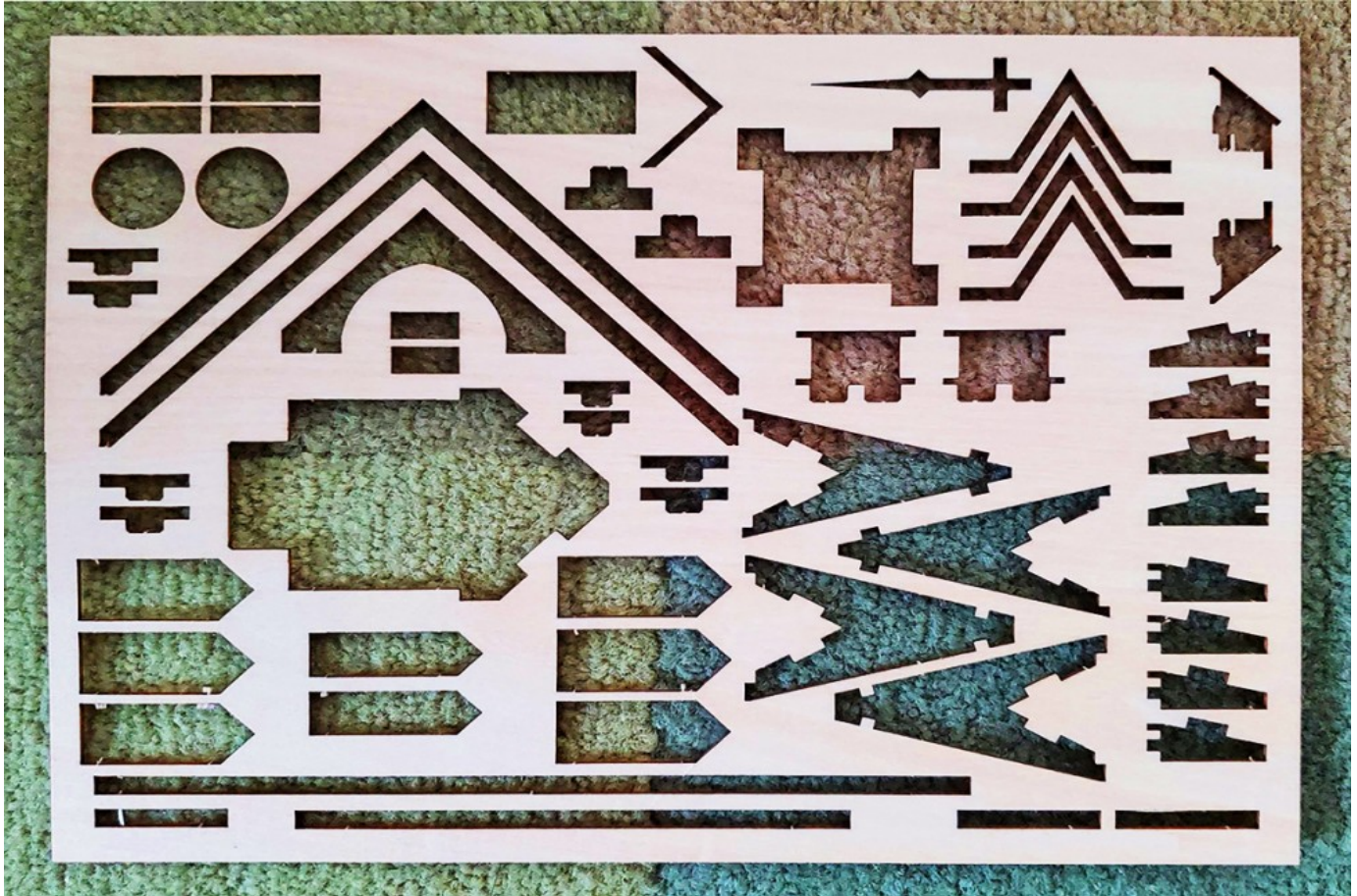


40 ways a church can go green

## Light bulbs, bike racks, solar panels, and more

by [Anna Woofenden](#) in the [August 10, 2022](#) issue



Read the main article on [what it means to be a green church during a climate crisis](#).

1. Use rechargeable batteries in your wireless mics.
2. Compost your food scraps and coffee grounds.
3. Switch to energy-efficient light bulbs in your church building. Bonus: put them on timers or motion sensors.
4. Put flowers in vases of water without using floral foam.

