

Go green & Eco for God!

So what! - Why?

.... Because God is awesome! And he has given us this precious gift – Creation!

We are totally dependent on Creation every single day of our lives! – by the very air that we breathe; the food that we eat and water that we drink. All the natural resources for everything – yes even down to your cell phone come from God’s gift of Creation!

We need to take time to say “Thank you, God!” We need to take time to fall in love with his precious gift of Creation! We need to take time to care for his precious gift of Creation!

.... *That’s why!*

Ok – so how can our Parish do this?

- Easy step - are environmental hymns and prayers a regular feature of parish worship?
- Do you hold environmentally-related liturgical services during the year? What about celebrating World Environmental Day in June and Season of Creation in September (well, at least one Service)
- Would publishing tips for green living in the pew leaflet and other communications to parishioners be beneficial to the parish?
- **Re-connect!!!** When last did you touch the soil, a flower, a leaf? – **really** touch it, look at it, admire it? Have you considered holding regular outdoor events: Eucharist’s, hikes, birding outings, camps etc. to get closer to nature? Lots of fun for everyone!
- Would educational sessions on the environment for parishioners and local community, e.g. Eco-breakfast talks or workshops appeal?
- What about considering a waste management and recycling system on parish premises?
- Have you considered carrying out a local project involving parishioners and the community e.g. a clean-up of a local river or park?
- Would the Sunday School and Youth group be interested in and learn from such activities? – super resource material is available – such as *“Ryan the Rhino: Story of Creation”* and *“Season of Creation for Kids”*
- Should you consider sustainable practices on the parish properties, e.g. solar energy, water harvesting, indigenous planting, green cleaning products, minimise paper usage, re-usable crockery etc.?
- Should you be promoting the Diocesan Environmental Policy to parishioners?
- Would it be worthwhile to perform an environmental audit of the Parish?

Do we have to do everything?

Not all at once! Baby steps!! & JAEI is there to help you!

If your answer to any of these questions is YES! - Please speak to your Rector or Archdeacon and they will put you in touch with JAEI (The Johannesburg Anglican Eco-spiritual Initiative).

You can also visit the JAEI website: www.jaei.org.za or drop an e-mail to Noeleen at noeleen@jaei.org.za



How do we start?

Look around – you are in God’s environment – His creation!
Consider: Do you want to be a faithful steward of his Creation?

Wrong answer!
Try again

Yes

No

Chat to the Church Wardens & Council as well as Parishioners

Appoint and Eco-champion

Tell JAEI you’re interested in becoming a Green Parish! JAEI will help you

Compile an action list

Make a list of “where you are at!”
..... in other words, do an “Audit”

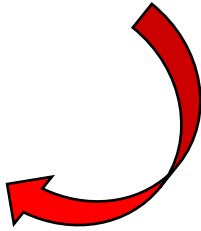
With Eco-champion, gather together an interested group to be your “Eco-team”

Assign duties

Put your plan into action!

Tell everyone!!!
Involve everyone!!!

Have fun!



Getting started

A quote from Archbishop Thabo

“That there is life on this planet is a miracle in itself. It is the most serious of sins that we humans are threatening this life. For too long we have selfishly misused and abused God’s mandate to “have dominion over” creation (Genesis 1:28). Now is the time to recognize that we have a responsibility to God to care for this intricate web of life, acknowledging that “The Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24).

One of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion is *“To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew life of the earth”*. This recognises that we are protectors of each other: of the natural world, of the poor and vulnerable. As we live in an era of rapid and destructive climate change which affects us all; with the impact being on the poorest and most vulnerable, the 2013 Provincial Synod passed a resolution calling on all ACSA parishes to include creation care as an essential component of Christian mission. The resolution also mandated the adding of environmental responsibility to the canonical responsibilities of Parish Counsellors (Canon 28.4a) and Church Wardens (Canon 29).

As People of Faith, we are aware of the intricacy and wonder of God’s creation and give thanks to God for the gift of life on this planet, our only home. We recognise that we humans are integrally part of this web of life and that our well-being is dependent on the health and well-being of this planet; and also recognise that God has mandated us to care for and keep this web of life for future generations.

