is lived, and move beyond assumptions about

the presumed ubiquity and homogeneity of the type of north American conservative evangelicalism that is not representative of the diversity of Christianity across the globe (or even across the USA), which dominates research in this area to date.

My thesis will attempt to fill these gaps. To answer my question *what explains environmental advocacy by faith-communities,* in the following chapter, I outline the approach taken in this thesis to move beyond survey-based questions of beliefs and behaviours, and instead examine the practice of faith in the everyday context. I explain the rationale for the approach, and give details of the research strategy and methodology adopted to answer my research question.

3 Research Design, Aims and Strategy

In this chapter, I give an overview of the research design adopted to answer the research questions outlined in chapter one. I explain the research strategy that is applied, and describe the methods of data collection utilised throughout the research. In particular, I describe the ethnographic research methods adopted, and introduce the research setting and cases selected to inform this research. In describing my research methods and data collection, I also reflect on the process of learning ethnography and of being an ethnographic researcher in a familiar, everyday context. In the second half of this chapter I outline the analytical process, before closing with a discussion of some of the ethical issues involved in my research, and thoughts on my positionality as an ethnographic researcher in this project.

3.1 The 'what' and 'why' of environmental engagement: Research question and aims

The aim of the research is to seek explanation and understanding about why people of faith are engaged in environmental action in their faith communities. It considers how support for environmental issues is integrated into congregational life, and investigates the motivations and practices of environmental advocacy. The principal research question to address these aims is: w*hat explains environmental engagement in faith communities?* To address the question of 'what explains engagement', my secondary research questions also seek to address the *why* and *what* of faith-based environmentalism: *why do communities become involved in environmental advocacy? W*hat are the *motivations for engaging in environmental action within a church context? What are the practices of faith-based environmentalism?* A further question asks whether and how intergenerational concerns are present.

3.2 Studying everyday religion: an ethnographic research strategy

In the previous chapter, I addressed one of the particular challenges of much of the previous research into religion and ecology: it is a field heavily dominated by quantitative, survey-based research. Much of this research seeks to assert causal links between specific measures of religion (specific biblical beliefs; levels of 'religiosity') and indicators of environmental attitudes and behaviours. The wide range of survey-based research has however delivered mixed results, as indicated earlier, and the over-reliance on survey data has been criticised among other things, because of its focus on self-

reporting, and the necessity of 'individual-scale' responses that negate the social context in which religion is grounded (Proctor and Berry, 2005). By contrast, research about other aspects of faith-based activism often adopts a more qualitative approach, and is frequently based on case studies that give depth and insight into the phenomenon studied, rather than seeking to connect particular indicators of beliefs with specific actions and activities (e.g. Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Cloke, Beaumont and Williams, 2013; Marsh, 2005; Smith, 1996; Snyder, 2011; Wuthnow and Evans, 2002)). An in-depth, qualitative approach similarly offers the best opportunity for answering the what and why research questions at the heart of this thesis.

To answer my research aims and questions about the motivations and practices of faith-based environmental activists, and to investigate the social context in which religion is practiced, I take a qualitative approach to my research and set out to study the social world of the actors in depth. At the start of my research, my original research strategy was a qualitative approach based on interviews and focus groups in a number of churches, to get a wide-ranging overview of environmental advocacy and activity in Scotland. My assumption was that interviews would allow churchgoers to tell me about their environmental involvement and practices, and thus provide a rich dataset of facts and anecdotes to analyse and discuss. The addition of focus groups was intended to enable me to gather a variety of perspectives, while also gaining insight into shared understandings of environmental engagement in the communities (Gibbs, 1997). Indeed, my intention was that focus groups would enable research participants to engage in informal discussions about their underlying beliefs and motivations, without leading input from me as a researcher (Wilkinson, 1998). Early in my PhD experience however, I was introduced to the concept of ethnography and specifically participant observation (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002), and I took the opportunity to engage in 'practicing' ethnography at a number of climate change-related public events in the autumn of 2013. Through this experience, and as I learned more, I realised that my concern to investigate faith-based environmentalism from the perspective of the local congregation relied on getting to know and understanding the everyday experience of a congregation, rather than being told about it in an interview. As such, I began to understand that an ethnographic research approach grounded in participant observation would better enable me to analyse the everyday life of the community from the perspective of participants (Berg and Lune, 2012:2000) and thus gain a detailed and in-

depth understanding of the experience of environmental engagement by a faith community.

While ethnography is a broadly used term, its fundamental heart is an emphasis on participation in, and observation of, the social world being studied over an extended period of time (Atkinson, 2015:4, 25; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Indeed, ethnography and participant observation are terms that are often used synonymously in the literature (Bryman, 2004: 292-293). Ethnographic research has a strong focus on the everyday life of a community (Atkinson 2015:16-19; 61; Berg & Lune, 2012:200) and on the "analysis of social action and social organisation" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:7). Ethnography is however more than participant observation: as an approach, it also includes the use of interviews, document analysis and other data collection methods (Berg and Lune, 2012; Bryman, 2004) to analyse and understand the situation being studied.[49] I felt that adopting an ethnographic approach to the study of faith-based communities would to reveal insights into the practices and routines of faith-based activists that would not be possible by the use of interviews or questionnaires alone (Gobo, 2011: 25). I am interested in the motivations and practices of congregations, and how these factors influence their involvement in environmental action. Indeed, in prioritising everyday practices of religion and religious environmentalism, my intention is to consider what McGuire calls "religion-as-lived" or lived religion (2008: 15; see also Hervieu-Lèger, 2007; Ammerman, 2007). In doing so, I emphasise that the practice of environmental engagement within a religious or faith-based setting goes beyond a tick-box exercise of faith and belief, and instead is experienced and expressed by ordinary people in their everyday lives (McGuire, 2008: 11-12) and as part of a faith-community.

In adopting an ethnographic approach, my research is constructivist and interpretive, focusing on the meanings that participants create as part of their everyday activities (Blaikie, 2010: 99). Although ethnographic research is sometimes perceived to adopt an inductive research strategy and claims to enter the field without preformed questions, I agree with Atkinson's comments that ethnography should not be

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[49] I understand ethnography as a method of gathering data (Bryman, 2004:293; Spickard, 2016: 174) and a research practice rather than a formal writing style. While I intend throughout this thesis to represent the congregations studied in a way that honours the ethnographic research strategy adopted throughout this research, I have intentionally avoided describing the results of this thesis as "an ethnography" of faith-based environmentalism, given the somewhat more formally structured layout of the thesis.

considered a "purely inductive undertaking" (2015:58). I adopt what Blaikie refers to as an abductive research strategy (Blaikie 2010:89-92), which addresses both the 'what' and the 'why' of environmental activism in the everyday lives of participants, and which aims to discover the meanings and motives of social actors in this context. The quality of constructivist and interpretive research is evaluated by criteria such as trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:13; see also Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research is, as Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2011:106) state, not about erasing ambiguities in research, but rather about understanding their sources. Trustworthiness, something of an 'umbrella term' (Schwartz-Shea, 2006:101) is shown by researcher reflexivity, transparency in engagement and analysis, and 'member checking,' the practice of taking the written material and research findings back to the participants and thus demonstrating a commitment to knowledge that prioritises the research participants' understanding of their experiences (Schwartz-Shea, 2006:104-106). The credibility of qualitative research is demonstrated by factors such as prolonged engagement and observation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 301), while transferability rests on the researcher offering sufficient 'thick description' to enable others to assess whether research findings can be 'transferred' to a new setting (Schwartz-Shea, 2006: 109). Throughout my research and in this thesis, I incorporate such considerations into my research strategy, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and reflexivity throughout, and thereby illustrating how the research presented in this thesis adheres to quality criteria widely used in qualitative and interpretive research.

It is also important to emphasise the interdisciplinary nature of this research project in which I use social science methodology (ethnography) to study how environmental advocacy is practiced within the context of the church. In doing so, I come across questions of how Christian theology is interpreted, understood and practiced in everyday life. I take inspiration from Stark and Finke (2000: 21) about studying the human side of faith, and adopt a research approach that respects and has empathy for the beliefs of the people I am studying. I also engage with literature in congregational studies that seeks to understand the local church, whether at a global or local level (e.g. Ammerman, 2005; 2007; Cameron et al, 2005, Woodhead et al, 2004). Although much of the congregational studies literature in the UK has focused intrinsically on the local church within its community (Woodhead et al, 2004:18; Jenkins,

1999), research from the US has a strong emphasis on how the local church addresses wider social issues (e.g. Wuthnow and Evans, 2002). These wider issues are of particular interest to this research.

I should add also that I find myself intrigued by Scharen's encouragement (2012: 2-3) for 'rapprochement between empirical and theological understandings of the church', as the findings of this research will be of interest to those engaging faith communities in environmental activism, and those seeking to understand faith-based activism in a church community more broadly. Yet my approach follows more broadly with James Spickard's argument (2016: 173-174) that ethnography and theology are not the same thing: I am not a theologian using ethnography, rather I am a social scientist using ethnographic methods to investigate a phenomenon that exists in a religious and theological context.

Research Setting

To study the everyday lives of communities of faith engaged in environmental activities, I investigate churches that are members of the organisation Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS). ECS is a charity that "offers a programme to enthuse and equip churches to weave environmental issues into their life and mission in an enjoyable and stimulating way."[50] As of July 2017, ECS has four hundred registered member churches who are interested and/or involved in environmental issues. More information about ECS can be found in Appendix A. ECS is an ecumenical (i.e. non-denominational) organisation, and member churches come from all over Scotland. ECS stands on its own as the representative organisation for Christian communities engaging in environmental issues in Scotland, and is of intrinsic and instrumental interest (Stake, 2003: 136) for my research to seek insight about faith-based environmentalism in Scotland.[51] ECS's role as a partner organisation in the broader research project contributed to its role as a gatekeeper (Berg and Lune, 2012: 214), helping to facilitate access to potential congregations of interest for the research. The process for selection of research cases within ECS is detailed in the next section.

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[50] www.ecocongregationscotland.org/about-us/about/. Accessed 11 May 2017.
[51] ECS is of intrinsic interest to my study as a non-academic partner in the overarching research project under which my PhD is funded.

3.3   Research Methods and Data Collection

Preliminary research and pilot studies

In the initial year of my PhD research, I familiarised myself with ECS as an organisation, meeting some of its active members through participant observation at events such as an Edinburgh-network meeting[52] (October 2013), a 'Vision Day' for board members and key volunteers (December 2013), and the Annual Gathering (April 2014). I also attended other environmentally-themed gatherings in Edinburgh, including an event about climate change at the Edinburgh Storytelling Festival (*Beacons: Stories for our not so distant future*); campaign events such as *Fossil Free*, organised by the student-led activist organisation People and Planet, and featuring prominent speaker and climate campaigner, Bill McKibben (October 2013); and the *People's Climate March,* Edinburgh's contribution to a series of public marches ahead of a Climate Summit at the UN General Assembly (September 2014). Participation in these events served as familiarisation with the contemporary environmental movement in Edinburgh, and the involvement of faith-based groups therein.[53] My engagement in these activities enabled me to practice my participant observation skills, and provided a rich background on which to reflect on the nature of faith-based environmental action within the contemporary environmental movement in Scotland.

To familiarise myself with ECS and its member churches more deeply, I also carried out four investigative pilot visits to churches, to understand the everyday life of an eco-congregation. I attended one church in central Scotland to participate in its ECS Award assessment,[54] gaining an insight into the ECS award scheme which recognises environmental actions undertaken by churches. The three additional churches were investigated as potential study sites, but were unsuitable to wider involvement in the research, whether because of my research parameters changing (my first visit was to a possible church in the town of St Andrews, prior to finally restricting my research field to Edinburgh) or because there proved to be little active participation or engagement in

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[52] ECS operates twenty regional network groups for support and peer-mentoring across local churches.

[53] *Fossil Free* was co-sponsored by Operation Noah, a faith-based movement that lobbies churches in the UK to divest their financial holdings from fossil fuel companies. See www.operationnoah.org. Accessed 11 May 2017.

[54] ECS Awards "for environmental excellence" are presented to churches that have undertaken a number actions and commitments in their community. Of 397 registered eco-congregations in May 2017, 125 hold an ECS Award. More details can be found at www.ecocongregationsscotland.org/award/ (accessed 11 May 2017).

environmental activity.[55] These visits and interviews however gave me an opportunity to practice my field note writing skills, and to pilot some interview questions, both of which were important as I entered the main data collection period of my research.

Selecting research sites and gaining access

The primary criterion for selection of research sites was an opportunity to learn from those engaging in environmental action (Stake, 2003:153-154) to enable me to address the question of why communities engage, what motivates their activities, and how they practice engagement. The principal gathering of a church and the external expression of its faith is the worship service (Day, 2004:109), so I made it a priority to attend Sunday worship services as the main opportunity to connect with congregations. As such, practical considerations also affected the choice of churches for ongoing participant observation. I opted to concentrate on churches within the city of Edinburgh, given the necessity of getting to Sunday morning gatherings by public transport, and in anticipation of weekday evening activities throughout the period of fieldwork.[56] Taking the list of registered congregations from the ECS website, I undertook purposive sampling (Bryman, 2008:414-415; Stake, 2000:446) to select congregations that I would approach for inclusion in my research. To study communities that would "provide insight" (Gerring, 2007:91) about the life and practice of an eco-congregation, I focused initially on those that had achieved at least one ECS award, taking evidence of an ECS award as an indication of a demonstrable level of commitment to engagement in environmental issues.[57] From the list of forty-three churches in Edinburgh (at October 2014, excluding one church that is listed as a member, but has since closed), nineteen congregations were noted as having received one or more ECS awards. I then manually analysed church websites for indications of environmental activity, looking through event listings, or for details of a 'green group' or ECS. I also asked the ECS administrative team for recommendations of churches in Edinburgh that they knew to be actively engaged, recognising that church websites are

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[55] In one case, although the minister was enthusiastic about involvement in the research, there had been no specific eco-congregation engagement by church members in the preceding four years; in another case, the 'key person' had recently moved away, and the church did not want to engage further with my study at this time.

[56] Church groups are what Crang and Cook (2007:39) refer to as spatially and temporally intermittent communities. My observations took place where and when the communities gathered.

[57] Churches can register as eco-congregations without necessarily taking any further activity or action post-registration.

often not as up-to-date as is desirable, and given the challenge of having only one hour on a Sunday morning in which to get a sense of a church congregation in its principal form. I contacted each of the nineteen churches by telephone to ascertain further information about engagement, and to try and obtain contact details for a minister or active layperson whom I should approach for further information. I cross-referenced the findings of my internet research and telephone conversations with the recommendations from ECS staff, and identified five churches to approach in more detail about participating in my research. These were selected as I felt they would provide both a relatively 'typical' or representative experience of a church community in Edinburgh (Gerring, 2007:91), and offer a good opportunity from which to learn about what it means to be engaged in environmental work (Crang and Cook, 2007: 14).[58,59] In doing so, I followed the advice of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:49) to sample both what could be considered routine, as well as that which is more extraordinary.

I contacted these five churches by phone and by email, enclosing a short project information sheet (see appendix B), explaining my work and asking for permission to engage with the community for my research over a period of approximately twelve months. This approach worked well for establishing contact with three churches (including two that ultimately became research sites) but took more time with others because of difficulties in getting in touch by phone (few churches have full-time office support). Similarly, awareness of data protection legislation in the UK meant that I was reliant on emails being forwarded to relevant church members and awaiting a response, rather than obtaining contact details and contacting people directly. This resulted in early delays in getting my fieldwork off the ground. In two of the churches, I also found that attending on a Sunday morning soon after contacting the church worked better for finding the 'right' people to speak with, instead of waiting for an email response.[60]

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[58] There is one city-centre church that is well known in the community for its political engagement, and holds an ECS award. I was however specifically asked by ECS staff not to approach them, as the church had expressed concern about being asked to host a number of researchers (at the time of writing, I am aware of at least one other environmentally-themed project organised another School in the university with which this church is involved).

[59] Representativeness is difficult to determine (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000:42) but for the purposes of a study that investigates the everyday experience of environmentalism in churches, my intention was to represent churches that were not exceptionally large or well-resourced, for example, such as the main cathedral in Edinburgh.

[60] As an academic, it is easy to assume that everyone has and uses frequent access to email. That is not the case for some members of the population, particularly older demographics, who are more likely to be represented in churches in Scotland.

Research field: Edinburgh

As mentioned above, practical reasons meant that Edinburgh was chosen as a study site (Silverman, 2006:81): in seeking to participate on an ongoing basis on Sunday mornings and for occasional midweek events, it was necessary to choose a field of research that was easily accessible from my home by public transport. Churches within ECS are found across Scotland, from Shetland to Dumfries, but I felt that studying a small number of churches in an urban location would provide an element of triangulation of my data collection, thus helping to ensure the robustness of my research findings, and enable a level of comparison across cases. Studying churches in diverse geographical locations, such as one in Edinburgh, one in a village or market town, and one in a remote Scottish highland or island community, as I also considered in the very early stages of my PhD, would have been more appropriate for answering a different research question.

Focusing on some element of homogeneity of place (Edinburgh), my purposive sampling included denominational diversity, to consider whether contextual differences lead to different results (Bryman, 2008:287). Following initial contact and site visits with the five churches mentioned earlier, the churches finally selected for ongoing ethnographic study were members of the Church of Scotland (CofS), the United Reformed Church (URC), and the Roman Catholic church. My initial intention was to participate in four congregations (including either an Episcopalian or non-denominational church in my study), but with the weekly rhythm of church community life, I recognised that participation on at best a monthly basis was not conducive to establishing myself as a participant in the life of the community.[61] Additionally, the amount of time I could spend in each community (e.g. at weekday evening events) would be further reduced if I sought to include a fourth congregation. This trade-off of breadth and depth is a challenge faced by many ethnographers (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 40), and I concluded that three churches was the optimal, practical size of study that enabled an extended period of participation and observation across a range of communities, but without spreading myself too thinly and thus sacrificing depth of insight.

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[61] Participation would likely have been even less regular than every four weeks because of occasional other personal commitments that took me away from Edinburgh.

The cases adopted for this research are summarised below (see chapter four for more information about each church).

	Denomination	Description
Saughtonhall Church	United Reformed Church (reformed/congregational)	Approximately weekly 60 attendees; mostly retired; stable congregation. Located 3 miles west of the city centre.
Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (CSH)	Roman Catholic Church	Approximately 250 attendees at main Sunday morning mass. Diverse congregation; city centre location.
Wardie Parish Church	Church of Scotland (Presbyterian)	Approximately 150 weekly attendees. Lots of families with children. Located in suburb approximately 3 miles north of city centre (city outskirts).

Table 3.1 Brief summary of the churches featured in this research.

Demographically, both Wardie and Saughtonhall are located in some of the most privileged areas in Scotland according to Scottish Government statistics (in the top 5% on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)) while CSH is located in a more mixed area (band 12 (representing top 45-40%) of the SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2016b). More detail about each church is included in chapter four.

A short note on context

The UK context and the denominational backgrounds of the churches that form the basis of this study are important. As highlighted in chapter two, many of the studies at the intersection of religion and ecology have been undertaken in the USA, where the religious landscape is distinct to the UK, and to Scotland. In particular, smaller numbers of people claim adherence to religion (in the 2011 Scottish census, 53.8 per cent of the population identified as Christian, 36.7 per cent answered 'no religion' and another seven per cent did not state a preference (Scottish Government, 2013, 2015); and church participation and attendance is declining (Guest, Olson and Wolffe, 2012). Similarly, many of the previous studies purporting to investigate the links between religion and environmental attitudes or behaviours have typically focused on conservative evangelicals, often identified through beliefs about biblical literalism or imminent end-times, as theologies indicative of Christian belief (e.g. Guth et al, 1995;

Maier, 2010). Such beliefs are not widespread in the UK (Unsworth, 2016). Instead, the three churches included in this study would be considered 'liberal' or 'mainline' churches in the North American context.

Data collection: participant observation, interviews, documents and photographs

As an ethnographic study, the principal method of data collection is participant observation. Following Bryman (2004:293), I understand ethnography to be a method which focuses on being immersed in a social setting over an extended period of time, making observations of the community and engaging in conversation, as well as interviewing informants and collecting documents. I took photographs to remind myself of situations and locations, and to represent ways that environmental activity was practiced in each of the church contexts. My 'formal' data collection period and my commitment to regular, involved participant observation began in October 2014 and continued for twelve months, finishing early in October 2015. While I sensed I was reaching an element of data saturation over the summer, it was at this time (June 2015) that the environmentally-themed encyclical *Laudato Si'* was released by Pope Francis. This stimulated activity by participants at CSH and, I hoped, might offer more opportunity for conversation with churchgoers in the Catholic church in particular. In addition, ECS as an organisation was becoming more involved with the build-up to the COP21/Paris climate negotiations, seeking to engage member churches as part of that activity. I therefore extended the period of fieldwork beyond the summer and spent a full twelve months with the congregations. After withdrawing from ongoing participation in the communities, three additional relevant contact opportunities arose, in November 2015 (Global Climate March, to which I was specifically invited by one of my research participants); February 2016 (a follow-up interview with one of the ministers prior to her leaving to take up a new position); and March 2016 (*Laudato Si'* Lenten Retreat Day hosted by the Catholic Diocese's Justice and Peace group). I have included these in my analysis. A summary of these dates is included in the table below.

Initial phase	Sept 2013-Sept 2014	Familiarisation Pilot visits Development of research design
Pilot phase	Early Oct 2014	Exploratory visits Pilot interviews
Principal data collection phase	Oct 2014-Oct 2015 Feb-Apr 2015	Ongoing participant observation Interviews with non-case churches[62]
Closing phase	Sept-Oct 2015 November 2015 February-March 2016	Disengagement from field Follow-up opportunities

Table 3.2 Timetable for pilot studies and data collection.

Over this period, I attended events on ninety-seven distinct occasions, including Sunday worship services, public events, church meetings, social events, discussion groups, childrens' holiday club, and local and national meetings organised by ECS. This figure includes attendance at thirty-six Sunday morning services at the three case churches (thirteen, ten and thirteen visits to Saughtonhall, CSH and Wardie respectively). These ninety-seven visits resulted in 198.5 contact hours with the communities, not including time for travel to/from the venue, or for writing up field notes. I undertook informal interviews with ten participants, and held numerous other conversations over coffee and during the course of events with additional interlocutors. I also gathered 275 documents from the churches, including worship sheets, meeting minutes, events publicity and ECS award applications, using these to supplement and inform my data analysis more broadly. A summary of this data collection is included in the table below:

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[62] In addition to the case churches where ongoing participant observation was the principal form of data collection, I also interviewed seventeen people representing sixteen other congregations in Edinburgh. These interviews were intended to increase the scope and add an element of triangulation to the data gathered for the research. Data from these interviews have however not been included in this thesis, as my research focused on a commitment to representing and understanding the everyday experience of social lives ongoing through participant observation (Atkinson, 2015:16-19; 33), rather than an interview-based study of a larger number of churches.

	Saughtonhall	CSH	Wardie	ECS	**Total**
Sunday worship services	13	10	13	n/a	**36**
Other events	9	20	12	10	**51**
Informal interviews	3	3	4	n/a	**10**
Total	25	33	29	10	**97**
Number of contact hours	49.75	61.5	59	28.25	**198.5**

Table 3.3 Overview of fieldwork participation.

Initial contact: building relationships

My initial priority was to get to know each community as well as possible. In the first instance this was based around Sunday morning worship services – the main gathering point for any traditional church community. Given the open nature of church services, although I had contacted the churches about my research prior to an initial visit, I did not inform them ahead of time of my planned attendance on a Sunday visit. I was always open about my role as a researcher. I engaged in conversations before the worship service began, and over coffee after the service, each time openly introducing myself as someone "doing a project about eco-congregations" or "doing research about churches and the environment." On my initial visit, this was generally sufficient for an introduction to the person or people responsible for environmental issues ("Oh, you must speak to…."). Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I subsequently participated further in both informal and formal meetings within the communities, and ultimately found myself invited to social activities as well (a Christmas meal; a film night; a theatrical production). I highlight this to discuss the importance of relationship-building within the communities with which I was engaging. I told participants that I was keen to learn about, and participate in, events and meetings with an environmental focus, but in the first three months of my fieldwork, only one church had a specific 'green group'[63]

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[63] CSH had a 'Green group' which became the principal point of contact for my research. Wardie had a group called 'Wardie Climate Champions' that led the implementation both of building renovations and a series of outreach events funded through the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. More details about this are discussed in chapter seven. There was no 'green group' or active sub-group with responsibility for leading environmental engagement at Saughtonhall. Instead, they have a nominated ECS contact person, who engages broadly across the congregation; this person became my key participant at Saughtonhall.

activity, to tidy up the church garden before the winter. Indeed, despite my intention to get know the 'green groups' and attend their activities and events, it soon became clear that these groups were less formalised than anticipated, and environmentally-themed events, while not uncommon, were not necessarily a regular, ongoing part of church community life.

ECS Edinburgh Network & ECS National

In addition to the ongoing participant observation with three church communities, I also attended regular meetings of ECS and the ECS Edinburgh network, to get a sense of the broader community to which local eco-congregations are attached, and to consider the ways in which such 'networks' support the work of the local congregations. My first experience of this was being invited to attend the "ECS Network Leaders' Day" in Dunblane in September 2014 — a Saturday event aimed at sharing ideas and best practice between those committed to leading regionally-based network events across Scotland for their local churches. No-one from the Edinburgh network attended this meeting, but it gave me an overview of ECS as an organisation, and the types of activities organised at the regional level. The Edinburgh network did organise a number of events throughout the period of fieldwork, on topics such as fracking, why churches should engage in environmentalism, and waste recycling (a site visit to the city recycling facilities). Key participants from each of the churches attended these events, along with representatives of other churches from across the city.

A full list of fieldwork visits attended can be found in appendix C.

Writing field notes

Field notes are a fundamental part of the ethnographer's data collection, and indeed, of writing ethnographic texts (Emerson, 1995). As a novice ethnographer, I followed the advice of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:179) about taking meticulous notes during the fieldwork process, following a maxim of "if in doubt, write it down" (Bryman, 2004: 306). Yet I also found myself challenged by Silverman's warning that the greatest danger is in trying to report everything in field notes (Silverman, 2006: 88). Emerson (1995: 69), recognising the challenges of not knowing what might be important especially in the early stages of participant observation, encourages the new ethnographer to "simply to document the impression [s]he has at that time." I also followed advice from experienced ethnographers such as Crang and Cook (2010: 51),

who outline a list of factors to include in field notes based on the work of human geographer Paul Cloke (2004). Their suggestions include noting a description of the physical space, of interactions, of your own participation in the setting and in interactions, and elements of self-reflection. My field notes include such descriptions. I was encouraged by a colleague in the anthropology department to think about the five senses – what I am seeing, hearing, sensing, smelling and tasting? As the focus of my study is churches, I also drew on research in congregational studies and the sociology of religion (Ammerman et al, 1998), and considered a checklist developed by Karen Tusting and Linda Woodhead (2002) specifically for a study of congregations in the UK, using their extensive list of 152 questions to consider when observing a church as a guideline to stimulate observation.

Following the advice to be meticulous, and basing my initial field notes on the types of checklists described above, I took what have been called jotted notes or scratch notes (Bryman, 2004: 308) during and immediately after events (often using a bus journey home to note down details in the 'notes' function on my mobile phone). I wrote up more detailed notes either later that day (e.g. I would write up notes from Sunday morning events that same afternoon) or, in the case of an evening event, first thing the next day (Berg and Lune, 2012: 231; Bryman, 2004: 308). Detailed field notes were completed within twenty-four hours of an event taking place as much as possible, and formed the principal data source for analysis.

In taking 'scratch-notes', my note-taking style depended on the situation in which I was participating. During church services, I originally used pen and a notebook, but found this to be intrusive to my participation and overly conspicuous – I definitely felt like I was the only person taking notes during the service. I soon switched to writing directly into the 'notes' app on my mobile phone. That, of course, looked like I was texting or using social media during the service (something which was jokingly commented on twice by participants as my research progressed and relationships became informal). Yet taking notes on my phone did feel like a less intrusive and more efficient way of taking notes. Following the service, I would use these scratch-notes as the basis of my more detailed field notes, expanding them by inserting full texts of hymns, songs and Bible readings, and adding further observations and details about conversations with participants held after my notebook or phone had been put away. I

also recorded the services where possible,[64] and used these recordings to refer back to a specific section when writing up my notes. I occasionally transcribed a prayer or part of a sermon which related explicitly to an environmental theme, for example, but did not fully transcribe complete recordings of worship services. For other events such as social gatherings, lectures and discussions, I would either take notes in a notebook during the event or, when that was not possible (for example during gardening sessions), I made verbal notes into my phone's 'voice memos' function on my way home, or immediately wrote scratch notes in a café, or on the bus, after the event. Again, I wrote up more detailed notes based on these scratch-notes and voice memos, on the same day where possible, and always within twenty-four hours of an event taking place. My note-taking style was very comprehensive (Wolfinger, 2002:90-91), writing down as much as possible of that I had observed, including observations and records of conversations, as well as notes on the content of prayers, hymns/songs and sermons. This took a significant amount of time and I was aware that this means I recorded some aspects that might seem mundane or unimportant to my research question within my notes. Yet in seeking to represent the congregations accurately and faithfully, it was important to be comprehensive, while also finding the balance of describing things in depth and focusing on the main issues under investigation (Crang and Cook, 2007: 555). Throughout all, the emphasis was on description more than analysis at this stage (Emerson et al, 1995: 105).

To keep a log of events and field notes, I entered details of each activity I attended in an Excel spreadsheet. I added details about the interaction date, location, description of the event, whether I had a recording of the event, and whether or not I had transcribed the recording. I also noted the length of time the event took, and any immediate comments or reflections that I felt might be important for later analysis, such as highlighting a particular conversation that took place, or indeed, if my initial reaction was that there was little of relevance to environmental issues in that event. This served as a useful record for referring back to events when I began the formal process of analysing my data, and when trying to recall the date of specific conversations or events, for example.

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[64] Technical/sound issues in the church sometimes made recordings inaudible.

Interviews

My participant observation experience included a substantial amount of time in informal conversations during after-church coffee times, to hear stories about environmental concern and engagement told during the informal, everyday routines of congregational life. This was important for maintaining a participatory perspective during my field work: sharing stories in this way is recognised as an egalitarian means of communication (Escobar, 2011: 24) that enables people to share their views and experiences in a familiar manner. In addition to noting details of such conversations in my field notes, I undertook ten informal interviews with key participants, as a supplement to the many conversations and discussions over the course of the fieldwork. Aware of the dominance of interviews in qualitative social science research, I did however feel it important to take the opportunity to sit down with my key participants to strengthen the validity of my data: interviews would mean that I had recordings and transcripts from each of my key participants, on which I could then draw for analysis. Indeed interviews are often combined with participant observation, providing an opportunity for a different insight into a situation, or elucidating processes not visible to the researcher (Lane Scheppele, 2014: 396). As someone using ethnographic methods and field notes for the first time in a research project, I was also nervous about the potential impact of researcher bias through the very nature of writing field notes myself (Gomm, 2008:269, 292). My intention was that interviews would strengthen the robustness of my research by enabling data triangulation (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000:57). It would also mean I could use direct quotes given by my respondents throughout the thesis, rather than relying solely on my field notes or recollections of conversations as detailed therein. Interviews were carried out from October 2014 (focused on seeking an introduction to engagement in a church and asking about people's reasons for participating) to February 2016 (an opportunity to feedback on early stages of data analysis, and to get clarification on processes or practices that were still unclear). This meant that, with the exception of the introductory interview in October 2014, I already had a research relationship with each of my interviewees. Hence these interviews are sometimes termed ethnographic interviews, because of the rapport that exists between researcher and participant, and the resultant informality of interviews, which in many ways reflected more of a themed conversation, rather than an interview (Sherman Heyl, 2001).

In an effort to maintain the informality of the relationships, I did not use a formal list of interview questions in these interviews. I did have a number of sensitising questions about motivations for participation, and also requested information about the community's history of engagement, details that would not be accessible by observation alone. That said, I left questions open-ended, and let the interview develop in the direction taken by the interviewee. I intentionally did not prioritise interviews with the minister/priest, as I was keen for the research to represent the experience of churchgoers and the congregation as a whole. Interviews were held in participants' homes or public cafes, and most of them were recorded using a digital voice recorder, or the 'voice memo' app on my mobile phone.[65] The use of a voice recorder occasionally added an awkward dynamic to the interview process: people with whom I had developed a relationship, and who had freely shared stories and experiences, suddenly took on a level of formality when seeing the voice-recorder. Indeed, in one case, noticing this reaction, I made a point of covering the voice-recorder under a sheet of paper, hoping (and commenting) that out-of-sight would mean the voice-recorder was also out-of-mind. Yet as this interview was drawing to a close, and conversation was wrapping up, my participant again pointed to the voice-recorder, asking if it was okay to turn it off now. I fully transcribed each of the interviews myself, and analysed the transcriptions as a data source, alongside my ethnographic field notes.

The informal ethnographic interviews provided useful additional data on which to draw for my analysis, and gave me the opportunity to probe in more detail about the history and practice of environmental engagement by participants and the congregations to which they belong. Their basis within a period of participant observation enabled reflection and discussion about events in which we had both participated, adding an additional layer of reflection to the process of ethnography.

3.4 Analytical Approach

The ethnographic fieldwork adopted for this research led to the creation of a diverse range of data including field notes, documents (newsletters, notice sheets,

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[65] On one occasion, an incoming phone call stopped the *voice memo* app on my phone after less than two minutes of an interview that lasted nearly eighty minutes. On realising this error at the end of the interview, I rapidly scribbled notes on the nearest piece of paper I could find, and went immediately back to the office where I made extensive notes about the interview without any further interruption. I subsequently made sure to use both a voice recorder and my phone's *voice memo* app as back-up. I have since learned how to set my phone to 'do not disturb'.

administrative documents), interview recordings and transcripts. In ethnographic research, the process of data analysis is often intertwined with the period of fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 158): the very process of writing field notes and deciding what to include, or which sections of a church service to transcribe fully, for example, are early choices that form part of the data analysis process (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001; Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999: 66; LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). I did not undertake formal coding of field notes during the principal fieldwork period (October 2014 - October 2015), but my interaction with writing field notes and reflecting on them on an ongoing basis, prepared the ground for data analysis. This process was important in establishing general themes emerging from the data, and reflecting on, and investigating, those themes, as I continued my participant observation. I also created a short précis to each set of field notes (a short summary, with a brief overview of content and conversations that might be of further specific relevance, and possibly some personal reflections on a specific issue or question).

Following the completion of fieldwork, I began systematic analysis of the data. I adopted a case-oriented approach to analysis (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014:101-102), maintaining the integrity of each congregation throughout the analysis process to understand each church on its own terms. Each case is presented on a chapter-by-chapter basis in this thesis.[66] My analytic process is grounded in a process of open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Flick, 2002) using both 'descriptive' and 'topic' coding, looking through my field notes for key themes, and refining categories through subsequent coding iterations (Richards and Morse, 2006: 134). I began by undertaking thematic open coding, going through all of my field notes line by line to identify themes and issues of interest in the data (Berg and Lune, 2012: 240; Emerson et al, 1005: 143; Harding, 2013: 80). LeCompte and Schensul (1999) point out that ethnographers use both deductive and inductive analysis. Paul Atkinson (2015) also emphasises that ethnographic research cannot be considered purely inductive: every ethnographer enters the field with some questions in their mind. Hence I undertook open coding with a small number of *a priori* codes developed from my research questions and a thorough reading of existing academic studies in religion and ecology, as

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[66] The process of looking for underlying similarities and differences across congregations follows analysis of the three churches studied, and is discussed in chapter eight

outlined in chapter two. My *a priori* codes included categories such as motivations, practices, stewardship, and justice.

To assist with the management of the large amounts of data, I used QSR NVivo software as a tool to support both data organisation and the coding process (Wickham and Woods, 2005:688).[67] Recognising that the organisation and management of data is in itself an integral aspect of the data analysis process (Orton-Johnson, 2015: 42; Gibbs Friese and Mangabeira, 2002), I found NVivo to be a valuable tool for data organisation, enabling coherent storage and access to large amounts of data in one place (Welsh, 2002). Using NVivo enabled me to code selected passages of data to multiple codes (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 154-155) while maintaining the integrity and context of the original data. Following the completion of my initial stage of open coding, NVivo also enabled a systematic review of codes as I moved into the second stage of data analysis, 'axial coding' (Flick, 2002: 181), the process of re-reading the initial dataset, and refining and differentiating initial coding. The final stage of data analysis was selective coding, further categorising and grouping the codes, to establish the key findings from each congregation. At each stage, NVivo was used as a valuable tool for managing and displaying coding and data from my research and analysis. I emphasise that I use NVivo as an organising tool to assist the process of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2004: 420), for "preparing, storing, and displaying text" (Fielding 2007: 453). NVivo does not perform data analysis in itself: that analysis and interpretation is still undertaken by the researcher (Gibbs, Friese and Mangabeira, 2002; Richards and Morse, 2007).

It is important to emphasise again that ethnographic research is about presenting the social world from the perspective of the research participant. It is about analysing the social actions and social organisations in which everyday life takes place (Atkinson, 2015: 7), and representing that social context in its fullest context (Lane Scheppele, 2014: 397). Quality is measured by consideration of trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:13), demonstrated by attention to researcher reflexivity and transparency). I have sought to present my analysis in this manner throughout this thesis.

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[67] QSR NVivo is one of a number of software packages designed to aid in the data analysis process. The generic term for all such packages is Computer-Aided-Qualitative-Data-Analysis-Software, or CAQDAS.

