

# BECOME A GREEN CHURCH

CHECKLIST IN ORDER TO BECOME  
A MORE CLIMATE- & ECO-  
FRIENDLY CHURCH



## GOOD REASONS FOR BEING A GREEN CHURCH:

- ✓ Joy and respect for all of God's creation
- ✓ Care for the climate, environment and nature
- ✓ Global justice
- ✓ Protect natural resources – and save money at the same time

# CHECKLIST IN ORDER TO BECOME A GREEN CHURCH

As a Green Church you are a part of a growing network of churches, cemeteries, religious organizations and schools assisting to administer God's creation with thankfulness, respect, and care. Additionally, increasing consideration for your consumption and decreasing strain on the environment can produce savings on both economy and resources.

## HOW TO BECOME A GREEN CHURCH

Go through this list with the parish church council or a relevant group of church employees and/or volunteers. You can become a Green Church when you:

- 1) Fulfil at least 26 of the in total 50 requirements (there should be at least two fulfilled requirements in each category).
- 2) Have appointed a green committee, preferably composed of people from the parish council, church employees and users of the church, ideally with relevant expertise. One of the committee members must be appointed as the contact person to the secretariat of Green Church.

The churches in Denmark are very different, and none will probably find all the 50 points on the checklist relevant or possible to fulfill. But we hope the list will inspire and deliver relevant ideas for your future work.

## ENROLMENT

It is free to enroll in the network of Green Churches. When you have complied with the criteria listed above, attach your completed checklist in an email to [gronkirke@gronkirke.dk](mailto:gronkirke@gronkirke.dk). Also include a picture and a short text describing your work with sustainability (this will be used on our web page and on our social media channels) together with the name, email, and phone number for your appointed contact person. Subsequently you will be registered as a Green Church. We will register you on [www.gronkirke.dk](http://www.gronkirke.dk) and send you a Green Church poster. From then on, we will send a new poster every year in January via email. If you still comply with the necessary requirements to be a



For an in-depth look into the checklist, see the instruction on: [www.gronkirke.dk](http://www.gronkirke.dk)

Green Church, you can print and put up the new poster. Feel free to contact us in order to fill in the check list. Should you need extra help in the process, the Green Church secretariat can assist you with help. It is also possible to book one of our volunteer consultants to advise on a particular subject.

## BECOME A PARTNER CHURCH

The Green Church Partnership Track is for those whose sustainability ambitions reach a little higher. As a Partner Church you will receive exclusive material every year for use in your church. Only the Partner Churches can access this material, which can include green sermon guidelines, climate talks or similar. In addition, you will be granted free access to all of our existing materials (print and digital) as well as two free tickets to the annual Green Church conference – all for only DKK 1000 a year. Read more about becoming a Partner Church on [www.gronkirke.dk/bliv-partnerskabskirke](http://www.gronkirke.dk/bliv-partnerskabskirke).

## WHEN YOU ARE A GREEN CHURCH

The Green Church newsletter gives inspiration and new ideas to work with as a Green Church. Sign up for the newsletter and follow us on our webpage [www.gronkirke.dk](http://www.gronkirke.dk), on Facebook and Instagram. If you have good stories or ideas from your work as a Green Church, we would very much like to hear about them.

Thank you for joining in!  
With kind regards

Green Church  
a part of The National Council of Churches in Denmark.







## THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

To be a Green Church affects the whole life of the church and involves the work to influence attitudes. The Church has a distinctive language and a special approach to nature and to the stewardship of creation with a focus on our shared responsibility on issues concerning climate, environment, sustainability, nature, and justice ('climate justice'). This involves cultivating a rejoicing, grateful and responsible attitude towards creation – viewing creation as a gift that the Church must steward in everything from ministry to education, social work, and mission.



