

25 Ways To Go Green And Save Money Too



***By
Jeff A. Bujna
Director of Architectural Operations***

With all of today's talk about saving resources, global warming and going green to save the planet, it often seems that the world is obsessed with negative thoughts and no solutions. I have put together a list of common sense approaches that can help anyone "go green" and save money in the process.

1. Update old and worn out appliances, water heaters, light bulbs, etc. with newer energy efficient types. Some are labeled with an energy star rating. As all things eventually meet the end of their natural cycle, replace them to save money. Recycle most items to keep them out of landfills.
2. When planting new trees or designing new landscape areas, plan to take advantage of natural windbreaks or prevailing wind patterns. This will help to reduce energy costs. Natural shading reduces cooling costs in the Summer.
3. When replacing flooring, recycle. Replace the flooring with earth friendly materials and products that use reclaimed or recycled materials.
4. Do a life cycle cost analysis to determine if spending more upfront will have long term benefits and actually save money in the long run.
5. Consider low-flush toilets as a good option to reduce water and waste costs along with sensors at the sinks and urinals to limit wasted water.
6. Eliminate the use of plastic cups and plates.
7. Replace old existing windows or design with new energy efficient windows.
8. Add insulation to the attic area or design with at least an R-30 above the ceiling. This will reduce annual heating and cooling costs dramatically. Your local Architect, design professional or insulation installer can recommend an "R" value appropriate for your geographic area.
9. Tune up that old boiler, heat pump or furnace. Regular maintenance and tune-ups can make your unit run efficiently and save money. By all means do change the filters on a frequent and regular basis
10. In a new design or addition, consider a multi-story solution. This will reduce the buildings footprint and impact on the site. This will additionally reduce costs due to an efficiency of building up instead of sprawling horizontally.

11. Plan with or replace the roof with a lighter color. This can dramatically reduce the solar heat gain on a roof. Many municipalities are mandating the use of light colored roofing materials.
12. Use regional materials when planning a new church such as locally quarried limestone or locally manufactured brick or milled / recycled timber.
13. Recycle old materials and replace with eco-friendly or recycled newer materials.
14. Replace or design with motion sensing switches to reduce electricity costs.
15. Post website data instead of printing the information to reduce the impact on the environment and reduce printing costs.
16. Designate a "green committee" or start a "green ministry" to study and implement common sense action items.
17. Consider replacement or new design of old tank type water heating systems to be tank-less, "instant-on" water heaters to reduce fuel costs.
18. Schedule Summer activities and meetings early or late in the day to take advantage of lower outside temperatures. Schedule Winter activities or meeting to take place during mid-day warm periods to take advantage of its cost savings.
19. Take advantage of newer low VOC / low odor paints when specifying paints or repainting. These types are less hazardous to workers and to your congregation as well.
20. At the end of the day, turn off your computer or other electronics rather than have them hibernate. This has been studied by many groups to be a main source of wasted electricity.
21. Hire an Architect, builder or design professional that is affiliated with the United States Green Building Council and is aware of today's energy concerns and standards.
22. Design to take advantage of natural day-lighting.
23. Use programmable thermostats to reduce the energy load at off-peak periods. (This is preferable to turning each system off when not in use which could cause mold or condensation problems.)
24. Create a "Green Idea" suggestion box to encourage congregation participation.
25. Start a recycling drive to fund special projects or boost donations for the needy. (This can help the community and encourage "green" participation as well as environmental awareness.)

We can all implement at least a few of the items above. Any implementation collectively will have an impact on annual costs to each of our own churches facilities and impact our communities. Being responsible stewards of our church's money and the planet's resources can help direct funds to critical needs areas within your own unique ministries and reduce annual operating costs.