

The Green Church Initiative

Mount Olivet United Methodist Church-Arlington

Report to the Annual Conference of 2015 - 2016 activities

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it...” (Psalm 24:1)
The scriptures are full of references to God’s creation and to humanity’s relationship with it. The Green Church Initiative (GCI) is a covenant congregation program that empowers a local church to live out its faith, given the Biblical mandate to care for and be good stewards of all that God has so lovingly created.

Introductory Information

The categories chosen for this GCI are representative of the total life and ministry of a congregation. We want a Green Church to understand that everything it does in ministry is connected to God’s creation; in other words, caring for creation is so fundamental to who we are as Christians that it must necessarily be infused into every aspect of the life of a congregation; hence the categories of Worship, Discipleship, Stewardship, Evangelism, and Mission.

Prerequisites

1. Register your congregation with Caretakers of God’s Creation to declare your intent. We want you to register so Caretakers will have a record of your participation. We will continue to provide updates to the GCI and more and more resources as they become available. Also, we feel that your registration fee will help you to commit your congregation to begin to take action. (Mt Olivet registered as a Green Church after a Church Council Vote in Jan 2008.)
2. Form a Creation Care Ministry Team
The United Methodist Book of Discipline provides for the formation of an “Earth Advocacy Committee” in a local church, and creation care ministries have already been legitimized as valid ministries in many local congregations. The formation of such a ministry team is crucial in order to incorporate creation care completely into the overall ministry of a local congregation.
3. Formally adopt the GCI Covenant (adopted by Church Council in 2008) by the congregation’s governing body, i.e. Church Council, Administrative Board, etc. and signed by the Council Chair and Pastor. (Form a committee and sign the covenant to document your intent within six months from the point of registration)
4. Provide an annual report of your progress.

Certification Levels (Points required in each discipline)

Category	Green	Gold	Platinum
Worship	100	150	200
Discipleship	50	75	100
Stewardship	50	75	100
Evangelism	50	75	100
Mission	50	75	100
Totals	300	450	600
Suggested Contribution	\$100	\$75	\$50

Mount Olivet Total points for 2015= Platinum Level

Worship – 150 [Gold]

Discipleship – 80 [Gold]

Stewardship – 230 [Platinum]

Evangelism – 50 [Green]

Mission - 120 [Platinum]

Total: 630 points [Platinum]

Contribution: \$500 to Virginia Conference Caretakers

PLEASE NOTE: You *must* accumulate the minimum number of points in *each* category in order to qualify for certification. In some instances, the same item is listed in multiple categories because it is pertinent to different aspects of the life of the congregation; for example, a church garden can be a mission project in that it helps to feed the hungry, and it can also be an evangelism tool in that its very presence can attract people to that church. Hence it belongs in more than one category. However, you can *only* get points one time for such an item, so you can choose the category in which you want to take the points.

Covenant Commitments

Actions	Total Possible Points	Pre-registration Points	Points for Intended Actions
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A. Worship

<p>A-1 At least once each year, devote an entire worship service to the celebration and honoring of God’s creation. This “Earth Sabbath” or “St. Francis Sunday” or “Festival of God’s Creation” includes a special focus on God’s creation with sermons, prayers, music, children and other activities. Held on April 24th, 2016</p>	Mandatory		10
<p>A-2. In addition to the annual Earth Sabbath service, incorporate creation care activities into worship on an ongoing basis (do at least three times per year, before earning credit, for any letter below).</p>			
<p>a. Pray for God’s creation; include prayers that are inclusive of stewardship and praise of God’s creation by both clergy and laity. Prayers for creation regularly included in worship</p>	10		10
<p>b. Select hymns that have creation care and creation praise themes for regular inclusion in the music of the church. Have regularly included hymns praising God’s creation in 2015</p>	10		10
<p>c. Plan a creation-centered anthem or solo. Done several times in 2015, regular singing of creation psalms</p>	10		10
<p>d. Choose scripture readings that include God’s creation themes. Done several times in 2015</p>	10		10

