

# Earth Care Congregations

## A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches



### Summary

Earth Care Congregations are congregations that have committed to the “Earth Care Pledge” and accomplished a specific number of actions toward caring for God’s earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Congregations earning 25 points in each of the four categories will be certified as Earth Care Congregations and receive various honors.

Congregation members will also be invited to participate as individuals by completing similar actions in their homes. A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches provides congregations with worksheets, resources, and instructions for becoming an Earth Care Congregation. The four categories of actions in the “Earth Care Pledge” were used as a guide for developing “Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches.”

### Background

In 1990 the 202<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*,<sup>1</sup> which calls our denomination to engage in the tasks of restoring creation. The “Call to Restore the Creation” is part of the resolution and stated that the General Assembly:

- Recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;
- Understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;

---

<sup>1</sup> *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. A report adopted by the 202<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (1990) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1990, The Office of the General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Louisville, Kentucky

- Recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies;
- Approaches the task with covenant seriousness –“If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God...then you shall live” (Deut. 30:16) – and with practical awareness that cherishing God’s creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.

In consideration of this “Call to Restore the Creation” congregations are invited to participate in a certification program for Earth Care Congregations based on the “Earth Care Pledge” (Appendix D). Certification requires churches to commit to the “Earth Care Pledge” and complete actions in the four categories identified in the pledge: worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

### **Why Should We Care for the Earth?**

Because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), churches are challenged to live in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation. Earth Care Congregations are answering the call to the human vocation of “tilling and keeping” the garden from Genesis 2:15.

### **How Can My Church Become an Earth Care Congregation?**

If your church is interested in becoming an Earth Care Congregation (ECC) the first step is to form an Earth Care Team and complete an ECC Environmental Audit (Appendix C). The Earth Care Team can be as small as two people and does not need to be a formal committee. Completing the audit will give the Earth Care Team information about what earth care activities and facilities improvements the church has undertaken and what remains to be done. The environmental audit is divided into four categories where earth care progress can be evaluated. Many of the activities can be completed with little to no funding.

With the environmental audit completed the Earth Care Team can recommend next steps based on available resources, cost-effectiveness, and acceptance by the congregation. The Earth Care Team should then present the information to the session and ask for approval of the Earth Care Pledge (Appendix D) and to submit an Earth Care Congregation Application (Appendix E).

Once you have completed an Earth Care Congregation application, the application and audit will be reviewed by PC(USA) Environmental Ministries and if 25 points have been earned for actions in each of the four categories, your church will be awarded the honor of being an Earth Care Congregation. Once Environmental Ministries receives an application, churches will receive a response within two weeks. The honor includes an Earth Care Congregation certificate, use of the ECC logo, listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website, notification of your presbytery, a press release for local publicity, and an earth care book for your church library.

If the audit shows that your church has not earned a total of 100 points, 25 in each category, your church should continue to take actions towards earth care and apply to be an Earth Care Congregation once the point total has been reached. Appendix B lists examples and resources for the four categories of earth care activities that your church can choose to implement. Responsibility for making progress in each of the four categories can be assigned to existing

church committees such as worship, education, facilities, and outreach. PC(USA) Environmental Ministries can help churches with ideas on how to implement activities and facilitate changes to work toward the Earth Care Congregation certification.

The honor of being an Earth Care Congregation should be renewed each year by the anniversary of your church's application. Renewal requires earning a total of 50 points in the four categories with a minimum of 5 points in each category. (For recertification, points must be earned within the previous year, i.e., if the church's high-efficiency furnace was installed 4 years ago, it cannot be counted for recertification. However, if a church continues to use reusable dishes, this can be counted again for recertification.) Churches meeting the renewal requirements will be awarded an updated certificate, permission to use the ECC logo, and continued listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website.

### **What Can My Church Expect?**

Congregations applying to be Earth Care Congregations will become involved in making their church buildings, operations, worship services, education, and outreach respectful of the glory of God's creation. This concern for preserving and sustaining what our Creator has made will go beyond church operations and extend into the homes and family lives of congregation members.