3.5   Ethical Considerations and Positionality

As a social researcher, I have ethical responsibilities to both my research community, and my research participants. In the first instance, I affirm that the research for this thesis was formally approved according to my department's ethical procedures in the summer of 2014. My ethical responsibility to the wider academic research community and the practice of ethnography requires reflexivity on my position as a researcher. A social researcher always impacts their research. As Atkinson states: "because our research topics consist of human conduct, and because those phenomena are produced by social actors, we are inevitably and inextricably implicated in what we study" (Atkinson, 2015: 26). Even the very act of writing field notes requires an awareness of my positionality as a researcher, given the inherent way that background knowledge can influence the understanding of a situation (Wolfinger 2002: 93) and because of the researcher's role in actively selecting what is being observed and written down (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 18). This, in fact, is one of the major criticisms of participant observation as a research method: some argue it is highly subjective, precisely because of the impact of the researcher's attitudes and perceptions, and their involvement in the research setting (Gobo, 2011:28). As someone who has attended probably hundreds of church services in her life, much of what I experienced in the worship services and church communities was 'familiar', and this familiarity would have been reflected in my note-taking, and in the questions I was asking of research participants. Put simply, there were aspects of life in a church congregation that I probably overlooked, as they did not strike me as particularly noteworthy or important. This knowledge however, was also important in establishing my credibility as a researcher (Bryman, 2004:299). Talking openly about 'my own church' (not included in this study) provided a common ground from which to engage in conversation with participants. I thus operated both as an insider to the Christian faith, while also maintaining a distinct outsider role as a researcher within the community. I was clear with the congregations that I was participating in their communities for the purposes of my research. A related aspect that needs reflection is the risk of bias, and of being perceived to be someone on the 'inside' of wanting to make results more positive or striking than they might actually be (Beyer: 2011; 34-35)). I emphasise that the aim of my research is to explain, not evaluate, faith-based environmentalism. To address such perceptions and to ensure robustness of the results, I have presented all the relevant

evidence that has been gathered from a wide variety of sources (Yin, 1994:123), and have shared and discussed drafts of my research findings with key informants from each congregation (Yin, 1994:33).

My responsibilities as a researcher with the communities I was studying were based on access being granted through an appropriate community leader. In each case this was the minister. I established my research credibility through an initial approach and meeting with the minister on my first visit. I was always transparent about my research aims and provided church leaders with a project information sheet (appendix B). Where confidentiality was requested, it has been honoured. Of course, churches are open to the public and, my participation in a variety of events over a period of time means it is likely that some people with whom I interacted were not aware of my status as a researcher (Mandel, 2003, quoted in Crang and Cook, 2007: 41; Bryman, 2004: 294). When conversations developed, I always identified myself as a researcher; in one of the churches, I was even introduced as "our research student…" in informal conversations. There were of course also issues of power and distance between myself as an academic researcher, and those with whom I interacted (Rose, 1997: 312). To minimise this researcher/researched effect, I approached my research "as a conversation among mutually interested parties" (as Lynch recommended for her research with civil society organisations, 2008: 712). Despite this, I occasionally found myself leaving an interaction wondering how I would have responded had I been the participant at an event attended by an academic researcher (representing Berg and Lune's comments (2015: 205) that "to be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation with yourself." I came away thinking that yes, I would probably have my guard up if they indicated they were doing research.

As ethnographic research seeks to represent and analyse the social world from the viewpoint of its participants and "to do justice to the complexity of everyday life *in situ*" (Atkinson, 2015:61), it was important for me to share my research findings with each of my case study communities in the weeks prior to submission of this thesis for examination. I offered key participants the opportunity to comment on relevant sections, a practice known as "respondent validation" (Bryman 2004:274). This proved a useful exercise in ensuring that the participants felt they were appropriately represented

in this thesis, and enabled interested discussion and reflection with participants about the broader findings in this thesis.

Social relationships and ongoing participation are fundamental to the process of data collection in ethnography. An additional factor for reflection is the impact of those relationships on the practice of research. Crang and Cook (2007:42) for example, highlight how some researchers "emerge from their work with new and unexpected friends" which they suggest can affect both the manner of the research, as well potentially the findings, through fear of not wanting to be seen to be critical, for example. These social relationships became most evident in my research as my ongoing participation in events resulted in increased informality with some participants: one, for example, expressed an audible, jovial "oh Alice…" as I again started taking notes during in a church service. The relationships helped rather than hindered my research however, as participants felt free to emphasise nuance in some of my findings, and/or were keen to understand what they could learn from my research to further help them in their engagement.

Of course, these factors emphasise just some of the ways the social researcher is part of, and implicated in, the research being undertaken and the phenomenon being studied (Atkinson, 2015: 26; Berg and Lune, 2012: 205). In short, the research presented throughout this thesis is an analysis of the motivations and practices of faith-based environmental activists as experienced and understood by one researcher. The intention is that, in discussion with the research of many others, it contributes to a greater understanding of what drives and motivates people of faith in their environmental praxis and understanding.

3.6   Summary
In this chapter, I have outlined the ethnographic research strategy adopted throughout this thesis. This strategy develops from questions about why, and how, congregations engage in environmental issues as part of their everyday experience of community life; it focuses on the importance of observation and experience of the everyday life in a faith community. I have given an overview of the processes that informed my research design and strategy, and outlined the processes of data collection and analysis adopted to answer the principal research question: what explains environmental engagement by communities of faith? In the following chapter, I provide

further background information about each of the churches studied, and introduce them to the reader in more detail by providing a sense of 'thick description' (Geertz, 2000) of the experience of visiting each of the church communities on a Sunday morning.

4 Setting the scene: Context and case churches

In this chapter, I present the context of Scottish politics during the period of research for this thesis, and then provide a more detailed overview of each of the three cases studied, in the order they are presented in the thesis. The aim is to provide the reader with an introduction to the 'feel' of the communities. This illustrates one of the challenges of seeking cases that represent a 'typical' Edinburgh church: there are substantial differences even among churches that are selected for their representativeness. My intention in including this chapter is to enable the reader to engage with the communities as I experienced them, before moving on to discuss environmental issues in subsequent chapters.

4.1 The Scottish political context: 2014-2016

The fieldwork for this thesis was undertaken from October 2014 – October 2015, with participation in additional *ad hoc* events until March 2016. This period was one that included a number of key political events in Scotland and the UK. In particular, the fieldwork for this research began just a few weeks after the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence (18 September 2014) which saw a very high voter turnout of 84.6% (Electoral Commission, 2014: 1) and which resulted in a 55:45 vote against independence. That result may appear decisive in favour of the *status quo*, yet the referendum led to a substantial increase in grassroots political mobilisation within the pro-independence 'Yes' campaign in particular, and substantial growth in support for independence from a base support of only 23% in 2013 (and an average of 30% support for independence in the period since 1999) (Curtice and Ormston, 2013:2), driven in part by the strong grassroots engagement and participation. Despite the result of the referendum, one outcome was the formation of a 'loose social movement' for independence that continued beyond the date of the referendum (Lynch, 2015).

Just a few months later in May 2015, the result of the UK General Election indicated the strong continued levels of support for independence: the Scottish National Party (SNP), the principal political party in favour of independence for Scotland, won 56 out of a total of 59 seats in Scotland (Electoral Commission 2015). In doing so, the SNP reduced the Scottish Labour Party, historically the most dominant party in Scottish politics, and a party that campaigned for a 'no' vote on independence, from 41 Members of Parliament (MPs) to only one. The overall percentage of votes for each party tells a

slightly more nuanced story however: the SNP received 50% of the vote share, while the Scottish Labour Party received 24.3% of the vote (BBC News, 2015). Together with the wipe-out of Scottish Labour, the 2015 General election returned a small majority for the Conservative Party across the UK, with the result that the SNP, a party with a centre-left and social-democratic ideology (Bennie, 2017:26-29) leads the Scottish Government (in the Scottish Parliament), and overwhelmingly represents Scottish constituencies in Westminster, yet the national, UK government is led by a political party, the Conservative Party, with no Scottish MPs, and a centre-right ideology. These two political events provide an important backdrop to this research, as they illustrate the enhanced levels of grassroots political engagement and participation around the time of the fieldwork, albeit engagement that was, in some cases, described as "divisive" and "highly polarised" (Gordon, 2013), on the issue of constitutional change.

Alongside this broad Scottish political backdrop, the focus of environmental activists during the period of fieldwork was the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 21st COP meeting (COP21) in Paris in December 2015 was widely regarded as the key opportunity for the global community to agree emissions targets to reduce the impact of climate change. Campaign organisations such as Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, a broad coalition of environmental organisations of which ECS is a member, focused heavily on the Paris COP21 for their activism and lobbying throughout 2015. Stop Climate Chaos developed a campaign entitled "Show the Love" during the spring of 2015, calling on members to contact their MSPs about "the things you love that are affected by climate change" (Stop Climate Chaos, 2015), and ECS itself developed a 'climate baton', to raise awareness of the COP21 among member congregations.

Despite the ongoing debate about independence that was not entirely settled by the referendum as illustrated above, there is however broad cross-party consensus in Scottish Parliament on the need for strong national and international climate policy. An ambitious Climate Change (Scotland) Act was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament in 2009, and Scottish politicians have been keen to demonstrate that ambition at UNFCCC negotiations (Imrie, 2017). A positive, ambitious climate policy regime thus represents a non-partisan issue at a time of continued divide on constitutional issues. One example of this was seen in a rally organised by Stop Climate

Chaos outside the Scottish Parliament in February 2015,[68] to lobby the Scottish Government about the need for a climate deal at the Paris COP21. In addition to the Scottish Minister for the Environment, Aileen McLeod, MSPs from all parties spoke at the event, and all were keen to be photographed to show their support for ambitious climate action.

Environmental issues are often seen as a valence issue in political science and while that appears to be the case in Scotland, the Conservative Party and the UK government began to adopt a different position in 2010, moving away from their promised green agenda (Carter and Clements, 2015). As such, the cross-party support in Scotland[69] could arguably be seen as one way that the Scottish Parliament distinguishes itself from wider UK politics. In addition, against the continuing backdrop of the ongoing question of Scottish independence, it is important for the wider context of this research to note that climate and environmental issues currently represent a relatively non-party-political opportunity for engagement in Scotland.

4.2   Saughtonhall Church, Edinburgh: Caring for Creation

Saughtonhall Church is located approximately three miles west of the centre of Edinburgh. Founded in 1929, its original building opened in 1935, but was destroyed by fire in 1993. The current church is a modern, brick building, built on the site of the original church. It opened in 1995. While plainly decorated, the church building incorporates elements of the original structure that survived the fire: small, decorative stained glass windows frame the entrance and the altar; a foundation stone, commemorating the opening of the original building is set in the ground at the front of the building.

Saughtonhall describes itself as a "community-based church"[70] with an aim to be "Christ's people, transformed by the Gospel, making a difference to the world."[71] Attendance at a typical Sunday service is approximately sixty people, mostly of an older, retired demographic, like many churches in Scotland. The URC does not operate on a parish system - there are no pre-defined geographical boundaries for which the church

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[68] http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/holyrood-rally. Accessed 18 January 2018.
[69] This includes the support of the Scottish Conservative Party, which is related to, but distinct from, the Conservative Party in the UK.
[70] http://www.saughtonhall.com/aboutus.html. Accessed 07 July 2017.
[71] http://www.saughtonhall.com/index.html. Accessed 07 July 2017.

is pastorally 'responsible', or from which the majority of the congregation is expected to be drawn. The minister however describes the physical geography of the neighbourhood from which she feels most of the congregation are drawn - a neighbourhood bordered by a major road to the north, a small river to the east, a railway line to the south and a golf course to west. With one or two exceptions, "most of the congregation comes from within walking distance" she tells me, albeit some travel by car because of mobility limitations.

Saughtonhall became a member of ECS in 2011, and received its first ECS award in 2012. Following the three-year cycle for ECS awards, the community submitted an application for a second award in autumn 2014 and received an assessment visit and second award during the period of fieldwork, in February 2015. There is no separate 'green group' within the community; instead one member of the congregation serves as 'coordinator' and contact person for ECS. During the period of fieldwork, one member of Saughtonhall also served on the Board of Trustees of ECS.

The United Reformed Church

Saughtonhall Church is a member of the United Reformed Church (URC), a UK-wide denomination of approximately 1500 member churches, of which just forty-eight are located in Scotland.[72] Part of the worldwide reformed tradition, Saughtonhall Church was originally a Congregational Church, and became part of the URC when the Congregational Union of Scotland joined with the URC in 2000 (Camroux, 2014: 109). Organisationally, autonomy in the URC rests with individual congregations: decisions at the church level are made by the Church Meeting. A Board of elected Elders is tasked with ongoing management of the church. Within the denominational structure of the URC, Saughtonhall is represented at the Scottish Synod (regional-level meeting), which in turn is part of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church. The URC is "tolerant rather than dogmatic" (Orchard, 2012: 83) with a strong liberal tradition[73] (Bebbington, 1989: 228; Camroux, 2016: 33-34, 184). Organisationally, the URC avoids a central decision-making body to impose its majority decisions across churches (Orchard, 2012: 82) and there is strong support for consensus-style decision-making.

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[72] www.urc.org.uk Accessed 11 November 2015 and http://directory.urc.org.uk/13-scotland-synod.html Accessed 14 May 2017.
[73] Liberalism is a much-contested term, but can be defined as theology that focuses on "the liberal values of tolerance openness and inclusion" (Camroux, 2016: 11).

The URC is one of the smallest denominations in Scotland with just five churches in Edinburgh,[74] three of which are churches in joint membership of the URC and another denomination.

Visiting Saughtonhall Church

Saughtonhall Church is situated on a busy tree-lined road in a residential neighbourhood, surrounded by privately-owned bungalows, terraced houses and semi-detached villas with small gardens to the front and larger gardens to the rear. The Scotland rugby stadium, Murrayfield, is located less than a mile east of the church. The church is set back from the front of the street by just a few metres: a brick building that stands out from the other buildings on the road only because of the clear signage on the external wall ('Saughtonhall United Reformed Church' along with information about the church service times – see figure 4.2). A temporary sign is situated at the front door of the building each Sunday morning, with large, thick black letters on a white background: "We're open - Welcome."

Figure 4.1 Entrance to Saughtonhall Church

Figure 4.2 Plaque on wall outside Saughtonhall.

There are two stained glass windows in the entrance vestibule. One, on the left, is small, and depicts a simple, red cross framed in a yellow circle, with what appears to be landscape in the background. The second, straight ahead, is a full-length window

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[74] www.urcscotland.org.uk Accessed 13 April 2016.

featuring a man with long hair and a beard. The man is framed by tree branches, and reaching out to a dove. The words "St Francis of Assisi" are incorporated into the stained glass, identifying the figure. Both windows are easy to miss, as the entryway leads immediately to a short corridor on the right. Walls on each side of this corridor are covered in posters, leaflets, and noticeboards full of details about events and activities in the local community. Doors on each side lead to other rooms - an office, a small meeting room, a kitchen, bathrooms. One noticeboard is marked "Eco-Congregation" and includes a poster with more information: "Saughtonhall United Reformed Church is an Eco-Congregation. We are committed to caring for creation. Making the link between environmental issues and our Christian faith. Responding with practical action in the church and wider community." A small poster outlines "What we've been doing" and another contains a graph and information about the electrical output produced by the church's solar panels.

The corridor continues straight ahead and through another door, where it opens into the main hall. A woman is standing, smiling and greeting visitors, and handing out hymnbooks - a purple, hardback book with *Church Hymnary* embossed in silver on the front. The hall feels open: the walls are plain, painted in an off-white colour, with small, clear windows, high above eye level, letting daylight in. To the front of the hall, a low stage is framed by dark blue walls that are set back slightly, and decorated by three stained glass windows - long, slim and arched. A large wooden table sits in the middle of the stage; a wooden lectern is to the left of the stage, with a large floral bouquet further to the left of that. On the right hand side, a small choir of ten people sits chatting among themselves, and the organist is sorting her music. The seating in the main body of the church faces the front; individual wooden chairs, laid out in rows, with six chairs on each side of a centre aisle. Seven rows of seating provide space for up to eighty-four people. The chairs do not quite 'fit' the modern church building: they are made of a dark wood, presumably oak, with a rush seat and hymnbook holder contained in the seat-back (they would not be out of place in a much older, traditional church building). A few minutes before the service begins, approximately sixty people are present, the vast majority above retirement age, but a small number in their 30s, 40s and 50s as well. There are no children present. Details of community announcements are projected onto the walls on either side of the front of the church, including an invitation to stay for fairly-traded tea and coffee after the service. The announcements scroll through: the

country-dancing group meets on Thursday evening; the women's group on Monday afternoon; the men's group on Tuesday afternoon. An audible bustle of conversation can be heard all around as members of the congregation arrive. People are dressed in their everyday wear – relaxed, although not entirely informal. Coats and jackets hang on a coat stand at the back of the hall, and people gradually take their seats on the wooden chairs.

At 11am, a man walks down the centre aisle and turns to face the congregation: this signals the start of the service, and a quietness descends. He asks everyone to stand, goes to the back of the hall and then, accompanied by the music of the organ, returns to the front carrying a large Bible. It is placed on the table at the centre of the stage and opened. The man steps down. The minister follows, dressed in black robes with a white stole around her neck, and stands behind the table on the stage, facing the congregation. "Good morning" she says, and the congregation responds. "Welcome to worship today…"

The service begins with a short "call to worship" followed by an opening hymn. The organ plays the first line and the community stands to sing. There is a sense of informality in the service that embraces a familiar structure seen in many churches across Scotland: a call to worship, opening hymn, opening prayer, another hymn, church announcements, readings from the Bible, a hymn, a sermon (fifteen minutes long), another hymn, and a financial collection, taken by passing velvet collection bags with wooden handles round the congregation. Congregational prayers are led by a member of the community, followed by the Lord's Prayer, either spoken or sung congregationally, and a closing hymn. People stand for the hymns and stay seated for everything else – but these are unspoken instructions, practices developed over time as a community. The sense of informality is expressed in different ways – church announcements include a welcome and list of forthcoming activities, as well as recognition of the week's birthdays or an update about someone who has been in hospital. The Minister might ask for a particular reading to be re-read, because she liked it so much, or an image to be reshown, so that she can reflect on a theme in more detail. Often there might be a small presentation – a celebration of an award received, or mention of a social event or drama production that recently took place. The service ends with a 'blessing' – a closing prayer to encourage the community in the week ahead, and then, while everyone is still

standing after the final hymn, the church steward returns to the front to collect the Bible. Solemnly, he walks on to stage, closes the Bible, then lifts it up and turns around. The minister walks from the back of the stage to join him, and they depart back down the central aisle, signalling the end of the service. The congregation sits down, the organ stops playing, and the chatter restarts.

At the end of the service, the hall transitions from hosting a worship service to hosting a coffee break. Attendees return hymn books and Bibles to the bookshelves at the back of the hall, while others stack chairs or go to the kitchen to serve refreshments. Tables are set up, each surrounded by eight or ten chairs. Jugs of milk and plates of biscuits are brought to each table; people take their seats while others join the small queue at the back of the hall for tea and coffee. The sound of conversation and laughter provides the background to all of this activity. Sometimes there will be a celebratory cake – a significant birthday or wedding anniversary celebrated by the whole community. There is a clear sense of a strong community in this church, as conversations turn from small talk about the weather to a question of concern about someone who is unwell, or discussion and planning for the coming week's events and activities. Coffee time continues for twenty to thirty minutes and if anything, numbers increase slightly as the occasional carer or grown child enters the hall to give a church member a lift home, inevitably finding themselves drawn in to community conversations.[75] By 12.30pm, people are leaving, plates and cups have been tidied away, tables are rearranged to be ready for Monday's social group, and lights are switched off. Sunday's activity has been completed, and the congregation departs for home.

4.3 Church of the Sacred Heart: Seeking justice and peace

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (CSH) is located in the centre of Edinburgh, on the periphery of the city's Old Town. It is surrounded by tenement flats, two hotels, and some modern office blocks. The church dates back to 1859, with the parish community gathering in its current building since 1860. CSH is an inner-city Catholic parish, and has been supported by a small resident community of Jesuit priests

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[75] One visiting minister commented that at the end of the service, his usual custom is to move to the back of the church, to make sure he greets people as they leave. This is the only church he had ever been to, where he went to the back of the church – but nobody seemed to leave.

since its foundation.[76] The parish priest is a member of this community. Strong links with a nearby convent were established when the church was founded, and continue to this day (Conboy, 2009: 7, 53). CSH proclaims its welcome to all people on its website, "whether for one visit, or one of many".[77] The main weekly Mass takes place at 10:45am on a Sunday morning, with additional services on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and early on Sunday morning. The main Mass is attended by upwards of two hundred and fifty people. Attendees come from a diverse variety of backgrounds: older, long-time members of the community, a small number of families with young children, and a large number of students and recent immigrants to the city. As a city centre church, it also draws a large number of one-off visitors to its weekly services.

CSH became a member of ECS in 2007. It received its first award in 2010, and a second in 2013. The associated Lauriston Jesuit Centre (also known as Lauriston Halls) is in a building adjacent to the church, and also received an ECS award in 2010, following a series of significant environmental improvements undertaken with financial support from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (Scottish Government, 2009). A small, self-titled Green Group, which developed from within the church's Justice and Peace Group, takes responsibility for developing and overseeing environmental initiatives in the community.

The Catholic Church

CSH is a Catholic Church. The 2011 Scottish census indicates that 15.9% of the Scottish population describe themselves as Catholic (12.1% in Edinburgh), which makes Catholicism the second-largest religious group in Scotland after the Church of Scotland (32.4% of the Scottish population; 24.3% in Edinburgh).[78] The Catholic Church's own estimations are that less than one in four of the city's Catholic population attend weekly mass (Cushley, 2015: 7). CSH is a parish church,[79] one of twenty-seven churches in

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[76] Jesuits are a religious order of the Catholic Church, formally called the Society of Jesus (Cross and Livingston, 2005: 875-877). CSH is unusual for a Catholic church in having a religious order resident within its parish. Jesuits are a 'teaching order' with a focus on spirituality, social justice and adult learning (Sarah, personal email correspondence, July 2017).

[77] www.sacredheartedinburgh.org Accessed 30 August 2016.

[78] http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/rel2asbfigure12.pdf. Accessed 07 July 2017.

[79] In official terms, "the parish is not a building, but a legal personality... [which] needs people and a priest" (Allen, 2014: 15-16). In practical terms, parish is the terminology used for where Catholics go to mass – what Protestants would understand as a church. For consistency throughout this thesis, I use the terminology of church to indicate the place where churchgoers attend weekly services.

Edinburgh that are part of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh (Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, 2016). The Catholic Church operates with a hierarchical organisational structure whereby local churches are part of a geographical grouping of churches known as dioceses. These dioceses and archdioceses (which cover larger areas) are overseen by a bishop or archbishop, and connected to the leadership of the global Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome, currently Pope Francis (Reese 1996:1).

The priest at CSH is supported in his ministry by a Parish Pastoral Council.[80] A Liturgy Committee is responsible for the flexible elements of the service of mass (e.g. prayers and hymns). Other committees in the church with significant lay involvement include the Justice and Peace Committee and the Green Group. The small resident Jesuit community runs the Lauriston Jesuit Centre, and offer a series of adult education programmes for the community, principally focused on issues of spirituality and social justice.

Visiting Sacred Heart

CSH is located on a dense and busy side street near the city centre. To the street front, the building is distinctive and imposing: a large, Victorian stone building with a decorative front and traditional glass windows. It is set back and raised slightly from the street by a wall and a small courtyard. A noticeboard indicates the mass times, and the large, red, wooden doors at the front of the building are open. On a Sunday morning, people arrive on foot, by car and in taxis, with elderly members of the community stepping carefully between the densely parked cars to the pavement and through to the small courtyard. The visitor enters through the main doors, where members of the community offer a welcoming smile, a notice-sheet and a green hymnbook. The entrance hall to the church feels slightly claustrophobic - a small, low-ceilinged space, panelled with dark wood on the side walls and glass to the front, and busy with people arriving for mass. Tables set out along the front of the glass-panelled wall are filled with informational leaflets, magazines and booklets from a variety of organisations. Some are of particular interest to the church community (a fundraising leaflet from SCIAF,[81] a Jesuit Magazine, copies of the weekly Catholic newspaper *The Tablet*, flyers for a Scottish Catholic Youth Day), others are more secular (a newsletter for a local cycling

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[80] Vocational clergy in the Catholic Church are called priests and are exclusively male, hence my adoption of the male pronoun in this instance.
[81] Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

organisation, information about where to recycle batteries). A small display on the left hand side of the entrance area gives details of progress on a fundraising campaign to raise £50,000 to repair the church organ. Doors in the middle and on either side of the glass wall lead to the main worship space. Entering through those doors, an almost cavernous sanctuary opens up, as the low ceiling of the entrance vestibule gives way to a high, arched roof with natural light shining through. Large murals adorn the walls on each side of the hall, depicting images from the life of Jesus. Each painting is brightly coloured, and sequentially numbered in golden paint, indicating that they are the *Stations of the Cross*,[82] a common feature in Catholic churches. More than twenty rows of wooden pews lead to the front of the church, split by a centre aisle, with space on each side for at least twelve people to sit. An informal head-count however indicates that only six or seven people are actually sitting on each side, and I estimate an attendance of approximately 250 people. A small statue is located in the side aisles on either side of the sanctuary, a space for parishioners to light a candle and pray. The decoration at the front of the church is elaborate. Marble pillars and walls adorn the front of the sanctuary, with brass candlesticks and white lace tablecloths on top of the marble altar. Two decorative lecterns made of brass are situated on either side of the altar, while a large, marble pulpit stands out above and among the wooden pews on the left-hand side of the church. The walls at the front are painted in gold, and a dark blue dome decorated with delicate golden stars frames the imposing organ pipes high above the altar.

Attendees are dressed informally: there is no explicit dress code. The gathered community has a diverse demographic across ages and ethnicities. A small group of musicians rehearses at the front of the church, while a man walks across the altar area to light large candles on either side of the table. Conversations provide some background noise, but the atmosphere is mostly quiet. I take a seat towards the back of the building, nearly tripping on the kneeling rail in the pew – a cushioned rail that can be folded down for kneeling during prayers in the service. I also notice an old, cylindrical radiator

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[82] The 'Stations of the Cross' is a series of fourteen images depicting the journey of Jesus' last week through the streets of Jerusalem to his crucifixion. The images have been used as devotional tool since the middle ages (Thurston, 1906). Depictions of the Stations of the Cross are on display at many Catholic churches. The murals at CSH date back to 1875 and were restored in 1999-2002 (Conboy, 2009: 27).

at floor level, and briefly reflect on the challenges of energy efficiency and heating in a large, historical building such as this one.

Before the service begins, I take a moment to read the service sheet I was given as I entered. It contains a short reflection on the day's Bible readings, and is densely packed with information about forthcoming events and community news: a series of interfaith discussions with members of the Sikh, Muslim and Jewish religions; a new gathering for teenagers; mass times for the week ahead; and an encouragement to "pray for those who are sick and the people who care for them" followed by a fairly long list of names. At the bottom of the page, I notice the Eco-Congregation Scotland logo in one corner, with a request, "Please recycle this newsletter after you have read it."

As the church continues to fill up, a gong suddenly rings twice, a signal to the community to rise to their feet. The mass begins. Musicians start playing, the choir sings, and members of the community turn to their hymnbooks. A procession emerges from the back of the church: some people wear red robes, others are in their everyday wear, and they are followed at the back by a priest, robed in white, holding a Bible high above his head. One person carries an incense burner, adding a distinctive aroma to the proceedings. The procession leads down the centre aisle, as the congregation sings a hymn. On reaching the front, the Bible is placed on the altar table in the centre of the church, and the procession disperses.

The mass follows a pattern that is clearly familiar to attendees. The priest speaks and the congregation knows how and when to respond; no instructions are necessary.[83] Prayers are led by a member of the church, and are interspersed with music and singing. A passage is read from the Bible, and the priest leads a short (five-seven minute) sermon from the pulpit. The community stands, sits and kneels in a well-established routine. Finally, the mass moves to the service of communion, a ritual recognisable to me as a regular churchgoer, yet also unfamiliar and inaccessible as a non-Catholic.[84] A majority of people in attendance walk towards the front of the church to receive communion, but I notice that I am not alone in remaining seated. Following a closing prayer, the

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[83] On a later visit, I find a printed "Order of Mass" before entering the church, which contains details of the words and actions throughout the mass, and the formal name for the various parts of the service.
[84] The practice of communion and some of the language used in the service is similar in Protestant and Catholic churches, but different theological interpretations mean that only Catholics are permitted to receive communion in a Catholic church.

priests reads some community announcements, highlighting forthcoming events and inviting attendees to coffee in the hall next door following the service. A final word of sending is given "Go forth, the mass is ended" and the community begins to disperse, even before the final hymn is sung and the closing procession leads the priest out from the church.

I wait a few moments, and then leave through the door I entered, spotting noticeboards on either wall of the doorway which identify the community as a 'fair trade church'. I glimpse an ECS award (dated 2010-2012) on the wall, with printed information from the Sacred Heart Green Group. The flow of people makes it hard to stop and look at the board in more detail. The priest greets everyone leaving the church with a handshake and a short chat. People disperse along the street in all directions, but I try to follow those heading towards Lauriston Halls for coffee. About thirty metres along the street, I go in through another set of doors, to another large hall, where tea and coffee is served. There is a short queue for coffee, and tables and chairs are set out in front. Only a small number of churchgoers come through for coffee: I estimate fifty people spread around eight tables. Some appear to be sitting among friends; others are much quieter, sitting near people they do not seem to know. The welcome is cordial, if slightly formal, and conversations around the tables begin.

Figure.4.3. Images from the Church of the Sacred Heart. Clockwise from top left: i) External view of the church. ii) Internal view of the sanctuary. iii) The Eco-Congregation Scotland award on display in the church entrance. iv) Green Group noticeboard in the church entrance.

4.4   Wardie Parish Church: Grounded in Community

Located on the northern edge of Edinburgh, just a stone's throw from the banks of the River Forth, Wardie Parish Church (hereafter Wardie) is an imposing stone building surrounded by large, Victorian villas and terraced houses. The church is located on a junction in the centre of the leafy neighbourhood of Wardie and Trinity. A congregation has existed at Wardie Parish Church since 1885,[85] and the church has been situated in its present location since that date, first as a wooden hall and then, from November 1893, as a large stone building with a capacity for five hundred people. The building has been extended and developed to accommodate different uses and needs over time, yet maintains its presence at the centre of the community.

As part of a national Church of Scotland denomination (CofS), Wardie has a geographical parish boundary. Defined by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, the regional administrative body, Wardie's parish boundaries are relatively small, but regular churchgoers come from both within and outside of the parish boundary. That said, Wardie is definitely a community, with a strong 'sense of place' (Rose, 1995) both as a church, and within the neighbourhood which it serves. The church describes itself as aiming to be "at the heart of our community… a local hub" (WPC, 2015a: 2) and was reviewed through the Church of Scotland's quinquennial Local Church Review process in December 2014, receiving a strong report: "…the congregation of Leith Wardie [its official name] exemplifies much of what is best in a well-organised, committed and imaginative parish church" (WPC, 2015a: 2). Wardie has a long-standing involvement as an eco-congregation, first registering in 2004, and has received two awards, in 2005 and 2008, for their environmental engagement. In the spring prior to the beginning of my fieldwork, Wardie was awarded almost £52 633 from the *Climate Challenge Fund* (CCF) for energy efficiency improvements and community outreach activities.

The Church of Scotland

Wardie is a member of the Church of Scotland, the "reformed and Presbyterian" denomination which, while not a formal state church, has held the role of the national church in Scotland since 1690.[86] The Presbyterian nature of the CofS

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[85] A history of Wardie Church, 1885-1985, written by W. S. Robertson, is available from the church. A more recent history (1985-2015) is currently being written by members of the congregation.

[86] The Church of Scotland is self-governing and there is no formal role for the UK's Head of State, although s/he takes an oath to preserve the Church on ascension to the throne.

means that no member has more influence than any other. The Church is governed at the national level through the meetings of the General Assembly (which takes place in Edinburgh each spring); at the regional level through the Presbytery (Wardie is part of the Edinburgh Presbytery); and at the local level through the Kirk Session (led by Elders, elected from within the church, and overseen by the minister). Wardie has an additional level of organisation, a Congregational Board, which is responsible for administrative matters. The Board has three constituent committees: Church and World, Finance, and Property. Wardie's Kirk Session has about sixty members; the Congregational Board is much smaller.

Visiting Wardie Parish Church

Walking through the neighbouring streets of Wardie gives the visitor a tangible sense of place: large stone villas and terraced houses; broad streets; well-kept gardens and cars parked in private driveways or on the street. Stepping off the bus at the end of the route, a sign indicating the entrance to a lawn bowls club is visible from the bus stop, and the sounds of a tennis game can be heard coming from grass courts situated behind a nearby fence. There is a sense of a neighbourhood at peace on a Sunday morning. The streets are clean; pleasantries are exchanged as neighbours walk by. People are going about their Sunday morning business - children in sports kits jumping into a car; a family out for a Sunday morning stroll with a pushchair; a well-dressed woman making her way along the pavement. People arrive at the front doors of Wardie on foot and by car. The building is imposing - a traditional, stone-built Victorian church building, situated on a street corner, and surrounded by large houses. Cycle racks are located at the side of the main door, although they remain empty.

Two people stand outside the front door of the church, wrapped in warm coats, and chatting animatedly. They acknowledge and welcome everyone who approaches, some with a clear sense of familiarity, others more formally. Walking through the big, wooden doors, two more people stand at the entrance to the church. They greet visitors with a warm smile, and present a folded piece of paper marked "Wardie Parish Church, Order of Service," before opening the door to the main worship hall. The door opens to reveal a high-ceilinged hall, with rows of wooden pews facing the front. Large stone

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www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/how_we_are_organised/history and
www.stgilescathedral.org.uk/queen-church-scotland/ Accessed 07 July 2017.

walls with frosted windows are on either side, and a wooden balcony containing wooden pews on three sides is on the first floor level. High above the front altar, there is a large circular stained-glass window featuring four brightly-coloured figures. The pews on the ground floor are separated by side aisles covered in a deep, navy blue carpet. People sit in the pews chatting and, although the hall is not full, neither is it empty. There are approximately 150 in the congregation, including those sitting upstairs. A door at the right-hand side of the hall opens up, and a child runs through with an accompanying adult. At the front of the church, a wooden altar table is covered with a decorative cloth depicting fruit and vegetables, and a lectern, also made of wood, stands slightly to the right. A photograph of a lighted candle is projected on to both sides of the main wall. A blue banner with the writing "I [heart] Kidz @ Wardie, 3-12 years" hangs from the balcony, and other decorative fabric wall hangings are displayed on the walls at the back of the church. Pews are dotted with green-coloured Bibles, and purple hymnbooks ("Church Hymnary: 4th Edition"). Small pieces of card are also laid out on the pews: one is yellow and says "Welcome to Wardie Parish Church - please let us know you are here," while the other is white and simply contains the following words:

> "God, whose farm is all creation, take the gratitude we give; take the finest of our harvest, crops we grow that all may live. All our labour, all our watching, all our calendar of care, in these crops of your creation, take, O God: they are our prayer." Leslie Thomas John Arlott (1914-1991)."

Taking a seat on a wooden pew towards the back of the church, quiet smiles and acknowledgements are exchanged with others. With a few minutes before the service begins, I read the "Order of Service," noticing an outline of the service to come, and a series of announcements listing ongoing church activities (including weekly worship times), and special events. These include a "Welcome Breakfast" for those who are new to the church and details of forthcoming concerts featuring members of the church choir. There is a request for new leaders for the 'Rainbows' group,[87] and information about collections of goods and money for local and international charities. The final notice is an invitation to all to join a simple lunch of soup, home baked bread, and fruit after the service, with donations to the Christian Aid harvest appeal. The lunch will also

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[87] Rainbows is an organisation of Girlguiding, the Guide Association in the UK, a leading charity for girls and young women and part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Rainbows are aged 5-7 years.

include an opportunity to visit displays about how to get more involved in life at Wardie.

A side door to the front of the church opens and the minister walks in, dressed in a suit. He moves to the centre of the church, welcomes the congregation and visitors, and reads a short passage of scripture to start the service. People sit facing the front, quietly listening. Following the Bible reading, the minister announces an opening hymn, and invites the congregation to stand and join in. An organ begins playing, and despite the presence of hymnbooks in the pews, lyrics are projected onto the walls on either side of the front of the church. The choir stands; the congregation stands, and the whole gathering begins to sing in unison. As the hymn finishes, everyone sits down as if on cue. The minister leads an opening prayer, and the congregation is quiet, with heads bowed, before joining in with the Lord's Prayer. The words of the prayer are projected onto the screens, although not many people seem to be looking at them. A corporate "Amen" signals a change in atmosphere and heads are raised. The service continues with a children's talk aimed at the twenty or so children who are gathered at the front of the church. Another hymn follows, during which the children leave for their own activities. The worship service continues, with Bible readings, hymns, prayers, and a sermon. The congregation is quiet and reserved throughout, and the twenty-minute sermon is based on the earlier Bible reading, with a strong application to life today. When the sermon finishes, the organist plays a piece of music and collection plates are passed, taking the weekly financial offering for the congregation's ministries. Two more prayers follow: a prayer of thanks for the collection, and a longer prayer of petition – prayer of concerns for the world, led from the front by a member of the congregation. Prayers include words of gratitude for the congregation and the community, and for those who are not welcomed in daily life; for the poor and homeless, who have no place to rest, and for refugees and the opening of borders. With words of compassion and love, the prayer finishes, and the minister announces a closing hymn, and then an invitation to coffee after the service in the church hall.

As the service ends, people gather their jackets and bags, and start to make their way through the doors on either side of the front of the worship hall, greeting friends and acquaintances as they go. Most attendees walk through the church, along a short corridor, and through another set of doors, into a smaller hall where children

energetically reconnect with their parents and friends. An orderly queue forms by two tables set up to serve tea and coffee; a separate table contains juice and biscuits for children. For about thirty minutes after the service there is a bustle of conversation: discussions about holidays, church business and about plans for the rest of the afternoon. I reflect on the strong sense of friendship and community in the hall, before people start to head off for whatever the rest of the day will bring.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the experience of visiting each of the case churches on a Sunday morning. I have also presented a brief introduction to the denominations to which each church belongs. This chapter has provided the background context for the following three chapters, where I present the main body of empirical data collected in this research, and I outline the principal findings about motivations and practices of environmental engagement in each of the churches studied.

5   Saughtonhall Church: Caring for Creation

Introduction

The first case presented is Saughtonhall Church, a small church located in a quiet suburb approximately three miles from the city centre, and a member of the United Reformed Church denomination (URC). More details about the church's context and geographical location is found in chapter four. In this chapter, I present the findings of my observations and experiences with the community at Saughtonhall. I discuss the major themes identified through analysis of the data gathered during fieldwork. At all times, the principal research question of *what explains environmental engagement by faith-based communities* is the overriding sensitising question behind the analysis. This chapter identifies how a theology of *creation spirituality*, a sense of feeling close to God in the natural environment, and of seeing humans as just one part of God's creation, is present within the normative worship practices of the church community. I then identify how creation spirituality is understood by churchgoers as a call to *care for creation*. I show how the practical response of the congregation to these themes is translated into environmentally-aware practices that impact everyday behaviour (recycling), and can lead to larger changes (investment in solar panels).

