



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

FAITH IN ACTION



COMMUNITIES OF FAITH BRING HOPE FOR THE PLANET



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was made possible through the hard work of many people, including:

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FAITH IN ACTION: COMMUNITIES OF FAITH BRING HOPE FOR THE PLANET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sierra Club is proud to present its first ever national report on the environmental engagement of communities of faith, “Faith in Action: Communities of Faith Bring Hope for the Planet.” Highlighting one exceptional faith-based environmental initiative from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, “Faith in Action” demonstrates the breadth, depth and diversity of spiritually motivated grassroots efforts to protect the planet. Sierra Club applauds the growing level of commitment and leadership among people of faith working to connect environmental awareness with widely shared values including stewardship, justice, and concern for future generations. We also recognize that lasting social change rarely takes place without the active engagement of communities of faith.

Environmental concerns continue to rise in prominence on the agenda of the faithful, with no sign of receding. As the implications of global warming and its disproportionate impact on the world’s poor become increasingly clear, prophetic voices are being raised in religious communities around the globe. In the United States, 67 percent of Americans say they care about the environment because it is “God’s creation.”

Faith groups highlighted in this report lead the way in crafting creative and promising solutions to tremendous environmental challenges. Religious leaders and lay persons alike are “greening” all areas of religious life, including worship, education, community life, buildings and grounds, and increasingly engaging in grassroots education and organizing. In addition to crafting solutions to global warming, these groups also work to protect water quality and access, protect wilderness and endangered species, stop mountain-top removal coal mining and develop creative solutions to our nation’s unsustainable and inequitable food systems.

Some examples from the report include:

1. The Texas Christian Life Commission, the largest Baptist organization in Texas educates congregations about creation care and calls for a moratorium on building new coal-fired power plants to reduce health risks.
2. Community Lutheran Church of Sterling, VA, operates a community garden and provides organic produce to local low-income families.

3. North Dakota’s ecumenical Prairie Stewardship Network, educates communities of faith and others about clean energy and global warming.
4. Hazon, a Jewish environmental organization in New York City organizes community bike rides and educates about sustainable living.
5. Catholic Bishops of the Dioceses of Pueblo and Colorado Springs, CO speak out in defense communities surrounding heavily polluted Fountain Creek.
6. St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church, of Tucson, AZ promotes water stewardship and conservation.
7. The Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin helps mosques and Muslim families reduce their carbon footprint.

Such passion and dedication provides tremendous hope for everyone working to protect the planet. We hope that this report will further encourage people of faith to become personally and publicly engaged in the environmental dialogue in America. We look forward to continued and growing partnerships in the future as we explore, enjoy and protect the planet together.

“Faith in Action” is a project of the Sierra Club’s Environmental Partnerships Program.

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INTRODUCTION

Almost all of the world's major religions have long-standing teachings and traditions that shape the way humans should relate to the natural world, although these teachings have not always been emphasized by those in leadership. After centuries of lying dormant, religious perspectives on environmental stewardship are being revived and communicated with great fervor, bringing new energy and vision to the movement to protect the planet. This awakening is not an accident.

For at least the last two decades, religious leaders and scholars of many traditions have been working to articulate specifically theological, moral and spiritual views on the environmental crisis, linking core religious values such as stewardship, justice, and concern for future generations with environmental concerns. The United Church of Christ (UCC) issued a groundbreaking report in 1987 documenting socioeconomic and racial disparities in the placement of toxic waste facilities throughout the United States, raising awareness about the connection between social justice and environmental concerns. In Pope John Paul II's "World Day of Peace" message in 1990 he urged the world's more than one billion Catholics to connect their belief in God as a creator with care for the environment.

