

RECOMMENDATIONS



Action

3. Determine Your Carbon Footprint and Embrace Drawdown

“God so loved *the world* that he gave his only son . . .’ is not a pious platitude or a simple religious refrain. It is a declaration of God’s purpose and mission in the world from the beginning to this very day. ‘God so loved *the world*.’ That’s not just about us who are human. It’s about the whole of God’s grand and glorious Creation.”

—Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, on keeping our promises in caring for creation with carbon-reduction techniques such as the carbon tracker tool

Recommendation: We encourage congregations collectively and individually to reduce their carbon footprint as much as possible to foster life-giving choices in how we inhabit the earth that has been given to us.

Background: Carbon reduction applies to church facilities and, perhaps more importantly, to members of the congregation. Congregants can achieve this goal through *measuring* their carbon footprints and *taking actions* to reduce their footprint *collectively* at Sustain Earth, Our Island Home, the carbon tracker tool designed for use by The Episcopal Church. When participating together, the entire congregation is strengthened and empowered, serving as a model to the larger community.

Taking Action:

- **Diocese-Wide Implementation of the Carbon Tracker Tool.** We recommend that two or three people in each parish become familiar enough with the Sustain Earth, Our Island Home carbon tracker tool so they can help others with questions as they arise. This will require sustained communication and coordination, training, and follow-up user-group meetings to maintain momentum.
- **Facility Improvements.** Although improvements to facilities may be large and out of reach financially, many small operational changes can be made to reduce the facility carbon footprint. Here are just a few examples:
 - A no-Styrofoam/minimal plastic policy for all events
 - A minimal travel policy
 - Carpooling
 - On-line meetings to alternate with in-person meetingsFacility improvements can even become opportunities for stewardship in that parishioners can support improvements in honor or memory of someone they love. For example, at Saint Mark's, parishioners helped fund the EV Charging Station and a water bottle filling station.
- **Energy Audits.** An energy audit is an assessment of the church to look at current energy consumption and then identify energy efficiency measures that

can make the church more efficient. A small investment in an energy analysis may also expose some less expensive improvements to facilities that could save money on utility bills as well as significantly reduce the facility carbon footprint. Small grants through the [Bishop's Committee on the Environment \(BCE\)](#) and other organizations may be available to underwrite an energy audit. At some future date, the parish may feel called to raise money to make bigger improvements.

Results: Together, using our carbon tracker, we can show our personal and congregational transformation. We can explore group financing and support each other's endeavors. Our actions will inspire others to commit to act.

Resources:

- **Partner geographically.** For small parishes, it may be helpful to collaborate with other parishes in their geographic regions found [here](#).
- **Carbon tracker training.** A recording of a June 2021 training with the developer of the carbon tracker tool can be found [here](#).
- **Diocesan Carbon Tracker Workshop** (2021) includes experiences of members from the dioceses and can be viewed [here](#).
- **Grants** from the Bishop's Committee on the Environment and Earth Ministry/Interfaith Power and Light can be found [here](#).

[Drawdown, Seattle](#) has many resources available for people and organizations attempting to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. These resources are based on the comprehensive book [Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming](#), by Paul Hawken (editor). [Here](#) is a handout that summarizes the [Drawdown solutions](#) in brief paragraphs, many of them within the scope of the church. The Drawdown website is also rich with recommendations, TED talks, and film and book recommendations that provide context on why to carbon track.