5. Switch to 100 percent beeswax candles.
6. Swap out conventional cleaning supplies for environmentally friendly ones, and use environmentally friendly ice melt.
7. Use the same bulletin for an entire season, with small inserts for Sunday-specific information.
8. Install electric hand dryers in bathrooms. Or use sustainably produced paper towels and then compost them.
9. Source food locally for meals cooked at the church.
10. Install solar panels on your church building.
11. Put in a bike rack and create an easy and secure place for parents to store strollers when they walk to church.
12. Install rainwater collection tanks. This reduces both your building's impact on wastewater treatment and your use of city water for irrigation.
13. Download [Interfaith Power and Light's free start-up kit](#) and pick an item to work on.
14. Get your local electric company—or someone in your congregation who has the skills—to do an energy audit, and commit to working through the list of recommendations. Things to look at include the building's insulation and air sealing, the efficiency and cleanliness of the heating systems, and the possibility of installing more-efficient heat sources.
15. Implement a building-wide ban on bottled water and Styrofoam. Include this as part of a green policy for rental agreements.
16. If you aren't recycling, start. If you are, find out where your recyclables are going—and explore ways you can reduce or reuse the waste in the first place.
17. Walk or ride your bike to church. Develop a program to encourage churchgoers to share rides, pick up those less able to get to church, and extend the church community beyond the walls and onto the roads.

18. Gather a small group of people to research and map your local food system. Discover where food is being grown, how it is being distributed, who has access to what types of food in what neighborhoods, and how food waste is handled. Look for ways the church can be a resource for supporting food sovereignty in your neighborhood.
19. Host an annual clothing swap.
20. Have your governing body resolve to eliminate purchasing of all disposable cups, plates, bowls, and silverware. Move to reusable items for coffee hour and church meals—napkins and tablecloths, too—and create a culture of dishwashing as a spiritual practice or fellowship opportunity.
21. Try moving toward a plant-based diet in your shared meals as a community. Experiment with various recipes and dishes together.
22. Host a potluck at which people bring dishes made entirely from food grown within 100 miles.
23. Partner with a local farm to make your church a drop-off point for a community-supported agriculture program, and recruit households from the congregation to commit to participating in the CSA.
24. Replace your church lawn with vegetable garden beds and feed your local community.
25. Create a “pay what you can” farmstand to share produce with the community.
26. Share your space. A building that sits empty for most of the week is a waste of energy. Fill it with community groups, classes, nonprofits, etc.
27. Map your local watershed and see how your church is impacting the water in your community. Get involved with projects to add rain gardens, reduce lawn chemicals in runoff, and take other actions specific to your place in your watershed.
28. Check out [Project Drawdown](#). Dozens of scientists worked together for years to calculate the changes that would have the biggest impact on climate change. Their top ten include several things congregations can do: reduce food waste, avoid beef, add rooftop solar, and keep refrigerators and air conditioners in good repair.

29. Learn about the Black Church Food Security Network, and bring founder Heber Brown's examples and questions to your community ([see "The Black church aims to heal the land and heal the soul"](#)).
  30. Find out what organizations and groups are welcoming climate refugees in your area and how you can offer support.
  31. Build relationships with your neighbors who are living outdoors and learn how climate change and poverty are affecting them.
  32. Look at your church's investments and take steps toward divesting from the fossil fuel industry.
  33. Participate in marches, sit-ins, actions, and civil disobedience on behalf of the planet.
  34. Start a study group on eco-theology and share the learning with the community.
  35. Create liturgies of lament and prayerfully consider the effects of the climate crisis together in community.
  36. Preach on gospel messages of creation care. Wondering where to start? Try *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*, by Leah D. Schade, and *The Green Good News: Christ's Path to Sustainable and Joyful Life*, by T. Wilson Dickinson.
  37. Check out the Wild Church Network and Holy Hikes, and consider joining an existing group or taking a group from your congregation to do liturgy outdoors.
  38. Involve the church's children and teens in deciding what to do and in leading the charge.
  39. Practice sabbath, individually and collectively, and notice how we are tied up in consumerism and greed.
  40. Pray daily, with words and actions, for the care of our precious earthly home.
- AW, with gratitude for the collective wisdom of friends and colleagues who helped brainstorm this list