1. We have a themed service annually committed to the stewardship of creation (which could be held outdoors).
2. We include the themes of creation, nature, climate and environmental issues and justice in the church service liturgy throughout the year where it is suitable (in e.g., sermons, hymns, prayers).
3. We celebrate and raise awareness of Creationtide each year. It can be celebrated, for example, as an outdoor church service in an ecumenical setting.
4. We include aspects of creation in our church education – for example in preparation for confirmation or baptism and in study groups.
5. We arrange or take part in events focused on creation, climate, environment, nature and/or justice such as theme nights, courses, conferences and excursions.
6. We raise money to support climate- and environmental projects in the poorest and most vulnerable countries and areas in the world.
7. We arrange events focused on reuse and recycling such as jumble sales and swop markets.
8. We cooperate with others, such as companies, municipal entities, associations, institutions, NGOs, other churches, and organizations on projects focused on climate, environment and related ministry/social work.
9. We direct attention to the connection between ministry/social work and nature, e. g. through hikes and pilgrimages, church services in nature, therapy gardens and similar.



## THE CHURCH'S COMMUNICATION

It is important that the work with being a Green Church is visible and deeply rooted in the daily life of the church. The work of being a Green Church is not only for those who are especially interested in the agenda but also for members of the church council, those employed in the church, the parishioners, and it would be best if all those who are a part of the church be included in the work. What happens in the church should inspire both the parishioners and the local community. This is why communication is important.



10. We direct attention to our certification as Green Church, e. g. by displaying the Green Church poster in a prominent location, writing about Green Church matters in our church's communication channels and/or using the Green Church logo on our social media, newsletter, web page or the like.
11. We share stories about creation, climate, environment, nature, and justice in our church newsletter, on our church web page or externally through the communication channels of others.
12. We cooperate with companies, municipal entities, associations, institutions, other churches and organizations
13. We have compiled a plan of action for our work as a Green Church and go through it at least once a year.
14. We deliberate and discuss matters of being a Green Church in parish council meetings, personnel meetings or volunteer meetings at least once a year.





## THE CHURCH'S PURCHASES

Being a Green Church involves taking concrete steps to reduce your church's carbon footprint. The church's purchasing of goods and services can have a great climate and environmental impact. Purchases include all the products and goods the church buys, including food, paper, flowers, computers, furniture, building materials etc. It is a good idea to check all the church's purchases for each area of work and consider if they can be made in a more climate and environmentally friendly way. Request products with a low impact on climate or environment, even if the companies in question don't immediately offer them. We advise you to consult with relevant local municipal or diocesan units. The Green Church secretariat will also be able to assist you with finding relevant local actors in this matter.



15. We limit the church's purchases and prioritize buying durable and/or secondhand items when possible.
16. We buy groceries with a low carbon footprint, which has the least detrimental effect on the environment. We prioritize buying plant-based, organic, Fairtrade and/or locally produced goods and seasonal food.
17. We buy environmentally labelled products for cleaning, maintenance and outdoor areas whenever possible.
18. We use environmentally certified organic and/or Fairtrade suppliers of goods and services whenever possible.
19. For bigger purchases we buy environmentally certified, recycled or upcycled products and materials.
20. For renovations and construction projects we use environmentally certified products, materials and services and consider the use of recycled materials.
21. We buy and use rechargeable batteries where we can.
22. We use flowers and bouquets with the least harmful effect on climate and environment, such as flowers and greenery from the churchyard, flowers grown locally, potted plants, environmentally certified plants, paper or LEGO flowers.



## USE OF ENERGY IN THE CHURCH

The church's use of energy – especially heating – is often an expensive item on the budget. A lot of CO<sub>2</sub> and money can often be saved here. To save energy, an inspection of infrastructure used can be needed (heat sources, taps, windows etc.), but often a lot can be saved by being aware of consumption and other everyday habits. It is always a good idea to get professional help.



