



# Ways to Green Your Parish

Practical Hints and tips for parish  
Environmental stewardship

Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador  
Stewardship sub-committee  
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# Hello and welcome

As Christian stewards of creation how we treat the world around us is intricately connected to our relationship with God. Creation is the world in which we live, the beauty, the familiar, the hurt and the healing of the spirit. We cannot love God the Creator without actively making decisions to celebrate and care for creation. While this booklet is by no means exhaustive, its purpose is to demonstrate that there are many things that we can do – from simple, quick to complex to costly – to explore *OUR* role as stewards of creation.

This guide is a product of the sub-committee of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. A special thanks to the Diocese of New Westminster who pioneered this concept and allowed this Diocese to adopt and adapt the information contained in the material.

A special thanks to members of the sub-committee who assisted greatly with the editing and rewriting as well as checking our web sources outlined in the resource section.

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This guide will be posted on the Diocesan web site and is available to parishes for their use.

Kevin Smith  
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2008

# Ways to Green Your Parish

There are four major areas in our community life where we can make simple changes that lead to significant “Greening” impacts...

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## Greening' our Parish through Transportation...

***As a community, you can encourage parishioners to think about their personal transportation decision-making...***

1. Where applicable, raise awareness about the public transit service in your area. For example, print route numbers of buses with stops near your church in the bulletin. This increases everyone's awareness of options.
2. Organize your own 'Commuter Challenge'; distribute trip diaries, ask parishioners to fill them in for one week, and then challenge them to find ways to make fewer trips and by less polluting means.
3. Designate a 'Car-less Sunday' and celebrate the various ways people travel to church. Earth Ministry has some resources to help with this: [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org).
4. Start a carpool for getting people to church on a Sunday. Set up a map, provide pins, and get parishioners to mark where they live. Use this tool to pair up willing carpool participants.

***As a community, you can encourage parishioners to walk and cycle ...the "greenest" modes of transportation.***

5. Install a bike rack on your premises. Installing a bike rack increases the options that people have for accessing your building all week long.
6. Keep a bike pump and repair kit at church to help with minor repairs. You just never know when it might come in handy!

## **‘Greening’ our Parish through decisions around Building and Grounds Maintenance...**

7. Install aerators on taps. This is especially useful for high-use taps in the bathrooms and kitchens. These are inexpensive and can greatly decrease cold and hot water consumption.
8. Install a low-flow head on any showers. This reduces the amount of water wasted, and increases the pressure at the same time. A win-win!
9. When purchasing new toilets, consider low-flow models to reduce the amount of water used per flush.
10. Likewise, consider replacing old urinals with newer models that save water and that don't flush unless used.
11. Install a water- or sand-filled 2 litre pop bottle (or a couple of bricks...whatever works) in each toilet tank to reduce the water used with each flush.
12. When pouring water down the sink, ask yourself if it could water a plant instead. This takes the water out of the storm-water system, where it ends up in the ocean before it has a chance to do any good work for thirsty plants or replenishing our ground-water.
13. Outside, consider maximizing permeable surfaces for capturing water or simply slowing it down - everything from container gardening on a balcony to installing a rain barrel to planting a tree!
14. Repair leaks promptly. A leak of one drip per second wastes about 10,000 litres per year!

### *Hot water conservation...*

15. Those aerators and low-flow shower heads will be useful here, too. The water isn't any colder, there's just less of it coming out altogether. There are savings to be had here in terms of the gas or electricity used to heat your hot water tank!
16. Set your hot-water tank to 55 degrees Celsius. No cooler, though, to stop the growth and spread of harmful bacteria.
17. If appropriate, install an insulating blanket around your hot water tank. This stops heat from dissipating to the air around your tank.

18. Insulating the first four feet of exposed hot-water pipe is an effective measure for keeping the hot water hot as it travels to your tap or shower.
19. When replacing your hot-water tank, consider installing a high-efficiency one. There are incentives available through various programs...check with your appropriate utility provider.
20. If you run a washing machine in your building, run it at as cold a setting as possible, and always run it at the appropriate water level.
21. Consider replacing any top-loading washing machines with front-loading machines. They are a more efficient model.

