

Checklist for Churches and Parsonages on Creation Care Actions

The 2022 New England Annual Conference passed a resolution encouraging all churches to report in and celebrate what they are doing to care for creation and fight climate change at their Church Conferences ([RS-22-222](#)).

Remember, your choices to be more energy efficient can help you save money, be more comfortable, lower emissions, reduce pollution and help reduce need to extend the power grid. And you help save the Earth from climate disaster. Climate change is the single biggest moral challenge humans have ever faced. Thank you for doing your part.

First Steps

1. Turn off lights in unused rooms.
2. Change all your lighting to LED lights, which are lower emitters of heat, last 10x longer, and are cheaper than all other lighting.
3. Replace holiday lights with LEDs.
4. Put outdoor lighting on motion sensors and make sure it aims downward. This saves money by only being used when needed. Lighting that aims down preserves night sky, is eco-friendly for all night creatures, and is safer as it reduces glare.
5. Install surge protectors and turn them off when not using office or worship equipment. Many of these items draw power constantly unless power strip is turned off or they are unplugged.
6. Use church dishes/silverware or have church members bring their own utensils and re-usable plates, cups, and water bottles rather than throwing out disposables. This reduces destruction of trees for paper products. Even with recycling, most plastic ends up in landfills or oceans. Plastic, made from fossil fuels, is deadly to wildlife and not good for humans either.
7. Check out <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/issue-with-tissue-2021-scorecard.pdf>. This score card ranks paper products like paper towels, tissue, and toilet paper for those best for the environment. Many major brands are cutting down forest to make things we throw away. The score card by National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) ranks a number of paper product brands and describes why those earning an “A” are better. Remember healthy forests fight climate change by absorbing Co2.
8. Clean and replace air filters as recommended. This can cut energy use by 5%.
9. Install programable thermostats to automatically adjust temperature. This only works if someone is assigned to adjust the program according to your actual

schedule, so designate a person to monitor these weekly and change the clock twice a year for daylight saving time. Name of person (s) handling this each week _____.

10. Calk and weatherstrip around doors and windows.
11. Add shades to windows to keep heat in or out depending on the season.
12. Set your hot water thermostat to 120 degrees. It's safer and cheaper.
13. If your water heater is 10 years old or older, wrap it in an insulating jacket.
14. Plant native trees, bushes, and flowers. This helps preserve eco-systems that are under stress, reduces invasives, is pleasing to look at, and reduces lawn area and need to mow.
15. Reach out to a local environmental group. Is there a project you can help them with? Could they use your building for meetings or an event?
16. Use electric lawn equipment. It is quieter and MUCH less polluting. Use non-motorized equipment like rakes, shovels, etc.
17. Use the resources on the Conference's Creation Care webpage (www.neumc.org/creationcare) We have created a [QR code](#) that takes people to the page. You can send the code out in your newsletters and post in your church or make it available at church events. It's a great way to tell people about all the rebates that are available to everyone and the many services that are discounted or free based on income.
18. Get an energy audit. In many states, utilities provide these for free. Pursue rebates on what is recommended in the audit. See www.neumc.org/creationcare for your state's programs. Vt, NH, and MA have Interfaith Power and Light groups that help with costs.

More advanced options:

1. After getting an energy audit, air seal the church and/or parsonage first. This saves energy and costs: Why heat/cool the outside?
2. Add insulation recommended by the energy audit.
3. Add heat pumps for heating/cooling. Heat pumps use electricity that is generally less dependent on fossil fuel to generate. Lowers emissions.
4. Add a hot water heat pump. These dehumidify your basement as well as get you off fossil fuel.
5. Look into solar— by adding panels to roof, yard or parking lot canopy or partnering with a solar company to purchase solar credits from elsewhere.
6. Gas stoves are very polluting of indoor air. Gas appliances leak methane constantly from pipes and valves and give off pollution when in use. Consider an electric or induction stove when upgrading.