<p>e. Include creation care themes in children’s messages or similar child-focused activities.</p> <p>Regularly include “caring for God’s creation” as a way to show love of God and neighbor in children’s sharing</p>	10		10
<p>f. Include creation care and stewardship themes in sermons throughout the church year by clergy or laity.</p> <p>Done several times in 2015</p>	10		10
<p>g. Show a video segment that includes creation care.</p>	10		
<p>h. Incorporate liturgical dance and/or drama that celebrates creation using church members and/or local artists.</p>	10		
<p>i. Include a prayer of confession for your congregation’s exploitation, pollution, and/or neglect of God’s creation.</p> <p>Included in prayers of confession several times in 2015</p>	10		10
<p>j. Include creation care in a mission moment.</p>	10		
<p>k. Use communion elements that are locally made and with organic materials, including the chalice, bread and wine..</p> <p>Bread for the way service made by a church member</p>	10		
<p>l. Use live flowers and plants on the altar, using native and local materials as a priority. This requirement may include native alternatives to Easter lilies and Christmas poinsettias as well as the weekly altar flowers.</p> <p>Replaced non-organic flowers with silk flowers in 2011, continued in 2015</p>	10		10

m. Include petition prayers for God's creation. Many prayers included care for God's creation in 2015	10		10
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A-3. Conduct a blessing of the animals with the congregation and animals from your community. Blessing of the Animals Oct. 2015	10		10
A-4. Designate a Rogation Day for the church with a special service blessing the harvest.	10		
A-5. Schedule at least one outdoor worship service. Outdoor worship as part of Blessing of the Animals, Live Nativity 2015	10		10
A-6. Use sustainably grown palm fronds and compost them after use, or incinerate them and use the ashes on the next Ash Wednesday. Done in 2015	10		10
A-7. Conduct a blessing of recycling bins and compost containers to incorporate recycling as a part of worship.	10		
A-8. Use only 100% recycled paper for church bulletins, utilizing chlorine-free and SFC-certified paper products; display recycling, chlorine free and FSC logos. Use 30% recycled paper some of the time	10		
A-9. Create or purchase and display a creation care-themed banner for the sanctuary and other venues where worship services are conducted. Done in 2015	10		10
A-10. Use collection plates or bowls made locally and using earthen or fibrous materials from congregation members.	10		
A-11. Incorporate a "Season of Creation" into your church's liturgical year. For a four-week period	10		

during Ordinary Time, treat God's creation as a liturgical season like Advent, Christmas, Lent, etc. Celebrate Earth, Water, Air and Fire as gifts of God.			
A-12. On United Methodist Women's Sunday, use the Women's Division theme of the connection between the lifestyles of people in industrialized nations and the consequent hardships that brings to some people in developing nations.	10		
A-13. As a celebration of a baptism or a memorial after a death, plant a tree in honor or memory of a church member.	10		
A-14. Include in your Thanksgiving service a litany of thanks for the harvest and the land that produced it (church members might bring food from their gardens or locally grown food to share with each other and the hungry.)	10		
A-15. Schedule an outside speaker to preach on earth care topics. Beth Norcross on Nature and Spirituality	10		10

Total Points in Worship Area in 2015: 150 points

B. Discipleship

B-1. Hold a training event on how to garden organically. Participated in an organic garden workshop at SE Caretakers conference in March 2015.	10		
B-2. Form a new Sunday school class or small group dedicated to the study of the intersection of faith and creation care. Forming a "SING" to help link faith and care of creation.	10		10
B-3. Organize a creation-centered Vacation Bible School.	10		

B-4. Conduct a weekend retreat for children, youth, and/or adults with a creation theme in order to raise awareness of God's creat	10		
B-5. Have a special study session (4-6 weeks) on a creation care issue. Evening class on the Pope's Climate Change Encyclical planned for May.	10		10
B-6. Show a video that lifts up environmental issues. Film, "The Breach" shown. Film illustrates the impact on dams, mining, etc. on wild salmon.	10		10
B-7. Sponsor a creation care fair in which you invite outside organizations to do displays or booths that will help raise your awareness.	10		
B-8. Invite an outside speaker with expertise in faith/creation to do a presentation for a group or groups within the church; optionally, involve neighboring congregations. .Beth Norcross gave a presentation on the formation of a SING to the Caretakers.	10		10
B-9. Visit another church in your area that has an active creation care ministry to learn from them some things they are doing (or to share what you are doing at your Church. Attended the bi-district meeting where other Churches presented what they are doing on Creation Care.	10		10
B-10. Create a display or bulletin board lifting up creation care issues, and describe what your congregation is doing to raise awareness of creation care.	10		
B-11. Include a creation care tip in each weekly bulletin and/ or each monthly newsletter (either printed or electronic). Done monthly throughout 2015	10		10
B-12. Train your religious educators in the importance of including creation care in all classes and/or small groups. (Inclusivity is the intent here.)	10		

