

**Checklist for Green Congregations: Building, Grounds, and Practices**  
Correlated with pages in  
“Environmental Guide for Congregations, The Building and Grounds”  
See under manuals at: [www.webofcreation.org](http://www.webofcreation.org)

**Worship:**

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 basket near exit 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.

**Office**

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.

**Education**

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.

**Coffee hour, receptions, and congregational meals**

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, glasses, 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.

### **Energy Usage: Electricity**

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.

### **Energy Usage: Heat**

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.

### **Paper and Wood Products**

1. \_\_\_ Set guidelines for paper use for office, worship, and education.
2. \_\_\_ Use recycled, chlorine-free office paper and envelopes for all uses.
3. \_\_\_ Or 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.

## **Water Use**

### *Kitchen*

1. \_\_\_\_ Repair leaky faucets.
2. \_\_\_\_ Do not let faucet run while doing other tasks.
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 sensor, use-based flush system.
2. \_\_\_\_ Use 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.

## **Green Cleaning Products**

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.

### **Food Choices**

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 a community garden to share with local food banks.

### **Transportation**

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.

### **Indoor Air Quality**

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.

### **Nature Inside and Out**

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 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.

### **Recycling and Waste**

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.