



Annual Report 2017-2018

www.GreenChurches.ca

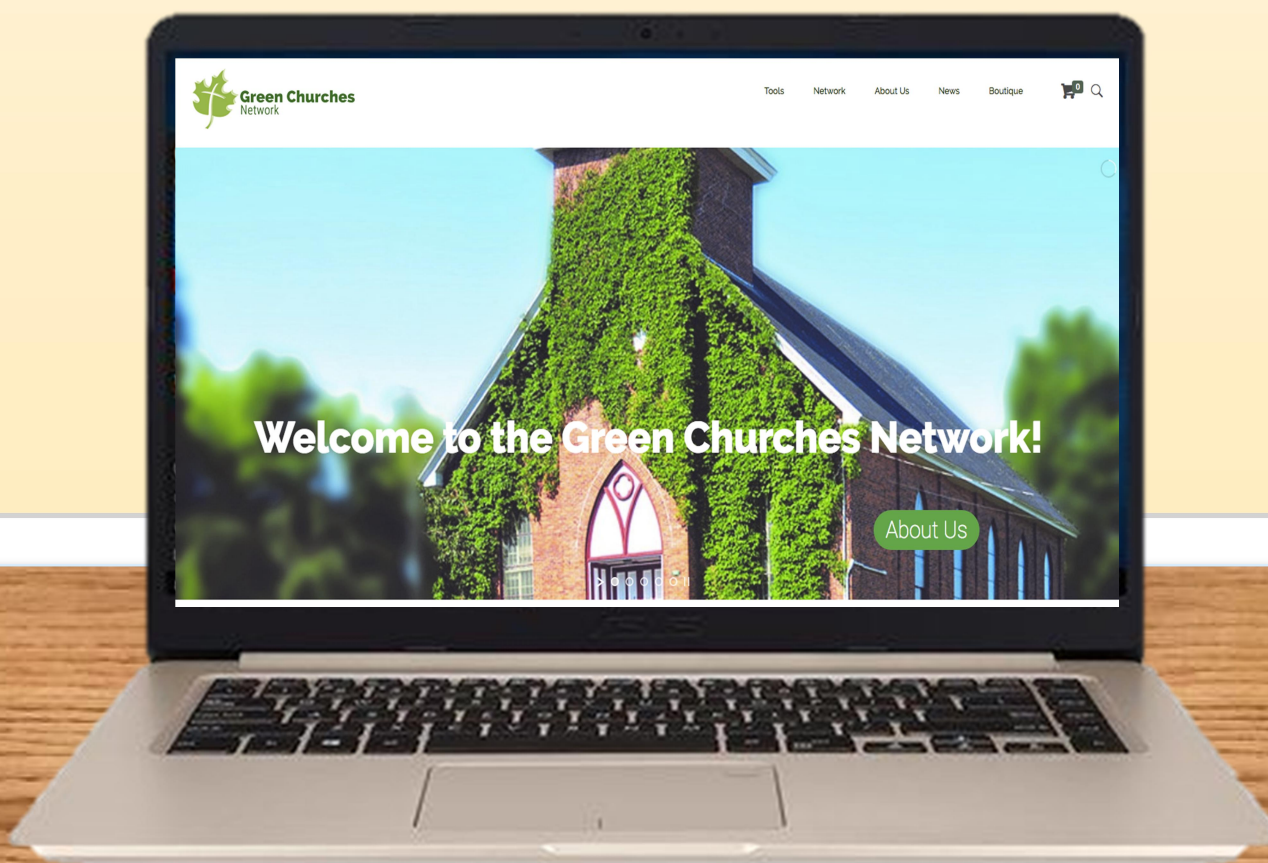


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From the Executive Director

A YEAR OF MOVES, BOTH VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL!



2017-2018 was a Year of Moves

The **virtual move** of our website platform required ten months of programming. But, it was worth all the work. What a success! The new site was an instant hit: more visits, PayPal payments, more email traffic, more networking, more churches interested in joining the Network.

