

Towson Presbyterian Church – Earth Care Action Team
ECC Recertification Narrative for Program year 2025

The Earth Care Action team is one of three action teams at TPC and is a subcommittee of Mission/Outreach, but Care of Creation is integral to all aspects of the life of our church.

Here's how ECAT worked with/in the areas of...

Stewardship

- 1) Continued to encourage members to use online giving (including QR code, monthly direct bank drafts), reducing use of paper offering envelopes. We have also cut down on the number of paper “statements of giving” mailed out to less than a dozen.
- 2) Annual Report/Annual Meeting – distributed the annual report and related information primarily as electronic files available for download/viewing. Only printed a small number (20) for distribution at the meeting, significantly reducing the use of paper for this annual event.
- 3) Weekly church newsletter goes out every Friday as an “e-blast” (digital only). Have nearly eliminated all paper correspondence that we used to mail out.
- 4) Sunday bulletin is available on line for both in-person and virtual (streaming) worshippers to use in place of a printed bulletin if they so choose.

Property

- 1) Continued maintenance of our two grant-funded rain gardens, installed in 2023, to capture rainwater run-off from the building and the parking lot.
- 2) Continued care for our renovated (with permeable crushed stone) labyrinth, our Intergenerational Garden, and other areas of the former manse property. This property provides neighborhood green space and is used by many neighbors including children from TPC's preschool, residents of the home for mentally disabled adults (next door), dog walkers.
- 3) Church continued to replace windows to reduce cold air leakage and energy consumption.
- 4) Continued to maintain our 265-acre BeeTree Preserve property, which is in permanent conservation easement. Used by members, neighbors, scouts and other outside groups. Maintained previously planted stream buffer trees, trimmed trees threatening paths, camping sites and picnic shelters, and installed new bat houses. Continued forest management plan.

5) Continued the important first full year watering and maintenance of the thirteen trees (native species) planted on the church property in partnership with Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources through the Trees for Sacred Places program from Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake. All have survived and are now established.

6) Blue Jean Sunday – churchwide effort to care for our church property, inside and out. Volunteers used green cleaners, reuseable cleaning cloths, and paper yard waste bags (that go to county composting).

7) Bought commercial composter for church kitchen to compost kitchen scraps from Sunday Community Lunch (free meal for the local food insecure) and other meals at TPC. Adding the compost to the Intergenerational Garden compost for use next season.

8) Have had a pair of natural burials (no embalming, no vault, in biodegradable container) at the church cemetery. Anticipating more of this greener style of burial as members become more familiar with this option.

Mission/Outreach

1) Intergenerational Garden (IGG) – this was our 16th season. Made 53 deliveries of fresh healthy vegetables to the local food pantry (about 250 lbs. plus 97 ziploc bags). Flowers from the garden delivered to bereaved and homebound members. The IGG has its own social media presence to further spread the word. A volunteer posts photos, deliveries and other information to a public blog site for others to follow.

2) Participated in Project Clean Stream (locally organized area-wide stream clean-up).

3) Drawing on earth care focused Lenten calendars from PC-USA, Interfaith Power & Light and Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, we created our own Lenten-style calendar for Earth Month. Calendar was a mix of prayer, reflection, personal action and advocacy ideas, designed for a range of ages. Encouraged congregational use through Earth Month (April).

4) Tree planting – TPC coordinated with the Neighborhood Forest program and enrolled 18 children who received and planted 21 native black cherry trees at their homes.

5) Earth Care Action Team met quarterly to plan, share ideas, and support each other in our individual efforts.

6) Two TPC members attended Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) and Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) workshop – Faith & Waters Restoration Forum. One member received 2nd annual Founder’s Award from IPC.

Adult Spiritual Formation, Children's and Family Ministries (Education, Fellowship)

- 1) Camp BeeTree – held 1-week outdoor day camp/Vacation Bible School at our BeeTree Preserve property. Environmental themes and integrated use of the woods, stream, and field.
- 2) October outdoor Blessing of the Animals on the church lawn.
- 3) Youth and families volunteered at First Fruits Farms, gathering crops for the local food banks.
- 4) Continued to use our Earth Care Facebook page as a means for the congregation (and friends) to share earth care tips, articles, and stories.
- 5) Lenten Children's Festival – one station painted plant pots and then planted native seeds in them.
- 6) Advent Children's Festival – one station decorated milk jugs, planted native perennials (from seeds gathered by members and gardeners).

Advocacy and Action

- 1) Recertified by PC-USA as an Earth Care Congregation (17th year).
- 2) Continued membership in Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC). ECAT members attended an IPC and IPL (Interfaith Power & Light) sponsored webinar briefing on issues and bills in the 2025 Maryland General Assembly. Hosted a table in coffee hour on 2 Sundays with information on 3 environmental bills before the MD General Assembly. Information on these also shared through churchwide email blasts, bulletin announcements and on church website.
- 3) Also used TPC Earth Care Facebook group to promote various earth care related activities at the church and beyond including the Intergenerational Garden, Earth Day, Project Clean Stream, and Lenten and Earth Month calendars.

Worship

- 1) Earth Sunday environmentally focused Sunday morning worship service.
- 2) Held outdoor, creation care focused, Sunday morning worship at TPC's BeeTree Preserve, as well as special outdoor service at the BeeTree cemetery for Memorial Day.
- 3) Harvest Sunday – celebrated the Intergenerational Garden, placed a cornucopia on the communion table.

4) Have reduced our use of cut flower arrangements and many times have used potted plants instead. Flowers and plants used are sourced from a local grower.

5) From time to time have included care of creation in our Prayers of Confession (or misuse and lack of appreciation for) and Prayers of the People (in thanks and praise of God) in Sunday morning worship.

-- Submitted 2/14/2026

Church membership – 434

Certified since 2010

Started EC in 1989

EC/ECAT - 15 people