

ELCA Environmental Audit Guide

**for congregations, schools
and other groups**



Introduction

“We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally, as members of this church and as members of society.... As congregations and other expressions of this church, we will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life. We will advocate the environmental tithe, and we will take other measures that work to limit consumption and reduce wastes. We will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation. We will undertake environmental audits and follow through with checkups to ensure our continued commitment.”

*ELCA Social Statement,
“Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice”
1993*

The purpose of this guide is to provide congregations or other groups with a simple, easy to use resource suggesting ways to reduce their environmental impact. This guide is organized into one-page sections covering various environmental topics. In addition, sections on the importance of communication and environmentally preferred purchasing are included to increase the impact of your efforts.

Each section contains an explanation of the issue, suggested activities, and resources for further information. Sections and activities can be selected independently, and do not need to be done in order. Congregations can pick the issues or activities that best suit their priorities and resources.

This guide could be used by an environmental committee, Sunday school class, congregation council, or ad-hoc group as they take action to care for God’s creation. Used on an on-going basis, your congregation’s progress can be monitored on the checklist found on the final pages of this guide.



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This resource was developed as a part of a strategy during a consultation marking the 10th anniversary of the ELCA social statement, “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice.” The full text of the social statement can be found on the ELCA’s Web site at www.elca.org

This resource has been produced by the ELCA Division for Church in Society’s Environmental Education and Advocacy Program in partnership with Health Care Without Harm, Washington D.C., www.noharm.org, and the Healthy Building Network, Washington D.C., www.healthybuilding.net

The Web sites listed in this text were current as of February 2004.

Communication

“Commitments of this Church: We will promote reporting on the environment by church publications, and encourage coverage of this church’s environmental concerns in public media.”

Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993

Communication can make all the difference in the success and longevity of the congregation’s environmental initiatives. The team using this guide to reduce the environmental impact of the congregation should carefully consider who will be affected by any activities or decisions, invite them to participate in the discussion, and communicate any changes or decisions that will effect them. Communicating effectively with the congregation as a whole and with the community at large can increase participation in the effort, demonstrate leadership in caring for God’s creation, inspire others to take steps, and strengthen the integrity of our witness.

Activity Checklist

- Find a champion to be the team leader.
- Designate a staff member or volunteer to develop plans to ensure that the congregation is made aware of the decisions made by the group using this guide. Post the draft plan on your congregation’s Web site or bulletin board. Ask for comments.
- Set up a bulletin board or location in the facility where members can find out about the different environmental initiatives or events happening at the church. Designate someone to ensure that the bulletin board is updated regularly.
- Report regularly to the congregation through the weekly bulletin or church newsletter updates on environmental activities.

- When starting a new topic in this Guide, consider which members of the congregation, outside groups or staff will be affected by the suggested activities. Directly contact these members and invite them to participate. Make sure they are notified of any decisions made, regardless of their participation.
- If announcements are made during the service, use this time to announce the decisions and upcoming activities of the group using this guide. Invite members with particular expertise in that area to offer their assistance.
- Discuss your experience using this guide with someone else in the congregation who is not participating. Don’t pressure them to participate; simply tell them what you are doing and how it is affecting you.
- Place updated information about environmental activities on the church’s Web site.
- If the congregation has regular adult education sessions, arrange for at least one session to cover environmental issues and what the church is doing about them. Making this session part of a regular adult education series may increase attendance.

Resources

1. The Religion Communicator’s handbook, *How Shall They Hear?* “provides nuts-and-bolts, no-nonsense information about every aspect of communications” for congregations. Order it at www.religioncommunicators.org/handbook.html
2. See ELCA Social Statement “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope & Justice.”
3. See study guide based on ELCA Social Statement.

Purchasing

“The idea of the earth as a boundless warehouse has proven both false and dangerous.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

All products purchased by a facility have an environmental impact. Certain controls can be put into place to ensure that environmentally preferable products are being purchased, products that are less toxic, produce less waste, are least harmful and more efficient.