The **actual move** to a new national office took four months of searching for a propitious location. But finally, what joy to be told on April 22nd during an Earth Day celebration at St. Francis of Assisi Parish that the priest and people wanted us to move there. Already part of the Green Churches Network for the last eight years, the church community said, "We would like to have you here at our home". Happy to accept this warm welcome, we set up our national office in June in the rectory of their sister church, St. Claire, in East Montreal.

Society needs the church as an ally in caring for the environment, and the church needs to be involved in the growing movement of eco-spirituality if it wants to be coherent. The more we give the Green Churches Network the means to be creative and productive, the more we will be surprised by the results and by its ability to stimulate an evolution in the Church's attitude toward the earth, our 'common home'.

Norman Lévesque

General Director

Norman Lévesque
Executive Director

QUOTES

"Every Sunday we used these (Season of Creation) prayers with an introductory song and concluding prayer. I want to congratulate you on this immense work!" - Sr. Françoise Martel, sbc

"Congratulations to the whole team! What creativity and how effective! I am amazed by the 'Season of Creation' (including the suggested prayers and reflections). Also, this outdoor panel "Proud to be engaged in the Network of Green Churches" that we received today! I cannot wait for it to be installed!"
- Jean-Pierre Soucy, Parish Priest.

"Thanks for the 'Season of Creation in a Box'. You folks do marvelous work. Well done."
- Rev. Ken Gray, Secretary of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network and co-chair of Creation Matters

"We are in the midst of celebrating the Season of Creation and have a number of activities for young and old including nature walks, an interactive web of life, a day of reflection and a blessing of animals. We are more than happy to belong to the Green Churches family."

- Bart van Roijen, Parish Priest, Kelowna, BC



OUR MISSION

The Green Churches Network supports Christian communities that improve their environmental practices. It offers practical tools geared to action, education and spirituality which enable them to successfully integrate the ministry of Creation care into the regular activities of their church.

Our ecumenical organization welcomes Christian communities from all denominations.

We invite church communities to include the biblical theme of stewards of Creation in their prayers and teachings, to adopt better environmental practices such as recycling, energy efficiency, and water conservation. Churches in our Network also organize educational and community service activities, promoting a healthy and sustainable environment. Their initiatives can be found on our website.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Benoit Lacroix-Vachon, (President) Engineer

Mr. Michel Pilon, (Vice-President) Valleyfield Diocesan Social Action Officer

Ms. Valérie St-Onge, (Treasurer) Chartered Professional Accountant

Ms. Louise Cormier, former secretary of the Quebec bishops' Church & Society Council

Bro. Guy St-Onge, fsg, past president of the Canadian Religious Conference



REGISTERED CHURCHES IN THE GREEN CHURCHES NETWORK

FOUR (4) NEW GREEN CHURCHES IN 2017-2018

- **Hermitage Saint-Antoine (Lac-Bouchette, QC) Catholic**
- **Our lady of Good Counsel Church (Sault-Ste-Marie, ON) Catholic**
- **Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-du-Cap (Trois-Rivières, QC) Catholic**
- **St. Basil's Church (Ottawa, ON) Catholic**



Hermitage Saint-Antoine
(Lac-Bouchette, QC)

Green Churches Registered Prior to 2017 (65 Churches)

- Holy Trinity (Rouyn-Noranda, QC) Catholic
- Diocesan Centre of St-Jean-Longueuil (Longueuil, QC), Catholic
- Congregation of Notre Dame Motherhouse (Montreal, QC), Catholic
- Saint Genevieve (Ottawa, QC) Catholic
- Saint Anne of the Parade (QC) Catholic
- Diocesan Centre of Valleyfield (Valleyfield, QC) Catholic
- Agape Centre (Quebec City, QC) Catholic
- Beaconsfield United (Beaconsfield, QC) United
- Bellarmin Jesuit Provincial House (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Canadian Religious Conference (Montreal headquarters) Catholic
- Cedar Park United (Pointe Claire, QC) United
- Emmaüs Centre (Victoriaville, QC) Catholic
- Franciscan Intercommunity Animation Service [SIAF] (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Good Shepherd (Drummondville, QC) Catholic

