

2010-04-09



Green Episcopal Congregations in Minnesota

A Program of the Minnesota Episcopal Environmental
Stewardship Commission (MEESC)
www.env-steward.com

Covenant Checklist

There is no one way to implement this Covenant. It is between the congregation or group and MEESC as a way to move towards a better relationship between the congregation and God's creation. The congregation and the MEESC contact person will identify which action steps will be considered for the Covenant.

The list of things you might do is nearly infinite. You may have creative ideas of your own, or find good ideas in other publications or websites. Feel free to incorporate them. Suggest a point value based on what you see here, and propose it to the Green Congregations contact person. Although we have tried to take into account difficulty and value to the environment in assigning points for different action steps, the numbers are still somewhat arbitrary. Again, we invite your suggestions.

- The Action Steps are broken down by topic areas:
 - Education
 - Specifically for children
 - Worship / Preaching
 - Programs and Support
 - Buildings and Grounds
 - Community involvement
 - Personal involvement

The only requirement for the recognition is that a congregation or group to achieve the identified number of points for the level of recognition.

Each Action Step consists of three parts:

1. Point Value
2. Action
3. Action congregation wishes to pursue

WORSHIP

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Regularly use worship materials that point to the reality that God created and redeems creation and calls the church to the tasks of healing and defending it. Samples of worship materials are found on the MEESC Website at http://www.env-steward.com/worship.htm | |
| | Participate in an annual Celebration of Creation – either as outlined in the Diocese of Minnesota or in some other manner. | |
| | Include the goodness of God’s creation regularly in music, prayer, and worship, as well as during Earth Day and other special services. Consider environmental ethics in a sermon or a series of sermons. Hold worship service outside occasionally at a camp or park or on the church grounds instead of in the church building. | |
| | For each person baptized, plant a tree in the churchyard or community. Suggest that church members contribute trees as a living memorial to loved ones who have died. Appoint a committee to oversee the selection and planting of the trees. | |
| | Become a congregation committed to celebrating God's Sabbath by taking time for rest, community building, enjoying God’s creation together, and giving rest to nature. Remember that the Sabbath is for all of creation, not just for human beings. | |
| | Confess to God as individuals and a congregation your own involvement in exploiting and neglecting the world that God created and called good | |
| | Create a series of banners for your church sanctuary that portrays creation themes. Display them often as reminders of our call to protect and heal the creation. | |
| | Produce an environmental awareness drama as part of a worship service. | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|-------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Purchase two or more units of green electricity per month | |
| 1 | Inspect all faucets and fix all leaks. | |
| 2 | Install programmable thermostats. | |
| 2 | Eliminate fertilizer use and reduce herbicide use on church lawns to one application per year or less. | |
| | Plant indigenous strains of flowers, trees, and bushes that would be more hardy and insect resistant or convert to wild flower meadows to reduce the need for mowing | |
| 2 | Set up a rain barrel for lawn and garden watering. | |
| 2 | Install a low flow toilet (up to 8 points for installing throughout). | |
| 2 | Install moisture-sensing controls for automatic sprinklers. | |
| 5 | Seal air leaks to the outdoors. | |
| 5 | Do an electricity use audit. | |
| 5 | Replace most (90%) of incandescent lights with fluorescent or LED (light emitting diode) lights. | |
| 5 | Install ceiling fans in high ceiling areas. | |
| 5 | Replace ¼ or more of lawn with flower garden, vegetable garden, or native plants. | |
| 10 | Have a thermo-leak test of all facilities. | |
| 10 | Increase insulation in outside walls. | |
| 10 | Restore an area of natural habitat. | |
| 15 | Add insulating panes to stained glass windows. | |
| 15 | Replace less efficient furnaces or hot water heaters <i>before the old ones fail</i> , for the sake of increased efficiency. | |
| 15 | Increase insulation in roof or attic. | |
| 15 | Install a rain garden. | |
| 20 | Have a complete energy audit of all facilities. | |
| 20 | Replace windows with higher efficiency ones. Two points per window up to 20 points. | |
| 20 | Install solar panels. | |
| 20 | Install a green roof. | |
| 30 | Share your facility with another congregation with the intent that it be a long term arrangement. | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|-------------|---|------------|
| | Purchase books and videos for the church library that deal with protecting and healing God's creation. (Links to books and other resources can be found on the MEESC Website at http://www.env-steward.com/readlist.htm) | |
| | Use materials from <i>Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation</i> that focus on Millennium Development Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability). | |
| | Hold a church-wide vacation Bible School for all ages using the theme of celebrating God's world. Invite members of the community to join with your congregation in the program. | |
| | Visit a neighborhood of your area where there is a high level of contamination. Find out who lives near the contamination and what affects it has on those who live close by. Join in efforts to end the contamination | |
| | Regularly hold church school classes outside whenever possible. Discover ways that you can learn from nature. | |
| | Offer a workshop for gardeners on composting, organic gardening, and indigenous plants. Teach about using alternatives to pesticides and artificial fertilizers in the garden. | |
| | Take a field trip. Tour your town's garbage dump, water supply, sewage treatment plant, recycling center, and power plant. Learn more about what happens to the waste your community produces. Prepare questions to ask the guides who show you around. Follow up on the tours by writing a report for your church newsletter or your community newspaper to share the information you have gained. | |
| | Choose a book or article from the resources and study it together as part of an adult education class. Ask people from your congregation representing diverse points of view to form a panel that responds to the book. | |
| | Sponsor a contest design for a poster, T-shirt, button, or bumper sticker with an environmental theme. | |
| | Take high school students or college students on a four-day backpacking trip. As you spend time in the wilderness together, study the Exodus story emphasizing the Israelites' dependence on God during their journey. Pray together the Psalms that speak of the wonder and awe of God's creation. | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