- ☐ **23.** We have had an energy economic review of the church's buildings made (church, parish community center, rectory etc.), and follow the instructions as well as we can.
- ☐ **24.** We check our meters for water, electricity, heating and gas at suitable intervals, e.g., once a month, and use the reading to set benchmarks to reduce consumption.
- ☐ **25.** We give priority to the low use of energy and good fuel economy when buying, for example, freezers, washing-and washing up machines, pc's and machines for the cemetery.
- ☐ **26.** We buy electricity from sustainable sources.
- ☐ **27.** We use LED lights (both light bulbs and tubes).
- ☐ **28.** We turn off the lights in rooms which are not in use and/or have installed (light) sensors and timers both indoors and outdoors.
- ☐ **29.** We turn off computers and other office machines when they are not in use.
- ☐ **30.** We use heating produced in the most environmentally and climate friendly way and connect an electronic control system if possible.
- ☐ **31.** We lower the temperature in the church, parish hall/parish community center and in the office whenever feasible.
- ☐ **32.** We have introduced systematic monitoring of humidity and de-humidifiers in the church building as well as other possible parish buildings to ensure a good indoor climate and avoid mold.
- ☐ **33.** We limit water usage, e. g. by installing reduced-water use toilets or by filling up the dish washing machine before running it.
- ☐ **34.** When letting or subletting facilities, we recommend the tenant to follow the guidelines above regarding electricity, water and heating.





## THE CHURCH'S TRANSPORTATION AND OUTDOOR AREAS

The use of fuel for transportation in private cars, trucks and airplanes contributes significantly to the global emission of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. Everyone can contribute to reducing this by choosing forms of transportation which put less strain on the climate and environment. Many churches have outdoor areas – both large and small – which can be used for green purposes. Not much space is needed to plant trees or fruit bushes, put up bird boxes or beehives, whether you have church land, a churchyard, rectory gardens or just a parking lot.



- ☐ **35.** We ensure parking for bicycles near the church or the cemetery.
- ☐ **36.** We use bicycles, buses, trains, and pool-drive to a larger degree.
- ☐ **37.** We avoid air travel whenever possible and pay CO<sub>2</sub>-compensation when flying is needed.
- ☐ **38.** We have purchased one or more bicycles for the church, for example carrier bicycles for local transport for church employees and volunteers.
- ☐ **39.** We hold some of our meetings and courses online to reduce transportation.
- ☐ **40.** We implement environmentally friendly and ecological activities and improvements in

the outdoor areas of the church and cemetery, e.g., by going through the church's various machinery and the checklist for Green Churchyards.



**41.** We establish and provide habitats for wild animals and plants in the outdoor areas of the church.



**42.** We ensure an ecological and climate-friendly management of the church's agricultural land and woodland, prioritizing biodiversity, groundwater protection and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



## WASTE IN THE CHURCH

Waste is today often a resource which can be used somewhere else. Cardboard, paper, glass, milk cartons and so forth can be used in church activities for children. Paper which is only printed on one side can be used as notepaper – and the waste that we don't recycle ourselves might be useful to others. It will often be advantageous to cooperate with other churches in your municipality to obtain offers for waste management.



- ☐ **43.** We attempt to repair our things and hand over what we can't use for recycling.
- ☐ **44.** We reduce and adjust our consumption to avoid wasting food, packaging etc.
- ☐ **45.** We use proper tableware instead of disposable tableware whenever possible.
- ☐ **46.** We print and copy on both sides of the sheet of paper, and we use leftover paper when possible.
- ☐ **47.** We compost garden waste, either on our own land or on approved compost sites.
- ☐ **48.** We sort household waste in its proper categories (such as food waste, cardboard, paper, glass, textiles, food and drink cartons, dangerous waste, and residual waste)
- ☐ **49.** We deliver electronic waste to approved recipients or, where possible, to a recycling scheme.
- ☐ **50.** We organize reuse and the collection of, for example, clothes, candle stumps, mobile phones, glasses etc.





## THE CHURCH'S OWN INITIATIVES

There can be many green initiatives which are not covered in the categories and points of this checklist. They count too! Add your own ideas and initiatives here.



51. _____ _____	55. _____ _____
52. _____ _____	56. _____ _____
53. _____ _____	57. _____ _____
54. _____ _____	58. _____ _____