Activity Checklist

- Contact your office supply vendor and ask if recycled or environmentally preferred products are offered and if they are marked in the catalog. If not, contact other local vendors or look on the internet for vendors that sell and designate these products. Support vendors who stock recycled paper, recycled toner cartridges, and other environmentally preferred products.
- Involve those who purchase the products targeted by other sections of this guide in the audit and decision-making process. If those who make the purchasing decisions aren't involved, they are less likely to stick to the decisions to buy the environmentally preferable product.
- Make the phone numbers of local stores that supply these environmentally preferable products readily available to all who purchase for the facility and to members of the congregation. Include this information in the weekly bulletin, on the Web site, and in the business office.
- Get feedback from users. If a new product, such as recycled toner cartridge or compact fluorescent light, does not perform as well as the old product, talk to the vendor or manufacturer to troubleshoot the problem. Don't

give up and blame the environmentally preferable attribute for failure. The problem could be incorrect installation, not purchasing the correct product (such as the wrong kind of toner cartridge), or some other mistake that can easily be rectified.

- When selecting supplies, examine the packaging. Select products with less packaging or recyclable packaging.
- When choosing appliances, including upgrades to your lighting, office equipment, heating and cooling systems, choose products that have the Energy Star[®] logo.

Resources

1. See www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/envpurch.html for an introduction to Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.
2. See www.newdream.org/procure/ for general information on starting an environmental purchasing program and information on specific product areas from the Center for a New American Dream. Order a guide to Responsible Purchasing for Faith Communities at www.newdream.org/faith/
3. See www.greenseal.org/recommendations.htm#product for brand-name environmentally preferable recommendations of commonly used products by Green Seal, a non-profit that develops environmental standards.
4. If you have questions about environmental options for different products, or want to find out what other facilities are doing to green their purchasing, subscribe to the EPPNet listserv, sponsored by the Northeast Recycling Coalition at www.nerc.org/eppnet.html
5. For a listing of Energy Star[®] products see: www.energystar.gov

Pesticides

“...[W]e are to live within the covenant God makes with every living thing (Gen 9:12-17; Hos 2:18), and even with the day and night (Jer 33:20). We are to love the earth as God loves us.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Pesticides are used to control and/or kill plants or animals that exist in a location where humans do not want them. Many pesticides are not only toxic to the plants or animals they target, but also to humans (particularly children) or to desirable animals such as pets or butterflies. During rains they often runoff and contaminate water supplies. *Integrated Pest Management* is a method of pest control that minimizes the use of chemical pesticides and maximizes the use of non-chemical controls such as barriers (plugging holes in the foundation) and preventative maintenance (such as not leaving food in offices overnight).

Activity Checklist

- Work with maintenance staff to inventory storage of pesticides and all pesticide use. Note whether the product is currently in use, will no longer be used, or has passed its expiration date. Call your solid waste handler for instructions on disposing of outdated pesticides or those that will no longer be used. You may need to contract with a hazardous waste hauler to dispose of these items.
 - Develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program using the resources listed below.
 - Designate an individual or group (such as maintenance staff) as responsible for pesticide use decisions.
- Inform staff and building users that they should discuss their pest concerns with the maintenance staff. Staff will be responsible for purchasing all pesticide products used in the building and grounds following the Integrated Pest Management plan. Allowing facility users to bring pesticides into the facility without controls can result in excessive or inappropriate use, exposure risks, and unexpected hazardous waste costs. See *Communication* page for suggestions on how to communicate this program to your congregation.