The language of creation care is widely used within the academic and lay communities to explain Christian engagement with environmental issues, as has been discussed earlier (chapter two). This chapter goes further, and demonstrates the powerful nexus of the practice of creation care and community. Given the importance of worship and ritual for forming the identity of a community (Day, 2014:104), incorporating creation spirituality, and creation care, into the worship rituals and practices of a community leads to the development of a strong community ethos of environmental concern. I argue that it is the strong community ethos of environmental awareness, developed through a commitment to creation spirituality and creation care, that explains engagement by this congregation, and which undergirds and supports the environmental actions in their community.

5.1 Theological drivers of environmental engagement

Creation spirituality: God is all around

On a rainy morning in early January, I am sitting on a wooden chair beside Sam, the ECS coordinator at Saughtonhall, and her husband Peter, during the worship service. The service follows the pattern of a traditional Protestant church service in Scotland: a 'call to worship' taken from one of the Psalms, an opening hymn, and an opening prayer, led by the minister, some of which is included below:

> "Blessed are you, Lord our God. You have made the heavens and the earth… Eternal God, when we truly pause and consider the world in which we live. When we calm our hearts and our minds and gaze about us. We are filled with awe and with wonder. Eternal spirit, gathering about us, breathing over us, reaching out to us. Lord we remember how your voice brings to life all that is. Today, most gracious God, in this day that you have made. We pray that we might truly sense the wonder of who you are… Glory be to you, oh God of all creation…"

The service continues and, following another traditional hymn accompanied by the church organ, Peter steps up to the pulpit at the front of the church, and reads the Bible passages for the day. One of these is from the opening lines of the Bible:

> "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
> And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day', and the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day."
>
> Genesis 1: 1-5
> Lectionary reading,[88] 11 January 2015

As Peter reads, a photograph of a sunrise over a rural field is projected on to the walls on either side of the front of the church; a second image appears partway through the reading of a bright moon shining through tree branches. Peter finishes, returns to

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[88] The Revised Common Lectionary is a series of Bible readings specified for daily and weekly use. It is an ecumenical resource produced by the Consultation on Common Texts (www.commontexts.org) and includes a three-year cycle of Bible readings for use by churches worldwide. Each Sunday includes two assigned readings (one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament) a Psalm, and a reading from one of the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark or Luke – the three Gospels that present the stories of Jesus' life). More information available at http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu (accessed 10 February 2017) and RCL (1997).

his seat, and the minister takes a few moments to reflect on the photographs. She explains that one was taken in the Welsh countryside, and the other in the middle of the night while at home in Edinburgh. The minister then moves on and introduces the next hymn.

I use this illustration from one of the weeks I attended worship at Saughtonhall to illustrate how images and words evoking the "awe and wonder" of nature, understood, and described, as God's creation, are used within the practice of Sunday worship. The Bible readings for the week in question were determined by the Revised Common Lectionary, a pattern of readings that Saughtonhall follows consistently. The main topic of the sermon was not an environmental theme – it was about stepping into the new year and moving forward together, serving a God who loves all people. Yet the prayers and the readings and even some of the words in the hymns, pointed to the role of God as creator of the earth. The congregation was encouraged that, if they take a moment to look around, they can be filled with a sense of how God "brings life to all that is" (prayer; 11 January 2015). This style of worship, with an understated use of environmental imagery and language, was not an unusual occurrence at Saughtonhall.

I did not inform contacts ahead of time of my intention to attend on a particular date to avoid prejudicing the research,[89] yet repeatedly found myself identifying strong environmental themes during a service, whether through the words of prayers and sermons, the songs that were sung, or the imagery used to illustrate sermons and reflections. One of my contacts even joked about this one week which seemed particularly environmentally-focused, light-heartedly asking quietly: "Did Sue [the minister] know you were coming?".

This consistent use of imagery and language about creation, about humanity as one part of God's creation, and about praising God through the wonders of creation, is one of the major environmental ethics identified through previous research, often called *creation spirituality* in the academic literature (Kearns, 1996; 2004: 477). The approach focuses on sensing and experiencing God/the divine in nature and "the wonders of the universe" (Kearns, 2004: 478). As described in section 2.2, creation spirituality has been

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[89] With the exception of Sundays with an intentionally environmental theme: when the ECS chaplain was leading the service (17 May 2015); and the service at which the second ECS award was presented to the community (4 October 2015). The data gathered and analysed for this research includes content from these services as well as illustrations from other occasions throughout the year.

called a 'spiritual deep ecology' (Gottlieb, 1996), which focuses on transforming the relationship of humans with nature from a dualistic view (humans/nature), to one that understands humanity as part of creation. This is described through the language of a 'community of creation' by leading biblical scholars such as Bauckham (2010) and Moltmann (1993). Regular attendance and participation in Sunday services enabled me to observe how a theology of creation spirituality is prominently expressed through the worship practices of the community at Saughtonhall. Some examples of this are indicated below:

Prayers
"Thank you for the abundance of creation; may we walk in your steps with footprints that heal, not damage; as an act of devotion of worship to the one who's made it, not as an act of self-preservation…" (Congregational prayer, 1 Feb 2015)

"Lord of creation, the world is yours; you have made the earth and all that grows and flourishes. The waters and seas and the rivers that flow; the air, the sky, the clouds and the winds; in chaos and in calm; in storm and in tranquillity, we praise you…" (Opening prayer, 08 Feb 2015)

"We worship you, God: you are Creator - you bind us together in this wonderful world and you bind us together. Your energy flows through creation and we marvel at the vastness of the universe. You made this world and you gave us life." (Opening prayer, April 2015)

In earth and ocean – your hands we see
In bird and fish – your hands we see
In tree and flower – your hands we see
In insect and animal – your hands we see
In each of us – your hands we see. ('Call to worship', 4 October 2015)

Hymns:
"Praise the Lord for times and seasons,
cloud and sunshine, wind and rain;
spring to melt the snows of winter
till the waters flow again,
grass upon the mountain pastures,
golden valleys thick with grain.
(Timothy Dudley-Smith; from Church Hymnary, 2005; #103).

Sermons
"The illustration the minister used was a plant in the Australian desert – the place where they don't get rain for years. Its seeds can lie dormant for up to 30 years, but then when the rain does come, the seed wakes up and grows."
(field notes, 01 February 2015)

Analysis of written materials produced by the community (newsletters, internal reports, posters) indicates that this theology of creation spirituality is a long-standing practice in the community, and is articulated in the context of the application forms they submit for the ECS award scheme:

> "Our Sunday worship regularly includes an opening hymn with a creation theme… Images of beautiful landscapes, inspirational countryside scenes and the diversity of God's flora and fauna from around our globe are projected during our worship activities throughout the seasons to engage our sense of wonder about His creation and inspire us to each do our part to love and conserve it…"   (ECS application, autumn 2014)

The strong creation spirituality is recognisable through the use of phrases such as "our sense of wonder" about God's creation, and language that draws attention to images of the natural environment. Such language is most frequently used in the context of giving praise to God: "we celebrate God's creation in our worship" (comment made in the ECS award meeting, Feb 2015). Yet environmental illustrations are also invoked in wider theological teaching in this community, particularly in the context of sermons, as indicated above, where the image of dormant seeds waiting for water was used to illustrate a sermon about the authority of Jesus, and a patch of snowdrops coming through the ground after the winter was used as a metaphor to evoke a sense of hope, that spring will come.

Visual images, words of hymns, and responsive prayers (where the minister leads, and the congregation responds) are projected on to the plain walls at the front of the church, thus removing the need for weekly printed service sheets. These projection facilities are also used to provide a visual dimension to the worship services. As well as words that communicate a strong environmental ethic, photographs and other images present a strong sense of creation spirituality within the regular worship practices of the church. These photographs often provide a visual accompaniment to prayers and times of quiet and reflection within the worship services, or provide a background image for a Bible reading:

> "At the end of the sermon there was time for reflection on the Bible passage from Isaiah…, which was again projected on the walls with the text projected onto images … starting with 'nature' pictures (mountains, sunset, beaches) but also then including animals (a huge bear) and an athletics stadium; two girls on a beach; a man fishing; another from the

Commonwealth Games; runners on a beach etc." (field notes, 08 February 2015).

"…a sunset over the ocean, an autumnal tree, a garden flower… a person walking down a dusty road with some goats; beautiful waterfalls; a shadowy image of water cooling towers on a coal power station; an animal looking to camera etc." (field notes, 4 October 2015)

It is important to emphasise that the images used, often photographs taken by the minister or her husband, are not exclusively of sweeping landscapes or orange sunsets; they often include people and animals, whether in a natural environmental setting (an image of some "wonderful mountains, and somebody in a boat going along" or a more urban area (runners in an athletics stadium, people in a city street). I enquired whether including images of people alongside images of the natural environment was intentional. The minister, Sue, replied: "I think we use images of things that are… worth conserving". This sense of focusing on the wholeness of creation, and of emphasising humanity as part of creation, was also highlighted in a conversation with Fraser, a member of the congregation. One Sunday, following an ECS Edinburgh network event the previous week, Fraser and I were discussing wider aspects of environmental theology in the church, in light of what had been discussed at the event we had both attended. He had been struck by one of the presenters talking about a commonly-referenced Bible passage from the Gospel of John, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Fraser explained how, in his experience and from his theological background, this passage is often interpreted as meaning that God's focus is on people, and encouraging people all over the world to believe in God. Instead, Fraser commented how, at the ECS event, he had learned that the original Greek word for world, *kosmos,*[90] refers to the world as a whole, whereas there is a different word that refers to people in the world :*anthropos*. If the author of John's gospel (from which this passage is taken) had intended to talk only about God's love for people, then it would have been more appropriate to use *anthropos*. Fraser commented that there was a broader, more holistic meaning behind this passage that he had not previously realised. He reflected on this further, sharing a story about a friend who once had said that you

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[90] The earliest copies of the New Testament are in Koine Greek, a common form of Greek in the first Century C.E.

can see more of God's creation in a bus stop queue than in an ocean view, implying that people are more important to God than an ocean. Fraser's felt that this understanding is one of the challenges for the church with regard to environmental theology: focusing on the people in the queue at the bus stop, without seeing the rest of the picture (October 2015).

Figure 5.1 Worship at Saughtonhall Church, showing how environmental images are projected to illustrate a Bible reading.

Creation spirituality and the practice of worship

The data presented above illustrates how a small congregation has integrated a theology of creation spirituality in the ongoing worship practices of its community, the principal ritual of community life in the church. Worship services are the primary gathering point for a Christian community. As a space of learning about the Christian life, worship services are where a Christian identity is developed, and where a community's identity is publicly expressed (Day, 2014: 109; Rambo, 1993:115; Warner, 1997, quoting Kertzer, 1988; Wood, 1994: 409). The rituals of the worship service, including music (Caccamo, 2007; Warner, 1997: 226-227), prayer (Fuist, 2015), and words (sermons) (Bell, 1997: 189; Day, 2014), all play a part in expressing a community's beliefs and contribute to a greater sense of community (Rambo, 1993:115). Even though

such rituals and hymns "can become habitual and unthinking," they can also act as "powerful sources of awareness" (Gottlieb, 2006: 188). Christian communities have consistently used songs, hymns, words and images to as part of their worship and liturgy to learn about and share the story of their faith, from the oldest hymns alluded to in the New Testament itself (Smith, 2009:135), to the hymns used by the US Civil Rights' movement (Smith, 1996: 11). These songs and rituals can lay strong foundations in the development of a particular Christian worldview (Smith, 2009) in which creation spirituality can lead to direction action on environmental issues.

The incorporation of words, hymns and images that encourage a sense of awe and wonder of God's creation, and of praising God with creation as part of regular worship services, also demonstrates how environmental theology is built into the traditions and culture of community life. This integration has been repeatedly highlighted by scholars (Haluza-DeLay, 2008:80; Conradie et al (quoting Rasmussen, 2013) 2014:6; 138) as crucial for normalising environmental ethics within faith communities. Indeed, Messenger (2001:174) argues that incorporating environmental theologies in worship is essential, as worship is the place where theology is formed. Interestingly, my research participants did not speak of a sense of awe and wonder, or of praising God through creation. Their interpretation of the creation spirituality presented in their worship practices was to translate what they hear and experience into an individual and community-level response to the beauty and wonder of God's creation: a responsibility to take care of that creation – the environment. The following section addresses how a theology of creation spirituality is understood by churchgoers as a call to 'care for creation,' and emphasises the significance that participants place on responding practically to what is preached in the church.

Caring for creation

> "Eco-Congregation Scotland is trying to get churches to think about the environment a bit more; trying to get people to care for creation"
>
> Sam, 01 February 2015

The week before Saughtonhall had its second ECS award assessment, in the spring of 2015, Sam was given the opportunity during the service to bring the congregation up-to-date with details of the ECS award, and to highlight activities they had undertaken as part of their award application. She reminded the community of the

ECS award scheme, and outlined the background to their participation in environmental issues, particularly since the installation of solar panels on the church roof a few years previously. Sam encouraged church members to consider what actions they could do both individually, and as a community, to get more involved. A few weeks later, as I was helping to clear away chairs after the church service, I observed a member of the congregation go up to Sam with a copy of the *Green Bible* (2008) in his hands, which I recognised from across the room. I made my way over to join the conversation, as this excerpt from my field notes illustrates:

> ""Have you seen it?" he asked her, "I would love to get this … I'd buy them for the whole church if I could afford it." Sam responded that she was not aware of the Green Bible but was intrigued to have a look. Fraser talked excitedly about the book's introduction and how every passage that refers to the environment, "even this week with the rivers," is highlighted in green [referring to the passage read during the service]. "It shows you how the environment is everywhere in the Bible." I asked him whether he was involved in the eco-congregation group, to which he replied "No, I'm just interested". He then went on to explain how it is "part of who we are to care for all of God's world". He used to be at a different church in town: "people there would say 'that's your bag' as if it was some lefty, liberal thing. It's not. I wish some of them would realise it's about caring for all of God's world".
>
> Field notes, 15 March 2015.

The second motivation for engagement identified through the data analysis at Saughtonhall, as illustrated in the examples above, is *caring for creation*. It is a major theme within the literature on religious environmentalism as outlined in section 2.3 and as such, it was an *a priori* code for each of the cases as I began the process of data analysis. Importantly, 'creation care' is language used by the minister and by members of the congregation at Saughtonhall to explain their involvement and understanding of their environmental engagement, both in conversation, and in the written presentation of the community, as I indicate below:

> "The key theological drivers have been in caring for creation and stewardship of our resources." (ECS award application, 2011).

> "In October 2013 we were invited to participate in Edinburgh Doors Open [Day], opening the church up to visitors. As there is not much to see from environmental activities, we arranged the church with a number of displays for people to visit. This included: … a stand linking how our care for the environment linked with our Christian faith…There is no doubt this activity

helped us gain greater depth in the understanding of environmental care as part of discipleship amongst our members." (ECS award application, 2014).

"…the great work we all do as a church and as individuals to pray for and actively look after God's creation." (Saughtonhall Church Annual Report, 2015).

These are just some examples of how terminology of 'caring for God's world', and 'actively look after God's creation' are connected to issues of Christian discipleship – what it means to live as a Christian at Saughtonhall. The reflection on the Doors Open Day emphasises this aspect of communicating environmental aspects both internally (to other members of the congregation), as well as externally (to the neighbourhood community). This language of "caring for creation" is frequently used by UK-based organisations working to encourage churches and Christians to give greater weight to environmental issues, including ECS; it is also included in denominational resources: the URC's Environmental Policy identifies care for creation as one of its "fundamental Gospel commitments" (URC 2004, 2016).

In light of the dominance of 'care for creation' in these communications, it is not surprising to find it as a prominent theme in this research, in common with many previous studies of Christian-based environmental engagement (e.g. Danielsen, 2013; DeWitt, 1998; Kearns, 1996). It is used by the minister in her explanations of how she tries to incorporate environmental issues in her services more broadly: "And the worship and that side of things…that's part of this caring for God's world" (interview, February 2016); it is terminology used by members of the congregation as they seek to understand and explain their engagement: "it's just about churches caring for God's creation and taking care of their environment" (Sam, February 2015); and is also represented in the prayer language of the community, "Thank you for Eco-Congregation. May we continue to be known for the care we show…" (01 February 2015). The community presents itself as having a strong sense of "responsibility for looking after our world…to think, pray and act" (ECS award application, 2014) both in the church and in their own homes; the incorporation of the imperative to look after/ care for creation in the context of worship, also integrates such an ethos within the community's identity, as discussed earlier.

The 'creation care' ethic as described by Kearns (1996) places a strong emphasis on the role of the individual in taking action on environmental issues as part of what it

means to live a Christian moral life. It has been emphasised repeatedly in literature aimed at clergy and churchgoers (see for example Hosenfeld, 2009; McDuff, 2010, 2012; Sleeth 2006) and strongly embraced by church and denominational leaders (Kim 2016; URC, 2004, 2016; WCC, 2017; Wilkinson, 2012). Van Wieren (2013: 25) describes how "the fundamental idea that the earth is sacred in some sense and therefore worth of reverent respect and care pervades Christian environmental thought" is a basic ethical principal on which Christian environmental ethicists agree. Research has found that many church members do not recognise the messages coming from church leadership structures about environmental engagement (DeLashmutt, 2011), and many churchgoing Christians (in the USA) do not even recognise the concept of 'creation care' (BARNA, 2008). The community at Saughtonhall has however taken on board the encouragement to 'care for creation' and reflect on what that means for their own behaviours.

This individualised nature of 'creation care' enables people to interpret a theology of creation spirituality so that the big picture - the challenges of climate change and environmental destruction - become manageable at the smaller level. Creation care is also an individual-level response to the big-picture cosmic theology of creation spirituality. An individual-level response also reflects one of the dominant frames used by the UK and Scottish Governments in their emphases on encouraging personal environmental behaviour change to achieve environmental policy outcomes (Butler, 2010; DEFRA, 2008; Scottish Government, 2013:4-6).[91] The emphasis on individualised responses to climate change has been criticised in light of the significant economic and infrastructural shifts that are also necessary to combat climate change (Klein 2015; Northcott, 2013: 201-203), and suggestions that individual-level responses are simply insufficient to bring about the necessary level of societal change (Shove, 2010). Yet understanding creation care as an individual-level response enables people to take action on an issue they consider important in the context of their faith, living out their faith in their everyday context.[92]

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[91] The Scottish Government also targets community-level action and behaviour change (Scottish Government, 2013: 12-13).
[92] Later in this chapter (5.2), I also discuss how an individual understanding of creation care is understood at Saughtonhall in terms of congregational-level actions, a response of the individual congregation, through the practices that affect 'everyday' aspects of community life.

My data shows that, by expressing their environmental action in terms of 'creation care', members of the community at Saughtonhall have incorporated this ethic into their understanding of Christian discipleship and moral living; whether and how this is practiced is discussed in the following section. Indeed, I find that the ethic of 'creation care' is a theologically driven, action-focused response to the creation spirituality encapsulated in the worship practices at Saughtonhall. Just as the most basic Christian ethic of caring for other people leads members at Saughtonhall to engage in projects that actively help to care for others,[93] so those who hear a Christian ethic of creation spirituality seek ways to respond and practically care for the environment. This research thus supports the findings of Tarakeshawar et al (2001) that a theological understanding of 'nature as sacred' (which reflects the type of 'creation spirituality' represented at Saughtonhall and discussed earlier) relates to enhanced environmental care: a theological belief that supports, rather than detracts from, environmental activism.

Intergenerational concern: caring for the environment across generations?

The Saughtonhall community has remained steady through significant periods of change, not least, a fire in 1993 that destroyed the building and resulted in the whole church being rebuilt. Elements of the community's history are woven into the fabric of the current church building: the stained-glass windows that frame the altar at the front of the church; the foundation stone from 1935 is laid in the ground just in front of the building; the stained glass windows that form part of the entrance way: all were rescued from the previous building and incorporated into the new one. Additional adornments saved from the church after the fire are also exhibited internally – the cradle roll (a decorative list of children who have been baptised within the community) hangs on one wall inside the church hall, and a large, framed embroidery celebrating the community's membership when they opened the new building in 1995, reflects the membership of the community through times of change. Even the cakes presented during post-service coffee times to recognise significant birthdays and anniversaries (including 80th and 90th birthdays, and 50th wedding anniversaries on occasions I attended), give attention to the importance of a long history that is celebrated by this community. These representations

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[93] A number of members at Saughtonhall for example, support the Edinburgh homeless charity *Fresh Start* on a weekly basis.

of the story and continuity of the community make a striking visual presence (not least, in walking through a new, brick building and plain corridors to be greeted in the main hall by what are clearly much older stained-glass windows that clearly belong in a more traditional church building).

The essence of community life today however is very much on the present: concerns raised in prayer are about current situations, whether local (someone who is sick or recently home from hospital) or global. The only reference to previous generations with regard to environmentalism that I heard during my time with the community was a comment about how 'recycling' was simply the widespread practice of not wasting resources in the 1940s and 1950s. This church, with a predominantly post-retirement demographic, does not draw on its past in order to look to the future.

Concern for future generations is only slightly more evident in the community: and then mostly in connection with grandchildren. The week-long holiday club during school holidays brings in children from the wider community, as well as acting as a space where grandchildren can be brought to church. Similarly, despite advertising a Sunday School on the noticeboard at the front of their building (and the minister commenting that she hopes it might be something they can offer again in the future) there are simply not enough volunteer leaders to take up the reins, and no children in attendance on a weekly basis. The most consistent connection with future generations is the small Girls' Brigade troop that meets in the church hall,[94] to which the minister acts as chaplain. An awareness of future generations was also reflected in the decision to install photovoltaic solar panels on the church roof. A small group of women, referred to affectionately by Sue as "our oldies" (they were all in their 80s), attended a workshop organised by Christian Aid at a Scottish Synod meeting.[95] The community was already considering investing in solar panels, but Sue described how this small group of about five members of the church "got really quite fired up and said we should get on with this." While acknowledging that the financial incentives offered at that time were of likely benefit to the community[96] (Sue added "they're also canny Scots ladies… they

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[94] An interdenominational Christian youth organisation www.girls-brigade-scotland.org.uk. Accessed 11 July 2017.
[95] A synod is the regional-level gathering of the URC denomination.
[96] The 'feed-in tariff,' the amount paid by the electricity companies to the church for the electricity they produce and feed into the national electricity grid, means that the solar panels should ensure an income of

know a bargain when one's coming") there were bigger issues driving the decision: one of the women had commented to Sue "I know I'm not going to be here to see this...but this is the best thing for the future." Mark, Sue's husband, added that the community was also trying to meet the challenge from the Scottish Synod to reduce their carbon footprint by thirty per cent. These examples illustrate that some attention is paid to future generations by the community at Saughtonhall, but also to illustrate how motivations for environmental engagement are multi-faceted. Participants made reference to the fact that installing solar panels was a decision that looks to the future; yet financial incentives and a challenge to reduce the community's carbon footprint were also important. Concern for future generations was not the primary motivation behind the investment. Instead, I find that motivation for environmental engagement at Saughtonhall is driven primarily by present concerns for doing what is right and 'caring for creation', rather than a reflection on the legacy that has been inherited – or the one that will be left behind.

5.2   Practicing environmental engagement: from theology to action

What I have presented so far outlines how a strong theology of creation spirituality is present within the worship practices of Saughtonhall Church, and is understood by members of the community as a call to 'care for creation'. I now turn to analyse how the congregation at Saughtonhall responds to these theologies, and takes distinct steps to realise practical environmental actions in their community. The quote below, taken from an internal noticeboard, emphasises this point: an ethos of caring for creation is explicitly linked with how the community responds within the practice of their Christian faith:

> "We are committed to caring for creation. Making the link between
> environmental issues and our Christian faith. Responding with practical
> action in the church and wider community…"
> <div align="right">(church noticeboard, October 2014).</div>

The practical response to a theological motivation of creation care includes issues ranging from everyday recycling to the installation of solar panels on the church roof. I

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approximately £3500-£4000, for a total of twenty-five years. The initial outlay was just over £25 000, approximately one third of the community's financial reserves.

begin by discussing the community's commitment to recycling.

Recycling

On entering the church on a Sunday morning, no printed service sheet is given to members of the congregation, as would be the usual practice in many other churches across Scotland. This is arguably one of the smallest, yet most immediately noticeable ways the community takes action on its environmental concern: by reducing paper usage.[97] Community news and announcements are projected on the walls on either side of the front of the church prior to the service, while the words of hymns, responsive prayers (where the community is asked to read sections of the prayer together) and details of Bible readings are projected in the same way during worship. The intention to reduce waste and practice recycling are evident in what Mark calls the 'ethos' of the community:

> "… you see it in the drama group as well.[98] We've come up with this thing where we get furniture from the Edinburgh Furniture Initiative. Which is already recycling.[99] And we pay half the cost and give it back to them afterwards…rather than waste stuff and go and put it on the dump… It's much better to reuse things where you can. I think that's true all over the place, isn't it? Don't waste." (Mark, interview, February 2016)

Sue tells a story of another opportunity to reduce waste that indicates the importance of this ethos in the community:

> "…A few weeks ago, someone appeared with about five hundred teabags and two big tins of coffee that were being thrown away because they were moving office premises… 'could we use them in church?' They were not fair trade tea and coffee…but the way that we thought about it was that actually, these were going to be wasted. So under the re-use, recycle, reduce, we thought we'd just re-use them… and avoid the waste. Actually, the psyche of the congregation is to see all that going to waste as just ridiculous…" (Sue, interview).

The focus on recycling, and the use of phrases such as "reduce, reuse, recycle" indicates language that has been adopted by environmental organisations across Scotland in campaigns to encourage environmental awareness by the wider population.

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[97] Exceptions are made for special services, such as baptisms, funerals, etc. where people might want to keep the service sheet as a memento.

[98] Saughtonhall Drama Group puts on two-three productions each year. It is based within the church, and some church members are active members of the drama group (although there is no expectation that members of the drama group are connected with the church in any way).

[99] Edinburgh Furniture Initiative is a second-hand furniture shop and homelessness charity.

The community at Saughtonhall has taken the message to heart. I heard stories of a prolonged (but ultimately successful) debate with the local council to have a designated recycling bin for the church, prior to which people "were taking the recycling home and putting it in their own bins…" The 2015 summer 'holiday club' for primary school pupils was called "Wastewatchers," and involved the transformation of a mock-rubbish dump into a garden alongside a week-long programme of environmentally-themed activities; the recycling of the church Christmas tree was mentioned during the announcements section of the church service, and on the website. One contact even joked with me about how my "rubbish PhD" was progressing. At one point during my observations, as I felt like I was taking endless notes on recycling and waste reduction initiatives, I realised that recycling is one of the principal ways in which a local community *can* engage in environmental activity on an ongoing basis: recycling is a practical, tangible and easy way of taking action on environmental concerns, and of practicing care for creation. Research by Downing and Ballantyne (2007) shows that 40% of people in the UK think that recycling is the major activity which is most effective in reducing climate change, and recycling was the leading category (after "I'm not doing anything") used by people asked to identify what they *are* doing to tackle climate change. Whitmarsh (2009) similarly found recycling to be the most common response by participants seeking to mitigate the effects of climate change. When the message from the pulpit is to 'care for creation' and the message from the government and environmental NGOs is 'reduce, reuse, recycle', people who choose to respond, like the community at Saughtonhall, do so principally in a way that is accessible, adopting a mainstream environmental behaviour and a social norm (Barr et al, 2003; Downing and Ballantyne, 2007: 36) within the context of the practice of their faith.

Box 5.1: *Wastewatchers* **Holiday Club**

In July 2015, Saughtonhall ran a week-long 'Holiday Club' for primary school children. For five mornings, a team of twelve volunteers led thirty children through an assortment of videos, songs, activities and games with an environmental theme, based on resources produced by Scripture Union.[100] Sue (minister) and Sam (ECS coordinator) worked together, drawing on Sam's professional expertise as a countryside ranger, to adapt the content of the *Wastewatchers* materials for use at Saughtonhall. Volunteers were enthused by the prospect of crafts focused around recycling and re-using materials. In separate conversations Sam and Sue both emphasised the importance of ensuring that the faith-based elements of the programme (teaching about the world as God's creation, and about the story of Jesus) was not lost amidst the busyness of crafts and games. Children thus participated in a series of activities that sought to link biblical stories with environmental issues. The environmental message focused around a mound of waste that was 'transformed' over the week into a garden. Practical activities included growing cress seeds, using natural materials (leaves, sticks, feathers) to create sculptures, and reusing packaging such as cereal boxes to create imaginary animals.

In a short presentation to the church the following Sunday, Sam explained that the message of the week was not just about the transformation of waste by recycling, but about how Jesus transforms lives; she added that it was also about how the outward actions necessary to live sustainably also require inward transformation. I wondered whether many of the participants, or volunteers, had taken that message on board. The week was an important opportunity for the congregation to engage with the wider community (a number of attendees and their parents and guardians had no other connection with the church), and the choice of *Wastewatchers* as a theme was an intentional move to further embed environmental themes within their activities. Yet while some messages seemed to resonate with participants (one child particularly picked up the message that God was "delighted" with his creation), I was left with a sense that the confusing mixture of Bible stories and environmental messages, rather than a coherent narrative of creation care, for example, meant that the potential of the week was not fully realised.

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[100] Scripture Union is a UK-based organisation that publishes educational materials for use in churches. The Wastewatchers materials are found at www.scriptureunion.org.uk/HolidayandMidweekClubs/ Wastewatchers/119178.id Accessed 18 April 2016.

Figure 5.2: Photographs from WasteWatchers Holiday Club, July 2015

Building/facilities management

A second and significant aspect of the practical response at Saughtonhall is the use of photo-voltaic solar panels on the roof of the church building. When I introduced myself and my research on my first visit, I was immediately greeted with comments about solar panels from the woman I sat beside: "we're the only church with them…" she said, enthusiastically.[101] After the service, she rushed to introduce me to Mark, one of the lead contacts for environmental issues. Making sure I had a cup of coffee, he headed off to get the solar panel controller (itself solar-powered) and then, as my field notes state: "excitedly showed me the amount of power that had been produced already that day (showing proudly where cloud cover during the morning service was reflected in a dip in electricity production that was visible in the monitor), the month-by-month graph… and the amount of energy produced each year."

The community at Saughtonhall invested in a 10kW system of solar panels in 2011.[102] This was a significant financial decision for the congregation, but brings in approximately £3750-£4000 per annum in income, and reduces electricity costs. During 2014-2015, the panels generated 8600kW of electricity, an estimated saving of five tonnes of carbon dioxide that would otherwise have been used, or produced, from non-renewable electricity sources, according to the church's 2015 annual report. The decision to purchase solar panels rested both on pragmatic factors (financial outlay and projected returns on investment) as well as environmental ones (reducing carbon emissions); details of both factors were presented to the congregational meeting that made the decision to progress with the investment. In recalling the process however, Sue recounts the contribution of one particular church member, Elspeth. The service on the day of the congregational meeting was, as is usual practice at Saughtonhall, based on the Bible readings outlined in the lectionary:

> "I can't even remember what I'd preached on… [pause]… it was the
> Talents,[103] I think. Because I think she said: 'You've just said in the service
> about not burying your talents in the ground'… that happened to have been
> the lectionary reading … And she said we've just heard the parable of where

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[101] This is not actually the case – at least one other ECS member church has solar panels (Selkirk Parish Church), in addition to other churches across the UK (Bennett, 2012; Stephens, 2015). I include this comment to illustrate the enthusiasm for the panels in the community.

[102] The average size for a domestic system in the UK is approximately 2-4kW.

[103] Matthew 25: 14-29.

he stuck it in the ground and it didn't do anything, you know, … [we should] Stick it in the roof! …it's about using your talents!"

Sue continued to reflect on the impact of that statement: "it was an amazing piece of theological reflection from the floor of a church meeting, to say, look let's do it…" This is only one example of how church members find meaning and understanding in the content of sermons to apply to decisions about their engagement in environmental issues. Yet it is interesting to consider how moments of theological engagement can, and do, impact faith-based engagement in environmental issues. Indeed, it points to the 'transcendent motivation' that Smith describes as a 'religious asset' that can motivate activism and engagement in social issues (1996: 9-11).

Throughout my year with the community, references to the solar panels were made very infrequently by the congregation members. On an ongoing basis, it is possible to spend time with this community and not even be aware that the panels exist. The most significant interaction about them after my initial visit was a question at the Annual Meeting about why there had been a slight drop in income compared with the previous year as discussed in my field notes: "In the Q&A about finances, I thought it amusing that one person commented that there was less income from solar this year than the previous year [it was in fact only £59 less on over £3700 of income]. Various comments followed about it being because of the weather: cloudier days means less sun which means less energy produced." My observations at Saughtonhall agreed with a comment made by Sue in an interview: "You forget really that they're there most of the time." Yet the panels continue to be an important part of the expression of the community's identity, and of its environmental concern. The community organised a switching-on event attended by members of the neighbourhood community, councillors, and the local newspaper in 2011, and again engaged their community through participation in Doors Open Day in 2013 (see p.98). A monthly log of the electricity produced is kept on a whiteboard in the minister's office, and the internal ECS noticeboard displays regularly-updated graphs detailing monthly and annual energy production. Indeed, late one evening, as I was coming to the end of my fieldwork, I received an email from Mark: "Hi. Just submitted our quarterly PV reading. 3270kw which is our highest ever quarterly reading for July-October… very fitting as we are getting our second Eco-Congregation award tomorrow morning…" (personal correspondence, October 2015).

These examples reflect how environmental concerns are built into the ethos of the community at Saughtonhall: the apparent mundanity of the solar panels that barely warrant a mention on a day-to-day basis, glosses over the significant amount of information-gathering, cost-calculating and congregational decision-making that led to their installation. Solar power has become incorporated into the community identity – definitely something to shout about when asked, but otherwise simply in the background, quietly powering the community.

Practical responses relating to building management issues are however about more than the production of solar electricity. The Saughtonhall community takes additional steps to reduce its environmental footprint, including using energy-efficient lightbulbs throughout the building, having appropriate internal insulation on the walls, and installing a bike-rack at the front of the building (again arranging a short 'opening ceremony' with a local councillor one Sunday after the service). I observed a clear sense of trying to do what was possible within the limits of their capacity. Indeed, this level of practical response and action has also resulted in a slight sense of wondering 'what's next?' for some members of the congregation, as will be discussed later.

Figure 5.3. Clockwise from top left: the ECS noticeboard displaying ongoing electricity production; a side-view of solar panels on the church roof; the controller indicating hourly electricity production (over a 24 hour period); controller indicating monthly electricity production. The controller also shows the amount of revenue per day/per year, and the total amount of electricity produced since installation.

Integrating environmental action as an 'everyday' activity

The practice of faith to directly help and support others has always been part of the Christian tradition (Miles, 2006: 115-118). Writer and historian Dorothy Bass (2010: xv) argues that caring for creation is also a distinct practice of faith within this tradition, calling it "a hands-on local practice with global reach." As I have shown throughout this chapter, the community at Saughtonhall sees environmental engagement as a practice of their faith, and integrates environmental actions within existing practices of church life. They also go further, and incorporate environmental concerns within traditional church

practices of serving the poor and helping others. This is another way of embedding environmental issues within the everyday life of the congregation, and raising awareness of environmental themes while honouring Christian traditions. One example is the congregation's international development partnership[104] with an ecumenical daycare project (ECUDARE) in Ngong, Kenya. Sue described how the connection with the community in Ngong led to them becoming "really aware" of water use:

> "We did a whole thing for the women to have water tanks - they were spending a lot of their time carrying water. I think that raised the awareness about water … how much we waste water, and how these women had to carry it, and they were spending half of their daily income just on buying water. And so for them to have these water tanks where they could collect the rainwater was life-changing. So that, I think, made us… more water-aware… we've learned from them."

This sensitivity to water availability and usage by partners elsewhere in the world led the community to seek to reduce their own water use (even in water-rich Scotland) as a gesture of solidarity, replacing the continuous (24 hour) flushing system in the urinals in the male bathrooms with a more efficient system. A second example of embedding environmental activities in the everyday actions of the community, is the annual activity of buying a Christmas tree for the church, a practice which now integrates environmental awareness and serving others. Saughtonhall purchases its sustainably forested Christmas tree from IKEA, which runs a marketing campaign whereby anyone purchasing a tree receives a £20 voucher to spend in-store in January.[105] The congregation then recycles the tree,[106] and uses the £20 voucher to purchase kitchen products which are subsequently donated to a local charity, Fresh Start. These may seem small practices, but they incorporate environmental issues within frames of support for existing projects, and contribute to normalising environmental actions within more traditional ways of practicing faith. Northcott (2007: 281) argues that such small-scale actions are significant also because of how they express solidarity with others people, and with the earth itself.

Environmental issues are brought into the everyday practices of the church community through the incorporation of environmental themes in worship services, and

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[104] In conjunction with two other local churches.
[105] http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/ikea/christmas-trees/ Accessed 11 July 2017.
[106] A recycling service with kerb-side collection is offered by the city council.

within daily practices of managing their facilities, as discussed. I have also addressed how weekly services are a context for formation, and an expression of the community's identity (Day, 2014:104). The context of worship is also a space in which a practical response to environmental and theological concerns can be expressed. At Saughtonhall, this includes sharing information about environmentally-themed events within the weekly announcements (e.g. an encouragement to switch off lights at home as part of WWF's "Earth Hour" event in March), and can also consist of integrating more significant, symbolic actions as part of worship services. One example of this was when the ECS chaplain, an ordained minister in the URC, preached at the church in the summer of 2015, a few months ahead of the UNFCCC climate change negotiations. During the service, the chaplain introduced a wooden baton (the same baton referenced in the preface of this thesis), an ECS initiative to raise awareness of the climate negotiations, and a tool for lobbying the Scottish Environment Minister. The aim was to emphasise the support of churches across Scotland for a strong climate treaty at the Paris negotiations. The baton was inscribed with the words "Time for climate justice! Churches in Scotland demand a deal in Paris, December 2015" and the congregation was encouraged to say a prayer together ("God of creation, we pray for your world in a time of climate change; we pray that leaders of nations reach agreement in Paris; may we in Scotland care for creation, now and forever. And now we send on this baton with our love and prayers. Amen.").[107] The baton was then passed around the congregation, and I observed how people paused and reflected on the symbolism of the baton: it was as an act of participation in a small but meaningful way, in the distant political process to which it was speaking.