## **Appendices**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Steps Toward Becoming an Earth Care Congregation
<b>Appendix B</b>	Examples and Resources for Four Categories of Earth Care Activities
<b>Appendix C</b>	ECC Environmental Audit
<b>Appendix D</b>	Earth Care Pledge
<b>Appendix E</b>	Earth Care Congregation Application
<b>Appendix F</b>	Overview of Earth Care Congregations

This guide was originally developed by Jane Laping, Stewardship of Creation Enabler from Houston, as "Restoring Creation Congregations." PC(USA) Environmental Ministries worked with Jane Laping and Alan Jenkins, founder of Earth Covenant Ministry in Atlanta, to update this first guide to become "Earth Care Congregations" to be used on a nationwide scale for Presbyterian congregations interested in earth care.

**Please contact PC(USA) Environmental Ministries for assistance in becoming an Earth Care Congregation** or with any questions that may arise throughout the process at 888-728-7228 x5624 or [environment@pcusa.org](mailto:environment@pcusa.org). For more information on the Earth Care Congregations program please visit [www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment).

## **Appendix A**

### **Steps Toward Becoming an Earth Care Congregation**

1. Form an Earth Care Team of at least two people who are interested in your church becoming an Earth Care Congregation (ECC) and who will complete the ECC Environmental Audit. If your church needs assistance with this, please consult Environmental Ministries.
2. Complete an ECC Environmental Audit to see if your church earns 25 points in each category.
3. Use the audit to recommend next steps to either earn 25 points in each category for initial certification or, if your church has earned the required points, to complete ECC recertification next year (which requires at least 50 points, with at least 5 in each category).
4. Present the results of the audit and your recommendations to your congregation's session. Ask the session to make and approve a motion to approve the Earth Care Pledge (Appendix D, which needs the signature of the clerk of the session) and to apply to become a certified Earth Care Congregation.
5. If your church has not earned the required points for initial certification, work on implementing further earth care activities suggested in Appendix B until these points are earned, and then apply to be an Earth Care Congregation.
6. If your church has earned the required points, apply to be an Earth Care Congregation and list your next steps on the Earth Care Congregation Application (under steps for recertification in Appendix E).
7. If your church's application meets the criteria of the required number of points in each of the four Earth Care categories, Environmental Ministries will certify your church as an Earth Care Congregation.
8. After certification as an Earth Care Congregation, your church will be honored with an Earth Care Congregation certificate, use of the ECC logo, listing on the PC(USA) Environmental Ministries website, notification of your presbytery, a press release for local publicity, and an earth care book for your church library.
9. Earth Care Congregations must be recertified each year. Renewal requires earning a total of 50 points within the previous year in the four categories with a minimum of 5 points in each category.
10. Once your church has become certified as an ECC and integrated earth care into its church life, you are urged to encourage and educate members on how to live sustainable lifestyles.

## Appendix B

### Examples and Resources for Four Categories of Earth Care Activities

Listed below are resources and examples of activities for each of the four categories in Earth Care Congregations. Further activity ideas are found in the ECC Environmental Audit.

Helpful general resources:

- PC(USA) Environmental Ministries, [www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment)
- Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC), an Eco-Justice Network, a member-based, grassroots non-profit group that cares for God's creation, [www.presbyearthcare.org](http://www.presbyearthcare.org)
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, <http://nccecojustice.org>
- Interfaith Power and Light, <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/>
- Earth Ministry, <http://earthministry.org/>

#### 1. Worship (Worship Committee)

*Earth Day worship services and other special days of celebration (blessing of the animals, garden blessing):*

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Earth Day resources <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/#earthdaysundayresources>
- Web of Creation Blessing of the Animals service <http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/blessinganimals.htm>
- Web of Creation Garden Blessing <http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/trinity%20WorshipPlan.pdf>
- Season of Creation, a four-week worship and education program in September <http://www.seasonofcreation.com/>

*Hymns about the environment:*

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program hymns <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/hymns.php>
- Presbyterians for Earth Care Presbyterian hymnal suggestions <http://www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-docs.html#Scriptures>

*Scripture readings about the environment:*

- Presbyterians for Earth Care suggested Scriptures <http://www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-docs.html#Scriptures>

*Sermons on earth care:*

- Eco-Justice Ministries: "Three Layers of Environmental Preaching" <http://www.eco-justice.org/3layers.asp>
- Interfaith Power and Light sermon and worship resources <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/clergy-corner/>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program sermon <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/awardsermon.php>

*Children's sermons:*

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program children's sermon on climate change <http://www.nccecojustice.org/climate/climatechildrensermon.php>
- Evangelical Environmental Network children's sermon <http://creationcare.org/resources/sunday/worship.php#12>

