



Greening Niagara

Why are we doing this?

“The nobility of our lives depends upon the manner in which we come to understand and fulfill our assigned role.”

- Thomas Berry

“In wildness is the preservation of the world”

- Henry David Thoreau



“With every diminishment of diversity, our understanding of God is subsequently diminished. The universe in all its wondrous modes of expression, both individually and collectively, is a celebration of its divine origin. Our art, our music, our rituals, and indeed our creativity are all informed by creation.”



“In our race to control and exploit the earth's natural resources for the benefit of humankind, we have been blind to the fact that we are shutting down the very life supporting systems that we depend upon for our survival... many theologians and scholars are realizing the need to re-visit scripture and the many insights on humankind's relationship to creation that exist within our church's rich tradition.”



Genesis 9:12

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:



“Although we have limited rights of use of other life forms, and also responsibilities of care and protection toward them, there is an ultimate thouness at the heart of every living being... We...encounter each other being simultaneously as 'other' and as kin. ...Each has its own distinct relation to God as source of life, and not necessarily for our purposes...

- *Rosemary Radford Ruether, Gaia and God*



Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.



Some historical basis

“Creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him Who made and ordered it.”
- *St. Irenaeus of Lyon (129 -203)*

“The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.”
- *St. John Damascene (675-749)*



“God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.”

- *Martin Luther (1483-1546)*

“I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go the least plant may bring you a clear remembrance of the Creator....One blade of grass or one speck of dust is enough to occupy your entire mind in beholding the art with which it has been made.”

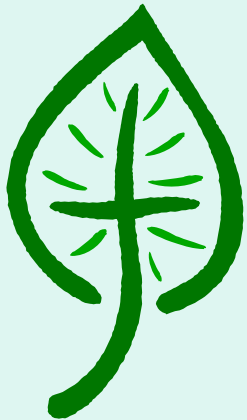
- *St. Basil the Great (347-407)*



Responsible Stewardship

As caregivers for the planet, how do we as a community of faith make a difference?

How do we model for the world that we are searching for our niche in the cosmos?



St. Gabriel's Passionist Parish

Gold standard LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) from the Canada Green Building Council – only church in North America









101 (117) Ways
to Green
Your
Church

The Church Building

- Lower hot water heater in summer
- Use Air Conditioning within reason – 10 degrees
- Use energy efficient light bulbs
- Clean light bulbs
- Turn off lights when not in use
 - Use dimmer switches
 - Use timers on lights



- Check working order of weatherstripping, sealing, caulking
- Consider Energy Star windows
- Consider replacement appliances
- Wind generators
- Solar panels
- Non-nuclear energy providers (Bullfrog)
- Install ceiling fans (reversible)
 - Dehumidifiers
 - Window coverings



- Investigate geo-thermal heating
- Solar powered outside lights
- Use a programmable thermostat
- Place thermostat sensors low on walls
- Clean furnace filters regularly
- Clean windows and radiators to increase heat
- Apply energy-conservation film to windows
 - Install awnings over windows reduces sunlight in summer
 - Insulate



- Be aware of the quality of renovation products (durability versus cost)
- Have an awareness of origin of products (for example, is wood FSC certified?)
- Examine toilet tank capacity – brick?
- Install washers for leaky faucets
- Avoid running excess water for clean-up
 - Purchase eco-friendly options for essentials (i.e. toilet roll)
 - Use eco-friendly cleaners (H₂O₂ instead of bleach, vinegar, etc.)



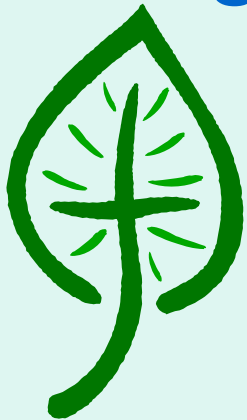
The Parking Lot

- Create an idle-free zone (with signs)
- Install a bicycle rack
- Carpool
- Encourage use of Public Transit
- Offer parking incentives (i.e. IKEA)
 - Do a commuter challenge



The Church Grounds

- Choose perennials over annuals
- Practice Grass-cycling
- Use drip or low-flow irrigation for lawns
- Do watering at night or early morning
- Use timers for watering
- Use rainbarrels
- Consider non-grass greenery
- Plant local plants
- Avoid planting water-intensive plants



- Use non-chemical pesticides
- Find alternatives to salt for ice in winter (non-clumping cat litter, sand)
- Use non-chemical herbicides
- Practice compliment planting
- Use a push mower
- Compost; or use municipal green bins
- Plant a tree
- Cover flat roof sections with greenery in summer



- Plant vegetables for food banks
- Consider community gardens
- Teach green gardening to the community
- Invite experts to share green hints
- Consult experts for choosing greenery



The Church Office

- Use e-mail for communications instead of letters
- Put recycle boxes at every workstation
- “Frogfile” or other green office supplies
- Use re-writeable CDs/DVDs
- Print/copy on both sides of the paper
- Use print preview to prevent printed errors
- Use refillable or recycled pens



- Buy products with less packaging
- Use computer's energy-saving modes
- Turn off all office machinery at the end of the day
- Invest in eco-friendly companies/funds
- Have an environmental assessment done
- Use appliances wisely (full)
 - Buy recycled paper
 - Recycle ink cartridges
 - Choose paperless bills



Worship

- Place a recycle bin at back of church for bulletins
- Project service on overhead to reduce number of bulletins printed and number of books to be replaced
- Have children write earth-prayers for intercessions
 - Preach “Green” sermons
 - Discover earth-embracing rituals (Native, Celtic)
 - Pray
 - Be inspired



- Invite guest speakers
- Show environmentally-themed films
- Study scripture from a “care-taker” perspective
- Start a “Green” Book study
- Get involved with the PWRDF
- Be awed by creation
- Have a worship service outside
 - Take the Sunday School to a park
 - Have an ‘alternative’ worship service
 - Use living plants in place of cut flowers



The Church in Community

- Be aware of local initiatives
- Promote community activism
- Offer meeting space to local organisations
- Explore the area, use the eyes of a child
- Do an ecological footprint test (online)
 - Find out what other churches/ organisations are doing
 - Open a lending library
 - Educate; be educated



Social Events

- Avoid using styrofoam and/or plastics at coffee hour/parish dinners
- Purchase fair trade coffee/tea
- Use re-useable coffee filters
- Consume local food for meals/snacks
- Choose organic foods
- Avoid soda for cold drinks
- Be aware of corporate practices of food producers
- Encourage vegetarianism
- Avoid bottled water



General Practices

- Re-use: bags, for example
- Avoid petroleum-based plastics
- Dispose of hazardous waste as hazardous waste (paint, oil, CFL bulbs)
- Recycle: whatever can be!
- Divide recyclables (paper, plastics/glass)
 - Reduce consumption
 - Evaluate necessities



Some resources for day-to-day ideas

- Lee Valley
- Home Depot Eco-Options catalogue
- Environment Hamilton
- World Watch Institute
- St. Gabriel's Parish (Toronto) LEED certified
- Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology (University of St. Michael's College) – monthly Eco-Sabbath