These are three different examples, of recycling, building management, and integrating environmental actions within the everyday routines and rhythms of church life, that illustrate how a small congregation like Saughtonhall, with a weekly attendance of only sixty people, can come together and practice environmental engagement. Mark frequently described this engagement as "definitely part of the ethos [of the community] … it's just what everyone does" and both Mark and Sue referred to an environmental ethos during an interview. I also observed this through participation in the community. Ammerman (1997b: 54-57) describes the 'culture' of the congregation as "the small

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[107] The theme of *justice* will be discussed in later chapters.

things of everyday life [that] give shape and identity to a particular congregation…
patterns of activity through which the congregation communicates to itself and others
what it is about": Sue and Mark's comments, and the small aspects of everyday life at
Saughtonhall that integrate environmental engagement, reflect that culture, or ethos, of
the community.

There are of course outstanding questions: it is possible that much of what Mark
described as the 'congregational ethos' of minimising waste could be explained by the
older demographic of the congregation that shows a generational awareness and practice
of thriftiness (Brand, 1997:207). When I questioned this, one respondent affirmed the
sense of environmental practice being embedded within the community ("I think it's
ethos…"), while another reflected on how many of the "more sustainable" things that
people do today were actually commonplace in the 1940s and 1950. In addition, like
many in Scotland, this community is immersed within a society that regularly hears
messages about the importance of taking individual actions on climate change in
particular. It is possible that they are responding to these calls for action, and doing so
within their church context, rather than responding to anything heard or practiced in the
church community. That said however, the role of the church as a space for
engagement, communication and "normative diffusion" of opinions and behaviours
(Djupe and Hunt, 2009:672) should not be underestimated, even in the midst of broader
societal influences.

5.3   Summary

The case of faith-based environmentalism at Saughtonhall demonstrates the
significant measures that a small church community can take on an ongoing basis as a
practical response, embedded within the tenets of their faith, to the environmental crisis.
As Conradie et al (2014) and others have argued: "environmental care needs to be
theologically-driven and grounded in order for it to be effective." I have shown how a
strong theology of creation spirituality, of sensing God's presence through imagery and
words that reflect the awe and wonder of the natural world/God's creation, is present in
the worship services at Saughtonhall. I have articulated how this sense of the wonder of
God's creation leads to the practice of creation care, with churchgoers interpreting their
response to God's creation as a responsibility to 'care for' the environment, both
individually, and congregationally. I have also shown how the practice of creation care is

rooted within the ethos of the community, with a broad approach taken to embedding environmental concerns within the ongoing practices of the community, from recycling, to reducing water usage in solidarity with contacts in Kenya. The church building is one place where stories of the past are brought into the present, and is one place where environmental commitments of the present generation, whose actions include the installation of solar panels, will be expressed in the future. Yet analysis of the data gathered at Saughtonhall indicates that participants' understandings of environmental concern is focused most prominently on the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on present generations.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, the community found itself at something of an impasse with regard to its environmental engagement. The ECS coordinator expressed reservations about the ECS requirement to demonstrate continued reductions in energy use as part of the ECS award process, given the few options available to further lower their energy use. The strong community ethos of recycling can continue without active encouragement, and the solar panels no longer require concerted engagement. Sustaining engagement is one of the challenges for volunteer-led initiatives in faith communities, as well as in secular community groups and organisations (Wilson and Musick, 2008:448); this challenge will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

6   Church of the Sacred Heart: Seeking justice and peace

The second case presented is the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart (CSH), located in the centre of Edinburgh. In this chapter, I explain how the data support previous research (Kearns, 2011, 2012; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay, 2014: 300) that *justice* is a dominant motivating factor for engagement in environmental issues in the community. Church members are concerned to understand *justice* in the context of caring for the poor, often referred to as the 'option for the poor,' a strong theme in Catholic social teaching (CST), which is discussed in more detail. The importance of using appropriate terminology for the specific church context is also discussed. I also explain how intergenerational concerns about environmental degradation are expressed within the community. In the second part of this chapter, I investigate how environmental engagement at CSH is practiced. I emphasise how educational events address engagement from a cognitive perspective, and outline how those activities are intertwined with a desire for practical engagement, including hands-on activities such as gardening, and traditional forms of political participation and advocacy. I note however that moving people to practical action is more difficult than engaging them in discussion. In the final section of the chapter, I analyse the role of more pragmatic factors of church life in explaining environmental engagement. I highlight how leadership and organisational structures affect environmental advocacy within the community, and emphasise how such pragmatic factors both help and hinder engagement in the community. I illustrate how motivated individuals work within and outside of the limits of organisational structures to act on their concerns. I close by emphasising that, while theological motivations are important in explaining engagement, so too are pragmatic factors. It is the combination of these factors that affects how and whether engagement is practiced and sustained.

6.1   Theological drivers of environmental engagement

Justice as a motivating factor

One evening, four members of the Green Group at CSH gathered to develop a programme of activities for the year ahead. Discussions included the coordination of a date for an outdoor mass led by the priest (a 'Mass under the tree' had been held in a country park previously) and an organised outdoor walk away from the city centre. Patrick, whose principal involvement in the Green Group is maintaining the small

garden/courtyard at the front of the church building, suggested a church-wide programme to grow vegetables. His idea was to focus on caring for the poor as part of their environmental activities, by encouraging members of the church to grow vegetables in their gardens and allotments. As well as developing participation in gardening, he articulated his intention to donate the resulting produce to the soup kitchen run by the sisters at the nearby convent. Conversations about the practicalities of the proposal ensued (including jokes about how much produce would be feasible under poor allotment soils and Scottish growing conditions), and an event was planned for early in 2015 to share ideas and resources to others in the congregation with little experience with gardening. Sarah, my principal contact at CSH, liked the proposed idea because it was about *the option for the poor* – growing vegetables with a purpose. She commented about this directly:

> "We need something which is going to catch the Catholic imagination. And that means helping poor people. Like Patrick with his growing vegetables. Or… Water Aid… what's going on in other parts of the world…These are the things which catch people's imagination."

Justice is described by Rasmussen as "the most common and enduring of norms in religious ethics" (2013: 151). It is widely recognised as one of the principal motivations for faith-based engagement in environmental issues, as has been discussed earlier (section 2.3; see also Conradie 2017:76; Kearns 1996; 2012; Hulme 2009: 163; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-Delay 2014:300). Justice is a dominant theme in the tradition and history of the Catholic Church: it is a prominent concern in the body of documents known as Catholic Social Teaching (CST),[108] and is one of the four cardinal (central) virtues (alongside prudence, fortitude and temperance) of the Catholic catechism (Hornsby-Smith, 2006:112). Members at CSH frequently talk about their environmental concerns with reference to 'justice and peace' and the 'option for the poor,'[109] strongly articulating that these two phrases are motivations for their engagement, and are important and necessary when discussing environmental concerns in their church context. Sarah talked, for example, of "the Catholic perspective" and her

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[108] Also known as Catholic moral teaching. See box 6.1.
[109] The "preferential option for the poor" is one of the key concepts of CST (Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 12; 112-113), and developed from the influential teachings of Latin American liberation theologians and bishops in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) is the seminal book that outlines how Jesus consistently identifies with the poor and underprivileged, and demands that the Church do the same.

feeling that environmentalism was "almost irrelevant" to the Catholic Church more broadly, because of the "root problems in and around the world of [people's] survival": environment is part of it, but there are a lot of other issues to consider. She similarly stressed in short quote on the previous page, that catching the 'Catholic imagination' means helping the poor.

The importance of understanding environmental concerns as issues of justice, was also articulated by another key participant, Angela. Over coffee one day, as Angela recounted her involvement in environmental issues within the community, she related how some of the early environmental events that the church organised had taken place under what she called "a justice and peace umbrella." Activities included a social-justice film series, during which the films *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Age of Stupid*[110] were presented. Angela also talked of a presentation she attended in the early 2000s, about the Church's social teaching, referring to it as "the Catholic church's most well-kept secret" (a moniker also used in the academic literature e.g. DeBerri *et al*, 2003)). As our discussion continued, Angela told of her understanding of a long history of the Church calling for justice for workers, of participating in "active politics" and of fostering "a deep sense of justice and goodwill and public service…and the common good." Indeed, these were all excerpts that she had highlighted in a copy of *Gaudium et spes*,[111] one of a small selections of booklets about CST that she had brought to share with me. Angela emphasised how her concern for social issues went back to her childhood, describing how she would question "why does the church not sell all these riches and get rid of all the pomp and circumstance and do something for the poor?" (interview, July 2015). Yet it was her participation in the workshop about CST that had been an "eye-opener" to the Church's broad teachings on social issues and justice.[112]

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[110] *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) focuses on former US Vice-President Al Gore lecturing about climate change. *The Age of Stupid* features actor Pete Postlethwaite in a story about a man living in the mid-21st Century, questioning why humanity had done nothing about climate change fifty years earlier.
[111] *Gaudium et spes* (Joy and Hope) was one of two major documents issued at the very end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 (Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 97), and which offers a "theological defence of democratic governance, humans rights and economic succour" (Hetzke, 2010: 50).
[112] Commentators frequently emphasise that many Catholics are not necessarily aware of CST or its teachings (Johnson, 2007:232), although Ivereigh suggests that CST is "coming back to into the church's consciousness" (2010:19). The Vatican Council for Justice and Peace is seeking to raise the profile of CST in the Church, such that teachings will "stand alongside the Catechism of the Catholic Church" (PCJP, 2012).

Members of the Green Group recognise the place of environmental issues in their understanding of their faith's concerns about human dignity, social justice, and the common good, and are keen to emphasise that to others in the community. Indeed, it is the only way they feel that others will take environmental issues seriously, as Catriona, another member of the Green Group commented: "Speaking from a Catholic perspective, it's almost a heresy just to be more interested in the environment, because it's just part of the whole thing" (interview, April 2015). We were discussing what environmental themes might be included in the forthcoming encyclical (published in June 2015), and Catriona reflected how she hoped it would include "things like… duty, our mission, impacts on the poorest." She emphasised "justice is also part of it." Angela expressed this sentiment more emphatically: "Often I find the justice and peace and the eco things are crossovers – you can't really separate the two…"

The justice-centred foundation of environmental activity that motivates engagement interestingly is tied with a hesitancy to talk about creation care. Sarah in particular discussed her dislike of, and reluctance to use, language of 'creation' and 'creation care'. Her reservations came from a concern that talking about 'creation' might lead to misunderstanding by people outside the church, who she feels perceive it as associated with 'creationist' views of a literal seven-day creation (to which she does not subscribe). She is also cautious about such perceptions becoming a potential barrier to engagement with neighbourhood residents, with whom she is leading the management of a wildflower plot in the local park.

Incorporating environmentalism as justice in the church context

The actions of the members of the Green Group in linking their environmental concerns and practices with the wider understanding of justice, reflects how they interpret their own motivations for engagement. It also represents how they advocate for environmental issues to be incorporated in the everyday practices of their faith community. Embedding environmental issues in the traditions and culture of the church is regularly highlighted as an important factor for sustaining a long-term commitment to environmental concerns within church contexts (Haluza-DeLay, 2008:80; Rasmussen, 2013). The incorporation of environmental concerns in theology (Townsend, 2014) and worship practices (Messenger, 2001:173-174) has been emphasised, but environmental sensitivity and practice must also be applied to wider aspects of church life. The concern

exhibited by contacts at CSH to use language of 'justice and peace' and 'option for the poor', rather than creation care is important. It indicates an understanding of how appropriate terminology motivates engagement (Williams, 2003:326),[113] and reflects awareness of apprehension within Catholicism about interpreting concern for 'creation' as being something akin to nature worship (Taylor, 2007:260-263). Environmental actions at CSH are instead affirmed as matters of justice; climate change is emphasised with reference to its impacts on the global poor, and even local activities such as growing vegetables are understood in terms of how to help serve the poor and needy in the city. These expressions of environmental activities as issues of justice establishes engagement firmly in the historical traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church, both in terms of participants' own motivations for engagement, and in encouraging others in their community to join their concerns.

It is important to emphasise that the acknowledgement that environmental degradation and climate change affects those who already have the least, locally and globally, means that environmental issues are not separate from broader questions of justice. I argue that this concern goes beyond the terminology of 'ecojustice', frequently used in studies at the intersection of religion and ecology (e.g. Kearns, 1996), and leads towards a broader use of the term, one that incorporates issues of hunger and poverty and, in the Catholic context, the 'option for the poor', the common good, and human dignity (PCJP, 2012; Ivereigh, 2010). Kearns (2011, 2012) emphasises in more recent work that 'justice' is now widely used by Christians engaging in environmental activism, but then again falls back on the language of 'eco-justice' as "a full vision of environmental justice that includes humans and all living beings…" (2012:604). The data in this case however, indicates that the use of 'justice' without the 'eco' prefix, is important for establishing environmental issues within the broader theological and historical traditions of Christian churches that prioritise social justice (Ammerman, 2005:136; Haluza-DeLay, 2008; Hulme 2009: 163).

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[113] Williams (2003:118) emphasises that religious language that motivates some people to action can also be off-putting to others, which Sarah indicated with regard to the use of 'creation'.

Box 6.1: Catholic social teaching (CST)

CST is a collection of Catholic teachings on social issues. Although there is no formal 'canon', CST comprises principally of papal encyclical letters, and is widely agreed to begin with *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which addressed increasing social inequalities in light of 19th Century industrialisation (Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 85, 91; Ivereigh, 2010:21). The common focus of CST is a response to, and moral reflection on, social issues of the time (Hetzke 2010:49; Vallely, 1998:5). CST is thus "not a fixed set of tightly developed doctrine" (DeBerri et al, 2003:14) and can change. The main theme across CST is human dignity, with principal concerns about the common good, the option for the poor, solidarity with others (rejecting individualism) and a preference for non-violence (Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 12; PCJP, 2012). The intention is "to preach eternal values" about human dignity (Allen, 2014: 146), although teachings often speak to specific contexts and call for political action.

Environmental concerns have largely been ignored in CST, despite De Berri et al's claims (2003:33) that "respecting, sharing and caring for creation" is included within the tradition. Concern for famers, rural communities and their land is expressed, but an awareness of the broader impact of environmental damage is a relatively new development (Johnson, 2007:230). While natural resources were considered "well-nigh inexhaustible" and "means of exploiting these resources for … advantages and livelihood" was encouraged in *Mater et Magistra* (1961), this teaching changed just ten years later in *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), which acknowledges that "by an ill-considered exploitation of nature, [humanity] risks destroying it and becoming in turn the victim of this degradation" (both quoted in Charles, 1999:91). More recent attention is drawn to Pope John Paul II's 1990 message "The Ecological Crisis: a Common Responsibility," which included reference to the ozone layer, greenhouse effect, fossil fuel burning and deforestation (Schindler, 2007:329-330), and to a publication from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1991 "Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on the Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching" which highlights the environmental crisis as a moral challenge: "It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God's creation" (USCCB, 1991). The first encyclical to address environmental issues in depth, *Laudato Si'* was issued by Pope Francis in June 2015, and is discussed in more detail in box 6.2.

Intergenerational concerns: caring for the environment across generations?

On a cold January evening, with flutters of snow in the air, twenty-five people gathered in Lauriston Hall to listen to a presentation about taking a pilgrimage along the John Muir Way, a 215 kilometre walking route across the centre of Scotland, from Helensburgh on the west coast to Dunbar on the east.[114] ECS Chaplain Trevor Jamison began his presentation with an introduction to ECS as an organisation that "encourages congregations and individuals to reduce their impact on the planet, and reach out to the wider community" and provided some background about the life of John Muir,[115] before moving on to share experiences of his pilgrimage in the summer of 2014. Interspersing stories of long days walking, Trevor reflected on the human impacts on the landscape that are "ancient, old and new", and visible all around. His journey took him past the Roman-built Antonine Wall; along Victorian canals built for the transport of goods; and past the new Falkirk Wheel, built in 2002, to provide a contemporary link between those canals. The route moves to the coast, where a new road bridge is being built to carry thousands more cars and lorries across the River Forth each day. The new bridge dominates the view, and shows that cars still lead the way. On the closing stages of the route, he found himself looking for the landmark of the volcanic rock of Berwick Law, a hill that stands out on the flat landscapes of East Lothian. Jamison then connects the experience to environmental concerns and climate change, asking "what are landmarks into the future in terms of climate change?" What are the challenges and the solutions that we do not yet know about, and what will be the solution? His ten-day walk ended at Dunbar, the birthplace of John Muir.

I use this example to illustrate how intergenerational awareness is exhibited, in particular with relation to climate change, at CSH. More than in the other cases in this study, speakers and participants alluded to a sensitivity about the effect of current environmental and emissions-related practices with regard to human impact across generations, and to how such practices will affect future generations. The Catholic Church historically places significant emphasis on the importance of tradition in its theology: Catholic theologian Lawrence Cunningham (2009: 11) speaks of tradition as a

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[114] More information can be found at www.johnmuirway.org. Accessed 02 February 2017.
[115] John Muir was an environmentalist and conservationist, who founded the Sierra Club in the US, and had significant influence in the establishment of Yosemite Valley as a National Park. He was born in Dunbar, East Lothian, before moving to the US with his family at the age of eleven (Holmes, 1999).

"supreme value", as continuity from one generation to the next is handed down from Jesus to the present day. This is tied closely with the doctrine of the 'Communion of the Saints,' a doctrine that affirms an understanding that the Church today includes those who lived in the past (Cunningham, 2009:11; 70; Duffy, 2004: 42-46). These beliefs are visible in the fabric of CSH – a small statue of the Scottish martyr St. John Ogilvie[116] for example, is situated in one of the side aisles of the church, and there are large roundels set high in the vaulting, containing portraits of Jesuit saints. I anticipated that the secondary research question about cross-generational concerns might be more prominent within this case, but was unsure about its relevance to environmental issues.

Engagement with intergenerational issues came into focus during discussions about the context and content of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The moderator for the first of three evening discussions about the encyclical held at CSH in September 2015, was one of the community's resident Jesuit priests. He began by highlighting how CST traditionally builds on the teachings of previous popes to speak to issues to contemporary concern. The priest continued that *Laudato Si'* is different. In *Laudato Si'*, he explained, the concerns expressed by past generations are brought together with those from the contemporary Catholic Church, through the inclusion of, and reference to, statements made by regional Bishops' Conferences from around the world about the environment and climate change. This is a departure from tradition: the encyclical, a core part of CST, was developed not only from the previous teachings of the Catholic Church, but also through theological reflection about the lived experiences of people across the world today. The concerns expressed in these contemporary reflections are then communicated in the encyclical, which itself is addressed to the whole of the present generation.[117]

A second, day-long event entitled "*Laudato Si'* – Caring for our Common Home" was organised by the diocesan (regional) Justice and Peace group in March 2016. This was advertised as a 'Lenten Retreat', an opportunity "to consider, in an

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[116] A martyr of the Scottish Reformation, who was a Calvinist before converting to Catholicism in 1596, and became a Jesuit in 1599. He was hanged for refusing to convert back to Protestantism in 1615, and was canonized in 1976 (Watkins, 2016:374).

[117] *Laudato Si'* is addressed to "every living person on this planet" (Francis 2015, #3). Encyclicals are more commonly addressed to members of the Catholic Church and "all people of goodwill" (PCJP, 2012). The priest commented that the only other encyclical addressed to the whole of humanity was *Pacem in terris*, released in 1963, which addresses issues of peace and nuclear non-proliferation, and written against the background of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the nuclear arms race.

atmosphere of quiet and reflection, our relationship with our world" (personal email correspondence) and involved a mixture of presentations and group discussions, and ended with a short celebration of mass. The speaker began by highlighting the deep concern for the environment expressed in the prayers of St Basil (4th Century), Hildegard of Bingen (12th Century), and St Francis of Assisi (13th Century). Reference to these well-known saints of the church was placed alongside the writings of Thomas Berry, a 20th Century Catholic writer, described as bringing "a spiritual dimension to the present ecological crisis." Later in the day, stories of 'environmental martyrs' were told: Dorothy Stang, Chico Mendes and Berta Cáceres,[118] provocatively placing environmental action within a familiar and important Catholic framework,[119] but highlighting how the language of 'martyr' is not used within the Church, for people killed fighting for environmental justice. By referring to these activists in this way, the presenter set their actions in the broader context of the Catholic tradition and of the communion of the saints. At the same time, she emphasised the contributions of previous and present generations to the state of the world, today and in the future.

Speakers at these two events pointed very specifically to concern for future generations in their presentations. Both presenters emphasised how wisdom from past generations informs the present context. And both highlighted how contemporary reflection on the Church's historical teachings, combined with present experience, lead to the conclusion, clearly articulated in *Laudato Si'*, that past and present generations have a responsibility towards future generations. Paragraph 95 of *Laudato Si'*, for example, puts one of the Ten Commandments, "You shall not kill", in the context of contemporary resource consumption and how it "robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive". Paragraph 159 stresses that "the notion of the common good extends to future generations." Participants at the events reflected these ideas: during a short group discussion, one woman referred to a statement of the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines in 1988, picking out a phrase about how "the attack on the natural world is rapidly whittling away at the base of our living world and

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[118] Dorothy Stang was a nun who lived and worked in Brazil and campaigned to support poor farmers, and protect the rainforest. She was murdered in February 2005 (Rocha, 2015). Chico Mendes fought deforestation of the Amazon rainforest and was murdered in December 1988 (Keck, 1995). Berta Cáceres was an indigenous activist who campaigned against the building of a dam in Honduras. She was killed in March 2016 (Malkin and Arce, 2016), just a few weeks before the *Laudato Si'* event in Edinburgh.
[119] Martyrdom is included in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and "means bearing witness even unto death" (#2473).

endangering its fruitfulness for future generations." She liked it "because it mentions the next generation" and because it encourages an examination of the conscience about what present generations, do and do not do, which she termed "sins of omission and commission". In the course of discussion, another participant shared stories from the teachings of some indigenous groups that look six generations ahead, setting that indigenous perspective against the Western tendency to consider only one or two generations into the future. Later in the day, I found myself sitting with a group discussing potential possible new national and local policies to address issues raised in *Laudato Si'*. The following two excerpts from my field notes again point to intergenerational concerns expressed by participants:

> "One of the first things that was mentioned was the challenge of governments only having five years in office – and wanting/needing to focus on re-election rather than any long term policy issue. How do you get long term policies in that context?"

> "Immediately one woman commented on the questions of 'what are we going to leave for the people behind us' – particularly thinking of her granddaughter. She talked of previous generations – of how her generation had taught the generation who are now in their forties or so, wrongly, as they had taken up the throwaway culture of previous generations... It is the younger generation that are being taught about reduce, recycle, re-use and who are practicing it themselves… her generation was responsible for teaching their kids wrongly, and are now responsible for teaching the younger generation as well." (field notes, March 2016).

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP) explains that "responsibility for the environment" is described within CST as "a responsibility that present generations have to those of the future…" (PCJP, 2012:236), yet the reputation of CST as the church's 'best kept secret', suggests that this attitude is not necessarily commonly held. Participants and speakers at events at CSH indicated a sensitivity to concern for future generations, reflected in *Laudato Si'*, where human dignity, the common good, and justice are emphasised as issues of concern for all generations (O'Neill, 2016:751). Issues of intergenerational concern are often phrased in terms of 'intergenerational justice' and of a 'responsibility towards the future' by theologians (Muers, 2008:7) and environmental ethicists (Gardiner, 2006; Dobson, 2007). The pope again stresses this in *Laudato Si'*: "Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us"

(Francis, 2015; #159). The participants and speakers at CSH demonstrated such intergenerational concerns, whether contemplating the challenges of short-term political cycles, or considering issues closer to home – the impact on grandchildren, and the responsibility of the present generation to future generations.

Box 6.2 Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si'*: On the care of our common home

On 18th June 2015, Pope Francis issued an encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*. Released six months ahead of the UNFCCC's climate change summit, it received significant international media attention. It was described as "the most astonishing and perhaps the most ambitious papal document of the past 100 years" by The Guardian (18 June 2015), and as "radical and wonderful… a gift to humanity" in The Telegraph (Stanley, 2015). International leaders including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and US President Barack Obama formally welcomed the encyclical's release. Its content was analysed in a range of academic journals including Nature (Schiermeier, 2015), Nature Climate Change (Brulle and Antonio, 2015; Carvalho, 2015), Biological Conservation (Cafaro, 2015), and Environmental Politics (O'Neill, 2016).

The attention given to *Laudato Si'* is atypical for a Catholic teaching document.[120] Much of the media coverage focused on how the encyclical addresses climate change, and its potential and/or intended impact on political elites ahead of the UN climate negotiations (Brulle and Antonio, 2015:900). Yet *Laudato Si'* goes beyond that to address issues of human dignity, care for the poor, and justice, all topics that are consistent across CST (McDonagh, 2016:xiii).[121] The encyclical was not universally welcomed. Conservative voices, in politics and the church, expressed concern about passages decrying the impact of the current economic system on the environment, while others criticised the pope's engagement in science altogether (Gregg, 2015; Miller, 2015; McDonagh, 2016; Sullivan 2015). Scientists and environmentalists critiqued the absence of any discussion about global population growth (Ehrlich and Harte, 2015).

Pope Francis' widespread popularity, his prominence as a global figure, and the moral voice he currently commands, leads to bold statements that "there is no one on

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[120] One participant commented that she felt that the last encyclical to receive such coverage was probably *Humanae Vivae* (1968), in which the Church's official teachings on contraception are communicated.
[121] The founding director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, Mike Hulme (2015: 16-17) highlights that 'climate' is only mentioned fourteen times in the encyclical, while 'the poor' occurs fifty-nine times.

earth who commands more attention" (Jamieson, 2015:19). Yet, as with many high-level statements issued by churches and denominations, including the Catholic Church, there is often a distinction between social *teaching* and social *action* (O'Brien, 2010:117-121; Reese, 1996). The long-term impact of *Laudato Si'* remains to be seen.

6.2   Practicing environmental engagement

Having established justice as the principal driver of engagement, I now turn to how participants at CSH act upon their concerns in their local context. Their prominent sense that environmental issues are justice issues is inextricably linked with their faith's teachings, and shapes the manner in which they act on their concerns. CSH's location as a city-centre church with limited outdoor space, also has an effect. In this section, I illustrate how environmental concerns are integrated into existing patterns of activity in the church: adult learning opportunities, service to the poor and homeless, and political advocacy.

Adult learning opportunities

> "There was a 'green group' announcement on the front [of the newsletter] about the vegetable-growing project event on Wednesday this week. There was a long list of other activities, including two other things at the same time on Wednesday evening – "Option for the Poor" by a SCIAF staff member, talking about how SCIAF has put Catholic social teaching into practice in some of the world's poorest countries, and a "Justice and Peace Lent Lecture" held by the archdiocese of Edinburgh and St Andrews, about human trafficking." (field notes, March 2015).

Evening lectures are a consistent part of community life at CSH, and are advertised in the church newsletter each week. During the period I spent with the community, evening events included topics as diverse as interfaith-dialogue, a 'school of prayer and Ignatian spirituality',[122] and a film about the El Salvadoran priest and social justice campaigner, Archbishop Oscar Romero.[123] There were so many opportunities, that events would frequently overlap, both in the church, and in the Catholic

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[122] Ignatian spirituality refers to a broad range of contemplative practices for Christian living, derived from the teachings of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Order of Jesuits of the Catholic Church (Cunningham, 2009:205).
[123] Archbishop Oscar Romero was a priest in El Salvador who spoke out for justice and an end to war during the country's civil war. He was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating mass (Dada, 2015) and was beatified by Pope Francis in May 2015.

community across the city, as in the situation above. Environmental activities developed in a similar fashion, which Angela explained at our initial meeting, included an aim of running four events each year. The first ECS award application gives details of a series of talks from 2009 involving prominent local and/or Catholic speakers, including Alistair McIntosh, a popular writer and environmental activist, and Father Sean McDonagh, a Catholic eco-theologian. More recently, during the research for this thesis, Green Group events included a lecture and discussion about fracking;[124] reflections about an environmental pilgrimage;[125] advice about how to grow vegetables; and a series of discussions about the *Laudato Si'*. Each event fitted into the existing rhythm of educational lectures in the community, often organised by the resident Jesuit community, and attendees included members of CSH, as well as members of the public.

Educational opportunities aimed at adults in the church community are a normative aspect of congregational life in Western churches. Functioning as "a kind of optional, continuing education" for spiritual growth, Ammerman shows how education is one of the principal concerns for church leaders, and that small group and education-focused sessions are one of many regular activities within churches that help build community (Ammerman, 1997b: 57; 2005: 25, 47). The practice at CSH of integrating environmentally-focused themes within the broader educational practices of the church, demonstrates an awareness of the importance of embedding environmental concerns within traditional church activities. Attendance at educational events was relatively healthy (over twenty people attended discussions both about fracking, and the environmental pilgrimage), and participation in discussions about the encyclical was even higher (nearly forty people attended each of the evening events in September 2015, and twenty-five attended the one-day event in March 2016). Yet my contacts expressed frustration at the feeling that these events continue to be a peripheral concern for many in the church. Additionally, turnout at the practical events (how to grow vegetables,

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[124] Fracking is the popular term for the process of hydraulic fracturing of underground rocks to extract natural gas. At the time of my field work, the UK Government was investigating the use of fracking for the extraction of natural gas to meet future UK energy requirements. The Scottish Government placed a temporary moratorium on investigations, awaiting further research and consultation (Scottish Government, 2015). Fracking is highly contested by environmental groups, as it continues reliance on fossil fuels, and has negative environmental impacts in the region of extraction.

[125] The pilgrimage was on the John Muir Way http://johnmuirway.org/ (accessed 1 September 2016) and discussed in the context of intergenerational concerns on p.121.

gardening in the church courtyard) was minimal (only two non-Green Group members attended the former; and only Green Group members attended the latter).

Engagement with any issue takes many forms, as evidenced throughout this thesis. Indeed social psychologists Lorenzoni, Nicolson-Cole and Whitmarsh (2007) identify engagement as encompassing cognitive (knowledge), affective (emotional) and behavioural aspects, in a non-linear fashion.[126] In a similar vein, religious studies scholar O'Brien (2010: 117) makes a distinction in the Catholic context between what he terms the Catholic social gospel (which sees a social problem and considers "What would Jesus do?"), Catholic social teaching (the understanding that the gospel indicates a call to action, and reflection on the challenge to live out those actions) and Catholic social action ("when you actually try to do something effective…"). These categories essentially map on to Lorenzoni and colleagues' categories of engagement. The prominence of adult education, lectures and presentations in the practices of environmental advocates at CSH, shows a strong inclination towards the cognitive and affective aspects of engagement: increasing people's knowledge about an issue, and encouraging a response, through integration of concerns into their religious faith. At the fracking event, one participant spoke of her concerns, articulating that she considered environmentalism to be a fundamental part of her faith: "I've been a member of Friends of the Earth for over twenty years and am Catholic. For me, these things go together" (October 2014). A participant at an event about the general teachings of Pope Francis commented that it had encouraged her to rethink "how we see ourselves as part of creation" (July 2015). Groups discussing their responses to the encyclical talked of the importance of taking small actions for the right reasons, of Sabbath and rest (for humans and for land), and of the central role of spirituality and the interior life with regard to environmental concern (March 2016). These examples strongly support the combination of cognitive and affective aspects of engagement suggested by Lorenzoni et al (2007) or the Catholic social gospel and Catholic social teaching indicated by O'Brien (2010).

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[126] Their research focuses on climate change, but has clear parallels with broader environmental engagement.

Taking action: practical engagement and political advocacy

Practical engagement

While there was engagement and support around lectures and discussion-focused events, enthusiasm for practical, hands-on engagement at CSH was more muted. This is a challenge recognised by Austen Ivereigh (2010:19), who comments: "what CST doesn't do is call for endless discussion in seminars…" Sarah's commitment to taking what she calls "a cerebral approach to these [environmental] problems" links explicitly with the intention that knowledge should lead to broader action. Patrick and Sarah tried hard to encourage the church community to grow vegetables and donate them to the nearby soup kitchen, but with little success (Sarah even described how she once went to donate produce she had grown to the soup kitchen, and was met with a slight sense of confusion; her donation was accepted, but the sisters were not aware of the initiative). Both Sarah and Patrick were similarly committed to keeping the courtyard at the front of the church well maintained, but with little additional support. The wildflower patch in the local public park was an opportunity to "do something environmental" (Sarah, interview) that they felt was not possible within the bounds of the church itself, and attracted the involvement of local residents. During my field work, the only church members to engage with the wildflower project were members of the Green Group.

A concern for practical action was reflected in comments made during discussions about the encyclical (September 2015), although many actions suggested by event attendees were very small-scale and home-based. One participant shared her story of committing to buying a vegetable "ecobox" and finding that scrubbing potatoes was becoming part of her spiritual life. Others talked of bigger picture actions: one group commented on the importance of "education, education, education," and the challenge to cut down on consumerism. One participant expressed concern about people's unwillingness to make significant lifestyle changes: "we agree with everything in there – until we realise that it affects our standard of living." Another added that talking in collective terms of 'we' and 'us', enables people to avoid asking questions about their own individual behaviours. This discomfort led participants to argue that small steps in the right direction are better than none at all, a viewpoint supported by environmentalists such as Paul Hawken (2007:3) and ethicists such as Michael Northcott (2007:284-285), who in particular talks of the "moral power" implicit in small

acts and practices that are intrinsically right.[127] National governments also frequently adopt an individually-focused approach to encouraging behaviour change as part of their efforts to reduce national emissions (DEFRA, 2008; Butler, 2010), as discussed in the previous chapter.

Political advocacy and action

Moving beyond the small, individualised actions to reduce emissions, Northcott's more recent writing (2013) turns to structural and institutional factors that must also be addressed to solve global environmental challenges. This aspect is also evident in the environmental activity at CSH, through advocating for churchgoers to engage in traditional forms of political activism. There is a quiet but strong undercurrent of support for direct political engagement from those engaged in environmental issues. I regularly heard about the importance of participating in the political sphere, through informal conversations with community members, and at events.

> "… we all have to pick up the ball and run with it. It's over to us. … for many years, quite a lot of us have understood our position in the church as passive/receptive teaching: we receive, and we fulfil our duty. And once we've ticked the box we've done our bit… But that's not what Pope Francis is saying … You should be going to your MPs and make them work on it… BP[128] has something like fourteen people to lobby Parliament, CAFOD has one. So if your MP is not hearing from us, who is he [sic] going to be hearing from?"
>
> > Jesuit priest, presenting on the teachings of Pope Francis, July 2015

> "If it becomes party political, then you're going to offend somebody. You're going to have somebody say 'that's not part of the church'… I think it is."
>
> > Angela, interview, July 2015.

These two examples illustrate the inherent tension within the church about political engagement. In the first instance, there is the call from a church leader to churchgoers to become involved and lobby MPs about the issues raised in *Laudato Si'*. This is a call that affirms the importance of political advocacy about environmental issues as part of what it means for people to practice their faith. The second comment, however, indicates concerns about the potential response of church members to anything that could be construed as partisanship. Angela is expressing reservations that,

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[127] See also Rasmussen, 2013 and Gottlieb 2006.
[128] BP is a multinational oil and gas company previously known as British Petroleum.

although she herself believes in challenging institutions to take action on an issue about which she is passionate, some of the people she is trying to motivate and mobilise are reticent to do so. Indeed, she added that some in her community make a strong distinction between the role of the church and everyday politics.

The call for political action is evident in different ways at CSH. It is reported in the community's ECS award application forms: the first application highlights participation in an international church bell-ringing event ahead of the COP15 climate negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009: despite the lack of a church bell, the community used hand-bells during a church service, thus practicing a symbolic political action in the context of the mass. The second award application, two years later, refers to an activity where parishioners "were invited to choose from a list of peace pledges… which covered taking personal action on the environment, fair trade, ethical banking and lobbying MPs or MSPs[129] on issues such as trade justice and climate change." Political action is also encouraged and heard within the context of the events outlined earlier. Angela's introduction at the fracking event included an encouragement to "get into conversation with politicians about the way forward," while the presenter, the ECS Climate Change Officer, stated: "You have to make it clear you are concerned," with an explicit connection to the forthcoming UK General Election (May 2015) and Scottish Parliamentary Election (May 2016). Participants at one of the *Laudato Si'* events were encouraged to propose actions "to make a difference", and the discussion group with which I was sitting focused primarily on political engagement, as I noted in my field notes:

> "We talked about lobbying all parties (rather than just the Green Party), to try and let them all know it was a priority to take long term decisions on climate change. One man also mentioned how he had read recently that the current (Conservative) government had introduced twelve things since they were elected [four months earlier] that negatively impacted the environment. Another woman… pointed out the importance of the forthcoming Paris conference and said that governments need to commit – and to be held accountable." (Field notes, September 2015)

The longstanding commitment of Green Group member, Sarah, to political action is clear. On one occasion, she recounted her frustration about a discussion at an ECS Edinburgh network meeting a few years previously. Each of the attendees had

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[129] Member or Parliament (MP) and Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)

been asked to make a short presentation about their churches and their interests. As part of this, Sarah presented the network members with information about a Bill under consideration in the Scottish Parliament, to introduce a charge for disposable plastic carrier bags. "I was asking Eco-Congregations if they could support the Bill… They just said 'we don't think we can do that'.[130] And I thought that this is ridiculous; something which is not political – it's cross-party, it's about the environment… The idea that Eco-Congregations could actually… put their hands up and say 'we want this Bill to succeed…'" she said, trailing off with a sense of exasperation.

A final example of the commitment to political engagement by members of CSH was evident in the willingness of church members to participate in the Scottish Climate March, held on a very wet and rainy Saturday in November 2015, to mark the start of the UN climate negotiations in Paris. ECS encouraged member churches to attend, and a small group at CSH had taken the time to prepare small banners.

Figure 6.3 Members of CSH at Scotland's Climate March, November 2015.

These examples illustrate that, at the local level, while avoiding political partisanship, there is a consistent encouragement to engage with larger political issues and structures by the people with whom I interacted at CSH. As Angela commented: "It's putting your faith into action." Referring explicitly to direct political engagement, Angela added the importance of her individual-level response: "whether I encourage

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[130] Sarah expressed concern that other ECS members were unsure about appearing politically partisan. ECS promotes itself as an organisation that supports churches in their environmental work, rather than a political organisation. The ECS Environment Chaplain described the organisation at one event: "We are not a campaigning organisation as such… our niche is encouraging reflection and action in and through church congregations…" ECS is however affiliated with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, a coalition of organisations that campaigns on climate issues, and encourages members to support political engagement through their website, which declares: "We commit ourselves to campaigning on urgent threats…" (www.ecocongregationscotland.org/about-us/about/ accessed 10 July 2017).

others at church or not, I personally ought to be doing more in that area" (interview, July 2015).

