

BC Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Green Parish Accreditation
Program



Green Parish Accreditation BC Synod

The Green Parish Accreditation Program was developed to give recognition to churches that have demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

The first step is to form a Green Parish Accreditation Committee with a designated Chair. The Church Council Committee can then write to the Faith and Society committee and ask to become registered as a candidate. The parish then has twelve months to document completion of the following action areas: (1) Energy Conservation; (2) Reduce, Reuse and Recycle; (3) Ground Care and Maintenance; (4) Transportation; (5) Church Communication; (6) Religious Education, (7) Worship and Liturgy

Candidates will be evaluated on the basis of a Progress Report completed by the Green Parish Committee. Accredited parishes will receive a Certificate of Accreditation

Note: The Green Parish Accreditation was adapted from the Green Sanctuary Program developed by the Unitarian Universalists.

GREEN PARISH ACCREDITATION

1. Energy Conservation

(1a) Conduct an energy audit and make recommendations to Church Committee. 1

(1b) Set targets for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. 2

2. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

(2a) Each year, separately weigh trash and recycled materials for at least one representative week and calculate the amount per church member. Each year, set a target percentage in reduced trash and increased recycling by the following year, until no further improvements can reasonably be expected. 3

(2b) Adopt a procurement policy for church supplies requiring price comparison with recycled alternatives and purchase of recycled products available at a cost within five to ten percent of the cost of the equivalent non-recycled product. 4

3. Ground Care and Maintenance

(3a) Stop the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides.5

(3b) Use mulches or other organic material to reduce need for watering flower borders or shrub areas.6

(3c) Replace plants with drought tolerant perennials or shrubs.7

(3d) If not already using an electric lawn mower, commit to replacing the gas mower as soon as is practically possible.8

4. Transportation

(4a) Post a sign-up sheet for car pooling to facilitate pooling to and from church sponsored activities.8

(4b) Encourage public transportation. Post public transportation schedules on your bulletin board. Identify nearest bus stop location or other public transportation facility.

(4c) Encourage bicycle usage by having a bicycle rack or designated secure place where bicycles can be kept.

5. Church Communication

(5a) Set up an Environmental Information Centre at your church or on the website if there is one. Provide practical information on energy and environmental practices at church and home. Include a Green Corner in the church newsletter with updates on environmental activities.11

(5b) Identify, learn and sing earth-based hymns and songs and engage in other creative ways to keep environmental issues before the congregation.

5(c) Post environmental stewardship commitments on our cooperative GreeningSpirit website. (www.greeningspirit.ca)

6. Religious Education

(6a) If you have church school, teach at least one children's environmental course per year. The Footprint Files and the Greening Congregations Handbook are two sources of lessons and activities that can be used.

(6b) Simplicity Circle or other adult education group focused on environmental issues and ways to reduce our ecological footprint.

7. Worship & Liturgy

(7a) In consultation with the pastor, dedicate at least one Sunday worship service per year to the environment.

(7b) In consultation with the pastor, incorporate environmental prayers, readings and songs in regular worship.

For further formation about the various resources available to help parishes through the accreditation program, please contact Don Johnson at don.johnson@telus.net telephone 604 984 7331 or our partner church through David Dranchuk, Diocese of New Westminster. Email: ddranchuk@vancouver.anglican.ca Telephone: 604 684-6306, Ext. 221

Footnotes

1. An energy audit will set baselines and point to the lowest cost measures that can be taken to reduce energy consumption. The audit also identifies appropriate retrofits and how these can pay for themselves over the course of a few years. After studying the audit report, the Committee should make recommendations to the Church Committee. See: [Best Management practices for the Church](#) (a pdf. file)

2. Some churches on Vancouver island were able to reduce energy consumption by as much as 20% by low cost measures such as caulking of windows, insulating hot pipes, installing weather stripping/storm guard, programmable thermostats, replacing regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent and installing LED exit lights. Please see Best Management Practices in Resources Section. [Best Management practices for the Church](#) (a pdf. file)

3. Most of our garbage is sent to landfills. Landfills generate toxins harmful to the environment. Incinerations are sometimes used to burn solid waste under controlled conditions. While they reduce the stress on landfills, they create other problems including air pollution.

Reduce: Source reduction actually prevents the generation of waste in the first place, so it is the preferred method of waste management and goes a long way toward protecting the environment. Purchase durable, long-lasting goods; Look for products and packaging that are as free of toxics as possible.

Reuse: Reusing products, when possible, is even better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again.

Recycle: Materials like glass, metal, plastics, and paper are collected, separated and sent to facilities that can process them into useful products. In addition, recycling generates a host of environmental, financial, and social benefits. For a list of community recycling depots: <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/recycling-and-garbage/pdfs/2005recdepdirectory.pdf>

4. *Buying Recycled Products: When we buy recycled products, we create an economic incentive for recyclable materials to be collected, manufactured, and marketed as new products. Purchasing products made from or packaged in recycled materials saves resources for future generations. (Perhaps a link for some site with info about identifying recycled products.)*

5. *Chemicals kill beneficial organisms, insects and other animals and excess chemicals pollute groundwater and rivers. Instead, concentrate on improving your soil and drainage using compost or other organic amendments to encourage healthy plant growth. Ensure your plants are situated in the place best suited to their individual needs: e.g. shade, sun, boggy or well-drained soil. Remember, healthy plants can usually resist most diseases and even pests. For strategies to deal with pests and diseases without harming your environment, please consult: "Integrated Pest Management Manual for Home and Garden Pests in B.C.", published by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.*

6. *Mulches are organic substances e.g. bark, pine needles, dried leaves, and grass clippings, which are spread on top of the soil to decrease the evaporation of moisture from the earth. Landscape fabric, cardboard or even newspaper can also be used. As an added bonus a 2-3" layer of mulch also discourages weeds from growing and when it breaks down, it amends and nourishes your soil.*

7. *Choosing perennials over annuals reduces the need for watering as, once established, they are more deeply rooted and can usually find the moisture they need. Plants native to BC are adapted to rainy winters and dry summers, and flourish in less than desirable conditions. Have "layers" of vegetation such as small trees and shrubs. Perennials can create mini-climates of moisture and they also trap rain more efficiently.*

8. Plan to reduce the area of lawn so a push or electric mower can be used. Low growing ground covers such as Spreading Thyme can be grown instead of grass. They do not need mowing and smell delicious when walked on.

