

First Steps - to reduce energy consumption, at little or no cost

1. **Check your consumption** - compare each fuel bill with previous ones for the same quarter. Read the meters as often as possible, to avoid relying on estimated readings and to give early warning of waste.
2. **Ventilation** - airbricks, and ventilation for bottled gas and other heaters without sealed flues, are essential. Otherwise, cure draughts with sealing strips and door-closing springs; make sure windows are properly closed in the winter. If you have dampness you may need to get advice: continuous airflow and heating are very expensive ways of dealing with it.
3. **Thermal insulation** - Insulate the congregation (!) with seat cushions and carpet strips in the pews. For a traditional church, domestic-type insulation is quite unsuitable, except for foil behind radiators and freezing protection for water pipes. In a modern building which is continuously used, it is worth checking that the insulation is adequate.
4. **Instruments and control** - everyone must be kept comfortable, or they may stop coming. Control which areas are heated, to what temperatures, and at what times, as carefully as you possibly can:
 - each room should have its own thermostat; in working order and correctly set. Turn it right down when the area is not in use.
 - for each function, whenever possible, put the heating on just in time for the room to reach comfort temperature by the start and off again when it ends. Use time switches - you can override them if heating is required specially.
 - don't run central heating just for hot water; fit local instant heaters instead.
 - for safety, have regular servicing and monoxide detectors for gas boilers.
 - modern controls can also give savings with water consumption and lighting.
5. **Purchasing** - the deregulated market means that energy suppliers may offer widely differing prices, so shop around. For electricity, some suppliers charge less at weekends.
6. **The Congregation** - explain to members what is being done and encourage them to save energy themselves at home and at work. Old people may need advice to keeping warm.
7. **For further information**
 - *Heating Your Church* by Bordass & Bemrose £6.50 incl p&p, Council for the Care of Churches, Fielden House, Little College St, London SW10 3SH
 - *Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings* National Energy Action
St Andrew's House, 90-92 Pilgrim Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE1 6SG 0191 261 5677
 - *Church Heating and the Organ* Inst of British Organ Building, 13 Ryefields, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds IP31 3LD
 - *Maintenance and Equipment News* Quarterly, Free. Crown Wood Pub'ns, PO Box 249, Ascot, Berks, SL5 0BZ
 - *Parish Pump* Periodical, Free. the Conservation Foundation. 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR
 - *Controls and Energy Savings, Fuel Efficiency Booklet 10* and many other publications, Building Research Establishment, Watford WD2 7JR
 - *Eco-congregation* Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
 - *Energy Saving Trust* 21 Dartmouth St, London SW1H 9BP although their publications are relevant for the domestic situation, they are not so relevant to church premises.