Resources

1. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers a simple guide to implementing an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) in schools that is appropriate for most congregational facilities. See www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/brochure/
2. Healthy Families, Healthy Environments offers advice on IPM programs including biblical passages for reflection at www.healthyfamiliesnow.org/Article_asp-Record=1086.html
3. The IPM World Textbook provides detailed information on applying IPM to a variety of landscape, indoor, and agricultural situations at ipmworld.umn.edu/ Spanish version: www.ipmworld.umn.edu/cancelado/Spanish.htm
4. The collaborative Database of IPM Resources can direct you to resources for your particular IPM need at <http://ippc.orst.edu/DIR/index.htm>

Mercury

“We see the despoiling of the environment as nothing less than the degradation of God’s gracious gift of creation.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Mercury is a persistent, toxic chemical that can impair the nervous system. Environmental mercury contamination is extremely widespread in the United States, with 43 states warning residents to restrict their fish consumption from certain water bodies because the fish are so contaminated with mercury. (See www.epa.gov/ost/fish/ for more information on fish advisories.) Mercury exposure can also result from breakage of mercury devices such as thermometers. Such accidents can result in high clean-up and liability expenses. Main sources of mercury to the environment include trash incinerators (from the mercury devices disposed of in the trash) and coal-fired power plants.

Activity Checklist

- Develop a mercury policy for your facility establishing that no new mercury-containing equipment or devices will be purchased or accepted by your facility except for fluorescent lamps. Mercury-free alternatives are widely available for virtually all other product categories. See www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/schools/Resolution.pdf for an example. See *Communication* section for suggestions on how to communicate this restriction to your congregation, staff, and building users.
- Inventory all mercury in the facility and note whether the mercury-containing device should be immediately replaced, or should be labeled so that when it is disposed of, it is done properly. Lists of mercury-containing devices found in buildings can be found at <http://abe.www.ecn.purdue.edu/~mercury/src/title.htm>, www.informinc.org/fsmercalt.pdf and www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/mercury-products.pdf Contact a hazardous waste company to safely dispose of any mercury found.

Host a mercury thermometer exchange for your congregation or community. See www.noharm.org/mercury/exchange for a guide on how to hold an exchange.

Ensure that all fluorescent and other mercury-containing lamps (such as high-pressure sodium lamps used in outdoor applications) are disposed of properly. All fluorescent lamps contain mercury, even those designated as “green,” and should be disposed of by using a qualified hazardous waste company or universal waste company. Consult your local environmental agency or phone directory to find a company to recycle your mercury-containing lamps.

If your facility is using T12 linear fluorescent lamps, you may be able to save energy by retrofitting to T8 fluorescent lamps. In most cases, T8 lamps contain less mercury than T12 lamps. Consult your lighting vendor or local utility company for assistance in evaluating the financial advantages of retrofitting to T8 linear fluorescent lamps.

Resources

1. For more information on mercury contamination, sources, and impacts, see www.epa.gov/Region5/air/mercury/understanding.html
2. A list of companies that recycle fluorescent lamps can be found at www.nema.org/lamprecycle/recyclers.html
3. For information on reducing mercury in fluorescent and other energy-efficient lamps, see www.informinc.org/fact_P3mercury_lamps.php
4. For recycling in your community see: www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=progs&a=local.asp or www.care2.com/near_home/getlocal_list_all.html

Paper Products

“God’s command to have dominion and subdue the earth is not a license to dominate and exploit.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Paper products are all around us and include copy paper as well as paper products such as paper napkins, paper towels, and toilet paper. Using recycled paper products can save trees, water, and energy. Using unbleached or chlorine-free alternative paper products can also reduce the environmental impact of the paper products you use.