9. Motor vehicles account for 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Carpooling can reduce commuting time by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. It will decrease emissions as well as fuel costs. It increases parking availability for those who must use cars. And it is a good way to get to know other people.

If you are pooling with any consistent group going to the same location, very little organizing may be needed. One person needs to take the initiative to set up who will drive and how often, whether any money will be paid, the order of pick up, etc. Once this is in place, continual operation will not need much extra organizing.

10. The Environmental Information Centre can be a bulletin board dedicated for that purpose. Parish Environmental Stewards will be sent regular information bulletins to consider for posting.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Footprint Files

Ideas to help congregations care for Creation and reduce their footprint, was developed by the Diocesan Environmental Commission (DEC) of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, with contributions from Susan Gage, Briony Penn, Cory Waters, and Peggy Wilmot. Beautifully illustrated in binder format by Donald Gunn & Briony Penn of Penn and Gunn Associates. Copyright 2002, 900 Vancouver St., Victoria, BC V8V 3V7. Tel. (250) 386-7781. E-mail. synod@bc.anglican.ca

Each section of Footprint Files includes a background article, a reflection, liturgy, story and activities, relating to these themes:

- *Praise! Paying attention to Creation.*
- *Being Outdoors – Feeling our connection to the web of Creation*
- *The Covenant – What does the Lord require of you?*
- *St. Francis – Living a life of simplicity and community*
- *Audit/God-it! – Environmental auditing for churches*
- *Back Home – Ideas to encourage church members to audit their homes and lifestyles*
- *Day by Day – Ideas to help your parish maintain creation stewardship momentum*

- Resources – to help you learn more.

Greening Congregations Handbook: Stories, Ideas, and Resources for Cultivating Awareness and Care in Your Congregation.

This 225-page Handbook is a “tool box” for all who want to foster creation awareness and care in their congregations. It helps readers actively respond to the question, “Why should people of faith care for creation?” The Handbook also helps congregations develop an enduring, creation-honoring focus within all dimensions of congregational life.

The Handbook contains the following sections:

□ *Section One:* *A wide variety of readings that provide theological and ethical foundations for a creation-awareness/care ministry. Contributors include H. Paul Santmire, George Tinker, Lester Brown, and other local (Puget Sound region) and national creation-care voices. Each of the ten readings comes with a set of questions for reflection and a short bibliography – making each a helpful tool for either personal or group study.*

□ *Section Two:* *Inspiring insights from congregational organizers on how to begin fostering a creation-honoring vision. Knowing that “one size seldom fits all,” this section presents readers with four different “pathways” for beginning. Each pathway contains organizers’ candid stories of how they began and grew in their greening congregational efforts. The section concludes with a comprehensive strategy for weaving a creation-honoring vision into the entire life of the congregation.*

□ *Section Three:* *Extensive resources for bringing the greening strategy (from Section Two) to life. This section highlights “getting started ideas” and helpful local and national resources for six dimensions of congregational life: mission statements; worship; education; institutional life (e.g., energy conservation, recycling, green building practices); community outreach (e.g., eco-justice efforts, hands-on restoration projects); and outreach to broader religious groups (e.g., ecumenical and interfaith gatherings).*

□ *Appendices:* *Seven additional resource offerings. These appendices include an extensive listing of quotes, worksheets for becoming better acquainted with a congregation or a bioregion, an extensive list of resources by denomination, book and song bibliographies, a sample creation-honoring worship service, and more. The price for the Handbook is \$21 plus \$3 (USA) for shipping (WA residents add \$2.11 for sales tax.) It may be ordered by calling Earth Ministry (206) 632-2426 or with the [order form](#) on this Web site.*

Order Handbook [online](#) or via printed [order form](#).

[Best Management practices for the Church](#) (a pdf. file)

This report presents the collective findings of our 28 church audits completed since 2000. These audits looked at low-cost and no-cost ways of reducing

energy and water consumption, saving churches money and reducing their environmental impact. We've identified the potential for these parishes to save over \$40,000 in energy and water related operating costs, by implementing measures that pay for themselves on average in 2 years! Click here to download the adobe report and learn from the most common no-cost and low-cost things we found! Then, get to work and start saving!

Please note - in order to view documents in the Adobe pdf format you must have [Adobe Acrobat reader](#). You can download a free version of Acrobat reader by clicking below



KAIROS CANADA

Kairos is the umbrella group that unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

There are a number of resources with respect to environmental stewardship that can easily be downloaded from www.kairoscanada.org

Energy Efficiency:

- [Moving Faithfully Towards Energy Efficiency: A case study for faith communities](#) 
- [Putting Preaching Into Practice – Energy Efficiency for Religious Buildings](#)
- [Energy Workbook for Religious Buildings](#) 

Climate Change:

- [Who's Turning Up the Heat?](#)
- [Factsheet on Renewables](#)
- [Solidarity with Victims of Climate Change: Reflections on the World Council of Churches' Response to Climate Change](#)
- [Summary of the WCC Reflection](#)