In light of this, we are called to take this mandate seriously, but becoming a Green Parish seems to be a daunting and scary affair! Not so!

Embarking on the Green Journey with your Church provides a wonderful opportunity to grow. Perhaps you are already involved and don’t even realise it. Also, you can go from doing nothing to doing something! You can move toward responsible practices that will help the Planet and save your church money as well. You can start to explore new perspectives on faith, worship and spirituality that will renew and energize your members.

Getting started can be a big step in some churches, but it does not have to be hard. This is a time for exploration and getting practical. Your carefully thought-out plan to adopt an Eco-ministry can lay the foundation for an ever-deepening commitment.

Let’s get going!

Don’t forget to take lots of pictures to document your journey and share them with JAEI as well!

1. Preparation

- a. Call a meeting of everyone who will be affected (this includes Wardens, Parish Council, Parish Ministers, representatives of all other Ministries – including Youth and Children)
- b. Explain the need (here a JAEI representative can help)
- c. Do a quick *“where are we at”* summary (mini-audit) (see below)
- d. Present the results of the mini-audit to the congregation
- e. Appoint an Eco-champion to head up your new Eco-ministry and an Eco-ministry team
- f. Formulate an action plan

Finding your Eco-champion & Team

Nothing will change in the Parish unless there are people who are working to make it happen! There may well be someone who stands out for you to lead this Ministry, otherwise, you may well have to do a bit of convincing. Is there someone who has an interest in the environment – nature; Creation? The Eco-champion really needs an environmental interest and (better still) passion. If there is someone with environmental knowledge – approach them as well.

Speak to various people in the existing Ministries – a good cross-pollination of ideas and involvement is always good – and there will be many projects and activities that everyone can pitch in with. Call for volunteers. Ideally, the Eco-team should be from 5-10 people. Representation of Youth in this Ministry would be super!

Once you have your “Eco-team” together, have a meeting to set some short-term goals. A good idea would also be to do a quick survey within the congregation to see what they would expect and actions that they would like to see.

Talk to JAEI as well as some existing Green Parishes for advice and encouragement.

Action plan – setting goals

To start out on any journey – you have to know where you are – so a “mini-audit” is really necessary at this point.

	Don't Have	Mediocre	Good	Great!
Worship:				
Do we sing Creation/enviro hymns regularly?				
Do we have Creation/enviro prayers regularly?				
Do we have Creation/enviro sermons?				
Do we celebrate Season of Creation and other Enviro Days?				
Information:				
Do we know about JAEI (<i>Johannesburg Anglican Eco-spiritual Initiative</i>)?				
Do we have copies of the Diocesan Eco-Policy and Green Building Guidelines?				
Do we have copies of the Enviro Resolutions from Province?				
Do we have an Enviro information board?				
Do we mention Enviro information in our pew bulletin?				
Have we had any Enviro information functions / outings?				

Enviro footprint:				
Do we monitor our electricity usage?				
Do we monitor our water usage?				
Do we use environmentally friendly cleaning products?				
Do we monitor use of office supplies (especially paper)?				
Do we recycle waste paper?				
Do we do any other form of recycling?				
Do we harvest rainwater?				
Do we have a biodiversity friendly and water-wise garden?				
Do we have a food garden?				

The answers to the above questions should give you a good idea of what you need to tackle – many are quick and easy (introducing hymns and prayers, eco-corner in the pew bulletin etc.) – others are going to take a little effort but are well within your grasp.

Actions:

There are lots of ideas for an action plan listed below - **You don't have to do them all, or do them all at once! Baby steps!!** However, having a good look at energy and water usage is an essential start.

