



During Love your Burial Ground Week (Saturday 8 - Sun 16 June) churches from all denominations are being invited to a week-long 'nature count' to monitor and celebrate the biodiversity in churchyards.

This Churches Count on Nature initiative will see people visiting churchyards to record what they see – from the ancient yews to tiny ladybirds.

The data will then be collated on the National Biodiversity Network.

It is jointly run by the conservation charities Caring for God's Acre and A Rocha UK, together with the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

**During Churches Count on Nature 2024, the Church of England Environment Programme with Caring for God's Acre, will run a special series of webinars on different aspects of land and nature.**

Find out about common species in your churchyards such as swifts and bees; watch some great advice about ancient yew trees; hear from

Bishop Graham Usher about the global Communion Forest initiative and explore the relationship between oceans, science and faith.

### **Wed 22 May, 12 noon - 1pm: Knowing your ant from your elder**

This practical session will help prepare you for your Love Your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature event. It will explain the significance of biological recording in churchyards and other burial grounds, tailored for those new to the subject. These green spaces are teeming with diverse life forms such as plants, birds, trees, insects, and small mammals. But how do we identify and document them effectively? You'll learn how to utilize the iNaturalist app, which seamlessly connects to the National Biodiversity Network database which integrates with the Church Heritage Record. Join us to discover the simple skills needed to explore and record the biodiversity of these important spaces.

**Speaker:** Harriet Carty, from the conservation charity Caring for God's Acre. Harriet, a seasoned ecologist with a passion for biodiversity, has dedicated her career to nature conservation. From the Seychelles to the Orkney Islands, she's worked on nature reserves, focusing on land management. Now based in Shropshire, she's been a consultant for the National Lottery Heritage Fund for many years, supporting work involving landscape-scale habitat restoration, volunteering and training. Harriet has been working for Caring for God's Acre for nine years and has been director of the charity since January 2017.

[Register here.](#)

### **Mon 11 June, 12 noon - 1pm: Planting your tree in the Communion Forest**

The Communion Forest is a global initiative comprising local activities of forest protection, tree growing and eco-system restoration undertaken by provinces, dioceses and individual churches across the Anglican Communion to safeguard creation. This seminar explores how planting is to hope, restoring is to heal, and protecting is to love.

**Speaker:** The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich.

Graham Usher is an ecologist, Bishop of Norwich and the Church of England's lead bishop for the environment. He chairs the national Environmental Working Group and the Advisory Group of the Communion Forest. He speaks regularly about environmental issues in the House of Lords.

[Register here.](#)

### **Tuesday, 11 June, 12 noon - 1pm: Your church - your swifts**

The Swift, a spectacularly agile and exciting flyer, a once common migrant insectivore now on the Red List of disappearing birds, took to nesting in churches when the UK lost its ancient forests. In some cases, they have been nesting in the same church for hundreds of years, maybe even more. But intolerance, re-roofing, renovations, modifications and insulation threaten their survival as never before.

Yet it is easy to save their nest places, and this bird is the cleanest bird you can ever have living in your church, and is only here for 12 weeks a year, in fact it can be the ideal tenant as well as being a unique and exciting feature for your Church! Indeed, some progressive churches now have organised summer Swift Evenings where parishioners can enjoy the aerial spectacle and have a get together as well.

Find out more at this fascinating and well-illustrated talk, full of practical and easy to follow advice.

**Speaker:** Edward Mayer. Edward has been in love with swifts since the age of six, they were the first birds that he really noticed. His career has been spent in property and project management; as well as working for the GLC and managing property for the Civil Service, he spent 12 years managing the Tate Gallery's properties throughout the UK.

[Register here.](#)

### **Wednesday 12 June, 12 noon - 1pm: Ancient Yew trees**

Globally, veteran and ancient yews are threatened; however, remarkably, on a world stage the best refuge for them is English and Welsh churchyards. It is here that over three-quarters of Britain's oldest yew trees can be found, and they both require and deserve good stewardship.

Myths and misconceptions surrounding the management of veteran and ancient yews can lead to very poor pruning practices, serious tree root damage and even the premature loss of these valuable, unique trees. The talk will provide clarity on Yew biology, best-practice management and dispel these myths/misconceptions.

**Speakers:** Chris Knapman, 'Have I Got Yews for You'- Understanding Ancient Yews and Russell Ball, Ancient Yew Management.

