WHY FORM A GREEN TEAM?

(AKA Earth Care Team, Environmental Committee, etc.)

Creating change within a congregation is more likely to happen if two or more people approach congregational leadership. An even greater chance of success occurs if the person represents an organized group of three or more people.

These suggested steps depend on the structure of your house of worship and the needs of your congregation.
1. All you need is interest; neither previous experience nor background knowledge is necessary. Find one or two more like minded people in your congregation. A chat with clergy may lead you to people with your interest. Talk about your ideas with people that are members of gardening or outdoor organizations or volunteer for environmental groups. Invite a one-on-one conversation over lunch with people that have a vegetable garden or compost or have added solar panels to their home.

2. Get permission to organize a group within your congregation. Ask to speak briefly at a service or board meeting to explain why this is important to you, why it’s important to your congregation, and why you want to start a Green Team. There may be a committee, such as social justice, that will welcome an environmental subcommittee.
3. Once your group is formed, meet monthly, write an agenda, take, and distribute meeting notes. Give everyone an opportunity to express their ideas without judgmental input. Steer discussion to create opportunities to make ideas realistic. Develop a list and prioritize them. When possible, tie actions to faith traditions, celebrations, and holidays.

4. Decide on initial projects and goals. Start simple with just one or two projects. For example, maybe your group wants to focus on reducing garbage. How? Maybe your goal is putting a recycling bin next to every garbage can and at the entrances/exits. Walk around your building. What else jumps out at you? Can plastic cups be replaced by reusable mugs?

5. Completion of one quick, easy-to-do project gives your team confidence and credibility. The FCGG Toolkit has many ideas and resources. A FCGG volunteer can answer questions, give guidance, and make references to appropriate agencies. Reach out to us at info@fcgg.org
6. Get buy-in from leadership before doing a project. If you hit opposition, arguing the dangers and realities of climate change won’t work. Try instead to point out the religious connection (see the toolkit introduction) or the financial benefit. For example, replacing all the CFL lightbulbs with LED lightbulbs will cost more up front, but within a year, depending upon the size of the building and how many bulbs are replaced, it could save hundreds to thousands of dollars annually.

7. Being “Green” is not just for the green team or the building. Bring environmental consciousness into all faith community activities. Encourage new habits in the home. Publish articles about accomplishments and their impact.

8. Have fun! Programs and successes lead to more participation and growth in team membership. Teams that enjoy meetings, doing programs, and achieving success, continue and grow. Read the stories in the next section for inspiration.