

## **Presbytery Earth Care Program**

*A program of Presbyterians for Earth Care*

### **Overview**

We are facing a climate crisis that is the biggest challenge the world has ever known. Already we are seeing longer periods of drought, record-breaking high temperatures, and warmer oceans that give rise to disasters that result in loss of property and lives that affect all of God's creation.

The Presbyterian Church has responded to this crisis through policies such as "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice" in 1990 to the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson's recent statement calling Presbyterians to respond to climate change with faithful action. Perhaps the most significant program the Church has undertaken in this area is Earth Care Congregations, with 232 churches certified in 2018. However, there is much more that needs to be done. Churches, with their leadership structure and congregational members are perfectly positioned to witness to the moral and spiritual call to act to protect our common home.

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) is responding to this congregational opportunity by collaborating with presbyteries to support churches in their stewardship of creation. To accomplish this purpose, PEC is offering a Presbytery Earth Care Team (PECT) Toolkit for presbyteries to involve churches and their members in making sustainable choices to care for God's creation. The strategy involves forming an Earth Care Team at the presbytery level to engage and support congregations in integrating creation care into their church's Christian witness and ministry.

The PECT Toolkit is a step-by-step procedure that describes how to get started, recruit others, and organize and sustain your team, plus ideas for education and events and how to schedule and promote them. The PECT Toolkit also includes a Directory of Resources that may be useful as your Presbytery Earth Care Team considers educational events for the presbytery and/or churches in the presbytery.

In addition, Presbyterians for Earth Care has partnered with the Presbyterian Hunger Program to present educational webinars for churches and individuals to learn more about organizing a Presbytery Earth Care Team, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Churches, Community/Church Gardens, etc. PEC will also host conference calls to respond to questions, share resources and ideas, and provide support to individuals and teams starting and sustaining a Presbytery Earth Care Team.

## How to Use the Presbytery Earth Care Team (PECT) Toolkit

The PECT Toolkit contains two sections

1. How to Start and Sustain a Presbytery Earth Care Team
2. Directory of Resources

In the first section, [How to Start and Sustain a Presbytery Earth Care Team](#), read through the five suggested goals in the PECT Toolkit. Think of these goals as a guide, not something that needs to be followed verbatim. The items in parentheses are suggestions that PEC collected from existing Presbytery Earth Care Teams.

Complete each goal before going on to the next. For example, you will need to form a core team to make some preliminary decisions before you are ready to invite others to your first meeting.

Choose from the suggestions in parentheses or come up with a more creative idea as a group. These are only recommended actions that have worked for others. You don't have to do them all or use any of them.

Try not to skip the administrative tasks starting with your first meeting. Describing your purpose, developing a mission statement, setting a goal(s), and deciding on a name will help you communicate with others and recruit them to join your team.

Scheduling activities and events should be fun and energizing. Be careful not to plan more than your team can coordinate and promote. Start off small and build momentum.

Conducting an annual evaluation of your efforts can identify what was successful and should be repeated, and what failed and should be dropped or redesigned. An evaluation doesn't need to be formal. Simply asking your team what they thought went well and what didn't is sufficient to start a conversation about the next year.

It feels good to be recognized for your accomplishments, but if no one knows about them it won't happen. The response you get when sharing what your team has done with your presbytery committee will give you a clue if it is worth publicizing to a broader audience.

Stay upbeat and positive and show some excitement. No one wants to be part of a team that brings them down. Remember that your work is making the very good planet that God created for us more livable for your generation and generations to come. That is a goal worth working toward.

Be sure to share responsibilities among the team members so that one person is not doing it all. PEC wants you to keep your Presbytery Earth Care Team going and not suffer from burnout. Be sure to let PEC know what you need and we will do our best to help. Email the PEC Coordinator at [pec@presbyearthcare.org](mailto:pec@presbyearthcare.org)

## 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

## Directory of Resources for Your Presbytery Earth Care Team

The resources listed in this section follow the goals in the Guide, *How to Start and Sustain a Presbytery Earth Care Team*. Additional resources are also listed for Earth Care Congregations, Advocacy, Earth Care Spiritual Resources and Earth Care Supported by Science

