

THE GREEN CHURCH INITIATIVE

OF

THE NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Of the United Methodist Church



The Green Church Initiative

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it...” (Psalm 24:1)

The scriptures are full of references to God’s creation and to humanity’s relationship with it. The Green Church Initiative is a covenant congregation program that empowers a local church to live out its faith, given the Biblical mandate to care for and be good stewards of all that God has so lovingly created.

Introduction

This document defines the steps a church can take to be recognized as a Green Church. It is intended to cover the major areas of action your congregation can take as it pursues this goal. A score of 90 or higher qualifies a church as a Green Church. The supplementary GCI document “Commitment Actions for the Green Church Initiative” contains a comprehensive list of many actions you can take. Encourage the leaders and members of your congregation to study this document and pursue some of them. We want a Green Church to understand that everything it does in ministry is connected to God’s creation; in other words, caring for creation is so fundamental to who we are as Christians that it must necessarily be infused into every aspect of the life of a congregation.

Prerequisites

1. Register your congregation with the Creation Care Ministry Team of the North Carolina Annual Conference. By doing so, the conference will have a record of your participation. A registration form is attached to this document.
2. Form a Creation Care Ministry Team. *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* provides for the formation of an “Earth Advocacy Committee” in a local church. This is crucial in order to incorporate creation care completely into the overall ministry of a local congregation.
3. Within three months of registration, formally adopt the “Green Church Initiative” Covenant (attached) by the congregation’s governing body, i.e. Church Council, Administrative Board, etc. and signed by the Council Chair and Pastor.
4. Establish a baseline score based on your church’s performance the previous year.
5. Evaluate your church’s performance after one year.
6. Provide a report of your progress to the Creation Care Ministry Team.
7. Determine if your congregation wants to pursue further actions for greater impact.

	Topic	Max. Points	Base-line	First Year
1	Energy and Water	30	0	
	Utilize Programmable Thermostats or Central Control System to minimize HVAC run time.	8		
	LED lighting - Replace incandescent and fluorescent lighting that is operated more than 500 hours a year	6		
	Have an energy survey conducted by Waste Reduction Partners (WRP), IPL, your electric utility, or other qualified entity	5		
	Collect and plot one year of utility bills including water.	5		
	Install solar panels	8		
	Upgrade ceiling, wall, or underfloor insulation	5		
	Install low flow or waterless urinals and dual flush toilets	5		
	Install highest efficiency HVAC system practical when replacement time comes.	5		
	Upgrade windows	5		
2	Education and Outreach	20	0	
	Minimum 2 Creation Care sermons/year including one on stewardship and a "Season of Creation" - 2 points per sermon	4		
	Minimum 2 Creation Care studies or adult Sunday school classes on topics such as Drawdown, Earth Friendly Practices, Forest Protection, Green Building, Advocacy - 2 points per study	4		
	Minimum 2 Sr. High classes or MYF programs per year 2 points per program or class	4		
	Minimum 2 Elementary Classes per year - 2 points per class	4		
	Articles, Creation care tips in newsletters or bulletins 1 point per article	4		
3	Food and Food Waste	10	0	
	Serve more vegetable dishes at church meals	3		
	Obtain food from local, ethically produced, regenerative sources	3		
	Ensure that leftovers from meals are distributed or taken home	2		
	Compost food waste	2		

	Topic	Max. Points	Base-line	First Year
4	Advocacy	10	0	
	Members actively participate in Creation Care organizations such as ICCT, Sierra Club, NCIPL, Union of Concerned Scientists, UMW, Church & Society, Earthkeepers, UM Creation Justice Movement, etc.	4		
	10% of congregation to write local, state, and U.S. Legislators	3		
	Participate in local, state, and U.S. advocacy events such as climate awareness.	3		
5	Recycling	10	0	
	Clearly marked bins at strategic locations	4		
	Cleaning crews put recycle material into central recycle containers for pick-up	3		
	Use recycled paper for 80% of church publications	3		
6	Landscaping	10	0	
	Use native plants in landscaping.	4		
	Eliminate 20% of turf and replace with native plants.	2		
	Plant a community garden or pollinator garden	2		
	Eliminate chemical fertilizers and herbicides	2		
7	Chemicals and Materials	10	0	
	Switch to reusable dishware and silverware. Eliminate use of single use plastic including bottled water	4		
	Eliminate Styrofoam	3		
	Use environmentally friendly cleaning products	3		
8	Extra Credit	5		
	Take Actions from the Green Church Initiative that are not included in the above activities. 1 pt/activity, max. 5 points	1		
	Total Points	100		

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Congregational Covenant

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.” Psalm 24: 1-2

The scriptures overwhelmingly affirm the responsibility of every Christian to care for God’s creation. We are called to participate not only in the redemption of individuals and all of humanity, but in the healing of creation itself; therefore, ministries that encourage care for God’s creation are significant to the mission of this congregation. God is at work bringing justice to the entirety of God’s creation and God calls us to participate in God’s mission.

In order to respond to God’s call and to live out our faith as responsible stewards of God’s creation, we hereby covenant to adopt the Green Church Initiative and will in good faith complete its requirements as soon as possible.

The Creation Care Ministry Team of our congregation will review the covenant annually to assess the previous year’s work and to consider other ways in which we can participate in God’s redemption of creation.

_____ Name of Church	_____ Address, City, State, Zip
_____ Pastor	_____ Trustees Chair
_____ Church Council or Administrative Board Chair	_____ Mission Committee Chair

Please keep a copy and return the original of this form to:

Rev. Rhonda Grant Jordan
Director of Outreach Ministry
North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist
Church 700 Waterfield Ridge Place
Garner NC 27529

Note: If you or your church desires assistance in meeting these goals or needs help getting started, etc, please e-mail Jacob Dye at jdye@nccumc.org and Jane Almon at jalmon@nccumc.org.