**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT**

We of The Reformed Church of New Paltz believe that human beings are called by God to the task of stewardship, the taking care of the Earth respectfully for its own sake, and so that present and future generations may live on it and enjoy its fruits. The gifts of creation and the responsibility of stewardship were given to all of humanity.

God calls upon the church to participate in the redemption of individuals, all of humanity, and the whole of creation. Therefore, ministries of environmental stewardship and environmental justice are significant in the mission of our congregation. We thus promise to become engaged in or to continue to be engaged in these ministries by following **Programs** and **Practices** that are consistent with our mission. These include, among others:

**Programs**

* Worship: We will celebrate God’s grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls upon us to participate in the redemption of the world by cherishing, protecting and restoring creation.
* Learning & Teaching: We will seek opportunities for ourselves and our children to learn more about the wonders of creation, the threats posed by humans to the survival of creation, and the possibilities of our participating in God’s redemption and justice.
* Lifestyles: We will form habits of consuming, conserving, and sharing that will serve to protect and restore the environment. In particular, we reuse and recycle as many materials as we can and seek ways of limiting our consumption of fossil fuels.
* Community, National and Global Involvement: In our community, the nation and the world, our congregation will witness to and participate in God’s redemption of creation by supporting public efforts and policies which support vulnerable people and protect and restore the degraded earth.
* Each year, we will review our previous year’s work on environmental justice and consider other ways we can participate in God’s redemption of creation.
* We will become active participants in these efforts by considering affiliation with such other similarly oriented groups as Eco-Justice Ministries, the National Council of Churches U.S.A.’s Eco-Justice Programs – Adamah Covenant Congregations, Greenfaith, Interfaith Power and Light, and Earth Ministry.

**Practices**

In our attempts toward ecological sustainability we will pursue accepted practices in Purchasing, Operations and Capital Improvements including but not limited to the following steps:

**Purchasing**

1. Phase out the purchasing of CFC’s and other ozone depleting substances, by continuing to use mugs during coffee hour. Use church dishes & silverware for all functions, including dinners, potlucks and community events.

2. Use post consumer waste, chlorine-free, recycled office paper and paper/plastic products.

3. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products whenever possible.

4. Use Fair Trade products whenever possible.

5. Eliminate pesticide use on church grounds.

**Operations**

1. Use energy efficiently and wherever possible, reduce its use such as insulate & weather-strip the building.

2. When replacing appliances and heating units, purchase most energy efficient.

3. Use water efficiently, inside buildings and out.

4. Avoid pollutants entering drainage system.

5. Encourage increased use of renewable energy.

6. Recycle office paper, glass, plastic, cardboard, etc - by using a waste company with an active, easy to use recycling program.

7. Reduce amount of material waste.

8. Dispose of waste responsibly

9. Work to inspire other faith communities to participate in responsible purchasing & sustainable ecological practices

10. Conduct Environmental Audit, monitor progress and review EP on a regular basis

**Capital Improvements**

1. Follow green construction practices (LEED) whenever feasible in renovation or new construction projects.

**Travel**

1. Reduce air pollution and energy use by avoiding unnecessary travel.

2. Promote the use of energy efficient vehicles.

3. Share transportation when possible.

4. Walk, bike or use public transit whenever possible.