Vermont Interfaith Power and Light

Resources for Religious Communities

Interfaith Environmental Awareness and Action in Vermont
Dear Reader:

We hope that you have found our results of our research this fall as part of our environmental studies class at Middlebury College insightful. Now it that we have come to the end of the time allotted to our project, we leave it up to you to decide what step to take next. In the pages that follow, you will find a compilation of several materials that we intended to be both informative and inspirational. These resources, produced by us this fall, are available both here and in electronic form on the website. They should be made readily available to congregations that request them. We plan on sending select ones out to the congregations that expressed an interest in receiving them during the interview process this fall. Feel free to develop new resources as you proceed with this work in 2005 and beyond. Education should be one of the primary focuses of VIPL as it develops, since congregations often cited a lack of information as being one of the main obstacles to their engagement in environmental stewardship activities. By providing congregations with resources, you can make great strides towards the goal of reducing the impact of Vermont religious institutions on the Earth.

Good luck!

Sincerely,

Lauren Ziegler & Judith Schutter
Middlebury College, 2004

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Interfaith Quotes for Preservation of and Care for the Earth

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it.” Psalm 24:1

"Greater indeed than the creation of humankind is the creation of the heavens and the earth. Yet, most of humanity does not understand." Qur'an 40:57

“The relationship between the human community and the natural world cannot be healed by a single, particular faith, but only by a profound understanding that all faiths should revere a single Earth.” Tom Hayden, in The Lost Gospel of the Earth

"The Holy Blessed One took the first human, and passing before all the trees of the Garden of Eden, said, 'See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you.'” Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

“It would go a great way to caution and direct people in the use of the world, that they were better studied and known in the Creation of it. For how could Man find the Confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part thereof?” William Penn in Some Fruits of Solitude

“The Lord placed the Human Being in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it.” Genesis 2:15

“Ask the animals, and they shall teach you; the birds of the air, and they shall instruct you. Speak to the earth and it shall teach you.” Job 12:7-8

“We eat not simply to satisfy our own appetites, we eat to sustain ourselves in the task we have been given. Each of us is unique coming into the world with a gift no other can offer: ourselves. We eat to nourish the vehicle of giving, we eat to sustain our task of world repair, our quest for harmony, peace and justice.” Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro from Earth Prayers

"Tzedek, tzedek tirdof... Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and dwell in the land that the Eternal your God is giving you.” Deuteronomy 16:20

“There is nothing more tragic in all the world than to know right and not to do it.” Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness . . . are contrary to the order of creation. . . . The ecological crisis is a moral issue.” Pope John Paul II

“There is enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.” Mahatma Gandhi

“Faith without action is dead.” James 2:17
“...[T]he Earth is ultimately a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all... It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of existence. Today, the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness – both individual and collective – are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence.” Pope John Paul II “The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility”, 1990

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

“Before you finish eating breakfast this morning, you’ve depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured... We aren’t going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of reality.” Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“When you realize you have enough, then you are truly rich.” Tao Teh Ching

“It is He Who produce gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar in kind and different in variety; Eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day of the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess; for Allah love not the wasters.” The Quran 6:141

“The earth is mother of all that is natural, of all that is human.” St. Hildegard of Bingen

“I believe that to meet the challenge of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility... It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources and, through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment.” The 14th Dalai Lama

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!” Phil. 2:4-8

“We, all of us, are being called to do something unprecedented. We are being called to think about ‘everything that is,’ for we now know that everything is interrelated and that the well-being of each is connected to the well-being of the whole. This suggests a ‘planetary agenda’ for all the religions, all the various fields of expertise.” Sallie McFague, theologian

“Is not the sky a father, and the earth a mother, and are not all living things with feet and roots their children?” Black Elk

"Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The LORD almighty has declared in my hearing: ‘Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine, a homer of seed only an ephah of grain.’” (Isaiah 5:8-10)
“The present threat to mankind’s survival can be removed only by a revolutionary change in individual human beings. This change of heart must be inspired by religion in order to generate the will power needed for putting arduous new ideals into practice.” **Jonathan Porritt, of Friends of the Earth**

“Water flows from high in the mountains. Water funs deep in the Earth. Miraculously, water comes to us, and sustains all life.” **Thich Nhat Hanh**

“Only when we see that we are part of the totality of the planet, not a superior part with special privileges, can we seek effectively to bring about an earth restored to wholeness.” **Elizabeth Watson**