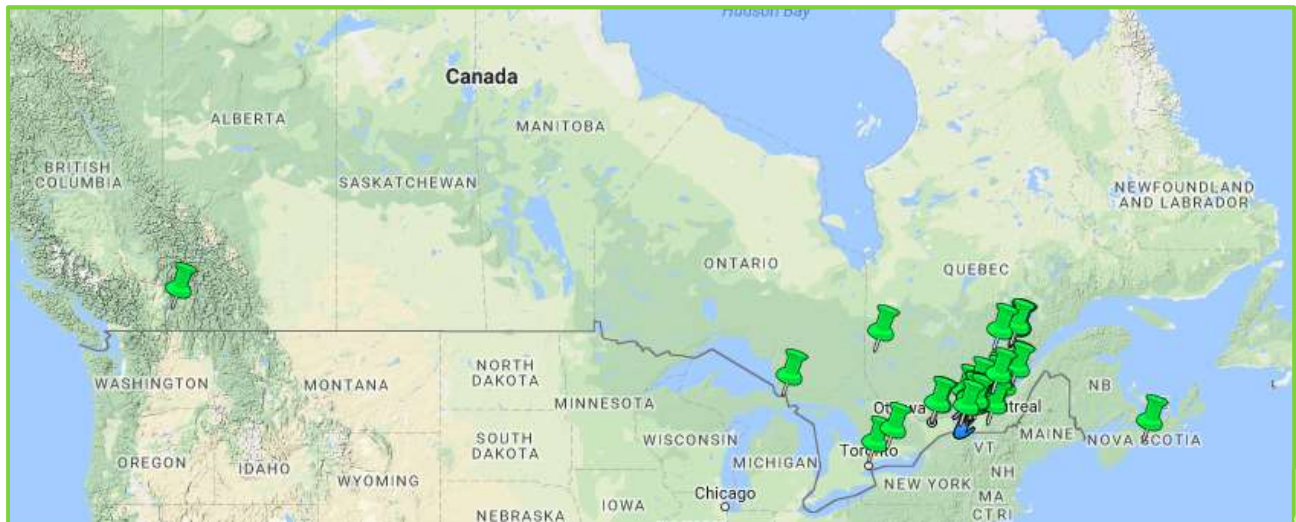
- Greenwood United Church (Peterborough, ON) United
- Grand Seminary of Montreal (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Holy Family (Blainville, QC) Catholic
- Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Monastery of the Canons Regular of Prémontré (St. Constant, QC) Catholic
- Montreal Diocesan Centre (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Montreal City Mission (Montreal, QC) United
- Mount Bruno United (St. Bruno, QC) United
- Mountainside United (Westmount, QC) United
- Nicolet Diocesan Centre (Nicolet, QC) Catholic
- Notre Dame de Bon Secours Chapel (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- Precious Blood Parish (Repentigny, QC) Catholic
- Religious Society of Friends (Montreal, QC) Quaker
- St. Marguerite Bourgeoys (Longueuil, QC) Catholic
- St. Mark's (Dorval, QC) Anglican
- St. Martin (Laval, QC) Catholic
- St. Matthias (Arvida, QC) Catholic
- St. Matthew (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Peter's (Town of Mount Royal, QC) Anglican
- St. Philip (Arvida, QC) Catholic
- St. Sauveur (Saint Sauveur, QC) Catholic
- St. Theresa of the Child Jesus (Arvida, QC) Catholic
- Summerlea United (Lachine, QC) United
- United Theological Seminary (Montreal, QC) United
- Val Notre Dame Abbey (St. John of Matha, QC) Catholic
- St. Francis of Assisi (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Gabriel's (Toronto, ON) Catholic
- St. James United (Montreal, QC) United
- St. Joachim (Chateauguay, QC) Catholic
- St. Joachim (St. Joachim of Shefford, QC) Catholic
- St. John and Camino de Emaus (Montreal, QC) United
- St. John Brebeuf (Lasalle, QC) Catholic
- St. John Eudes (Arvida, QC) Catholic
- St. Lambert United Church (St. Lambert, QC) United
- St. Maria Goretti (Pointe aux Trembles, QC) Catholic
- St. Andrew's (Halifax, NS) United
- St. Anne (Chicoutimi, QC) Catholic
- St. Bartholomew (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Benedict (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Bernadette (Trois Rivières, QC) Catholic
- St. Bernadette Soubirous (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Bernardin (Waterloo, QC) Catholic
- St. Charles (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Charles Borromeo (Quebec, QC) Catholic
- St. Charles Garnier (Kelowna, BC) Catholic
- St. Columba House (Montreal, QC) United
- St. Dominic (Jonquière, QC) Catholic



Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade
(Ste-Anne-de-la-Pérade, QC)

- St. Edward (Montreal, QC) Catholic
- St. Elzear (Laval, QC) Catholic
- St. Eustace Evangelical Church (St. Eustace, QC) Evangelical
- St. Eustace Church (St. Eustace, QC) Catholic

Interactive Google Map of the 'Green Churches'



© 2018, Google Maps

As of June 30, 2018, there were **69 registered green churches**. Four (4) communities (Catholic) joined this year. Why so many Catholics? The influence of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, is surely largely responsible for inspiring such ecological involvement. Our outreach to all churches in all Canadian provinces is ongoing.

Monthly Newsletter

We want our newsletter, sent by email (Mail Chimp) each month, to remain short, clear and concise. It goes out in French to 1,363 subscribers and in English to 777 for a **total of 2,140 readers**. Some church media reproduce items of interest locally. The newsletter is a great success and augments the traffic on our website.

People subscribe to the newsletter on our website, at our kiosk tables or by filling out a coupon at conferences

A Dynamic Team



During the summer of 2017, we had the joy of seeing our office team grow to six employees! Véronica St-Louis expanded communications by establishing contacts with over 200 churches both inside and outside of the Network. She also edited various texts with an expert touch. Pascal Ypperciel, a student and extraordinary graphic designer, helped Matteo Mortelliti to set up the website. Matteo, a youth pastor, worked part-time to lay the foundations of our new website and his aesthetic choices were greatly appreciated.

Bernice Baranowski is present 4 days per week as a researcher and translator. This generous woman assures a warm welcome to visitors and provides invaluable assistance to the national office. Our administrative assistant, Angelina Ferreira, does her job with serenity and professionalism. Norman Lévesque, director, concentrated on developing the 3-Year Plan while coordinating other projects, such as the new website and the Season of Creation toolbox

AN EDUCATION PROJECT COORDINATOR



In October 2017, the national office was very pleased to welcome Guillaume Morgan as coordinator of educational projects for a one-year contract at three days per week. He is also following courses to become a pastor in the Mennonite Church. Guillaume's main tasks included developing spiritual, educational and action-oriented intergenerational activities in French and English, formatting the layout and putting them on line. He also coordinated the design of the "Season of Creation 2018" toolbox and generously used his programming skills to transfer the Green Churches Network website to a new platform.

Congratulations for the good work, Guillaume!

PRECIOUS VOLUNTEERS

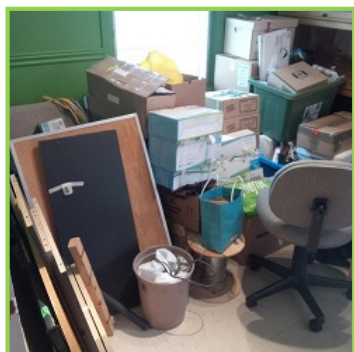
We warmly recognize Pascal's involvement in graphic design, Véronica's editing and communication skills, Roger's help in painting and upkeep of the premises, Nancy's availability for housekeeping and cleaning. We owe a big debt of gratitude to those who helped us pack up and move our office to its new location: Jean-Marie, Promesse, Daniel, Gabriel and Pierre.

National Office move

The Green Churches Team was invited on April 22, Earth Day, for the unveiling of the exterior sign "Proud to be Part of the Green Churches Network" at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in East Montreal, already a "green church" for 8 years. After the ceremony, the pastor, Fr. François Baril, offered us office space in the rectory of their sister church: St. Claire, a 15-minute walk from the Honoré-Beaugrand metro station. He said, "We want you to be part of our home."