Scientists also play a key role in this movement, calling on religious leaders for dialogue and assistance. In the early nineties, a coalition of some of the world's most eminent Nobel Laureate scientists including Carl Sagan wrote an "Open Letter" to religious leaders in which they acknowledged the limits of science and technology alone to solve the world's environmental problems. They described the environmental crisis as "intrinsically religious." More recently, world renowned biologist and secular humanist E.O. Wilson published a book entitled "The Creation" in which he identifies science and religion as "the two most powerful forces in the world today" and concludes that they need each other to solve the burgeoning environmental crises. Breaking stereotypes and chipping away at historic tensions between scientific, environmental and religious communities, these scientists seek to bring together people of faith and good will around the world in efforts to protect the planet.



Also in the nineties, organizations in the United States like the National Religious Partnership for the Environment began to foster ongoing efforts among religious leaders including Jewish, Orthodox, mainline Protestant, Catholic, historic Black church communions

and evangelical Christians. A decade later, the Interfaith Power and Light Campaign gained grassroots traction, forming partnerships with Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian and many other congregations around the country, while the 2002 “What Would Jesus Drive” Campaign earned major media attention.

Many factors have contributed to this so-called “greening of religion” movement, but none so much in recent years as the looming climate crisis. As the environmental implications of global warming and its disproportionate impact on the world’s poor become increasingly clear, religious leaders are speaking up. February 2006 marked a new era in the environmental conversation, when 86 evangelical Christian leaders signed the Evangelical Climate Initiative statement and called upon our nation’s leaders to address global warming. In early 2008, a group of leading Southern Baptists issued a statement calling for action on global warming and Pope Benedict urged Catholics to recognize pollution as a “sin.” All of these initiatives coalesce around a few key broadly shared principles: stewardship, justice and concern for “the poor,” and concern for one’s neighbor and future generations among them.

As people of faith embrace these principles more fully, environmental concerns continue to rise in prominence on the agenda with no sign of receding. This report features one exceptional example of religious environmental engagement in each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. We highlight the incredibly broad range of models, issues and approaches in Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian and interfaith/multifaith efforts. In some cases, initiatives focus on “greening” religious life: preaching sermons on environmental topics, incorporating nature oriented hymns and images in worship, and teaching “creation care” in religious education classes.

Other approaches include hosting educational film screenings, taking field trips or doing service projects, and undertaking public education campaigns. Still others promote recycling, energy conservation, and community gardens. We discovered many amazing people and organizations in the process of writing this report. We can provide only a glimpse of the power and creativity of these efforts.

The environmental issues highlighted in this report also vary widely. Finding solutions to global warming is clearly of the utmost concern in these communities, with Baptist families in North Carolina pledging to reduce their carbon footprint by 10%, Catholics in New Mexico handing out more than 3,000 energy saving compact fluorescent light bulbs to their friends and neighbors, and Presbyterians in Nevada installing solar panels on their rooftops. Other important initiatives seek to protect drinking water quality and access, protect wilderness and endangered species, stop construction of new coal-fired power plants, bring an end to destructive practices like mountain-top removal coal mining, and develop creative solutions to our nation’s unsustainable and inequitable food systems.

In the United States today, due to the hard work of these organizations and many others, 67 percent of Americans say they care about the environment because it’s “God’s creation.” From lifestyle

and behavior to public policy, this renewed interest and awakening to the plight of the planet provides much hope for progress, especially in light of our nation’s history; lasting societal change rarely takes place without the active engagement of communities of faith.

Sierra Club Faith Partnerships

In the face of unprecedented environmental challenges like global warming, people from all walks of life are coming together to make a difference. Many Sierra Club members also come to their environmental activism from a place of faith. In fact, almost half of Club members say that they attend worship services at least once per month. Sierra Club is engaged in active partnerships with communities of faith across the country and from nearly every faith tradition and spirituality to put their values into action. We believe that the magnitude of the challenges we face necessitates such collaboration.

While many of these stories involve Sierra Club partnerships, this report is intended to honor the broad array of faith groups engaged in environmental efforts and help share their stories as part of a larger narrative of hope for the planet. Throughout this report, we seek to reflect the motivations and values of groups and individuals, sometimes using language such as “God’s creation” or “sacred” which is not usually found in secular environmental publications. Sierra Club’s faith partnerships efforts, including this report, are not intended as an endorsement of any specific religion, tradition or belief.