“The faith community has led every major movement in the US. No institution is more suited to preach clean air, water, and land than the institution that professes a love of God and God’s creation.” **Rev. Sally Bingham, National Director, IP&L**
Interconnection Faith and the Earth Literature List

Christianity-focused resources

❖ General Discussions/Overviews


❖ Biblical Basis for Creation Care


How to Care for Creation


Judaism-focused resources


Available from Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (www.coejl.org)


Buddhism-focused resources


**Interfaith resources**


- General insights about the environment and human nature


Did you know that *The American Baptist Church* passed a resolution on global warming in 1991 that calls for American Baptist institutions and individuals to deepen the understanding of creation and the gifts that God has bestowed us while joining in local, national, and global efforts “safeguard the world’s atmospheric integrity” by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions?

This resolution, which expands upon the 1988 Policy Statement on Ecology that notes our responsibility to God for the care of creation (Genesis 1:1, 11-12) and of God's displeasure with humanity's misuse of creation, calls for Baptists acknowledge the role of their faith within creation and to act as part of a “unified creation” by decreasing their contribution to global warming. As a local measure, the resolution cites building and renovating homes and churches to be energy efficient, buying ecologically-conscious products that consume less energy in production, and creating educational programs with energy conservation components. At a responsive, macro-level, the resolution summons churches to support legislation that increases fuel efficiency in vehicles and encourage an international treaty that specifically targets reduction of greenhouse gases. The full text can be found at: [http://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/globwarm.htm](http://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/globwarm.htm).

Many Baptist churches in Vermont are currently trying to fulfill this mission. Several interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with *Vermont Interfaith Power and Light*, provide suggestions for ways to do this.

The *Springfield-Calvary Baptist Church* in Springfield follows the ideas elucidated by the resolution on global warming by decreasing the church’s energy use. In addition to recycling and using compact fluorescent lightbulbs, the church encourages the congregants to carpool to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

The *Bennington First Baptist Church* in Bennington cited the Statements of Concern from the American Baptist Church and echoed sentiments of the resolution when speaking of their sermons which reinforce ideas of stewardship. The church also encourages recycling and is upgrading its electrical system to make it more efficient. They also noted this upgrading had the additional benefit of being financially beneficial.

The *United Church of Lincoln* in Lincoln exemplifies using ecologically-conscious products by using Seventh Generation bathroom supplies, which are sustainably-produced. The issues of ecological preservation are global warming are discussed in sermons as well as coffee-time discussions. The Church has sponsored Green-Up cleanups, pulling of the invasive species along the river, recycling, and various land-based activities including an interfaith tree planting ceremony which facilitated connections to other faiths under the understanding that they all sought to preserve the Earth because, in each faith, it had an aspect of sacredness and is crucial to life.
Did you realize that The Episcopal Church actually passed a resolution at the 70th General Convention affirming the responsibility of its members for the earth in this and future generations?

It calls on Episcopalians to reflect on their personal and corporate habits in the use of God’s creation, share with one another ideas for new responses, and act as individuals, congregations, diocese, and provinces of the Episcopal Church in ways that protect and heal all interdependent parts of creation. The full text can be found at: http://www.webofcreation.org/education/policystatement/episcopal

Many Episcopal churches in Vermont actively try to carry this mission out. Several, interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide good suggestions for ways to do this.

The Jerusalem Gathering Church in Bristol mentioned that they receive regular emails from the Peace and Justice branch of the Episcopal Church alerting them to actions in Congress that pertain to the environment, which they then discuss.

At the St. James Episcopal Church in Essex Junction, they have special services devoted to care of creation four times a year. They discuss issues around natural resource use, pollution, and forestry. On St. Francis Day, they even have a blessing for the animals and discuss the importance of caring for all animals.

The All Saints Episcopal Church in South Burlington explained how the Diocese of New England strongly encourages care of creation by passing resolutions and providing curriculum materials to individual churches who would like them. In their church, they use compact fluorescent light bulbs, recycle, reuse their coffee cups, and even try to promote carpooling. They also discuss climate change specifically.

The New England Diocese is doing a lot too.

