



Earth Care Congregations

A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches

Version 2, updated July 2011

SUMMARY OF EARTH CARE CONGREGATIONS

Earth Care Congregations are congregations that have committed to the “Earth Care Pledge” and accomplished a specific number of actions toward caring for God’s earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Congregations earning 25 points in each of the four categories will be certified as Earth Care Congregations and receive various honors. Congregation members will also be invited to participate as individuals by completing similar actions in their homes. “A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches” provides congregations with worksheets, resources, and instructions for becoming an Earth Care Congregation. The four categories of actions in the “Earth Care Pledge” were used as a guide for developing “Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches.”

BACKGROUND

In 1990 the 202nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, which calls our denomination to engage in the tasks of restoring creation. The “Call to Restore the Creation” is part of the resolution and stated that the General Assembly:

- Recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;
- Understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;

- Recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies;
- Approaches the task with covenant seriousness –“If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God... then you shall live” (Deut. 30:16) – and with practical awareness that cherishing God’s creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.

In consideration of this “Call to Restore the Creation” congregations are invited to participate in a certification program for Earth Care Congregations based on the “Earth Care Pledge” (Form 2). Certification requires churches to commit to the “Earth Care Pledge” and complete actions in the four categories identified in the pledge: worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE FOR THE EARTH?

Our faith urges us to strive for eco-justice: defending and healing creation while working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it. This call is rooted in the human vocation of “tilling and keeping” the garden from Genesis 2:15, as well as Christ’s charge to work with and for the most vulnerable. Because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), churches are challenged to live in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation.

HOW CAN MY CHURCH BECOME AN EARTH CARE CONGREGATION?

If your church is interested in becoming an Earth Care Congregation (ECC) the first step is to form an Earth Care Team and complete an ECC Environmental Audit (Form

1). The Earth Care Team can be as small as two people and does not need to be a formal committee. Completing the audit will give the Earth Care Team information about what earth care activities and facilities improvements the church has undertaken and what remains to be done. The environmental audit is divided into four categories where earth care progress can be evaluated. Many of the activities can be completed with little to no funding.

With the environmental audit completed, the Earth Care Team can recommend next steps based on available resources, cost-effectiveness, and acceptance by the congregation. The Earth Care Team should then present the information to the session and ask for approval of the Earth Care Pledge (Form 2) and session recognition of next steps for earth care. If 25 points have been earned in each category, approval to submit an Earth Care Congregation Application (Form 3) should also be requested.

Once you have completed an Earth Care Congregation application, the application and audit will be reviewed by PC(USA) Environmental Ministries and if 25 points have been earned for actions in each of the four categories, your church will be awarded the honor of being an Earth Care Congregation. Once Environmental Ministries receives an application, churches will receive a response within two weeks. The honor includes an Earth Care Congregation certificate, use of the ECC logo, listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website, notification of your presbytery, a press release for local publicity and an earth care book for your church library.

If the audit shows that your church has not earned a total of 100 points, 25 in each category, your church should continue to take actions towards earth care and apply to be an Earth Care Congregation once the point total has been reached. Appendix B lists examples and resources for the four categories of earth care activities that your church can choose to implement. Responsibility for making progress in each of the four categories can be assigned to existing church committees such as worship, education, facilities, and outreach. PC(USA) Environmental Ministries can help churches with ideas on how to implement activities and facilitate changes to work toward the Earth Care Congregation certification.

The honor of being an Earth Care Congregation should be renewed each year by the anniversary of your church's application. Renewal requires earning a total of 50 points in the four categories with a minimum of 5 points in each category. (For recertification, points must be earned within the previous year, i.e., if the church's high-efficiency furnace was installed 4 years ago, it cannot be counted for recertification. However, if a church continues to use reusable dishes, this can be counted again for recertification. In general, if an item takes further or continued action, points count toward recertification.) Churches meeting the renewal requirements will be awarded an updated certificate, permission to use the ECC logo, and continued listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website.

WHAT CAN MY CHURCH EXPECT?

Congregations applying to be Earth Care Congregations will become involved in making their church buildings, operations, worship services, education and outreach respectful of the glory of God's creation. This concern for preserving and sustaining what our Creator has made will go beyond church operations and extend into the homes and family lives of congregation members. The ECC program helps churches plan their continued earth care ministry and can create greater support for this ministry from the congregation as a whole.

