

Scavenger Hunt for Church Buildings

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."
(Psalm 24:1-2) (New International Version)

During a time such as Bible School, Sunday School or Youth Group plan a lesson around the topics of energy conservation, environmental stewardship and taking better care of this wonderful planet God has given us. Ask the young people what they are concerned about. Then announce that the group (split into several groups if one is too large) is going on an Energy Conservation Scavenger Hunt around the church building. Remind the children that saving money on energy also helps free of the church's budget to do other things such as fund Mission projects or replace something at the church that is worn out. Some church buildings may not have all of these rooms so adapt where necessary.

Thermostats:

Talk about what a thermostat is and what it does. Who controls the thermostats in your church building? Are they turned down in the winter and up in the summer (if there is air conditioning) when no one is using that part of the building? Are your thermostats programmable so that they are doing this automatically? How many are in the church? A thermostat is like a person's skin. It can feel what the temperature is. It is also like your brain. It remembers what temperature is comfortable and tells the furnace or air conditioner when to run. Sometimes thermostats are really smart and can be taught when to change the temperature in the room when people are going to be there. Those types of thermostats are called programmable. Those thermostats help to save energy that no one will be around to use. Most people are comfortable when the thermostat is set to 70 degrees for heating and 75 degrees for cooling. What are your church's thermostats set at?



Doors and windows:

Turn off the lights and look at the frames around doors to the outside and windows. Can you see any daylight showing? If it is winter, place your hands around the edges. Can you feel cold air leaking in? Can you measure the length and width of the crack? Multiply the width x the length. See



how many square inches of opening there is. Ask a trustee if they knew there was a hole that big around the door. What could your church do to eliminate or reduce these leaks? How will this help your church?

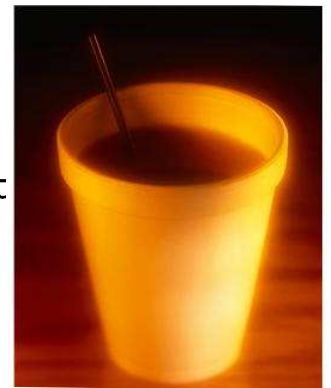
Water usage:

Does your church purchase water from the city or does it have its own well? What are uses of water at your church: Baptism, watering the lawn or a community garden, showers after someone uses the gymnasium, toilets, sinks in the bathroom and kitchen, dishwasher, others? How can your church use less water? Is it feasible to collect rain water and use it for some purposes? Are any faucets leaking? Can you hear or see the toilet running? How many toilets are in your church building? Is there ever a time when someone has forgotten to shut off the water at a sink? Try to remember what running water sounds like. Young ears hear better than older ears. Sometimes people do not always remember whether they shut the water off after they washed their hands. You can save water by shutting the water off for them. A faucet can use about \$.70 of water for every hour it is left on. Can you figure out how much this would be if a faucet was left on from one Sunday to the next?



Kitchen:

Does your church use foam cups for coffee? Do they use paper plates for potlucks and dinners? It is better for the environment if they use "real" dishes and wash them. What are some other ways your church can be "greener" in the kitchen?



Sanctuary:

Our beautiful sanctuaries – often with soaring roof lines – can be difficult spaces to heat and cool. Does your church have ceiling fans to circulate the air and keep the room more comfortable? Look around your sanctuary. Can you think of any ideas to save energy? Are there grilles in the walls or ceiling which are open to the out of doors all year? Do the windows have extra sheets of glass or plastic on one side or the other? Does your sanctuary have more than one thermostat? If it does, are they all set at the same temperature? Are they all set to either cool or to heat?



Lighting:

Light bulbs and lighting can be big energy users in a church. Is someone turning off the lights when the building is not in use, except for security lights? What type

of light bulbs is the church using? Could they switch to more energy efficient ones? Could some lights be on a timer that turns them on and off at the best times? Count how many light bulbs are in each light fixture. Find out what the size is of each bulb. Figure out how long the lights are left on. This is all good information to know when you want to save energy. If your church building had a light fixture with 6- 60 watt light bulbs, the electricity cost to illuminate that fixture would be about 3.6 cents per hour. If that fixture was left on from one Sunday to the next, what would the cost be? Can you figure out the hourly cost if 13 watt compact fluorescent bulbs are used to replace the 60 watt bulbs?



Outdoors:

Look around the parking lot, the lawn and the church building – can you think of a few final suggestions to help make your church kinder to the environment, save energy and take better care of God’s house? Do you have leaking faucets? Could you water flowers and trees with rainwater? Do you have parking lot lights? Do you have an outdoor light that is on when few people are around to see it? How is your lawn mowed or your snow cleared? What is used to make sidewalks less slippery in the winter?



Share your results with the other groups. Pledge to live a “greener” life and share your results with your church’s building committee or building manager. Can you share some of your concerns with other church members? What would be an appropriate and effective way to do this? Even small changes can add up if more people get “on board.”

If you need extra help contact the energy consultant at the Presbytery of Great Rivers office.