Best Practices for Parish Maintenance

Activities in parish buildings can be organized to make them more sustainable. There are many resources available for ideas to improve our parish buildings, such as the Greening Niagara web page (http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/green/) which has links to many other useful resources.

With regards to parish maintenance, consider introducing the following Best Practices to reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings and make them more sustainable:

Cleaning

Use environmentally friendly cleaning products. Use homemade preparations such as those listed here: http://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/docs/renewing.pdf or look for Environment Canada EcoLogo certified products such as those supplied by Eco-Max of Oakville, http://www.eco-max.ca/

If employing a contractor, require them to use EcoLogo products or equivalent. Talk to other parishes; St Luke's Burlington, for example, uses a contractor that employs EcoLogo products.

Use reusable rags and cloths, or employ paper products with significant recycled component. Make green or blue bins available in washrooms and other locations to collect this material after its use.

General Upkeep

Consider an annual walk-thru of the parish to check for items such as dripping taps or drafts that can be looked after promptly. Maintaining weather-stripping on doors and windows and addressing drips can reduce your energy and water usage. Regular maintenance of heating and cooling units after each season, including the regular replacement of filters, can also have significant benefits.

Whenever repairs or ongoing maintenance is required consider ways of completing the project in an environmentally sound manner and to incorporate as many energy and water saving features as possible by painting with low VOC paints, improving insulation, choosing high efficiency furnaces and air conditioners when needed to be replaced, installing programmable thermostats and maintaining temperatures at levels that minimize energy yet at acceptable levels. Consider the 'life cycle' costs and benefits of alternative repair and maintenance solutions.

Reduce water consumption by using aerators on taps, low-flow heads on any showers, when purchasing new toilets buy low-flow models. When replacing the hot-water heater choose a high-efficiency or tankless one and maintain the hot water temperature at 50°C.

As light bulbs are replaced use new energy efficient replacements (In 2008 compact fluorescent units are an attractive alternate to incandescent bulbs. In the future, LED units will likely be a better alternative, but the technology has yet to appear that is viable for general lighting).

Waste Management

Get to know your trash. Before you can get too far, you need to know what you actually toss out each week. Some common items you can recycle include office paper, newspapers, cardboard boxes, printer cartridges, aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Contact your city or recycling management company to provide you with any necessary containers and for information about what your area's waste management options are.

Provide blue boxes near all sources of recyclable waste: offices, copy rooms, kitchens, narthex. Where local programmes exist, collect compostable material for pick up. Typical indoor waste that is acceptable includes food, coffee grounds, paper serviettes, paper cups.

Display signs and educational posters that indicate what waste goes where (most should either be recycled or put in the green/compost bin). Don't forget to educate outside user groups too!