

Initiating an Earth Care Team

Barbara Overton
Presbytery of Tropical Florida
Riviera Presbyterian Church

Hello! My name is Barbara

- ▶ Live in Miami, Florida
- ▶ Attorney for a Hospitality Company
- ▶ Supporter/Volunteer for Coral Restoration
- ▶ Advocate reduction of use of single use plastics
- ▶ Avid Plogger



Riviera Presbyterian Church

- ▶ Earth Care Congregation since 2011
- ▶ Environmental Education Activities
- ▶ Beach Clean Ups
- ▶ Engaged and informed environmentalists
- ▶ Member of Presbyterians for Earth Care

Florida



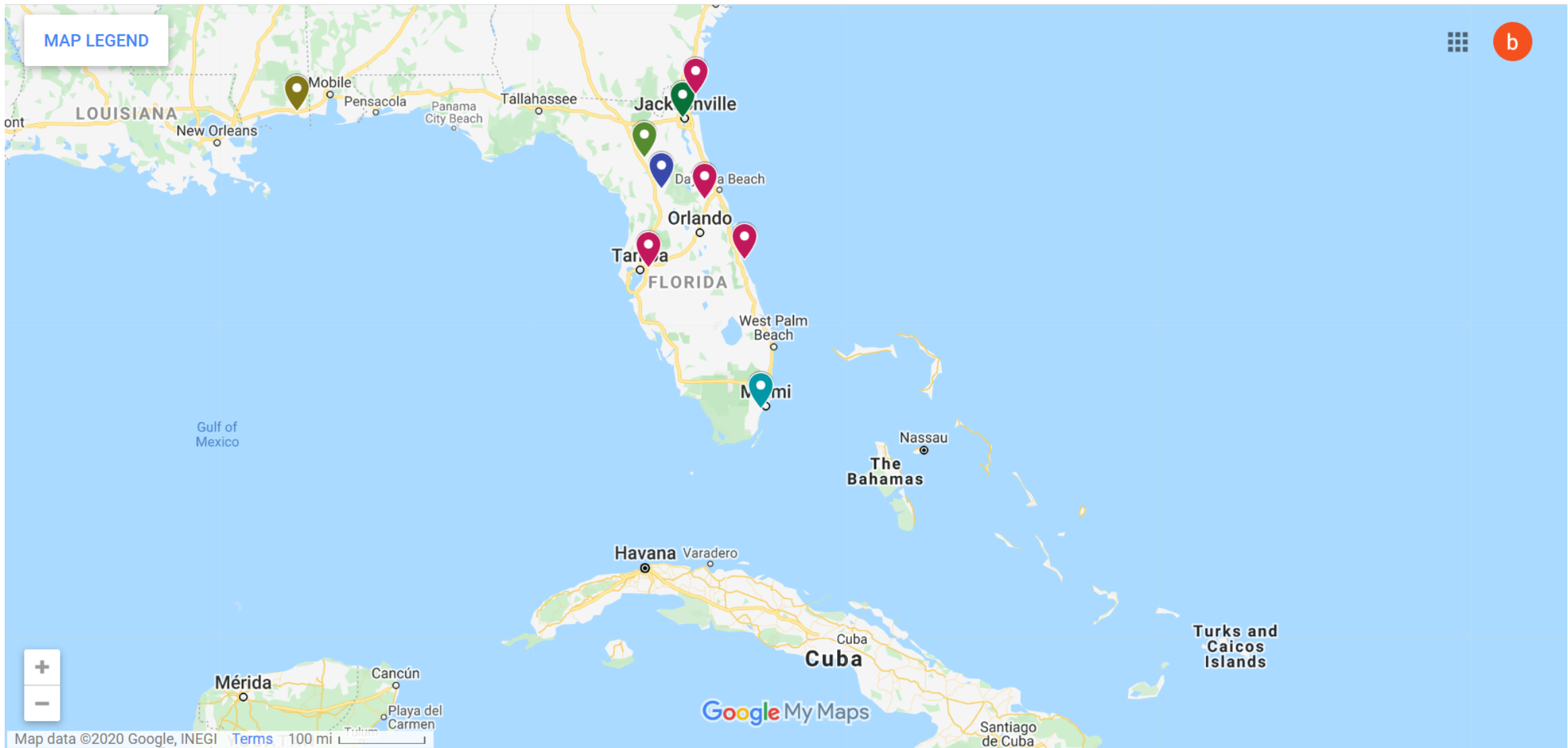
Presbytery of Tropical Florida

6 Counties
42 Churches
Over 200 miles long

South Florida: Ground Zero for Environmental Matters

- ▶ 3 National Parks and Miles of Coastline
- ▶ Red Tide
- ▶ Sunny Day Flooding
- ▶ Blue-Green Algae
- ▶ Degradation of Coral Reef
- ▶ Water Quality
- ▶ Sea Level Rise
- ▶ Loss of Wildlife Habitat
- ▶ Climate Change



