

Checklist for Green Congregations: Building, Grounds, and Practices
Correlated to “Environmental Guide for Congregations, Their Buildings and Grounds”
See under “manuals” at www.webofcreation.org.

Section 1: Worship (6-15)

1. ___ Living flowers or plants on the altar to be kept or planted later outside.
2. ___ Living plants or trees in the sanctuary to purify air and to be “worshippers”!
3. ___ Beeswax candles rather than (oil-based) paraffin wax candles.
4. ___ Local wine for communion
5. ___ Practice intinction or have re-usable glasses (not plastic) for communion.
6. ___ Wash communion vessels/ glasses with eco-safe dish-washing detergent.
7. ___ Provide communion bread of whole grain, organic and locally grown.
8. ___ Purchase fair trade palm fronds for Palm Sunday.
9. ___ Limit or eliminate use of paper for bulletins. Re-use where possible.
11. ___ Use post-consumer waste/ recycled paper for bulletins.
10. ___ Place attractive basket near exit from sanctuary for recycling worship materials.
12. ___ Consider the origin of the paraments made for worship.
13. ___ Use outside light where feasible.
14. ___ Use outside air and fans instead of air conditioner where feasible.
15. ___ Use live Christmas tree and then plant on church property.
16. ___ Green decorations for holidays.
17. ___ Worship outside in nature.
18. ___ Safe disposal of batteries from wireless microphones.

Section 1: Office (6-15)

1. ___ Use post-consumer/ recycled paper
2. ___ Paper-use guidelines to limit use and for efficient use/ reuse.
3. ___ Recycle paper, ink cartridges.
4. ___ Proper disposal of batteries, computers, printers, copiers.
5. ___ Limit mailings/ use e-mail.
6. ___ Unplug computers/ printers/ coffee makers/ microwaves when not in use.
7. ___ Use fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate.
8. ___ Healthy snacks.
9. ___ Purchase Energy Star appliances when replacing equipment.
10. ___ Cut down on junk mail. Notify senders.
11. ___ Bring plants into office for beauty and to purify air.
12. ___ Use refilled/ recycled ink and toner cartridges when feasible.
13. ___ Limit number of copies for use by groups.
14. ___ Use white or pastel color paper. Bright colors do not recycle.

Section 1: Education (6-15)

1. ___ Art projects: avoid craft foam products and wax (oil-based) crayons.
2. ___ Use recycled paper.
3. ___ Provide recycling bins in classrooms.
4. ___ Limit photocopies of material.

Section 2: Coffee hour, receptions, and congregational meals (16-22)

1. ___ Eliminate Styrofoam, plastic cups, and disposable paper and plastic products.
2. ___ Provide mug rack.
3. ___ Encourage people to bring their own plates, cups, and utensils to meals.

4. ___ Provide/collect ceramic plates and cups, glassware, and stainless-steel utensils.
5. ___ Purchase efficient Energy Star dish washer and other appliances.
6. ___ Use eco-safe dish-washing detergents and cleansers.
7. ___ Provide healthy/ organic/ locally grown food items for snacks and meals.
8. ___ Minimize waste from food or paper/ plastic products.
9. ___ If you cannot eliminate waste, use biodegradable plastic options now available.
10. ___ Use Fair-Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, etc.
11. ___ Share leftover food. Compost food waste.
12. ___ Consider cloth napkins/ towels with member using laundry facilities at home
13. ___ Establish guidelines for the congregation and for outside groups using facility.
14. ___ For dishwashing and laundering, establish a church team, rotate use, or take a collection each time to pay a person who especially needs the money.
15. ___ Avoid running water unnecessarily.
16. ___ Turn out lights when not needed.
17. ___ Unplug stove, microwave, and coffee maker when not in use.
18. ___ Use post-consumer paper products for napkins and towels.
19. ___ Get rid of soda machines/ Use refrigerator and honor system.

Section 3: Energy usage: Electricity (24-40)

1. ___ Get off the grid with renewable energy: photovoltaic panels or wind mills.
2. ___ Replace all incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. Exit lights.
3. ___ Retrofit fluorescent lighting and replace bulbs with the most efficient available.
4. ___ Use electric timers on some indoor and outdoor lights. Use motion sensitive lights.
5. ___ Avoid (high energy) halogen lights.
6. ___ Use photovoltaic panels for exterior lighting or church sign.

Section 3: Energy Usage: Heat (24-40)

1. ___ Get off the grid with renewable energy: geothermal, wind, solar (hot water).
2. ___ Inspect, adjust, and clean all heating and air conditioning systems.
3. ___ Remove obstacles from vents and registers.
4. ___ Moderate heat throughout building to times and areas of use.
5. ___ Use ceiling fans for cooling.
6. ___ Raise thermostat for cooling in summer. Lower it in winter.
7. ___ Fix leaking faucets.
8. ___ Insulate hot water pipes and water heater. Use tank-less water heater.
9. ___ Purchase high-efficiency, Energy Star water heater and dish washer.
10. ___ Seal air leaks in door, windows, and gaps in the building envelope.
11. ___ Insulate walls and ceilings.
12. ___ Purchase energy-efficient windows.
13. ___ Use dishwasher only when full.
14. ___ Limit meetings to certain nights/ times for energy consumption.
15. ___ Foster practices among members to turn out lights when not in use.

Section 4: Paper and wood products (42-49)

1. ___ Set guidelines for paper use for office, worship, and education.
2. ___ Use recycled, chlorine-free office paper and envelopes, including stationary.
3. ___ Provide certified paper (Forest Stewardship Council).
4. ___ Use recycled paper for products in kitchen and bathrooms.
5. ___ Reduce paper use in office, worship and education.
6. ___ Provide handy paper recycling bins in various rooms.