### *Energy Conservation measures...*

22. Replace conventional incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent ones. Give priority to locations where lights are on for three or more hours at a time.
23. Replace exit sign lights with LED varieties. They use much less energy. Christmas lights are now available in this variety as well.
24. Put up signs encouraging people to turn the lights out in a room if they are the last ones to leave.
25. In high traffic places, install sensors so that lights turn on automatically when you enter, and turn out after you leave.
26. Place lamps in a corner, against two walls, so that light reflects off them. A simple trick for better illumination!
27. Install timers on all outdoor lights.
28. When not in use unplug electronics such as TV's, computers, microwaves, VCRs, modems, etc. Up to 30% of the total energy consumed by these is through the internal clocks and little lights that stay on between uses.
29. Replace the electric pencil sharpener and other small electrical office appliances with manual models.
30. When making new purchases, be sure to buy Energy Star rated high-efficiency appliances.
31. If you have a clothes dryer in your building, consider hanging clothes to dry, if appropriate.

32. Complete a self-guided energy audit to get to know the energy use issues in your building. KAIROS has some resources to help you. Also, check with the Federal Government's website.
33. Hire a professional to undertake an extensive energy audit of your building.
34. Share the results of your energy audit with the rest of the parish. Arrange for tours if anyone is interested in seeing where some of the major energy culprits are in your building.
35. Act on the results of your energy audit. Make a plan for how to do this. There will be a range of options, from easy "low-hanging fruit" to expensive retrofits.

### *Heating and cooling your building...*

36. Install a programmable thermostat, or reduce the temperature manually when no-one is in the building. Programmable thermostats are not expensive, and are easy to install.
37. Lower the thermostat by 2 degrees Celsius on average through the winter...and raise it by 2 in the summer if you have air conditioning.
38. Install a high-efficiency furnace. Check with your utility provider for deals!
39. Have a workbee for seasonal weather-stripping of doors and windows. This stops draughts to keep you warmer in winter and cooler in summer.
40. A lot of heat is lost through windows. Check for any cracked or broken panes, and consider double-glazing.
41. Consider installing a reflective film on the windows to block out the sun's heat in the summer.
42. Install fans to circulate the air in summer and winter.
43. Close blinds and curtains during the day on hot days.
44. Seal and insulate forced air system ducts.
45. Plant deciduous trees around the building to provide shade on hot days.
46. Upgrade insulation - make sure all external walls, the basement, the roof and any crawl spaces are well insulated.

### ***Reduce, reuse, recycle...***

47. Reduce the amount of garbage your parish generates by buying more durable, reusable, and less-packaged goods.
48. Reuse materials whenever possible. Donating items to the Sunday School crafts is one possibility...
49. Another is to reuse paper printed on only one side. Keep this separate for note-taking or printing draft documents. Once both sides are used, it is ready for recycling...or to be shredded for crafts of packing material.
50. Set up a recycling program in your parish/community.
51. As an exercise...separate and weigh all recyclables/garbage/compostable materials for a typical week every year, and challenge the community to reduce it by a certain percentage for next year.
52. Make recycling boxes highly visible and easily accessible. This is both an educational tool and a way of making it easy to use.
53. If you use office paper that is recycled - state that on all materials - state that on all materials that are distributed. It's a good reminder to everyone that you have made that commitment.
54. Add a message to all Church handouts and documents, asking for them to be recycled.
55. Whenever possible, keep the bulletin short to use less paper.

### ***Cleaning and office supplies...***

56. Use 'environmentally friendly' cleaning products. There are several brands out there to consider...or simple home-made alternatives may be sufficient.
57. Purchase paper products (paper towel and toilet paper) that have a high recycled fibre content.
58. Do not use pesticides in or around church buildings, unless there is no alternative.
59. Recycle the air in the office by having windows that open and by having some green and/or flowering plants. They absorb carbon



dioxide and replace it with oxygen.

