



Faith Communities Go Green (fcgg.org)

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Faith Communities Go Green: An Introduction

“In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.”

-Wangaari Mathai

Faith Communities Go Green (fcgg), originally an impact Team within Green Umbrella, was founded to partner with religious communities throughout the Greater Cincinnati area to add the moral voice to engage in sustainability initiatives that will reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change. It is now a collaboration between Green Umbrella and Equasion.

Religious organizations and communities can become strong allies in the fight for climate action. All traditions emphasize the moral and ethical imperative to care for creation. Individual efforts are important, but collabora-

tion within and among congregations can bring about much greater change.

Mission:

Partnering with religious communities to create a more sustainable and equitable future for all by mobilizing their moral voice to reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change.

Vision:

Religious communities collaborating to integrate care for creation in their lives and society.

Guiding Principles:

We keep open minds, value everyone’s ideas and respect diverse opinions.

We use accessible language and translate ideas into language that is easily understandable.

We are willing to learn.

We respect the process and commit to it; we believe process is product.

We commit to finding the right questions and struggle with common questions.

We keep the common good top of mind.

We are willing to compromise.

We are willing to take risks.

We utilize a systems lens by maintaining a holistic, long-term vision of the full system rather than



A Chinese Bamboo Metaphor

If you sow seeds of this type on fertile ground, you have to be very patient. Nothing happens for years; there are no green shoots or any signs at all for the first, second, third or fourth year. The fifth year, something green pushes

through the soil, and then it grows 40 feet in one year! The reason is simple, for years nothing happens on the surface, but the bamboo is developing prodigious roots until it is ready to manifest in the world. This is what bottom-up

grassroots change looks like when a critical mass is reached. Suddenly, there is support, a new attitude, a confluence of effort and energy, and if enlightened leadership also manifests, a major cultural shift can happen.,

The Advocacy Working Group

The Faith Communities Go Green Advocacy Team equips members to bring the compassion and ethics of their faith to the work of shaping environmental policy. Coming from many faiths, we are passionate about equity, advocating for policies and practices that reduce the disproportionate impact of pollution and climate change on low-income and vulnerable people.

We work to be proactive in legislative debates, particularly at the state level (Ohio) and mobilize people to send comments to regulatory agencies like the EPA when rules are being drafted. Meeting monthly by Zoom and

tracking relevant bills, we develop action alerts for members to use in newsletters, bulletins, and letter-writing campaigns. We also help organize meetings with elected officials.

We also share stories of success to keep hope and resolve strong. Greater Cincinnati is providing more and more good news about the impact of vision, collaboration, and the commitment to measure impact. Download “State and local resources on environmental policy” to discover outstanding non-profits and regional collaborations that provide a wealth of information through reports, blogs, seminars, and newsletters.

Faith communities have unique resources to motivate people to engage in “climate action,” but this requires a new way of framing the issue, according to the research of Prof. Ed Maibach of the George Mason Center for Climate Change Communication. In a webinar for the Catholic Climate Covenant, “Why the Faith Community Holds the Climate Change Key,” he advised mobilizing faith communities’ core strengths of trust and moral leadership. “Simple, clear messages, repeated often by a variety of trusted voices, suggest and motivate solutions,” he wrote.

Volunteers Wanted for Earth Care Initiative

Are you passionate about making a positive impact on our environment and helping congregations in the Cincinnati area? We have an exciting opportunity for you!

Faith Communities Go Green (FCGG) is launching a program to assist congregations in reducing their energy consumption and lower utility bills. We are seeking dedicated individuals to join our team as volunteers, responsible for conducting low-level energy assessments for local congregations. No prior experience is necessary – we will provide you with training led by certified professionals.

As a volunteer, you will have the chance to make a tangible difference by conducting low-level energy assessments for congregations. By identifying areas of improvement, you will help them save money, support their mission, and contribute to a greener planet.

Benefits of volunteering with us include:

- Training by a certified professional.
- Flexible scheduling to accommodate your availability.
- Opportunity to enhance your skills and evaluate your own house of worship.
- Joining a passionate community of like-minded individuals.

If you have a genuine passion for learning and making a positive impact, we welcome you to join our team. Together, let’s reduce our impact on the environment and create a brighter future for all.

To sign up and learn more, please contact Ken Wright, leader of the FCGG facilities group, at facilities@fcgg.org by Friday, November 10, 2023. Join us in this important mission and be part of the change!

DONATE NOW

FCGG aims to raise \$15,000 to support our mission to reduce environ-

mental impact. We are excited to announce that we are hiring a dedicated part-time Program Manager for six months. This individual will play a crucial role in implementing and overseeing low-level energy assessments at local congregations. However, we need funding to extend the Program Manager’s position for an additional six months.

The Program Manager will focus on assisting congregations of various faiths to form green team and guide them in implementing actions that mitigate the crisis. This includes conducting low-level energy assessments, tracking energy costs, and implementing energy-efficient measures within their facilities. The Program Manager will play a vital role in developing interfaith programming that educates and activates faith communities throughout the region.

