

Indianapolis Green Congregations



Why & How to Form a Green Ministry

Lafayette Green Drinks

January 5, 2010



Overview

- Background & Definitions
- 5 Steps to a Green Team
- Advice & Resources



Definitions



- Eco-Justice (NCC)
 - All ministries designed to heal and defend creation, working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it.
- Creation Care (EEN)
 - Caring for all of God's creation by stopping and preventing activities that are harmful (e.g. air and water pollution, species extinction), and participating in activities that further reconciliation of all of creation to God.
- A.K.A. Green Ministry, Green Sanctuary
- Consistent with Judeo-Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim & other religious teachings



What's a Green Team?

- The group that leads Creation Care efforts in a congregation
- Also known as:
 - Caring for Creation Group
 - Green Ministry Team
 - Earth Stewardship Team





Green Congregations in Indiana

- At least 30 congregations in Indianapolis with active environmental stewardship programs
- 20 congregations in Bloomington have joined “Earth Care”
- New: Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light forming to work on climate change issues
- Center for Congregations holding “Green Stories” workshops – Indy, Seymour & Fort Wayne



5 Steps to a Green Team

- Prepare & Organize
- Hold First Meeting
- Develop Communication Plan
- Develop Action Plan
- Review Plans Annually





5 Steps to a Green Team

1. Prepare & Organize
 - Research your denomination's teachings
 - Get organizational commitment
 - Write a charter
 - Choose a team (well-connected, with time & passion)



Epworth UMC Green Team

- Charter approved Dec. 4, 2006, by Church Council
- Expected Results:
 - Examine church operations and activities
 - Increased environmentally friendly operation of the church
 - Increased environmental stewardship by church members and friends
 - Environmental awareness and outreach to the community





5 Steps to a Green Team

2. Hold First Meeting

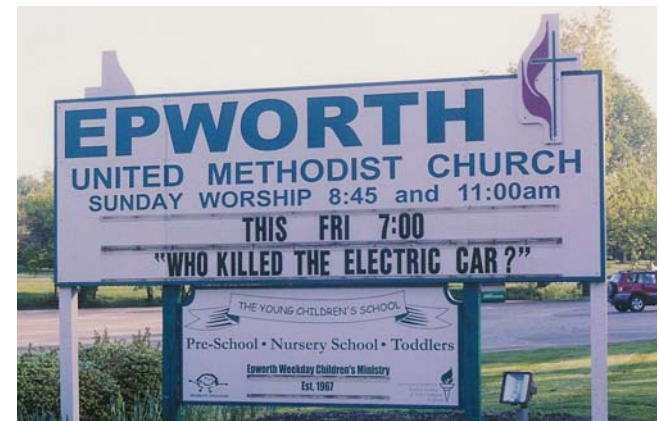
- Understand & accept charter
- Discuss group's goals and norms
- Establish regular meetings
 - Agendas & minutes
 - Begin & end on time



5 Steps to a Green Team

3. Develop Communication Plan

- How will you communicate goals, activities and progress to the congregation?
- ID available communication vehicles
 - Governing meetings
 - Bulletins, newsletters, signs, emails, Website
 - Worship Services
 - Local news media