Please contact PC(USA) Environmental Ministries for assistance in becoming an Earth Care Congregation or with any questions that may arise throughout the process at (800) 728-7228, x5624 or environment@pcusa.org. For more information on the Earth Care Congregations program please visit www.pcusa.org/earth-care-congregations.

This guide was originally developed by Jane Laping, Stewardship of Creation Enabler from Houston, as "Restoring Creation Congregations." PC(USA) Environmental Ministries worked with Jane Laping and Alan Jenkins, founder of Earth Covenant Ministry in Atlanta, to update this first guide to become "Earth Care Congregations" to be used on a nationwide scale for Presbyterian congregations interested in earth care. The guide was updated in July 2011, one year after the ECC program was launched.

A GUIDE TO GREENING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING APPENDICES

- Appendix A** Steps Toward Becoming an Earth Care Congregation
- Appendix B** Examples and Resources for Four Categories of Earth Care Activities
- Appendix C** Overview of Earth Care Congregations

If you are applying to be an Earth Care Congregation for the first time, click here for first year application materials, which include the following forms:

- Form 1** Earth Care Congregation Environmental Audit
- Form 2** Earth Care Pledge
- Form 3** Earth Care Congregation Application

If you are applying to recertify as an Earth Care Congregation, click here for recertification application materials, which include the following forms:

- Form 4** Earth Care Congregation Recertification Application
- Form 5** Earth Care Congregation Recertification Environmental Audit

APPENDIX A

Steps Toward Becoming an Earth Care Congregation

1. Form an Earth Care Team of at least two people who are interested in your church becoming an Earth Care Congregation (ECC) and who will complete the ECC Environmental Audit. If your church needs assistance with this, please consult Environmental Ministries.
2. Complete an ECC Environmental Audit to see if your church earns 25 points in each category. It is helpful to collaborate with church committee members who are focused on each of the four categories in the audit.
3. Use the audit to recommend next steps to either earn 25 points in each category for initial certification or, if your church has earned the required points, to complete ECC recertification next year (which requires at least 50 points, with at least 5 in each category).
4. Regardless of whether you have yet reached 25 points in each category in the Environmental Audit, present the results of the audit and your recommendations to your congregation's session. Ask the session to approve the Earth Care Pledge (Form 2), which needs the signature of the clerk of the session), recognize the next steps for earth care, and if 25 points have been earned in each category, approve the submission of the Earth Care Congregation Application (Form 3).
5. If your church has not earned the required points for initial certification, work on implementing further earth care activities suggested in Appendix B until these points are earned, and then apply to be an Earth Care Congregation.
6. If your church has earned the required points, apply to be an Earth Care Congregation and list your next steps on the Earth Care Congregation Application (under steps for recertification in Form 3).
7. If your church's application is complete and meets the criteria of the required number of points in each of the four Earth Care categories, Environmental Ministries will certify your church as an Earth Care Congregation.
8. After certification as an Earth Care Congregation, your church will be honored with an Earth Care Congregation certificate, use of the ECC logo, listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website, notification of your presbytery, a press release for local publicity and an earth care book for your church library.
9. Earth Care Congregations must be recertified each year. Renewal requires earning a total of 50 points within the previous year in the four categories with a minimum of 5 points in each category.
10. Once your church has become certified as an ECC and integrated earth care into its church life, you are urged to encourage and educate members on how to live sustainable lifestyles.

APPENDIX B

Examples and Resources for Four Categories of Earth Care Activities

Listed below are resources and examples of activities for each of the four categories in Earth Care Congregations. Further activity ideas are found in the ECC Environmental Audit.