A professional energy specialist will train the volunteers to conduct the energy assessments.

Education and Lifestyles Working Group

Our Education/Lifestyles Working Group, which has 60 members, educates and inspires members of the various faith and civic communities to change their lifestyles, whether by taking small steps or big, to reduce our individual and collective carbon footprint and collectively help our planet to become healthier and sustainable.

We go about our tasks in several ways. We help places of worship start Green Teams, which also includes its surrounding grounds; we host webinars and workshops; have Movies &

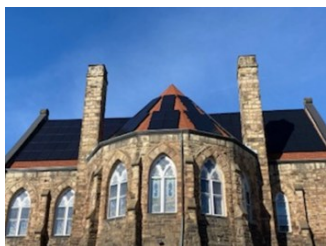
Discussion nights; offer opportunities to the public to participate through our Faith Communities Go Green Team in Eco Challenges 2-3 times a year, hold book discussions on books addressing climate change and much more.

Our group meets once a month to put our heads together on planning events throughout the year, updating one another on our current work, and running new ideas with one another.

The Eco Tips from Susan Vogt, a member of our working group, in-

spires us to take on simple to tough challenges that will keep us engaged in living mindfully, caring for our environment, and reducing our carbon footprint.

We are planning more programs/events to offer this year and welcome you to join our working group and contribute your time and ideas to our tasks at whatever pace you are comfortable with. We have an exciting year ahead!



The facilities group provides the opportunity to meet leaders of congregations doing exceptional work in greening themselves. You can meet them in person at their houses of worship to learn how they inspired their congregational members to change their

The Facilities Working Group

building toward net-zero carbon. Join these tours to see what they have achieved and ask questions to help you further the work in your congregation. Get the information on the upfront costs and the return-on-investment savings and how long it will take before they see financial benefits.

The Facilities working groups provide tools to help you reduce your energy

use in your facility building. The less energy you use, the lower your utility bill. That leaves money for congregational programming. Reducing energy usage also lowers your environmental impact by putting less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It is a win-win; lower cost, lower carbon footprint. We guide you to start with the easy, do-it-yourself, steps, moving from lowest cost, up to having an energy audit of your building and beyond.

Start a Green Team

Having a green team in a house of worship enables lay members to influence attitudes and daily behaviors to take better care of our planet for future generations. Show people the connections between environmental issues and other issues they might care about, such as refugees or food insecurity. Use the strengths of the people on your team.

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.





Faith Communities Go Green Members

You're invited to our 3rd Annual FCGG Meeting.

December 14th from 7-8 PM

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcudOusrj4iGdNepX9iMIDEk9fy19zvF5N4#/registration>

To learn more and join Faith Communities Go Green, a Green Umbrella and EquaSion Collaboration, go to www.fcgg.org

Join a Working Group!

Advocacy: Contact Ariel at

Advocacy@fcgg.org

Facilities: Contact Ken at:

Facilities@fcgg.org

Education/Lifestyles: Contact

Becca at: Education@fcgg.org

Learn about our Energy Efficiency Initiative and meet our new EEI Program Manager, Cheryl Hutchins.

We'll give you a quick update on what each of our three Working Groups have been doing this past year, but most importantly we want to hear from YOU!

We want to hear YOUR IDEAS! In this meeting we will spend more time **listening to you**. What Climate Action steps has your Faith Community taken and how can we help in that process! Take this opportunity to find ways to collaborate and network with other faith communities.

[REGISTER NOW](#) to receive a confirmation email containing zoom information to join the meeting.

Resources

Books:

Cook, John, Ph.D., *Cranky Uncle vs. Climate Change: How to Understand and Respond to Climate Change Deniers*. Citadel Press, 2020.

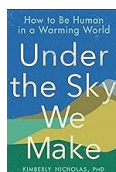
Cook uses cartoons, humor, and critical thinking to expose the misleading techniques of science denial and build public resilience against misinformation.

Hasyhoe, Katharine. *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*. One Signal Publishers, 2021

Hayhoe provides profound insights about human behavior and a blueprint for how we can talk to others about climate change and work together towards the healing of our common home.

Nicholas, Kimberly, Ph.D. *Under the Sky We Make: How to Be Human in a Warming World*. Putnam, 2021

Nicholas, a leading global sustainability scientist, provides simple and doable ideas that can lead to effecting radical change in our society and culture starting with making fundamental shifts in our own lives.



Websites

www.skepticalscience.com

This website provides current information on climate change. It is designed by Dr. John Cook, the author

of *Cranky Uncle vs. Climate Change*, and provides not only solid scientific information, but also makes use of cartoons and humor to illustrate many of the principles of climate change.

www.climate.gov

From blogs to FAQs to long-read features, this site offers a deep dive into climate science and about how climate change and variability matter to us.

ipcc.ch

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides reports and other information resources coordinated under the auspices of the United Nations and produced through the collaboration of thousands of international scientists to provide a clear and up to date view of the current state of scientific knowledge relevant to climate change.