



Green Churches Network

Three-Year Plan for 2017-2020

*Registered Charity Organization
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GOAL : 200 Green Churches for 2020



Dear partners,

As I write these words, the *Green Churches Network* numbers **65 registered churches, colleges, monasteries and centres in three Canadian provinces**. For the development of a more ecologically-sensitive society, we have set ourselves the challenge of seeing our Network reach 200 green churches by 2020!

We believe that your support to the *Green Churches Network* helps revitalize the country's churches through new resources that attract new participants, including **youth**, through positive **media** coverage of the particular church's concrete "green" projects and through promoting united action and **dialogue** between denominations. Building on extensive fieldwork since 2006 and the official establishment of our organization in 2015, we now have a national office in the Montreal area with a staff of 5 including the director. The spiritual, educational and action **tools** we design are multiplying every month, including our popular "Lenten Challenge" calendar and the Sept. 1st – Oct. 4th "Season of Creation"¹ toolkit used by the majority of Christian denominations in Canada.

Action Plan Basics:

In the following pages, we will present our three-year action plan in detail. It is simple, clear, accurate and will be effective!

1. Gradual Network expansion in all **Canadian provinces** by putting in place Regional Coordinators.
2. Development of new tools aimed at assisting local **administrative councils** to reduce the maintenance costs of their religious buildings and their ecological footprint at the same time.
3. Equipping registered green churches with an effective **communications strategy** involving video design, presence on social networks and practical training. This holds huge evangelization potential.

The joy of meeting

Nothing would bring me more joy than **meeting with you face to face to discuss** your take on our vision of the future.


Norman Lévesque
Executive Director

¹ The "Season of Creation" extends from September 1st to October 4th. Visit: creation.greenchurches.ca

GREEN CHURCHES

THREE-YEAR PLAN 2017-2020



2020

200 green churches in
10 provinces and
3 territories

Green Churches Forum in Halifax
New "Green Churches" Certification
New Annual Thematic Calendar
2 New Regional Coordinators in
British Columbia and in Ontario



2019

155 green churches in
7 provinces and
1 territory

Green Churches Forum in Calgary
New Videos and Blogs
Training Green teams in photo and video production
1 New Regional Coordinator in the Maritimes



2018

110 green churches in
5 provinces

Green Churches Forum in Trois-Rivières
New Guide for church administrators
(on how to reduce their building maintenance costs
and their ecological footprints)
1 New Regional Coordinator in the West



2017

65 green churches in
3 provinces

Green Churches Forum in Ottawa
"Season of Creation" Toolbox
New Eco-justice and Eco-spirituality Activities
New User-Friendly Website



**Green Churches
Network**

Our Mission

The **Green Churches Network** provides Christian communities who adopt environmentally friendly practices with practical tools geared towards action, education and spirituality enabling them to successfully integrate the ministry of Creation care into their day-to-day church life.

Why the crucial importance of Green Churches?



1. For the Church:



Ecology represents an important new vector in a Church seeking to renew itself. In exploring the Bible and the lives of the saints, it uncovers and brings to light ecological values already embedded in Christian tradition. This new coherence attracts **positive coverage by the media**. A church which esteems Creation care as vital to its mission opens the door to **dialogue with other denominations** sharing the same concern and with ecojustice movements.

2. For Society:



The increasing presence of “green churches” is of real benefit to society. Ecological groups, usually secular, already **cooperate** with municipalities and others on many projects. Governments find that adopting an ecological agenda increases cohesion among various offices. Recently, our government has initiated a closer working relationship with the *Green Churches Network*. How often do we see church and society working together? An opportunity not to be missed!

3. For Youth:



Today’s young people are immersed in a world of hyper consumption and virtual reality ... not exactly conducive to a spiritual way of life. Taking part in green committees and ecological activities speaks to them. In making the green shift and adopting better environmental practices, a church opens a new door for its youth. When they feel spiritually nourished, these **young persons want to make their own contribution** and the community is enriched by their dynamism and their electronic communications talents.

4. For the Environment:



Each time a church installs a better heating system or improves its recycling and composting rate, it significantly **reduces the ecological footprint** it makes on the environment. This means a reduction of thousands of kilograms of greenhouse gases and several tonnes of waste per year. Setting up a community garden also increases the availability of local organic agricultural produce.

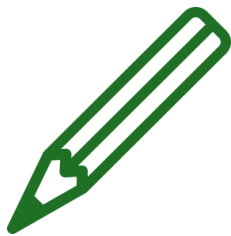
5. For our Religious Heritage:



The closure of so many churches has a profound impact. Registered green churches reconsider the use of their premises. An improved lighting system, better insulation, use of geothermal energy, all contribute to **reductions in the costs of maintaining** church buildings as well as assuring the conservation of our religious heritage.