General resources:

- PC(USA) Environmental Ministries, www.pcusa.org/environment
- Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC), an Eco-Justice Network, a member-based, grassroots nonprofit group that cares for God's creation, www.presbyearthcare.org
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, <http://nccecojustice.org>
- Interfaith Power and Light, <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/>
- Earth Ministry, <http://earthministry.org/>
- GreenFaith, www.greenfaith.org

1. WORSHIP (WORSHIP COMMITTEE)

Earth Day worship services and other special days of celebration (blessing of the animals, garden blessing):

- Celebrate Earth Day Sunday on the Sunday before or after April 22 with National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Earth Day resources <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/#earthdaysundayresources>
- Web of Creation Blessing of the Animals service www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/blessinganimals.htm
- Web of Creation Garden Blessing www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/trinity%20WorshipPlan.pdf
- Season of Creation, a four-week worship and education program in September www.seasonofcreation.com/

Hymns about the environment:

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program hymns <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/hymns.php>
- Presbyterians for Earth Care Presbyterian hymnal suggestions www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-aids.html

Scripture readings about the environment:

- Presbyterians for Earth Care suggested Scriptures
www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-aids.html

Sermons on earth care:

- Eco-Justice Ministries: “Three Layers of Environmental Preaching”
www.eco-justice.org/3layers.asp
- Interfaith Power and Light sermon and worship resources
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/clergy-corner/>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program sermon
<http://ncccojustice.org/resources/awardsermon.php>
- Earth Ministry Sermons
<http://earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids/sermons/creation-care>
- Montreat Presbyterian Church’s environmental team and sermons about the earth
www.montreatchurch.org/EARTH_MINISTRY/earth-ministry.html

Children’s sermons:

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program children’s sermon on climate change
www.ncccojustice.org/climate/climatechildensermon.php
- Banners that portray creation themes: www.webofcreation.org/Worship/space/banners.htm

General resources for worship:

- Eco-Palms (sustainably harvested palms by workers who are paid a just wage): PC(USA) Enough for Everyone www.pcusa.org/palms
- Earth Care-focused Lenten Discipline “Tread Lightly for Lent” from PC(USA) Environmental Ministries, available at www.pcusa.org/environment two months before Lent starts each year.
- Earth Ministry worship aids
<http://earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids>
- Web of Creation worship resources
www.webofcreation.org/Worship/resources.htm
- Green Bible, the New Revised Standard Version from HarperCollins Publishers, in which all verses dealing with God’s care for creation are printed in green ink.
<http://greenletterbible.com/>

2. EDUCATION (EDUCATION COMMITTEE)

Find earth care curricula:

- Eco-Justice Ministries Curriculum Review for all ages
www.eco-justice.org/CurricReview.asp
- *Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table*, Presbyterian Hunger Program Curriculum with versions for middle school students (available in English and Spanish) and adults
www.pcusa.org/justeating/
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Resources <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/>
- Earth Ministry suggested curricula
<http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/by-type/curricula>

Vacation Bible School curriculum with an earth care theme:

- New Community Project VBS curriculum
www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/operation_creation.pdf
- Spark House ReNew: the Green VBS curriculum
www.wearsparkhouse.org/renew/

Youth projects related to the earth care/sustainability:

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Youth Carbon Reduction Campaign
www.nccecojustice.org/carbonreduction/crc_youth.php
- Sell compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)
- Collect recyclables
- Sell used items (garage sale)
- Repair broken items for re-use
- Start a community garden

Schedule earth care speakers or programs:

- Presbyterians for Earth Care Speakers List
www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-speakers.html

Books on earth care for your church's library:

- Earth Ministry book list
<http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/by-type/books>

Educate members on sustainable lifestyle choices:

- Encourage church members to perform home energy audits or carbon calculations
www.energysavers.gov/your_home/
www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html
- Encourage members to learn about environmental health choices
NCC Eco-Justice environmental health materials
<http://nccecojustice.org/health/>
Environmental Working Group environmental health resources www.ewg.org/health

- PC(USA) Enough for Everyone's Just Living series, resources on lifestyle integrity
www.pcusa.org/justliving
- Encourage members to give up bottled water with Presbyterians for Earth Care's bottled water campaign
www.presbyearthcare.org/advocacy-h20.html
- Start a book club on earth care issues
- Encourage church members to invest in socially and environmentally responsible stocks Learn more from PC(USA) Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) www.pcusa.org/mrti/

Earth care themed DVDs with faith-based guides:

