

Presbytery Earth Care Team Toolkit
A project of Presbyterians for Earth Care

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Overview of the Project

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 from 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, and a page of Frequently Asked Questions.

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 Starting a Church 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 more creative ideas 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

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, Earth Care Guides for Action 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

Download: <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://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NCP-Creation-Care-Policy-06112016.pdf>

Sample Presbytery Earth Care Network Charter from National Capital Presbytery

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Earth-Care-Network-Charter-2018.pdf>

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/>

Holding Greener Presbytery Meetings from National Capital Presbytery

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/How-to-hold-a-Green-Meeting-final.pdf>

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.

The Doctrine of Discovery: An Introductory Model for Adult Education

<http://presbyearthcare.blogspot.com/2018/02/a-model-for-adult-education.html>

Dramatic Youth Reading: ONE VOICE at Earth Sabbath

<https://presbyearthcare.blogspot.com/2019/05/dramatic-youth-reading-for.html>

Video 1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNtpHgmW_Dk&feature=youtu.be

Video 2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpmk15h8gHg&feature=youtu.be>

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_4LllymVcxa?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

Earth Care Pledge and Application

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

Sample survey for and reports of environmental actions from all churches in a presbytery:

<https://presbyearthcare.org/survey-of-earth-care-actions-from-presbytery/>

https://ptcaweb.org/images/Documents/earth_care_news.pdf

A Guide to Starting a Church Earth Care Team

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

Policies and statements from 1951-2018 are listed in chronological order.

<https://presbyearthcare.org/pcusa-earth-care-policy/>

GA ROCKS! A 4- minute video in the style of "Schoolhouse Rock" about how policy gets passed in the PC(USA) <https://buff.ly/38NBjjk>

Get your Presbytery to Divest (Toolkit) *Compiled by Fossil Free PCUSA, this toolkit contains resources covering How to Ask Your Presbytery to Divest, Fossil Free Options and Frequently Asked Questions.*

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aqPyiobM4k7X4I9zwR3HNYGptX9bvKlr>

Earth Care Information

And Justice for All: The movement for Environmental Justice (1995)

A 24-minute video from 1995 of polluting industries in communities of color in various places throughout the US from the Presbyterian Historical Society

<https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A161407>

Where Life Begins This short film explores the sacred moments after the birth of a Gwich'in baby and the importance of protecting ANWR from drilling for the future.

<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/must-see-film-shows-devastating-impact-drilling-arctic-refuge>

We Don't Give Up is a 10-minute documentary that explores the disregard for Indigenous rights in the Arctic Refuge through the lenses of art, science, and faith.

<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/new-film-highlights-threat-oil-drilling-alaska-native-communities>

Welcome to Gwichyaa Zhee is a 14-minute film that explores the parallels between Bears Ears and the Arctic Refuge. <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/welcome-gwichyaa-zhee-highlights-human-cost-arctic-drilling>

Let the Earth Breathe is a music video written by Elinor Stock and performed with her daughter, Chenoa. The lyrics and images glorify God's creation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oms4N9-ISMA>

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>

2020 Climate Change Sabbath Toolkit sponsored by the Nebraska United Church of Christ Board

<https://securservercdn.net/198.71.233.179/wxq.122.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Climate-Change-Sabbath-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf>

Engaging Our World. Sunday School Resource for UN Sustainable Development Goals is a leader guide intended is a tool to help introduce groups to these goals and to explore them more deeply with the hope that persons, together and as individuals, may find meaningful ways to engage the goals and take action.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/engaging-our-world/>

Earth Care Spiritual Resources

Creation Care Worship Handout by Rev. Dr. Janet Adair Hansen. Twelve pages of resources that include scriptures, liturgy, music, helpful websites and significant dates.

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Creation-Care-Worship-Handout-Hansen-03.09.21.pdf>

Creation Care A short video by Rev. Dr William P. Brown combining creation care with evangelism.

https://ctsnet.zoom.us/rec/share/vqOP_qZ4JsNOQUvK0wEsvwtjyVqpTQNPXduIKQi-QN-go_zJRq7tk7IzF1jL94Y.dRnkpV-iVwLmf0-s Passcode: wXMBF0?a

Sample Presbytery Meeting Worship Services from National Capital Presbytery

March 2017 <https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Worship-NCPresbytery-March-2017.pdf>

March 2019 <https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/worship-NC-Presbytery-service.pdf>

Presbyterians for Earth Care Lenten Devotionals

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

Presbyterian Hunger Program Tread Lightly for Lent 2021 Calendar

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/tread-lightly-for-lent/>

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

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q. How do I convince my presbytery to form a Presbytery Earth Care Team (PECT)?

A. Presbytery Earth Care Teams actually follow a bottom up model, where a passionate individual puts together a core group to plan the team and set the agenda for the first meeting. The PECT model does not promote asking the leadership of your presbytery to form a Presbytery Earth Care Team.

Q. Why should my Presbytery Earth Care Team be an official part of the presbytery?

A. There are several advantages for a Presbytery Earth Care Team to be part of a presbytery. With official standing within an existing committee, a PECT could have support and assistance with written (digital) communications to all presbytery churches, use of a ZOOM call account, time and tabling at presbytery meetings, and access to funding. Each presbytery is different, so some or all of these services may or may not be available to your team. There are successful Earth Care Teams that operate at the presbytery level that act independently of the presbytery, so being a part is not essential for your Earth Care Team.

Q. How do I find out how to start an Earth Care Team at my *church*?

A. Presbyterians for Earth Care recognizes that there is a need for a guide for starting a congregational earth care team and has developed one. This Guide is not intended to compete with Earth Care Congregations but is the first step in becoming an Earth Care Congregation. The Guide and other helpful resources can be found on the PEC website

<https://presbyearthcare.org/church-earth-care-teams/>

Q. Isn't Earth Care Congregations a program of Presbyterians for Earth Care?

A. Presbyterians for Earth Care promotes Earth Care Congregations, but it is administered by the Presbyterian Hunger Program of PC(USA).

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

Contact Jessica Maudlin for more information. jessica.maudlin@pcusa.org

Q. What is the difference between Presbyterians for Earth Care and the Presbyterian Hunger Program?

A. Presbyterians for Earth Care is a non-profit organization that was formed in 1995 to help the PC(USA) carry out the 1990 policy, Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice. As a non-profit, PEC can do things that the denomination cannot such as submit overtures for approval at General Assembly. The Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), on the other hand, functions within the PC(USA) structure and conducts environmental education based on PCUSA policies of environmental justice. PHP also certifies Earth Care Congregations.