



Faith & the Common Good

Seeking Common Ground for the Common Good



Greening Sacred Spaces



Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) is a practical program developed by *Faith & the Common Good* to assist faith communities in taking concrete actions to create a more sustainable and energy efficient place of worship and to educate members of the community about ecological issues. Greening Sacred Space will help people of faith live out the call to protect our planet home within their own context. It also provides an opportunity to save money, help save the planet, and engage in meaningful conversations about the spirituality of eco-sustainability.

Faith & the Common Good is an interfaith network of religious communities who understand the Earth as a sacred gift. We believe that our faith traditions are a key source of wisdom in the great spiritual quest of our time: Healing our beloved Earth. We believe that we are called to re-envision the way that we live.

Greening Sacred Spaces supports faith communities in different ways:

- **Guides and Resources.** FCG has developed many resources that will help your faith community to become more sustainable and cost efficient. These range from posters (like the Green Rule, shown right) to GSS case studies, information on financing audits and retrofits, “how to” guides (such as Forming a Green Team Guide), videos, and more. Resources can be downloaded from www.faith-commongood.net.
- **Networking.** Every community in Ontario has groups and people involved in environmental protection and green activities. Often these people can be a big assistance with your greening efforts and in many cases we can help you find these local partners. FCG may also be able to introduce you to other faith communities who are greening so that you may learn directly from their experiences. Regular GSS networking meetings are held across Ontario.
- **Ongoing support.** Our staff will be in contact with you from time to time to assist you and to hear about your activities. We may be able to offer new ideas and resources, point out examples, provide other contacts and simply celebrate your progress with you.



The Green Rule *Ecological Wisdom from Faith Traditions*

The Green Rule presents sayings from more than a dozen of the world's great religious and spiritual traditions, demonstrating that all have at their core an awareness of the sacredness of creation.

For more information or to join the GSS project, contact:

Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin Regions: contact Jane Snyder jsnyder@faith-commongood.net, 519-747-5139 or view www.reepwaterlooregion.ca

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Greening Sacred Spaces Steps to Greening



We have found that successful greening efforts follow a number of simple steps. These are:

- 1) **Introduction:** To give you and your faith community an overview of what is possible as you plan your greening.
- 2) **Expressing Interest:** Even though most people are aware of the challenges we face from human-accelerated climate change and other environmental problems and they want to do something about it, it still need the leadership of a few committed people to make things happen.
- 3) **Gathering People Together:** An important starting point is gathering a group of concerned people together to discuss what needs to be done. FCG has a Forming a Green Team Guide to help with this.
- 4) **Getting Decision-Makers Involved:** To ensure ongoing success it is important to bring key decision-makers from your faith community along in this transformative process.
- 5) **Let everyone know what you are doing:** A key to success, and positive change, is keeping everyone in the loop on developments. Make regular announcements, write newsletter articles, talk about your ideas at coffee time.
- 6) **Green events:** Green events will educate, build interest, answer questions, and create momentum and hope. A green event can be anything from a 15-minute information session to full workshops and eco-fairs. FCG has a several workshop guides to help with planning these events and DVDs on various greening topics.
- 7) **Energy audits:** provide the basic information about the potential for more efficient energy use. An audit can range from a simple walk-through, pointing to obvious problems and potential opportunities, to a full engineering study that goes into great detail.
- 8) **Retrofits:** can make your building more energy efficient and comfortable to use and can range from caulking around doors and windows, to insulating the basement and ceiling, to new mechanical systems.
- 9) **Community Involvement:** What kind of lawns and gardens do you have? Is there the opportunity for a public display of your commitment to caring for creation such as solar panels or other renewable energy sources? How can your building convey to the neighbourhood that your faith community cares about humanity's place in creation? How can you be a leader and set a good example for all your neighbours and other buildings.
- 10) **Greening your sacred home space:** GSS invites you to view your home and surroundings as sacred spaces. Our homes are places of rest, beauty, feasting, gathering, loving, and so on; all sacred activities if we make the connection between the Divine impulse towards goodness, wholeness and well being. We need our homes to be as healthy and eco-sustainable as possible, not only to save energy and money but because it is a more holistic and satisfying way to live.

For the detailed version of this document, visit <http://www.faith-commongood.net/gss/steps.asp>.