

GREEN CONGREGATION PROGRAM BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Action Plan

1. Energy for lighting:

Retrofitting current lights with new and improved lighting saves fossil fuels and money. Replacing just one incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light saves the burning of five hundred pounds of coal over the ten year lifetime of that bulb.

Resources: Lowes has an ecobulb that gives off a warm color, wonderful for track lighting.

www.efi.org/ipl has a large assortment of energy efficient lighting fixtures/bulbs including dimable cfl bulbs and offers discounts to churches.

2. Energy for heating and cooling:

An energy audit for heating may also turn up some feasible ways in which you can conserve in the production of heat and air conditioning. Local and state energy companies are often eager to do free audits and make recommendations.

CWLP will do an energy audit for churches.

3. Renewable energy:

Get off the non-renewable energy grid altogether. Some congregations have gone to renewable energy. This is especially worth considering if you have a school or day care in your building or other programs that make extensive use of the facility. Some are turning to a geothermal energy source. Others are using solar energy for heating water or for outside lights. Due to advances in technology and the shorter times for payback, all of these options are becoming more attractive. It is worth looking into these options. Again, energy companies or state/federal organizations may offer incentives to assist with the upfront costs. Churches with day cares or educational programs sometimes qualify.

www.sustainablespringfield.org has information on recent local green building resources in the Springfield area.

4. Recycling:

Seek to develop a comprehensive recycling program for the church buildings—plastic, cans, glass, office paper, card board, among others. You may also want to set up a small recycling corner for members to recycle items at church that they might otherwise throw away, such as cell phones, printer cartridges, household batteries, plastic bags, and so on. Post instructions near the receptacles.

5. Lawn maintenance:

Avoid pesticides and herbicides; avoid chemical fertilizer; where feasible, mow with a hand mower that is battery powered or electric mower. Consider planting low maintenance grass; avoid watering, especially during a drought.

6. Green Cleaning products:

Do an inventory of products used in the maintenance of the church. Reduce or eliminate toxic products used in the maintenance of the buildings. Environmentally safe products are now available for most cleaning jobs.

Masco packaging & Gilsons are two companies in Springfield that sell hydrogen-peroxide cleaners which the schools now use as non-toxic cleaner.

7. Coffee Hour and Potlucks:

Offer Fair Trade/shade grown coffee and tea; provide snacks that are healthy; offer organic and/or locally grown food. Make efforts to reduce or eliminate the use of Styrofoam, plastic, and paper products (the ideal solution is a dishwasher). Provide a mug rack. Wash dishes and utensils with eco-friendly dishwashing solutions. Consider cloth napkins.

Find local foods online at: (a year round farmers market will be starting soon in Spfld)

<http://www.illinoisfarmdirect.org/>

www.localharvest.org

www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu

Eco friendly dishwashing powder—Seventh Generation—works well.
Steep n Brew has an affordable shade grown fair trade coffee product available online (\$6 a bag).

8. Paper products:

Do an inventory of paper purchases and seek to purchase recycled/ post-consumer waste paper for office use as well as for bathroom and kitchen use. Develop guidelines for the use of office paper by staff and volunteers—to reduce, use fully, and recycle. Make use of paperless electronic means of communication where feasible.

Wisconsin company: Wausau Bay West has a Bloomington, IL resource outlet for ecofriendly toilet paper through Central Supply 309-828-5081.

9. Green Your Worship Practices.

Here are some ideas to make your worship practices more earth-friendly:

Place plants on the altar instead of cut flowers; send them home for planting
Use recycled paper for printed materials; reduce/reuse/recycle or eliminate bulletins.

Place recycling baskets at the exits; provide reusable glasses (not plastic).
Use beeswax candles instead of oil based candles.

Policy/pledge: We agree to assess the destructive impact that our activities and the use and maintenance of our property may have upon creation—in such matters as energy use, toxic products, paper use, water use, waste, transportation, among others. We will strive to make choices that lessen our negative impact on the earth and that serve to renew and restore the earth community.

Goal: To reduce the negative ecological imprint of the building and grounds of the congregation in regard to every aspect of the physical area of the seminary, and in turn to create an earth-friendly zone of the congregational property.