

## Creation Care Committee Tips

Forming a Creation Care Committee within your congregation may be the single most important step you can take to have a lasting impact. After all, there's an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others." Not only will this group serve as a source of inspiration and ideas, they will make the experience much more enjoyable, lead the day-to-day efforts of your creation care mission, and provide an invaluable network of advice and support. This guide will help you to recruit members to do two things: 1) form a creation care committee that can lead your creation care efforts, and; 2) give your committee the tools it needs to engage and empower your congregation's members.

### Get Started: Create Your Committee

- ❑ **Earn the approval of congregational leaders** - One of the first things you do should be to gain the approval of your congregation's lay leadership for the formation of a creation care committee. This approval will give your committee additional credibility.
- ❑ **Prepare a compelling story** - Think of how you can describe the purpose of the committee to others. You should consider not just why you are interested in empowering and inspiring others on climate change, but why others might want to join in. Blessed Tomorrow has resources to help you tell a powerful story rooted in your faith and the values of your congregation that you can use to excite others about the idea of joining your committee. Visit [blessedtomorrow.org](https://blessedtomorrow.org) and click on "Inspire Others."
- ❑ **Draft a mission statement and choose a catchy name** - A mission statement is an excellent way to communicate the shared purpose and vision of your group both to yourselves and others. Blessed Tomorrow can help get you started with our resource on Crafting Your Story, available at [blessedtomorrow.org](https://blessedtomorrow.org). Your committee's name is critical too. Picking a committee name connected to your tradition (e.g. "To Till and Tend") or fun (e.g. "Earth Quakers") can help to set the right tone for the inspiring work ahead that flows seamlessly into your congregation's existing customs and traditions.
- ❑ **Identify the best messengers and make the ask** - In addition to those who are already champions of this issue, you'll want to find people who are new to creation care and climate to join your committee. This is critical for making creation care into a popular topic within your congregation, as these individuals may be easier for ordinary members to identify with; not necessarily the "greenest" members of your congregation. Candidates for your committee should be given a formal invitation to join by describing the group, its goals, and what is expected of its members. Make sure to acknowledge and celebrate people's decisions to join the committee, so others can be inspired by their example.

- **Announce your arrival** - You should strive to make an immediate splash when you introduce your new group to your congregation. Put it in the bulletin, in the announcements, and on your social media sites. Better yet, make it part of the call to action within a great sermon on creation care. Regardless of how you do it, make sure that it invites others to join in! Visit [blessedtomorrow.org](http://blessedtomorrow.org) to view our Crafting a Communications Strategy resource, which will provide you with ideas on how to publicize the launch of your committee.

## On Your Path: Keeping Your Congregation Engaged

- **Start small** - A wise minister once said that his goal was to bend people, not to break them. If you try to do too much too fast, you may find that you have left the rest of your congregation behind. For this reason, we recommend starting with the low-hanging fruit, such as introducing creation care as a topic for your congregation to explore together. Or, you might want to explore the Care for Creation actions that involve little to no costs but bring immediate benefits, which you can find at [blessedtomorrow.org](http://blessedtomorrow.org). Once you have built understanding and trust, you can move on to bigger goals.
- **Keep a big tent** - Not everyone will be immediately supportive of addressing climate change. For this reason, it's important to offer up reasons and opportunities that appeal to a broad base of perspectives. Some congregants may not recognize climate, but can recognize the need to be stewards of creation. Others may not believe in cutting emissions, but they can see the value in cutting the congregation's energy bills.
- **Involve the congregation** - Involving the congregation doesn't just mean holding events led by the committee for your members. It means asking your members what topics they would like to explore and catering your program to their interests. You may even have members outside of the creation care committee present on these topics as another way to generate additional support and excitement. You can also continually recruit new members to join your congregation care committee, who can serve as a wellspring of new energy and ideas.
- **Make your efforts visible** - Don't bury your light! Your commitment, your involvement, and your successes are all things that your congregation should see and hear about. Take advantage of your bulletin boards, newsletters, and other avenues as space to trumpet your efforts and spur additional interest. Check out Blessed Tomorrow's communication tips for more tips on how to communicate your success, available at [blessedtomorrow.org](http://blessedtomorrow.org).
- **Stay positive and celebrate success** - Though the challenges we face are serious, remember that despair paralyzes people, whereas solutions and positivity empower them. You must instill a sense of hope so that your members recognize that they are a part of the solution, not the problem, and that leading on climate will ultimately benefit them, their children, and their community. In addition, be sure to reward and celebrate the participation of the committee members, and your congregation's milestones along the way. Have fun and don't be afraid to infuse humor and creativity. This will help maintain momentum and make the work more enjoyable!

### Stage 3: Big Ideas: Take it the Next Level

- **Have a plan** - Failing to plan is planning to fail. By creating a long term plan for your creation care committee, you can make sure that each step along your path builds on the one before. This goes for your ongoing communications, events, and facility improvements. Blessed Tomorrow will help you create a customized Path to Positive plan for your congregation at [blessedtomorrow.org](https://blessedtomorrow.org).

- **Connect with other groups** - You may be surprised to learn that there are other congregations and organizations in your area also working on creation care. These groups can be a rich source of support, resources, and ideas. Similarly, the Blessed Tomorrow forum at [blessedtomorrow.org](https://blessedtomorrow.org) and social media sites can put you in touch with others walking down this path.