- Banners that portray creation themes:  
<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/space/banners.htm>

*General worship resources:*

- Eco-Palms (sustainably harvested palms by workers who are paid a just wage): PC(USA) Enough for Everyone  
<http://www.pcusa.org/enough>
- Carbon Fast for Lent (or create your own earth care–focused Lent discipline)  
<http://www.tearfund.org/Campaigning/Carbon+Fast.htm>  
Visit PC(USA) Environmental Ministries for other ideas at [www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment)
- Earth Ministry worship aids  
<http://earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids>
- Web of Creation worship resources  
<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/resources.htm>
- *Green Bible*, the New Revised Standard Version from HarperCollins Publishers, in which all verses dealing with God’s care for creation are printed in green ink.  
<http://greenletterbible.com/>

## 2. Education (Education Committee)

*Find earth care curricula:*

- Eco-Justice Ministries Curriculum Review for all ages  
<http://www.eco-justice.org/CurricReview.asp>
- *Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table*, Presbyterian Hunger Program Curriculum with versions for adults and middle school students  
<http://www.pcusa.org/hunger>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Resources  
<http://ncecejustice.org/resources/>
- Earth Ministry suggested curricula  
<http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/by-type/curricula>

*Vacation Bible School curriculum with an earth care theme:*

- New Community Project VBS Curriculum  
[http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/operation\\_creation.pdf](http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/operation_creation.pdf)

*Youth projects related to the earth care/sustainability:*

- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Youth Carbon Reduction Campaign  
[http://www.ncecejustice.org/carbonreduction/crc\\_youth.php](http://www.ncecejustice.org/carbonreduction/crc_youth.php)
- Sell compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)
- Collect recyclables
- Sell used items (garage sale)
- Repair broken items for re-use
- Start a community garden

*Schedule earth care speakers or programs:*

- Presbyterians for Earth Care Speakers List  
<http://www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-speakers.html>

*Books on earth care for your church’s library:*

- PC(USA) Environmental Ministries suggested reading  
<http://www.pcusa.org/environment>

- Earth Ministry book list  
<http://earthministry.org/resources/suggested-publications/by-type/books>
- Educate members on sustainable lifestyle choices:*
- Encourage church members to perform home energy audits or carbon calculations  
[http://www.energysavers.gov/your\\_home/](http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/)  
[http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind\\_calculator.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html)
  - Encourage members to learn about environmental health choices  
NCC Eco-Justice environmental health materials  
<http://ncececojustice.org/health/>  
Environmental Working Group environmental health resources  
<http://www.ewg.org/health>
  - PC(USA) Enough for Everyone's Just Living series, resources on lifestyle integrity  
<http://www.pcusa.org/enough>
  - Encourage members to give up bottled water with Presbyterians for Earth Care's bottled water campaign  
<http://www.presbyearthcare.org/advocacy-h20.html>
  - Start a book club on earth care issues
  - Encourage church members to invest in socially and environmentally responsible stocks  
Learn more from PC(USA) Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)  
<http://www.pcusa.org/mrti/>
- General resources and suggestions for education:*
- Make announcements about how to be good stewards of God's earth
  - Reuse supplies and purchase sustainable supplies for Christian education
  - Collect disposable items to use in children's craft projects (egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, bottle caps)
  - PC(USA) Environmental Ministries resources  
<http://www.pcusa.org/environment>
  - Presbyterians for Earth Care resources  
<http://www.presbyearthcare.org/resources-docs.html>

### **3. Facilities (Buildings and Grounds Committee)**

*Energy conservation:*

- Perform a professional energy audit  
Though not required, Earth Care Teams are encouraged to complete a professional energy audit of church buildings in addition to the ECC Environmental Audit. An energy audit critiques the energy efficiency of your buildings and recommends steps to make your buildings more energy-efficient. A professional audit could be performed by a trained church member who volunteers his or her time, through a local energy provider, local government program, or other business or non-profit. An energy audit will give you much of the information you need to complete the energy conservation section of the ECC Environmental Audit and help you set goals for the future.
- Contact your utility company to see if they offer free or low-cost energy audits for churches  
<http://eetd.lbl.gov/EnergyCrossroads/2ueeprogram.html>