**To reach our goal of
200 registered green churches by 2020,
we will take the following steps:**

1. Expanding across Canada
2. Increasing educational activities
3. Reducing the cost of church building maintenance
4. Training green committees in video production
5. Certifying "Green Churches"



"All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education. It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' par. 214

1. Expanding across Canada

Currently, the majority of green churches are found in the province of Quebec, with three in Ontario and one in Nova Scotia. The geographic distribution is mainly due to the history of the *Green Churches Network* which was born in Montreal in 2006 and grew by word-of-mouth throughout the regions of Quebec. With the experience gained over the years as the only Canadian organization exclusively focused on facilitating green options for churches, the Green Churches Network intends to take root in all Canadian provinces. The website and educational tools are already available in both official languages. What is lacking is making the Network more widely known through the utilization of church media and, above all, through a living presence in the person of a regional coordinator.

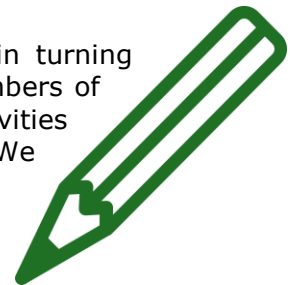


As more funding becomes available to the Green Churches Network, we will be able to hire the necessary staff (part-time at first), to interest churches in joining the network, to organize Regional Forums and to provide grassroots training. The regions would be: the West, the Maritimes, Ontario, British Columbia and the territories.

2. Increasing Educational Activities

Since the founding of the project in 2006, those interested in turning their Christian community into a "green church" are often members of the pastoral staff (or volunteers). Until now, only three activities were offered on the website of the *Green Churches Network*. We are now prepared to offer some thirty activities.

We will develop activities that touch three dimensions of the life of a Christian community:



SPIRITUALITY: We will design activities that can be part of a Faith Education program (children) or a Bible group (adults), examples of retreats in nature and liturgies. We wish to highlight Rogations (feast of sowing in May) and Thanksgiving (feast of harvest in October).

ACTION: We want to mobilize faith communities to reduce their negative impact on the environment and to enrich the Creation of God. For example, green initiatives could involve picking up rubbish on riverbanks, getting to church by other means than a car, doing chores with natural cleaning products, organizing a community meal featuring local produce within 150km and many others. We will make it possible for a church to calculate its positive and negative environmental impact.

EDUCATION: We aim to raise awareness among church members about environmental issues, which are sometimes complex. What are the impacts of climate change? Which species are at risk? What is voluntary simplicity? What are genetically modified organisms? These educational activities are often intergenerational.

3. Reducing the cost of building maintenance

To make the practical knowledge of improved ecological techniques available to those most concerned with building maintenance, it is time to target a new audience: administrators who sit on church councils. Their primary concern is the maintenance (and sometimes survival) of the religious building. In many cases, the local religious heritage can be preserved thanks to our advice.



We will begin by designing a self-assessment guide on energy use. Heating and lighting are major expenses. Solutions to consider include better insulation of walls and windows, a replacement of the lighting system or a modification of the heating system. We hope to reference auditors who can evaluate religious buildings and produce a report that will guide the council's decisions.

4. Training in Video Production

The seventh art was long reserved for a minority who had access to expensive video cameras. Today, the video is accessible even to small organizations and they are able to evangelize through their website and social networks. And the *Green Churches Network* has a lot of good news to make known through image and video.



The Network will produce videos from materials provided by registered green churches, illustrating what is happening on the ground. Then we want to train the green committees to make their own videos. This new competence will surely spill over to benefit other ministries in the Church.

5. Certifying "Green Churches"

For years, we have dreamed of offering a "Green Church" certification to Christian communities. Several requests have been made in this direction in recent years, as some pastoral teams like to take up such challenges. A rating form will be used to assess the degree of ecological sensitivity in the management of the religious building and the good habits of the Christian community. The result will be displayed by a percentage and/or a shade of colour: pale, medium or dark green for example.



This form of official recognition often causes groups to take their commitment more seriously and move forward. Another form of recognition will be annual awards in three categories (Spirituality, Education, Action) presented at the Green Churches Forums. A strong team is required at the national office to handle all these requests.

For more information



Our team will be pleased to answer any question you might have, related to resources you might be searching for or for possible collaborations to help develop the Green Churches Network across Canada.

Please note that this request for financial support specifically addresses the organizational aspects of the Green Churches Network essential to its growth toward 2020. We aim at reaching annual revenues of \$ 200,000 by 2020.

May the Father, Creator of so much beauty and goodness in our natural environment, bless and keep you!


Norman Lévesque
Executive Director

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Ask for our Annual Report!