In February of 2003, the Episcopal Bishops of Vermont published a letter about how to serve Christ in all creation. They include a paragraph specifically on climate change:

One of the most daunting challenges we face is global climate change. Many scientists agree that if we burn fossil fuels at expected rates, global warming caused by human activities could raise worldwide average temperatures between 3 and 11 degrees Fahrenheit in this century. In New England, climate change may cause flooding in coastal areas, reduce the quality of our region’s fresh water, imperil agriculture, and increase the outbreaks of infectious disease. Within this century, New England may lose its maple, birch, and beech trees. We face the loss of our spectacular fall colors and the end of fall-foliage tourism, as well as the destruction of our region’s maple sugar industry. (1)

The full text of the letter, along with links to other resources, can be found online at: http://www.dioceseofvermont.org/Environment/BpsEnvLtr.html
Resources available for Jewish congregations in Vermont

Do you know that Jewish traditions and teachings from the Torah have been a strong driving force for them to lead by example and address environmental issues?

One example of many would be the law of Lo Tash’chit, the biblical prohibition against the wanton destruction of nature. It comes from a passage in Deuteronomy that reads:

"When you besiege a city for a long time, fighting against it to conquer it, you shall not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for you may eat of them, and you may not cut them down, for is the tree of the field a person that it should be besieged by you? Only trees which you know not to be fruit bearing trees, may you destroy and cut down; and you may build bulwarks against the city that wars against you, until it is subdued."

Synagogues in Vermont, regardless of their affiliation, have gotten involved. Several interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide suggestions for ways to do this.

The Israel Congregation in Manchester observes the holiday of Tash’chit that traditionally marks the birthday of the trees planted throughout the year. For their congregation, the holiday is more about environmental and ecological awareness than trees specifically, especially because it falls in February when Vermont trees, unlike trees in Israel, are not flowering.

The Congregation Beth El in Bennington includes an environmental component in their Judaism school and has hosted workshops on creating eco-kosher homes.

The Rutland Jewish Center uses energy efficient light bulbs and refrains from using too many disposable dishes. They even teach the value of bal tashchit (prevention of needless waste) to the children in religious school. The rabbi also addresses environmentalism in sermons and is involved in COEJL.

What is COEJL?

It stands for the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and is one of your biggest resources. COEJL’s mission is to deepen the Jewish community’s commitment to the stewardship of creation and mobilizes the resources of Jewish life and learning to protect the Earth and all its inhabitants. They do this through their website (www.coejl.org), publications, and letter writing campaigns. They even have a list of the top ten actions that individuals can take to address global warming, including planting trees and organizing energy conservation programs in synagogues.
Resources available for Quaker meeting houses in Vermont

Did you know that foundational testimonies of the Quaker tradition as well as the self-organized structure of the Society of Friends have been the strong motivational forces pushing Friends to the forefront of the environmental movement?

Crucial historical and contemporary testimonies of Peace, Simplicity, Equality, Community, and Justice have profound connections to environmental consciousness and preservation. These testimonies are all crucial to the idea of environmental sustainability as it is an idea highly dependent on intergenerational and intrageneration equity, sustainable use of resources among communities, and environmental justice, which necessitate a degree of simplicity in one’s living. The foundational beliefs and queries of the Quaker faith prepare congregants with a unique and mutualistic relationship to the environment. Quakers’ unique quality of being self-organized, rather than directed from a denominational head or body, encourages the same type of grassroots initiative necessary in the environmental movement. This query-based faith benefits from the discussions that result, including a *Society of Friends Statement on Global Climate Change*, which compelled Friends organizations to seek Divine Guidance in understanding how to: reduce their use of energy and material resources; support strong international agreements for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; promote national policies for assuring energy and resource conservation; participating in a transition to less damaging technologies in our industries, agriculture, buildings and transportation. For full text see: [http://www.webofcreation.org/ncc/statements/sof.html](http://www.webofcreation.org/ncc/statements/sof.html); for more info see: [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org)

Many Friends congregations in Vermont have utilized these testimonials as inspiration to get involved and respond to the Statement. Several, interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with *Vermont Interfaith Power and Light*, provide good examples of what you can do.

Congregants among the *Friends Meeting House* in Middlebury have sought to minimize their global impact by buying fuel efficient cars, are highly involved with the community in environmental initiatives, and have large vegetable gardens or farms. The congregation form study circles that discuss environmental issues of simplicity, equity, and climate change and have completed the 10% challenge, a test to see if you could reduce energy consumption in your personal life by 10%.