B-13. Take a field trip to a creation-related facility <i>and</i> facilitate a faith-based discussion. Stream Clean up May 2015 and Jan 2016.	10		10
B-14. Create and publicize a creation care section of books, videos, or DVDs in your church library. Continued in 2015	10		10

DISCIPLESHIP: 80 points

C. Stewardship

Establish a zero waste goal by [Year]

C-1. Develop a system to recycle paper, plastic, cans, and glass. Yes, and are expanding system.	Mandatory		10
C-2. Recycle electronic waste, including compact fluorescent light bulbs. Have been doing this since 2013	10		10
C-3. Publicize local opportunities to dispose of toxic chemical waste properly. Coordinate with your local waste management authority or local government. Yes, publicized Arlington e-care days in 2015 through church bulletin.	10		10
C-4. Compost food scraps and other compostable items in a bin. Compost coffee grounds/tea bags in 2015	10		10

D. Stewardship – Paper

D-1. For church publications, use paper labeled “chlorine-free” and minimum 30% recycled fiber content. Display the recycling, and chlorine-free logos on the publication. (100% post consumer waste is goal.)	10		
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D-2. Purchase bathroom tissue, facial tissue, paper towels, and paper napkins made from 100% recycled paper.	10		
D-3. Purchase paper cups/plates/bowls/napkins that are compostable. Paper cups only	10		10
D-4. Reduce the amount of office paper your church consumes by at least 10% per year. Do an audit of paper use on a weekly basis and explore ways to reduce usage. Engage youth and other groups in the church in making this happen. Done since 2013, reuse baptism inserts rather than reprinting	10		
D-5. Produce electronic newsletters instead of, or in addition to, paper copies. Enews continued in 2015 and "Messenger" newsletter sent out electronically to those who request it.	10		10
D-6. Minimize the use of the Sunday morning bulletin; show the order of worship electronically. Done in the contemporary service in 2015	10		10
D-7. In the office, set printers and copiers to default to duplex printing.	10		
D-8. Print on the back of one-sided "waste" paper.	10		
D-9. Make paper that has been printed only on one side into scrap pads for use in the church.	10		
D-10. Provide training for staff and laity on how to conserve paper.	10		
D-11. Stop junk mail. Identify junk mail that is regularly received, and ask to be taken off the list. Volunteer regularly asks junk mail distributors to take us off their lists	10		10

E. Stewardship - Energy

<p>E-1. Carry out an electric energy audit for your facility. Reduce electric energy usage by at least 10%.</p> <p>Sanctuary A/C replaced with a more energy-efficient unit in 2011, Entered data into EPA Energy Star system. (Portfolio Manager)</p>	20		20
<p>E-2. Buy “green power” for your church, where available. Most electric utilities now offer consumers the opportunity to purchase “green power” certificates. Contact your utility to learn the details.</p>	10	Link to options	
<p>E-3. Generate your own renewable energy to account for at least 3% of your electricity usage. If renovating or conducting new construction, consider the installation of photovoltaic solar panels.</p>	10	Use as info	
<p>E-4. If you plan to expand, remodel, or build a new church facility, become LEED-certified. Contact the local Green Building Council or seek architects, builders or engineers who are LEED- certified for more information.</p>	10		
<p>E-5. Implement “walk, bike, bus or car-pool to church” Sundays at least four times per year. Get youth involved in organizing this activity.</p> <p>One bike to church Sunday in 2015</p>	10		10
<p>E-6. Document that at least 10% of your members have reduced their home energy consumption by at least 10% over the previous year.</p>	10		
<p>E-7. Install motion-sensing switches for indoor lighting and provide training for your sexton and/or others who are responsible for turning heat, A/C, and lights on and off on how they can contribute to saving energy.</p> <p>On-going</p>	10		10