As discussed earlier in this thesis, faith-based engagement in the public sphere is a longstanding tradition with Christianity (see section 2.1). The Catholic Church has always been part of that engagement (Hetzke, 2010:61). Political involvement is described as "a worthy and demanding expression of the Christian commitment of service to others" by the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace (PCJP, 2012:283). Although the Catholic Church is officially non-partisan (as emphasised by Angela), that does not mean being apolitical (Allen, 2014:146). CST strongly encourages a practical response (Ivereigh, 2010:25; O'Brien, 2010:117), and emphasises that ensuring human dignity and the promotion of the 'common good' are responsibilities for individuals and for the state (PCJP, 2012:84). This attitude was articulated in a comment from a visiting Jesuit priest at an event about the general teachings of Pope Francis, in July 2015. Recognising the strong political profile of Pope Francis, the priest commented that, although the Church does not have authority to comment on political questions, he felt it does have the authority to comment on the "moral implications of what happens as a result of (science and) politics." The priest closed by adding that Pope Francis "is not a politician… [but] uses his influence to help them [politicians] work for a better world…"

My data illustrate how individuals at CSH follow this example from the highest levels of the Catholic Church. Participants use their voices to call for structural change on environmental issues by engaging with the political structures available to them. Previous research on religion and ecology has indicated that church members do not necessarily make a link between their faith and political activism on environmental concerns (Djupe and Gilbert, 2009: 210), and has even found that regular church participation can hinder political activism on environmental issues (Sherkat and Ellison, 2007).[131] Yet these studies are both based on Protestant congregations in the US. The Catholic Church's emphasis on political engagement (PCJP, 2014:283) is a foundation that appears to have impact on the members of CSH. Indeed, Oelschlager's suggestion

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[131] The communities emphasised by Sherkat and Ellison (2007) feature a high number of conservative Protestants and as such, their findings are based on a very different religious, cultural and political background than exists in Edinburgh. Djupe and Gilbert's 2009 study is arguably more comparable, focusing on 'mainline Protestants,' but the case under discussion in this chapter is a Catholic church.

that "political activism follows naturally for any community that grasps the responsibility to care for creation" (1996:185-186), echoes the call for practical engagement within CST; the findings in this research reflect that tendency towards political activism.

6.3 Pragmatic factors that explain engagement

In addition to the theological motivations for environmental engagement at CSH, ongoing participant observation also revealed the importance of practical, everyday aspects of church life that explain participation in environmental advocacy. I refer to these as 'pragmatic factors' of church community life.

Leadership

Sociologists of religion point to the minister/priest[132] as "the most involved and influential person" in a local congregation (Ammerman, 1997b:52-53). This influence is a result of the authority and legitimacy given to them by the very nature of their office, their role in speaking before the congregation each week, and their position at the centre of social connections within the church. Cunningham (2009: 16-17) and Ryan (1996) also suggest that that the hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church, and the strong relationship of churchgoers to the priest and the local parish, further strengthens the leadership role of the priest in the Catholic context. The support, opposition, or even apathy of the priest is central to the success (or otherwise) of environmental engagement by church communities (Ayre 2014:148, 158–59; Agliardo, 2014). The Catholic Church is also strongly hierarchical, functioning with an episcopal structure (Cunningham, 2009:16) whereby local churches are connected through their priest and bishop (the leader of their diocese (geographical region)), to the pope, in his role as bishop of Rome and leader of the Catholic College of Bishops (Reese, 1996:1-2). Although there is debate within the Catholic Church itself about the role and influence of the pope and the papacy (Reese, 1996),[133] he is formally the leader of the Catholic Church. The popularity of the current pope as a moral leader and public figure (WIN/Gallup, 2016; Bulle and Antonia, 2015, 900) gives him a high level of informal

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[132] Priest is the more appropriate term for use in this case, as it is the terminology used in a Catholic church. The Catholic context also explains my use of the male pronoun when referring to a priest in this chapter.
[133] Reese, 1996, emphasises the influence of the papacy within the church and beyond, but Duffy, 2004, argues that the papacy is central, but not with as much imbued authority as is generally attributed to him.

influence as well. Leadership has the potential to affect environmental engagement both at the highest levels of an organisation like the Catholic Church, and at the local level of the congregation.

High-level leadership

Towards the end of my time with the congregation, the high-level leadership of the pope came to the fore, with the publication of *Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home* (Francis, 2015). My research participants were keenly awaiting its publication, as it is the first time that an encyclical has focused so heavily on environmental issues. Anticipation was also high within secular environmental networks, and in the international media (see for example Yeo, 2015), because of its release just six months ahead of the crucial UN climate negotiations. Details about its exact contents were unknown ahead of its release, but Catriona relayed her thoughts about it to me one day:

> "The encyclical is very exciting because it's a structure, a mechanism for action. They [encyclicals] don't come out very often. It gives clear direction. I hope that it covers things like duty, our mission, impacts on the poorest…"
>
> Catriona, interview, April 2015.

The CSH Green Group sensed that *Laudato Si'* was an opportunity to, as Sarah said, "raise our credentials." Participants began discussing how they might respond to it in January 2015. Catriona described how she saw the encyclical as "another tool, a route, a jumping off point" for action and that, depending on how the Catholic Church might use it more widely, a tool with the potential to mobilise millions of Catholics around the world to take action on climate change and the environment. Members of the Green Group wanted to highlight what they hoped would become a prominent issue in the parish, anticipating that the encyclical might inspire action and engagement from other churchgoers. The opportunity to integrate environmental issues within the broader social and theological traditions of the community was also clear: the highest level of the Catholic Church, the pope himself, was addressing the issue.[134] The Green Group's

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[134] Scholars of CST emphasise that encyclicals reflect the Church's concern about what it considers major societal problems of the day (Hornsby-Smith, 2006:11). In addressing environmental issues in such a high-level document, *Laudato Si'* raises the salience of environmental issues in the wider context of the Catholic Church's teachings.

response to the prospect of this high-level leadership was to organise a series of evening events to fit into the community's ongoing adult learning programme.

Over the three events in September 2015, organised by the Green Group in discussion with the parish priest, each of the six chapters of the encyclical were discussed in detail: each event covered two chapters, presented in order. Sarah was keen that the events were not lectures, but rather that attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with the encyclical: "it's a grassroots discussion, so the moderator is there only to keep the peace make sure everyone gets to speak" (personal email correspondence, 9 July 2015)). Volunteer moderators, which included representatives of CSH (one of the Jesuit priests, and a lay leader), ECS, SCIAF, and myself, [135] gave a short presentation summarising the content of each chapter, and then facilitated questions for discussion in small groups. Moderators had some knowledge of churches and environmentalism, but were encouraged to refer to a detailed discussion guide published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 2015) for preparation. The Diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh also responded to the Pope's leadership on environmental issues by organising its 2016 *Justice and Peace* Lenten Retreat, solely around topics presented in the encyclical.

These examples illustrate how high-level leadership can stimulate engagement within a church, particularly in the example of a Catholic Church, with its hierarchical structure. In the short term, the pope's leadership on environmental issues had an impact on engagement by the local church community. The longer-term impact remains to be seen, and is beyond the remit of this research.[136] Event participants expressed reservation that middle levels of the church hierarchy needed to engage if environmental issues are to be fully integrated within Catholic teaching and practice, as this excerpt from my field notes indicates:

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[135] Sarah invited me to lead a session and, given my research is based on participant observation, I considered this a form of participation in the work of the Green Group. Additionally, given the need to find six moderators, my participation in this way was also an opportunity to 'give back' a little something to the community for letting me undertake my research with them over an extended period of time.

[136] Early research in the US about the impact of the encyclical is contradictory. Maibach et al (2015) polled American adults before and after the encyclical's release, and found that participants, and particularly American Catholics, were more aware of, and engaged in, climate change. They attributed this to the encyclical, calling it 'The Francis Effect'. Li et al (2016) however, also in the USA, found that the encyclical did not have a significant impact on awareness and concern about climate change. If anything, it entrenched existing attitudes, particularly among more conservative Catholics.

"There were wider discussions about buy-in to environmental issues from bishops, and a sense that not everyone was on board with this pope more generally, and particularly with some of his teachings on environmental things… The speaker was concerned that the priests who are just recently out of seminary are not on board… She had once asked how much training the seminarians get on the environment. The answer was half a day. Not half a day per week or month, she commented, but half a day during their entire seminary education… She had discussed with one bishop that an encyclical is the highest teaching document in the Catholic Church – so surely it should be taught in seminaries? "I really don't get it, but I know we have to do it" had been the response. (Field notes, March 2016).

The leadership and authority of the pope, expressed through the encyclical, gives credibility to those advocating for environmental engagement in the local community. This example, however, also illustrates how high-level leadership can set an agenda, but needs to be matched with local-level leadership and ownership of an issue. Embedding the pope's teachings on environmental issues in the format of an encyclical is important: it places them within the formal structures of the church, and in the corpus of CST, as Catriona's comment on p.135 indicates. Integrating teaching within the structures of authority in a church or denomination however, does not necessarily mean that the content of such documents is followed in practice. The question of turning rhetoric on environmental issues into practical action has been identified as a challenge for the church (Ayre, 2014: 149, 155; Conradie, 2017; DeLashmutt, 2011; (Djupe and Olson, 2010; Hornsby-Smith, 2006: 113; Lysack 2014; O'Brien, 2010: 115-120), just as it is in environmental policy more broadly (Blake, 1999, Fudge & Peters, 2011). Agliardo (2014: 186) emphasises for example, that Pope John Paul II addressed environmental issues in a speech on the 1990 World Day of Peace: it has taken over twenty-five years for this concern to be recognised more formally within the teaching of the Catholic Church. Maibach et al's (2015) research undertaken in the months immediately following the release of the encyclical, claims that Pope Francis "changed the conversation about global warming." Yet this statement comes with a caveat, that one of the major factors in determining the full impact of the encyclical is whether bishops and priests engage with the teachings and 'amplify' them in their local contexts (Maibach et al, 2015:4). Despite a hierarchical system that should work to distil the teachings and put them into action (O'Brien, 2010:116), it does not necessarily work efficiently. It is to this local context that I now turn, to analyse the effect of clergy leadership on engagement at the local level.

<u>Local-level clergy leadership</u>

In describing her own journey to involvement in an eco-congregation, Angela insists on taking a distinct step back from her church experience, and recounts a story of visiting her sister in Washington, D.C. in the early 1990s, and for the first time, "coming across people trying to conserve things, and to recycle as well." This was her first introduction to environmental practices, and on returning to the UK, she began recycling glass and cardboard, driving them to the central collection point at the city waste dump, long before kerbside recycling schemes were in place. Angela continues, reflecting on her first connection with environmental issues in her church, and points to the influence of one of the community's resident priests:

> "The big instigator … was one of the Jesuit Priests. He started a 'Justice and Peace' group in the church and that was why we started doing fair trade…[he] was an inspiring leader for justice and peace and for eco stuff."
> Angela, interview, July 2015.

This priest encouraged Angela to participate, and she explains how he emphasised "putting faith into action" as they investigated the resources offered by ECS and considered how to implement them within their local church.[137] She describes the events organised at this time, including guest lectures, a film series, and outings to venues around and outside of the city (including an early morning bird-watching trip on a country farm), as well as a refurbishment programme in Lauriston Hall, improving insulation, and installing a heat exchange system. The priest was involved with the renovation, and made sure it was "done as environmentally as possible."[138] I sense that this was a high point of environmental engagement in the church, and indeed Angela goes on to describe how, after this particular priest left the community, she struggled to keep up momentum:

> "I said, 'I'll try and keep the green things [going]'… we had done some more work, but he had the contacts for when he was doing the talks,

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[137] Angela outlined challenges with some of the ECS resources, such as an encouragement to bring environmental concerns in to church worship, as the Catholic mass is more prescribed in content than a Protestant worship service.
[138] The renovations were funded through a successful application to the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF), a Scottish Government initiative to support communities to reduce carbon emissions. CSH received £136,666 from the fund in 2009 (Scottish Government, 2009). The CCF is discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

whereas I find that a lot more difficult... One of the things that I feel… is that sometimes there is a limit as to what we can do."

<div align="right">Interview, July 2015.</div>

Angela's comments, and my observations, about the varying level of engagement in the community following the departure of the priest illustrate one of the major challenges of environmental engagement within and by a church community: the importance of an actively engaged leader at the local level. Shattuck's research (2016) highlights the importance of clergy leadership in legitimating environmental engagement in a community, through their willingness to integrate 'earth care' within the social norms of the community, and providing support for lay leaders who are actively engaging. Lieberman's (2004) smaller study with Christian and Jewish communities in Oregon, USA, finds that clergy leaders often take an active role in organising and stimulating engagement. This was the case at CSH initially: the priest who stimulated engagement at CSH had been a member of the resident Jesuit community and thus held a leadership role, but was not the parish priest. The current parish priest continues to be supportive of environmental initiatives, but at a lower level of engagement, as this short excerpt from my field notes indicates:

> "Sarah mentioned that [the priest] "wasn't hugely involved" with the eco-group, but that he was very supportive and encouraging, and provided good leadership..."
>
> <div align="right">(field notes, November 2014).</div>

Sarah frequently referred to the parish priest as a helpful contact when she was trying to get an initiative off the ground. He was a quiet presence during the events and activities in which I participated during my fieldwork, taking time to attend an environmental photography exhibition one Sunday after mass, and stopping to chat and encourage members of the Green Group one Saturday morning while we were tending the wildflower patch in the local park. The priest wanted to help raise the profile of environmental issues by presenting the community's second ECS award plaque at the end of mass on a Sunday morning. Events organised by the Green Group were also regularly included in the list of announcements at the end of the mass, embedding environmental events within the parish life of the church. Yet in the ten times I attended Sunday mass at CSH, sermons did not address environmental issues, only an occasional hymn used images of nature, and only one prayer referenced 'care of the

environment,' and that was in the week immediately following the publication of *Laudato Si'*.

Earlier studies have shown how a change of church leadership can stimulate environmental action in a church community and affect a community's commitment to social action in the community, through adopting a more engaged position than their predecessors (Middlemiss, 2010:78; Ward, 2004:126). My research indicates that the reverse can also be true: the quiet, implicit support offered by the current priest at CSH is not as strong as the help provided by a previous priest in the community, and is not sufficient to embed environmental issues more broadly in the concerns of the church. Clergy leadership has been shown to have influence in motivating engagement through practical action and participation for example, in leading adult education sessions (Holland and Carter, 2005). Similarly, Lieberman (2004) and Shattuck (2016) stress the importance of incorporating environmental themes from the pulpit for normalising environmentalism within church life and supporting earlier research by Djupe and Gilbert (2003:16). Djupe and Hunt's research (2009: 680) even suggests that it is not the amount of speech from the pulpit on environmental issues that matters, but rather the perceptions of the amount of speech on environmental themes. Such engagement was absent from my observations at CSH. There are of course many reasons why a local priest/minister might not be fully engaged in supporting environmental initiatives in their community, not least competing priorities and the prioritisation of other issues (Agliardo, 2014; Haluza-Delay, 2008:75; Wilkinson, 2012:97-99). Sarah emphasised for example, how she feels that she and Angela are aware of the many responsibilities of the parish priest, and are reluctant to burden them with more. The reality of changing demographics in church membership and the priesthood, also affects their workload.[139] This is only one example from one church, but it supports earlier findings in Catholic communities in the UK (Ryan, 1996) and illustrates the centrality of clergy leadership within a community, both for initiating engagement, and sustaining it. The sustainability of engagement will be discussed in more detail later, in the context of lay/volunteer participation.

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[139] In April 2015, the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh issued a pastoral letter to all churches in the archdiocese outlining significant issues about the decreasing numbers of priests in the area both now, and in the future (Cushley, 2015). This was already a topic of conversation for my participants, who had recently attended an event concerning the future nature of the Catholic Church in Edinburgh.

Local-level committee leadership

Another issue of local-level leadership has an impact on enabling and/or hindering engagement: local committee leadership. ECS requires that a church's decision-making body (e.g. a congregational board or elder committee) needs to support their original registration (ECS, 2016) to ensure that environmental engagement is supported beyond the interests of just one or two people in the community. This requirement acknowledges the role that local-level leadership structures play in enabling, or hindering, environmental engagement. The contribution of such committees as a mechanism that supports or detracts from environmental engagement became evident in different ways at CSH. The following excerpt is from CSH's first ECS award application in 2009:

> "Our parish Finance Committee has developed a list of short, medium and long-term actions to improve our environmental footprint, based on the eco-congregation modules on finance and church fabric. The committee reviews the list annually to ensure we make progress, and a number of practical actions have already been taken" (ECS application, 2009).

As outlined above, the initial stages of engagement at CSH were strongly embedded within the parish structures: a priest played a key role in establishing initiatives and, as the quote above indicates, the Finance Committee was engaged in prioritising and monitoring environmental issues relating to the church building. Yet during my period of observation with the community, I neither saw nor heard of engagement from the parish Finance Committee, or any other administrative committee within the church. As part of the ECS award process, assessors make recommendations to the community, intended to stimulate further action.[140] One of the participants at CSH expressed frustration that they were unable to implement some of the recommendations, because of what they felt was a lack of influence into CSH's decision-making structures.

> "I asked about the main church hall[141] … the answer was a slightly laughed-off 'no' – the energy in the hall 'doesn't work very well' as it is an old converted warehouse… There was a sense that one of the challenges of

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[140] Two volunteers, one with expertise in environmental issues and one with experience of church community life, undertake ECS award assessments. They visit the church, and observe and discuss environmental engagement in the community. There is an implicit but unwritten expectation that the church should have incorporated such recommendations to achieve the next award level.

[141] The main church hall, where mass is celebrated, not the Lauriston Halls, which are adjacent to the church building.

being an eco-congregation is getting into the 'nitty-gritty' – the question of having influence or knowledge about issues which are 'too technical.' As one of the group said, 'It's the little steps; we need to think along the lines of what we as a little group can do.'" (Field notes, Jan 2015)

Angela felt that they "seem to have to go through a process and consult" even on relatively minor issues, such as changing to biodegradable cleaning products, while Sarah told another story of trying to buy a tree for the courtyard at the front of the church:

> "Just planting up the front of the church was a big deal. It may look like a very small effort now. But I can't tell you how many committee meetings there were. Father Peter originally said he wanted a tree… [but] the pastoral committee wanted to have a think about the tree. And then other committees… the building committee wanted to think about the tree. I can't tell you, it was just unbelievably bureaucratic… Nobody could decide what sort of tree, and someone actually got an expert to come and advise about a suitable tree… Finally I happened to be visiting the Botanics,[142] and I noticed that they had a sale. So I rang the church on spec and I got Father Peter and I said, 'they're selling a rowan tree here, half price. Should I buy it?' And he said 'oh yes, get two!'" (interview, June 2015).

This supports previous work by Lysack (2014) in Canada about the way that lengthy bureaucratic procedures at the local level can be a block to engagement: the experience at CSH is not new. Yet the frustrations experienced by the Green Group ultimately led to a change of focus, as they moved to engage outside of the church, figuratively and literally, and engaged with the residents in the nearby streets. Sarah helped to establish a small community organisation *Greening Our Street,* with the aim of trying to tidy up some of the surrounding streets, and which led to the initiative for a wildflower area in the local park. The CSH Green Group is a member of *Greening Our Street*, along with local residents, and Sarah and colleagues from CSH continue to participate in the actions and activities of the community group on a regular basis.

Sustained volunteer engagement

As has been evident throughout this chapter, environmental engagement at CSH involves only a small number of volunteers from the wider church community. Upwards of two hundred and fifty people gather on a Sunday morning, a large number in a Scottish context, yet during the period I spent at CSH, I had two key informants, contact with three others who participated in the Green Group, and only a handful of

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[142] Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

other churchgoers with whom I would regularly interact. I always attended post-mass coffee time and sought out conversation with churchgoers, but environmental issues were not themes that sparked conversation. Angela and Sarah were leading what sociologist Nancy Ammerman (2005: 136) describes as an issue group within a congregation, people coming together around an issue (the environment) and seeking to learn about and share their concerns. The lack of wider participation and engagement was a tangible frustration to those who were trying to lead environmental initiatives in the parish. Angela described how, after the priest who enthusiastically supported activity left the parish, she tried to keep things going. It was a harder task than anticipated however, as discussed earlier. She gave an example of an initiative that she considered successful, yet also incomplete, because of a lack of capacity to sustain engagement:

> "It's hard going. There was one year where we did something… it was about food and waste and all sorts of things. … There were big charts with different kind of pledges people could make. And we had clothes pegs with them on, and they could choose which one to take… I think that went well, but the thing is – you've got to then evaluate that. We didn't take that step. It's quite hard work. It's almost a full-time job in a parish, to be able to do that. And I think that's what makes it quite hard…" (interview, July 2015).

Sarah was keen to let me know that more people had participated, both in the Green Group, and in the neighbourhood/wildflower project, in previous years. She expressed frustration at the low numbers of volunteers helping to manage the wildflower patch, despite her regular contact with an email list of over fifty people, and even talked briefly at one point of handing back responsibility for the area to the city council (but decided against doing so). Another example of frustration at the lack of engagement from the wider church community came at an event that had been advertised in the church newsletter, but to which only Patrick, Sarah and myself turned up. The three of us started to discuss other ideas for events that might engage people in the parish:

> "Patrick mentioned the possibility of another photo competition – they have done it twice before. He thought it would just be a case of 'we've always done this so let's do it again.' But Sarah suddenly seemed exhausted by the prospect – of getting people to enter, of running it again… I sensed that she was tired of things, and she said as much herself 'maybe I'll get some energy back for these things later' … She had been full of ideas earlier, but all of a sudden she was making comments about things seeming too much and needing more energy" (field notes, Jan 2015).

The challenges of sustaining enthusiasm and moment became most apparent about six months into my time with the congregation, when Angela decided to step back from much of her participation in the parish, including the Green Group.[143] She talked of "burnout" and of "green fatigue and empty batteries" (October 2015), and of her feeling that "sometimes there is a limit as to what we can do" with organising events and making environmental improvements to their buildings, adding "It's just keeping on with these things I find difficult."

The availability of volunteers to lead engagement is one of, if not the principal, aspect of social engagement in faith communities. Volunteering, whether within or outwith the immediate faith community, is something of a normative value in faith communities (Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008:76; Cloke, Thomas and Williams, 2013:5). Churches are dependent on volunteer labour for any number of initiatives, whether for the running of the weekly worship service itself, or through encouragement to serve the community in other ways, many of which are outlined on the information-heavy weekly notice-sheets at CSH. Leading the Green Group is thus one of many initiatives within the church, and any events organised contribute to a busy programme of activities. Shattuck's research (2016:132) with faith communities in the US identifies lay leaders as organisers, people who are key for sustaining engagement, while O'Brien (2010:121-122) points to laypeople as "agents of transformation," who, he argues, are key actors for moving the Catholic Church from words to action on climate change. Baugh (2015) and Wilson and Musick (2008) highlight how volunteer engagement needs to be sustained, and that social factors, such as a sense of making progress, or as simple as feeling valued, are an important component of this. Wilson and Musick's research in particular (2008:448) highlights how volunteers become disillusioned if their work feels futile. They refer to the frequent use of the language of 'burnout' by community volunteers, which they identify as a particular risk within 'advocacy volunteering' (such as environmental advocacy) where feedback, and a sense of success, can be intangible.[144]

The frustrations voiced by Sarah and Angela are indicative of a wider challenge within faith communities: how to sustain the commitment of volunteers, and the

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[143] She also stepped back from her involvement in the ECS Edinburgh network group.
[144] Wilson and Musick (2008) contrast advocacy volunteering with face-to-face volunteering, where volunteers can see the impact of their contribution and 'make a difference' directly to the people they are serving.

engagement of the church community more broadly. Research by Garland et al (2008), Cnaan and Cascio (1999), and Nelson (2007) highlights the importance of offering recognition, support and feedback to volunteers, both from leaders and within the community, and of ensuring that volunteers feel their work is meaningful and challenging. These factors certainly existed at CSH initially, and the current priest continues to offer encouragement and support behind-the-scenes. The lack of wider participation makes sustaining engagement a challenge. Ammerman's research (2005: 369) indicates that the majority of Catholics in the USA do not engage in parish life beyond attending mass, and it may be that a similar situation would be found in the UK.[145] The publication of *Laudato Si'* gave my participants a sense of purpose that their work was valued within the wider structures of the church. This was affirmed through attendance and feedback from the events they organised about *Laudato Si'*, but the risk is that this engagement is short-lived. Research by Regnerus (2003) and Hoge et al (1998) also indicates that, just as social factors can be more important than theological ones in determining engagement, they are also important in sustaining engagement. People may become engaged in an issue for a theological reason (believing that their faith teaches that they should, for example, take action on climate change because of its impact on the poor) yet those initial motivational values become less important than social and material factors in sustaining engagement (Wilson and Musick, 2008: 431-432). In the case of CSH, while those who are taking the lead are driven by concern for environmental issues, the lack of social connections and support for their engagement is potentially a factor that contributes to the sense of fatigue and burnout.

6.4 Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have presented the major factors that explain environmental engagement at CSH. I have shown how the principal theological motivation is the longstanding concern within the Catholic Church for justice, which participants understand through acknowledgement of the concerns of climate change and environmental degradation on the poorest and weakest, and a central theme of Catholic social teaching (Hornsby-Smith, 2006). This concern for justice leads to

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[145] Desmond Ryan's *The Catholic Parish* (1996) describes the changing role of laypeople in the local church in England, following the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) which encouraged greater lay involvement in the ministries of the Catholic Church. Ryan highlights opportunities for lay involvement in initiatives in churches, but also identifies challenges of people's willingness to engage.

consideration of the impact of present-day practices on the lives of future generations. Narratives drawing on the teachings of the lives of people who have died reflect a sense of the 'communion of saints,' of those who sought to raise environmental concerns as justice issues within the Christian faith. I have also analysed how the community at CSH practices its environmental concerns. I have emphasised the strong focus on adult learning opportunities, a normative practice of community life at CSH, and illustrated the desire by those driving environmental action to make their environmental engagement a practical commitment, whether through hands-on actions like gardening and growing vegetables, or through traditional forms of political activism. I noted however, that there was less evidence of participation in practical forms of action by the broader community at CSH.

Across all of this, the impact of different levels of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church were interacting. At the local level, laypeople were trying to engage others in their concerns, and a busy priest was showing support, but without taking a visibly active part in promoting environmental actions in the community. The involvement of the highest level of the Church, through the publication of *Laudato Si'*, energised discussion and interaction around the place of environmental concerns at the local level, at least in the short term, and encouraged the members of the Green Group about the place of their work within the teachings and practices of the Church more broadly at both the local and global levels.

In explaining environmental engagement, my analysis indicates how theological concerns are interwoven with more pragmatic factors about church life. I have demonstrated how leadership is important, both at the local level (the parish priest) and at the highest level (the pope). I have expressed that active participation is key for integrating environmental engagement as a normative practice in the community. This continues to be a struggle at CSH. Yet the potential effect of the highest level of leadership in the Catholic Church is also seen, through the impact of the publication of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The Green Group felt encouraged through the teaching contained *Laudato Si'*, and the wider community at CSH was willing to engage in discussions of the place of environmental issues within their faith, at least in the short term. Finally, I have illustrated how volunteer commitment and enthusiasm needs to be supported and acknowledged, to avoid frustration and burnout, a common feature of community volunteering, also identified in previous research.

In the next chapter, I discuss how justice also motivates engagement in a Protestant community, Wardie Parish Church, and illustrate in more detail the importance of social aspects of environmental engagement for sustaining participation.

7   Wardie Parish Church: Grounded in community

Introduction

The third and final case presented is Wardie Parish Church, a large, family-friendly church located in a suburb on the north side of Edinburgh. Wardie is a member of the Church of Scotland, the largest Christian denomination in Scotland. In this chapter, I outline how the congregation at Wardie is motivated by a longstanding concern for justice and charity across the community, and how the congregation works intentionally to integrate environmental practices into these existing concerns. I interweave examples of the practice of environmental advocacy throughout, and illustrate how engagement is practiced in the principal expression of community life at Wardie: worship. In the final part of this chapter, I set the theological motivations and practices alongside practical issues of financial resources and leadership. In doing so, I illustrate again that environmental engagement is explained by an intersection of theological motivations and pragmatic factors. In particular, I draw attention to the opportunities presented by accessing external funding for environmental engagement, and demonstrate how such funding can help to engage a broader constituency in environmental issues than might be typical. I conclude by drawing the analysis together and identifying the central importance of community and social relations as a facilitator, motivator and space for environmental engagement.

7.1   Theological drivers of environmental engagement
Justice: Fair trade, ethical buying, and sustainable consumption

Standing under the new low-energy lights of the church hall after the Sunday service, I take a sip of coffee and notice the fair-trade products laid out on tables at the side of the hall, filled with a selection of Divine chocolates, Geo muesli-bars, and Traidcraft products such as sugar, nuts, coffees, teas, and 'environmentally friendly' cleaning products.[146] Three women stand behind the tables, smiling and chatting to each other and members of the congregation. There is a hubbub of friendly conversation as small transactions are made – a box of tea bags or a packet of mixed nuts being sold amidst the chatter. I catch the eye of Heather, one of my principal research contacts, standing adjacent to the stall, and she invites me into her conversation

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[146] Divine, Geo-bar and Traidcraft are established fair-trade brands in the UK market.

with Caroline, whom I have not met before. "I'm doing some research about churches and the environment," I say, gesturing towards Heather. "That's how we know each other." "Ah, so this fair-trade stall will be right up your street then?" replies Caroline, looking at the table. On a separate occasion, the Sunday morning service addresses current events about refugees fleeing war in Syria. Unusually, the sermon is written as a letter to an Old Testament prophet, Amos, describing how the situation to which he had spoken thousands of years ago, was perhaps not all that different from what is happening in Europe today. The call to action during this sermon is clear – Christians who claim to care about people suffering, must stand up and speak out on such issues. There is no mention of environmental issues or climate change during the service (even though the news media suggests climate-related resource stress as a possible catalyst for the war (Selby & Hulme, 2015)); the focus is very much on the suffering caused by war, the effects on those who have the least, and Christianity's call to respond and take action. The sermon is one of the most direct ones I have heard in my visits to Wardie, and focuses explicitly on justice for the poor and oppressed. Later, over coffee, I find myself chatting with Karen, another of my principal contacts. After exchanging pleasantries, she refers back to the service, immediately pointing out that it was the "kind of stuff you [Alice] are interested in – social justice, fair-trade and the like."

I include these two short examples to demonstrate the immediate association made by members of the congregation between fair-trade, compassion for refugees fleeing war, and my research on environmentalism in churches. Such connections, particularly between environmental concerns and the fair-trade movement, were a recurring theme in conversations with members of Wardie.

Wardie has a long history as a church that promotes fair-trade goods - it is a *Fair Trade Church*[147] and received a *Fair Trade Faith Community* award from Edinburgh's Lord Provost[148] in 2011 (Wardie Climate Champions (WCC) 2015: 5); church newsletters indicate a commitment to selling fair-trade goods in church as long ago as May 2005 (WPC, 2015b). The fair-trade movement in the UK has its roots in church communities (Clarke et al, 2007; Cloke et al, 2011) and stalls selling Traidcraft products have been a

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[147] www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/get-involved/in-your-community/faith-groups/fairtrade-churches Accessed 08 March 2016
[148] The Lord Provost is the title given to the leader of the City of Edinburgh Council: it is a position similar to a mayor.

common sight in church halls since 1979, when Traidcraft was founded. The community at Wardie is part of that tradition, which has been shown to be a popular method in which Christians in the UK have consolidated questions of ethics, morality, devotion to God, and concern for producers in developing countries. Importantly for this research, buying fair-trade is also a way that Christians in the UK frequently put their faith into practice (Cloke et al, 2011:100).

Support for fair-trade goods is often included within understandings of ethical, or sustainable, consumption (see for example Clarke et al, 2007; Middlemiss, 2010; OECD, 2008; Pepper et al, 2011), and is included with DEFRA's understandings of pro-environmental behaviours and sustainable lifestyles (DEFRA, 2008; 2011). Supporting fair-trade has strong links with concerns for justice, particularly with regard to calls for a more just system for international trade, and concern for the pay and conditions of producers in developing countries (Moore, 2004). It is also seen by some people as "a way of distributing resources to the poor" (Bretherton, 20101:176). Indeed, Traidcraft's foundations were within the Christian development charity Tearfund, as part of a response to address issues of poverty through trade (Clarke et al, 2007:589).

The integration of Wardie's environmental actions with support for the fair-trade movement is also longstanding, and continues today. This reflects how environmental issues are linked with concerns about moral and ethical concerns about the impact of the current economic system on producers in developing countries (Bretherton, 2010:183) and as a response to issues of poverty and global development (Clarke et al, 2007), thus embedding the practice of environmental engagement within a frame of concern for justice by the community at Wardie.

In their first ECS award application in 2005, the community lists their activity as a *Fair Trade Church* under the theme of making a positive impact "with their local or global community":

> "At least monthly stall of Traidcraft products … Church organisations use fair-trade tea and coffee and biscuits; special events promote use of fair trade products."

In fact, this was one of the factors that was commended by ECS in the award assessment feedback letter:

> "The assessors particularly commended the congregation for the following initiatives…
> - The promotion of fair-trade goods, not only for themselves, but as a way of raising wider issues about trade and consumption, and of building friendships between churches and politicians, between Edinburgh and the wider world." (ECS assessment letter, 2007)

These two excerpts illuminate the significant meaning placed on the fair-trade movement by ECS: fair-trade products are taken to indicate a moral 'good' in and of themselves; they raise awareness of trade justice issues and of sustainable consumption. Moreover, for some respondents, they foster political engagement and relationships with politicians, and even (according to the ECS assessment letter) appear to be allocated a role in international relations. By affirming the place of support for fair-trade in the ECS assessment process, environmental concerns are explicitly linked to issues of international trade justice, an understanding supported and emphasised by contacts at Wardie. Focusing on fair trade and ethical consumption continues to be part of the community's environmental engagement: "shop ethically" was one of five principles behind 'Wardie Climate Champions' project to encourage churchgoers and the local community to reduce their environmental impact (see box 7.1). Other principles of this project were save energy, travel wisely, save resources and "care for our environment," as detailed in the promotional flyer in figure 7.2.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, concern for justice is widely recognised as a motivation for environmental engagement within Christian communities, particularly 'mainstream' protestant communities, a categorisation which would include the Church of Scotland (Jenkins, 2008; Kearns, 2011; 2012; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-Delay, 2014: 300). The community at Wardie expresses concern about global poverty and development through active support for fair-trade products. By associating environmental action with support for fair-trade, participants integrate environmental concerns within their congregation's longstanding commitment to justice. This association also reinforces the understanding that taking small-scale, local-level actions such as buying fair-trade products, is an important practical response to a challenging global issue. Extending that understanding to engagement in environmental issues places meaning on environmental action in the context of putting faith into practice.

Justice and charity

Support for fair-trade is not a full representation of the congregation's broad engagement with justice issues. The community at Wardie also places a strong emphasis on charity, and supporting people in need, both in terms of active support and financial giving. Wardie supports a number of international development charities and projects financially, and community members engage actively in local charities and care organisations. Concern for climate change is embedded within that concern, as described in the October 2015 church newsletter: "The burden of climate change often falls most heavily on the poorest in the world, those who have done the least to cause it, and we are keen to do what we can to reverse that trend" (WPC, 2015b). The prominence of charity as a key part, and outcome, of involvement in a Christian community is well-documented (Ammerman 2005: 160-165; Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008; Miles 2006; 117-118; Putnam, 2000: 67; Putnam and Campbell, 2010: 447-452; Wuthnow, 1994). What I seek to demonstrate here, is how the community at Wardie integrates environmental concerns within their existing charitable practices, albeit in a limited way.

I should note at this point that I consider justice and charity to be two distinct yet inter-related factors that support engagement at Wardie. Ivereigh (2010: 1) highlights that charity is often understood as a more direct, personal act of support to those in need (and would thus include financial giving), while justice focuses on challenging more systemic or institutional issues. He quotes Pope Benedict to emphasise their interconnectedness. Deane-Drummond (2011: 189) illustrates how the virtue of charity is important in creating justice.[149] Ethicist Bouma-Prediger (2001: 155-158) suggests that both are 'ecological virtues', with benevolence/love coming from a principle of beneficence (doing good for others), while justice is about equity and treating others fairly. As such, the distinction I make in this case is that environmental concern at Wardie is associated with a concern for justice as exhibited through support for fair-trade within the community. It is also associated with charity, and demonstrates how environmental practices can also highlight concern for others.

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[149] Ivereigh and Deane-Drummond both speak from a Catholic context into wider issues of environmental concern.

Box 7.1: Wardie Climate Champions

A significant aspect of my research at Wardie was focused around the community's engagement in a project titled *Wardie Climate Champions* (WCC). Through a successful application to the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF), the church received a grant of £52 633 just over six months prior to the start of my fieldwork. This was a twelve-month grant to support a range of carbon-reducing renovations to the halls, and a series of community-based awareness-raising events.

The major focus of WCC was improvements to the energy efficiency of the church halls (including the addition of insulation and double glazing, and improving the heating zoning system), and initiatives aimed at changing environmental behaviours (installation of cycle racks; efforts to encourage vegetable gardening etc.). The five main themes for the project were "save energy, travel wisely, shop ethically, save resources, care for our environment." The majority of the renovations were undertaken in the summer prior to my fieldwork, and a number of the events planned as part of the project had already taken place. That said, the project group was active throughout my study, and the WCC project formed a focus for conversation and inspiration to people throughout my fieldwork.

The WCC project engaged the support of the Kirk Session, the principal leadership body of the congregation within the Church of Scotland, to adopt a church-wide Sustainability Strategy, and embedded it within the Kirk Session's statutes for ongoing accountability.

Wardie Climate Champions

Who are we?
We are a group based in Wardie Church Halls

What are our Aims?
To cut carbon emissions in Wardie Halls by upgrading the building and heating system helped by a grant from the Climate Challenge Fund.

To encourage everyone using the Halls and living in the local community to engage in fun and informative activities and to embrace the following principles to become Wardie Climate Champions.

> **Save energy**
>
> **Travel wisely**
>
> **Shop ethically**
>
> **Save resources**
>
> **Care for our environment**

More information is available:
- Notice board in the Wardie Halls corridor
- Website: www.wardie.org.uk
- News@Wardie monthly newsletter

Charity No. SC008710

Wardie Climate Champions

Join us and take part in some fun, free and informative activities to become a Wardie Climate Champion

Do you want to grow your own produce?
Join us at the Edible Garden Project, meet at West Gate, Royal Botanic Garden on Saturday May 17th 3pm.
Also join us on our Open Gardens days on Tuesday 17th June 6-9pm or Saturday 21st June 2-5pm.