Sierra Club is deeply grateful to the religious communities highlighted in this report and so many others across America who are bringing renewed interest, energy, and unique perspectives to the environmental conversation while taking the lead on finding solutions to our environmental challenges. Building on our shared hope and values, Sierra Club seeks to empower people of faith and partner with local congregations to translate these values into action. We hope that this report will further encourage people of faith to become personally and publicly engaged in the environmental dialogue in America. We look forward to continued and growing partnerships in the future as we explore, enjoy and protect the planet together.

“All the wild world is beautiful, and it matters but little where we go, to highlands or lowlands, woods or plains, on the sea or land or down among the crystals of waves or high in a balloon in the sky; through all the climates, hot or cold, storms and calms, everywhere and always we are in God’s eternal beauty and love.”

— SIERRA CLUB FOUNDER JOHN MUIR



THE MODERN DAY NOAH

BIRMINGHAM, AL

In 2002, scientists in Alabama were thrilled to locate a third population of the endangered Watercress Darter, a shimmering rainbow-colored fish not much bigger than a finger.

Upon discovering that such a unique creature inhabited a spring on church grounds, Bishop Heron Johnson of Faith Apostolic Church in Birmingham, Alabama proclaimed “God purposefully placed this little fish here for us to protect.” Today, local media heralds Bishop Johnson as the “modern-day Noah.”

Faith Apostolic Church, Sierra Club Water Sentinels, the Freshwater Land Trust, biology professors and government agencies have joined hands and hearts in a monumental effort to preserve the rare little fish, all signing a public commitment to work together to protect Seven Springs, the home of the Watercress Darter.

With help from partner organizations, the church is transforming the area around the springs into an educational sanctuary for the tiny endangered fish. To protect the Watercress Darter, church members are working with conservationists to clean up the area, remove invasive species and restore native plant habitat. Dozens of church members volunteered to be certified in water-quality



Beth Young

testing and they regularly participate in preservation efforts. Faith Apostolic is building a meditation garden and outdoor classroom to encourage reflection and educate the community about its rare inhabitant and the importance of preserving biodiversity.

“Harvard biologist and Alabama native, E. O. Wilson challenges religious communities and environmentalists to work together to solve urgent environmental problems. Faith Apostolic Church illustrates the incredible potential in uniting to protect God’s creation,” says Dr. William Howell, the biologist who discovered the Watercress Darter.



CAN YOU SEE OUR FUTURE IN THEIRS?

FAIRBANKS, AK

Oral traditional indicates that the Gwich’in People have lived in the region of northeast Alaska and northwest Canada for more than 20,000 years. The name means “people of the land,” and this dynamic community’s way of life is intimately intertwined with the Porcupine Caribou herd which roams the coastal plain. Indeed, the caribou are the heart of the Gwich’in identity; their majestic bodies provide food, boots and tools while their spirit permeates nearly every aspect of Gwich’in folklore, spirituality, ceremonies, songs, stories and dance. The Gwich’in way of life does not exist without the caribou.



As the threat of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge continues, some people view the decision as a matter of dollars and cents. Others downplay the potential destruction of an ecologically invaluable wilderness area. For the Gwich’in, however, drilling in the Arctic isn’t just a matter of economic gain or environmental degradation; it would mean the end of their way of life and the destruction of their identity. The proposed drilling would

take place on the historic birthing grounds of the Porcupine Caribou, an area known to the Gwich’in as “the sacred place where all life begins.” Drilling could devastate the herd population, taking with it the Gwich’in way of life.

The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, led by Bishop Mark MacDonald, is one of the strongest advocates for the largely Episcopalian Gwich’in population. Because of their passionate efforts, the Episcopal Church became one of the first of many religious institutions to publicly oppose drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The church recognizes that it is not only an environmental issue, but it is also a matter of human rights — and that the two issues are undeniably intertwined. In a 2004 letter, Bishop MacDonald and the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church beseeched the public: “can you see our future in theirs?” Humanity undoubtedly lives in a symbiotic relationship with our environment, and we cannot exist without that which sustains us. That is the message of Bishop MacDonald and the Gwich’in People.

