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St. Aidan's: State's first GreenFaith church

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The congregation at St. Aidan's is taking its surroundings and the greater good of the environment quite seriously.

In its last visioning process, the congregation of St. Aidan's, Ann Arbor discovered the importance of the stewardship of the natural environment – particularly the wildlife habitat on its campus – was a big part of its special mission.

So it took everything a step further.

With a covenant established between the national Episcopal Church and GreenFaith – an interfaith environmental coalition that inspires, educates and mobilizes people of diverse religious backgrounds as environmental leaders – St. Aidan's became the first congregation in the state of Michigan to join the group's certification program.

GreenFaith offers a two-year certification program that has 13 years of experience helping congregations, synagogues and Islamic communities live out "green" values in everything they do – from preaching and education to the operation of their buildings, to advocacy for a healthy environment for communities of color and low-income communities.

In addition to years of work trying to restore its woodlot to a healthy Michigan forest, the congregation and its sister congregation, Northside Presbyterian, have been systematically engaged in environmental upgrades to its building through insulation in the attic (the worst volunteer job imaginable), a shift to fluorescent light bulbs, programmable thermostats and the purchase of a 95% efficient furnace (with the help of a diocesan grant).

The church has also committed to buying fair trade coffee and unbleached coffee filters, and to use china or environmentally sound paper products for our hospitality. Educational sessions on recycling, assessment of carbon footprint and other efforts have been made by the church, too.

The new relationship with the national Episcopal Church offered 30 Episcopal churches scholarships to enter the certification program. St. Aidan's applied for the program in December 2010. Soon after that, it was accepted and granted a church scholarship. St. Aidan's is the first congregation of any type in Michigan to participate with GreenFaith and one of the first recipients of the national Episcopal Church scholarships.

For more information about GreenFaith, [click here](#).

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