- "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice" and "Cherishing God's Earth" from PC(USA) Environmental Ministries
www.pcusa.org/environment-resources
- Earth Ministry suggested videos
<http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/by-type/videos>
- *Renewal*: A documentary about people of faith working on environmental stewardship with tools for faith leaders www.renewalproject.net/
- Earth Ministry Religious Study Guide and clips to accompany Ken Burns' *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*
http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/for-adults/curricular-aids/national_parks/ken_burns
- *Dirty Business*: A documentary about mountaintop removal coal mining with accompanying study guide from National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program <http://dirtybusinessthefilm.com/>
- *Deep Down*: A documentary on mountaintop removal coal mining with accompanying study guide
www.deepdownfilm.org/
- *Let There Be . . . Stuff?* Six-session curriculum connecting faith, consumerism and environmental stewardship from GreenFaith and the Story of Stuff Project
<http://greenfaith.org/resource-center/spirit/religious-environmental-education>
- *Fresh*: A documentary about sustainable food, with accompanying study guide from GreenFaith
www.freshthemovie.com/

General resources and suggestions for education:

- Make announcements about how to be good stewards of God's earth
- Reuse supplies and purchase sustainable supplies for Christian education
- Collect disposable items to use in children's craft projects (egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, bottle caps)
- Hold an educational event in addition to Earth Day Sunday worship to celebrate Earth Day, which occurs every year on April 22

- PC(USA) Environmental Ministries resources
www.pcusa.org/environment
- Presbyterians for Earth Care resources
www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-docs.html

3. FACILITIES (BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE)

Energy conservation:

- Perform a professional energy audit
Though not required, Earth Care Teams are encouraged to complete a professional energy audit of church buildings in addition to the ECC Environmental Audit. An energy audit critiques the energy efficiency of your buildings and recommends steps to make your buildings more energy efficient. A professional audit could be performed by a trained church member who volunteers his or her time, through a local energy provider, local government program, or other business or nonprofit. An energy audit will give you much of the information you need to complete the energy conservation section of the ECC Environmental Audit and help you set goals for the future.
- Contact your utility company to see if they offer free or low-cost energy audits for churches
<http://eetd.lbl.gov/EnergyCrossroads/2ueeprogram.html>
- Contact your local or state government to learn about incentive programs for energy audits
- ENERGY STAR for Congregations: Environmental Protection Agency program to assist churches with energy efficiency. Participating churches receive technical help and may use the Portfolio Manager system to track and reduce energy. www.energystar.gov/congregations and Portfolio Manager: www.energystar.gov/benchmark
- PC(USA) Electric Steward Congregation
www.pcusa.org/enough
- PC(USA) Carbon neutral challenge
www.pcusa.org/climatechange
- Interfaith Power and Light congregation carbon calculator <http://coolcongregations.com/calculator>
- Find incentives for renewable power and energy efficiency www.dsireusa.org/
www.nccecojustice.org/greenchurch/grbfunding.php
- Purchase ENERGY STAR appliances
www.energystar.gov/
- Purchase renewable energy/green power
Learn about options for buying green power
www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/what_you_can_do/buy-green-power.html
See if your utility offers green power <http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/>
- Explore LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council www.usgbc.org/leed/

- Perform two preseason (prior to using heat and air conditioning) checkups to maintain HVAC systems each year www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool.pr_maintenance

Suggestions for energy conservation:

- Determine how well insulated different parts of your church are, and add insulation where necessary and effective
- Install an insulation blanket on water heaters seven years of age or older, and insulate the first three feet of the heated water “out” pipe from your water heater
- Install an energy-efficient electric or gas water heater
- In areas of infrequent water use, consider “tankless” water heaters to reduce “standby” storage costs and waste
- Set your water heater to 110–120 degrees Fahrenheit where appropriate (some local health codes require higher temperatures)
- Install seven-day programmable thermostats
- Install thermal shades for windows to conserve heat in winter
- Install tinted windows to reduce solar heat gain in summer
- Clean or change your HVAC filter once a month
- Utilize natural light where possible
- Utilize natural cooling and ceiling fans to avoid use of air conditioning
- Check ductwork to ensure that joints are sealed
- Include responsibility for best environmental practices in your church’s facilities manager’s job description or include this in the duties of the building and grounds committee
- Establish a fund for energy improvements in the church’s budget

Water conservation:

- ENERGY STAR for Congregations
www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations_guidebook.congregations_guidebook_water
- Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense: learn about faucet aerators and other ways to conserve water www.epa.gov/watersense/

Suggestions for water conservation:

- Repair leaking pipes, fixtures and seals
- Install controls that turn faucets off automatically

Recycling/Waste:

- ENERGY STAR for Congregations
www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations_guidebook.congregations_guidebook_recycle
- Identify and use recycling locations, <http://earth911.org/>
- Purchase recycled paper and office products www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/rrr/buyrecycled.htm

Suggestions for recycling:

- Donate to charities that accept unneeded items that cannot be recycled
- Use refill kits for ink cartridges and toner cartridges
- Recycle ink cartridges and toner cartridges that cannot be refilled
- Use labeled recycling bins for aluminum, glass, plastic, metal and cardboard

Food:

- Purchase fair trade coffee and tea (that is sustainably grown) through the Presbyterian Coffee Project
www.pcusa.org/coffee
- Prepare vegetarian recipes
www.vegetariansrecipes.org
www.vegcooking.com
- Support your local farmers' markets
www.localharvest.org/
- Be a pick-up location for CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml

Cleaning supplies:

- Make your own less-toxic cleaners with vinegar, baking soda, salt, borax, etc.
www.eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm www.ecocycle.org/hazwaste/recipes.cfm

Grounds:

- Practice green landscaping (greenscaping or xeriscaping)
www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/rrr/greenscapes/index.htm
- Eliminate pesticides with organic gardening
www.organic-gardening.net/
- Use integrated pest management (IPM) methods
www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm
- Select plants for church grounds that are native to the area, in an attempt to decrease invasive species and reduce the need for watering.
www.wildflower.org/plants/

- Consider diverting gray water for irrigation rather than using fresh water
www.epa.gov/WaterSense/docs/water-efficient_landscaping_508.pdf
- Use a rain barrel or cistern to store rainwater for later use www.lid-stormwater.net/raincist_specs.htm
- Compost yard waste and food scraps
www.howtocompost.org/
- Increase wildlife habitat on church grounds by planting butterfly gardens, pollinator gardens, or creating other habitat
- Become certified as a “Community Wildlife Habitat” from the National Wildlife Federation
www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Community-Habitats.aspx
- Learn about creating pollinator habitat from the Xerces Society’s “Pollinator Conservation Handbook”
www.xerces.org/
- Use Audubon Society resources to create habitat for birds, bats and butterflies
http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/
- Plant shade trees to reduce heat gain and help with storm water management

Storm water management:

- Learn about storm water management issues and strategies from the EPA
www.epa.gov/weatherchannel/stormwater.html
- Plant a rain garden or install a bioswale
www.raingardennetwork.com/
www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/raingarden_design/index.htm
- Create a green roof on your church
www.epa.gov/hiri/mitigation/greenroofs.htm
- When repaving the church’s parking lot, consider a permeable paver
www.lid-stormwater.net/permpavers_benefits.htm

Recognitions and programs available for greening facilities:

- Audubon Signature Program for new developments from Audubon International
<http://signature.auduboninternational.org/>
- Earth Ministry Greening Congregations Program
<http://earthministry.org/programs/greening-congregations>
- ENERGY STAR Congregations Awards
www.energystar.gov/congregationawards
- ENERGY STAR Certification for Houses of Worship that demonstrate superior energy efficiency through the free Portfolio Manager Tool
www.energystar.gov/benchmark

- GreenFaith Certification Program
<http://greenfaith.org/programs/certification>
- Interfaith Power and Light: many state chapters offer Congregational Covenants
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/state/>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Carbon Reduction Campaign
<http://nccecojustice.org/carbonreduction/>
- PC(USA) Electric Stewards
www.pcusa.org/electric

General resources and suggestions for facilities:

- Web of Creation's "The Environmental Guide for Congregations, Their Buildings, and Grounds"
www.webofcreation.org
- The National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program resources
<http://nccecojustice.org/resources/>
- Explore green design and remodeling options if your church is rebuilding or renovating
- Purchase used items for renovations
- Use low volatile organic compound (VOC) content paints, varnishes and cleaning supplies
www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html
- Recycle or donate used items if your church does renovations

Read earth care success stories from other congregations:

- Church Earth Care Stories on PC(USA) Environmental Ministries Eco-Journey Blog
www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/topic/church-earth-care-stories/
- National Religious Partnership for the Environment
www.nrpe.org/profiles/index.html
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program
<http://nccecojustice.org/stories/>
- Interfaith Power and Light
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/success-stories-2/>
- ENERGY STAR for Congregations Awards
www.energystar.gov/congregationawards