### Goal 1. Form a Presbytery Earth Care Team

Sample Earth Care Handout for a Meeting of the Presbytery of Tropical Florida

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Earth-care-document-for-Aug-2019-PTF-1.pdf>

Sample Email Invitation to Earth Care Congregation Pastors to form a Presbytery Earth Care Core Group

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Sample-letter-PECT-core-group-invitation-1.pdf>

Sample Earth Care Survey of Churches from Presbytery of Tropical Florida

<https://forms.gle/GkcpW9tzk6X6JPH5A>

### Goal 2. Meet as a Presbytery Earth Care Team

Sample Meeting Minutes of a young Presbytery Earth Care Team

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/TwinCities-Mtg-Minutes-08.17.19-1.pdf>

Sample Care of Creation Policy from National Capital Presbytery

<https://thepresbytery.org/creation-of-care-policy/>

Sample description of an Earth Care Team on the Presbytery of East Tennessee website

<https://www.presbyteryeasttn.org/climate-and-energy-stewardship>

Sample Carbon Footprint Fund ongoing project from the Presbytery of East Tennessee

<https://www.presbyteryeasttn.org/carbonfootprintfund>

### Goal 3. Schedule Activities and Events

Considering our Treasure: A Reflection on Embracing God's Economy

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/considering-our-treasure-a-reflection-on-embracing-gods-economy/>

Schedule an all-day Communications Workshop with Presbyterian Mission Agency (Free if scheduled by presbytery and attended by 20 people)

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/communicators-network/schedule-a-workshop/>

Let's Talk Faith and Climate: Communication Guidance for Faith Leaders from Blessed Tomorrow

<https://blessedtomorrow.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/10/ea-lets-talk-faith-and-climate-web-2.pdf>

Conversation Guide for Living the Change from GreenFaith

<https://livingthechange.net/time> Scroll down to Download our Conversation Guide and enter your name and email for the download.

#### **Goal 4. Evaluate your efforts**

Sample Evaluation Questions for team members

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/draft-EVALUATION-QUESTIONS-1.pdf>

#### **Goal 5. Publicize your accomplishments**

Sample Newsletter article for EarthKeepers of Heartland Presbytery

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Earthkeepers-for-Heartland-Description-Connection-1-1.pdf>

Sample PowerPoint Presentation of Presbytery Earth Care Team

<http://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Presbytery-Earth-Care-Program.pdf>

Sample Script for PowerPoint Presentation for Presbytery of Trinity

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PP-script-for-Trinity-Presbytery-Feb.-with-Lees-additions-1.pdf>

### **Additional Resources for Educational Events and Activities**

#### **Earth Care Congregations**

Earth Care Congregation PowerPoint and Earth Care Congregation video

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/taiwbrq5h3kowro/AABF4uKFhR06ir\\_4LlIaymVcxa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/taiwbrq5h3kowro/AABF4uKFhR06ir_4LlIaymVcxa?dl=0)

Earth Care Congregation map and certification year:

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1baExpbVgyeKCK5NQALnNXmdte\\_rUDUCv&ll=30.326488402425994%2C-113.85769515000004&z=3](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1baExpbVgyeKCK5NQALnNXmdte_rUDUCv&ll=30.326488402425994%2C-113.85769515000004&z=3)

Earth Care Pledge and Application

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>

Sample call for reports of environmental actions from all churches in presbytery:

[https://ptcaweb.org/images/Documents/earth\\_care\\_news.pdf](https://ptcaweb.org/images/Documents/earth_care_news.pdf)

## **Earth Care Advocacy**

PCUSA Office of Public Witness is the public policy information and advocacy office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Its task is to advocate, and help the church to advocate, the social witness perspectives and policies of the Presbyterian General Assembly. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington>

### **PRESBYTERIAN POLICIES AND STATEMENTS 1951-2018**

#### **Presbyterian Church (USA) Policy Brief**

A summary of Presbyterian environmental policy statements from 1990 to 2008

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf)

Past denominational statements (Presbyterian Church USA, United Presbyterian Church USA, Presbyterian Church US) 1951-2003 – from Creation Justice Ministries

[http://www.creationjustice.org/uploads/2/5/4/6/25465131/presbyterian\\_church\\_usa.pdf](http://www.creationjustice.org/uploads/2/5/4/6/25465131/presbyterian_church_usa.pdf)