We visited the three rooms in the former rectory that now serve as our office. These rooms are about 10'x10', plus storage space, toilet and sink. As we did not have easy access to sinks and toilets at our old office, this is a blessing! We also have the use of a meeting room with a large table as well as a spacious balcony surrounded by large trees. Our modest starting rent is, for the parish, a concrete way of contributing to our mission.



We moved from Laval to East Montreal on June 16th. Apart from the heat, it was a day without glitches. With nine energetic and generous people involved, packing and unpacking the boxes and carrying the pieces of furniture upstairs (no elevator) went well. It only took 3 days for us to arrange the furniture, install the phone and computer systems and become functional again.

Fr. Baril together with the pastoral team of St. Claire Parish celebrated our arrival with a wine and cheese welcome on June 21st.

The inauguration of the national office of the Green Churches Network took place in the evening of July 5th and was presided by Most Rev. Alain Faubert, auxiliary bishop of Montreal. In his prayers to ask God's blessing on our office and on our work, Bishop Faubert was particularly attentive to the United Church and Mennonite green church associates who had come to pray and celebrate with us. He made a point of greeting each person and of circulating among us to chat and to serve drinks and snacks during the light refreshment period. The weather was warm and a warm friendliness and "green" connection was felt by all.

We love the name of the beautiful church of St. Claire next door to us! St. Clare of Assisi, a 13th century Italian nun, was a contemporary of St. Francis and founder of the Poor Clare religious community. She was a great friend of St. Francis of Assisi and like him she lived a life of extreme simplicity and poverty. St. Clare also showed a great love for God's creatures, notably demonstrated by the garden she set up in the cloister to welcome the birds.



Our New Website: www.GreenChurches.ca



After 10 years of use, the Joomla 1.5 platform was outdated, causing many bugs and had to be replaced. In the summer of 2016, all articles were migrated to a Joomla 3.5 platform. The migration was rather a failure. Although this platform was beautiful visually, we encountered many problems in adding new modules, such as the boutique, statistics or the registration form. We lost about a hundred links and were hacked several times.

With the new communications assistant and given the help of a student during the summer of 2017, we decided to rebuild the site on a WordPress 4.7 platform. The reconstruction took 10 months of work. This site was launched on April 3, 2018 on the Tuesday after Easter. In a way, it was a resurrection of our presence on the internet. Comments on the new website have been very positive. One can easily navigate it from a computer, tablet or cell phone. The boutique on the new website will be functional by the end of summer 2018.

The new "statistics" function on the website will allow us to publish complete data next year. Since it went online (3 months), the site has received 3,474 visits.

LES RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX



The number of people who "like" our Facebook page @GreenChurches increased by 18% in one year. There are now 1,205 people reading what we publish. The number of those who follow our tweets on Twitter @GreenChurches has risen by 30% in one year. In total 524 people follow us on Twitter @ChurchesGreen.



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Educational Activities

In this first year of our triennial plan, the priority was to develop educational activities to stimulate interest in the theme of Creation in learning, in prayer and in action. A total of 16 intergenerational activities have been published on the website



SPIRITUALITY

- The Seven Days of Creation
- Noah, Guardian of Creation (biodiversity)
- Creating Links (ecological sensitivity)
- Seek First the Kingdom (voluntary simplicity)
- Blessing of Animals



EDUCATION

- Do you know your Ecological Footprint?
- Endangered Birds
- Fair Trade
- GMO Modified Seeds
- Sustainable Fishing
- Eating Meat Responsibly



ACTION

- Cleaning a Park
- Car Free Sunday
- Planting Bulbs
- Cleaning Riverbanks

Funding for the position of educational project manager came from the Béati Foundation, which contributed \$27,000 for one year. We are deeply grateful for the boost they gave us!

Toolbox for The 'Season of Creation' 2017



Tools to download:

- Calendar of Daily Actions
- Poster
- Prayer Guide
- Fundraising Guide
- Spirituality Activity
- Education Activity
- Action Activity

In August 2017, the Green Churches Network launched the first Season of Creation Toolbox. We are the only organization in Canada to offer such a resource.

What is the "Season of Creation"?

