



**Binkley Baptist Church**  
**1712 Willow Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514**

**Our congregational commitment to Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Rot**

*All that is described below is accomplished with support of our Church Council and in collaboration*

*with the Building, Grounds, Membership, Fellowship, Outreach, Worship, Fine Arts, and other Binkley Church committees*

**In Liturgy, Ritual, Worship, Pastoral Care:**

- Adopted a Proclamation of Sustainability on April 16, 2018 that reads, in part:  
*With a Biblical and spiritual foundation and with firm resolve, we commit ourselves as a community of believers to a path of sustainable practices that reduces our negative impact on Earth's environment, extends our mission of social justice, and expands our joy for the natural world*
- Conduct an Annual Earth Day Service
- Taught an Adult Sunday School class related to Earth Care Ministry and established a Biblical base for our efforts to care for God's creation
- Weave Earth Care themes routinely into our services, sermons, music and classes
- Teach ecological and sustainable practices in Vacation Bible School
- Host an annual Blessing of the Animals Service and a Tree Planting/Blessing ceremony (in 2019)
- Maintain spaces for outdoor worship, meditation, and social gatherings to increase awareness and appreciation for our natural world
- Replacing single-use disposable communion cups with compostable cups
- 2018-2019 Stewardship Campaign theme: "Planting-Cultivating-Harvesting"

**In Earth Care Responsibility:**

**Major Initiatives**

- Conducted a detailed **energy audit** and prioritized actions in 2015
- Fund raised \$51,000+ to install **50 solar panels** in July 2016  
*As of September 19, 2022, Binkley Church's solar panels have generated 106.94 MWh of energy and saved 165,594.44lb of CO2 emissions from being emitted; the equivalent of*

*1,251.22 trees planted, and not paid \$11,762.98 in revenue to Duke Energy since installing the solar panels in July 2016*

- Installed programmable thermostats throughout the church facilities in 2016 to help reduce energy consumption
- In 2018, with \$5,370 support from the church, Earth Ministries Green Team implemented a **triple-stream collection system** and waste diversion plan in order to recycle and compost everything possible. The overall goal is to divert as much as possible from the landfill by implementing a reduce-reuse-refuse strategy throughout our facility. All entrances, worship spaces, fellowship rooms, meeting rooms, classrooms, offices, and bathrooms have triple-stream collection systems

*Currently, we collect on average 4,305 pounds/month of compostable materials and 520 pounds/month of recyclable materials.*

As part of the plan, we also stocked our kitchen with a full inventory of reusable service-ware for 200+ people, replaced “throw-away” single-use items with compostable alternatives to be used when reusable items aren’t practical, replaced single-use Church School food/beverage supplies with bulk/ community products, and began purchasing products from local/sustainable vendors when possible. We have partnered with our many non-congregational building users to join us in our mission of sustainability and re-written their covenants/contracts reflecting this commitment

*In our first year of composting, from May 15 to December 31, 2018, Binkley diverted 10.03 tons (20,060 pounds) of compostable waste from the landfill. In 2019, Binkley diverted 25.83 tons (51,660 pounds) of compostable waste! As of September 2022, Binkley has diverted **61 tons** of compostable waste from the landfill!*

*In March 2019, Binkley Baptist Church was selected a winner and one of five inspiring faith communities nationally in The Cool Congregation Challenge conducted by Interfaith Power & Light. See: [https://youtu.be/LQQw3rGDt\\_E](https://youtu.be/LQQw3rGDt_E) [www.interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org)*

- Issued **monthly “Challenges”** to the congregation beginning in May 2018 with the *Ugly Mug of May* Challenge (to collect reusable coffee/tea mugs), the *June Jaunt* Challenge encouraged our enjoyment of the out-of-doors. These were followed by the *Plastic Free July*, *Stop the Junk Mail* (August), *Understanding Green Terminology* (September), *Leaves & Ballots* (October), *A Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Earth* (November), *Having a Sustainable Christmas* (December), *Commit to One Sustainable New Year’s Resolution* (January), *Plant a Tree* (February), *For the Beauty of the Earth* (March), *Community Cleanup/#trashtag* (April), *Passport to Sustainability* (May). These Challenges have engaged the congregation in joyful ways. The monthly Challenges resumed in 2022.
- For many years until COVID Binkley conducted a large **bi-annual Yard Sale** with Barbee’s Chapel Church & Ministries (an historically African American church) that reuses/recycles clothing, toys, small appliances, garden supplies, kitchen ware, etc., and donate proceeds to selected local organizations

