



# Caring Faithfully for the Earth

## How becoming an Earth Care Congregation can green your church

*Presented by members of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church's Earth Care Team to the Presbytery of Yellowstone, November 4, 2022*

### WHAT IS AN EARTHCARE CONGREGATION?

A PC(USA) Earth Care Congregation commits to the “Earth Care Pledge” and accomplishes a specific number of actions toward caring for God’s earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Congregation members participate as individuals by completing similar actions in their homes. “A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches” provides congregations with worksheets, resources, and instructions for becoming an Earth Care Congregation (ECC).

### HOW CAN MY CHURCH BECOME AN EARTH CARE CONGREGATION?

- 1) Form an Earth Care Team and complete the audit which is part of the ECC application, and available at [www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations](http://www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations).
- 2) Following the self-audit, the team can recommend next steps based on available resources. With session approval, the application and pledge can be submitted.
- 3) When a church has achieved 25 qualifying points in each of the four areas (worship, education, facilities, outreach), the Presbyterian Hunger Program will award the honor of being an Earth Care Congregation.
- 4) Annual renewal requires earning a total of 50 qualifying points in each area, encouraging congregations to grow their commitment.

### WHAT CAN MY CHURCH EXPECT?

Congregations will become involved in making their church buildings, operations, worship services, education and outreach respectful of the glory of God’s creation. This concern for preserving and sustaining what our Creator has made will go beyond church operations and extend into the homes and family lives of congregation members. The ECC program helps churches plan their continued earth care ministry and can create greater support for this ministry from the whole congregation.

### GENERAL RESOURCES

PC(USA) [www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment) Presbyterians for Earth Care <http://presbyearthcare.org>

Creation Justice Ministries [www.creationjustice.org](http://www.creationjustice.org) Earth Ministry [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org)

GreenFaith [www.greenfaith.org](http://www.greenfaith.org) Interfaith Power and Light [www.interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org)

Montana Interfaith Power and Light <https://montanaipl.org>

## IDEAS FOR A CONGREGATION'S EARTH CARE MINISTRY

- Provide a recycling point for your congregation or your community.
- Plant additional shade or fruit trees at your church or participate in a tree planting activity in your community.
- Create a composting bin that uses leaves, and grass clippings from the church grounds to produce compost for the church grounds or for members to use.
- Host a Pollinator Week celebration in conjunction with the annual National Pollinator Week.
- Sponsor a Gardeners' Market in your churches parking lot each week during the summer.
- Establish an apiary in cooperation with a local beekeeper. Honey could be sold to local community members.
- Host seminars or lectures on topics related to gardening and other eco topics.
- Swap out conventional cleaning supplies for environmentally friendly ones.
- Use environmentally friendly ice melt.
- Do an energy audit of your church facilities, and commit to working through the list of recommendations
- Partner with a local farm/ranch to participate in a Community-Supported Agriculture initiative.
- Share your space with community groups, classes, nonprofits, and others so the building doesn't sit empty during the week.
- Involve the church's children and youth in deciding what to do. Young people care about the earth they are inheriting!
- Consider earth care in all decisions regarding camping ministries, and let the love for creation nurtured by outdoor ministry guide operations, worship, education, and outreach of the camp.
- Investigate the installation of solar panels on your church building. Northwestern Energy has grants available for nonprofits.
- Look at your church's investments and take steps to invest in companies which have earth care priorities.
- Join with other Montanans to advocate for the "clean and healthful environment" our state constitution promises. Learn more from Montana Interfaith Power and Light's virtual speaker series, "Interfaith Advocacy for a Livable Climate." (Oct 30, Nov 6, 13, 20, Dec 4; 6:30 pm on Zoom, <https://montanaipl.org>)
- Pray daily, with words and actions, for the care of our precious earthly home.