Do you enjoy walking and meeting new people?
Come along to Wardie Walkers
We meet on a Wednesday afternoon once a month, May 21st, June 18th, July 16th.
Meet 1pm at cycle path entrance in Clark Road.

Do you want to save fuel when visiting Wardie Halls?
Use our new cycle racks
Share a car
Take part in the 'Walk to Wardie Week' 2nd-8th June
Use public transport

Do you want to reduce your energy bills?
Visit the Energy Fair on 6th September and learn about Carbon Conversations Groups
Borrow a Home Energy Monitor
Free fuelgood driving lessons

Form further details visit:
- Notice board in Wardie Halls corridor
- Website: www.wardie.org.uk
- News@Wardie monthly newsletter

Charity No. SC008710

Figure 7.2 Leaflet for Wardie Climate Champions

Each Sunday, announcements in the *Order of Service*[150] (often reaffirmed verbally by the minister or a lay leader during the servie) provide details of activities in the week ahead, and calls for volunteers to support particular events. This short entry from my field notes illustrates the breadth of engagement:

> "Other things included: requests for extra supplies for family services ("Messy Church"), a collection box for Tilda Mission Hospital (India), a note asking for donations for Fresh Start (an Edinburgh charity supporting homeless people) and Granton Food Bank; a call for leaders for Rainbows, and other church social events including "Open Door" (flower arranging session this week), Wardie Guild, and a collection for Blythswood Shoe Boxes [Christian charity – **"**Boxes will go to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Pakistan, Romania and Serbia this year" from their website]" (Field notes, 26 October 2014).[151]

Packed into just one week's notices were activities aimed at families with young children; social events for church members; collection of financial donations for an international development charity; and collection of physical donations for local and international organisations. Support for i) the immediate local community, ii) city-wide projects, and iii) international development is a normative practice at Wardie. During my time with the community, other examples of charitable activities included the creation of a 'timebank' to match requests for help from the local community with people who have time to give (e.g. decorating; gardening; dog-walking etc.); ongoing donations for a food-bank and periodic collection of household goods for a city-wide homelessness charity; ongoing financial collections for a hospital in Tilda, India; a donation of nearly two hundred and fifty school backpacks for children in Malawi; and the promotion of 'alternative Christmas gifts', certificates to be given in lieu of Christmas gifts to recognise financial donations made to local and international charities not supported elsewhere (in 2014-2015, this included donations for Médecins Sans Frontières and four Edinburgh/Scottish charities working with vulnerable people, and people with dementia

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[150] The sheet handed out to churchgoers containing information about the content of the service, as well as information about forthcoming social activities in the community.

[151] Messy Church is a family-based programme of activities that takes place away from the 'typical' Sunday morning gathering, intended as a way to reach out to families with young children in a creative way. www.messychurch.org.uk (accessed 26 June 2017). Rainbows is a programme for 5-7 years olds associated with Girlguiding; Open Door is a social and discussion programme at Wardie that is open to all; Wardie Guild is associated with the Church of Scotland Guild, previously known as the Women's Guild.

and learning difficulties). This prioritisation of charity as a value is long-standing – support for the hospital in Tilda was established over thirty years ago through a personal connection, while alternative Christmas gifts, promoted by the youth group and available to the full congregation, have been promoted for at least fifteen years according to old editions of the monthly church newsletter, 'News@Wardie'.[152]

Given this strong emphasis on charity and charitable giving in the community, it was interesting to note that one of the events organised as part of the WCC programme was a fundraising event with an environmental context and an environmental theme. In the spring of 2015, one member of the WCC group offered her home as the venue for a "Fashion Exchange." The idea was to combine a social event with recycling clothes, and raising funds for charity. People in the community donated old clothes, shoes and accessories ahead of time (as they would do to a charity shop), and then these were exchanged and sold at the event, with all proceeds going to support the purchase of energy-saving lightbulbs for the 'home starter boxes' produced by Fresh Start. With a nominal entrance fee, a small raffle, and clothing purchases, the event raised nearly £500. Participants commented on the event both in terms of the social benefits of getting to know people from across the church community, and on the environmental perspective that was presented (one commented that "it was about sustainability….it was all about recycling really" while others added similar sentiments about the recycling aspect of the evening in particular).

The Fashion Exchange is an example of WCC members integrating environmental concerns within the existing charitable practices of their community, emphasised by Haluza-Delay (2008:80), Rasmussen (2013) and Wood (1994), as important for environmental concerns to become a central concern for churches. The event served a dual purpose, given the strong social focus of the evening, but the initiative came from members of the WCC group and was part of the WCC events to promote action on climate change within the community. It also illustrates how the community is willing to expand its understanding of charitable giving to include environmental concerns, although interestingly, the decision was to support people

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[152] Wardie has had a commitment to charity from its very earliest days. Excerpts from a church history booklet refer to "the Poor's Collection and a Poor Fund" and distributions thereof, as well as a letter from June 1887 relating to giving a gift to the poor in recognition of Queen Victoria's Jubilee (Robertson, 1985: 10-11).

through a homelessness charity in a manner with which they already engage, rather than fundraise for an environmental charity such as the Scottish Wildlife Trust or Friends of the Earth. This case suggests that charity is an underlying virtue that congregation members draw upon as they seek to embed environmental concerns into the everyday practices of their community; it is not a motivation that drives or explains engagement *per se*.

Community: people and place

In the summer of 2015, Wardie was in a 'vacancy', the period of time after one minister has left, and before a new long-term replacement has been appointed.[153] As part of the recruitment process, the Kirk Session prepared a Parish Profile, a document presenting the church to prospective candidates, and outlining the type of candidate they were seeking for the position. The opening paragraph states:

> "Our aim is for Wardie Church to be the heart of our community. Within a small parish (geographically, the smallest in Edinburgh) we see ourselves as a local hub, with a congregational ministry of hosting. Our size is our strength – there is a real neighbourliness in the area that we feel marks us out." (WPC, 2015a: 2).

This statement indicates the high value that the congregation puts on the importance of community as place in its identity: phrases such as "a local hub," "a ministry of hosting" and "neighbourliness" illustrate this value. Well-established within the fields of human geography and cultural studies (see for example Cresswell, 2004 and Rose, 1995), the importance of place has also been studied with regard to environmentalism and the sacred (Northcott, 2015; Palmer, 2012) and environmental engagement by and in churches (Clifton-Soderstrom, 2009; Seifert and Shaw, 2013). The history and role of the Church of Scotland as a national church also impacts this contribution to a sense of place: Wardie has a defined parish boundary for which the minister/church is notionally responsible. Indeed, the church was originally built (on then open land) with the intention of servicing a particular area of the city, with responsibility for geographically defined areas ('elders' districts') identified as early as 1887 (Robertson, 1985: 4-6; 10). Like most churches today, it draws its congregation

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[153] The previous minister moved to a new church in April 2015.

and 'hall users'[154] (together referred to as 'the wider Wardie community' (WPC, 2015a: 5)) from a broader area than the formally defined parish.

While community as place is important for the congregation at Wardie, so too is community as people. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas argues that, first and foremost, a church is called to be a church, "the servant community" (1983: 99-100). A strong focus on community has always been at the foundation of the church, and indeed, the book of Acts[155] in the Bible tells the stories of the early Christian community following Jesus' death and resurrection (see particularly Acts 2: 42-47). Sociologists of religion emphasise the primacy of "worship and fellowship" for churches (Ammerman, 2002: 131) over and above any service or advocacy activities, while Park and Smith (2000: 272) identify the strong sense of community identity that churchgoers find through their churches. Throughout the research for this thesis, my principal focus was on the environmental activities of the congregation: studying how the congregations practice environmental engagement, and analysing the underlying motivations behind their activity. Yet this finding, about the importance of community as people and place, is one example where participant observation illuminated a research finding that I probably would not have asked about in an interview. Being party to the 'everyday life' of the community (Ammerman, 2007:6) and experiencing what McFarland Taylor terms "religion on the ground" (2007: xi), I observed, and repeatedly heard reflections about, the importance of community both as a motivation for, and outcome of, engaging in environmental issues.

Community engagement
Wardie expresses its desire to serve its neighbouring community through its ongoing interactions with schools, local care facilities and other community-based organisations. This is articulated in written communications such as newsletters, and is visible from the myriad of posters and event notices displayed in the corridors around the church hall. Wardie also puts this neighbourliness into practice, acting as the hub for

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[154] The term 'hall users' arises regularly both in the context of WCC meetings and in the broader understanding of the role of the church in the community. 'Hall users' are people and groups who do not attend Sunday services, but do regularly use the space in the church, often on a weekly basis. This includes people attending the community choir, and parents and children at the playgroup or Brownie Guides, for example. The church describes the 'Wardie community' as "the people who worship in Wardie Parish Church plus all the organisations that use the halls" (WPC, 2015a: 5), and estimates this to be 750 people per week.
[155] Acts is the common name of the book that describes the "Acts of the Apostles."

organisation of the "Wardie Community Gala" (a biennial, two-day event, held in August 2015), and hosting a number of organisations including Brownies, choirs, a playschool, and a community drama group, within the church. The programme of environmental events organised through WCC added to this hive of activity, and groups who use the halls were informed of plans as they were being developed, and encouraged to participate. It should be noted that the funding that enabled events under WCC came with explicit requirements about community engagement:[156] the CCF is specifically aimed at community projects (including faith-based communities); associated activities should engage the community; and building improvements are to benefit the local community, rather than the church.[157] This requirement for community engagement focused the WCC committee's energy on developing an events programme with a broad focus, including an energy day, held in the church halls and attended by over 100 people, and an Open Gardens event hosted in the gardens of community members (not necessarily church members) who are trying to grow food. The aim was to inspire others to take up gardening or to try something new with their gardens. Looking back over the year of WCC, research participants reflected on the various activities they had organised, as detailed below:

> "we … did not really realise …the wonderful support which would come freely from our local community and the knowledge that we were a very small part of a huge swell of concern and effort to "do something" about climate change (WCC 2015: 46)

> "Heather herself was amazed by how many people had come – and expressed a little bit of apprehension about simply opening her doors and letting anyone in: 'We've had all sorts, some are from the church, others are neighbours, but others are people who I don't know at all. It's a bit odd really… but that's what it's all about, isn't it? Bringing people together, people getting to know each other.'" (field notes, Open Gardens, May 2015).

> "We developed working links with other local people who were already taking action to tackle climate change…" (WCC 2015: 6)

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[156] Project application guidelines state that "Projects must also engage with the community to encourage low carbon behaviours in their everyday lives" http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/applying-for-ccf-funding/ccf-grants/funding-for-community-owned-building-projects/. Accessed 17 July 2017.

[157] Funding for building renovations was restricted to the rooms used by community organisations, rather than the main church hall, where Sunday services are held. Hall users were also informed about, and invited to agree to, the congregation's sustainability strategy.

"It's been the most fulfilling, happy thing I've been involved with. I've got to meet so many local people…" (Margaret, interview, April 2015).

Comments of this type indicate that it is not environmental benefits that are most prominent in people's reflections on events: there is a strong emphasis on the importance of getting to know the local community, of building personal relationships, and of meeting new people. Participants recounted the 'success' of their activities in terms of social connections and links within the community, rather than any environmental outcomes or measurements. The focus on social aspects of engagement correlates with findings of Ammerman (1997b, 2002, 2005), Putnam (2000); Putnam and Campbell (2008); Wuthnow (1991) and others, about the importance of social connections within congregational life, and in particular, within people's willingness to engage, and participate, beyond attendance at Sunday services. Crucially, environmentally-focused events strengthened relationships between individuals, and within the church as a whole. The communal aspect of connecting the church with the wider community also links back to the quote at the start of this section from the church profile: "Our aim is for Wardie to be at the heart of the community…" The environmental activities organised under WCC affirmed the value of building social connections by members of the congregation, and created a sense of contributing to the local community through their engagement. In other words, a pre-existing sense of community within the congregation enables environmental engagement; at the same time, environmental engagement sustains, and strengthens, that sense of community.

The context of CCF funding does have some impact here. The fund is aimed specifically for projects that engage with community to reduce carbon emissions and change behaviours. Wardie's original application to the CCF was for approximately £8000, to help pay for energy-efficiency renovations to the church halls. Administrators at the CCF encouraged the congregation to submit a more substantial application, which included more significant building renovations, and a programme of community education and engagement. As such, there is a risk that the value the congregation places on community is reflective of this funding formulation rather than a broader analysis of the church's environmental engagement. The original five "target outcomes" defined at the beginning of the WCC project focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing car use, helping people change energy behaviours at home, and increasing the numbers of people growing garden produce (WCC, 2015: 4). In addition

to reporting detailed figures about these target outcomes to the funders, the "headline achievements" reported back to the CCF at the end of the project included reflections about the social impact of the project, and statements such as "a positive response from the whole Wardie community, exceeding our expectations…" and "we developed working links with other local people who were already taking action to tackle climate change" (WCC, 2015: 6). These statements make it clear that the relational and community-focused aspects of the project were significant to participants, above and beyond the carbon-measuring reductions requested from the funding body.

It was particularly interesting to observe how participants indicated that involvement in the WCC project gave church members a sense of 'legitimacy' with which to engage with the broader community and neighbourhood: taking action on environmental issues enabled connections to be built that they felt in some way validated their existence in the community:

> "The woman … explained how popular that [Open Gardens] had been - both socially, and in terms of a few people trying their hand at growing veg in a way that they'd never done before. She also explained how the event had reached the wider community as well: "People who don't really know my church life were coming along and sharing… and there was no pressure."" (field notes, October 2014)

> "Extra opportunities for the coming together of church members and neighbours has enhanced the positive role that Wardie plays in the area…" (WCC, 2015:48-49).

> "the events they were running were "not just 'churchy' but something 'real' that all people can engage with" … [the minister] talked about how being involved in environmental issues can enable accessible and well done (i.e. not condescending) links to the wider community" (field notes, November 2014).

Another example came from Heather's experience of leading a walking group, *Wardie Walkers*, an initiative established under the WCC project, but which continues to meet to encourage people to get outdoors, Heather commented:

> "It's such a nice occasion, we ramble along, we sit and chat… it's been a great way to get to know people. And I particularly like the fact that folks' partners get involved. Because it's not in the church and so it's presumably non-threatening." (August, 2015).

This hesitancy or reticence to acknowledge a faith-based aspect of their activity has been identified in the professional work of faith-based development organisations in Europe given the perception of religion as "at best, irrelevant, at worst regressive" (James, 2009:10) in some countries, including the UK (see also Cloke, Beaumont and Williams, 2013; Furbey, 2009; Woodhead et al, 2004:19; Woodhead 2014). This phenomenon – playing down any faith-based motivation behind their work - is also visible at Wardie, as indicated by the comments above. The flyers for the "Open Gardens" event distributed across the neighbourhood referred to "Wardie Climate Champions" with no explicit mention of the church, and the general WCC flyers (see figure 7.2) simply refer to the group being "based in Wardie Church Halls." Research participants found that environmental activities created an opportunity for engagement with the wider community through a common interest in environmental issues, and thereby contributed to the congregation's aims of "serving the community, reaching out to people in need" (WPC, 2015a). A commitment to environmental action enabled the congregation to engage with the local community in a manner that had not previously occurred. As such, building community ties and strengthening community beyond the church was also an outcome of environmental engagement for participants at Wardie.

Building internal community

Engaging in environmental issues not only provided legitimacy to the congregation regarding its role in its neighbourhood. Another community-building aspect that became clear was the internal impact of environmental engagement between existing members of the church, and particularly, those who contributed to the WCC project. Referring to "streams of things happening" and "trying to involve so many different people", Karen commented: "what's thrilled me about it is that it's kind of people that maybe wouldn't have been involved before, that you wouldn't think of as your traditional greenies…" Other data gathered likewise supports this theme:

> "… it's like the Climate Challenge group… I knew Fiona through dramas and things, and I knew others a bit, but I really didn't know anyone. And we had fun." (Heather, interview)

> "This was not only an evening where wine and lots of laughter were in abundance… but so many people stayed very late… The invitation had said 7-7.30pm… and let's just say that I was one of the first to leave, long after the last bus, at 12.15am… [One of] the main things I took away was definitely… the friendships that had developed among the group members as a result." (field notes, May 2015).

The congregation's focus on the WCC project took the level of engagement in environmental issues within the community above that which had been the case for the previous ten years. The process of developing and submitting an application, implementing both the building refurbishments and the event-focused components of the project over a short period of time (twelve months), and dealing with the reporting requirements of a government grant, brought people together in a way they had not previously experienced. Heather commented how it had been a great way for so many people to use their 'gifts' and had truly been a team effort. The sense of fun and engagement was palpable in the meetings I attended: discussions about measurements for reporting on CO_2e reductions were littered with anecdotes about switching electrical equipment on and off around the house after the installation of an energy monitor to see which gadgets had the highest energy use, and laughter when a one person commented that monitors showed very low levels of energy-usage – until his grandchildren came to visit. Another committee member, who strongly affirmed that she was "not an ecowarrior" in a later interview, set herself the aim of reducing her household energy use by ten percent. She commented that she had not yet placed foil panels behind the radiators, but joked that she was instead currently reducing energy by doing less ironing.

It was also striking how participants recognised the relationships that were being formed between them, and with the wider internal church community, as a result of engagement in environmental issues. This again was an important outcome of their work that they affirmed in their end-of-project report to the CCF: one of the headline achievements read:

> "The WCC committee forged strong working relationships, complementing each other's existing skills, developing new ones (and benefitting on a personal level from getting to know each other better)" (WCC 2015: 6)

while again emphasising this in more detail later in the report:

> "Some of our committee had been heavily involved in previous years in establishing Wardie as an eco-congregation and despite managing to achieve this, had at times felt they were running out of steam. However, the committee members found strength in each other's varying abilities and by breaking down what was required into smaller parts, and by using the knowledge and contacts that we each had, it soon became clear that we could engage with a much broader range of local people who in turn would

be able to disseminate information and encouragement to attend or contribute to planned events." (WCC 2015: 46-47).

Karen's excitement at the involvement of people who were not what she called "traditional greenies" reflected the comment in the report that those who had established Wardie as an eco-congregation had been "running out of steam" before the opportunity presented through WCC provided a new focus for engagement. The committee found "strength in each other's varying abilities" and an ability to "engage with a much broader range of local people" as a result of their participation. WCC resulted in clear environmental benefits, not least, the measured reduction in CO_2e through activities and building improvements, as well as indications that more people were engaging in environmental behaviours.[158] The social aspects of the project reflect comments made by the founder of the Iona Community, George McLeod, that "a demanding common task builds community" (quoted in McIntosh and Carmichael, 2015: 14). Participation in an environmental project at Wardie provided WCC group members with an enhanced sense of community, and new and stronger relationships. My observations and participant comments indicated that this stronger sense of community was an important outcome for all.

Somewhat surprisingly, 'community' as a motivation for, or outcome of, engagement is rarely discussed within the literature on religion and ecology, despite its prevalence in studies of social engagement by religious congregations more broadly (e.g. Marsh, 2005; Ammerman 2002, 2005). 'Community' is increasingly recognised as an important factor in the broader environmental movement (see for example Bomberg and McEwen, 2012; McIntosh, 2004; Macias and Williams, 2016; Middlemiss, 2011a, 2011b). Gorringe and Beckham (2013: 33) also suggest that churches' long experience of community-building is expertise that they can offer to the Transition Town movement, to help it grow and expand. The lack of attention to community in previous studies of religious environmentalism/religion and ecology may be due to the way that research has been undertaken: surveys that focus on individual/micro-level responses dominate

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[158] Middlemiss (2010:81) similarly reported enhanced levels of behaviour change in church community members with little previous engagement in environmental issues, although I would argue that her description of "substantial behaviour changes" is exaggerated: the example she uses is 'a decision to incorporate as many fair trade, local and organic products' when shopping, and later admits that that most participants described positive attitudes to change, but difficulties in doing so. My participant similarly described an intention to reduce energy use, but, at the time of this conversation, had not taken actions to implement that behaviour change.

the field and, especially when based on social attitudes surveys, are far removed from any direct association with a church community (Proctor and Berry, 2005). Research in this area also predominantly asks questions of causal links between religious beliefs and environmental behaviours, or of understanding religious attitudes to the natural world (Berry, 2016), rather than seeking to understand what McGuire (2008: 123) calls "religion-as-practiced in the context of their everyday lives."

Hessel and Rasmussen (2001) called for more research into the role of church and community in studies of religion and environmentalism over fifteen years ago. A number of studies since then have engaged the community-(meso-)level for analysis (see for example, DeLashmutt, 2011; Douglas, 2008; Haluza-DeLay, 2008; Liebermann 2004; McDuff, 2012; Middlemiss, 2010; Shattuck, 2016; Taylor, 2007; Townsend, 2013; Veldman et al, 2014; Vonk, 2011;[159] Wilkinson 2012: 85-110; Young, 2010). Yet the focus of this research is predominantly on the practical aspects of *what the community does* to engage in environmental issues, rather than the importance of 'community' as a value, and its impact on the church community and engagement more broadly. The research in this thesis began with a similar aim: to understand the motivations and practices of faith-based environmentalists in churches in Edinburgh. The inductive, thematic analysis of the data gathered shows that the communities being studied for their advocacy are themselves a product of the value of community, and the sense of community within the church. A faith-based community provides the opportunity for environmental engagement; at the same time, the community is strengthened by participation in environmental action and advocacy.

Within studies of religion and ecology, Djupe and Hunt (2009) and Djupe and Gilbert (2009) highlight the importance of what they call 'congregational effects,' the social and institutional aspects of church life, in shaping environmental behaviours and attitudes in faith communities. These studies indicate that social factors are more important than 'doctrinal' aspects or measures of 'religiosity' with regard to engagement.[160] The strength of the social aspects of community that underlie

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[159] Vonk (2011) and Taylor (2007) analyse religious orders, communities that are distinct from what I understand to be the everyday experience of Christian community as experienced by churchgoers with whom I interacted in Scotland. Shattuck (2016) similarly includes five religious orders in her study of faith communities in the US, alongside ten more typical congregations.

[160] Measures used frequently in survey-based research to indicate a person's theological convictions and their level of participation in faith communities. 'Doctrinal' aspects often include whether a respondent is

environmental engagement were identified by Smith and Pulver (2009), whose research with leaders of environmental FBOs in the US revealed what they call the "unanticipated component" of community-building as a motivation for action by FBO leaders. My research thus creates a link between earlier studies of congregations that emphasise the importance of community as a value and factor that supports social engagement, and builds on Smith and Pulver (2009), to illustrate how community-building is an outcome of environmental engagement by faith communities. In doing this, I extend the parameters of understanding of the field of religion and ecology, and bring attention to the central role played by the underlying social factors within a congregation that affects the possibilities for, and outcomes of, environmental activity within a church.

7.2   Practicing environmental engagement

In addition to the programme of activities and renovations at Wardie, the everyday practice of religion and community life is expressed through the practice of gathering for worship. Despite their primary existence as a faith community, participants at Wardie were surprised to notice how environmental themes promoted through WCC were incorporated in their worship services.

Incorporating creation in worship

In March 2015, As the WCC project was coming to a close, the project committee gathered in Margaret's home on a Monday evening to compile its final report. Following an 'output grid' format provided by the CCF, which required detailed quantitative information on a range of measurements (including the number of people engaged in the project, how many events were organised, reduced 'car miles', kWh of energy saved), what began as a twelve-page draft developed over three weeks into an in-depth, sixty-six-page report. Details provided included a list of headline achievements; graphs and tables of carbon and energy savings, and heating zone 'heat-up' times; financial details; event reports; photographs of the new insulation and of double-glazed windows; comments from participants; and reflections from the WCC committee about the whole process of applying and implementing the project. Two-thirds of the way into this

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a 'biblical literalist' or has certain 'end-times' beliefs', often used to illustrate a particularly conservative or fundamentalist religious position. 'Religiosity' is more general and can include e.g. frequency of attendance at church, reported frequency of praying, etc.

detailed report, there is a short, understated one-page summary of "Unexpected Outcomes" from the project. The first item on that list is as follows:

> "As part of the weekly worship in Wardie… the prayers, hymns, readings and sermons frequently touched upon related themes of creation-care, community and collaboration, reducing consumption e.g. energy saving and thinking of others. Individual members leading prayers referred to thanksgiving for the gift of the CCF funds, and the work done in the building to improve its life." (WCC 2015:44-45)

These 'unexpected outcomes' indicate the how the worship practices of the community might not take centre stage in the participants' recollection or understanding of their engagement in environmental issues – yet they are present and significant enough to report to a non-faith-based funding body. Throughout my time with the community, I regularly heard hymns, sermons, and communal prayers that were filled with environmental themes and imagery, and observed other ways of raising environmental concerns within the worship practices of the community.

Prayers:
"the fanfares of creation, the roar of the wind, the crash of waves… the mysteries of our being, our DNA…All is witness to your glory." (October 2014)

"We owe you, Lord, a morning song. You fill us with gratitude for all the good things you let us enjoy. The beauty of nature around us; the company of each other…" (July 2015)

Sermons:
"Lord, you have written the melody and set down the lyrics of the song of creation. Your voice rings out in all that is around us, all of which we are a part …" (March 2015)

"Fasting signifies a solidarity with, an empathy with… the plight of those who starve through no choice of their own… If you use the recycling food bin, you'll recognise… how much food we throw away… Fasting is a valuable reminder that daily bread is God's gift and it helps us, even if only in a symbolic way, to recognise the plight of others." (February 2015)

Other:
"A small embroidered banner on the wall … with a picture of a tree and "The Earth is the Lord's" written on it; while a large banner at the back of the church is a pale blue background (sky), a darker blue stream and a tree, and words from Psalm 1:3 'like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season and their leaves do not wither…'" (field notes, December 2014).

These examples of worship practices at Wardie illustrate themes of justice (linking of fasting with food recycling and caring for those who suffer from hunger), and of creation spirituality ("the beauty of nature around us"; "the fanfares of creation, the roar of the wind, the crash of waves…"). These examples also include language that emphasises a view of the environment that affirms humans as an equal part of creation, as advocated by Bauckham (2010) and Moltmann (1993).

These 'unexpected outcomes' of engagement in a publicly-funded project, illustrate how the quantitative energy-saving and carbon-reducing measures undertaken by the community were reflected in the worship practices of the community. The integration of these themes within the worship practices of a community is important, as discussed earlier, because of the central role of worship, of hymns and songs (Caccamo, 2007; Warner, 1997:226-227; see also Smith, 1996:11)), and prayer (Fuist, 2015) in learning about and expressing the practice of the Christian faith (Day, 2014:109; Rambo 1993:115). This finding was supported in conversations with members of the community, who frequently referred to other rituals and practices within the community that also had a strong underlying environmental theme: a harvest service (an annual tradition held each October), or the twice-yearly *Walk to Wardie Week*, where the community is encouraged to leave the car at home and walk/cycle/use public transport instead. Indeed, the importance of initiatives like *Walk to Wardie Week* was addressed explicitly in the context of a weekly sermon at the beginning of Advent:[161]

> "In the global scale, your "Walk to Wardie" might seem like spitting in the wind of global warming - and yet it will mean everything, for it says, "I will not give in to you, despair and resignation; I'm a child of God." This is the work of Advent. And it's work… that will find expression here in Wardie in all sorts of other ways… in alternative Christmas gifts[162] and the big Christmas card;[163] in collection for Bethany[164], for Fresh Start and for the foodbank; in the visits of the Brownies to sing carols in the nursing homes. And in dozens of other actions, large and small, public and private, in which God's love will find expression through Wardie folk"." (November 2014)

In this context, the minister is putting the performative aspects of an otherwise purely environmental initiative (reducing car use) in a theological framework that affirms

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[161] Advent is the period leading up to Christmas, beginning four Sundays before Christmas Day.
[162] The opportunity to 'buy' donations for local charities in lieu of Christmas presents.
[163] A joint card to the whole congregation which people could sign instead of giving individual cards, with the suggestion being to give a donation to a charity to represent the amount of money saved.
[164] An Edinburgh charity working with homeless people.

the action as part of the practice of the Christian faith, and of the individual and communal identity with that faith. It affirms the importance of small, individual-level environmental practices within an understanding of what it means to identify as a Christian, a 'child of God', echoing Northcott (2007:273) and Rasmussen (2013:120), and creates theological meaning for churchgoers in practices encouraged across wider society on its environmental merits. By connecting an environmental practice with a list of other, more traditional, practices of the faith community, the minister is emphasising the connection of environmental practices with issues of justice and care for others, which he concludes is an expression of love.

The worship practices of the community at Wardie do engage more directly with themes of creation spirituality and justice more than was represented during informal conversations and interviews with members of the congregation. Building on Day (2014:109), Djupe and Hunt (2009) and others, these worship practices play a role in shaping the 'corporate identity' of Wardie more broadly. That broader identity, one which engages in issues of justice, in care for others, as an expression of God's love, both within and outside of the local community is evident in participants' understanding and expectations of their engagement in environmental issues.

Figure 7.3. Banner on display at Wardie Parish Church. The text is from Psalm 1:3 "are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither"

7.3 Pragmatic factors affecting environmental engagement

As with the cases presented earlier in this thesis, a number of more pragmatic factors were also identified as key to explaining environmental engagement at Wardie. While I have included these within a subtitle of pragmatic drivers of engagement, I again point to Stanley Hauerwas' (1983) theological argument that budgets and buildings are as much part of what it means to be a church as the practices of service and hospitality. I have separated them to emphasise the different ways that more practical issues can affect the outcome of engagement. The first issue addressed is financial resources, which was particularly important during the period of data collection: a significant amount of the engagement that I observed was funded through the WCC project. A second practical issue underlying engagement was leadership, as also discussed in detail in the previous case (CSH). I discuss leadership here given the different church polities (Wardie is a member of the Church of Scotland, where leadership authority is given to clergy and laity, and where there is greater scope for local initiative than in more hierarchical systems (McGuire, 2002: 101)). I illustrate how, despite the less hierarchical structures of the CofS, the leadership of the local minister continues to play an important role in engagement.

Financial resources

Wardie has been an active member of ECS since 2004, and has received two awards for environmental engagement. Its most recent award dates from six years prior to the start of my research with the community (2008-2010). Initial engagement as an eco-congregation was strongly educational in focus: presentations by invited speakers from the local university or the city council, for example, and focusing on connecting with the wider congregation through regular articles and 'eco-tips' in the monthly newsletter. As with many volunteer-led initiatives however, sustaining investment and commitment was a challenge. Additionally, issues that required more investment, logistically and financially, were somewhat less popular in the decision-making structures of the church, as one participant commented: "For years we'd been saying… 'why don't we put in an energy-efficient boiler?' and they were like 'oh, that's a lot of money… the boiler's fine… oh, you green people.'"

The period I spent with the community was marked by the WCC project. The WCC committee was tasked with delivering a programme of environmental

improvements and related events in the community. The excerpt below provides insight as to where this initiative came from:

> "The Wardie Climate Champions project was initiated following Wardie Church Property Committee's concern about rising energy costs, CO_2e and the lack of insulation in our Victorian buildings. We began by exploring the idea of installing solar panels, but were advised that the roof layout meant that these panels would not receive sufficient sunlight… to make the initial outlay cost-efficient. We therefore commissioned an energy audit… which indicated measures we could take to reduce energy costs and make a significant contribution to national targets for reducing CO_2e." (WCC, 2015).

This statement indicates that environmental issues were not the only motivation for engagement: the property committee's concern about rising energy costs was also a factor. Similarly, an earlier suggestion from participants to consider more energy-efficient boilers had been dismissed – until they finally stopped working and needed replacing. Despite a long legacy of recognition as an eco-congregation, financial issues and saving money initially took priority over more substantial environmental actions. This is not unusual: saving money is often found to be a significant factor driving behaviour change and sustainability (DEFRA, 2002; Whitmarsh, 2009). The availability of public funding is also used as a policy tool to stimulate environmental engagement in communities: both the UK and Scottish governments have focused on community-based funding mechanisms as a driver for low carbon engagement and behaviour-change (Hauxwell-Baldwin, 2013; Aiken, 2014). The fact that churches such as Wardie have structures of accountability, bank accounts, and other administrative factors required by government to receive funding, certainly makes faith communities an attractive proposition for funding bodies.

The report from Wardie's energy audit (a service provided free-of-charge by 'Home Energy Scotland'),[165] indicated that public funding might be available to support the cost of the recommended alterations, including draught-proofing, installing better insulation, and double-glazing, among other things. After a flurry of activity that involved developing ideas, receiving quotes for building

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[165] A Scottish Government initiative, managed by the Energy Savings Trust, to offer advice to households, communities and businesses on issues such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and waste reduction.

work, and pulling together a detailed application to meet the CCF's requirements, the congregation's application was successful: environmental issues, particularly climate change, became a major focal point within the community for the duration of funding. Financial issues stand alongside broad underlying motivational factors such as justice, charity, and community, as an explanation for Wardie's engagement in environmental issues.

The academic literature regarding faith communities and activism often highlights how churchgoers give significant financial resources to support other organisations in providing social care (see for example Ammerman, 2005: 164; Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008; Putnam, 2000: 67; Schnable, 2016). I have also demonstrated earlier that financial giving is a normative practice at Wardie. Yet the opportunity presented by external funding enabled environmental actions to be undertaken that were not addressed by existing congregational commitments to environmental engagement, justice, or charity. I have been unable to find any studies that investigate the long-term impact of short-term funding opportunities like the CCF on communities of faith, or their environmental activity, and Cameron (Cameron et al, 2005: 165-170) does not include one-off funding sources in her explanation of financial resources in a church context. Despite questions about the sustainability of engagement funded through such schemes (Creamer, 2015), faith-based organisations continue to seek support from resources such as the CCF to support environmental actions and activities.[166] This leads to a situation where governments use communities as a "delivery-mechanism for government policy on carbon management," (Hauxwell-Baldwin., 2013: 14) while communities in receipt of funding continue to understand their own environmental engagement in terms of the people and places with which they interact. The experience at Wardie reflects this pattern of engagement: the financial resources made available to the community did enable an enhanced level of engagement and action; yet the more important outcomes for the congregation, were about the social side of engagement.

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[166] Three faith-based communities were awarded funding for 2017-2018 (Scottish Government, 2017b).

Leadership

In one of my first meetings at the church, the minister discussed his role with regard to environmental issues. He commented that he intentionally used special services such as the harvest festival to emphasise particular environmental points more strongly, and recounted a story about the year the service focused not only on harvest and the gift of food, but also on the tremendous amount of packaging and waste that comes with it. With the CCF application, the minister acknowledged that he had played a part in pushing for the church to submit a funding application, but he also emphasised that the actual application and implementation was done by other people. Church members also pointed to the minister's role in encouraging the church to become an eco-congregation initially, to his ongoing support for initiatives, and spoke about the way he integrates environmental themes into worship on a regular basis: "he's fantastic: builds it all into the preaching, and the prayer" commented Karen (interview, November 2014). Margaret, who was new to environmental engagement through the WCC project, added "he's definitely involved [environmental] themes in worship… [he] has creation as one of his themes… it's very integral" (interview, April 2015). Such an example of up-front leadership in this way has been shown to have a "small but significant" effect on people's environmental attitudes by Djupe and Hunt (2009),[167] although Cnaan's (2002: 284) research investigating welfare provision by churches in the US emphasises how clergy leadership and influence has a central role in the implementation of initiatives (see also Liebermann, 2004). The Presbyterian polity of the Church of Scotland is also important. Distinct from the Catholic hierarchy discussed in the previous chapter, Presbyterian polity allows for much more flexibility at the local level, and a much broader engagement of lay church members in driving initiatives. This includes flexibility in the content of worship services, as well as greater openness to engagement and leadership by members of the congregation. Karen's comment about the minister Brian, illustrates this leadership role well:

> "He's a leader, but he's not a boss… [his style is] "Is the Spirit moving here; is this the will? Is this what people are thinking of?" And then giving you that "Okay, get on with it, do the best you can…" He lets people develop it and whatever they think is the right thing to do." (interview, November 2014)

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[167] Djupe and Hunt's research in the US (2009) indicates that *perceptions* of what is said from the pulpit has a greater effect on environmental attitudes than what is actually said. While clergy leadership is significant, their research also highlights that "the congregation's opinion swamps clergy effects"

This greater role for lay involvement, letting people develop initiatives as they feel appropriate, was clearly visible in the implementation of the WCC project, and the various environmentally-themed projects that were contained within that. Brian, the minister, did not attend any of the WCC committee meetings in which I participated, and the group members were empowered to make decisions and implement them as they wished. While clergy leadership was an important factor explaining initial environmental engagement at Wardie, the authority given to lay members of the church to drive their own initiatives also helps to explain engagement in this case. Ministerial leadership here reflects some aspects of what Shattuck (2016) refers to as a 'legitimating role,' normalising environmental concerns as a faith issue by integrating environmental concerns within the worship services in the community. Yet engagement is also explained by the minister acting as an encourager, vocally promoting initiatives and using his influence within the congregation (Ammerman, 1997b: 52-53) to support particular initiatives, in addition to incorporating environmental themes within worship.

7.4   Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have illustrated how engagement in environmental issues in this case is explained first and foremost by a long-standing concern for issues of justice, and caring for others. Environmental concerns are integrated into these themes, which are expressed and understood by members of the community in various ways. Concern for justice is expressed through support for fair-trade products, and environmental actions are integrated within existing practices of charity. The community's worship practices also reflect concern about environmental issues. These motivations and practices also illustrate how the congregation at Wardie places its environmental engagement in the context of present-day issues of justice and inequality around the world today. The worship practices of the congregation play an important part in grounding environmental issues within a normative community concern for justice. Yet these worship practices also reflect a sense of creation spirituality, a theme that is much less prevalent in the conversations and activities of the community. Embedding environmental concerns within worship in this way helps to facilitate what Smith (1996: 9-13) and Snyder (2011) refer to as *transcendent motivation,* adding meaning to the community's engagement by setting environmental issues in a theological frame

of understanding, and firmly establishing environmental issues within the everyday traditions of the community (Messenger, 2001: 174).