### *Yard Maintenance tips...*

60. Replace grass lawn around your building with other types of lawn. For example, plant a ground cover that does not need mowing or weeding or as much watering.
61. If you must mow, use a non-motored push mower for the job.
62. Rather than collecting grass clippings for disposal, leave them on the lawn instead. This helps restore nutrients to the soil and maintain moisture levels.
63. Convert lawn space into habitat and/or vegetable gardens.
64. Put up a nesting box to encourage birds into your yard habitat.
65. Hook up a rain barrel to your downspouts to water your gardens during dry-spells.
66. Plant carefully, so that there is little or no need for watering. Native plant species are best adapted to our climate.
67. Rake up leaves to use as mulch around the garden.
68. Rake up the leaves instead of using a leaf blower.
69. Plant a tree - for many of the reasons mentioned already (shade cover, cooling the building in summer, soaking up moisture to keep water out of the storm water system, and animal habitat).
70. Better yet, plant a fruit-tree! Celebrate the harvest at a community event. Share the harvest between pickers, and/or donate fruit to a local food bank, community lunch or community kitchen.

## **Greening' our Parish through decisions around food...**

### *Shopping for food...*

71. Purchase locally grown and processed foods for coffee-hour and community meals. The average meal has traveled 3000km to get to your plate...this has implications for freshness, but also the amount of green-house gases being emitted to move food around. Purchasing locally-grown foods reduces that inefficiency.
72. Let people know where the food being served comes from. Use it as an opportunity to educate people as to the benefits of locally-grown food.
73. Where locally-grown isn't possible, (coffee, tea and sugar), purchase fair-trade alternatives. These are widely available today.
74. To reduce costs, consider purchasing staple items (coffee, tea and sugar) in bulk.
75. Consider offering vegetarian options, or all vegetarian community meals. Meat is a highly-intensive food to produce - beef, for example, requires 6.25 litres of fossil fuels to produce 1 kilogram of food, emitting 15.5kg of carbon dioxide (a green-house gas) in the process. For more information, visit: [www.vegsource.com/](http://www.vegsource.com/)
76. Shop with cloth bags; reduce the number of plastic bags entering your building.

### *Producing food...*

77. Plant a fruit tree! It's an idea that bears repeating!
78. Convert some of the church lawn into community garden plots for local residents. Use a plot for growing food for community meals.
79. Plant a herb garden (in the ground or in containers). Ladybugs (which love parsley) and dragonflies prey on aphids and mosquitoes! Herbs can be harvested and used for medicinal purposes, for adding to bouquets, for flavouring food, and more.

### *Preparing food...*

80. Replace electric can openers, coffee grinders and other small electrical appliances with manual models.
81. Use the least energy-consuming method for cooking food - for example, steaming vegetables (which also retains more nutrients).

### *Food waste...*

82. Encourage people to take smaller portions and come back for more at community events...rather than take a large helping and not be able to finish!
83. Compost food waste whenever possible. Again, the provincial government's Multi Materials Stewardship Board has many resources available to help you set up a composting program which includes yard waste.

### *Serving food...*

84. Use re-usable napkins, cups and plates whenever possible.
85. Avoid using single-serving sugars, milk or creamers - they generate plastic and paper waste. Use a bowl and creamer instead.
86. Use reusable table cloths instead of single-use paper ones. Cotton/poly sheets (twin bed size) are an alternative to expensive linen cloths.
87. Keep a jug of drinking water in the fridge, instead of running the tap water until the water gets cool. This helps save water.
88. In the Grace offered before eating, recognize the many hands that have contributed to making the meal - include the farmer's name if you know it.

### *Cleaning up after sharing food...*

89. Hand-wash dishes whenever possible.
90. If using a dish-washer, run it only when it is full.
91. If using a dishwasher, leave the dishes to air-dry rather than using the hot air drying setting.
92. Once you get a sense of leftovers...combine contents and

unplug empty fridges or freezers during low-use times.

93. When it comes time, replace the fridge and freezer with a new high-efficiency one of the right size for your current needs.
94. Separate compost from the rest of the waste. If there isn't a composter at church, solicit a volunteer to take the compost home with them.
95. When food is left over from a Parish event, donate it to a local charity or organization that would benefit from it.

## **Greening' our Parish through our Ministry and Education**

### ***Celebrating***

96. Hold one liturgy a year outside.
97. Once a year, have a service focused on environmental stewardship.
98. In consultation with your priest, incorporate environmental prayers and readings into your regular worship.
99. Identify, learn and sing earth-based hymns and songs and engage in other creative ways to keep environmental issues before the congregation.
100. Create a group to study and hold in prayer the transformation required in our ministry and education to help care for God's earth.
101. Encourage and provide resources for the Youth Group to participate or create their own Earth Day celebrations on or around April 22.
102. Include environmental lessons in Sunday School classes and relate these to Biblical stories. EarthMinistry has some resources in this regard: [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org)
103. Rather than plaques - encourage people to donate trees, plants or benches in memory of their loved ones so that others can enjoy the outdoor part of your church.
104. Reconnect with the environment your church is located in - take a walk, learn about the geological features, the flora and fauna native to your area.