- Contact your local or state government to learn about incentive programs for energy audits
- ENERGY STAR for Congregations  
[https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small\\_business.sb\\_congregations](https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations)
- PC(USA) Electric Steward Congregation  
<http://www.pcusa.org/enough>
- PC(USA) Carbon-neutral challenge  
<http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/carbon-neutrality.pdf>
- Interfaith Power and Light congregation carbon calculator  
<http://coolcongregations.com/calculator>
- Interfaith Power and Light resources  
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/resources/#enef>
- Find incentives for renewable power and energy efficiency  
[www.dsireusa.org/](http://www.dsireusa.org/)  
<http://www.ncecojustice.org/greenchurch/grbfunding.php>
- Purchase ENERGY STAR appliances  
<http://www.energystar.gov/>
- Purchase renewable energy/green power  
Learn about options for buying green power  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/what\\_you\\_can\\_do/buy-green-power.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/what_you_can_do/buy-green-power.html)  
See if your utility offers green power  
<http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/>
- Explore LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council  
[www.usgbc.org/leed/](http://www.usgbc.org/leed/)

*Suggestions for energy conservation:*

- Determine how well insulated different parts of your church are, and add insulation where necessary and effective
- Install an insulation blanket on water heaters seven years of age or older, and insulate the first three feet of the heated water "out" pipe from your water heater
- Install an energy-efficient electric or gas water heater
- In areas of infrequent water use, consider "tankless" water heaters to reduce "standby" storage costs and waste
- Set your water heater to 110–120 degrees Fahrenheit where appropriate (some local health codes require higher temperatures)
- Install seven-day programmable thermostats
- Install thermal shades for windows to conserve heat in winter
- Install tinted windows to reduce solar heat gain in summer
- Clean or change your HVAC filter once a month
- Utilize natural light where possible
- Utilize natural cooling and ceiling fans to avoid use of air conditioning
- Check ductwork to ensure that joints are sealed
- Include responsibility for best environmental practices in your church's facilities manager's job description or include this in the duties of the building and grounds committee.

- Establish a fund for energy improvements in the church's budget.

*Water conservation:*

- ENERGY STAR for Congregations  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations\\_guidebook.congregations\\_guidebook\\_water](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations_guidebook.congregations_guidebook_water)
- Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense: learn about faucet aerators and other ways to conserve water  
<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

*Suggestions for water conservation:*

- Repair leaking pipes, fixtures and seals
- Install controls that turn faucets off automatically

*Recycling/Waste:*

- ENERGY STAR for Congregations  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations\\_guidebook.congregations\\_guidebook\\_recycle](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=congregations_guidebook.congregations_guidebook_recycle)
- Identify and use recycling locations  
<http://earth911.org/>
- Purchase recycled paper and office products  
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserv/rrr/buyrecycled.htm>

*Suggestions for recycling:*

- Donate to charities that accept unneeded items that cannot be recycled
- Use refill kits for ink cartridges and toner cartridges
- Recycle ink cartridges and toner cartridges that cannot be refilled
- Use labeled recycling bins for aluminum, glass, plastic, metal and cardboard

*Food:*

- Purchase fair trade coffee and tea (that is sustainably grown) through the Presbyterian Coffee Project  
<http://www.pcusa.org/enough>
- Prepare vegetarian recipes  
[www.vegetariansrecipes.org](http://www.vegetariansrecipes.org)  
[www.vegcooking.com](http://www.vegcooking.com)
- Support your local farmers' markets  
<http://www.localharvest.org/>
- Be a pick-up location for CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml>

*Cleaning Supplies:*

- Make your own less-toxic cleaners with vinegar, baking soda, salt, borax, etc.  
[www.eartheasy.com/live\\_nontoxic\\_solutions.htm](http://www.eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm)  
[www.ecocycle.org/hazwaste/recipes.cfm](http://www.ecocycle.org/hazwaste/recipes.cfm)

*Grounds:*

- Practice green landscaping (greenscaping or xeriscaping)  
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserv/rrr/greenscapes/index.htm>
- Eliminate pesticides with organic gardening  
<http://www.organic-gardening.net/>
- Use integrated pest management (IPM) methods  
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm>