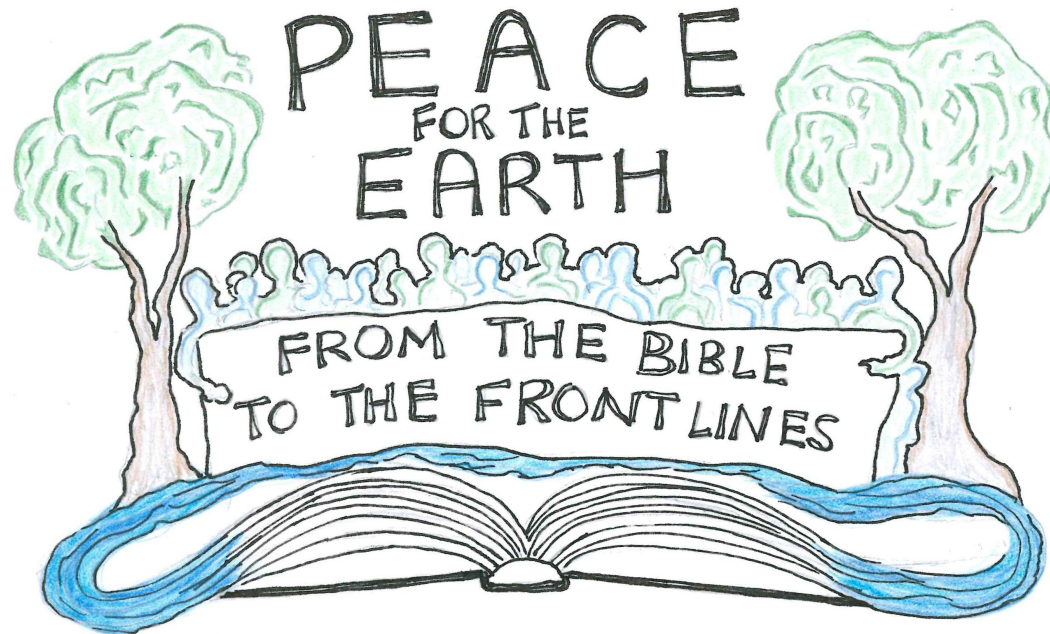


REALLY?
JUST ONE?

TWO QUESTIONS

1. How to get more churches engaged in environmental stewardship

2. How to bring the secular and religious communities together to address environmental issues



Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference

Building A Toolkit for Climate Action



PCUSA Website Resources and Blogs



Presbyterians for Earth Care Resources



Other Environmental Faith Action Groups



Liturgy and worship resources



General Assembly Resources



Starting the Conversation

- ▶ Get Alignment with Leadership
- ▶ Develop Relationships with Interested Parties
- ▶ Use different ways of communicating
- ▶ Overcome Objections
- ▶ Celebrate small victories

Communication Techniques



In person
conversations



Networking



Newsletters



Social Media if
you have it (we
don't)