E-8. Install a bicycle rack. Already installed.	10		10
E-9. Replace at least 80% of incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent or LED lighting with the goal of replacing all incandescent lighting. Ongoing			10

F. Stewardship - Trash

F-1. Conduct a trash audit. Learn what you could be recycling and how to reduce what you send to the landfill. Recruit a volunteer committee to monitor the waste for a set period of time and identify the recurrent materials that are going to the trash bin. Conducted audit in 2009	10		
F-2. Use china plates and cups, metal utensils, and glass tumblers at church dinners and fellowship times. Alternatively, use compostable dinnerware. (link to D-3) Increased use of china plates, etc.	10		10
F-3. Use cloth or recycled paper napkins at all church meals.	10		
F-4. Organize an annual green sale.	10		

G. Stewardship - Water

G-1. Reduce the area of turf at your church by at least 20% by replanting it with native plants, gardens, etc. to attract wildlife and reduce storm water runoff. .. A portion of the Church Green has been landscaped to reduce run-off	10		10
G-2. Replace your roof with a “green” roof. (Consider a green roof for new construction or major renovation.)			

<p>G-3. Reduce your annual water consumption by at least 10%.</p> <p>Entering our data into EPA Portfolio Manager and replaced the church commercial dishwasher with a water-efficient unit in 2011</p>	10	Use Portfolio Manager	10
<p>G-4. Serve no bottled water at any church function. Some groups i.e. youth mission trips have implemented no bottled water policy, MOST OTHER groups also are not using bottled water at functions</p>	10		10
<p>G-5. Plant a rain garden(s). This is to reduce storm water runoff and retain water for groundwater recharge and natural filtering of surface pollutants.</p>	10		

H. Stewardship – Toxic and Hazardous Materials

<p>H-1. Purchase and use only non-toxic, environmentally friendly cleaning products. Engage your church sexton, janitors or others involved with selection and use of cleaning materials.</p> <p>Janitorial service uses environmentally friendly products</p>	10		10
<p>H-2. Use no chemical herbicides, pesticides or chemical fertilizers in your landscaping.</p>	10		
<p>H-3. Use only “green” (non-toxic) cleaning products, especially in the children’s department, to clean carpet, paint, adhesives, toys, playground equipment, etc.</p> <p>Done in 2015 & 2016</p>	10		10

I. Stewardship - Food

I-1. Use locally-produced food for church meals whenever possible	10		10
I-2. Provide vegetarian options at church meals. Have all-vegetarian pot luck dinners and other meal events. Publicize widely and give awards for the best vegetarian meals. In 2015 we usually have a meatless option	10		10
I-3. Host a farmers' market. Consider conducting in cooperation with neighboring congregations or non-profit organizations. Local Farmer's Market held in Westover every Sunday.	10		
I-4. Grow your own vegetables in a church garden. Create a garden space for your church and organize a volunteer committee to oversee the planting, care and harvesting of the garden. Decide who will receive the food that is produced. Started an organic herb garden	10		
I-5. Act as a drop-off site for CSA (Community/Church-Supported Agriculture).	10		

J. Stewardship - Other

J-1. Encourage your stewardship committee to begin to include stewardship of God's creation, as well as stewardship of financial and other resources, as part of its programs. Make the connection between financial and environmental stewardship. Stewardship Committee formed environmental stewardship subcommittee in 2006, New Caretakers of God's Creation Ministry team formed in 2011	10		10
J-2. Include on your creation care ministry team the person responsible for purchasing supplies at your church, or train all staff and those using the building in eco-friendly practices.	10		
J-3. Purchase recycled printer and recycled copier	10		

toner cartridges, or refill your cartridges, if appropriate. .			
J-4. Establish a church policy to purchase supplies having reduced packaging. .	10		