LIFESTYLE

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| ½ - 5 | Use cups and dishes that can be washed and re-used. ½ point per parish event or 3 points if adopted for all coffee hours 5 points if adopted for all events including coffee hours. | |
| 1 | Reuse office paper as much as possible | |
| 1 | Recycle office paper, bottles and cans. | |
| 1 | Use eco-friendly cleaning supplies, soaps, and detergents. | |
| 1 | Use and sell fair trade or shade grown coffee. | |
| 1 | Use organic or locally grown foods for meals at church (up to 3 points for 3 or more meals). | |
| | Establish an organic vegetable garden to help supply healthy vegetables to a local food pantry or individuals in need. | |
| 1 | Compost yard waste and appropriate food waste. | |
| 1 | Hold a walk, bike or transit to church Sunday (up to 3 points for 3 Sundays). | |
| 2 | Use recycled paper products in office, kitchen and restrooms. | |
| 2 | Establish a drop off point for Community Supported Agriculture at the church. | |
| 2 | Have a meatless meal (up to 6 points for 3 or more meals). | |
| | Turn off lights, fans, and air conditioners when not in use. Turn down the heat and water heaters at night and on days that the church is not in use. | |
| | Get media coverage for an environmental issue that concerns your congregation or for environmental spirituality activities at your congregation. ____ points for a letters to the editor ____ points for paid advertisements ____ points for article mentioning congregation or group | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|-------------|---|------------|
| 2 | Hands on conservation/restoration/cleanup work (2 points per event up to 6 per level). | |
| 5 | Formally link with a local environmental group and contribute time and money to it's work. | |
| 2 | Contact elected representatives on environmental issues, more than once. | |
| 3 | Participate in the Ten Tree Challenge: http://uuministryforearth.org/act_tentrees.htm | |
| 3 | Use a socially responsible investment screen that includes environmental issues. | |
| 3 | Distribute Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs with info on how to take the MN Energy Challenge. | |
| 10 | Organize a community garden. | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

| Point Value | Action | Covenanted |
|-------------|--|------------|
| | At Christmas time, give a birthday gift to Jesus by sharing 25% of your Christmas budget with the needy. Use recycled paper for Christmas cards and gift wrap. Respect the environment in the gifts you select. Give gifts of your time or skills instead of expensive things. | |
| | Save energy in your home. Turn down the thermostat in the winter and turn it up in the summer. Weather strip windows and doors. Insulate the walls and ceiling. Install storm windows. | |
| | Use a push or electric-powered mower instead of a gas-powered mower to cut your lawn; or turn part of your yard into a meadow of indigenous wild flowers. | |
| | Purchase low-energy, high-efficiency appliances. | |
| | Leave your car at home whenever possible. Instead, choose public transportation, carpooling, walking, bicycling, or staying at home. | |
| | When purchasing a new car, look for the most fuel-efficient model you can find. | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | TOTAL POINTS | |

Point Summary:

_____ Worship
_____ Buildings and Grounds
_____ Christian Education
_____ Lifestyle
_____ Community Involvement
_____ Personal Involvement
_____ TOTAL

Upon completion of the point levels listed below, this congregation will be recognized by certificate presented at the next diocesan convention. Further, this congregation is encouraged to celebrate when it has earned points.

- Spring Green 30 points
- Bright Green 60 points
- Evergreen 90 points.

There is no time limit for achieving a recognition level. When a congregation or group signs the covenant and achieves one of the point levels, MEESC will announce that fact on the MEESC Website, through the MEESC e-mail list, to the Weekly News of the Diocese of Minnesota, and at the next Diocesan Convention.