



Partner Congregation

Welcome Packet



Interfaith
Partners for the
CHESAPEAKE

Thank you for taking the pledge!

We are delighted to welcome you as an Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) Partner Congregation. By signing the pledge, your congregation is answering the call to honor, restore, and protect the sacred blessings of creation. You are now part of a growing network of faith communities working to make a difference through education and action.

Now that your congregation has signed the pledge, it's time to get started! There is no single path to take after signing the pledge. This packet will highlight some actions your congregation can lead in honoring your commitment through the IPC Partner Congregation Pledge.

Welcome to the movement!





There is a place for everyone at the table

Whether your congregation is big, or small, or anywhere in between, there are meaningful actions you and your congregation can take. IPC has identified four categories of action for congregations to make a difference. For even more ideas, see the Menu for Action on page 7. Region-specific menus are also available on [our website](#).

Categories of Action



Training



Forming



Caring



Going forth

TRAINING



IPC provides a number of training opportunities for you and your congregation members to strengthen your leadership skills and environmental impact.

Faithful Green Leaders Training

IPC provides learning opportunities through our Faithful Green Leaders Training program to help partner congregations acquire the knowledge, skills, tools, and support they need to lead their communities in raising awareness and restoring the waters of the Chesapeake region. You can register to attend our Faithful Green Leaders Training program [on our website](#).



Learning Labs

IPC offers monthly online Learning Labs that take a deep dive into various topics of interest for faith communities looking to help your congregation members acquire the knowledge, skills, tools and support they need to build and grow an environmentally focused team to raise awareness and help heal the waters. You can register for our upcoming Learning Labs or listen to recordings of past Learning Labs [on our website](#).





FORMING



Forming actions are ones that help congregations raise awareness among their members and provide spiritual context to the call to action. These actions build your congregation's knowledge and commitment. Forming activities can include:

- Organizing spiritual nature walks or outdoor experiences
- Hosting environmental movie nights, book study groups, or scripture study
- Hosting a workshop on “Faith and the Environment” or “How to Talk About Climate Change”

Making a Difference Through Environmental Literacy

Understanding and appreciating the natural world is important for inspiring and informing pro-environmental behaviors. By increasing your congregation's environmental literacy and motivating from a moral and spiritual tradition, you can drive positive behavior changes that will benefit our watershed.

"But the land must not be sold beyond reclaim, for the land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with Me. Throughout the land that you hold, you must provide for the redemption of the land."

Leviticus 25:23-24

CARING



Caring projects are measurable actions that are intended to directly benefit your local watershed and the environment. Caring actions can include:

- Organizing and participating in a tree planting
- Installing a rain garden, cistern, rain barrels, treat or remove impervious surfaces
- Cleaning up trash at a local waterway, park or neighborhood

Don't Know Where to Start? We're Here to Help

The beauty of congregational projects is that they model behaviors that congregants can do at home. However, it may be challenging to know where to start when planning a rain garden or conservation landscape. To help, IPC connects congregations with environmental organizations and government agencies that provide funding and expertise. Refer to page 8 for guidance on steps to start a project.



"In some native languages the term for plants translates to 'those who take care of us'."
Robin Wall-Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*



GOING FORTH



"What the outstanding person does, others will try to do. The standards such people create will be followed by the whole world." Bhagavad Gita 3:20-21

Going forth actions are those that intend to engage the broader community. The power of our faith expressed in these healing actions serves as an inspiration to others to "go forth" and do likewise. Going forth activities include:

- Taking action to advocate for pro-environmental policies at the state or local level
- Spearhead a multi-congregation stream cleanup or neighborhood trash cleanup
- Collaborate with other faith communities to host a nature walk or spiritual outdoor experience

The Strength of Community

Social influence and community play an important role in increasing engagement in pro-environmental behaviors. By engaging others outside of your congregational community, not only can more trees be planted and invasive species removed, but more people will learn and subsequently act in ways that benefit the watershed.

Menu for Action | FOR CONGREGATIONS

Congregations are encouraged to choose one or more of these actions on their path to being faithful stewards of the environment.

Congregation Name: _____



Forming: Build your congregation's knowledge and commitment

1. Host a spiritual outdoor experience/nature walk
2. Organize an environmental movie night, book study group, or scripture study.
3. Host a workshop on "Faith and the Environment" or "How to Talk About Climate Change"
4. Participate in Faithful Green Leaders Training to start or support your congregational Green Team
5. Host a sermon on environmental issues
6. Organize an environmental book study group
7. Offer educational programming about drinking water, environmentally friendly gardening and lawn care or other environmental topic
8. Incorporate environmentally themed programming into your Youth Group, Sunday school, or Vacation Bible School
9. Sign the IPC Partner Congregation Pledge to celebrate, respect, and revere the Earth's blessings
10. Connect holiday celebrations with creation care themes

Caring: Put your knowledge into practice

1. Adopt habits that help reduce waste such as zero waste or recycling
2. Install a rain garden, cistern, rain barrels, treat or remove impervious surfaces
3. Organize and participate in a tree planting
4. Clean up trash at a local waterway, park or neighborhood
5. Remove invasive plant species to help local wildlife
6. Install a community garden on church grounds to benefit your congregants, or to donate the food
7. Design and install a conservation landscape to improve wildlife habitat
8. Explore how to reduce energy use at your congregation and home or solar/community energy

Going Forth: Spread the message

1. Involve other congregations, the neighborhood or general public in any Forming or Caring activities
2. Hold a native tree/plant training and sale
3. Spearhead and participate in multi-congregational storm drain stenciling or environmentally themed mural
5. Spearhead a multi-congregation stream cleanup or neighborhood trash cleanup
6. Collaborate with other faith communities to host a nature walk or spiritual outdoor experience
7. Host an environmental advocacy workshop; take action to advocate for clean water. Contact your state or local representative and/or write a letter to the editor



GETTING TO WORK

Tools and Resources to Get Started

Partner Congregation Map

Connecting with partner congregations in your area is easier than ever with IPC's [Partner Congregation interactive map](#). This tool makes it easy to locate nearby pledge congregations for partnerships and collaborations.

Useful Resources

The [Resources tab](#) on the IPC website has everything you need to plan and execute events, including:

- Region-specific Menus for Action
- IPC Logos to share your involvement in the movement
- English and Spanish prayer cards

After Signing the Pledge

Not sure where to begin after signing the Partner Congregation Pledge? Here are some actions we recommend:

- Contact an IPC staff member to discuss projects your congregation can take on
- Get support from your clergy
- Establish a Green Team
- Participate in Faithful Green Team Leaders Training
- Organize an environmental movie night, book study group, or scripture study
- Host a tree planting or stream cleanup
- Remove invasive species on your grounds

Connect with IPC!

Stay up to date with IPC news, partner congregation events, and more by following us on social media.



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**PARTNER
CONGREGATION
PLEDGE**

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