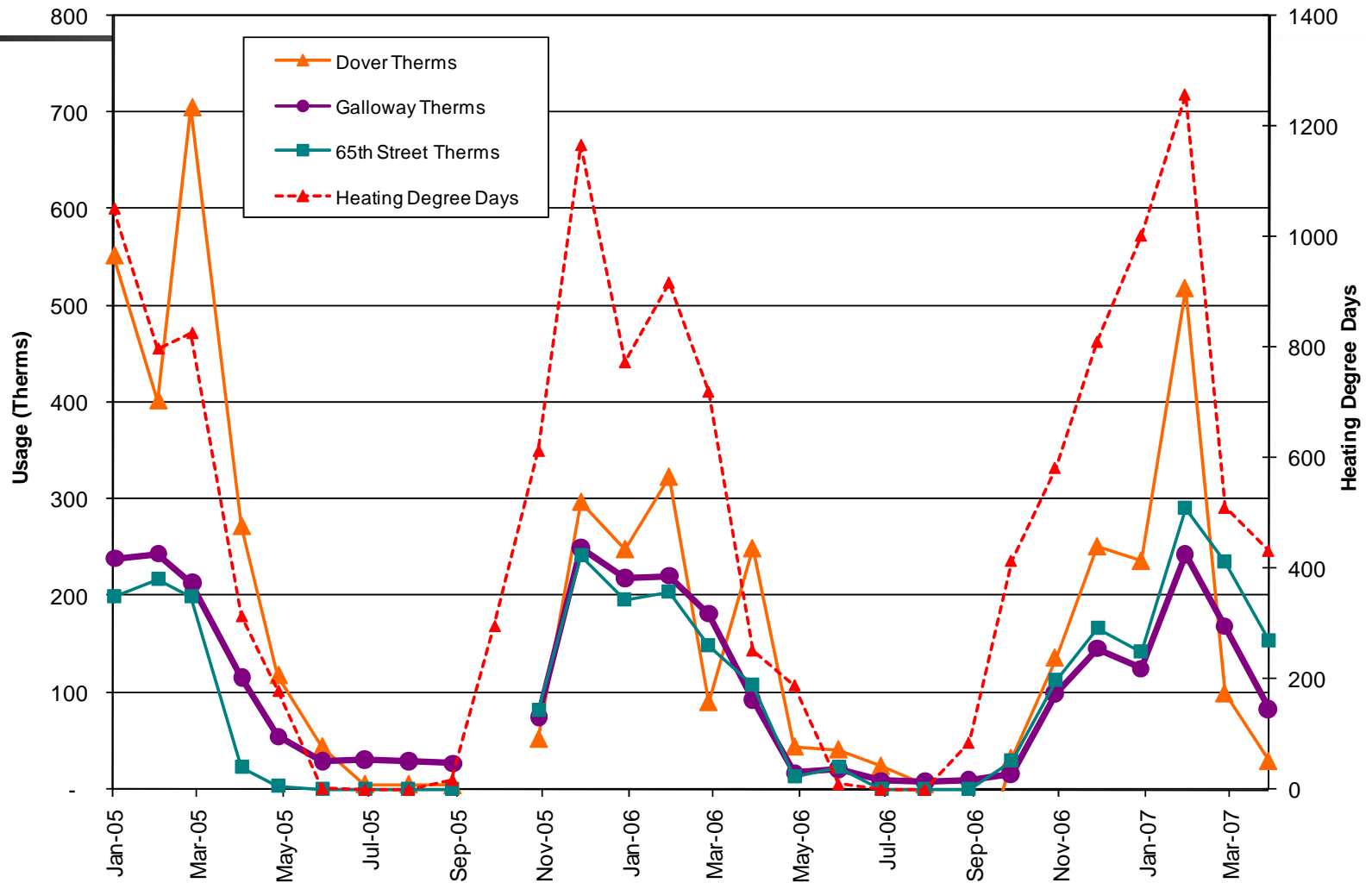
5 Steps to a Green Team

4. Develop an Action Plan

- Baseline: Audit the organization
 - Congregational Survey
 - Existing Programs: worship, education, outreach, missions
 - Chemical usage & waste disposal
 - Utility usage



Energy Audit – Gas (2005-06)





Develop Action Plan (cont.)

- Possible Action Areas:
 - Worship & Celebration
 - Religious Education
 - Sustainable Living
 - Church Operations
 - Environmental Justice & Advocacy





Indianapolis GC Activities

- Improving energy efficiency, insulation & weatherization
- Promote & offer recycling
- Reusable shopping bags
- Creation care-themed worship services
- Green tips in church bulletin





Indianapolis GC Activities

- Community tree-planting
- Grounds: Certified wildlife sanctuary, native landscaping
- “Low carbon diet” workshops
- Develop environmental policy for church operations
- “Walbicus” to Worship Weekend
- Bell-ringing for Climate Change





5 Steps to a Green Team

5. Review plans annually

- What did we accomplish?
- What's still left to be done?
- What are our goals this year?





Advice

- Be visible, helpful and have fun
- Recruit reliable people
- Start with win-win projects
 - Save & earn money (energy savings, recycling)
 - Emphasize simple living & curing “affluenza”
 - Don’t start with the sacred coffee hour!
- Track & publicize your progress





Intangible Accomplishments

- “We’ve cut our weekly trash in half just by recycling paper.”
- “I used a hardware store gift card I received to buy the new CFL light bulbs”
- “I’ve noticed lower electricity bills since we switched to CFL bulbs.”
- “This has been an eye opener for me.... Thank you for all you have done to help Epworth become more aware!!!”





Have Fun!

- Green art show
- Environmental film series
- Green fashion show
- Local food pitch-in dinner
- Winter "Soup Swap"





Epworth Challenges

- Overcoming bad experience with previous paper recycling program
- Dover House insulation debate
- Tree planting promotion fell short of goal
- Not everyone supports our climate change work





Creation Care Resources

- Indiana:
 - Indianapolis Interfaith Alliance – Creation Care
 - Improving Kids' Environment – Green Sanctuary
 - Earth Care Indiana (Bloomington)
 - Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light (statewide group now forming)
- National:
 - National Religious Partnership for the Environment (Interfaith)
 - Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN)
 - NCC Eco-Justice Programs
 - Unitarian Universalist Church – Green Sanctuary



Contacts

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