

**Becoming a Creation Justice Church
Action Plan
First Congregational Church, Eugene Oregon**

Why become a Creation Justice Church?

Holy Scripture tells us that we are part of God's Beloved creation. In Genesis 1 and 2, the first story we are told is of the relationship and connection between humans and our living planet. Our relationship with creation is a sign of our covenant with God and essential in our partnership with all living beings.

Care for our earth is a matter of economic and social justice. We are called to care for one another. The data reveals that the most vulnerable of our human siblings are the most affected by climate change because it alters weather patterns, sea levels, access to food and water and so much more.

If we and others don't act now, we won't have a home as we know it. Addressing climate change is essential for all of us, and especially for the well-being of future generations.

Everyone needs to be involved in addressing climate change, not just corporations. As individuals and as a congregation, we can have an impact.

Climate Action Plan

Under the leadership of church staff, FCC will conserve resources and use only environmentally friendly materials. "Green principles" will guide our use of equipment and consumable supplies and resources.

- Request consultation from BRING to review church practices and, after implementing their suggestions, apply for their "green" certification called "Rethink ".
<https://bringrecycling.org/services/certifications/rethink/>
- Request an energy audit from EWEB for the church building and develop plans for implementing the recommendations from the audit.
- Explore installation of solar panels on the church building (Explore the availability of grants or loans to fund this project. Perhaps ask members to "adopt a panel")
- Review all grounds maintenance practices with church staff and facilities committee in order to establish clearly specified guidelines for use of earth friendly strategies (use of battery/electric operated tools, e.g. lawnmower, blower, etc, planting practices that minimize water use, planting practices that encourage pollinators, prohibited use of herbicides, etc.)
- Continue FCC guidelines to use no disposable dishes or utensils at events within the church
- Work with church committees to insure that "green" practices are followed in everything we do. Examples: prohibiting single use plastics and clamshells for church use; can the Advent festival use fewer resources, how can we make Peace Village and other events as resource neutral as possible?

- Ensure we have adequate bicycle rack options at FCC
- Consider opening our church to Environmental Action groups for meeting and gathering space.

FCC congregation will be well informed and educated about all the ways individuals can make changes in their own lives to reduce, reuse, recycle, refuse, return, rent, repair, and rethink to limit resource use.

- Roll out our Creation Justice Initiative with an intentional effort to embed “catchy”, key ideas into people’s minds and use these phrases frequently and in different ways. Examples include “Are we being good ancestors?” (Jonas Salk); “The eyes of the future are looking back at us and praying that we can see beyond our own time” (Terry Tempest Williams); and “What did you do, once you knew...?” (Jeremy Lent).
- Ensure that FCC focuses our educational efforts on climate justice, which means understanding the connections to colonialism, capitalism, and racism among other things, e.g. moving beyond a strictly conservation understanding of climate justice.
- Provide monthly resources and education in the Shalom newsletter
- Include ideas about reduction of personal resource in our weekly FCC email
- Develop a plan annually for climate action, advocacy, education and information exchange with other climate-focused groups. Include programs for children, youth, adults and intergenerational events.
- Offer Children’s, Youth and Adult educational forum(s) on topics related to climate protection, resource use reduction, advocacy, etc.
- One to two times a year, offer a worship service that honors the earth and emphasizes our need to care for creation. Plan events around Faith Action Week 4/22-5/1.
- Offer plastic recycling roundups twice a year for those items that cannot be recycled curbside. (Possibly 3-4 times/year?)
- Engage youth group in determining ways they would like to be involved in this initiative
- Sponsor an “all church read” and select a book like Active Hope by Joanna Macy and offer a discussion. Offer smaller book groups periodically during the year.
- Sponsor intergenerational work projects, such as a tree-planting event with Friends of Trees.
- Participate in Beach Clean up options through SOLV and local riparian clean up
- Annually renew our covenant as a church to care for creation.
- Consider sponsoring a “Walk or bike to church” day for those who are able.

FCC will be a strong advocate for addressing climate change. We will use our voices to advocate on a local level, state level and national level for policies that slow global warming and reduce pollution.

- Advocate for the greater use of e-cars with an emphasis on purchasing from companies that provide a safe environment and fair compensation to their employees.
- Advocate locally for bike paths and good public transit options.
- Advocate with local food manufacturers for labeling and packaging that allows containers to be recycled.
- Members of the Green Team will determine who and how to connect with climate-focused groups at the local, state and national levels. Examples could include Earthkeepers, 350 Eugene, Interfaith Power & Light, Sierra Club and others.
- Information related up climate change legislation and advocacy will be shared through church emails and monthly newsletter, along with recommended advocacy actions.

- Teach people how to use the Climate Action Now app to advocate more extensively.

First Congregational Church endowment will be invested in companies that are environmentally responsible and will not be invested in fossil fuel industry or in other climate-damaging enterprises.

- Work with one or more representatives of the FCC Endowment Fund to review FCC holdings from a socially responsible investment lens.

First Congregational Church will apply for designation as a Creation Justice Church in the United Church of Christ.

- After a period of discernment and many of the activities in this action plan have been initiated, the Green Team will draft a Creation Justice Covenant that clarifies FCC's ongoing commitment to Creation Justice.
- The Creation Justice Covenant will be presented to the Board and to the congregation for approval.
- FCC will submit its application to be designated a Creation Justice church to the Environmental Justice Program, United Church of Christ.