- Consider diverting gray water for irrigation rather than using fresh water  
[http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/docs/water-efficient\\_landscaping\\_508.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/docs/water-efficient_landscaping_508.pdf)
- Use a rain barrel or cistern to store rainwater for later use  
[http://www.lid-stormwater.net/raincist\\_specs.htm](http://www.lid-stormwater.net/raincist_specs.htm)
- Compost yard waste and food scraps  
<http://www.howtocompost.org/>
- Increase wildlife habitat on church grounds by planting butterfly gardens, pollinator gardens, or creating other habitat
- Become certified as a “Community Wildlife Habitat” from the National Wildlife Federation  
<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Community-Habitats.aspx>
- Learn about creating pollinator habitat from the Xerces Society’s “Pollinator Conservation Handbook”  
<http://www.xerces.org/>
- Use Audubon Society resources to create habitat for birds, bats, and butterflies  
<http://www.audubonathome.org/neighborhood/>
- Plant shade trees to reduce heat gain and help with storm water management

*Storm Water Management:*

- Learn about storm water management issues and strategies from the EPA  
<http://www.epa.gov/weatherchannel/stormwater.html>
- Plant a rain garden or install a bioswale  
<http://www.raingardennetwork.com/>  
[http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/raingarden\\_design/index.htm](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/raingarden_design/index.htm)
- Create a green roof on your church  
<http://www.epa.gov/hiri/mitigation/greenroofs.htm>
- When repaving the church’s parking lot, consider a permeable paver  
[http://www.lid-stormwater.net/permpavers\\_benefits.htm](http://www.lid-stormwater.net/permpavers_benefits.htm)

*General resources for facilities:*

- Web of Creation’s “The Environmental Guide for Congregations, Their Buildings, and Grounds”  
<http://www.webofcreation.org>
- The National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program resources  
<http://nccecojustice.org/resources/>

*Read earth care success stories from other congregations:*

- National Religious Partnership for the Environment  
<http://www.nrpe.org/profiles/index.html>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program  
<http://nccecojustice.org/stories/>
- Interfaith Power and Light  
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/success-stories-2/>
- ENERGY STAR for Congregations  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb\\_success.congregations\\_winners](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.congregations_winners)

*Recognitions and programs available for greening facilities:*

- Audubon Signature Program for new developments from Audubon International  
<http://signature.auduboninternational.org/>

- Earth Ministry Greening Congregations Program  
<http://earthministry.org/programs/greening-congregations>
- ENERGY STAR Congregations Awards  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb\\_success.congregations\\_winners](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.congregations_winners)
- GreenFaith Certification Program  
<http://greenfaith.org/programs/certification>
- Interfaith Power and Light: many state chapters offer Congregational Covenants  
<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/state/>
- National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program Carbon Reduction Campaign  
<http://ncecojustice.org/carbonreduction/>
- PC(USA) Electric Stewards  
[www.pcusa.org/enough](http://www.pcusa.org/enough)

#### 4. Outreach (Outreach/Missions Committee)

- Organize a community garden  
<http://www.ncecojustice.org/downloads/anth/GardenResource%20-%20DoC.pdf>
- Public policy resources  
[http://www.nrpe.org/howcani/howcani\\_congVII\\_D4\\_01.htm#top](http://www.nrpe.org/howcani/howcani_congVII_D4_01.htm#top)
- Advocacy resources  
PC(USA) Washington Office  
<http://www.pcusa.org/washington/howtoadvocate.pdf>  
<http://www.webofcreation.org/PublicMinAdvocacy/actionplan.htm>
- Purchase Sweat-Free T-shirts (no sweat-shop labor used, and made from organic cotton) for a mission trip or other function  
[www.pcusa.org/enough](http://www.pcusa.org/enough)

#### *Suggestions for outreach:*

- Visit urban parks and nature centers
- Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed
- Organize an eco-justice tour of your community to explore blighted areas and work with justice leaders on these issues

## **Appendix C**

### **ECC Environmental Audit**

Earth Care Teams should complete the following audit of their church's practices before asking their session to affirm the Earth Care Pledge. There are four categories to be assessed: worship, education, facilities, and outreach. For initial certification, identify the points associated with the correct answer for your congregation and write the points for each answer in the column on the right marked "Your Points." Twenty-five points are needed in each section the first time you apply for certification as an Earth Care Congregation. A total of fifty points, with at least five in each area, are needed for recertification for each year after initial certification.

For initial certification, facilities upgrades can be made at any time previously, but worship, education and outreach activities must have occurred in the past year. For recertification, all upgrades and activities in all categories must have occurred in the past year.