Every year, from September 1st to October 4th, churches around the world observe the "Season of Creation". Since 2008, the World Council of Churches has been promoting church participation in this special period of the year. Its popularity is growing in Europe and the United Church of Canada was the first in this country to celebrate it. The downloadable resources provided by the Green Churches Network make it possible for all of Canada's Christian communities to join in the annual celebration and reenergize their commitment as responsible stewards of God's Creation.

Why the dates from September 1st to October 4th?

In 1989, Dimitrios I, Patriarch of Constantinople, dedicated the first day of the Orthodox liturgical year (September 1st) to the protection of the environment. He then invited the whole Christian world to "offer together every year on this day, prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both in thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation and in petition for its protection and salvation". In 2015, Pope Francis named September 1 as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. October 4 is the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology in the Catholic tradition. He is a model of integral ecology, where love for the poor, the sick and for all creatures flows from the same source.



When people clicked "Like" on our Facebook page, they received an image every day reminding them of the action to take. This attracted 96 new people to follow us.



When people followed us on Twitter, they would get an image every day. Thanks to that, 32 new people follow us.

Our Presence in the Media



From our 2017-2018 Press File:

PRINTED and ELECTRONIC MEDIA:

Diocese of Valleyfield (July 21, 2017) Diocesan Centre registered as a green centre
Scarboro Missions (Aug. 2017) Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation News
St. Basil's Catholic Church (Aug. 2017) Mission and Social Justice, Green Churches Network
Anglican Diocese of Edmonton News (Aug. 18, 2017) Margaret Glidden, Prayer Services for Season of Creation
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Bulletin (Aug. 27, 2017) Eco-Spirituality in the Green Churches Network
Meetings (September-October-November 2017) Louise-Édith Tétreault, Interview with Norman Lévesque
Diocese of St-Jean-Longueuil - News (Sept. 1, 2017) Participation in the "Season of Creation"
Living Laudato Si' (Sept. 1, 2017) Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
Global Sisters Report (Oct. 23, 2017) Dana Wachter, Greening the Motherhouse
Catholic Women's League of Canada (Oct. 23, 2017) Ontario Provincial Council, Education and Health Committee
Presence Religious Information (Jan. 30, 2018), François Gloutnay, The Green Churches Network looks for a new home
CommonWord (April 2018) Mennonite Church Canada, Green Churches Network
Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI (April 8, 2018) NetNews, A New Website for the Green Churches Network



WIKIPEDIA

Wikipedia (Jan. 2018) posts an article on the Protection of Creation with 2 mentions of the Green Churches Network and a link to our website. The book "Greening Your Church" by Norman Lévesque is also referenced.

Coming up...

If 2018 was the year of developing ready-to-use educational resources for Christian communities, 2019 will be devoted to church councils, to providing tools for those charged with the management and upkeep of religious buildings (temporal affairs councils, stewardship councils, finance councils, facility and property managers, etc.). We will produce a new MAINTENANCE TOOLKIT, a compact guide which will illustrate how implementing improvements to the building can reduce its ecological footprint and be cost-effective as well.



We will design a self-evaluation guide for the religious building which will allow managers, to evaluate energy consumption (heating, lighting, electrical systems) and propose improvements. In addition to reducing the church's ecological footprint, these adaptations will actually save money. So, everyone is a winner because the church will be sustainable!



In September 2018, for the second year, we will offer churches a downloadable "Season of Creation" toolbox. It will contain spiritual, educational and action-oriented resources plus a 2018 Creation Care Calendar with suggestions of practical actions for each day from September 1st through October 4th. Although promoted by the World Council of Churches (Geneva) since 2008, observance of the Season of Creation is almost unheard of in Canada. Naturally, the Green Churches Network had to develop tools on this theme.

In collaboration with Our Lady of the Cape Sanctuary, recently registered in the Green Churches Network, we will organize the next Green Churches Forum to be held in Trois-Rivières, Quebec in autumn, 2019.

In view of making the green churches movement better known, we want to hire a first regional coordinator in Western Canada, if funding permits.

A letter of invitation will be sent to all Orthodox bishops, as well as to evangelical associations, so that more of their churches can be welcomed into the Green Churches Network. There will also be a special effort to stimulate the participation of Christian communities in rural and maritime areas. The Lord calls us to share the good ecological news in all regions!