SACRED WATER

ARIZONA

TUCSON, AZ

The Rev. Stuart Taylor and members of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church are concerned about water issues both locally and internationally. Access to fresh water in Arizona is diminishing as increasing development pollutes streams and rivers and water-intensive mining operations deplete formerly abundant aquifers. Global warming also promises to exacerbate the region's precarious water situation. Beyond their Arizona backyard, the members of St. Mark's are also concerned about the mounting global water crisis, wherein more and more people are dying from lack of access to fresh, unpolluted water.

After seeing what the scriptures have to say about the significance of water and discovering that water is an important theme throughout the Bible, Rev. Taylor challenged his congregation.

Reflecting on the Biblical significance of water, he asked, "the water of our baptism symbolizes God's unconditional blessings — what would it mean for us, as Christians, to move from an understanding

of the sacred water of our baptism to an understanding of all water as God's sacred gift?" He implored his congregation to envision "an earth transformed, in which the waters of the earth are able to bless, heal and sustain all of life."

In response, the members of St. Mark's are now actively engaged in conserving and restoring water resources. They are developing a rain-water harvesting system, and the youth group is planning a service-restoration trip to the ecologically important San Pedro River, which is being polluted by escalating development in the area. In addition, the church bulletin provides tips on water conservation and other sustainable practices.

The Church is also doing a comprehensive environmental audit to identify ways they can implement sustainable practices across the board. They are also taking their message beyond their doors and are organizing workshops to educate other area churches about environmental sustainability.

LET THE EARTH BE GLAD

ARKANSAS

MORRILTON, AR

Last summer, Sierra Club volunteer and Camp Mitchell Board of Trustees member, Brooke Augusta Owen, directed the 1st–3rd grade session at Camp Mitchell, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas. She wanted her campers to have a week of fun, inspiration and spiritual growth. Even more, Owen wanted to impart a love of caring for the earth.

"Let the Earth Be Glad," an adage from the book of Psalms, was the theme for the week. "The camp focused on ways the kids could make the Earth glad by being good stewards of God's creation," explains Owen.

First, the kids embarked on an eco-themed scavenger hunt. Each team had to complete a number of environmental tasks around

the camp such as sorting recycling and flipping off light switches. After the hunt, the kids planted a tree. A priest blessed the tree and dedicated it to the campers with a plaque. Leaders explained why trees are an important part of the natural ecosystem and that the campers' gift to the earth would be alive for a long time.

During the week, the children studied Bible lessons about caring for the environment, followed by fun, hands-on activities. One day, they learned about Noah's Ark, biodiversity and St. Francis, the patron saint of animals. A guest speaker brought different animals for the children to observe and pet.

Another day, the children studied Genesis 2:15, a Bible verse where God tells humans to take care of the earth. A park ranger taught on how to be good stewards of the forests. And a local bee-keeper explained why bees are essential to the ecosystem. The kids dressed up as bees and did a play on life in the hive.

On the last day, the kids played eco-themed games and re-used old household items to make crafts. In one game, the kids grabbed the edge of a parachute and bounced a beach ball. Occasionally, a child was instructed to drop their edge and the ball fell, demonstrating that each of us must play our part and take care of our earth. The kids, energized with their new understanding, left Camp Mitchell with lots of ideas about how to "let the earth be glad" at home.

Next year, Camp Mitchell is looking to expand the environmental theme to more age groups, and they are greening the camp buildings with solar and geothermal features.





BUILDING FAITH PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FORESTS

LOS ANGELES, CA

Sierra Club organizer Juana Torres brings people together to protect the beautiful forests of Southern California. From her experience as a long-time Catholic youth group leader, Juana recognizes that many faiths offer a unique perspective on wilderness through “deep reverence and respect for God’s creation.” So when Juana came to work for the Sierra Club, she naturally turned to the faith community as an ally.

