

## A CHURCH “GOING GREEN” GETS GREEN AND SAVES GREEN

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By definition, “Environmental Stewardship is the responsibility for environmental quality shared by all those whose actions affect the environment.” Churches understand Stewardship, mostly when it comes to finances. When it comes to the environment, churches can be stewards as well as save money.



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When you hear the words, “GOING GREEN,” what immediately comes to mind? Generally, people think several things: Saving Energy, Recycling, and Fuel Economy. For most churches, the first item provides the greatest opportunity for saving money, time and being good stewards.

Let us examine some rules of thumb on how to ‘Save Energy’:

- 1- Reduce HVAC power consumption – For most churches, 50-75% of each utility bill is driven by the consumption of energy to heat and cool the church. Start by changing set points, one of the best and least expensive means to reduce energy consumption. Whether your church uses a manual thermostat or a ‘Building Automation System’, each degree lowered on the thermostat for heat lowers a utility bill by an average of one percent. In cooling mode, each degree set above 75 degrees Fahrenheit cuts cooling costs by 2%. A word of caution: Do not get too crazy since large changes in temperatures are not good for your building and are not efficient.

- 2- Look up at your lights—both inside and outdoors in the parking lot and around the grounds. After the cost associated with HVAC, your lighting will likely be your next largest consumer of electricity. Before you research solar or wind, there are practical suggestions: Replace inefficient light bulbs.  (Editors Note, one of our Funk Associates noted that he seldom has to climb a ladder or rent a lift as he has simply changed out lightbulbs which also saves labor costs each year.) An ENERGY STAR Qualified Compact Fluorescent Light bulb (CFL) can save more than \$40 in electricity costs over its lifetime and uses about 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and lasts up to 10 times longer.  An added benefit is that it produces about 75% less heat, so it’s safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with cooling. In addition to making a change from incandescent bulbs to CFL’s, you need to start the conversion of changing your fluorescent bulbs to LEDs which have even less energy use and heat generation and they are dimmable.

- 3- Incorporate Occupancy Sensors : Sensors are most suited when the space is intermittently occupied, like a bathroom, storage rooms, or a hallway, rooms unoccupied for two or more hours per day, and where the lights are



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typically left on when the space is unoccupied. The 5-min. time delay in a bathroom means a reduction in energy savings of 60%. How many times have you come to church on Wednesday to find the bathroom lights and fan on since Sunday?

- 4- Stop the dripping faucet. Whether it is in the church kitchen or the restroom, a dripping faucet left unattended at 10 drips per minute means a loss of 500 to 1000 gallons over the course of one year. That is cash *down the drain*, twice since some pay both a water and sewer bill.



- 5- Take a look at your entryway. A 1/16<sup>th</sup> inch gap between door and jamb for 8 hours means a heat loss in the winter equivalent to leaving your door wide open every day for an hour. Would you do that?
- 6- Systematic Preventive Maintenance: Regularly do a maintenance and life cycle check of all systems.

With the proper care to saving energy, a church can reduce operational costs, increase efficiency/ sustainability while at the same time being a responsible corporate citizen to the community and to the congregation. One other benefit: your church, when ready to expand and build, has a nest egg ready to feather the nest. Going Green can save the environment and save a church money. Going Green. Getting Green. Saving Green.