4. OUTREACH (OUTREACH/MISSIONS COMMITTEE)

Advocacy:

- Advocacy resources from the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness
Legislative Action Center <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/home/>
“How to be an Effective Advocate” www.pcusa.org/resource/how-be-effective-advocate/
- Advocate for eco-justice through the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program
<http://ncccojustice.org/news/takeaction.php>
- Advocate for sustainable food policies through the Presbyterian Hunger Program
<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/hunger/take-action/>
- Web of Creation “Public Ministry and Political Advocacy Action Plan”
www.webofcreation.org/PublicMinAdvocacy/actionplan.htm
- National Religious Partnership for the Environment public policy resources
www.nrpe.org/howcani/howcani_congVII_D4_01.htm#top

Sustainable food practices:

- Become involved in direct farm marketing or other sustainable food practices at your church.
Use GreenFaith’s “Repairing Eden” for ideas
<http://greenfaith.org/resource-center/stewardship/food-and-faith>
- Organize a community garden
www.ncccojustice.org/downloads/anth/GardenResource%20-%20DoC.pdf
- Become a “Let’s Move” Congregation by working to end childhood poverty, hunger and obesity through community gardening, farmers’ markets or other sustainable food practices
www.pcusa.org/letsmove

General resources and suggestions for outreach:

- Visit urban parks and nature centers
- Organize an eco-justice tour of your community to explore blighted areas and work with justice leaders on these issues
- Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed
- Donate used materials instead of throwing them away

Habitat for Humanity Restore collects reusable and surplus building materials
www.habitat.org/restores/

- Become a group member of Presbyterians for Earth Care
<http://presbyearthcare.org/>

- Sponsor an e-trash recycling or household hazardous waste day for the community
www.epa.gov/osw/consERVE/materials/ecycling/index.htm
- Share or rent office space within the church with local nonprofit groups to reduce the building footprint
- Purchase Sweat-Free T-shirts (no sweat-shop labor used, and made from organic cotton) for a mission trip or other function
www.pcusa.org/enough
- Network with other houses of worship and organizations in your area that are active in earth care
- Share about your experience with the Earth Care Congregations program or your environmental stewardship program in general with other churches and houses of worship
- Sign up to join the Environmental Ministries Action Network to stay connected with PC(USA) Environmental Ministries, others in your presbytery working on earth care and to be eligible to apply for grant funds for environmental stewardship projects at your church
www.pcusa.org/eman
- Contact the Presbyterians for Earth Care Regional Representative for your area to learn about opportunities to be involved in earth care
<http://presbyearthcare.org/connect-meet-your-rep.html>

APPENDIX C

Overview of Earth Care Congregations

Earth Care Congregations is a structured certification program for Presbyterian churches to function in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but to commune with creation. The Earth Care Congregations guide uses easily achievable steps to reach certification and has been designed for small to large congregations and for those who have been caring for the earth for years or who are just starting. The certification process for Earth Care Congregations is based on the “Earth Care Pledge” that was updated from “A Pledge to Heal and Defend God’s Creation” that is contained in the 202nd General Assembly’s report on Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice.

Churches that choose to become Earth Care Congregations commit to the “Earth Care Pledge” and complete actions in four categories derived from the pledge: worship, education, facilities and outreach. Earth Care Congregations become involved in making their church buildings and operations, worship services, education and outreach respectful of the glory of God’s creation. This concern for preserving and sustaining what our Creator has made will extend into the homes and family lives of congregation members.

Churches become Earth Care Congregations by earning a specific number of points toward caring for God’s earth in a church’s worship, education, facilities and outreach. Once a congregation has earned 25 points in each of the four categories and the session has affirmed the Earth Care Pledge, that congregation is certified as an Earth Care Congregation. Certification must be renewed each year, which requires earning 50 points with a minimum of 5 points in each of the four categories. Various honors will be awarded and will serve as motivation for churches to become certified Earth Care Congregations. Once your church has become certified as an ECC and integrated earth care into church life, you are urged to encourage and educate members on how to live sustainable lifestyles.

Presbyterian congregations may become certified as Earth Care Congregations by following the procedure in “Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches.” Earth Care Congregations answer the challenge to live in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15).