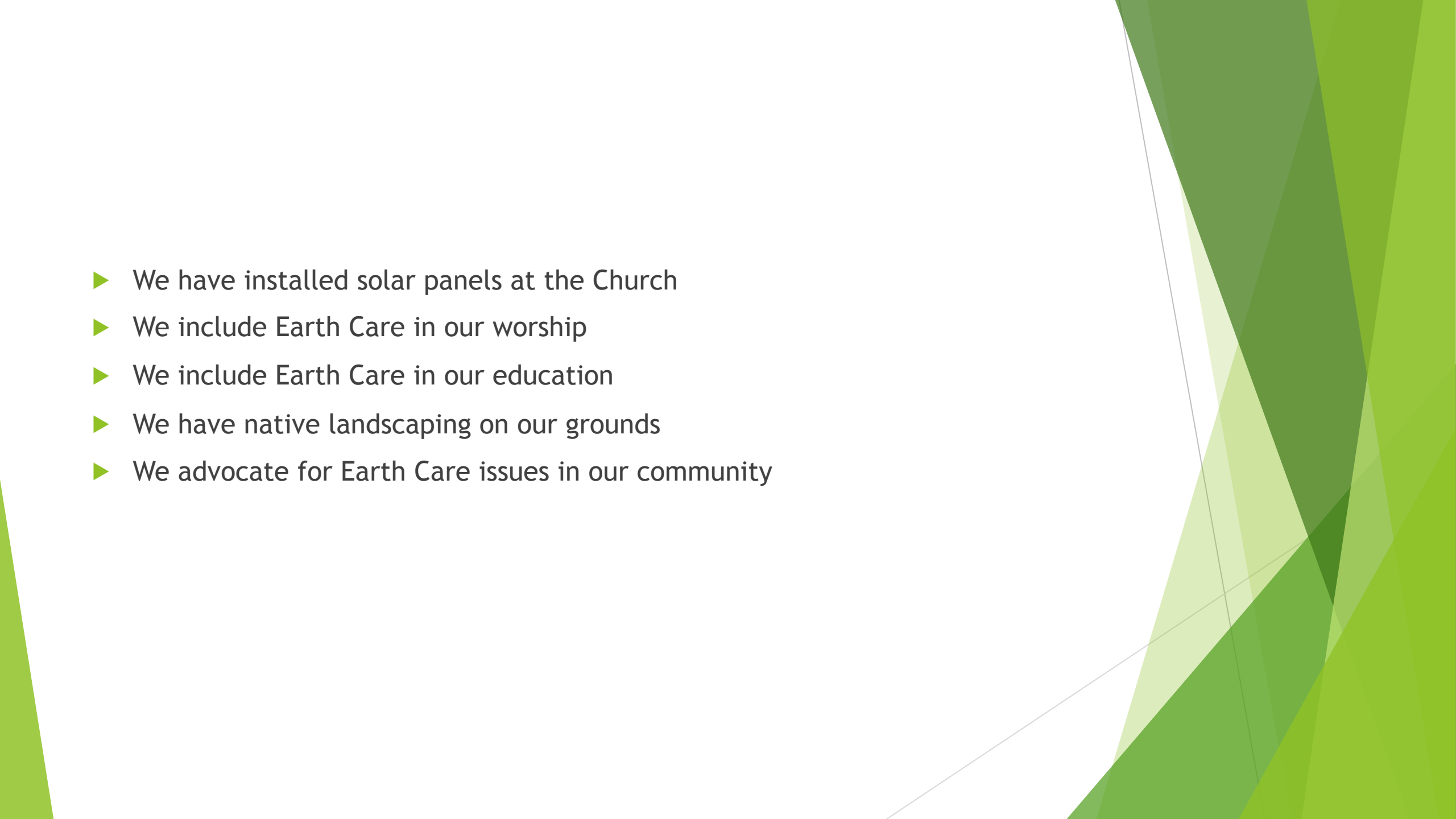
Google Survey

Google Survey

Which of these activities is your Church currently doing or considering?

Yes Working on It Thinking about It No

- ▶ We are certified as an Earth Care Congregation
- ▶ We usually use Fair Trade Coffee at the Church
- ▶ We make Fair Trade Coffee available to members for purchase
- ▶ We always or mostly use reusable plates, cups and cutlery
- ▶ We have installed one or more energy saving item at our Church (like LED lights or efficient appliances)

- 
- The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side and bottom of the slide, creating a modern, organic feel. The left side of the slide is mostly white, providing a clean space for the text.
- ▶ We have installed solar panels at the Church
 - ▶ We include Earth Care in our worship
 - ▶ We include Earth Care in our education
 - ▶ We have native landscaping on our grounds
 - ▶ We advocate for Earth Care issues in our community

What did we learn?

Of the 5 Churches we have responses from

- ▶ 2 Churches are considering becoming Earth Care Congregations
- ▶ No one is working on installing solar panels
- ▶ But all have done energy saving work
- ▶ Most have Earth Care in Worship and Education
- ▶ Most use native landscaping
- ▶ Mixed results on use of Fair Trade Coffee and elimination of disposables

Survey Comments

- ▶ We need to be the noisy prophetic voice and help people understand the urgency of the situation we are in and provide ways people can participate in being the solution
- ▶ Our goal is to incorporate practices such as reusable items for fellowship. We are in the process of upgrading our sanctuary windows to low e impact windows.
- ▶ Use the Presbytery Newsletter, the Presbytery meetings, and shared resources to educate people. Organize churches to be advocates for change and a voice on issues.
- ▶ Provide grants to incorporate some of the costly initiatives such as led lighting.
- ▶ Provide suggestions on what congregations could do; Frequent presentations from the Earth Care "team"

Overcoming Objections



Our church is too (broke, busy, small, elderly, etc.) to do Earth Care



There are more important issues for us to tackle

Celebrate Small Victories

Set Goals

Be Ambitious

Keep Working



Keep Up the Conversation

- ▶ We want to have a robust team by this time next year along with our 4 new Earth Care Congregations
- ▶ There are many short and longer term goals we are looking at - from expanding our team, to helping create more Earth Care Congregations, to reducing use of single use plastics at Presbytery meetings, to advocating for Earth Care Activities
- ▶ We need to be the voice of the Presbytery for Earth Care matters - especially as overtures start to be made for General Assembly
- ▶ If you have a friend in South Florida who would like to join our team, please email me! barbarariv@gmail.com

THANK YOU