Note: The following activities are by no means the only way for your congregation to act as stewards of God's earth. While all actions are honored, the following audit was created as a way to standardize a scoring system for the program. Please use the "other" section, listed after outreach, to write in other activities that your congregation has completed over the past year that you would like to share with Environmental Ministries. You are encouraged to send in further information and pictures from events with your ECC application.

If you have any questions about the audit, please do not hesitate to contact Environmental Ministries at [environment@pcusa.org](mailto:environment@pcusa.org) or 888-728-7228 x5624.

<b>Worship (25 total points needed for initial certification)</b>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Number of Sundays devoted to earth care in the past year	5	10	15	20	25	
Number of worship services conducted outdoors in the past year	5	10	15	20	25	
Number of sermons on earth care in the past year	5	10	15	20	25	
Number of earth care awareness dramas or dances in worship in the past year	5	10	15	20	25	
Number of trees/shrubs planted for new members, baptisms, confirmations, etc.	2	4	6	8	10	
	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	
Number of Sundays that worship services had an intentional earth care component (prayers, hymns, readings) in the past year	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of Sundays that an earth care themed banner or other art was displayed in the past year	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of Sundays that locally grown, pesticide free flowers were used in the sanctuary	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of Sundays that a Minute for Mission on earth care issues was presented	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of Sundays with a paperless service	2	4	6	8	10	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Did your church purchase Eco-Palms (sustainably harvested palms) for Palm Sunday?	5	0				
Did your church promote and participate in earth care-focused Lent disciplines?	10	0				
Does your church use glass communion cups that are washed?	10	0				
Does your church have an outdoor meditation labyrinth or garden?	10	0				
Did your church sponsor an event for members to write a song, sermon, or prayer with an earth care theme?	10	0				
<b>Subtotal for Worship</b>						

<b>Education (25 total points needed for initial certification)</b>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Number of children's/youth Sunday school courses (series of classes) with an earth care focus	12	14	16	18	20	
Number of adult courses (series of classes) with an earth care focus	12	14	16	18	20	
Number of days Vacation Bible School had an earth care theme	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of guest earth care speakers or programs	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of classes held outside	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of youth projects related to earth care conducted	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of articles/announcements about earth care in the bulletin/newsletter	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of months a bulletin board on earth care was displayed	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of pages on the church's website devoted to earth care	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of books, games, videos, or other materials with an earth care focus in the church library	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of educational events focused on sustainable lifestyle choices for members	12	14	16	18	20	
Number of times email messages about earth care sent to church members	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of earth care fairs or educational events held	12	14	16	18	20	
Number of art displays or exhibits focused on earth care held at church	4	8	12	16	20	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Is an earth care component included in confirmation classes?	5	0				
<b>Subtotal for Education</b>						

<b>Facilities (25 total points needed for initial certification)</b>						
<b>Energy conservation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				<b>Your Points</b>
Has your church earned recognition for greening efforts from a local, regional or national group?	5	0				
Does your church have any LEED-certified buildings?	10	0				
Has your session approved a plan to become carbon neutral? (suggested in the General Assembly 2006 Carbon Neutral Challenge)	5	0				
Does your church purchase renewable energy, i.e., wind, solar?	5	0				
Does your church have solar panels or a wind turbine to generate power?	10	0				
Has your church performed an energy audit and implemented at least two of the suggested items?	5	0				
<b>Heating/Cooling</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Are your church's furnaces high-efficiency models?	0	2	3	4	5	
Are your church's air conditioners high-efficiency models?	0	2	3	4	5	
Are your church's HVAC systems programmable to turn on and off at set times?	0	2	3	4	5	
Are your church's HVAC systems zoned so that not all rooms need to be heated/cooled at the same time?	0	2	3	4	5	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Does your church use geothermal energy to heat and cool its facilities?	5	0				
	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Number of outside doors that seal tightly	0	2	3	4	5	
Number of windows that seal tightly	0	2	3	4	5	
Number of windows that are double-pane	0	3	5	7	10	
Number of windows that are covered with plastic or storm windows for energy efficiency	0	2	3	4	5	