First she asked local religious leaders, “Why do people of your communities value the forests?” Then she listened. Inspired by spiritual perspectives on wilderness, Juana began the Caring for Creation program to connect people of faith in Southern California to their local forests. Offering presentations, meditative hikes and forest restoration projects Juana hopes to “invite participants to reflect on their responsibility as stewards of God’s creation and on the spiritual value of forests.” and inspire them to help protect the forests.

The Caring for Creation program is a wonderful success and many groups see Juana as a valuable resource, including churches in the Episcopal, Methodist and Church of Christ denominations, as well as Progressive Christians Uniting, a network of churches in Southern California. The program especially resonates, however, with the Latino Catholic community in Southern California.



Alberto Embry the Director of Latino Youth and Young Adults for the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese says, “Exploring our local mountains has deepened the bonds between the many churches in our large archdiocese and it has offered the hard to reach youth a new way by which to get to know God’s love which is so evident in his gift of wilderness.”

In a recent first-ever national poll of Latino views on the environment, ninety-three percent agreed that they have a moral responsibility to take care of God’s creation. Participants say that this program provides new and innovative means of connecting with God through firsthand experience with the splendor of creation, as well as a new model for effective partnerships.



CATHOLICS CALL FOR UNITY TO PROTECT WATER

PUEBLO AND COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Citizens in Colorado found themselves caught in a tragedy of the commons when a creek near the towns of Pueblo and Colorado Springs was inundated by sewage spills. Local authorities responded by bickering over who was responsible. At a press conference in 2006, Catholic Bishops from the local dioceses released a statement calling for a unified response. Bishops Michael Sheridan and Arthur Tafoya, of the dioceses of Colorado Springs and Pueblo, respectively, spoke out:

“It is our wish to emphasize the moral and ethical responsibilities we all share to find equitable and effective solutions to the problems impacting Fountain Creek and we want to bring a message of hope to the discussions around those issues,” said the Bishops’ statement.

Sheridan and Tafoya urged cooperation and open dialogue around the issue, encouraging all involved to think about how the pollution affects families and the environment. “Water is a necessity of life. Access to safe and clean water is a right of every person. It is our moral responsibility to ensure that the water that we discharge into our waterways is not polluted. Every community along our waterways has the right to clean water and to protection from floods and other damages that can be caused by ill-considered actions upstream.”

“God’s earth is His gift to us,” Sheridan said at the press conference. “We are here to tend to that gift.”

While the campaign to keep Fountain Creek clean continues, Sierra Club volunteers said the Bishops’ statement has made a real difference. “Their message had significant impact,” said Ross Vincent, vice chair of the Sangre de Cristo group of the Rocky Mountain Chapter. “People who wanted to believe things were okay with Fountain Creek began to pay attention and realize something needed to be done. The Bishops’ statement came at a critical time and it was deeply appreciated.”

Vincent added that the publicity received from the Bishops’ statement also brought in many government officials from all levels to tour Fountain Creek and see the problems first-hand.

That kind of cooperation is exactly what the Bishops wanted. “Fountain Creek should be a valued and nurtured natural asset to all of the people who live, work and play along its banks. It should connect and unite the communities it touches, not divide them,” concluded the Bishops statement.

RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

CONNECTICUT

MIDDLETOWN, CT

“First and foremost, I will do no harm in thought, word or deed.” Buddha Gaia is a community of Buddhist individuals who integrate Buddhist spiritual teachings with sustainable living. The name “Buddha Gaia” applies the Buddhist practice of “mindfulness” to how we treat the environment. “Being mindful means to be aware of how your actions affect the world around you,” explains Buddha Gaia member Joe Hoydilla.

