

FAQ

Why should my church care about the earth?

- The PCUSA calls congregations to care for God's creation and to aspire to live carbon neutral lives.
- Our faith urges us to strive for eco-justice: defending and healing creation while working to assure justice for all of creation and the beings who live in it.
- Scripture makes it clear we are to care for the earth on behalf of God: *The Lord God put the human in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.* Genesis 2:15

Why is this important for the Presbytery?

- The Call to Restore the Creation from the 1990 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; a new focus for mission 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;
- Recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern, 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 whole church to achieve its other goals.

What is an Earth Care Congregation?

- The PCUSA Earth Care Congregation certification program honors churches that make the commitment to be stewards of God's earth and encourages others to follow their example. The program annually certifies Presbyterian churches that commit to caring for the creation and continue to honor their pledge.
- To become Earth Care Congregation, churches, through their Sessions, affirm the *Earth Care Pledge* to integrate environmental practices and thinking into all facets of their church life and complete projects and activities in the fields of worship, education, facilities, and outreach.
 - The first step is to form an Earth Care Team, which can be as small as two people and does not need to be a formal committee. Next you would complete the audit that 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.

Examples of Earth Care Actions

- Worship
 - Sermons and hymns on earth care themes
 - Outdoor service

- Education
 - Classes on earth care
 - Art exhibits on the creation
- Facilities
 - Recycling
 - High-efficiency light bulbs
- Outreach
 - Mission trip on earth care issues
 - Community garden

PCUSA EARTH CARE CERTIFIED CONGREGATIONS IN NCP

- Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church
- Fairfax Presbyterian Church
- Fairlington Presbyterian Church
- Knox Presbyterian Church
- Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church
- New Hope Presbyterian Church
- Providence Presbyterian church
- Saint Mark Presbyterian Church
- Takoma Park Presbyterian Church
- Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church
- First United Presbyterian Church of Dale City, VA
- Lewinsville Presbyterian Church
- Rockville United Church
- Trinity Presbyterian Church
- United Christian Parish

What is the Earth Care Network?

- The network gathers representatives from NCP Earth Care Congregations for support, to exchange ideas, to recruit and help new members, and to work together on larger issues affecting the Presbytery. Recent successes in that area include updating the Presbytery's environmental policy statement to be in accord with the Earth Care Congregations program and changes to Presbytery meeting meals and hospitality to be more sustainable. We have created and maintain a webpage on the Presbytery's site regarding earth care activities and the [Power to Change Grant Program](#) which we administer through the Mission Interpretation Committee. NCP Earth Care Network members are eager to help any congregation interested in becoming certified or applying for a grant.

What is the Power to Change grant program?

- The grant provides matching funds up to \$2,000 per NCP congregation for earth stewardship projects. Funds may be used to acquire an "energy audit" of the church building including lighting, weatherization, heating and cooling systems. Other energy conservation measures may include improving building insulation or

installing energy saving equipment such as sensors, programmable thermostats, LED lights, or alternative energy systems, educational Earth Care programs, advocacy of earth care issues in the public arena, projects that preserve and sustain native species and biodiversity, promote sustainable watershed protection.

What goes into the adjudication process for disseminating the Power to Change Grants?

- The NCP Earth Care Network will prioritize proposals based on the following:
 - Readiness—Projects that are ready to be launched will be given a higher priority than those whose launch date is further into the future.
 - Prior Power to Change Grants Recipients—Applicants who are first time applicants to this grant will be given priority over those who have been granted a Power to Change grant(s) in the past.
 - Impact—Applicants whose projects are more impactful in terms like the amount of CO2 they eliminate, or numbers of people educated, or natural species helped, or policy decisions effectively advocated will receive priority consideration.

How has the grant from the Presbytery helped congregations with earth care?
[Program Summary](#) - This is a report of all the monies expended in the grant program each year and what they funded. It shows how each congregation spent the funds it received.