<b>Lighting</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Number of fixtures with efficient light bulbs: compact fluorescent light bulbs, LEDs, or efficient T8 tube lights	0	2	5	7	10	
Number of exit signs with light emitting diode (LED) bulbs	0	2	5	7	10	
Number of restrooms with motion sensors on lights	0	2	3	4	5	
Number of classrooms with motion sensors on lights	0	2	3	4	5	
Number of rooms with signs to turn off lights when you leave the room (if no motion sensors)	0	1	2	3	4	
<b>Heating water</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Are your church's water heaters tankless or on-demand?	0	2	3	4	5	
<b>Water conservation</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Number of dual-flush or low-flow toilets installed	0	2	5	7	10	
Number of waterless urinals installed	0	2	5	7	10	
Number of faucets with aerators	0	2	3	4	5	
<b>Recycling/Waste</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Amount of discarded paper that is recycled	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of recycled paper purchased	0	1	3	4	5	
Number of copies made that were double-sided	0	1	3	4	5	
Approximate amount of aluminum, glass, and plastic recycled	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of food scraps and lawn/garden waste that is composted	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of purchased paper products (napkins, paper towels, toilet tissue) made with recycled paper	0	1	3	4	5	
Number of tablecloths used that are reusable	0	1	3	4	5	

<b>Recycling/Waste</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Number of plates used that are reusable	0	1	3	4	5	
Number of cups used that are reusable	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of flatware used that is reusable	0	1	3	4	5	
Number of events where water is served from pitchers rather than disposable water bottles	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of electronic equipment recycled	0	1	3	4	5	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Does your church serve as a recycling drop-off for church members and/or the community?	5	0				
Are church members given the option of receiving the church newsletter via email?	3	0				
<b>Food</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Amount of coffee served that is fair trade (for example, from the Presbyterian Coffee Project)	0	1	3	4	5	
Number of meals with vegetarian choices	0	1	3	4	5	
Amount of organically or locally grown food purchased	0	1	3	4	5	
<b>Cleaning Products</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Number of cleaners used that are less-toxic, i.e., vinegar, baking soda, salt, borax	0	1	3	4	5	
<b>Grounds</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Amount of chemical fertilizers used on grounds in past year	5	4	3	1	0	
Amount of chemical pesticides, including herbicides, used indoors and out in the past year	5	4	3	1	0	
Amount of plants on the church grounds that are native, requiring little watering	0	1	3	4	5	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Has your church taken steps to create wildlife habitat on the church grounds?	5	0				
Does your church have a bike rack on its property?	2	0				

<b>Storm Water Management</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				<b>Your Points</b>
Does your facility have a rain barrel or cistern to catch water from gutters for later watering needs?	5	0				
Does your church have a rain garden, bioswale, or other feature to help manage storm water runoff?	5	0				
	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>About half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	
Amount of the parking lot that has permeable pavement	0	2	5	7	10	
<b>Subtotal for Facilities</b>						

<b>Outreach (25 total points needed for initial certification)</b>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Number of camping trips, nature walks or outings in which your church has participated	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of days alternative transportation (walk/bike/bus/carpool) to church was promoted	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of times your session voted to take a stand on local, regional, or national earth care legislation	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of times members were encouraged to write or email elected officials about earth care legislation	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of visits to elected officials' offices to advocate for earth care legislation in which a group from your church has participated	4	8	12	16	20	
Number of times petitions were available for members to sign for earth care campaigns or strategies	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of times the earth care issues from the Presbyterian Church Washington Office email list-serve, web site, or action alerts were used in an educational setting in the congregation	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of times used materials were donated for use in social justice projects such as Habitat for Humanity	2	4	6	8	10	
Number of times a service project related to earth care conducted	4	8	12	16	20	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>				
Is your church a group member of Presbyterians for Earth Care?	5	0				
Did your church sponsor a scholarship for a member to attend the Presbyterians for Earth Care biennial conference?	5	0				
Does your church host direct farm marketing (including farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture, buying clubs, or after services farm stand)?	5	0				
Did your church sponsor a mission trip focused on an earth care issue?	10	0				
Did your church sponsor an e-trash recycling or household hazardous waste day for the community?	5	0				
Does your church sponsor a community garden?	10	0				
Does your church share office space with non-profit groups?	5	0				
Has your church purchased Sweat-Free T-shirts (made with organic cotton)?	5	0				
Does your church collaborate with other ecumenical or secular groups focused on earth care?	5	0				
<sup>19</sup> <b>Subtotal for Outreach</b>						

<b>Subtotal for Worship</b>	
<b>Subtotal for Education</b>	
<b>Subtotal for Facilities</b>	
<b>Subtotal for Outreach</b>	
<b>Total</b>	

Congratulations on finishing your Earth Care Congregations Environmental Audit, and on all the good work that your congregation has done to protect God’s creation.