Through everyday choices, Buddha Gaia members seek to create a lifestyle that minimizes harm to the environment. They work to educate and engage their faith community in sustainable initiatives at weekly sanghas where they share practical and achievable green living tips with the larger Buddhist community, such as: recycling, switching to energy efficient light bulbs, buying local food and investing in reusable products. One week, they gave away coffee mugs to encourage folks to be mindful



that Styrofoam is completely non-biodegradable and after one use, Styrofoam cups find an eternal home in one of the over 1,700 landfills in the United States.

Buddha Gaia is committed to making a positive difference in the local community. To encourage community pride they conduct annual street cleanups wherein volunteers clean up trash littering inner city street blocks.

The community meets monthly to meditate on environmental harmony and discuss specific environmental issues. Recently, they focused on the connection between poverty and environmental degradation. “Buddhism is about not hiding from the pain of what’s wrong with our world,” explains Hoydilla. “It is about addressing our problems with courage and humility.” Through this approach, Buddha Gaia seeks to overcome environmental degradation and create a more sustainable human and nonhuman environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS

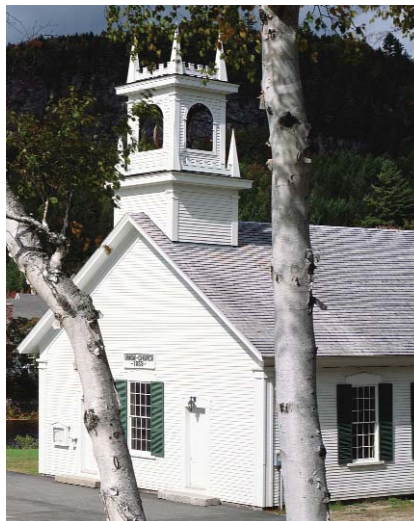
DELAWARE

WILMINGTON, DE

When the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Association chose global warming as a study/action issue, retired scientist Dr. Chad Tolman organized a study group in his local UU congregation. The Coalition for Climate Change Study and Action meets regularly to discuss ways that people of faith in Delaware can help mitigate the effects of global warming. “Climate change is not only a threat to human societies and natural ecosystems, it is a profound moral and religious issue, on which we must act,” declares Dr. Tolman.

Members of several religious denominations, including Presbyterian, Methodist and the United Church of Christ participate in the coalition. The Coalition seeks to identify and implement practical steps that people of faith can take to reduce global warming emissions and create a clean energy economy in Delaware.

Members work within their congregations to educate fellow parishioners about global warming and to reduce churchwide carbon dioxide emissions. Members of The Limestone Presbyterian Church are



installing 36 kW of solar panels on the church building--the first church in Delaware to do so. The First Unitarian Church of Wilmington has raised several hundred dollars for environmental initiatives by selling energy saving light bulbs, and is working to be accredited as a Green Sanctuary. Trinity Presbyterian Church formed a “Stewards of the Earth” team, installed a recycle bin, and has established an environmental web site.

The Coalition also advocated for a renewable energy standard in Delaware. The measure passed in 2005, requiring 20 percent of electricity sold in Delaware to be purchased from renewable energy sources by 2019.

Recently, Dr. Tolman, who is the Energy Chair of the Sierra Club’s Delaware Chapter received a grant to engage citizens in advocating for smart energy solutions. It is helping to engage people of faith working to protect the planet, The Coalition is now expanding its educational programs and collaborating with more faith groups and church leaders.



LET THERE BE LIGHT!

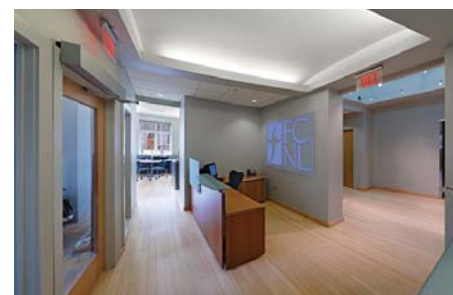
WASHINGTON, DC

In June 2007, friends, neighbors, and members of Congress gathered to celebrate the opening of the first green building on Capitol Hill. This beautifully designed sustainable structure is home to the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL is the largest peace organization in Washington, DC.

