

## ***Preparing for the Papal Climate Encyclical and Visit***

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### ***How Increasing Energy Efficiency in Parishes = Environmental Stewardship = Financial Stewardship***

The Pope's upcoming encyclical will focus attention on the need to protect our environment and those least able to adapt to human-induced climate changes through reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide. The vast majority of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions are the result of energy production, transportation, and use. The most immediate action a parish can take to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions is to save energy by improving the energy efficiency of its operations.

Every parish has abundant opportunities to save energy at no (or very little) upfront cost. Savings on energy bills free up funds for other key elements of each parish's mission. Most energy efficiency upgrades that do require investment pay for themselves in lower energy bills on relatively short time frames. Good environmental stewardship is also good financial stewardship.

Tools to improve parish energy efficiency, training, and technical support are available AT NO COST through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR Congregations program.

Catholic parishes throughout the United States can formally sign up as partners for the ENERGY STAR Congregations program. The program, headquartered here in Washington, D.C., would welcome having parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington as partners. There is no upfront cost to the program—all that is required is a commitment to look for energy savings opportunities in your parish facilities. Partners receive the ENERGY STAR Congregations newsletter and have access to the technical support the program provides.

The free tools that EPA provides include a "Portfolio Manager" to enable parishes to calculate and benchmark the energy performance of their buildings. EPA and local utilities have retained technical support contractors to help congregations analyze opportunities for improving their energy efficiency, based on this benchmark—this assistance is available at no cost.

Both Pepco (for Maryland counties) and the DC Sustainable Energy Utility Fund (for DC) offer significant rebates to help buy down the cost of energy efficient equipment (e.g., lighting, HVAC systems) for buildings. The ENERGY STAR Congregations program can help your parish identify and access these funds. This can "buy down" the upfront cost of more efficient equipment and shorten the pay-back periods even more.

For parishes that significantly improve their energy efficiency (moving into the top quarter of efficiency scores for comparable church or school buildings), ENERGY STAR offers a public certification and recognition program.

Additional details on the program are on the other side of this paper. If your parish would like to leverage this assistance as a partner in the ENERGY STAR Congregations program, as part of its response and catechesis surrounding the upcoming Papal encyclical and its preparations for hosting the Pope's visit, please indicate your interest by contacting the EPA Program Manager, Jerry Lawson, ([Lawson.Jerry@epa.gov](mailto:Lawson.Jerry@epa.gov)) or Dan Misleh at the Catholic Climate Covenant at 202-756-5545 (or [danmisleh@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:danmisleh@catholicclimatecovenant.org)).



## No-Cost and Low-Cost Sure Energy Savers



### Help your congregation save energy, save money and protect the environment:

#### 1. Commit to Energy Stewardship

Become an ENERGY STAR partner and commit to better stewardship at [www.energystar.gov/JoinBuildings](http://www.energystar.gov/JoinBuildings)

#### 2. Assess Current Performance

Benchmark your worship facility's baseline energy use, costs, and emissions with EPA's free, online Portfolio Manager® tool. Learn more at [www.energystar.gov/Benchmark](http://www.energystar.gov/Benchmark)

#### 3. Set Savings Goals using Portfolio Manager

Work with key staff and decision makers to integrate energy stewardship goals into congregational priorities.

#### 4. Create an Action Plan

Download the **ENERGY STAR Action Workbook for Congregations** at [www.energystar.gov/Congregations](http://www.energystar.gov/Congregations)

#### 5. Implement the Action Plan

Find free ENERGY STAR training webinars at [www.energystar.gov/buildings/training](http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/training) and ENERGY STAR qualified products at [www.energystar.gov/Products](http://www.energystar.gov/Products)

#### 6. Evaluate Progress

Highlight your savings and progress made through Portfolio Manager's standard or custom reports.

#### 7: Recognize Achievements

Acknowledge everyone who helped, share your success story with ENERGY STAR, and consider achieving facility certification.

### Lighting

- Turn off lights (and all equipment) when not in use.
- Install "occupancy sensors" to automatically turn lighting off and on as people need them.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and/or light emitting diodes (LEDs). CFLs cost about 75% less to use; last about 10 times longer. LEDs last about 20 times longer.

### Office and Kitchen Equipment

- When necessary to buy new equipment for office or kitchen, always look for ENERGY STAR qualified products.

### Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

- Keep exterior doors closed while running heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC).
- Clean or change HVAC filters every month during peak cooling or heating season. Dirty filters waste energy, overwork the equipment, and cause poor indoor air quality. New filters are inexpensive.
- Install a quality programmable thermostat to optimize HVAC system operation on a "24/7" basis for savings, comfort and convenience.
- Use fans. Fans can help delay or reduce the need for air-conditioning by making a higher temperature feel more comfortable.
- Plug air leaks with weather-stripping and caulking to control ventilation and stop outside air infiltration. Check around windows and doors. Leaks in HVAC ducts, attics, basements, and crawlspaces can be even more costly.
- "Tune-up" your HVAC system each season to protect performance and longevity.

### Water

- Buy EPA WaterSense® certified water fixtures.
- Fix leaks. Small leaks add up to many gallons and dollars wasted—especially for hot water.
- Buy an ENERGY STAR qualified water heater if a new one is needed. A "tankless" heater reduces "standby" energy storage costs.
- Set water temperature at about 110 – 120 degrees to prevent dangerous scalds and save money.

