The Earthwise Church Award Series challenges congregations to become *earthwise* by recognizing and supporting a variety of efforts at many levels and stages. It encourages congregations to begin with easy things that do not require much time or money, then challenges them to advance their Earthwise commitment through engagement with more challenging opportunities.

Becoming an Earthwise Congregation passes many stages of learning, effort, commitment, and refinement.

The opportunities below are examples of the efforts and commitments available to congregations an Earthwise designation. This is not an exhaustive list. There is no ‘one size fits all’ program: tailor your effort: Use what fits, innovate when it does not.

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**Greening personal lifestyle**
- Publish green tips in any church/parish magazine
- Promote awareness through posters or information from environmental organizations
- Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities (glass, plastic bags, cans, paper, plastics)
- Share ‘relatively current’ magazines with others in the congregation, nursing homes, etc.

**Church Land**
- Wildlife-friendly Management (e.g. minimal use of weed killers and pesticides, leaving some areas un-mown, valuing old trees, hedges, etc.)
- Use of Native plant species and plants that benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, etc.)
- Other features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, etc.)
- Visually attractive planting/features
- Area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship
- Area for recreation
- Compost yard waste (either on premises, or at authorized site)
- Removal of Invasive plant species

**Financial management & purchasing policy**
Create and follow an ethical-earth friendly investment policy for savings
Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials & paint
Purchase recycled paper and envelopes (to close the loop)
Purchase fair trade products (e.g. coffee)
Use local suppliers where possible – Community Supported Agriculture, Farmers’ Market (promoting a sustainable local economy and reducing transportation)
Work to end use of disposable products (goal – smaller trash bins, more recycling bins, etc.)

Catering
Use real-reusable dishes (not disposable cups and plates)
Cloth napkins and cleaning cloths (not paper towels – napkins)
Use farmers markets and other local suppliers (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)

Reduce Waste / Reuse / Recycle
Collection facilities for recycling items that church members, building users or local community can patronize (e.g. paper, cans, glasses, stamps, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes, foil)
“Yard” sales to raise funds, recycle goods and promote the availability of goods at affordable prices

Energy- heating and light

BEGIN WITH AN Energy Audit

THEN --

Monitor energy consumption regularly (monthly) to check trends
Switch to ‘green’ electricity (electricity from renewable sources – for example, Xcel Energy’s ‘wind source’)
Annual maintenance of HVAC system
Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities
Timetable meetings to minimize heating use
Heating system with timer and thermostatic controls
Purchase of one or more Energy Star appliances – create and follow a plan that replaces older inefficient appliances with energy star appliances (suggest at least one per year)

Annual maintenance of current HVAC system
Prepare and follow a plan for replacing or refurbishing HVAC older than ten/fifteen years Systems
Insulate windows and doors to reduce heat loss

Install appropriate levels of insulation where none exists – or increase insulation levels where possible and appropriate.

Clean windows to maximize natural light – Replace cracked or broken windowpanes

Establish and help people follow building policies that encourage users to switch off unnecessary lights

Office Policies that do not leave copiers, computers, etc. on Standby

Media policies that unplug televisions, etc.

Update lighting options:
- Install CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs; please dispose of properly)
- Install LED Exit Signs - LED exit signs will reduce carbon emissions by more than 5,000 pounds and save hundreds of dollars each year!
- Consider LED lighting in areas

Install Occupancy Sensors - Occupancy sensors in the right locations at your church can significantly reduce the energy your congregation uses (these devices typically pay for themselves in only 6 months to 5 years).

Water
- Check water outlets – fix drips and leaks

Install water-saving devices e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off faucets.

Rain Barrels and similar points for collecting rainfall from down pipes for use in garden

Building maintenance, remodeling, new construction
- Choose timber from sustainably managed forests, and reclaimed materials where appropriate
- Follow the most Eco-Friendly building practices available.
- Recycle used building materials when remodeling.

Public Policy Advocacy / Citizen Action
- Letter writing
- Calling legislators
- Meeting w/legislators
- Participating in rallies/events at the Capitol
- MN Energy Challenge
- Selling of light bulbs, green power
Eco fairs, carpooling, etc.
Other advocacy action

Engaging staff, clergy, the worship team, the CE program
  Meetings with staff/clergy
  Sermons given on global warming or stewardship of the earth
  Sermons/prayers on global warming or creation care themes
    included in your worship service
  Promote Earthwise events and activities in announcements, bulletins, and newsletters
  Earth day celebration –
  Earth stewardship worship themes
  CE program – adult
  CE program – Sunday school

Other means of engagement

Education outreach (programs for the community)
  Speaker
  Movie showing
  Forum or workshop
  Engaging youth groups
  Other outreach efforts

  Involvement in community events
  Other campaigns or actions

Sources –
1. Eco-congregation (England & Wales) is a project of A Rocha UK, 13 Avenue Rd, Southall, Middlesex UB1 3BL Registered Charity 1089276
2. Congregations Caring for Creation / MN Interfaith Power and Light Congregational Activity Report
3. Eco-Justice Program office of the National Council of Churches (http://www.nccecojustice.org/crc_congregations.php)