



Green Churches Network

Action Plan 2021-2025

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Objective: 250 Green Churches by 2025



Dear partners,

As we write these words, the *Green Churches Network* counts **86 registered churches, colleges, monasteries and centres in five provinces**. For the health of society and the environment, our objective is growing our network to reach 250 green churches over the next few years!

We believe that supporting the Green Churches Network helps to revitalize the country's churches by providing new resources that attract new volunteers to become involved, including **youth**. These same resources open doors to positive **media** coverage for the church, by covering ecological projects which promote a **dialogue** and a relationship between Christian denominations.

Building on extensive fieldwork since 2006 and the official establishment of our organization in 2015, we now have a national office in Montreal. The spiritual, educational and action **tools** we design are multiplying every month, including our popular 'Season of Creation' toolbox.

Action Plan Basics 2021-2025:

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

1. Gradual expansion to all **provinces and territories in Canada**, hiring Regional Coordinators for each region of the country
2. The development of new tools for **administrative councils** to reduce the maintenance costs of their religious buildings and their ecological footprint at the same time.
3. Building an effective **communication strategy** that focuses on video design, social media presence and trainings for registered churches. There is an invaluable evangelization potential here.

The joy of meeting

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

Erica Follon
Executive Director



GREEN CHURCHES

ACTION PLAN 2021-2025



2021

**100 green churches in
6 provinces**

15th anniversary of Green Churches
New guide for religious buildings



2022

**125 green churches in
7 provinces**

Regional Coordinator in the Prairies
Training green teams in photo and
video production



2023

**150 green churches in
8 provinces
1 territory**

Green Churches Forum in Calgary
New videos and blogs



2024

**200 green churches in
9 provinces
2 territories**

Regional Coordinator in the Maritimes
New Green Churches Certification



2025

**250 green churches in
10 provinces
3 territories**

Green Churches Forum in Halifax
New annual thematic calendar



www.greenchurches.ca

Why are Green Churches so important?

For the positive impact they have on:



1. 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 Christian denominations** sharing the same concern and with ecojustice movements.

2. 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. How often do we see church and society working together? An opportunity not to be missed!

3. The 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 people want to make their own contribution** and the community is enriched by their dynamic approach and technological talents.

4. the Environment:



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

5. Religious Heritage:



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



In order to reach 250 green churches by 2025, we have set the following goals:

1. Expand across Canada
2. Reduce the maintenance costs of buildings
3. Promote information through videos
4. Offer "Green Church" Certification



"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 a minority in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and 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 media coverage in other regions. More importantly, is the need for regional coordinators, an active presence in regions throughout Canada.



In order to continue our expansion, any additional funds would be useful to hire regional coordinators that would invite interested churches to participate in regional Forums and benefit from our training. The regions would be: the West, the Prairies, Ontario, the Maritimes, and the territories.

2. Reduce the maintenance cost of buildings

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 recommendations.

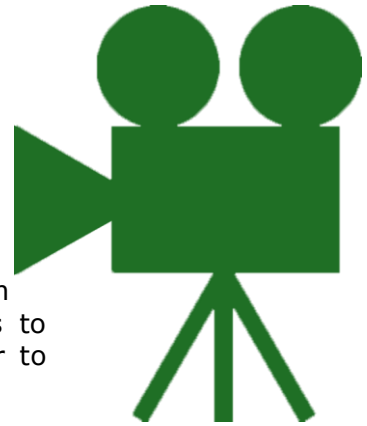
We will begin by designing a self-assessment guide on energy use. Heating and lighting are major expenses. Solutions to consider include better insulation of walls and windows, a replacement of the lighting system or modification of the heating system. We hope to reference auditors who can evaluate religious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



3. Training in Video Production

The seventh art was long reserved for a minority who had access to expensive video cameras. Today, video production is accessible even to small organizations and they are able to evangelize through their website and social networks. 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 skill will surely spill over to benefit other ministries in the Church.



4. "Green Church" Certification

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 commitment 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 could be annual awards in three categories (Spirituality, Education and Action) which would be presented at the Green Churches Forums. A strong team at the national office would be required to handle all these requests.



For more information



It is always our pleasure to answer any questions, help find any resources that you may be looking for, or to discuss any collaboration towards the growth of the *Green Churches Network*.

Please note that this Action Plan focuses specifically on the organizational aspects of the *Green Churches Network* essential to its growth towards 2025. We aim at reaching annual revenues of 200 000\$ in 2025.

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

Erica Follon
Executive Director

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*Don't hesitate to ask for our
annual reports!*