

# An environmental check-up for your church

## Johannesburg Anglican Eco-spiritual Initiative (JAEI)

### Welcome

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This Church Check-Up has been developed to help you get started as a Green Parish. It will:

- help you identify and affirm the environmental work you are already doing with your congregation, church centre and/or church offices
- give you advice on how to develop and grow as a Green Parish
- show your areas of strength and those that can be further developed
- point you to help for the areas you want to get involved in.

It is not a exam! It is here to help you.

### The environmental check- up

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#### 1. CHECK-UP

Use the following sections to identify your church's current environmental good practice and future priorities. For some questions you may wish to tick more than one box (e.g. an environmental feature may be present but also have the potential to be further developed). There is space for additional notes on each. Skip those sections or tick boxes that aren't relevant for your church.

#### 2. WORSHIP / LITURGY

Worship is the prime focus of Christian life from which the Church's life and mission flows. This section is designed to help you identify how thankfulness and concern for God's creation are expressed in your worship.

##### How regularly during the year are environmental concerns included in worship?

- Never                       Occasionally                       Only at special services                       Frequently
- e.g. Season of Creation,  
World Environment Day,  
World Water Week,  
Harvest Festival,  
World Day of Peace

##### In your Church's prayer life, do you:

- Praise God the Creator                       Say sorry for the harm done to the environment                       Give thanks to God for the gift of creation                       Pray for the healing of creation

**Does your Church connect with God’s gift of creation through worship?**

- Through fresh décor       Through prayer walks & outdoor services       Using natural materials within worship       Choosing organic bread and wine

**Does your Church sing hymns or songs that celebrate the wonder of creation and express the calling to care for the environment?**

- Regularly       On special Sundays       Hardly ever

**Notes:**

**3. THEOLOGY**

Theology is concerned with giving and exploring a rational and orderly account of Christian belief, drawing on Biblical studies, Church tradition and history, ethics and the context in which the Church is present.

| <b>Does your church:</b>   | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                | <b>Has potential to develop</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Have access to Christian environmental resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| Produce resources with environmental themes  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| Participate in or organise study/exploration events that include environmental issues.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| Include creation/environmental issues in its teaching, studying and preaching programme? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |

**Notes:**

#### 4. CHILDREN'S WORK

Christian work with children can inform, inspire and encourage youngsters as they grow in faith.

**Does your children's programme (infant and primary age) include environmental issues and the potential for developing this ministry?**

|  | <b>Sometimes</b>         | <b>Never</b>             | <b>Has potential to develop</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Junior Church/ Sunday School/ Children's Liturgy and Catechism | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| Playgroups   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| After school/ holiday clubs                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| In schools e.g. through Assemblies                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| All age worship  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>        |

**Notes:**

#### 5. YOUTH WORK

Churches undertake a range of youth work including group meetings on Sundays, church and open youth groups and mid-week uniformed organisations. If your church undertakes youth work, you can review your existing activities and consider future possibilities here.

| <b>Activities</b>   | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Involve young people in auditing and improving the environmental management of the premises | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hold a debate on environmental issues and personal responsibility                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop creation-care material to offer in worship  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Undertake a practical environmental/conservation project                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Arrange a nature walk / hike   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organise an environmentally focused community event (with young people from the whole community) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

## 6. ALL-AGE EDUCATION

Church is a place where people can grow in faith from cradle to grave. Relating key topics, like environmental issues, with Christian thinking can be inspirational and faith-affirming.

**What opportunities are or could be available for your church?**

| <b>Activities</b>                                  | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Undertake an environmental Bible study/ Reflection | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Invite a speaker on environmental issues           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organise/participate in a creation-care Lent group | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Produce study material on environmental issues     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

## 7. CHURCH PROPERTY

Good stewardship of energy and maintenance issues can both reduce your Church's impact on the environment and save your Church money, particularly in the long-term. This section can help you to assess your churches current environmental stewardship of property (sanctuary, halls, clergy housing) and the potential for developing this.

|  | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Insulate church buildings if necessary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Choose appropriately sized rooms for activities  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Timetable meetings to minimise electricity usage   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fit energy saving light bulbs  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider carrying out an energy audit  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider carrying out a water audit  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider carrying out a waste audit  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered renewable energy (e.g. solar)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by (e.g. photocopier) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Check water outlets – fix drips and leaks  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Install water-saving devices (e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps)              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered water harvesting  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered planting a food garden  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

**8. CHURCH MANAGEMENT**

Churches are responsible for the good stewardship of money and a range of consumables. You can use this section to assess your church’s existing good practice and identify issues for consideration and action.