Activity Checklist

- Inventory the paper products used in your facility. If possible, include information on purchase price and volume of products used over a particular period of time.
- Use the resources below and call the vendors you typically use to determine if recycled content and/or unbleached or chlorine-free alternatives are available for the types of products you use. Note the locations where it will be convenient for the facility to buy these alternatives and the price of the alternatives you identify. Share this information with those who purchase these items. If many of your paper products are donated, inform the congregation and other donors of your preference for recycled and unbleached/chlorine-free bleached supplies. Give them the list you developed of vendors who sell these products.
- If you are not recycling paper, talk to your waste vendor about establishing a paper-recycling program for your facility. Set up recycling bins in convenient locations. Consider making the bins available to the community.
- If your facility has a copy machine with this feature, post a sign informing users to create double-sided copies whenever possible. If

copies are usually made outside of the facility, inform those that make copies that they should make double-sided copies whenever possible. If your copier does not make double-sided copies, evaluate the cost of leasing or buying a new copier that does.

- Consider which documents normally distributed as hard copy should be made available electronically through the facility’s Web site. Such documents could include annual financial reports and weekly newsletters. Ask current recipients if they would prefer receiving the document through e-mail subscription.
- Consider writing only one worship service bulletin per Sunday to be used by all services. Ask congregation members attending earlier services to place bulletins in a basket by the door to be used by those attending later services. Keep the bulletin short by only printing material not available in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* or other hymnal.

Resources

1. See www.conservatree.com/ for brands of environmentally preferable paper, more information on environmental issues related to paper, and tips on reducing paper use.
2. See www.aigasf.org/committees/environment/guide_chart.html for a list of environmentally preferable paper brands.
3. See Reach for Unbleached! at www.rfu.org/ for information on pollution related to paper bleaching.
4. See the Chlorine Free Products Association at www.chlorinefreeproducts.org/ for lists of paper products certified as chlorine-free.
5. To calculate wood and water savings and pollution reduction from using recycled paper, see www.ofee.gov/recycled/cal-index.htm Share these results with your congregation.

Energy

“We will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Energy use is a large part of our society’s environmental impact. Coal-fired power plants that supply power to large parts of the United States are a major source of mercury contamination. Most energy sources using nonrenewable resources contribute to acid rain and climate change. Increasing demands for energy are straining our energy distribution systems, resulting in energy shortages and “brownouts.” See the *Mercury* section of this guide for more information on the connection between power plants and mercury.

Activity Checklist

- Do an energy audit of your facility each year. Ask your local power company if they offer assistance with audits. Your local power company may also have other tools you can use to become more energy-efficient, such as customized energy use reports or rebates on energy-efficient equipment. Ask about these and sign up for the ones appropriate for your facility. See resources below for energy audit forms.
- Consider purchasing “Green Power” for your facility. Green power sources have reduced environmental impacts when compared with traditional power sources, and include wind and solar power. Check with your local power company for green power options and see the EPA’s Green Power partnership program at www.epa.gov/greenpower/index.htm
- Join the United States government’s Energy Star for Congregations at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations Their free guide can help you reduce energy costs by 25-30%. After you implement the suggestions in the guide, nominate your con-

gregation for an Energy Star award at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.sb_awardsapp

- Establish a policy that all new electric products purchased by the facility will be Energy Star certified. For a list of product categories and brand names, see www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product
- If your facility is using T12 linear fluorescent lamps, you may be able to save energy by retrofitting to T8 fluorescent lamps. In most cases, T8 lamps contain less mercury than T12 lamps. Consult your lighting vendor or local utility company for assistance in evaluating the financial advantages of retrofitting to T8 linear fluorescent lamps.

Resources

1. See www.energystar.gov for a wide variety of tools you can use to reduce energy use, including calculators to estimate potential savings.
2. A variety of self-guided energy audit forms are available at www.energy.wsu.edu/pubs/ (*select energy audits and OM checklists from the menus available*) and www.webofcreation.org/estew/
3. See www.christianitytoday.com/yc/2001/001/2.18.html for Seven Steps to Power Savings for religious facilities.
4. See www.newdream.org/procure/products/energy.html for information on buying green power such as solar- or wind-generated electricity.
5. For success stories see:
www.thelutheran.org/0005/page40.html
www.webofcreation.org/lens/metrochgo.html
www.interfaithpower.org/
www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.sb_successstories

Transportation

“Decisions affecting an immediate locale often affect the entire planet.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Environmental impacts from transportation include pollution from burning and refining of fuels and pollution that results from the manufacturing, maintenance, and disposal of vehicles. Petroleum fuel exhaust emissions from even the most fuel-efficient vehicles contain chemicals that cause cancer, smog, and respiratory disease. Many vehicles contain mercury and lead that are released into the air when used cars are sent to smelters. PVC components of vehicles can contribute to dioxin emissions when used cars are incinerated in a smelter.