## Additional Actions & Projects

- Purchase fair trade coffee for our functions and recommend shopping at local farmers' markets when possible
- Regularly prepare vegetarian/vegan/plant-based foods at our Wednesday night dinners
- Prepare **only** vegetarian/vegan/plant-based menus during the Lenten season
- Encourage congregants to compost at home as well as to collect compostable materials, which can be disposed of in our campus' collection bins (picked up by a commercial composter)
- Created an Earth Justice section in our library
- Conducted a year-long campaign (2018-2019) to better educate members on sustainable lifestyle choices through our gatherings, weekly updates, monthly "Green Corner" column in the newsletter
- Encouraged members to perform home energy audits and carbon calculations
- Encouraged members to give up bottled water and all single-use items
- From October-December, encourage members to live more sustainably throughout the holiday seasons
- Reuse supplies and purchase sustainable supplies for all church events
- Collect disposable items to use in children's craft projects (egg cartons, paper towel rolls, etc.) and collect gently used medical accessories and equipment for members and families to borrow and use as needed
- Recycle ink cartridges and toner cartridges that cannot be refilled
- Indoors: purchased Energy Star appliances; Outdoors: reduced use of gas-powered tools
- Perform seasonal (quarterly) checkups and change filters monthly to maintain our HVAC systems
- Begun installing dual-flush toilets and posted reminder signs to properly shut off hand-washing faucets
- Included responsibility for best environmental practices in our contract with our Custodial Staff
- Adjusted water heater temperatures to 110°-120°F where appropriate
- Installed thermal window shades in a large meeting room
- Increased use of energy efficient indoor and outdoor lighting
- Reduced pesticides in our grounds/gardening
- Mulch leaves for reuse in the landscape; other yard waste composted (via Orange County program)
- Increased wildlife habitat on church grounds by planting butterfly gardens, pollinator gardens, and adding bird, bat and bee housing

- Certified as a “Community Wildlife Habitat” from the National Wildlife Federation
- Added native plants to the woodland border of our church grounds, in an attempt to decrease invasive species and reduce the need for watering

### **In Public Witness for Creation Justice:**

- Conduct Wednesday (now Tuesday) evening meal events that are open to the community beyond Binkley focused on the environment, climate change, recycling, composting, and the social justice impacts of environmental degradation
- Host to several guest speakers who have addressed topics such as: climate change, solar energy, the Bible and Ecological Justice, the NC Mountain-to-Sea Trail, environmental law, and political action
- Entered the 2018 NC Interfaith Council’s Cool Congregations Challenge
- Submitted narrative of Binkley *EM* initiatives for the NC Interfaith Power & Light Renewable Energy Database they are developing in collaboration with the NC Sustainable Energy Association
- Guest for local radio programs about waste reduction, diversion, full-campus composting

### **In Outreach and Service Beyond Binkley:**

- Jordan Lake Adopt-A-Feeder-Stream Program (Bolin Creek from Franklin Street to Fordham Blvd)
- Serve as a pickup location for an Orange County CSA, Anathoth Community Garden and Farm, Cedar Grove, and encourage our members to participate
- Meet regularly with other local faith-based organizations that are interested in learning more about diverting waste from the landfill and reducing the overall waste created. We share the details of our journey and our recommendations for success. See: <https://vimeo.com/385537617/37de9e957d>
- Collaborated with St. Thomas More Catholic Church and the Community Church of Chapel Unitarian Universalist to organize the Orange-Chatham Interfaith Care for Creation (OCICC) to learn, share, and promote about Earth/Creation Care from each other. Our Earth Ministry co-chair currently serves on the Steering Committee
- Engage actively in helping to create and grow the newly formed Interfaith Creation Care of the Triangle (ICCT). Our Earth Ministry co-chair currently serves on the Steering Committee

## **Plans/Goals Proposed for 2022-2023:**

- Continue monthly Eco Sundays that support reclaiming and recycling old batteries, electronics, medications, etc.
- Create an expanded Earth Ministries section in the library
- Replace Tuesday Night Dinner compostable take-out boxes with reusable take-out boxes
- Create Art/Nature exhibits at Binkley and conduct more nature hikes for all ages
- Organize “Repair Café” and “Sew-In” events
- Begin writing a “Get Back to the Kitchen and Save the Earth” Binkley cookbook
- Organize a biannual “Clean Up Our Neighborhood Day”

### **Current Earth Ministries “Green Team” @ Binkley Baptist Church**

Charles Coble, Chair: [ccoble2@gmail.com](mailto:ccoble2@gmail.com); Linda Bourne: [myrtle4492@gmail.com](mailto:myrtle4492@gmail.com); Carole Breckinridge: [breck395@gmail.com](mailto:breck395@gmail.com); Mike Ennis: [breck395@gmail.com](mailto:breck395@gmail.com); Herman Greene: [hfgreenenc@gmail.com](mailto:hfgreenenc@gmail.com);

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*All are invited to engage in Earth Ministries at Binkley Church*