



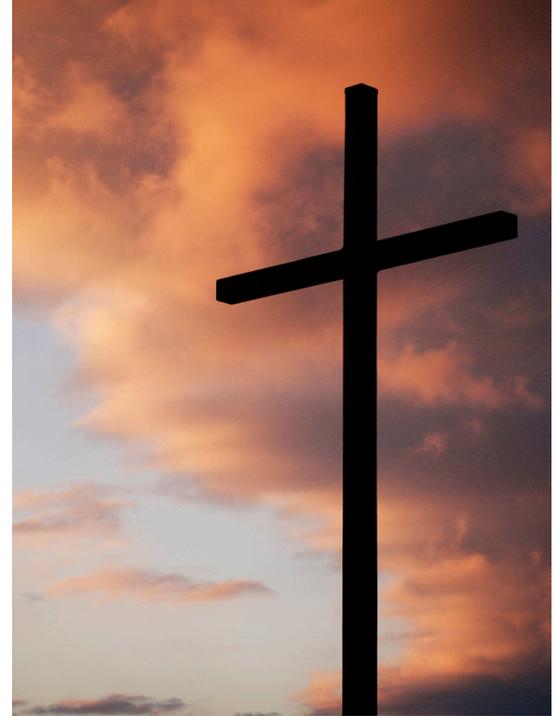
INTEGRATING CREATION CARE INTO PARISH MINISTRIES

1. Parish Leadership: The first step to “greening” your parish ministries is to assess your parish leaders’ commitment to Creation care and encourage their “buy-in” to CCT plans. ([See Community Engagement Toolkit](#))

- Meet with your pastor to hear his views on climate change. Share your CCT’s vision/goals with him and discuss how Creation care can be integrated into parish life. Ask him to integrate Creation care into his homilies. Share the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) [resource](#) on preaching and Catholic Climate Covenant homily [resources](#).
- Plan a presentation to the parish leadership that discusses how acting on Creation care fulfills the Church’s mission. Discuss how each ministry area of the parish can engage parishioners and community members in the Church’s work on climate change. Young people and Latino, Asian, and African-American people are especially excited about the church’s teaching on climate change, and incorporating this message into multiple areas of ministry is a great way to engage them.
- Meet with your Parish Council and/or Finance Committee to discuss the financial implications of Creation care activities, both savings gained through energy efficiency and expenditures needed for any retrofits or other sustainability measures.

2. Worship: Meet with your parish’s worship/liturgical ministry. Discuss how Creation care can be a part of worship. Plan together how to incorporate concerns for Creation into [worship](#).

- Plan Creation-centered worship for these celebrations: “Earth Day” Sunday (April 22), St. Francis of Assisi Festival (October 4), or World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation (September 1) with appropriate prayers, hymns and recognitions.
- Do you have a music ministry? Meet and discuss how to integrate Creation-centered hymns into worship.
- Do you have artists/quilters/sewers in your parish? Explore making banners to decorate the sanctuary or church building with reminders of God’s Creation and/or create a Creation-inspired altar cover.



“The parish is where the Church lives. Parishes are communities of faith, of action, and of hope. They are where the gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth. Parishes are the home of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church” (US Catholic Conference of Bishops)

A parish that acts on our responsibility to care for our common home is a parish that lives and proclaims the Gospel. A successful Creation Care Team serves as a catalyst to green the parish as a whole, and leads other ministry areas and church members to incorporate Creation care into their lives. Working co-operatively with other ministry areas reduces CCT members’ work load and benefits the parish as a whole as it opens new avenues of spiritual growth and engages parishioners in a new way.

- Green the worship space with living plants/trees. Place plants instead of cut flowers on the altar. Purchase [fair trade palms](#) for Palm Sunday.

3. Education: Make Creation care a central element of your parish’s educational activities and work to help raise awareness of the link between faith and care for Creation.

- Sponsor a [study of *Laudato Si'*](#) or another Creation care text.
- Hold a Creation care educational event for your community. Catholic Climate Covenant provides program guides for [Feast of St. Francis](#) and Earth Day. These programs can be conducted on any date, not just the official festival dates.
- Show an [environmental film](#) and hold a discussion afterwards.
- Use your bulletin insert, newsletters, or flyers in the hallway to disseminate Creation care educational information. Include environmental messages such as quotes, scripture passages, and Creation care tips in the bulletin.
- For youth and youth ministry ideas see our Youth Ministry and Climate Change toolkit.

4. Advocacy/Social Concerns: The Social Concerns/Advocacy committee is a natural ally of your Creation Care Team.

- Along with the Social Concerns committee, familiarize parish members with Creation care legislative issues and public policies. You may wish to hold workshops on how to effectively engage in the legislative process (local, state, federal). The USCCB has a [resource](#) on how your parish can take action on Creation care.
- Catholic Climate Covenant regularly sends you action alerts/petitions regarding Creation care, with a suggested letter and the appropriate legislators to contact. These can be promoted through the parish website or e-newsletter.
- Look for opportunities to speak out about the moral implications of caring for Creation through letters to the editor. Catholic Climate Covenant regularly alerts supporters about letter-writing opportunities in their states. Please [contact us](#) if you’d like to join the mailing list.

While recognizing that every parish is unique and organizes its ministries differently, this toolkit will give you some basic ideas about how to proceed. As always, please contact us at programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org if you have any questions or ideas of your own.

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

1. Catholic Climate Covenant provides a list of the [top 10 things](#) you can do to protect creation.
2. The Archdiocese of Atlanta has produced a terrific [resource](#) that gives parishes and parishioners options for reducing their carbon footprint and conserving natural resources.
3. National Catholic Reporter published an overview article, [“Go green: Steps to a greener church community”](#)

5. Mission work:

- Does your parish house a food bank? Add energy-efficient light bulbs to the items given away in the food bank.
- Have a group from the church volunteer with a local agency for a day of weatherizing low-income homes.
- Explore the possibility of creating a parish garden to grow produce for the food bank and/or flowers for the church.
- Work with the parish youth to plan a stream or road cleanup.

6. Facilities (Buildings and Grounds): Making your building and grounds more energy efficient and environmentally friendly is one of the best ways to reduce the parish's carbon footprint.

- In consultation with the Parish Council/Finance Committee, sponsor an audit or review of the church's energy and resource use. You can either do an informal walk through the building, or a comprehensive facilities audit. Two good resources for energy audits and for information on how to make your buildings more energy efficient are [Interfaith Power and Light](#) and [EPA's Energy Star Congregations](#).
- Investigate the possibilities of increasing the buildings' insulation, replacing old inefficient HVAC systems, installing low volume flush toilets and faucet aerators or even installing solar panels.
- Watch for our bi-weekly emails that regularly feature ideas for how to lower your community's carbon footprint. Some of the ideas will not cost you a cent (lowering your thermostats, turning off unused appliances, reminding folks to turn off the lights when leaving a room) and will save you money while saving energy.
- Work with your Facilities Committee to:
 - Increase recycling and decrease the amount of water/chemicals used in landscaping.
 - Establish a composting area and separate the compostable kitchen waste.
 - Reduce your use of paper products at social events. Aim to use real cups, dishes, and flatware as much as possible.
 - Eliminate the use of bottled water in parish events.
 - Use environmentally friendly cleaning products wherever possible.

