

Presbytery Earth Care Program

A program of Presbyterians for Earth Care

How to Start and Sustain a Presbytery Earth Care Team

One project of the Presbytery Earth Care Program is to assist presbyteries in starting and sustaining an Earth Care Team. Below are five suggested goals for presbyteries to meet with several steps to follow to accomplish each goal. Items in parentheses are suggestions collected from presbyteries with Earth Care Teams.

GOAL 1. Form a Presbytery Earth Care Team

- a. Determine where an Earth Care Team will fit in your presbytery (Mission & Social Justice, Presbytery Mission Connections, Peace and Justice Committees)
- b. Identify 1 – 2 people to develop a core group with you. (select from the chosen committee, Earth Care Congregations, your church)
- c. Brainstorm possible directions/ideas for the Presbytery Earth Care Team (provide education, network Earth Care Congregations, procure funding for small grants to churches)
- d. Draft a description of the team and a mission statement to take to a larger group. (See ideas in GOAL 2c.)
- e. Set a date, time and location for your first Presbytery Earth Care Team meeting (at a presbytery meeting, evening with dinner, conference call/ZOOM)
- f. Reach out to others to attend your first meeting (article in presbytery news, email invitation to Earth Care Congregations, announcement and/or table at presbytery meeting with sign-up sheet)

GOAL 2. Meet as a Presbytery Earth Care Team

- a. Start with a welcome, opening or prayer, and introductions.
- b. Describe the purpose of a Presbytery Earth Care Team (to engage and support congregations in integrating creation care into their church's Christian witness and ministry)
- c. Develop a short mission statement (to inspire presbytery church members of all ages to respond to the Bible's call to appreciate, respect and responsibly care for God's gifts of His Earth and all His Living Creations; to equip presbytery members with information and resources to preserve God's Creation; to network with neighboring congregations and community organizations to share environmental stewardship information, ideas and projects to promote responsible caring for God's Creation)
- d. Set an annual goal or goals for your Presbytery Earth Care Team (to raise awareness of climate change and its impacts, assist congregations to provide education for children and adults on issues related to earth care and environmental justice, advocate for public policies or write an overture that will help to restore and/or protect God's creation)
- e. Brainstorm possible projects and choose your first project (See Schedule Activities and Events below). It should be one that can be quickly and inexpensively completed to build confidence and create momentum in your team.

- f. Discuss possible partnerships (ecumenical groups, local non-profit, state Interfaith Power and Light)
- g. Think of a name for your team (Stewardship of Creation Committee, Presbytery Environmental Group, Eco-Justice Team). Decide how you will communicate with one another (email, phone, social media)
- h. Establish communication with your presbytery (presbytery newsletter, pre-presbytery workshops, announcements and flyer/one-pager/handout at presbytery meetings)
- i. Identify perceived needs (leadership training, budget, presbytery staff liaison)
- j. Set a date, time and location to meet again and establish a regular schedule of meetings (monthly, quarterly, 5 times/year)
- k. Report back to your chosen presbytery committee

GOAL 3. Schedule Activities and Events

- a. Invite speakers, hold panel discussions, lead a book study, show films at presbytery meetings or hold training events at churches
- b. Offer an “Earth Care Fellowship” with lunch, music and speakers, once a year at different churches
- c. Arrange regular outings to go camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, bird watching, wildflower walking
- d. Conduct a tour of environmentally sensitive areas or visit a monastery
- e. Team up Earth Care Congregations with nearby Presbyterian churches interested in becoming one
- f. Invite congregations to sponsor an earth care event and invite others through the presbytery
- g. Meet as a group to watch Presbyterian Hunger Program webinars on creation care topics (how to start an earth care team in your church, energy efficiency or renewable energy for your church, advocating for preserving God’s creation) or watch separately and discuss on a conference call immediately afterward

GOAL 4. Evaluate your efforts

- a. Once a year, reflect on how your Team has carried out its plan in the presbytery
- b. Decide what worked and what didn’t
- c. Discuss if things could have been done better or differently
- d. If your team has not completed its goals, decide whether to continue or do something else
- e. Set some goals for the coming year

GOAL 5. Publicize your accomplishments

- a. Report back to your presbytery committee
- b. Write up an accomplishment (with photo) and ask presbytery to publish in their newsletter
- c. Announce at presbytery meeting or include in presbytery packet
- d. Ask to make a presentation at your presbytery meeting
- e. If newsworthy, share with local media and policy makers