

Creation Care in Congregational Life

IMAGINE THAT... Church offices, committees and other groups consider environmental impacts when making decisions. Structures are in place to enable practices such as recycling, carpooling, buying recycled materials.

Don't forget to invite: Committee chairpersons, small group coordinator, pastors, office and janitorial staff or volunteers.

Step 1: Invite each chairperson or group represented to answer the following questions:

- What kinds of resources does your committee require in order to do its work?
- What kinds of wastes does your committee produce? How much waste is produced?
- In what ways does your committee use fossil fuel energy?
- Did you make any decisions in the past year that had a creation care angle to them?
- Are there opportunities to reduce, recycle, avoid toxins, model best practices?

Step 2: Rate your congregational life on its attention to creation care from zero to five. A zero indicates that no one present has ever asked any of the questions in step 1 before. A five indicates that these questions have been under consideration for some time and the congregation's life includes multiple practices that conserve or reuse resources.

Step 3: Here are some ways congregations might apply creation care to their congregational life. Are there practices you would like to work on?

- Communal meals include recycling, composting or dishwashing.
- Consumption of fossil fuels is considered when planning youth service trips or church gatherings.
- The church purchases recycled paper. Electronic copies are used where possible to save paper.
- Recycling bins are visible and well-marked.
- The church organizes the recycling of objects individuals might not know how to dispose of.
- The church installs a bike rack and encourages biking or carpooling.
- The maintenance crew uses non-toxic cleaning products.
- Policies such as recycling are written down and transmitted to new committee members as roles shift.
- Gifts to youth, new attenders or others are chosen carefully, recyclable or consumable.