**Other** earth care activities your church has completed or other information to share:


If your audit shows that your congregation has earned at least 25 points in each category please continue to step 3 listed in Appendix A and recommend next steps for earth care for your congregation.

If the audit shows that your congregation has some steps left to earn 25 points in each category, please continue to take actions toward earth care and apply to be an Earth Care Congregation once the point total has been reached. Appendix B lists examples and resources for the four categories of earth care activities that the church can choose to implement. Environmental Ministries can help you with ideas on how to implement activities and facilitate changes to work toward the Earth Care Congregation certification.

Please contact Environmental Ministries with any questions at  
888-728-7228 x5624  
Mail: Environmental Ministries, PC(USA), 100 Witherspoon St., Room 3221, Louisville, KY 40202  
Email: [environment@pcusa.org](mailto:environment@pcusa.org)  
Fax: 502-569-8116

## Appendix D Earth Care Pledge

*The Social Justice and Peacemaking Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in consultation with congregations and presbyteries across the denomination, developed a five-part resolution as a model for mobilizing congregations to respond to the General Assembly's "CALL TO RESTORE THE CREATION." The resolution was simplified to a four-part pledge in 2010. Churches applying to be an Earth Care Congregation must have the Earth Care Pledge affirmed by their session and signed by the clerk.*

### Earth Care Pledge

Peace and justice is God's plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God's. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

1. Our **worship** and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth.
2. In **education**, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice and community.
3. Our **facilities** will be managed, maintained and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations.
4. Our **outreach** will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

Affirmed by:

Name of Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk of Session    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the signed Earth Care Pledge to Environmental Ministries as part of the completed ECC Application (Appendices C,D, and E).

Mail: Environmental Ministries, PC(USA), 100 Witherspoon St., Room 3221, Louisville, KY 40202  
Email: [environment@pcusa.org](mailto:environment@pcusa.org)  
Fax: 502-569-8116

**Appendix E**  
**Earth Care Congregation Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of members: \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Earth Care Team members: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Earth Care Team was formed: \_\_\_\_\_

We invite you to include photos, bulletins, or newsletter articles in order to share ideas and best practices among congregations.

**For your application to be complete please attach the following:**

Completed ECC Environmental Audit (Appendix C)

Affirmed Earth Care Pledge, signed by the clerk of the session (Appendix D)

Briefly describe your plans for recertification in each of the four areas for next year (50 points are needed to be re-certified, at least 5 in each category):

Worship: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Facilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Outreach: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send completed application (Appendices C, D, and E) to:  
Mail: Environmental Ministries, PC(USA), 100 Witherspoon St., Room 3221, Louisville, KY 40202  
Email: [environment@pcusa.org](mailto:environment@pcusa.org)  
Fax: 502-569-8116  
For questions call: 888-728-7228 x5624

## Appendix F Overview of Earth Care Congregations

Earth Care Congregations is a structured certification program for Presbyterian churches to function in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but to commune with creation. The Earth Care Congregations guide uses easily achievable steps to reach certification and has been designed for small to large congregations and for those who have been caring for the earth for years or who are just starting. The certification process for Earth Care Congregations is based on the “Earth Care Pledge” that was updated from “A Pledge to Heal and Defend God’s Creation” that is contained in the 202<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly’s report on *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*.

Churches that choose to become Earth Care Congregations commit to the “Earth Care Pledge” and complete actions in four categories derived from the pledge: worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Earth Care Congregations become involved in making their church buildings and operations, worship services, education and outreach respectful of the glory of God’s creation. This concern for preserving and sustaining what our Creator has made will extend into the homes and family lives of congregation members.

Churches become Earth Care Congregations by earning a specific number of points toward caring for God’s earth in a church’s worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Once a congregation has earned 25 points in each of the four categories and the session has affirmed the Earth Care Pledge, that congregation is certified as an Earth Care Congregation. Certification must be renewed each year, which requires earning 50 points with a minimum of 5 points in each of the four categories. Various honors will be awarded and will serve as motivation for churches to become certified Earth Care Congregations. Once your church has become certified as an ECC and integrated earth care into church life, you are urged to encourage and educate members on how to live sustainable lifestyles.

Presbyterian congregations may become certified as Earth Care Congregations by following the procedure in “Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches.” Earth Care Congregations answer the challenge to live in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15).