Russell is a Chartered Biologist and ISA Certified Arborist and his qualifications also include an honours degree in botany and a post graduate diploma in landscape management.

Chris Knapman is a professional arboricultural, horticultural and ecological consultant with a special interest in heritage trees of aesthetic, biological and cultural interest. A member of the Ancient Yew Group, Ancient Tree Forum and a former Local Authority Tree Officer over two decades.

Also, two seasons as Tree Protection Officer for the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show.

A committee member of the Scottish Branch of the Arboricultural Association and recipient of the Association's Award for 2023.

Chris works nationally and internationally advising on special trees and is a regular speaker on various tree related topics.

[Register here.](#)

#### **Thursday 13 June, 12 noon - 1pm: Solitary bees**

Of the 280 bee species that are native to Britain and Ireland, around 250 are 'solitary'. This talk will explain the differences between social and solitary bees, and introduce you to some of the diverse and fascinating solitary species you might find in your gardens, local burial grounds or other green spaces.

**Speaker:** Brigit Strawbridge. Brigit is a wildlife gardener, amateur naturalist, and advocate of bees. Based in Cornwall, she writes, speaks, and campaigns to raise awareness of the importance and diversity of native wild bees and other pollinating insects. She is author of Dancing with Bees: A Journey Back to Nature.

[Register here.](#)

#### **Friday 14 June, 12 noon - 1pm: Blueing the church: exploring the oceans through science and faith**

There are 24 dioceses with coastal boundaries totalling 2,663 miles

Every year we have the opportunity to celebrate our oceans; World Oceans Day June 8th. Without the ocean we wouldn't be here!

Through this webinar speaker David will:

- Encourage churches to think and talk about our ocean and its inhabitants, their coastal boundaries and enable them to be as cognisant of the importance of 'blue' (i.e. marine) issues as well as green issues.
- Explore the challenges and opportunities in finding ways that churches can deepen and enrich their congregations' understanding of the relationship between oceans, science and faith.
- Provide basic but important information about marine science and our oceans through our toolkit 'Our Blue Planet: Exploring The Oceans Through Science and Faith.' which will be a helpful resource for churches.

**Speaker:** David Curry. David is the Diocese of Exeter's Environmental Advisor (Voluntary) and manages the Devon Living Churchyards project.

[Register here.](#)

#### **Recordings of past webinars**

The recordings of our 25 webinars from 2021 and 2022 can be found in a [playlist on YouTube](#) [here](#), or individually below.

##### **2021:**

- **Nature and climate : twin crises, shared solutions** [watch recording](#) (*starts at 2mins15*)
- **Forest Church** [watch recording](#)
- **The National Burial Grounds Survey** [watch recording](#)

**Finding our faith in trees** [watch recording](#)

- **5 steps to good management of your churchyard or burial ground** [watch recording](#)

- **Practical examples from Bristol Dioceses of churchyards managed for nature** [watch recording](#)
- **Blooming and beautiful : flower-rich grasslands** [watch recording](#)
- **Bats in Churches** [watch recording](#)

- **Devon Living Churchyards Project** [watch recording](#)
- **Eco Church : Land** [watch recording](#)

- **A beginner's guide to biodiversity and ecology** [watch recording](#)
- **Biological recording for Churches Count on Nature and the Beautiful Burial Ground Project** [watch recording](#)

## 2022

- “Knowing your ant from your elder” Why and how to record during Churches Count on Nature [watch recording](#)
- Life on the Edge Exploring the Oceans Through Science and Faith [watch recording](#)
- Getting involved in the Bats in Churches project [watch recording](#)
- Eco Church Land [watch recording](#)
- How the Church Commissioners are managing land for climate and nature [watch webinar](#)
- Blooming and Beautiful - Flower Rich Churchyards [watch webinar](#)
- The Nature Recovery Network [watch webinar](#)
- Sustaining church: Using your church spaces for growing food and growing mission [watch webinar](#)
- Urban Hope - how to create space for nature in a small space [watch webinar](#)
- Becoming Nature Positive: tackling the joint crises of biodiversity loss and climate change [watch webinar](#)

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[Biodiversity guidance](#)



[Find out more about churchyards and how you can help.](#)

[Bats in Churches Project](#)



[Find out more about the project and how it helps churches.](#)

[Churches Count on Nature](#)

[Learn how you can record the plants and wildlife in your churchyard.](#)