Alongside theologically-grounded motivations and practices, however, more pragmatic factors of church life also explain environmental engagement: leadership, particularly by the minister, to facilitate, guide and encourage initiative by church members. Financial resources affect the potential for action and activity over and above what might otherwise be prioritised within a community: the enhanced level of environmental activity in this case was driven considerably by the availability of external funding, which itself was accessed following concerns about rising energy costs. I do not wish to suggest that it was *only* financial issues that motivated environmental engagement at Wardie: that would not fully represent the work of Heather, Karen and the rest of the Church and World committee, who have sustained smaller-scale environmental actions and practices over the preceding decade. Similarly, to emphasise financial resources would also do a disservice to the efforts and energy of those were engaged in WCC, and in some cases, who engaged new environmental actions and behaviours through the WCC project.[168] I reference financial issues as an important underlying factor, because the example at Wardie illustrates what can be achieved when resources are made available to communities who are able to act on their concerns. The consideration of pragmatic factors such as financial resources, are missing from much of the discussion about religious environmentalism, as described earlier.[169]

At Wardie however, above all, engagement in environmental issues is explained by the high value placed on *community* by the congregation. The funding from the CCF shaped the nature of environmental engagement during the period of fieldwork, but the frequent and unprompted references to the importance of community as a motivation for engagement, and as an outcome of action, illustrates how community is a central

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[168] Some of the participants who joined the WCC team because of their existing financial and building management responsibilities in the church became most passionately engaged in reducing energy use, and recycling more, supporting the findings of Middlemiss (2010) that greater behavioural change is often identified in more recently-engaged members of the community, compared with what she terms the 'long-term engaged'.

[169] Torgerson (2012) acknowledges the importance of financial costs in congregational building projects and renovations. He focuses on financial issues only through encouraging congregations to consider a life-cycle perspective on building costs, rather than addressing the availability of financial resources for renovations *per se*. The case studies he presents however, of building projects and renovations in Jewish and Christian communities in North America, range in cost from $2.5million to $25million. These amounts that dwarf the £52 633 (approximately $80,500) accessed by Wardie. (The exchange rate is based on the 2015 average exchange rate of £1 = $1.5286 (Bank of England, 2017)).

aspect that explains successful environmental action in this case. The prominence of community, most specifically with regard to the importance of social relationships, and the physical place in which they are located, was an unexpected outcome of this research. Smith and Pulver (2009) found that community-building can be a motivation for environmental engagement. My findings support this. Moreover, I have also shown how community is realised at the local level, and that community was repeatedly identified by participants as an important outcome of their environmental activity. The social aspects of congregational life have also been demonstrated to affect environmental engagement more than theological convictions in studies in the US (Djupe and Hunt, 2009). My work supplements these findings, and demonstrates the importance of studying the practical, everyday experience of religion to fully engage in the contextual understanding of beliefs and practices of people of faith.

In the following chapter, I draw together the findings across the three churches studied throughout this thesis more comprehensively, and consider how my findings contribute to the wider field of knowledge about religion and ecology, and religious environmentalism.

8 Discussion

Throughout this thesis, I have presented and analysed data gathered from an ethnographic study of three Christian congregations in Edinburgh. The aim has been to gain understanding about the factors that explain environmental engagement by faith-based communities. Thus far, I have presented findings on a case-by-case basis to enable the reader to engage with the communities as I experienced them over a twelve month period.[170] I now turn to a wider discussion of the principal findings identified through the thematic analysis of the data, and demonstrate how these findings contribute to a wider interdisciplinary debate within studies of religion and ecology and environmental politics. While this is not an explicitly comparative research project, similarities and differences across the three congregations highlight key themes and additional areas of interest. As such, I will draw attention to these as part of this discussion.

In this chapter, I will consolidate the empirical evidence to illustrate how environmental engagement in faith communities is driven by an interacting set of factors that are both theological *and* pragmatic. I will discuss the well-established theological motivations of creation spirituality, creation care and eco-justice, and explain how they are represented in the cases studied. I will argue that the concept of *eco-justice*, used widely in the literature, is understood by participants within a broader theme of *justice*. I explain how intergenerational narratives are represented in the fabric and practices of church communities, but find that concern for future generations is not a major factor driving environmental engagement. I then discuss how these theological motivations are practiced, illustrating how the ethnographic study of *religion on the ground* (McFarland Taylor, 2007) or *everyday religion* (Ammerman, 2007; Hall, 2007, McGuire, 2008),[171] reveals that theological motivations cannot alone explain engagement. Theological motivations for environmental action intersect with pragmatic and social concerns, which also shape engagement. I argue that these more pragmatic factors represent the 'human side of religion' (Stark and Finke, 2000), and that they have been largely missed by previous studies in religion and ecology. These studies have been

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[170] As a reminder, the fieldwork took place from October 2014-October 2015, with occasional further contacts in November 2015, February and March 2016.
[171] McGuire (2008) highlights how the religion/spirituality that is "practiced, experienced and expressed" in peoples' everyday lives is distinct from that which is 'officially' pronounced or promoted.

dominated by survey-based research and, with some key exceptions, often assumed that beliefs and behaviours are somehow distinct from a social setting. The ethnographic methodology adopted in this research challenges these assumptions. Additionally, this approach identifies another element previously missing from academic discussions about environmentalism in faith communities: the importance of *community* as an overriding space for, and driver of, environmental action. In short, theological motivations for engagement intersect with pragmatic issues in the faith community. In the final section of the chapter, I argue that that it is this intersection of theological motivations and pragmatic issues in the context of a faith community that explains environmental engagement.

8.1   Theological motivations and explanations for engagement

Creation theology / spirituality

One theological motivation for engagement is 'creation theology' (Marlow 2009) or 'creation spirituality' (Kearns 1996, 2011), which was present in the two Protestant communities studied, most prominently at Saughtonhall (chapter five) and, to a lesser extent, at Wardie (chapter seven). In both cases, creation spirituality is expressed through acknowledging humans as one part of God's creation: part of the 'community of creation' (Moltmann, 1993; Bauckham, 2010). Creation spirituality is also presented as understanding that the natural world can engender a sense of awe and wonder that helps people to praise God (Deane-Drummond, 2006; Berry, 1993:103); it is a recognition of the natural environment as God's creation, not to be idolised, but to be loved (Wirzba, 2015) and revered (Northcott 2007).

Creation spirituality is expressed primarily in the context of the worship practices of the churches in this study. The language used at Saughtonhall and Wardie in prayers, readings, hymns, and sermons frequently refers to creation praising God; visual images of mountainous landscapes, sunsets, and children playing bring God's creation into the worship spaces. In contrast, creation spirituality was not a dominant theme at CSH, although I heard about occasional examples including an annual celebration of mass outdoors, and an environmentally-focused harvest thanksgiving mass. Contacts at CSH specifically expressed a hesitancy to use the word 'creation' amidst concern about being seen within the church community as putting too much emphasis on environmental issues, and from outwith the church, of being associated with

creationism.[172] These findings tie in with a long history of suspicion about and fear of creation spirituality and 'nature worship' in the Catholic Church[173] (Agliardo, 2014:183; McFarland Taylor, 2007: 46-47, 260-272), and also relate to an earlier study which found that Catholics were the most sceptical group among members of UK Christian denominations in their views towards nature (Hayes and Marangudakis, 2001).

The incorporation of creation spirituality in the ongoing worship practices at Saughtonhall and Wardie, demonstrates how both congregations seek to integrate an awareness of environmental issues as part of their broader theology on a consistent basis. The weekly worship service, the principal gathering and expression of the church community, is the place where individual and communal identities are formed and articulated (Day, 2014: 18, 109; Messenger 2001: 174), and where the Christian life is nurtured (Forrester, 2009: 4). As such, integrating a spirituality that seeks to express and understand the place of humanity within the whole of God's creation, as seen at Wardie and Saughtonhall, is important in establishing environmental concerns as a fundamental part of the Christian faith.

The weekly worship gathering may be the principal expression of a congregation's beliefs, and an important space to nurture and express those beliefs. Yet theologians emphasise that worship should lead to action (e.g. Smith 2013: 5; McFague, 1997). While the communities at Wardie and Saughtonhall expressed a strong sense of a creation spirituality within their worship practices, the practice of this theological foundation, the practice that leads from worship, is more prominent in conversations with research participants than discussions about theology. Participants understand the theological motivations for their engagement in terms of creation care rather than creation spirituality, a performative theology that involves an active response. It is to this theme that I now turn.

Creation care

The theology of creation spirituality presented and enacted through the words and actions of worship services is translated by churchgoers into a sense of responsibility to take action and put the teachings of their faith into practice. This is

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[172] Creationism is not a widely held belief in the UK (Unsworth, 2016).
[173] Suspicion or mistrust about misplaced 'nature worship' and a consequent reluctance to embrace creation spirituality (and a subsequent fear of environmentalism more broadly) is also present in non-Catholic traditions (Johnston, 2013: 111-112, 121).

understood by participants as a call to *care for creation*, an opportunity to actively "do something" (WCC, 2015: 46) about environmental issues in their congregational context. As discussed in chapter two, caring for creation is terminology widely used academically and in practitioner discourse by those engaged in environmentalism in Christian contexts. It is also adopted by ECS as the overriding vision for its work: *"A Scotland that cares for God's creation, now and forever"* (ECS, 2016). It is therefore unsurprising to find the language of creation care used by participants in this study as a motivation for engagement, as was shown most prominently at Saughtonhall (chapter five).

The use of creation care language in the congregational context places a strong emphasis on an individual responsibility to take action, whereby individuals interpret their own response to environmental concerns in light of their faith. Creation care also becomes a motivation for action at the congregational level. In many ways, creation care builds on the strong religious tradition of caring for other people through direct means (often called *neighbour care*) and putting faith into practice (Ammerman, 1997a: 203, 205; Bass, 2010; Miles 2006: 119; see also James 2: 14-17 in the Bible). Practicing creation care applies the Christian tradition of care to the natural environment as much as it does to other people: it embeds environmental action within traditional practices of the Christian faith, and becomes as a normative practice for a faith-based community. The manner in which participants at Saughtonhall readily adopted creation care as an underlying theological motivation for engagement illustrates this connection, and enables them to articulate the reason for their environmental advocacy within the everyday practices of their faith. Wilkinson (2012: 106-107) found similarly strong support for direct actions in her research with American evangelical Christians. Practicing the call to creation care in a congregational context leads to significant scope for considering the response of the congregational unit as a whole to take action on environmental issues. This theme has been evident throughout this thesis, as congregations have been shown to take practical, energy-saving and carbon-reducing measures in the management of their buildings, as well as developing educational and informational events on a range of topics.[174]

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[174] Research participants at Wardie also talked openly of actions taken at home as a result of the experience of congregational investment in environmental awareness. This includes initiatives to reduce energy use, and installing double-glazing on traditional, 19th Century windows. The installation of solar panels at Saughtonhall also encouraged others to investigate whether they could be installed domestically.

These direct, small, individual and congregational-level responses actions are important because they are a tangible way that participants can take action. Northcott (2007: 273-281) suggests that turning off lights and walking instead of driving are "rituals" encouraged by global warming that are "intrinsically right." Northcott calls these an expression of solidarity with the earth, and with those who suffer the effects of climate change, while Rasmussen (2013) suggests such actions are symbolically important, and play a part in preparing people for likely greater levels of behavioural change that will be necessary in the future. Small, locally-based actions are also increasingly becoming recognised as part of the wider context of environmental politics (Dalton, 2015) and part of what Schlosberg and Coles (2016: 161) call a new "environmentalism of everyday life". Others, however, argue that the concept of creation care is too individualised (Emerson, Mirola and Monahan, 2016: 219) and has diverted attention away from the institutional-level changes required to the current economic system if we are to have any chance of avoiding the likely serious consequences of climate change (Klein, 2015; Northcott, 2013). Research participants acknowledged these tensions: Heather talked of individual level actions as "frittering away at the edges, rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic" (interview, August 2015) in the context of wider institutional issues such as overconsumption, and an unwillingness to compromise on current standards of living. But she found solace in supporting small actions, as she said: "if you fritter away at the edges I suppose you get somewhere, which is better than not getting anywhere." Much of the initiative and support for religious environmentalism has come from a hope that small, local-level actions in local communities can be scaled up across the worldwide church, thus having potential for significant impact on a global level (see for example Bass, 2010; Gottlieb, 2006:83; Marsh 2005: 215; O'Brien 2010; Posas 2007), an approach also taken by national governments to reduce carbon emissions (Butler, 2010; DEFRA, 2008; Fudge and Peters, 201; Scottish Government, 2013:4-6).

It is important not to dismiss the significance of broader political and economic change necessary to fight climate change and environmental degradation. Yet the small-scale environmental practices that result from caring for creation in churches, although modest, still matter. They matter because they provide an opportunity for people to put their faith into action in a practical manner. Wilkinson (2012: 105-107) emphasises churchgoers' preference for taking "direct" actions with regard to environmental issues

in her research with evangelicals in the USA; while Ammerman (1997a: 205) also identifies how mainline Protestant Christians, also in the USA, find meaning in the small, everyday practices and actions of their faith, such as caring for the sick and needy. Those small-level actions give meaning to taking action in spite of large, global problems that are "beyond the everyday world". Theologian Stanley Hauerwas (1983: 100) also describes the commitment to such actions as part of the bigger picture of calling for justice in the world. My results support this conclusion: participants are aware that their actions might be small, but they are an opportunity to practice their faith in their immediate context, not because it will make a big difference, but because it is the right thing to do, and a way for research participants to practice their faith.

Creation care is a motivational framework for practical action, as individuals respond to an understanding of the world as God's creation with an understanding of human responsibility to care for that creation. An ethic of creation care empowers the individual and the faith community to take action – to live out their faith in practice. Author and activist Ruth Valerio (2016:213) calls for a situation whereby it is "as commonplace for the Church to be engaged in acts of environmental care as it is for it to be engaged in acts of community and social involvement..." The churches studied in this research are part of that engagement.

Linking environmental concerns with justice

A further theological motivation for environmental action is justice. It is a cross-cutting area of concern and action in each of the churches studied, and is the principal underlying motivational ideology for environmental engagement expressed by participants and congregations in this study. The people who actively participate in promoting environmental concerns understand their contribution as part of the church's broad concern for social and economic justice. Other churchgoers set environmental issues alongside issues of global poverty alleviation, caring for the poor and vulnerable, and ethical consumerism (fair trade). At CSH (chapter six) and Wardie (chapter seven) in particular, whether spoken, written or practiced, environmental concerns were understood as part of the church's broad commitment to justice, and a practical and palpable way people in Scotland can campaign for, and take action on, making the world a fairer society for all. Whether at a direct and local level and giving to charity, or through campaigning and advocating for changes to larger political and

economic structural systems, the churches studied in this thesis actively integrate environmental concerns within the existing practices within their communities of calling for justice.

The prominence of concern for justice as a motivator for environmental engagement affirms previous research on religious environmentalism (see for example Kearns 2011; 2012; Liebermann 2004; Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-Delay, 2014: 300). It also reflects findings of research with people seeking to live a 'green lifestyle' (Howell, 2013; Howell and Allen, 2017), and those involved in the global environmental movement more broadly (Hawken, 2007; Saunders, 2008). Understanding environmental issues as matters of justice positions environmentalism at the heart of Christianity; the environment becomes a social issue alongside more commonly understood issues of justice such as hunger, oppression, and caring 'for the least of these' (Matthew 25:31-40).

Justice is a particularly important motivational factor for participants from the Catholic church in this study, to the exclusion of creation care and creation spirituality. Participants spoke of a "Catholic perspective" and of catching the "Catholic imagination", emphasising concerns that environmentalism should be integrated within concerns for 'the least of these,' those most likely to be affected by the effects of climate change. This concern attests to the importance of integrating environmental issues within a broad understanding of what it means to care about human dignity and the common good (Deane-Drummond, 2011: 189-190), consistent with themes of Catholic Social Teaching (Hornbsy-Smith, 2010; DeBerri, 2003: xi). In emphasising justice as a motivation for engagement, participants at CSH assert again the importance of embedding environmentalism within the broader traditions and practices of the church, and evidence how this can be done.

I intentionally use the language of *justice* and avoid narrower or more specific terminology such as ecojustice (Kearns, 1996; Moody 2002), climate justice (Christian Aid, 2015; Martin-Schramm 2010; WCC 2013), ecological justice and environmental justice (Agyeman et al, 2016; Schlosberg, 2007), despite that all are widely used in academic and mainstream literature, and by NGOs (Hawken, 2007), to describe different aspects of their engagement in environmental activism. My preference for the broad language of justice is not to disregard any of those who identify with or describe their engagement in these ways; neither is it an attempt to de-legitimise any of these

movements in their own right. Rather, I wish to emphasise that the concept of justice, which principally relates to social and economic concerns, is a fundamental aspect of the faith of many Christians.[175] Research participants do not restrict their engagement to narrower terminology and indeed, expressed dissatisfaction with an 'eco' prefix or language of 'climate justice'. Instead they interpret their environmental activity firmly within a broad understanding of justice, a key part of the practice of their faith traditions, and indicative of their intention to encourage their congregations to engage with environmentalism not as a quiet subset of the Christian faith, but centrally embedded therein (Rasmussen, 2001; Kearns, 2012; Jenkins, 2008).[176,177]

A distinctive aspect of this concern for justice is its predominantly human-centred, or anthropocentric, nature. In each of the cases studied, concern was expressed in terms of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on people: on those on the margins of society; on those who are suffering because of changing rainfalls and extreme weather; of adopting new environmental practices to support the local soup kitchen. The language of climate justice, rarely used by my research participants, but increasingly adopted by faith-based NGOs such as Christian Aid (Christian Aid, 2016) and SCIAF (SCIAF, 2016) (Saunders, 2008), also acknowledges the impacts of climate change on people. Despite the adoption of creation spirituality in worship services, through which congregations engage with a theological perspective that understands humanity as part of God's creation (as described by Bauckham, 2010, Moltmann 1993, and others), such a broader, more eco-centric perspective has not been embraced by the participants in this study as part of their understanding of justice. There was, for example, no discussion about applying justice to non-human creatures, or of questions about animal and earth ethics (see for example Clough, 2017); fundraising at Wardie embraced an environmental perspective, but funds were raised for embedding environmental practices within a charity that supports previously homeless

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[175] This relates to the 'mainstream' Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church; more conservative and/or evangelical churches often have a greater emphasis on personal salvation.

[176] It also avoids creating a false dualism whereby environmental issues are distinguished from broader social issues (Rasmussen, 1996: 104). This corresponds with Hawken's (2007) call to the secular environmental movement to consider their work as a social justice issue.

[177] Recent research about climate change communication with different faith groups argues that 'justice' and 'social justice' "has strong Abrahamic" and "left-leaning" overtones which can be a turn-off for people of other faiths (Marshall et al., 2016). The authors instead propose 'fairness' as a better concept for engaging faith groups on climate change. From a Christian perspective however, Hornsby-Smith (2006) argues that the theological understanding of 'fairness' and 'justice' is different, affirming the use of justice within the Christian context.

people, rather than supporting explicitly environmental charities. In this study, participants understand environmental issues as matters of justice principally because of the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on the lives of other people. Research participants thus follow a pattern seen in mainline Christian and Catholic churches more broadly, emphasising 'ecological wholeness' and the value of nature within a context of justice, and integrating an awareness of the impacts of environmental degradation within an existing theological area of concern. This also represents a response that avoids elevating environmental concerns above concerns for humanity (Jenkins, 2008: 61-64). Through understanding their environmental advocacy as part of the church's overarching call for justice, participants seek to avoid "green fatigue" or of environmental issues being seen as a concern only for "traditional greenies" or "eco-warriors", and instead engage both in embedding their own motivations with a normative Christian framework of advocacy, and seek to use this framework to mobilise others around their cause.

Intergenerational concern

A secondary research question was concerned with how and whether church communities emphasise intergenerational concerns in their environmental action. Questions about responsibilities to future generations, and the impact of current lifestyles on the living conditions of future generations, are considered a hallmark of environmental politics (Ball, 2003; Gardiner, 2006); and are also recognised as a concern by Christian theologians (Muers, 2003, 2008; Agius and Chircop, 1998). Pope Francis emphatically describes justice between generations and intergenerational solidarity as a "basic question of justice" in *Laudato Si'* (Francis, 2015: #159),[178] while others suggest that advocacy for the poor and oppressed in present generations should extend to future generations, seeing them all as people who do not have a voice in current debates (Agius, 1998; Martin-Schramm, 2010; see also Krznaric, 2010). Given the strong sense of justice that drives environmental engagement, it might have been expected that participants would indicate some sense of responsibility towards future generations as a motivation for their environmental engagement. Yet intergenerational concern was not a strong motivator in the cases studied.

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[178] Pope Francis includes questions about current levels of resource use and impacts on future generations' likely needs (e.g. #22, #38, #52), and also identifies consideration of 'the common good' as applicable to both present and future generations (#159).

Intergenerational narratives were certainly present. They were, for instance, drawn upon to tell the story of each of the congregations through the use of words and artefacts that connect their communities with their Christian heritage. Past generations were also marked in the fabric of the buildings. These frequent allusions to the past history of the communities within the physical constitution of their buildings represents an explicit commitment to tell the stories of their community in the present, and to carry that story forward. Sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Lèger (2000) calls this a chain of memory and belief, highlighting how religions are one of the few places in contemporary society that hold onto past narratives and tradition in the world today. With regard to environmental concerns more specifically, the wisdom and prayers of past generations were a source of reflection and action for participants. Invoking the words and memories of previous generations can create an awareness that the present generation owes some of its existence to those who have gone before.

Yet the data about concern for future generations as a motivation for environmental engagement is mixed. All three churches focused their environmental concerns most specifically on justice for people in the present: those who have the least and whose lives are already affected by the impacts of climate change. Only at CSH was concern for future generations expressed in relation to environmental issues during conversations. At CSH, churchgoers indicated an awareness of the temporal challenges of climate change, discussing the need to balance short-term politics with long-term policy needs, for example. A number of participants in a workshop about the encyclical commented on the impact of environmental damage on future generations, picking up on concern for future generations expressed in *Laudato Si'* (Francis, 2015: #158; O'Neill, 2016: 781). Yet these references were exceptions rather than the rule. Thus while theologians and philosophers wrestle with questions of ethical responsibilities to future generations, such concerns were not a dominant motivation for environmental engagement in this study. Concern for the impact of environmental harm on present generations is what motivates most environmental action in the faith communities studied in this thesis.

8.2   Practicing environmental engagement

The aim of this research was not only to investigate the underlying motivations that explain environmental engagement in faith communities, but also to study how communities practice and implement environmental action and advocacy. A major

concern was to move beyond research that analyses environmental attitudes, or a theoretical willingness to undertake environmental behaviours, and instead to investigate the lived experience of environmental activity in faith-based communities. Each of the cases studied presents different insights as to how environmental actions are integrated in the everyday practices of a faith community.

Church services

The first and most evident way that environmental issues are practiced is through worship services. A worship service is the primary gathering of a Christian church. It is the principal expression of a community's faith; the place where theologies are learned and formed (Day, 2014); and the centre of practice and ethics in the Christian community (Forrester, 2009: 3). Integrating environmental concerns in this context makes a statement about the importance given to environmental issues within the beliefs and practices of the church. The words used in hymns and songs (Wolf and Gjerris, 2008; Smith, 1996:11), and readings and sermons, are the space in which the community understands and develops its identity (Day, 2014). Worship also includes prayers as a practical communication of a community's concerns (Stark and Finke, 2000: 109), and as an external expression of beliefs (Fuist, 2015; Nita, 2014); as well as symbols, rituals, images and stories that create a Christian worldview (Williams, 2003). It is the place from which the daily, lived articulation of the Christian life develops.

The style of worship service at the two Protestant churches studied was similar: both adopted a consistent liturgical pattern,[179] with a combination of prayers, hymns (accompanied in both cases by an organ), readings and a sermon. Saughtonhall (chapter five) made strong use of images during worship services, while the congregation at Wardie (chapter seven) used a more material form of imagery, textile banners and wall hangings, to represent environmental motifs. Both churches frequently used hymns with an environmental theme, and prayers and sermons regularly drew attention to creation and the environment, as well as making reference to specific environmental issues. The integration of environmental themes in worship at CSH (chapter six) is much less prominent than at Wardie and Saughtonhall, and almost non-existent during the regular service of mass. The liturgy of the Catholic mass is common across Catholic churches,

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[179] By liturgical pattern I mean the rhythm of prayers, hymns, and words used in a worship service.

although there is some scope for variation in prayers and the content of sermons. At CSH, the parts of the mass that can be determined locally did not reflect environmental themes. Participants at CSH have worked within those limitations where possible, but there is a strong desire for more, but a sense of little opportunity to influence change.

At Saughtonhall and Wardie, congregations integrate environmental concerns within what Conradie and colleagues (2014:6) call "the deepest convictions and symbols of the Christian tradition." In embedding environmental motifs and practices within the traditions of worship, the communities at Saughtonhall and Wardie express the importance of such issues within the overall context of their faith, and community identity (Day, 2014:104). The integration of environmental concerns beyond the regular worship gathering demonstrates how such issues can be successfully integrated within the everyday life of the community more broadly.

Everyday practices of church life

Words may dominate worship (Day, 2014), but the Christian faith is a lived religion that calls its followers to action. Armstrong (2006: xiii-xiv) argues that each of the major global religions developed around importance of actions rather than correct beliefs; theologian Duncan Forrester (2009:3) argues that it is in worship, and the actions that flow from it, that people learn how to be Christians. Action is also strongly emphasised in Catholic social teaching (Ivereigh 2010: 25). Following from worship, another way churches engage in environmental advocacy therefore is through the everyday practices of their community. Such practices include events and small group gatherings that happen on a weekly basis, with or without the presence of clergy. In each of the cases studied for this thesis, environmental issues were addressed both in the context of church services, and in other activities that constitute the normative practices of congregational life, such as evening lectures. Each congregation was also intentional about managing its facilities with an eye to environmental impact.[180] Beyond these 'big ticket' items however, each of the communities practiced engagement in smaller, everyday aspects of congregational life, such as serving fair-trade tea and coffee,

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[180] The congregations at CSH and Wardie both successfully applied for funding from the Scottish CCF to support the cost of improving the energy efficiency of their buildings. Wardie's application is addressed in chapter seven. CSH received support from the CCF in 2009-2010, prior to the period of research. These renovations are not addressed in this thesis as there was no ongoing 'active' engagement as a result of the funding, and it was not a focus of conversation or action during the fieldwork.

practicing recycling, and conserving water. Each church integrated environmental concerns beyond the words of the worship services and within the everyday practices of life as a faith community.

As discussed in the context of 'creation care', some of these actions may seem very small-scale in light of global environmental damage and climate change, yet they have meaning to the participants, and represent a tangible way that communities can engage in practicing creation care in their own context. These ongoing, everyday practices of environmentalism expressed within the context of the faith community also illustrate how such communities can be spaces for environmental actions that help to deliver national government carbon reduction targets. Yet such practices also express how faith communities can respond to a theological and spiritual context that embraces environmental concern within the broader context of the faith, and take action on that theology as part of the practice of their faith. While this thesis presents only three examples of churches responding to environmental concerns on a day-to-day basis, it illustrates how faith communities can implement actions in their local context.

The opportunity to participate in environmentalism is a tangible, practical response to a large, overwhelming challenge from which there is substantial psychological distance (Spence, Poortinga and Pidgeon, 2012). Moreover, it is an opportunity to integrate environmental actions as part of the everyday practices of church life, and to practice that faith. Everyday environmental practices within church communities can also lead to direct political action, such as participation in political marches. I argue that the everyday environmental practices of faith communities, small and large, are important, as they are a practical way that churchgoers live out their faith in their everyday lives, and make a political statement that seeks to draw attention to today's environmental challenges from a faith-based perspective.

Community engagement

The churches in this study used environmental practices to engage with their local communities. This might be considered a subset of the 'everyday practices of church life': being present and active in the local community is a priority for many churches in the UK, and each of the churches studied organises and/or hosts regular events that are open to all. Yet the churches also found that environmental advocacy facilitated new connections with their neighbouring communities that would not have

occurred without environmental action. Participants found that environmental issues gave them an opportunity to engage with the community in a way that respected their commitment to their Christian faith and their church, but without being seen to be "churchy."

Environmental activity meant that the churches took the opportunity to engage beyond the immediate congregation and connect with those resident in the surrounding neighbourhood. While not casting such engagement as acts of 'witness'[181] (as suggested by e.g. Longbottom, 2015; Van Wieren, 2013), community engagement through environmental action was one way the congregations could demonstrate that environmental concerns, widely discussed in the public sphere more broadly, are also understood and addressed through the lens of the Christian faith. Despite popular critique that the Christian faith is irrelevant to modern living (e.g. Birdwell and Littler, 2012; Kettell, 2009), participants used environmental action to assert that that is not the case. In doing so, churchgoers themselves were energised by the way environmental issues provided a sense of legitimacy for their community engagement, and allowed them to show that their faith is about belief *and* action on a number of issues.

Community engagement was also important as it fosters social connections, both within and beyond the churchgoing community. Participants frequently spoke about the importance of getting to know new people in the congregation, and of meeting people in the wider community, emphasising that environmental engagement enabled such connections to be made. Participants also expressed a sense of fun and enjoyment in the challenge of working together within the church to develop initiatives, sharing how coming together around environmental issues facilitated new relationships within the churchgoing community. The importance of the social aspects of community were also affirmed by participants' expressions of their frustrations when feeling alone in their engagement.

In wider studies of everyday congregational life, sociologists of religion recognise that relationships and a sense of community are integral to a congregation, and are as important as spiritual matters to churchgoers (e.g. Ammerman, 2005: 68).

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[181] *Witness* is language sometimes used in the Christian church to encapsulate a sense of evangelism through praxis i.e. a way of making a public statement about the practice of Christianity through demonstrating priorities and concerns through actions. See for example Van Wieren, 2013: 163.

Writer and activist Alastair McIntosh (2004: 284) also speaks of strengthening community as one of the foundational aspects of environmental activism. The social aspects of community, the relationships within and beyond the immediate congregation, are fundamental to the practice of environmental engagement in churches: they both explain engagement (they make participation fun and more likely to happen) and are an outcome of engagement (as relationships are built and strengthened). The social aspect of environmental engagement is often overlooked in studies of religion and ecology, as many previous studies concentrate heavily on the correlation between particular beliefs and behaviours. My research adds an additional, crucial dimension to this equation by demonstrating the centrality of community to the practice of environmental engagement in churches.

8.3   Pragmatic factors that explain engagement

Having outlined the principal theological motivations for environmental advocacy in churches in Edinburgh, and shown how environmental engagement is practiced, it is important to recognise that pragmatic factors, by which I mean organisational and institutional issues, also affect engagement. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas, in his 1983 essay *The Servant Community* (1983:107) argues that institutional aspects of church life ("budgets, buildings, parking lots, potluck dinners, heated debates about who should be the next pastor, and so on…") sit alongside theological considerations in understanding churches. Such factors also play an important role in explaining environmental engagement by and in churches. This section addresses the principal pragmatic factors that affect engagement in the cases studied, building my argument that environmental advocacy in faith communities is explained by an interweaving of pragmatic factors, brought together with theological motivations, in the midst of everyday life in a faith community. These pragmatic factors can both enable and hinder environmental engagement. In particular, I show how leadership, the availability of volunteers, and organisational resources affect the opportunities for action in a church community, and analyse how each of these issues impacts a congregation's environmental engagement.

Leadership – Encouraging, supporting, signposting

Leadership was found to have a substantial effect on environmental engagement in each of the faith communities studied. This was most pronounced at the local level, where the support of the local minister/priest was important for initiating and

sustaining engagement. High-level leadership, which came to light because of the release of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'* during the period of data collection, is also addressed.

Local level leadership

Participants identified the key role played by current and past ministers in stimulating and supporting initial engagement, raising the profile of environmental concerns within the communities, and encouraging ongoing commitment by volunteers. In all three cases, the active contribution of the minister was important in encouraging and supporting engagement. These findings support those of earlier research in the UK and North America. Sociologists of religion have emphasised the central role of clergy leaders within a congregation, and the impact this can have on political engagement and community involvement more broadly (Cnaan, 2002: 284-285; Ammerman 1997b: 52-53), as well as on environmental engagement in congregations. In some cases, clergy-led actions have been shown to speak louder than words ((Djupe and Hunt, 2009; Holland and Scott-Carter, 2015). Faith leaders[182] are revealed to be instigators and organisers of engagement (Middlemiss, 2010; Liebermann, 2004), and also help to 'legitimate' environmental concerns as an issue for faith communities (Shattuck, 2016). In each of the cases studied in this thesis, the minister/priest plays a central role in the congregation. In my cases, leaders did not take on a role as a key organiser of events, nor was their role primarily one of legitimating engagement and integrating environmentalism into social norms, although that was one aspect of their participation. Instead, the minister in the cases in this study were enablers; facilitators of action, who played a role 'signposting' lay members of the congregation towards resources for engagement. S/he acted as an initiator or supporter of engagement around whom community members gathered, and pointed congregation members to broader networks of support, resources, and advice. These networks might be within the community (connecting people with similar interests; suggesting and helping to create opportunities for activity) and beyond (drawing attention to external resources, connecting people with organisations such as ECS), and help nurture action in the community. Clergy leadership helps to facilitate engagement and create the conditions whereby such

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[182] Shattuck (2016:142) identifies faith leaders as "the people with authority to define the beliefs and values of a religious community and make decisions about community practices based on those values." Ministers and priests are faith leaders within a Christian context.

engagement can flourish. The minister's position at the centre of the community is part of this engagement. In short, local-level leadership is important. But this support is less directly 'leading the flock', and more about facilitating, enabling, and empowering members of the congregation to lead and take action themselves.

While these examples illustrate positive ways that that clergy leadership can help facilitate action in a community, ministers can also hinder or prevent action, acting instead as a gatekeeper (Agliardo, 2014; Ayre, 2014:148; see also Wald, Silverman and Fridy, 2005: 131-132). The cases in this study were selected as 'best-case' examples of environmentalism in church communities and it is not unexpected that such a negative role was not found. In each church, clergy members were supportive of action, and sought to encourage the volunteers who engage in environmental action in the community. Where that support was most proactive and explicit, as at Saughtonhall and Wardie, environmental concerns were verbalised from the pulpit, in public prayers, and incorporated into the everyday practices of the community. In the case of CSH, the priest's support for environmental engagement was less explicit than that of a previous priest, so while continuing to support volunteer engagement and facilitating opportunities, environmental initiatives were less prominent in the community than just a few years earlier.

High level leadership

In addition to local-level leadership, which I have demonstrated has a strong effect on environmental engagement, the issue of high-level leadership developed during my research as a result of Pope Francis' input into the field of religion and environmental concerns through *Laudato Si'*. Many denominations and church networks have issued high-level statements on issues such as climate change and environmental degradation,[183] yet there is a recognised challenge with the transmission and application of the teachings of top-down statements (DeLashmutt, 2011; Emerson & Smith: 2000; 44; O'Brien 2010: 118). Indeed, what could be considered the 'official beliefs and practices' of a church are not necessarily supported or accepted by members (McGuire, 2002: 106). The cases in this research represent what could be considered the "three

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[183] The United Reformed Church has an Environmental Policy (URC 2004, URC 2016) and jointly issued "Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in an Age of Climate Change" with the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain (Methodist Church, 2012). The World Council of Churches (2013, 2015) has also made high-level pronouncements.

most characteristic forms" of church polity in Western contexts: episcopal (CSH), with hierarchical structures of authority; presbyterian (Wardie), where authority is determined through the representation of clergy and laity; and congregational (Saughtonhall), where, despite denominational membership, the local congregation is relatively autonomous (McGuire, 2002: 101). As such, the potential for high-level leadership to influence a congregation's actions are mixed. The Church of Scotland issued a formal announcement supporting the Scottish Government's moratorium on fracking during my fieldwork (CofS, 2015), and the URC in Scotland committed to divest its financial holdings from fossil fuels at its meeting in March 2015 (URC, 2015). Yet neither of these issues was raised during my participation with the congregations.

Participants at CSH, however, were excited by the release of *Laudato Si'* both for what it might say theologically, and how it might bolster support for environmental engagement within their church. There was a hope that papal leadership would elevate the place of environmental concerns both in the local church and in the Catholic Church more broadly, and that it might stimulate participation in environmental activity in the congregation. Yet even in a strongly hierarchical system like the Catholic Church, where teaching and authority is expected to move down to the grass-roots with relative ease through the leadership of a priest who functions directly under ministry and direction of the appointed bishop (Cunningham, 2009:16), changing attitudes may prove hard (Chaplin, 2016). The encyclical certainly initiated engagement in the short term, but its long term impact is not yet known.

There are of course additional ways of providing high-level leadership. The Catholic Church in Scotland, the Church of Scotland, and the URC are all signatories, along with other ecumenical partners, to the founding of ECS, "to play their part in caring for the Earth" (ACTS, 2001).[184] The CofS and the URC continue to provide financial support for ECS (ECS, 2017). Taking these factors into account, it could be argued that high-level leadership does have an effect on engagement at the local level, through contributing to, and funding, a third-sector organisation on an ongoing basis. Moreover, my findings also show that high-level leadership can stimulate short-term

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[184] Signatories to the founding document for Eco-Congregation Scotland include representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Reformed Church, the Iona Community, the Congregational Federation, the Salvation Army and the Russian Orthodox Church.

engagement, if there is enough publicity and awareness of the leadership actions being taken high-level actions. The pope's intervention certainly provided support and encouragement to those already advocating for including environmental issues within their church, and raised the level of engagement around such themes. Assessing the longer-term impact is beyond the scope of this research.

Volunteers: Initiating, sustaining, and burning out

In addition to the role of clergy leadership, so leadership from within the congregation is vital. Indeed, volunteer engagement is often as important as pastoral leadership, if not more so, in practicing environmentalism in a faith-based community. In each of the cases studied, clergy leadership played an important part in stimulating and supporting environmental actions, as outlined above. Yet in each case, the drive and commitment of volunteers from within the congregation was crucial in implementing and sustaining action.

Numerous previous studies illustrate the normative value of volunteering by members of faith communities. Following Bekkers and Schuyt (2008), Cnaan (2002), Putnam and Campbell (2010), Ruiter and De Graaf (2006), and Wuthnow and Evans (2002), I consider service within the community of faith as a form of volunteering. Insights from studies of volunteering indicate that church membership, participation and commitment are often correlated with high levels of volunteer service, and giving time to serve other people (see for example Park and Smith, 2000; Putnam and Campbell, 2010; Wuthnow, 1991)).[185] The participants in this study are not unusual among churchgoers in their commitment to serving their communities. Key research participants are members of what Ammerman (2005: 136) calls an 'issue group' – a smaller group within a congregation that organises around a particular issue, such as the environment. Yet the groups at each church in this study were small, with an even smaller number of key volunteers who took on a vital role as what Mark (Saughtonhall) called a 'champion' of environmental engagement. As a 'champion' of engagement, these one or two individuals in each congregation are the principal organisers, implementers, and sustainers of environmental engagement in the community.