Activity Checklist

- Ask a staff member or volunteer to coordinate ride-sharing for members who live in the same neighborhood and attend worship or other events at the same time. Local environmental or transportation authorities often provide assistance in setting up ride-sharing programs for businesses. Publicize transportation initiatives with the congregation.
 - Make sure any vehicles the church owns follow a regular maintenance schedule for oil changes and other needs. Check for correct tire pressure. Preventive maintenance can improve fuel efficiency and emissions.
 - Review the event schedule at the church and consider if scheduling events at or around the same time could reduce the numbers of trips participating members must make to the church. For instance, schedule choir practice directly after or before another event, such as a worship service, adult education session, or committee meeting.
- If your location is accessible on public transportation, and/or many members live within a mile of the church, schedule “Don’t-Drive” Sundays when members are encouraged to take a bus, walk, or ride a bicycle to church. This event could also work as “Share-A-Ride” Sunday. Have the members who participate in this event identify themselves with pins or raising of hands during the service so those who don’t participate will know who to ask for more information.
 - When purchasing new vehicles for the facility, consider:
 - An electric hybrid vehicle. See www.cleancarcampaign.org/hybridelectric.shtml for more information.
 - Using EPA’s Green Vehicle Guide at www.epa.gov/autoemissions/ or the Green Book at www.greenercars.com/indexplus.html to choose the cleanest and most fuel-efficient vehicle that meets your needs.
 - A Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus. See www.informinc.org/fact_P3dieselbus.php for information on subsidies for CNG bus purchases and fueling stations.

Resources

1. For more information on lead, mercury, and PVC in vehicles see www.cleancarcampaign.org/
2. For a short description of one congregation’s experience with “Bike-to-Church Day,” see www.earthministry.org/Congregations/transportation_choices.htm

Water

“The principle of sufficiency means meeting the basic needs of all humanity and all creation.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

The increasing scarcity of clean water in many parts of the world is a burgeoning crisis affecting more than half of the world-wide population. The United Nations Environment Programme warns that almost three billion people will be severely short of water by the year 2025. Even in the United States, increasing demands for water are becoming problematic. People have thought of water as a plentiful resource and have taken clean drinking water for granted. We must all start thinking of clean water as a precious gift.

Activity Checklist

- Review the facility’s water bills and graph how much water the facility uses each month. Update the graph as water conservation measures are implemented and share this information with the congregation.
- Contact your local water authority and find out what kind of assistance and rebates are available to businesses to assist with water-use reduction. Many local water authorities offer water audit assistance, landscaping information, and rebates to offset the cost of water-efficient items such as toilets, faucets, and washers. You may also be able to obtain water conservation reminder stickers for restrooms and kitchens.
- With help from the local water authority, conduct a water audit of the facility that includes noting if toilets, faucets, and showers are low-flow. Automatic toilets and faucets may help you reach your water saving goals. Taking into account the rebates available, estimate the cost of converting all items to low-flow. Using the cost of water

per gallon, calculate the time it would take to recoup the cost of new fixtures based on money saved in water use charges. Work with the church budget committee to appropriate money to purchase low-flow fixtures and toilets.