7. ____ Reduce junk mail. Request senders to eliminate or ask for single catalogues.
8. ____ Purchase products—furniture/flooring/altars using only certified wood.
9. ____ Plant trees on church property, at homes/ businesses of members, in community.

Section 5: Water use (50-63)

Kitchen

1. ____ Repair leaky faucets.
2. ____ Do not let faucet run while doing other tasks. Put up reminders.
3. ____ Use dishwasher only when full.
4. ____ Do not contaminate water. Use only eco-friendly dishwashing detergent.
5. ____ Limit use of garbage disposals. Compost food waste.
6. ____ Install low-flow (aerator) faucets and dish sprays.
7. ____ Insulate hot water pipes.

Bathrooms

1. ____ Replace automatic flush systems with hand-flush or sensor, use-based system.
2. ____ Use pressure stops or hand-motion sensors on faucets.
3. ____ Repair leaky faucets and toilets.
4. ____ Install low-flush toilets or composting toilets.
5. ____ Install low-flow (aerator) faucets.
6. ____ Insulate hot water pipes.

Fountain

1. ____ Eliminate constantly running drinking fountains.
2. ____ Repair leaking fountains.

Outdoor church property

1. ____ Landscape with native grass and plants that require little or no water.
2. ____ Turn a church lot into prairie.
3. ____ Put in rain gardens to absorb runoff.
4. ____ Landscape to absorb runoff. Avoid bare areas.
5. ____ Use mulching mower.
6. ____ Mulch trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens.
7. ____ Eliminate/minimize pesticides, herbicides, and toxic fertilizer.
8. ____ Limit watering lawn. Water at dusk or dawn. Do not water during droughts.
9. ____ Use a rain barrel to collect for watering.
10. ____ Use down spouts to distribute water for watering plants and absorption.
11. ____ Install a roof-top garden.
12. ____ Install a grey water system for watering lawn and plants.
13. ____ Plant trees.

Parking areas

1. ____ Install permeable surface for parking or walking area.
2. ____ Limit size of paved surfaces or eliminate with gravel and wood chips.
3. ____ Provide spaces in the parking area for trees and ground absorption.

Section 6: Green cleaning products (65-70)

1. ____ Use eco-safe cleansers for restrooms, kitchen, dining areas, and other surfaces.
2. ____ Use eco-safe detergents/soaps/cleaners for dishes, hands, windows, communion vessels.
3. ____ Use eco-safe cleaners/shampoos for carpets, tile floors, hardwoods floors.
4. ____ Use eco-safe waxing products for floors.
5. ____ Use eco-safe products for cleaning church vehicles.
6. ____ Use eco-safe detergents for washing cloth napkins, towels, and paraments.

Section 7: Food choices (71-80)

1. ____ Provide healthy food for snacks and meals.
2. ____ Purchase organic, locally grown food.
3. ____ Purchase Fair Trade products where feasible.
4. ____ Have a vegetarian potluck. Educate about the environmental impact of meat.
5. ____ Sponsor a world hunger meal with beans and rice or other solidarity food.
6. ____ Become a drop off point for Community Supported Agriculture. Encourage members to participate.
7. ____ Plant an organic, community garden to share produce with local food banks.

Section 8: Transportation (71-80)

1. ____ Install bike racks. Encourage walking to church.
2. ____ Give information about public transportation.
3. ____ Organize car pooling for church events.
4. ____ Purchase/ use a van to transport people to church.
5. ____ Reward pastors and other church workers for using high-mileage cars.
6. ____ Designate car-free Sundays or months for worship.
7. ____ Each month have someone check/correct tire pressure of cars in the parking lot.

Section 9: Indoor air quality (89-94)

1. ____ Test for asbestos, lead, formaldehyde, radon.
2. ____ Address issues of mold, mildew, bacteria, and dust mites.
3. ____ Avoid volatile organic compounds from certain cleaning products, furnishings, fabrics, carpets, and paints.
4. ____ Provide open windows for air circulation.
5. ____ Put selected plants indoors to serve as air purifiers.

Section 10: Nature inside and out (95-98)

1. ____ Plants inside: entrance, near windows, at the altar, around the baptismal font, in the office, in the narthex and other gathering spaces.
2. ____ Bring other life into the church: an aquarium, hamsters, birds.
3. ____ Ceate an indoor or outdoor herb garden.
4. ____ Create an outdoor worship space or place of prayer.
5. ____ Create a tree sanctuary or memorial garden with benches.
6. ____ Be creative about the planting of trees, shrubbery, ivies, and flowers.
7. ____ On an open lot, create a prairie or a small preserve or an orchard.
8. ____ Use memorial funds and gifts to dedicate trees and natural spaces.

Section 11: Recycling and waste (99-110)

1. ____ Find out the recycling system in your area for all items. Aim for 100% recycling.
2. ____ Assess what you buy and the packaging involved. Avoid Styrofoam. Pre-cycle!
3. ____ Consider reuse as option one.
4. ____ Recycle office paper (after use of both sides). Recycle newsprint and other paper.
5. ____ Recycle glass, plastic, steel cans, and aluminum cans.
6. ____ Consider a convenient recycling center in the church for cell phones, printer cartridges, household batteries, eye glasses, plastic bags, and gym shoes.
7. ____ Use biodegradable plastic bags for garbage.
8. ____ Compost food and yard waste.
9. ____ Have property committee or youth periodically assess church waste stream.
10. ____ Provide recycling information to members for home use (including toxic disposal).