The *Religious Society of Friends* in Burlington connects their founding testimonials to environmentalism through the *Earthcare Committee*, which makes announcements of ecological issues in Meeting and in the newsletter. In recognition of their responsibility for their climatic impact, they have installed compact fluorescents, use a very efficient heater, use reusabledishware and napkins, and implemented a “tax” or donation of 10 cents per gallon purchased to the Meeting that will be donated to a climate-change non-profit organization.
Resources available for Roman Catholic parishes in Vermont

Were you aware that the United States Catholic bishops generated a public statement at their June 2001 General Assembly meeting called “Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good,” in which the bishops assert that “At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both ‘the human environment’ and the natural environment.”

This statement asserts the need for a dialogue about global climate change that is not partisan nor scientifically polarizing, but a “distinctively religious and moral perspective to what is necessarily a complicated scientific, economic, and political discussion”; they feel that the response to the challenge of climate change must be rooted in the virtue of prudence. The statement notes that Pope John Paul II has frequently discerned the ethical questions that lie at the heart of environmental degradation and has noted our common responsibility for stewardship of creation. Because inaction to climate change is expected to disproportionately burden the poor, responses to mitigate global warming must be rooted in social and economic justice. Out of respect for God’s creation, and the traditions of the Catholic faith, the statement compels congregations to focus on the needs of the poor and the vulnerable in a debate “often dominated by more powerful interests.” For full text see http://www.usccb.org./sdwp/international/globalclimate.htm.

A couple Catholic parishes in Vermont are currently trying to fulfill this mission. Several interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide suggestions for ways to do this.

The St. Dominic Parish in Proctor acknowledged that the American Council of Catholic Bishops thoroughly analyzes issues relating the Catholic faith to environmental problems. As such and out of inspiration from their Catholic faith, the parish sometimes incorporates issues of water quality, pollution, and global warming in sermons on creation care. While not organized through the church, many individuals are involved in environmental groups within the community. The parish uses compact fluorescents and recycles out of a feeling of collective responsibility as God’s children to take care of the Earth or creation.

The Christ the King Parish in Burlington works in the Vermont Interfaith Action group to campaign for local care for the Earth and bringing speakers in to talk about the environment. The parish also utilizes materials from the National Catholic Education Association, which incorporates curriculum materials about the environmental protection, Earth stewardship, resource use, and more. While the parish has few sermons that touch on the environment, they try to raise environmental consciousness by encouraging energy efficiency in turning off lights, saving heat, and recycling.
Resources available for Unitarian Universalists in Vermont

Do you know that the call for justice in the community that is central to the Unitarian Universalist faith has been a strong driving force for them to lead efforts to address environmental issues?

Your seventh principle, that it is your duty to “affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,” has been the basis of a project that recognizes congregations that really work to follow that mission.

The Green Sanctuary Program is one of your biggest resources

It has five equally important goals:

- To build awareness of societal environmental issues among UU’s;
- To generate commitment for personal lifestyle changes;
- To motivate UU’s to community action on environmental issues;
- To build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness;
- To build awareness and rectify environmental injustices

Your congregation can actually apply to be accredited as a “green sanctuary” by planning activities incorporating environmental awareness and action into worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living. For more information, check out www.uuaspp.org On the website you will also find additional resources like an energy audit worksheet and examples of environmental sermons.

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations in Vermont have gotten involved. Several, interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide good examples of what you can do.

The Champlain Valley Unitarian Society in Middlebury has begun to get involved in the Green Sanctuary Program. They recycle, buy energy efficient lights, and drink Fair Trade Coffee. They have even had an energy audit done.

The First Universalist Society in Windsor County puts on services specifically about the environment and global warming, incorporates these issues into their religious education programs, recycles, uses energy efficient lights, and has a committee set up to monitor the congregation’s progress in meeting its goal of becoming a Green Sanctuary.

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier has become certified as a Green Sanctuary. They have services and educational programs about sustainability and a sustainability group that monitors the church and encourages them to keep getting better at living up to its title as a Green Sanctuary. The use biodegradable cups, recycled paper, and compact fluorescent light bulbs.
Are you aware that The United Methodist Church amended and readopted a resolution at the 2000 General Conference that re-affirms the values of justice and sustainability in the context of energy consumption?

