

EVERYDAY GREEN IDEAS FOR THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Kaye Crawford May 5, 2008

As our world becomes more aware of energy costs and environmental concerns, our churches can do much to lead the way in reducing energy use and waste. If, as Christian communities, we believe it is important to provide better care for God's creation, our churches can become models for our communities by implementing a few simple changes in the on-going life of the church community.

By forming a Creation Care Team, a church can begin to study environmental concerns and make recommendations for conserving, preserving, and caring for creation. Among simple changes a team could recommend:

- ...Install a hot water heater timer and a heating and air programmable thermostat
- ...Purchase doormats and carpets from recycled products
- ...Create sustainable lawns by using more drought-resistant plants, more trees and mulch, and less grass to reduce energy used in mowing.
- ...Avoid the paving of walkways and parking lots unless penetrable paving products can be used to avoid runoff and erosion.
- ...Compost food remains and use to fertilize lawn plants
- ...Purchase as many products locally as possible
- ...Purchase items that use as little packaging as possible to reduce landfill waste.
- ...Install solar fans in the attic to reduce cooling costs
- ...Choose non-toxic cleaners such as white vinegar and baking soda.
- ...Create environmental education projects such as finding creative uses for used items, making rain barrels, or making reusable shopping bags from used shirts.
- ...Stop the use of styrofoam and plastic serving utensils which are damaging to the earth and the air.
- ...Use only Fair Trade Coffee to help save the rain forests and to provide fairer treatment of workers who grow the coffee.
- ...Avoid buying promotional t-shirts that are made in sweatshops.
- ...Subscribe to National Green Pages from www.Co-opAmerica.org

The church could consider creating a prayerful thought to display on a plaque, include in each bulletin, or say in church gatherings. Example: "The Earth is holy and deserving of our respect and reverence. May all of our actions this day and every day reflect our call to be good stewards of all Creation."