Stewardship: 230 points

K. Evangelism

K-1. Give each guest a “green” gift (examples: CFL bulb, LED bulb, reusable shopping bag, etc.) publicizing Caretakers of God’s Creation.	10		
K-2. Use barrels to collect and distribute rainwater. .	10		
K-3. Install waterless urinals and/or dual flush toilets. .	10		
K-4. Plant a vegetable garden on church property. (See I-4 above.) Planted an herb garden, but not visible to our guests or advertised	10		10
K-5. Install solar panels or a wind turbine which provide alternative power to your church and which are clearly visible from nearby highways.	20		
K-6. Host and publicize a weekly farmer’s market in your parking lot. Arlington already has established markets	10		
K-7. Invite secular non-profit environmental community groups to meet in your church. .	10		
K-8. Offer classes and other study opportunities that provide people in the community a way to connect faith and the environment. Participated in A Rocha DC meetings, conference green team meetings, and Evangelical Green Church	10		10

conference calls			
K-9. Become a recycling drop-off point for e-waste (techno-trash). Collect paper for shredding and e-waste	10		
K-10. Invite a secular environmental expert to do a presentation to which the community is also invited. Invited the Northern Virginia Solar Co-op group to give a presentation at Mt. Olivet.	10		10
K-11. Document that at least one family or individual has joined your church because you have demonstrated a concern for God's creation.	10		
K-12. Publicize your efforts to care for God's creation on Facebook, your congregation's Web site, the Virginia United Methodist Conference or other denominational website, your local newspaper or other media. Advertised Nature and Spirituality walks on Facebook and other sites	10		10
K-13. Qualify to become a Certified Wildlife Area.	10		10
K-14. Commit your church to become a drop-off site for a local community-supported agriculture (CSA) cooperative, and publicize its availability in the community.			

Evangelism: 50 points

L. Missions

L-1. Give energy-saving devices to the poor (insulation, programmable thermostats, CFL's, etc.), and install them. Gave solar panel powered workstations to Haiti	10		10
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L-2. Plant a church garden, with the produce going to a local food bank or those in need.	10		
L-3. Organize a local Community Supported Agriculture program to provide good, local, organic food for those in need.	10		
L-4. If your church houses a free medical clinic or facilities for the homeless , give away local or organic food to patients/guests, along with education about healthy food choices. Fresh produce given to guests at Community Assistance in 2015	10		10
L-5. Calculate the carbon footprint of your Volunteers in Mission trips for the year and offset them. Haiti mission trips did.	10		10
L-6. Train your mission volunteers on environmental issues specific to the places to which they will be going.	10		
L-7. Provide at least two direct service opportunities per year for your congregation to be in service to God's creation. Three steam cleanups	10		10
L-8. Advocate for local, state and national policies that will reflect better care for the planet. Encouraged members on environmental stewardship list to take actions to contact representatives in General Assembly.	10		10
L-9. Use fair-traded and shade-grown organic coffee, tea and chocolate . YES, continued this in 2015	10		10
L-10. Sell fair-traded coffee, chocolate, cocoa, tea, etc. Yes, continued this in 2015, raised more than \$2000 for youth missions .	10		10

L-11. Encourage United Methodist Women to study “Sisters on the Planet,” with its associated Biblical study guide. This study makes the connection between our lifestyles and the hardships faced by many women in less-developed nations trying to provide food for their children.	10		
L-12. Provide annual financial support to Caretakers of God’s Creation.	10		10
L-13. Enter into a covenant relationship with a United Methodist missionary assigned to your area. Have covenant with Pat Watkins..	10		10
L-14. Partner with other area organizations to work together to care for creation. Partnered with Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment on stream clean up	10		10
L-15. Participate with the Society of St. Andrew in a gleaning project.	10		
L-16. Participate in an international General Board of Global Missions project that includes caring for God’s creation.	10		
L-17. Provide scholarships for elementary age children to attend a summer camp. Encourage local congregation to send kids to summer camp. In 2015 Advertised camping opportunities at Camp High Road registration fee. UMW members support All God’s Children camp financially and with needed camping supplies.	10		10
L-18. Partner with a local Native American tribe to do a project that benefits God’s creation.	10		

L-19. Volunteer a group in your church to monitor a local stream. Monitor Lubber Run behind Hospice.	10		10
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Missions: 120 points.