#### **Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice (1990)**

[http://pma.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/environment/pdf/restoring-creation-for-ecology&justice.pdf#\\_blank](http://pma.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/environment/pdf/restoring-creation-for-ecology&justice.pdf#_blank)

#### **Hazardous Waste, Race and the Environment (1995)**

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/hazardouswasteraceandenvironment.pdf#\\_blank](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/hazardouswasteraceandenvironment.pdf#_blank)

#### **Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development (1996)**

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf#\\_blank](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf#_blank)

#### **A Call to Halt Mass Extinction (2001)**

In response to this crisis, the Presbyterian Church states: "The Creator-Deliverer calls human communities to work with God to rectify the abuses whereby human impacts upon the Earth are leading to a mass extinction of living species. This mass extinction would fundamentally alter and undermine the life and well-being of the humans and other creatures that survive. It would rob all future generations of the gifts of wholeness and diversity that God intends."

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/eco-journey/2010/03/10/the-presbyterian-churchs-call-to-halt-mass-extinct/>

### On Cleaning Up Power Plant Pollution (2002)

In 2002, the 214<sup>th</sup> General Assembly expanded to past policy addressing the issues of pollution damaging to God's creation by adopting a resolution ,On Cleaning Up Power Plant Pollution` which asked ,all Presbyterians to exercise stewardship by urging government officials to support federal policies and multipollutant legislation that will, in the most cost-efficient way, enforce current clean air laws by federal and state governments; resist efforts to abolish or undercut established clean air programs; enact new clean air laws for power plants that will substantially reduce pollutants that cause smog, acid rain, respiratory disease, mercury contamination, and global warming; end the 'grandfather' loophole that exempts older coal-fired plants, and encourage federal funding of technologies that will facilitate and/or reduce the cost of implementing these recommendations.' (Minutes, 2002, pp. 598-9)

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf)

Guide to Going Carbon Neutral (2006) <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/carbon-neutral-guide.pdf>

The Power to Change, US Energy Policy and Global Warming (2008)

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf#\\_blank](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf#_blank)

On Lifting up the "Call to Restore the Creation" (2010)

[https://presbyterian.typepad.com/files/call-to-restore-creation.pdf#\\_blank](https://presbyterian.typepad.com/files/call-to-restore-creation.pdf#_blank)

PC(USA) Letter to Barack Obama on Climate Change (2015)

[http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/us\\_paris\\_statement\\_final.pdf#\\_blank](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/us_paris_statement_final.pdf#_blank)

Affirmation of Creation (2016) [http://fore.yale.edu/files/Affirmation\\_of\\_Creation\\_2016.pdf](http://fore.yale.edu/files/Affirmation_of_Creation_2016.pdf)

Statement on Climate Change from Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson (2018)

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/jhn\\_statement\\_climate\\_change\\_oct2018.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/jhn_statement_climate_change_oct2018.pdf)

### Earth Care Guides for Action

Moving Forward: A Guide to Climate Action for your Congregation and Community  
From Blessed Tomorrow

<http://blessedtomorrow.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/05/BT-MFG-0514.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0z92H7o307aQbiFahwaUv5R7be9bde2k2-Nh6NZrgsF9BorXihqGSOnc0>

Creation Justice Ministries: Seeking Climate Justice for All

<http://www.creationjustice.org/climate-change---get-involved.html>

## **Earth Care Spiritual Resources**

Presbyterians for Earth Care Lenten Devotionals

<https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/>

Presbyterian Hunger Program Tread Lightly for Lent 2020 Calendar

[https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/tread-lightly-for-lent-2020/?fbclid=IwAR0GLoaSpiKITtgMaNtABtVN05uFIdFWLSY2eIMT3rQowMwcJRFp\\_6tDy-M](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/tread-lightly-for-lent-2020/?fbclid=IwAR0GLoaSpiKITtgMaNtABtVN05uFIdFWLSY2eIMT3rQowMwcJRFp_6tDy-M)

Presbyterians for Earth Care Advent Devotionals

<https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/>

## **Earth Care Supported by Science**

Fourth National Climate Assessment. Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov>

*This PECT Toolkit is a working document. If you have comments, questions, or resources to share please send them to [pec@presbyearthcare.org](mailto:pec@presbyearthcare.org)*