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[185] Much of this research has investigated volunteering within a church context, as well as the impact of church membership on peoples' volunteer commitments outside of the church context, for example, in supporting social welfare activities.

My findings support Shattuck's (2016) identification of the role of lay individuals in providing leadership and turning ideas into action. My analysis also adds weight to the calls of O'Brien (2010:122) that lay members of a community can be 'agents of transformation' in engaging churches (in O'Brien's case, Catholic churches) with the challenges of climate change and other environmental issues. The champion is the person who carries the torch for environmental issues among the competing priorities for action within a church (Wilkinson, 2012: 97-99). In my study, my key participants are the people who act to raise the profile of environmental concerns within the community. They help to inform others though organising events; they install practices such as recycling; and they receive and provide encouragement from and to the minister, to embrace environmental concerns within the wider concerns and practices of the church's everyday life. Moreover, my research suggests that the champion role taken on by these key participants also means that others in the community can avoid taking responsibility for embracing environmental issues as part of their faith. Having an environmental champion in a community instead maintains the position of environmental concerns as a distinct 'issue group' within the community.

The role of the key environmental volunteer as the champion of engagement also leads to challenges about how to sustain engagement at the congregational level, and how to support volunteers to do so. Key participants in each community expressed frustration and tiredness, and reflected on the challenges of maintaining enthusiasm for engagement when it felt like they were acting alone. This challenge of sustaining and maintaining volunteer engagement is recognised in broader studies of religion and welfare support in particular. Research by Garland, Myers and Wolfer (2008) stresses the importance of offering challenging and meaningful opportunities with which to engage, while Cnaan and Cascio (1999) emphasise the importance of providing support, recognition and encouragement to volunteers. In fact, issues such as climate change – those with few tangible outcomes or measures of success - have been identified as areas particularly vulnerable to volunteer burnout, due to a sense of futility of engagement (Wilson & Musick, 2008:448).[186] The sense of feeling alone, described by participants,

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[186] Wilson and Musick (2008: 449) suggest that volunteers working with issues such as climate change are able to make sense of their engagement by reducing such challenges to "individual acts of kindness" to make the task seem manageable. This corresponds to the ethic and practices of creation care observed in this research. Trying to save the global environment, or to prevent climate change may seem

illustrates how social factors are important for sustaining engagement, as emphasised in previous research by Cnaan (2002); Putnam, (2000); Wilson and Musick, (2008: 431-432) and Wuthnow (1991). In addition, McIntosh and Carmichael (2015) identify the role of community as a central feature of bringing change through activism. My findings support this research. Volunteers are motivated to engage in environmental action, but that enthusiasm can wane without the support of others in the community. Volunteers act as initiators and sustainers of environmental engagement in a congregational context. Yet a strong sense of *community*, and of not being alone in the endeavour, is inherent to the success or otherwise of environmental engagement.

This dynamic illustrates one of the major challenges of embedding environmental concerns within the traditions and practices of the church (Agliardo, 2014, Rasmussen, 2013, Townsend, 2014). The theologies and practices outlined thus far all play a role in integrating environmental theologies and action into the everyday practices of the Christian faith. Volunteer leaders and champions are also critical. But there are limits. Each of the volunteers in my research expressed frustrations, and occasionally felt alone or unsupported by the wider community in their commitment. In short, environmental themes may be strongly integrated within worship services, and practices of creation care strongly established within the everyday routines of congregations, yet active, key volunteers, and the support of the church community and of social connections therein, is vital to sustaining engagement.

Organisational structures

The three cases in this study were selected through purposive sampling (Gerring, 2007) to represent the 'everyday experience' of churches in Scotland. Three different traditions of church community in the UK (Church of Scotland, URC and Catholic) were studied. The inclusion of different traditions was intended to enable analysis of how environmental engagement is practiced across these slightly different communities, and to indicate whether there were distinct ways of advocating for the environment in different contexts. My analysis was not intended as an organisational studies research project (as seen, for example, in Cameron et al, 2005: 15-16), yet the

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unsurmountable, but breaking that down to small, manageable tasks such as increasing the energy efficiency of a church building, or growing vegetables, is more relatable.

data show that organisational structures are important in explaining environmental engagement. Church organisational structures are often seen as a potential resource for political activism (Cloke, Beaumont and Williams, 2013; Smith, 1996: 13-17; Wald, Silverman and Fridy, 2005) and for environmental activism more specifically (Haluza-DeLay, 2014; Shattuck, 2016). Yet organisational structures have also been shown to hinder engagement (Lysack, 2014). The different organisational structures across the churches in this study explains some of the different levels of authority given to the minister/priest, both formally and informally. They also represent the freedom of congregations to take initiative on an issue. Each case illustrates a different nuance of the fragile balance (or what Agliardo, 2014, calls a 'fortuitous combination') that can support engagement: factors that include leadership, volunteers, and organisational structures. These can come together to deliver significant environmental engagement within the community; yet they can also work, whether explicitly or implicitly, to hinder and prevent engagement.

Financial resources

Financial resources are also important in enabling action, whether at the micro level of buying seeds for a wildflower patch, or much more significantly, whether to invest in solar panels. In each of the three cases in this study, financial aspects contributed to explaining action and engagement in the community. In studies of religion and ecology, financial issues are most commonly addressed though survey questions, often using a question about individuals' 'willingness to pay' (e.g. higher prices for environmentally-friendly products) as a variable that represents a pro-environmental attitude (e.g. Carlisle and Clark, 2017; Clements, McCright and Xiao, 2014; Kanagy and Nelsen, 1995; Macias and Williams, 2016, Tarakeshwar et al, 2001; Woodrum and Wolkomir, 1997). Studies of faith-based activism more broadly suggest that one of the many resources that religious groups bring to activist causes, is their financial resources (Cloke, Thomas and Williams, 2013:6; Norris, 2002:282; Smith, 1996:13; Schnable, 2016). Yet the reality for the churches in this study is much different, and my findings support Shattuck (2016) that practical, financial concerns are important in enabling or preventing engagement. Even where there is enthusiasm for engagement, a lack of financial resource can restrict engagement, as illustrated by some of Sarah's struggles to find funding for wildflower seeds and/or bulbs to plant in the church

courtyard. Yet where finances are available, and where there is support for environmental action, significant commitments can be undertaken, as at Saughtonhall (solar panels) and Wardie (renovations and events programme through WCC).

Interestingly, the opportunity to save money is recognised as a strong factor in individuals' motivations for engaging in energy-saving practices, often more so than environmental concerns themselves (DEFRA, 2002; Whitmarsh, 2009). Yet research with community groups in receipt of funding through the UK Government's Low Carbon Communities Challenge (2010-2012, a scheme with parallels to the CCF in Scotland), found that financial incentives can act as an initial 'hook' for engagement, but are not themselves a driver of environmental behaviour change (DECC, 2012; Hauxwell-Baldwin, 2013). In my study, as with Hauxwell-Baldwin's study (2013), a strong sense of belonging to a community was found to be a more important factor than financial, or environmental, reasons in explaining participation and sustaining engagement. While financial factors played a role in enabling an enhanced level of engagement, the wider social context and sense of community must not be overlooked for its part in delivering engagement.

8.4   Community: combining theology and pragmatism *in situ*

A final, even more important factor explaining engagement is the role of *community*. The findings of this thesis have revealed the importance of studying religion *in situ* i.e. of considering the social context in which religion is experienced and practiced, for understanding what explains and drives engagement. I have shown how environmental engagement is explained by a combination of theological motivations and pragmatic factors, which influence the practice of everyday, lived religion, and the role of environmental concerns within that practice. Theological motivations and pragmatics factors both affect how congregations engage in environmental action and advocacy; they come together in the social context of the faith community.

My research shows most powerfully, how environmental engagement is created, developed and implemented by, and within communities; and it shows how communities are the context in which environmental engagement is practiced. With a few notable exceptions, while earlier studies often presume the existence of a faith community, little attention is paid to how these communities are created and supported, or how they create and support themselves. The faith communities within this study are

examples of what Newman and Clarke (2009: 60) would call "already active communities." Each of the communities studied already exists as a church congregation; their engagement in environmental issues is part of, and in an addition to, their ongoing existence as faith communities. Yet environmental engagement does not happen without this community. My findings emphasise more fully the central role that community plays in explaining environmental engagement by faith-based communities. My argument is that community, both as people and as place, is the context in which theological and pragmatic factors come together, to enable congregations to engage broadly and creatively in environmental advocacy. Faith communities demonstrate with words and practice that environmental issues can be an integral part of what it means to be a Christian in Scotland in the twenty-first Century.

The ethnographic methodology adopted for this research was important for elucidating the importance of both theological and practical factors in explaining engagement. Yet it also revealed the strong sense of, and commitment to, community that both enables, and is built through, environmental action. The ethnographic research methodology, grounded in ongoing participation in the communities over an extended period of time, was an effective way to capture this role of community. The practice of ethnography involves seeking to be faithful to the social context in which the research is grounded and aiming to understand that social context and the encounters therein in order to analyse them (Atkinson, 2015). As an apprentice ethnographer, I began my research with an open mind about what I would find. I entered the communities with sensitising questions about environmental issues and actions in the church. Experienced ethnographers often point out that a risk in the early stages of research is not knowing what is important (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995: 69), and of trying to report everything in field notes (Silverman, 2006: 88). I certainly found myself doing writing extensive field notes after each visit, and lacking confidence about whether I was observing and taking notes of the 'right thing'. Yet writing these field notes was an important aspect in identifying what I might otherwise myself have missed: the centrality of community as a space for engagement, as a driver of engagement, and as an outcome of engagement. In participating as fully as possible in the congregations, and seeking to represent those communities faithfully, it became clear that what holds together the theological and pragmatic factors that explain environmental engagement

was a strong sense of community; its importance understood and expressed both spatially, and relationally.

Community is often used as a broad, all-encompassing term, a "warmly persuasive word" (Williams, 1976:76 in Bennett, Grossberg and Morris, 2005), with multi-layered meanings in different contexts (Aiken, 2015). There is significant discussion in the literature on community engagement and public participation in policy development (e.g. Barnett, 2008; Newman and Clarke, 2009) about understandings of community, and in particular, how community is constituted and defined by different actors, explicitly or implicitly. This discussion also includes critique about how community and communities might be constituted as an expansion of governmental power as a response to policy needs (Newman and Clarke, 2009: 15). Indeed, the governmentalisation of community is a common policy response to climate change and environmental governance, partly because of its "ability to encompass both the local and the global" (Aiken, 2015: 765; see also Aiken *et al*, 2017).[187] My research participants would recognise a sense of community as both local and global: local in terms of the lived experience of their church congregation; and global through the relationships, principally at an institutional level but also via the local church congregation and its connections with members of church communities in other parts of the world.[188] In the context of this discussion, as my research focuses on understanding the everyday or lived experience of community, I use community as my participants do, both as a spatially-grounded understanding of community as place, as well as a social, or relationally-grounded consideration of community as people. Importantly, community is also a fundamental theological foundation of the Christian church, and a normative aspect of church congregational life (e.g. Ammerman, 2002; 2005; Wuthnow, 1991).

The first aspect for analysis is community as a *space and place for engagement*. Faith communities perform a role in being grounded in their physical communities, and in providing a space for environmentally-focused events and activities. The church

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[187] This is an important area for further consideration, particularly as two of the three congregations in this study accessed the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund to support the costs of building renovations and other activities, although is beyond the scope of this study.

[188] Dinham (2008, cited in Newman and Clarke, 2009:60) highlights how faith communities are an attractive partner for government given the communities' resources (networks, property, morality) that can be utilised to serve the public good, while Newman and Clarke themselves (2009: 48) highlight the role of apparent "organic, harmonious and social (not political) qualities" that such pre-existing communities are perceived to represent.

building itself (and grounds, where relevant) is a space for the practice of creation care (Torgerson, 2011) and outreach to the local community that can also communicate the environmental priorities of the congregation (Van Wieren, 2013). The building also provides a physical space for lectures, discussion groups and children's programmes. Each of these aspects was evident in the churches presented in this thesis. The congregations in this study each provided a space for environmental engagement within their church buildings, and also expanded their engagement into, and beyond, the physical location in which they are located.

The spatial aspects of community are an important consideration for environmentalism more broadly, as governments increasingly look to communities and community organisations to help deliver environmental policies (Scottish Government, 2017). Rightly or wrongly, these governmental understandings of community are often defined spatially (Aiken, 2015; Hauxwell-Baldwin, 2013). As such, I found that the physical presence of churches in their communities, and the space they provide for environmental activities, is an important factor in explaining their participation in environmentalism: once they have decided to engage, the space they have acts as a material resource in which engagement can take place (Ammerman, 2002: 129; Shattuck, 2016).

A spatial understanding of community is also important with regard to the sense of identity and connection with the local community that a church exhibits (Park and Smith, 1996). The sense of connection with place – and the church's position within, and as part of, the physical neighbourhood or locality – is a potential way of nurturing environmental concern within communities of faith (Clifton-Soderstrom, 2009; Gorringe, 2011; Northcott, 2013; Northcott, 2015; Seifert and Shaw, 2013). A strong sense of community, in terms of community identity (often developed through a sense of connection with place) has also been expounded as a tool for engagement in environmentalism more broadly (Bomberg and McEwen, 2012; Doron and Wallis, 2014). Engagement with the local, neighbouring community is a normative aspect of congregational life (Cnaan, 2002), and church congregations regularly seek to engage in caring for others and practicing justice through direct actions in their immediate, local context (Bass, 2010; Miles, 2006; Wilkinson, 2012). Understanding the importance of the physical community in which a church is located, and articulating that to and

through members of the church, indicates a spatial context in which people of faith practice environmental engagement. It embeds the practice of engagement within the broader framework of the normative practices and beliefs of the Christian faith, and connects the congregation to the surrounding community more strongly.

The second major consideration about community identified in this research is the *social aspects of community* that drives and explains engagement. People want to take environmental actions with others, and to have others join them in their concerns. This was evident in each of the congregations studied. These social aspects of religious engagement are repeatedly emphasised by seminal researchers in social science (Putnam (2000; Putnam and Campbell, 2008), as well as the sociology of religion (Ammerman (2005), Stark and Finke (2000) and Wuthnow (1991, 1994). These studies focus on broader questions of understanding congregations and congregational life, and highlight the centrality of community and connectedness over and above specific theologies or beliefs in a congregation. In contrast however, much of the literature about religion and ecology/religious environmentalism continues to focus on ecotheology and an ecologically-sensitive reading of the Bible (see for example, Moo and White, 2014; Conradie et al, 2014; Snyder and Scandrette, 2011), and of individual measurements of theological beliefs and their correlation with apparent indicators of environmental behaviour or concern (e.g. Clements et al, 2014; Arbuckle and Konisky, 2015; Shao, 2017). Despite criticism by Hessel and Rasumussen (2001) about the lack of consideration of ecclesiology (the study of the church) in studies of religious environmentalism, and emphasis by others of the importance of community within environmental action more broadly (e.g. McIntosh, 2004; McIntosh and Carmichael, 2015; Bomberg and McEwen, 2012; Doron and Wallis, 2014), only a smaller number of studies have embraced the challenge to focus on the local church. As I discussed in chapter two, the most prominent of these studies focus on distinctive communities of faith (McFarland Taylor, 2007; Vonk 2011) that do not reflect the lived religious experiences of 'everyday' Christians in the West.

Of the studies that have engaged more deeply with the social aspects of faith-based environmentalism, Djupe and Hunt's (2009) survey-based study and Shattuck's (2016) in-depth ethnographic research both highlight the impact of the social dimensions of the religious experience over and above measures of religiosity or

doctrine. In addition, Baugh's (2015) work with participants in a Bible study about "food, faith and the environment" found that church communications and networks were key to initial participation in the Bible study, but that the social and cultural context of discussions dominated the gatherings. I highlight these studies to stress that there is an awareness of the importance of the social aspects of community within recent work on religion and ecology. My research findings however indicate that the social and relational aspects of community are more prominent as a driving factor for engagement than has previously been understood or acknowledged.

An understanding of the local church as a community of believers is a central theological foundation for many Christians. The dominance of community as a theme in my research on environmental engagement was however unexpected. As I have stated, the tendency in studies of religious environmentalism is to consider measures of religiosity and correlate those with environmental attitudes and behaviours. From a more theological perspective, much of the existing literature focuses on the biblical and theological understandings that relate to an awareness of the fullness of God's creation, and how Christians should relate to that in their understanding of humans' role in the natural world. The empirical evidence of this study reveals the importance of community, socially and physically, and both within and beyond the immediate church congregation, as an explanation behind engagement. This finding is an important contribution of this research to studies of religious environmentalism.

8.5 Summary

In summary, I have illustrated how my research emphasises the importance of studying religion in its everyday context to understand engagement. Throughout this chapter I have analysed and emphasised the key themes of my research. Firstly, I have demonstrated how theological motivations for environmental engagement build on traditions of creation theology/spirituality, through which the natural world evokes a sense of praise, awe and wonder of and for God. This theology is interpreted by Protestant participants in particular as a responsibility to care for God's creation. This terminology is adopted by a wide range of organisations, and reflects both the Christian imperative to care for your neighbour in words and deeds, and an understanding of the natural world as created by God. Care for creation did not however resonate strongly with Catholic participants in this study, who instead focused on understanding

environmental concerns as issues of *justice*. The justice framework, also important to secular environmental groups, was also readily adopted and understood by Protestant churchgoers in this study, recognising the impact of environmental issues on existing priorities of the church relating to human dignity, fighting poverty, and caring for the poor. I also discussed *intergenerational justice* and found that, while present in a small way in the words of Catholic participants, intergenerational concerns were not a major factor motivating or driving environmental engagement on a day-to-day basis.

Secondly, I have demonstrated how environmental engagement is practiced by churches in Edinburgh. My findings emphasise the importance of integrating environmental themes within the context of worship, and have also revealed how congregations build on environmental issues to engage with their local communities on issues of common concern and interest. I illustrated how congregations integrate environmental concerns within the everyday practice of their community life, both in respect of events and activities, and building management. Alongside theological concerns and practices of congregational life, my research also has drawn attention to the importance of pragmatic factors in explaining environmental engagement. My findings show that that environmental engagement by faith communities is explained by a complex and interweaving set of factors which include theological motivations *and* pragmatic factors of everyday life in a faith community. This research indicates that the social context of religion, the local faith community, is of fundamental importance to the contribution that religion makes to environmentalism: in this case, Christianity.

Thirdly, I have illustrated how these interweaving theological and pragmatic factors come together in the context of community to enable environmental engagement. I therefore argue that *community* is a central, underlying and overarching factor that explains environmental engagement. I have shown how community is an assumed aspect of religion that has been overlooked in studies of religious environmentalism. Yet I have illustrated how community is important to the congregations in this study both in terms of people (the social connections that engagement fosters and develops, and the enjoyment and fun gained by taking action with others), and in terms of place (as church communities identify with the neighbourhoods in which they are located, and use environmental activities as an opportunity for community engagement). I have also shown that a pre-existing

community is important in and of itself for enabling environmental action; and that participation in environmental action itself strengthens and builds community. I have demonstrated how my findings were revealed by the important role of participant observation and ethnographic research methodology, and argue that the social aspects of the everyday religious experience are thus fundamental to the opportunities for, and practices of, environmental engagement by a faith community. In doing so, I have shown that community is an integral factor that explains environmental engagement. I have indicated this refers both to community as place and community as people, and have argued that community is the context in which theological and pragmatic factors of environmental engagement come together, and are practiced.

These findings provide depth of understanding about environmental action in the local church community which have implications for studies of religion/ecology and faith-based activism, and also add to broader studies. In the next chapter, I reflect on the implications of this research for the study of religion and ecology in particular, as well as for understanding faith-based and environmental activism more broadly. In setting my research in this context, I will also briefly reflect on the practice of my study itself, and consider the implications of this research for further academic study.

9 Summary and conclusions

The contribution of this thesis to the academic discussion on religious environmentalism and religion and ecology is multifaceted. Empirically, my study offers three key conclusions: firstly, that environmental engagement is explained by a combination of theological motivations and pragmatic factors. Secondly, my findings have highlighted the importance of everyday religion and everyday environmentalism for understanding engagement in faith communities. Thirdly, and most importantly, they demonstrate that *community* is the foundation on which environmental engagement is lived and practiced. The community of faith is where theological motivations and pragmatic factors come together to enable action. Previous studies in secular environmentalism have indicated that community identity is important for engagement, and recent policy developments at the national level are continuing to focus on the local community as a platform through which to implement national climate policy targets. Yet previous studies of religion and ecology often overlook this foundational aspect of religious life, and/or assume that the practice of religion is grounded in everyday faith communities, without drawing attention to the importance of community as a factor that explains environmental action in and of itself. Community is the space where environmentalism is practiced, both in terms of the local faith community and its locality; community is the context in which engagement is sustained; a sense of community gives meaning to those who participate; community-building is an outcome of engagement. In short, without community, there is no environmental engagement.

The findings of this thesis illustrate that theological motivations are important for engagement, but without community, theology is not put into practice. Pragmatic factors are also part of what it is to be a community, and help to explain engagement. Yet it is the social factors of congregational life, and in particular, the foundation of community on which congregations are built, that explains environmental engagement. When a community comes together, things happen. When a community does not support engagement, very little happens. The social context in which religion is practiced, the local faith community, is crucial.

For practitioners, several important implications emerge. My findings illustrate how Christian congregations are engaging in the practice of everyday environmentalism at the level of the local community. It shows how the social aspects of life in faith

community are important in explaining environmental engagement. For practitioners, the findings indicate how organisations such as ECS can continue to support environmental action by focusing on ensuring those driving engagement feel supported and connected to a wider community in their work. Organisations can encourage volunteers to prioritise events and actions that build community, and provide resources and support to sustain engagement. Additionally, my findings about the importance of local-level leadership emphasise the need to work with clergy, including at the level of trainee-ministers, to ensure that environmental concerns are included within discussions of justice. This should also include, for example ensuring that local church activities include environmentally-themed actions such as community gardening, as much as they currently include supporting the local foodbank.

This thesis also makes an important methodological and geographical contribution to the existing academic literature by utilising an ethnographic approach to the study of faith-based environmentalism. This research has indicated the importance of taking greater account of the social context in which a phenomenon such as environmental advocacy is based, and of seeking depth of analysis of the issues under investigation. My findings illustrate the importance of ethnographic methods in revealing the importance of community within faith-based environmentalism in Scotland. This study clearly demonstrates the value of spending time with communities and of seeking to understand their environmental engagement within the broader context of church life, thereby adding depth of knowledge to our understanding of the practice of environmental engagement in Christian communities. In engaging with the everyday experience of the religious life, I have highlighted the complex influence of social factors that affect practices and beliefs (McGuire, 2008), and argued that environmental engagement by faith communities can benefit from insights from broader studies of religion. An ethnographic approach has previously been used by McFarland Taylor (2007) and Vonk (2011) to study distinct religious communities, and by others to study faith-based environmental organisations (e.g. Baugh, 2015). I am only aware of Shattuck's recent thesis research (2016) as one other study that systematically analyses the experience of environmental engagement by everyday congregations from an ethnographic perspective, although she also includes distinct religious communities in her case selection. My study adds to those in-depth analyses of faith-based environmental activism, and also adds a new geographical perspective on faith-based

environmental engagement, that of the Scottish Christian experience, in an area dominated by research in North America. This thesis has also highlighted the insights that can be gained by taking an interdisciplinary approach to a research problem, drawing on knowledge from different disciplines to strengthen understanding within studies of religion and ecology, rather than seeking to establish stronger disciplinary boundaries. Such interdisciplinary engagement, part of the tradition of studies of religious environmentalism, maintains the potential for expanding and contributing to knowledge across different fields.

Research limitations and reflections on research strategy

There are of course limitations to this study. Despite adding geographical diversity to the existing literature, this study still focuses on research with a white, Western expression of Christianity, and there is considerable value to be had in broadening the study of Christianity and environmentalism beyond the global North. The challenge of doing multi-site ethnography meant that my participation, whilst intentional and ongoing, was also at times *ad hoc* in nature with each community. In the context in which churches meet primarily on Sunday mornings, my occasional participation in those Sunday gatherings on, at most, a three-weekly basis, even when supplemented with midweek events and activities, meant that making contacts beyond key participants was hard, and insights from further members of the congregations were not as prominently expressed as would have been desirable. As an ethnographic research project, I also sought to maintain the integrity of the context in which the research was undertaken as much as possible. This meant, for example, that I often resisted using a voice recorder for fear of changing the dynamic of a conversation or interview, possibly missing insights or nuances of conversation in my field notes rather than analysing a transcript. Focusing on the natural context of conversations also meant I was sometimes hesitant to engage in specific questions about my research, preferring instead to assess how environmental issues were represented in the general discussions and practices of the communities. Yet this also meant I left some questions unanswered: do churchgoers adopt environmental practices at home more or less than through the congregation, for example? And is there a connection between actions and theologies expressed in the context of church that might have significant meaning for people at home?

Another issue of relevance is my decision to engage with churches with a record of environmental engagement to learn from their experience. I prioritised those congregations that are already advocating for an environmental perspective to be integrated within church practices, rather than seeking to understand the barriers and challenges of engagement from churches who do not engage. As of June 2017, four hundred churches in Scotland are registered with ECS, a figure that represents ten per cent of Scottish churches.[189] While this is to be celebrated, it also means that ninety per cent of churches in Scotland are not registered with ECS. This discrepancy represents an opportunity for further study: to engage with those communities that are not engaging in their faith context, to understand why.

Opportunities for future research

The opportunity for further study to analyse non-participating churches offers the potential to learn more about the practicalities and effectiveness of the ECS model of congregational support more broadly, and to find whether and how churches across Scotland are engaging with environmental issues in the everyday practice of their faith in other ways. Such information would offer an important overview of the place of environmental concerns in churches in Scotland as a whole, and indicate more information about the barriers to further engagement and participation in the work of ECS. A cross-national analysis of organisations equivalent to ECS, and their members, would also provide insight into the practice of faith-based environmentalism in different contexts, although this would require considerable time and finance to be effective.[190]

Two further areas of research emerge from this research. The first is the relationship of congregations to their denominations, and the influence their environmental activism has there, if any. The research in this thesis set out to prioritise the experience of the congregation as a whole, as represented through the perspective of churchgoers who participate in a congregation on an ongoing basis. While I have indicated some of the ways these congregations engage with traditional forms of political activism on a national and international level, I have not considered how and whether congregations seek to influence the perspective of the denominations to which

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[189] Adrian Shaw, ECS Climate Change Officer, reported this verbally at the conference "Faith communities and environmental activism", Edinburgh, May 2017.
[190] Kim, 2016, is an edited volume of international Christian environmental engagement from practitioners around the world, but the contributions are principally anecdotal rather than analytical.

they belong i.e. do congregations participate in influencing denominational policies and statements in a bottom-up manner, or is leadership only top-down? This meso-level of engagement is an important level to study for understanding how congregations work to influence their denominations. It also opens up opportunity for closer study of the political effectiveness of faith-based environmentalism, as denominational leaders often have more political access than congregations and their members directly. Another important issue of significant research interest is whether and how environmental engagement creates opportunity for significant inter-faith work in the UK. Much of the existing research on religious environmentalism has focused on Christianity. Yet people of other faiths also practice environmental concerns, and there is considerable scope for further study in this area that will add valuable knowledge to both the study of environmentalism, and the study of religions.

This thesis hopefully offers a starting point for such exploration. It has offered new insight about the practice of religious environmentalism, and indicated the importance of community in explaining how, and why, faith-based communities engage in environmental issues. It has raised questions for further study, and offered suggestions for practitioners, and academics, to consider about the intersection of Christianity, faith, and environmentalism.

Appendices

Appendix A: Eco-Congregation Scotland

Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS) was established in 2001 to support churches across Scotland seeking to undertake environmental actions. ECS is an ecumenical organisation, working across the major Scottish denominations to facilitate environmental awareness and activism within local churches, and is part of a network of church networks in countries including England, Wales, Ireland, Canada, Norway, Germany, Hungary and the United States. ECS has four hundred affiliated congregations from Shetland to Dumfries, which have committed to taking action on climate change. To become an eco-congregation, a church community is required to set up a 'green group' in the church (with the support of any church-based decision-making body), undertake an environmental check-up of facilities (based on resources available on the ECS website), and be working towards an ECS award – a recognition presented for having achieved particular measures and actions in the community. One hundred and twenty-five of member congregations have received an ECS award "for environmental excellence," following evaluation of their activity independent assessors. Awards recognise initiatives such as fostering whole-congregation involvement, taking practical measures to reduce energy use, engaging with the wider community on environmental issues and having taken steps to integrate faith and environmentalism in the life of the community.

ECS describes itself as a grassroots movement (Aitken, 2011:1) and "a movement of faith in action" (Church of Scotland, 2014). Its member churches are encouraged to take an active role in their local network, regionally based groups facilitating networking and knowledge exchange across communities. There are twenty networks (at May 2017), from Orkney to Dumfries and Galloway. The small administrative core of ECS, based in Edinburgh, focuses on working with its member congregations to relate to three "strands" of action:

i)   Spiritual living (linking environmental issues with the Christian faith)
ii) Practical living (making practical changes in behaviour)
iii) Global living (taking action in the local or global community for wider impact and influencing).

The ECS award scheme focuses on these three strands of action. There are three awards, with distinctive criteria, and awards are valid for three years. The following is taken from ECS materials produced for congregations, and available via their website.[191]

First Award Criteria
To gain the first award churches must be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken initiatives in each of these three areas:
- Helping the whole congregation to make the link between their Christian faith and environmental concerns (***Spiritual Living***).
- Taking practical action in the church and/or church grounds (***Practical Living***).
- Having a positive impact on and/or working with their local or wider community. This must include measuring the carbon footprint of their church buildings and have plans to reduce it (***Global Living***).

Churches must have undertaken one reasonably substantive piece of work or a number of smaller projects in each area. When there is overlap, for example a church involving the local community in improvements to their grounds, the church should be given credit for taking action in both areas.

For their first award, churches may submit information on projects undertaken both prior to and since registering as an Eco-Congregation.

Second Award Criteria
For a second award, and in addition to the criteria for the first award, we look for:
1. Implementation of the recommendations made at the first award assessment, unless there are good reasons why this has not been possible.
2. A continuation/deepening of existing projects (unless there is a good reason why they have finished). These should be more than just maintenance and demonstrate steady growth.
3. New projects
4. Evidence of reaching out to others e.g. through more local community involvement, involving other churches in the programme and / or supporting the local Eco-Congregation network.
5. In addition, the congregation should be able to show that they have taken steps to make a measureable reduction in the carbon footprint of their church buildings.

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[191] www.ecocongregationscotland.org/award Accessed 01 July 2014.

Third Award Criteria

To achieve a third award a church should have clearly demonstrated a long term commitment to promoting an environmental policy and show that it is an integral part of its way of life and future development.

In addition it must be evident that as an Eco-Congregation the church is:

- Moving On: having carried out the recommendations from the second award, unless there are good reasons why this has not been possible.
- Continuing and initiating projects on a range of environmental issues.
- Supporting Eco-Congregation: showing evidence of having supported the movement through publicity / networking.
- Engaging in outreach work by carrying out environmental work within local communities.
- Measuring, managing and reducing the church's carbon footprint by 5% a year and is encouraging members of the congregation to do the same.

On a day-to-day basis, the ECS administration supports and resources local eco-congregations in their work. This includes the development of online resources and materials for the network, working with churches as they prepare for assessment for an ECS Award, training volunteers to help them develop programmes in their local networks, as well as representing ECS at a national level with politicians, partner organisations (including church bodies) and environmental organisations.

ECS is supported by a Board of Trustees, a small administrative team based in Edinburgh and an Environmental Chaplain, an ordained minister who seeks to work with and support churches in deepening their spiritual and theological understanding of caring for creation. ECS is supported by the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Government, Christian Aid, the United Reformed Church, SCIAF (the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund) and the Scottish Episcopal Church

More details can be found at www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Appendix B: Project Information Sheet

Project Information sheet given to research sites ahead of researcher engagement.

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Caring for the Future through Ancestral Time:
Engaging the Cultural and Spiritual Presence of the Past to
Promote a Sustainable Future

Research Background:
In debates about climate change, one factor that lingers in the background is time. Questions of responsibility for past emissions, present resource use and future generations come together in global conversations and action. Short-term thinking pervades many aspects of our lives yet the climate challenge requires present action and sacrifice if we are to care for the future. We see long-term targets being set by governments, but a lack of short-term action.

Religious organisations however, think differently about time, community and responsibility. The Christian understanding of time is shaped by a sense of intergenerational community, sometimes known as the 'communion of saints.' Present generations are conscious of the legacy of the past and also consider their responsibilities to future generations. This awareness of the past in the present and the present in the future is something we are calling 'ancestral time.'

Research Project:
Researchers from the University of Edinburgh are engaging with congregations across the country who are taking action on climate change and environmental issues. We are exploring ideas of time and ethics in such communities and investigating whether 'ancestral time' offers a greater sense of connection between present and future generations than the short-term thinking more prevalent in society. We are working closely with EcoCongregation Scotland, our project partner.

Our work will involve:
- Listening to the stories and experiences of EcoCongregations from across Scotland
- Discussing with congregations the successes and struggles of climate action in the local church
- Taking part in award assessment visits.
- Visiting congregations, local networks, and annual meetings of EcoCongregation Scotland.

For further information please visit www.ancestraltime.org.uk.

"Caring for the Future through Ancestral Time" is a three-year research project at the University of Edinburgh funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). EcoCongregation Scotland is a project partner.

Arts & Humanities Research Council

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Appendix C: List of fieldwork visits.

	Date	Event
Saughtonhall Church (chapter 5)	07-Dec-14	Sunday worship service (Advent)
	11-Jan-15	Sunday worship service, followed by lunch with minister
	01-Feb-15	Sunday worship service
	08-Feb-15	Sunday worship service and ECS award assessment
	15-Mar-15	Sunday worship service
	29-Mar-15	Sunday worship service
	19-Apr-15	Sunday worship service
	27-Apr-15	Saughtonhall annual meeting
	11-May-15	Christian Aid book sale visit
	17-May-15	Sunday worship service
	18-May-15	Social event
	05-Jun-15	Informal interview
	14-Jun-15	Sunday worship service
	30-Jun-15	Holiday club planning meeting
	05-Jul-15	Sunday worship service
	09-Jul-15	Holiday club preparation
	14-Jul-15	Holiday club planning meeting
	20-Jul-15	Holiday Club
	21-Jul-15	Holiday Club
	24-Jul-15	Holiday Club
	26-Jul-15	Sunday worship service
	09-Aug-15	Sunday worship service
	04-Oct-15	Sunday worship service and lunch with minister and others
	04-Nov-15	Informal interview
	22-Feb-16	Interview with minister
		Total number of events: 25
Church of the Sacred Heart (chapter six)	02-Nov-14	Sunday mass
	09-Nov-14	Sunday mass and Green Group meeting
	21-Nov-14	Gardening - church courtyard
	23-Nov-14	Sunday mass
	06-Dec-14	Event: Advent Art

	14-Dec-14	Sunday mass followed by Green Group photo competition
	16-Dec-14	Wildflower patch/gardening
	14-Jan-15	Presentation: Fracking
	28-Jan-15	Presentation: Walking John Muir Way
	31-Jan-15	Church gardening
	28-Feb-15	Wildflower patch/gardening
	08-Mar-15	Sunday mass
	11-Mar-15	Gardening tips - evening event
	28-Mar-15	Wildflower patch/gardening
	12-Apr-15	Sunday mass
	14-Apr-15	Informal interview
	24-May-15	Sunday mass
	27-May-15	Green group meeting
	30-May-15	Wildflower patch/gardening
	07-Jun-15	Arthur's Seat - Green Group & Refugee Survival Trust
	13-Jun-15	Wildflower patch/gardening
	13-Jun-15	Interview
	28-Jun-15	Sunday mass
	04-Jul-15	Wildflower patch/gardening
	07-Jul-15	Interview
	19-Jul-15	Sunday mass
	27-Jul-15	Evening lecture 'Franciscan Spring'
	30-Jul-15	Evening lecture 'Franciscan Spring' *Laudato Si'*
	23-Aug-15	Meadows Art Festival
	02-Sep-15	Green Group *Laudato Si'* event
	16-Sep-15	Green Group *Laudato Si'* event
	20-Sep-15	Sunday mass
	12-Mar-16	Lenten Retreat Day - *Laudato Si'*
		Total number of events: 33
Wardie Parish Church (chapter seven)	26-Oct-14	Sunday worship service
	04-Nov-14	Meeting/informal interview
	28-Nov-14	Interview
	30-Nov-14	Sunday worship service (Advent)
	03-Dec-14	Kirk Session - Quinquenniel review meeting
	08-Dec-14	Christmas community dinner
	04-Jan-15	Sunday worship service
	09-Jan-15	Pantomime

	19-Jan-15	WCC working group
	15-Feb-15	Sunday worship service
	01-Mar-15	Sunday worship service
	02-Mar-15	WCC working group
	16-Mar-15	WCC working group
	22-Mar-15	Sunday worship service
	05-Apr-15	Sunday worship service (Easter)
	12-Apr-15	Social event
	13-Apr-15	Interview
	17-Apr-15	Fashion exchange - social event
	26-Apr-15	Sunday worship service
	10-May-15	Sunday worship service
	16-May-15	Wardie Climate Champions - social
	22 & 23 May-15	Open Gardens event (evening & afternoon)
	31-May-15	Sunday worship service
	21-Jun-15	Sunday worship service
	12-Jul-15	Sunday worship service
	21-Aug-15	Interview
	26-Aug-15	Wardie Walkers - visit to Royal Botanic Gardens
	11-Oct-15	Sunday worship service
		Total number of events: 29
ECS	06-Sep-14	ECS Scotland Network Day
	01-Oct-14	ECS Edinburgh Network event
	09-Oct-14	Informal meeting with ECS staff
	10-Mar-15	ECS Edinburgh Network meeting
	25-Apr-15	ECS Annual Gathering
	18-May-15	ECS Edinburgh Recycling centre visit
	27-May-15	ECS/ Stop Climate Chaos at Scottish Parliament
	08-Jun-15	ECS Edinburgh - Planning meeting
	23-Sep-15	ECS Edinburgh - "Love God, Love God's world" event
	28-Nov-15	ECS Worship service then climate march
		Total number of events: 10

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