

# COOL CONGREGATIONS Challenge



Interfaith Power & Light

## Project Ideas & Stories for Inspiration

Cool Congregations Challenge entries find unique expression from place to place. We've collected a few sample stories of what others have done to inspire you. Find more at [CoolCongregations.org](http://CoolCongregations.org).

### Cool Congregations Planners

**North West Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Atlanta, Georgia** submitted a comprehensive plan that included: environmental Sunday services; a stewardship project involving the planting of 10 threatened Eastern Hemlock saplings; a rainwater capture project; installation of motion sensors on the lights; and, solar panel array expansion.

The senior youth group of **United Parish of Upton, Massachusetts** embarked on an audit and planning project to save energy and money for their church. Working with National Grid, they raised more than \$5,000 for the recommended improvements. They also enacted skits before worship services to promote the call to have congregants follow suit at home through MASS SAVE.

### Energy Savers

**Mercy Center in Madison, Connecticut** has curbed energy use and reduced six tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere through solar-powered hot water heaters that save 650 gallons of heating oil, programmable thermostats, attic and wall insulation, low-flow toilets, and lighting upgrades.

**Jonesville United Methodist Church in New York** has done extensive work to lower its carbon footprint in response to climate change, such as: upgrading the sanctuary ceiling; replacing heating and cooling systems; and adding motion sensor and time controlled lighting. In all, Jonesville United Methodist Church is saving an estimated 18,000 kWh of electricity, 2,200 therms of natural gas and more than \$5,000 in annual cost savings. This represents a saving of 62,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Cost effective insulation improvements at **Congregation Beth El in Bangor, Maine** have cut the energy purchased to power the congregation in half and at the same time as it made their building more comfortable, more useful to their congregation and more welcoming to their community.

Cool Congregations Challenge is a program of Interfaith Power & Light. Enter at [coolcongregations.org](http://coolcongregations.org)

## Renewable Role Models

**Federated Community Church, Flagstaff, Arizona** meets in a century-old building that now gets 96% of its power from the sun. Congregants can monitor the system's performance via a link on the church website.

**Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church in Oak Park, Illinois** is one of the first churches to go geothermal for heating and cooling. They have reduced their fossil fuel emissions by 100% and have reduced their energy costs by nearly \$12,000 per year. They host workshops in conjunction with Illinois Interfaith Power & Light to inspire other churches and synagogues to implement geothermal.



## Sacred Grounds Stewards

**Good Samaritan Church in Pinellas Park, Florida** developed a system for using recycled water for outdoor gardens. They also started using a natural blend of things like soap and Listerine as insecticides for the new native plants in their gardens.

**University United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas** is an urban church with a number of social justice ministries, including Open Door, a Saturday brunch for about 300 people experiencing homelessness. By adding commercial composting services and training its homeless clients, Open Door now runs trash free. It has composted more than 27,000 gallons of waste. The church has also quadrupled its recycling program as it works to serve vulnerable neighbors in the most healthy efficient, and environmentally sound means possible.

## Community Inspirations

An energy study from **First Universalist Church of Rockland, Maine** showed significant heat loss through windows. Leaders researched solutions and determined easy-to-build thermal window inserts to form an insulating barrier to save heat. The church saved 25% in its heating costs in the first winter. The project has grown into The Window Dresser Project is has produced 1,350 window inserts for more than 105 homes.

**Rock River United Methodist Church in Rock River, Ohio** sponsored a coffee hour to raise awareness of energy-efficiency. They gave away reusable bags; had literature available for energy-saving tips for people's homes; had a free raffle for an energy-efficiency give-away bag; and a demonstration table of a Kill-o-Watt meter and a fridge/freezer temperature card.

**Trinity Church, an Episcopal Community in Menlo Park, California** hosted an "Energy Party," which focused primarily on educating members and inspiring them to go green at home.