Resolution #6, The Energy Policy Statement, highlights the unique position in which humans are placed within God’s creation. While humans are just one among many of God’s creatures, we are also made in His image to protect the creation in which we live. The resolution compels congregants to avoid pitfalls of arrogance and irresponsibility in our use of resources and to be mindful in our energy use so as to promote justice and sustainability. It asserts the Church’s support of efforts to conserve energy, increase efficiency, and transition to renewable energy sources to combat global warming; moreover, it encourages all United Methodist churches to be models for energy conservation by purchasing energy efficient appliance, exploring alternative energy sources, and heating and lighting only rooms that are in use. The full text can be found at: http://www.umc.org/interior_print.asp?ptid=4&mid=958

Many United Methodist churches in Vermont are currently trying to fulfill this mission. Several interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide some good suggestions for ways to do this.

The Champlain Island Parish in Grande Isle told of the importance The United Methodist Church’s stance on stewardship, making it part of their social principles, influences them; they place any literature from the national UMC sends them about creation care in the newsletter. They also have a special Harvest Sunday in the fall to celebrate the gifts that the environment has given them. There is also a significant educational unit on stewardship within children’s Sunday school.

The Essex United Methodist Church in Essex Junction places a strong emphasis on energy efficiency within their church building. They use reusable dishware instead of disposal items and use only compact fluorescent lighting. For heating, the church uses natural gas instead of oil. In acknowledgement of issues of equity, the church only serves fair trade coffee and sometimes fair trade chocolate. The church also noted that many of these environmentally-conscious measures were economically beneficial.

The First United Methodist Church in Burlington expresses its ongoing consciousness of creation by have an annual environmental stewardship awareness forum in which environmental scholar Bill McKibben spoke last year. They represent Methodist thought about stewardship in a local interfaith group that discusses their concern for the environment from a faith perspective. The church is planning to have an energy audit done so that they can then focus their resources on certain energy efficiency measures.
Do you know that the self-realization or conviction that everything is intrinsically one, whole, and complete that is central to the Zen Buddhist faith has been a driving force for them to lead by example and address environmental issues?

Zen Buddhist’s belief that all incidents and beings are interconnected, Buddhist thought compels one to treat all living and non-living things with respect; there is not an “Other” and “Self” dichotomy. As one body, care must be given for all. Buddhism also teaches the doctrine of karma, which is the law of cause and effect. Since Buddhists believe in the law of interdependent causality, therefore, they are inspired by their faith to will be careful not to cause pain to minerals, people, animals, plants, or anything embodied in the earth because it will, in turn, be hurting themselves. The five precepts that lay Buddhists observe (in the context of the larger ten) that embody the basic moral principles of Buddhism are largely the rationale or motivation for Zen Buddhist centers to be ecologically-inclined.

The belief in the karmic continuum and these five precepts are Zen Buddhists’ greatest resource to their ecological-mindfulness.

While smaller than many faith communities in Vermont, a number of Buddhist meditation centers in Vermont are at the forefront of environmental consciousness are currently trying to fulfill these aforementioned principles. Several interviewed by Middlebury College students in fall 2004 as part of a project with Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, provide suggestions for ways to do this.

The Green Mountain Dharma Center (for Nuns) in Hartland-Four-Corners follows the tenet that if one does not care for her surrounding environment and all therein (i.e. plants, mineral, animals), the human species cannot be preserved. They try to be conscious of how all actions have after-effects. Thus, they attempt to live as simply as possible to minimize their impact on the Earth by getting an efficient wood-burning furnace, using compact fluorescent light bulbs, recycling, shopping with cloth bags, eating everything on their plates, and using natural cleaning agents.

The Vermont Zen Center in Shelburne also finds alertness and awareness about the interconnectedness of humans and the environment central to their faith. As such, issues about simplistic living and environmental preservation, sometimes specifically about climate change, often arise in discussion groups. To embody the ideology of their faith, the center has conducted an expansion that emphasized these environmental concerns by having efficient radiant heating, compact fluorescent light bulbs, locally-harvested wood, composting, recycling, and reusable dishware.
Coffee Talk

Does your congregation have a coffee hour?

If so, it would be a great time to facilitate a discussion about how the congregation views its role about how best to care for creation and each other.

**Here are some questions for you to consider as a congregation:**

1. What kinds of cups do we currently use?
2. Where does our coffee come from?
3. How does this reflect our priorities as a religious congregation?

