

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation

CHURCH



*Now you are the body of Christ, and each
one of you is a part of it.
1 CORINTHIANS 12:27, NIV*

10 WAYS TO START

1. **Weigh In.** Conduct an energy audit, either through your local utility or a performance contractor. Many church buildings can be made more efficient through simple changes, such as increased insulation, ceiling fans, LED bulbs in exit signs, and insulated curtains. According to the U.S. EPA, congregations that practice environmental stewardship can save 30 percent on their utility bills.
2. **Illuminate.** Change the light bulbs in the church to energy-efficient ones. Compact fluorescent lights cost about 75 percent less to operate than incandescent bulbs, and they last ten times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent bulb with a 32-watt CFL can save \$30 in energy costs over the bulb's life span.
3. **Recycle.** Put recycling bins in the church kitchen and anywhere else people are likely to dispose of recyclable materials. Reduce the size of church bulletins, encourage people to share them, and print on recycled paper. Place recycling bins at the exit doors to the sanctuary to make bulletin recycling easy.
4. **Switch Coffee.** Purchase organic, fair-trade coffee. Show your love for our neighbors across the globe by paying them a fair wage and not polluting their water supplies or tearing down their forest canopies.
5. **Scatter Seeds.** Organize a church garden. Soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and local after-school programs will welcome your fresh produce. A church garden is also a great way to engage people who normally don't go to church but are interested in gardening or community service.
6. **Share.** Start an exchange program. Set up a bulletin board for people to post items they need and items they want to give away. Start a library for tools and toys, in addition to books, magazines, and videos.
7. **Teach.** Start a Sunday school class, book study, or small group on God-centered environmentalism and discuss how group members can reduce their impact on ecosystems.
8. **Pray.** Hold prayer meetings for people affected by environmental changes and natural disasters. Pray for wisdom to know how to help and the strength to carry out God's will.
9. **Plant.** Plant trees and shrubs native to your region. Avoid using pesticides on church grounds.
10. **Rideshare.** Organize carpools to and from church—especially if you have many people coming from one area (such as college students or senior citizens).



More Tips

- Share your space. Share the church building with other organizations. Multiple church congregations can share one church building on Saturdays and Sundays. Soup kitchens and community groups can use the building during the week.
- Make Earth Day a Church day by making the Sunday before Earth Day a creation care theme.
- See what your denomination's stance is on creation care. For a list of denominational statements and organizations about creation care visit the Blessed Earth Resources for Churches web page.

- Power off. Turn off electronic devices in the church when they're not in use.
- Clean green. Make sure that the cleaning products used at the church are not harmful for the environment and contain no phosphates.
- Curb clutter. Hold a church yard sale. The fewer things we have, the less distraction in our lives and the more time we have to spend with God. Donate the money raised to church outreach, missions, and worthy charities.
- Turn off all office equipment at night. Install power strips to avoid phantom loads that keep equipment partially powered up 24-7.
- Use the power management software on computers so they switch to energy-saving mode when not in use.
- Set the office printer to double-sided default to save paper.
- Use ceramic mugs or compostable coffee cups.
- Distribute documents electronically to church staff and members whenever possible. Use e-newsletters instead of monthly mailings.
- Purchase paper products with a high post-consumer recycled content. Paper that contains 30 percent post-consumer waste costs about the same as regular paper; 100 percent will cost more, but the extra expenditure can be offset through double-sided printing or by reducing the length of weekly bulletins.
- A thermostat set 3 to 5 degrees higher in summer can feel just as comfortable when fans are used. Each degree of temperature adjustment can save about 3 percent on energy costs.
- Install programmable thermostats to make it easy to adjust the temperature when the building is not in use.
- Worship outdoors once a month during the summer to avoid cooling costs and to join your music with that of God's creation.
- In the church kitchen, use ceramic dishes for church functions. Use dishwashers only when full. You'll save energy, water, and detergent. Or better yet, ask for volunteers to wash and dry dishes by hand. Set coffeemakers on a timer to ensure their heating elements are not operating longer than necessary. Avoid using the oven in summer. Unplug unused refrigerators and appliances.
- Conserve water at church by fixing leaks, installing low-flow toilets, and landscaping with native plants. Use the money saved to help dig wells in Africa.
- Develop a long-term plan to implement energy saving recommendations. If all U.S. congregations made changes to practice environmental stewardship, they'd save an estimated \$573 million annually and prevent 6 million tons of CO2 from polluting the air. That's the equivalent of taking 1 million cars off the road.
- Schedule cleaning shifts and special events on days immediately preceding and following worship services so the building is warmed or cooled on consecutive days.
- Use washable communion cups or take communion by intinction
- Check out more great resources for your church at www.blessedearth.org/resources/for-churches/

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit inspiring faithful stewardship of all creation



*www.***BLESSEDEARTH***.org*