Environmental footprint

- Walk through the church building and make notes of where action needs to be taken in light of reducing your carbon footprint. This can determine your next steps.
- Changing light bulbs to energy efficient ones (LEDs are preferable – but at least change to CFLs.)
- Install timers and insulation on geysers. Also reduce the thermostats to moderate heat.
- Repair broken windows
- Erect an Eco notice/information board
- Remove alien vegetation
- Put up a bird feeder
- Initiate Creation prayers and hymns/songs as part of all Services.
- Put up notices about reducing water usage – especially in the kitchen and toilets.
- Fix any dripping taps
- Begin a waste management system for recycling (plastic, tins, glass, paper)
- Start a compost heap
- Should the Parish be looking at a major building project, whether a new or expanded facility, a major remodelling, or substantial repairs such as a new roof, which might provide an opportunity to install insulation, skylights or improved ventilation – it is

essential that the Diocesan “Policy on Green Building” be consulted. (The Diocese Trustees will want to know that you have consulted them!)

- Consider installing rainwater harvesting tanks
- Consider installing PV panels for alternative energy
- Consider transforming your gardens into indigenous and water-wise ones.
- Have an indigenous tree/shrub/planting day
- Consult the “Year of Special Environmental Days” - this could give ideas for activities. (Contact JAEI for this)

Transforming Worship

- Whilst the buildings and surrounds are important in becoming a “Green Parish” the congregation is equally important. Worship and people are an integral part of the process. It is here that the congregation will become introduced to the magnificence of Creation and inspired to care for it.
- Does a concern for the health and sustainability of God's creation show up in any aspect of worship services? – now would be a good time to do so.
- Hold an outdoor Eucharist - e.g. Sunrise Service in a natural area or attractive garden.
- Bring the awareness of God’s awesome Creation into worship. Nothing that we every do doesn’t involve God’s provision through Creation – the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the beauty of nature that inspires us We too, are part of that Creation, and we too need to respect Creation as a whole.
- Fix a date for an Environmental Service - Earth Day (22nd April); World Environment Day (5th June) and Season of Creation (September) would be suitable. Liturgies are available from JAEI. (Check out the **Season of Creation** Books – loaded with liturgies, prayers and information! Free download from JAEI website.) Task your Music Director to choose special hymns/songs, and your Parish Ministers to write special prayers. Invite a guest speaker. The Church can also be decorated accordingly. Involve as many people as you can.
- Learn new hymns about our part in God's creation, and keep using good ones that are already known. If there is someone with writing skills, write your own words to traditional hymns. (**Caution:** *Ensure that your Parish is registered with CCLI [Christian Copyright Licencing International] in order to do this, and that your song is only used within your congregation, otherwise it is an infringement of copyright and is open to legal action.*)
- Allow the Sunday School to explore environmental themes as well. Children will love to get out and discover what’s hiding in the soil and other exciting themes as well as making crafts from recycled waste.
- Include an Eco-corner in the pew bulletin as well.

Providing Information

- Have there been any educational programs that look at environmental issues or ecological theology? - now would be a good time to do so.
- Think about running a Bible Study dealing with Creation. (“God’s Earth, Our Home” – by Rowan Williams, past Archbishop of Canterbury) is a good one. Available on-line and from JAEI website.
- Arrange an Eco-breakfast with a guest speaker

- Do a thematic Bible study that shows the depth of "creation care" within scripture.
- Have an Eco-quiet morning
- Hold a forum where people can express differing views on a controversial topic. Focus the session so that the goal is an increase in understanding, and not a decision on a particular issue.
- Have a film evening – “The Story of Stuff” is a good series that gets us thinking about unnecessary consumerism. (available for free download at <https://storyofstuff.org>) Follow this with a debate/discussion.
- Post information on your Green Progress in your newsletter/website/notice board.
- At all times, encourage all parishioners to consider their own environmental footprint and how they can reduce it.
- Attend the JAEI Eco-sharing mornings and events.

Mission and advocacy

Once your Green Parish is really going well, think about expanding to some outreach as well:

- Consider the demographics of your own area and see where and how this can be done. Eco-justice is an important component of a Green Parish.
- Promote “fair trade” in all dealings.
- Take a hard look at where the Parish has invested their funds – are these providers ethical?
- Have a “*Live Simply so that Others Might Simply Live*” campaign.



And know that you are Going Green for God!