You would be surprised at how this sort of discussion can help you clarify both your goals as individuals and a group. It will help bring out the real motivation behind the actions you take. Clearly, if your congregation has a coffee hour, you face several choices, not just about whether to use Styrofoam, paper, or washable coffee cups, but also about whether or not to buy Fair Trade Coffee. These two decisions, although relatively simple, have implications on both your environmental impact as a group and on relations both within your congregation and in the larger global community.

**Here are some thoughts brought up in discussions between a group of Middlebury College environmental studies students and a couple congregants at the Jericho Congregational Church.**

Kelly King brought up how she washed the dishes that they used for coffee hour at their church because she felt compelled to do it by faith for the sake of the environment and other people.

Nancy Carey pointed out that by choosing to use paper plates instead of washing dishes they could still be responsible and try to act in accordance with God’s will but just have different priorities, like saving water and time.

**Disclaimer:**

The point of this handout is not to tell you what to do but rather to get your congregation to dialogue amongst themselves about their own priorities and how the actions that they take have an effect on other people and the world. At times, it is really important to stop and reflect on what you are doing and how you can make it better.
Fair Trade Coffee

What counts as Fair Trade??
- Coffee producers must earn at least $1.26/lb of coffee no matter what the market price is
- Coffee producers are awarded credit at appropriate prices
- Long-term relationships between producers and corporations

Why should we drink Fair Trade Coffee??
- It’s the first product in the United States to be held accountable by independent monitors—we should ensure that producers (of all products!) are compensated fairly and work under safe conditions
- Over 100 US companies offer fair trade coffee to over 7,000 retail locations
- It’s environmentally friendly! Fair trade often (but not always) means organic or shade-grown. Most fair trade coffee producers don’t use chemical fertilizers or pesticides.
- Support small farmers! They should benefit from all of their hard work (average profit from gourmet—non-fair trade—coffee is $0.50/lb. Retailers shouldn’t make all the money!)

What can you do??
- Buy fair trade coffee!! Look for the official label
- Encourage your congregation to purchase fair trade coffee for coffee hours and all other events.

Buy fair trade coffee!! Look for the official label
Buildings:
Saving energy, $, & the environment

HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR CONDITIONING

* Seal cracks or leaks with weatherstripping or caulking.
* Turning thermostats down in winter and up in summer will reduce fuel consumption 3-5% for each degree.
* Open the windows in the fall and spring to keep building cool.
* Use ceiling fans in the summer.
* Replace air filters at least quarterly.
* Use ENERGY STAR approved heaters & air conditioners.

COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHTS

Compact fluorescent lights are 4 X as efficient and last 10 X as long as incandescent lights. You can use them to replace traditional screw-in light fixtures. Although they cost more initially, you will save approx. $15 per lamp per year in energy costs.

For larger spaces, use tubular fluorescent lamps rather than incandescent lights. They are 4-5 X as efficient and can last 8-20 hours longer.

RADIANT HEATING

Radiant heating creates an even heat distribution that makes occupants feel warm even though the air temperature might be lower than with a central air heating system. It allows boiler temperatures to be lower and have the boiler last longer.

Radiant heating (and cooling) uses water distribution instead of air distribution. While not appropriate for all buildings, some facilities that install radiant heating are 75% more efficient than standard air-based heating systems.

WATER HEATING

Costs associated with heating water can represent 25% of energy costs. Easy ways to reduce this cost and environmental impact:
* Buy a timer to turn off water heater when not in use during the week. It costs $30 initially but can save you $10-50/yr.
* Lower the thermostat.
* Insulate storage tank.
* Use efficient hot water aerators to reduce hot water consumption.

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES

Buying appliances labeled ENERGY STAR can save you a lot and even cut operating costs by one half. Not only do they run on less electricity, they also produce less heat. You can actually save on air conditioning by getting a good printer!

ZONING

Zoning your building by partitioning it off into smaller spaces each controlled by their own thermostats can save you money and electricity by only heating or cooling the rooms in use.

ENERGY AUDIT

An energy audit shows where significant amounts of energy is being lost. It can be conducted by an amateur or professional. Some religious institutions in Vermont have had energy audits conducted by Green Mountain Power, for example.

Find this and more info at:
www.energystar.gov

Search for:
“congregations”

Also check out:
www.eere.energy.gov