

## *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*

- Weigh in on your energy use. 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. Environmental Protection Agency, congregations that practice environmental stewardship can save 30 percent on their utility bills.
- 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 one million cars off the road.
- Illuminate your church. Change the lightbulbs in the church to energy-efficient ones. We are supposed to be a light to the world, not our sanctuary lamps.
- Recycle. Recycle church bulletins. Encourage people to share their bulletins, and reduce the size of the bulletin to fewer pages. Print bulletins on recycled paper.
- Switch coffee. Purchase organic, fair-trade coffee. Show your love for our neighbors across the globe by not polluting their water supplies with herbicides and pesticides, and not tearing down their forest canopies. Use ceramic mugs instead of disposable cups.
- 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.
- Share your stuff. Start an exchange program. Set up a bulletin board for people to post items they need and items they want to give away. Consider starting a library for tools and toys, in addition to books, magazines, and videos.
- Teach. Start a book study or small group on God-centered environmentalism and discuss how group members can reduce their impact on ecosystems.
- Pray. Hold prayer meetings for people affected by the environmental changes and natural disasters. Pray for wisdom to know how to help and the strength to carry out God's will.
- Plant trees. Plant trees native to your region. Avoid using pesticides on church grounds.
- Rideshare. Organize car pools to and from church. If you have many people coming from one area (such as college students or senior citizens), arrange for a van or bus to take them all to church instead of them driving separately.
- 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.



- Power off. Turn off electronic devices in the church when they're not in use. Unplug empty refrigerators and prop them open to prevent the growth of fungi.
- Reduce waste. Set up recycling bins in the church kitchen and throughout the building. Place boxes for cans, plastic, and paper, and bring them to the recycling center on a regular basis.
- 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.
- Distribute documents electronically to church staff and members whenever possible.
- 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 by reducing the length of or eliminating weekly bulletins and printing documents on both sides.
- Switch to energy efficient bulbs. Compact fluorescent lights cost about 75 percent less to operate than incandescent bulbs, and they last about ten times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent bulb with a 32-watt CFL can save about \$30 in energy costs over the bulb's life span.
- 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.
- 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.
- Each day, 6,000 children worldwide die from water-related diseases. 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.
- Schedule cleaning shifts and special events on days immediately preceding and following worship services so the building is warmed or cooled on consecutive days.
- Recycle paper bulletins.
- Use washable communion cups.



## OUR MISSION

*Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.*

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