- Speak with the staff members or volunteers that maintain the landscaping of the property. If they have any ideas on reducing water use, assist them in implementing those ideas. Make sure they participate in all decisions about water -use reduction. As a first step, make sure lawns and plants are only watered during the coolest part of the day, usually early morning before 7:00 AM or after 6:00 PM in the evening, to reduce evaporation.
- Ask your local water resource authority if a speaker is available to talk to the congregation about water conservation and local water resource issues. Schedule the speaker during a regular adult education session or immediately after a worship service.
- Use plants native to your region in landscaped areas.

Resources

1. See www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm for a wide variety of documents that can help you learn how to reduce water use.
2. See www.nycwasteless.org/bus/casestudies/cs-water.html for an example of calculating “pay-back” time of installing low-flow fixtures.
3. See www.des.state.nh.us/h2o_conservation.htm for water conservation fact sheets on conserving water in laundries, landscaping, and other areas.
4. See www.earthministry.org/Congregations/water.htm for examples of how congregations have addressed water conservation education.

Solid Waste

“...excessive consumption by industrialized nations...jeopardize[s] efforts to achieve a sustainable future.”

*Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope and Justice. 1993*

Solid waste includes everything you put into your trashcan, as well as other wastes that you may have to dispose of in other ways, such as large objects and hazardous materials. In 2001, each person in the United States generated an average of 4.4 pounds of solid waste, up from 2.7 pounds per person per day on 1960. This totaled 229 million pounds in 2001. The best way to reduce waste is to use less, or reduce consumption. Re-using items already available reduces waste more than recycling does, because it avoids the transportation and re-manufacturing impacts required by recycling. However, recycling is always preferable to putting something in a landfill or waste incinerator.

Activity Checklist

- Contact your local solid waste authority and find out if you can visit your local landfill or incinerator. Arrange for members to carpool to the tour. This is often a powerful motivator for members to start reducing their waste. Take pictures and share them with your congregation.
 - Conduct a waste audit of your facility to determine where the biggest opportunity for reduction is. Involve maintenance staff in this process. See www.gould.edu.au/wastewise/planning/audit.htm for an easy-to-use waste audit form.
 - Set up a recycling program at your facility. Talk to your waste contractor and local waste authority about the different materials that may be recycled. In some cases, recycling materials may be cheaper than sending them to the landfill or incinerator.
 - Buy recycled products, such as recycled toner cartridges or remanufactured electronic devices.
- Disposing of computers and other electronic waste products pose special environmental hazards. Check with your local waste management office to find out how to safely reuse, recycle, or dispose of these products. For more information see www.svtc.org/cleancc/pubs/sayno.htm
 - Consider setting up a “Re-use Depot” at your facility for congregation and community members. If you have the space, you could consider taking boxes and packing materials, craft supplies, or other items that would be useful to members of the congregation. Also investigate local materials re-use cooperatives or depots. You could consider acting as a drop-off point for congregation members, or arrange for your congregation to take a trip to the re-use depot location. See www.recycle.net/recycle/exch/ for a list of local materials exchanges or ask your local solid waste authority.
 - The second largest portion of solid waste in the United States, after paper, is food scraps and yard trimmings. This waste can easily be composted. Contact your local solid waste authority and participate in any composting programs they have. These may range from separating out compostable waste for pickup to assistance in setting up a composting bin at your facility. Compost can also be used in landscaping to reduce water evaporation and increase water retention of soil. See www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/compost/ for information on setting up a compost bin.

Resources

1. The majority of solid waste in the United States is paper. See the *Paper* section for information on reducing paper use, buying recycled paper, and setting up a paper recycling program.
2. See www.epa.gov/osw/students/school.pdf for a useful guide for groups in reducing solid waste in schools and similar facilities.
3. See www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/muncpl/index.htm for basic facts and assistance on reducing solid waste in the US.

Wood Preservatives and Playground Equipment

Wood, preserved with copper chromated arsenic (CCA), has been a popular wood to use when building decks, playground equipment, and picnic tables. Recently, evidence has indicated that children playing on equipment made with CCA wood could be exposed to hazardous levels of arsenic.