### *Governance...*

105. Start a green parish sub-committee as part of your stewardship Activities.
106. Assign a member of that committee to be your parish environmental steward on parish council.
107. Make an attempt to coordinate various meeting times (committees, choirs, guilds, etc...) so that fewer trips are being made to the church in a given week. Of course, in a small community where everyone is involved in more than one thing, this gets to be a bit problematic. Then again, maybe it would encourage more people to become involved!
108. Incorporate environmental stewardship into your annual stewardship campaign. Commit to doing some of the things mentioned in this booklet and then let everyone know when you've accomplished something specific. Celebrate!

### *Environmental education...*

109. Include a Green Corner in your church newsletter with practical information on energy and environmental practices at church and at home.
110. Get to know each other...there's a wealth of known and hidden knowledge in every parish. Often, it just takes someone posing the right question for someone to come forward to volunteer their knowledge and their time.
111. Find a number of ways to tell everyone what you've done. Environmental stewardship is a **good news** story - spread the word!
112. Contact the Multi Materials Stewardship Board for ideas and Promotional materials about reducing, reusing and recycling. See web address below.

**There are surely even more ways to green your parish. Be excited about the possibilities, and then share your stories!**

# Useful resources for parish environmental stewards...

## *Resources by Anglicans, for Anglicans...*

- ❑ Diocesan Environment Commission, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia (2002) Footprint Files. Contact [synod@acts.bc.ca](mailto:synod@acts.bc.ca) for more information.
- ❑ Ecology and Theology Working Group, Anglican Diocese of Ottawa (2002) *Renewing our Relationship with the Earth. A Guide: What you and your church can do.* <http://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/docs/renewing.pdf>
- ❑ Global Anglican Declaration on the Stewardship of Creation: [www.anglican.ca/about/COGS/statement-2002-11-02.htm](http://www.anglican.ca/about/COGS/statement-2002-11-02.htm)  
Lambeth on the Environment
- ❑ [www.anglicancommunion.org/ethics\\_technology/lambeth\\_1998.cfm](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ethics_technology/lambeth_1998.cfm)  
Sharing God's Planet: A Christian Vision for a Sustainable Future, presented by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams  
<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/g1558.pdf>

## *Ecumenical resources*

### Print resources

- ❑ Marcovna Barnett, Tanya, Ed. (2002) [Greening Congregations Handbook: Stories, Ideas, and Resources for Cultivating Creation Awareness and Care in Your Congregation.](http://www.earthministry.org) [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org)

### Web resources

- ❑ <http://www.mmsb.nf.ca/> (Multi Materials Stewardship Board: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)
- ❑ Canadian Forum on Religion and Ecology ([www.cfore.ca](http://www.cfore.ca))
- ❑ Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life ([www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org))
- ❑ Earth Ministry ([www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org))
- ❑ Evangelical Environmental Network ([www.creationcare.org](http://www.creationcare.org))
- ❑ Faith and the Common Good ([www.faith-commongood.net](http://www.faith-commongood.net))
- ❑ GreeningSpirit.ca \*coming soon\*
- ❑ Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology (<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/main.html>)
- ❑ Interfaith Climate Change Network ([www.protectingcreation.org](http://www.protectingcreation.org))
- ❑ KAIROS (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/>)
- ❑ National Religious Partnership for the Earth ([www.nrpe.org](http://www.nrpe.org))
- ❑ Religious Witness for the Earth (<http://www.gis.net/~rwe/>)
- ❑ Regeneration Project (<http://www.theregenerationproject.org/>)
- ❑ Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle project ([www.uuaspp.org](http://www.uuaspp.org))

### Calculators for measuring your impact on the earth...

- Redefining Progress Ecological Footprint tool: [www.rprogress.org/](http://www.rprogress.org/)
- Mountain Equipment Co-op Footprint tool: [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca)
- One-Tonne Challenge: [www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/)