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 “worshipers”!
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.
10. _____ Use post-consumer waste/ recycled paper for bulletins.
11. _____ 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 off 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.
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 rooftop 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.
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. ___ Create 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).