Activity Checklist

- Survey the facility and investigate whether any outdoor wood structures are made with CCA wood. Most decks and outdoor structures have historically been made with CCA wood, redwood, or cedar. New CCA wood has a greenish tint, but the best way to find out about the kind of wood is to speak to the company that manufactured the structure.
- EPA recommends that all CCA wood structures be sealed. See www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/cca_transition.htm#bkmrk6 for rec-

ommendations on sealing CCA wood.

- Since very little research has been done on the effectiveness of sealants, consider replacing or fencing off any playground equipment made with CCA wood. See www.cpsc.gov/phth/ccafact.html for information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission on CCA wood in playgrounds.
- Develop a plan and a budget to replace CCA treated wooden playground equipment.

Resources

1. See www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/cca_qa.htm for information from EPA on the hazards of CCA wood.
2. See www.ewg.org/pub/home/reports/poisonedplaygrounds/ for a report by the Environmental Working Group on CCA wood used in playgrounds.

Cleaning Products

All of us are exposed to the cleaning products used in the facility where we worship. Some cleaning products contain ingredients that cause or aggravate asthma or can cause corrosive burns or other hazards. Fortunately, a wide variety of safer products are available. Floor cleaning presents particular concerns.

Activity Checklist

- See www.greenseal.org, www.greenseal.org/certproducts.htm and www.newdream.org/procure/products/approved.html for lists of cleaning products that have passed the environmental criteria set by Green Seal, a nonprofit certifying organization, or similar criteria set by government purchasing agencies. These products have also passed performance tests. Speak to your custodial staff about switching to safer products.
- Use of cleaning products can be reduced by simply installing large mats at each door. If your facility doesn't have these, speak to the

budget committee about appropriating money to buy them. Then install the mats.

- If floors must be stripped and finished, talk to your vendor about using zinc-free floor finish and butyl-free stripper. Ensure maintenance staff is trained in new products. Old finish may not be removed with new, less-toxic stripper.
- If renovating, consider purchasing environmentally friendly flooring materials that do not need to be stripped and finished.

Resources

1. The Janitorial Pollution Prevention Project has generated fact sheets to help you select safer cleaners and safer cleaning methods. See www.wrppn.org/janitorial/jp4.cfm
2. *Cleaning for Health* includes an audit to assist in reducing chemical use and improving indoor air quality through cleaning. See www.informinc.org/cleanforhealth.php

Check off your progress as you work through the guide!

COMMUNICATION

	Not applicable	Desire to implement	Not yet implemented	Early stage efforts	Near completion	Fully implemented
Designate a staff member or volunteer to communicate with the congregation.						
Set up a bulletin board to inform the congregation about environmental initiatives. Designate someone to update the bulletin board.						
Report every week in the weekly bulletin updates on environmental audit activities.						
Directly contact those members who will be affected by activities in the guide and invite them to participate.						
Announce decisions and upcoming environmental activities during the worship service.						
Discuss your experience using this guide with someone else in the congregation who is not participating.						
Place updated information about environmental activities on the church's Web site.						
Arrange for an adult education session on environmental initiatives.						

PURCHASING

Support vendors who stock recycled paper, recycled toner cartridges, and other environmentally-preferred products.						
Involve those who purchase the products targeted by other sections of this guide in the audit and decision making process.						
Make the phone numbers of local stores that supply environmentally preferable products readily available to all who purchase for the facility.						
If a new product does not perform as well as the old product, talk to the vendor or manufacturer to troubleshoot the problem.						
Select products with less packaging or recyclable packaging.						

PESTICIDES

Work with maintenance staff to inventory storage areas for pesticides. Call your solid waste handler for instructions on disposing of outdated pesticides or those that will no longer be used. Develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.						
Designate an individual or group (such as maintenance staff) to be responsible for pesticide use decisions.						
Inform staff and building users that they cannot purchase pesticides to bring into the facility, but instead should discuss their pest concerns with the maintenance staff.						