**Purchasing policy & financial management**

|   | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Purchase Fairtrade products (e.g. tea and coffee)/<br>become a Fair-trade Church / Parish | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Use local suppliers where possible (promoting a sustainable local economy and reducing transportation)

Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials & paint

Purchase recycled paper and envelopes where possible

Check the environmental policy of your bank and see if you are satisfied with it

Have an ethical investment policy for any savings/ enquire about this at the appropriate church body

Formulate an Environmental Policy for your church

**Catering**

Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates

Use farmers markets and other local suppliers (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)

**Waste minimisation**

Collection facilities for recycling items which can be used by church members, building users or local community (e.g. paper, cans, spectacles, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes)

Hold jumble sales to raise funds, recycle goods and promote the availability of goods at affordable prices

Initiate a waste management system

**Notes:**

**9. CHURCH LAND & BIODIVERSITY**

Many churches are responsible for land varying in size from a tiny patch to a large acreage. This section can help you to assess the ecological value, value to the community and attractiveness of your church's plot and the potential to develop it.

|  | <b>Present</b>           | <b>Potential to develop</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wildlife-friendly management (e.g. minimal use of weed killers and pesticides, leaving some areas to grow naturally)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Indigenous plant species and plants that benefit biodiversity (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing, Nectar producing plants/trees for birds, butterflies and bees) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Other features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird feeding station, bird baths, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and other invertebrates)             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Visually attractive planting/ features   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Area for prayer/ contemplation/ outdoor worship  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Area for recreation  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

**Notes:**

## 10. PERSONAL LIFESTYLE

More people attend church week by week than participate with any other voluntary body. You can use this section to assess what your church is currently doing to encourage individuals to green their lifestyle and the potential to develop this mission.

|  | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Publish green tips in a church/ parish magazine/ bulletin  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Promote awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations (e.g. home energy audit) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage walking and cycling to church where safe   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

## 11. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Churches can work with and through their local community to improve their neighbourhood. Here you can assess the links that your Church already has in the local community and the potential for further development.

|  | Have done                | Could consider           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Establish links with JAEI and Green Anglicans;<br>Participate in JAEI activities   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Establish links with community organisations with a<br>view to sharing your environmental ministry<br>(e.g. schools, youth groups, local environmental bodies) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy<br>formation – Local Authorities can advise   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Draw on links that members have with environmental<br>bodies (e.g. EWT; Birdlife; WESSA, WWF)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

## 12. OVERSEAS CONCERNS

Living simply that others may simply live is a facet of Christian life.

**What can your church do to benefit the environment and people across the world?**

|   | Have done                | Could consider           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Support the work of Christian development agencies<br>(e.g. Christian Aid,) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have an active Justice and Peace group                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



|   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Promote Fairtrade   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Explore environmental issues through linked overseas communities or churches                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support the work of international conservation and environment agencies (e.g. A Rocha, WWF, Friends of the Earth) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

### 13. CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change poses a serious and immediate threat to people everywhere, particularly to the poor of the earth. This section can help you to identify what you can do in your church buildings and in your daily lives to reduce your carbon footprint.

|   | <b>Have done</b>         | <b>Could consider</b>    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Read your meters regularly/ assess your energy usage                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Calculate the carbon footprint of your buildings                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Take steps to reduce your carbon footprint  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage the congregation to reduce their carbon footprint in their everyday lives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Notes:**

**CONGRATULATIONS** on all the work your church is already doing to care for the Earth!  
**Now use the following pages to summarise your achievements so far and to draw up an Action Plan**

## **SUMMARY**

**List here what your church is already doing to care for creation:**

**SPRITUAL LIVING - Worship and prayer, theology and bible study, teaching for young and older people:**

**PRACTICAL LIVING - in the church buildings, grounds and in your use of resources:**

**GLOBAL LIVING - in personal lifestyle choices, in your community and the wider world:**

**NOW use the table below (or make up your own one) to draw up your  
Green Parish Action Plan:**

| <b>ACTION</b> | <b>TIMESCALE</b> | <b>WHO</b> |
|---------------|------------------|------------|
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**Adapted for Johannesburg Anglican Diocese**