

Sitting majestically on top of a hill, Grace Episcopal Church beckons to those passing by to come and explore the beauty of worship that lies behind the red doors of the traditional style church. Built sixteen years ago on a frugal budget, the structure presents challenges to being ecologically friendly. The hearts of the people won out though, and efforts were put into place to show greater respect to the environment.

The use of Styrofoam was eliminated, and the hand-washing of the coffee cups became a community building activity for the hearty few who dedicated themselves to the effort. The use of disposable tableware was drastically reduced with the purchase of dinnerware and a sanitizer. Special receptacles were placed in key areas throughout the church to receive recyclables and pick up service was arranged. Aluminum cans continued to be kept separately and donated to Habitat for Humanity (the collection hut is located on the church property).

Programmable thermostats were installed and set according to the usage of their zones. These presented, and continue to present, challenges for a variety of reasons. The original design of the zones is not intuitively apparent, and the restrooms and the office often fall victim to the adjustments of well-intentioned users of a shared zone. The time lapse that occurs between the re-setting and the actual temperature change is also a factor that is often neglected, with over or under-shooting being a common occurrence. Timers and motion sensors are also being implemented to reduce the electrical usage of parking lot lights and more.

A variety of types of trees are being planted on the property to provide beauty, shade, and habitat. Flower gardens have been planted to attract birds and butterflies. Efforts have been implemented to reduce or eliminate invasive plants from our woods and the landscaping. Discussions continue for future improvements in the efforts of honoring creation.