MERCURY

Develop a mercury policy for your facility establishing that no new mercury-containing equipment or devices will be purchased or accepted by your facility with the exception of fluorescent lamps. Inventory all mercury in the facility and label or properly dispose of these items.						
Host a mercury thermometer exchange for your congregation or community.						
Ensure that all fluorescent and other mercury-containing lamps (such as high-pressure sodium lamps used in outdoor applications) are disposed of properly.						

PAPER PRODUCTS

Inventory the paper products used in your facility.						
Determine if recycled content and/or unbleached or chlorine-free bleached alternatives are available for the types of products you use. Make a list of vendors of these items available to purchasers. Establish a paper recycling program.						
Post a sign informing users to create double-sided copies whenever possible. Consider buying or leasing a copier that makes double-sided copies. Consider which documents normally distributed as hard copy should be made available electronically through the facility's Web site. Ask current recipients if they would prefer receiving the document through e-mail subscription.						
Consider printing only one worship bulletin per Sunday, to be used by all services. Ask participants attending earlier services to place bulletins in a basket by the door to be used by those attending later services. Keep the bulletin small by only printing material not available in the <i>Lutheran Book of Worship</i> .						

	Not applicable	Desire to implement	Not yet implemented	Early stage efforts	Near completion	Fully implemented
ENERGY						
Do an energy audit of your facility each year.						
Join the United States government's Energy Star for Congregations.						
Establish a policy that all new electric products purchased by the facility will be Energy Star certified.						
Consider purchasing "Green Power" for your facility.						
Consult your lighting vendor or local utility company for assistance in evaluating the financial advantages of retrofitting to T8 linear fluorescent lamps.						
TRANSPORTATION						
Ask a staff member or volunteer to coordinate ride-sharing for members who live in the same neighborhood and attend worship or other events at the same time. Make sure any vehicles the church owns follow a regular maintenance schedule for oil changes and other needs.						
Review the event schedule at the church; consider if scheduling events at or around the same time could reduce the numbers of trips participating members must make to the church. Schedule "Don't-Drive" Sundays when members are encouraged to take a bus, walk, or ride a bicycle to church. This event could also work as "Share-A-Ride" Sunday. When purchasing new vehicles for the facility, consider an electric hybrid vehicle, using EPA's Green Vehicle Guide, or purchasing a compressed natural gas (CNG) bus.						
WATER						
Review the facility's water bills and graph how much water the facility uses each month.						
Contact your local water authority and find out what kind of assistance and rebates are available to businesses to assist with water use reduction.						
Conduct a water audit of the facility. Work with the church budget committee to appropriate money to purchase low-flow fixtures and toilets.						
Speak with the staff members or volunteers that maintain the landscaping on the property. If they have any ideas on reducing water use, help them to implement these ideas.						
Ask your local water resource authority if a speaker is available to talk to the congregation about water conservation and local water resource issues. Schedule the speaker during a regular adult education session or immediately after a worship service.						
SOLID WASTE						
Visit your local landfill or waste incinerator.						
Conduct a waste audit of your facility.						
Set up a recycling program at your facility.						
Buy recycled products, such as recycled toner cartridges or remanufactured electronic devices.						
Consider setting up a "Re-use Depot" at your facility or investigate local materials re-use cooperatives or depots.						
Set up a compost program at the facility.						
WOOD PRESERVATIVES AND PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT						
Survey the facility and investigate whether any outdoor wood structures are made with CCA wood.						
Seal all CCA wood structures on the premises.						
Consider replacing or fencing off any playground equipment made with CCA wood.						
CLEANING PRODUCTS						
Speak to your custodial staff about switching to safer products.						
Install mats at each entryway to reduce mud tracked into the building.						
Use zinc-free floor finish and butyl-free stripper.						
If renovating, consider purchasing flooring materials that do not need to be stripped and finished.						