The FCNL building models environmental sustainability including a green roof, energy-efficient windows, a geothermal heating system and the strategic utilization of natural light. In fact, light is both a physical and allegorical theme of the project. As a guiding mission for the building, FCNL quotes the New Testament verse Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven."



Located across from the Hart Senate Office building, the FCNL building was commissioned as a witness for environmental stewardship on Capitol Hill. Intrigued members of Congress, congressional staff, faith leaders, government architects and interested individuals have all toured the building to learn more about green architecture. This pioneering project emphasizes ecologically-conscious architecture as an important step towards the Friends' vision of an earth restored.



CREATION CARE LEADERS

LONGWOOD, FL

"Northland, A Church Distributed" is a large, evangelical church that approaches environmental stewardship from a biblical perspective. Senior Pastor Dr. Joel Hunter often references Genesis 2:15, which commands mankind to "cultivate and keep" the garden. In doing so, he encourages his congregants to see that God cared about creation long before environmentalism became wrapped up in politics.

Dr. Hunter affirms that despite political controversies and cultural norms, "our Christian obligation is to refrain from harming God's creation — period." He feels that evangelical Christians have largely ignored the Biblical mandate to care for creation. To address this, Northland is leading efforts to reclaim "caring for creation" as a Christian value.

Northland formed a Creation Care Task Force to identify ways that the church could be better stewards of God's creation. The church started out by conducting a comprehensive environmental audit, including the "waste composition study" pictured here,



Photo courtesy of Northland Church

which led to creating a recycling program, encouraging double-sided printing, and evaluating purchasing habits. In the process, the Task Force discovered that switching to more sustainable practices actually saved the church thousands of dollars, allowing them to be better stewards of both their natural and financial resources. Recently, Northland conducted an energy audit and is looking at ways to reduce the carbon footprint of its 3,100-seat sanctuary.

But Northland is not content to merely attend to the church's internal practices; they want to share what they've learned with Christians locally and across the nation. In January 2008, the church hosted a Green Expo to provide local community members with practical information on how to be better

stewards. In February 2008, Northland hosted a Creation Care Conference. The conference focused on equipping pastors and church leaders from across the U.S. with Creation Care principles and knowledge of sustainable practices, ministries and strategies they could implement in their churches.

CELEBRATE. NURTURE. EMBRACE.

GEORGIA

ATLANTA, GA

Celebrate. Nurture. Embrace. This is the approach that the congregation at Peachtree Baptist Church takes in caring for creation. The Rev. Robert Walker notes, “the first biblical commandment is for humans to work and take care of the garden that God has placed us in (Gen 2:15). As Christians, we must obey this first commandment and take care of the earth.”

Last autumn, Rev. Walker gave an 8-week sermon series on faith and the environment. Each week he spoke on a different environmental issue, demonstrating God’s love of creation and the biblical call to be responsible stewards of the earth.

After each sermon, the congregational “Green Team” gave a presentation on practical ways to care for the planet. With Georgia experiencing a severe drought, the sermon on water was especially compelling to church members. The Green Team provided water conservation tips and connected congregants with local and global organizations that work on water conservation.

Recently, Peachtree Baptist launched a Faith and the Environment ministry to further embrace environmental stewardship. “We inte-



Photo © AP

grate environmental values into all aspects of church worship: our sermons, our music, our prayers, our children’s sermon and our bible study opportunities,” reports the ministry coordinator, Sherri Allen.

The ministry provides educational programs, organizes community events and implements green practices. The church is offering the “Low Carbon Diet,” a 30-day program in which participants learn how to reduce their global warming impact. Peachtree Baptist also sponsors a church-wide recycling program, drive-less Sundays (where congregants are encouraged to carpool, bike or use public transportation), a re-usable shopping bag initiative, and an eco-friendly advent light sale. In addition, the church conducted an energy audit and is considering ways to become more energy efficient.

Peachtree Baptist is a member congregation of Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, an organization that works with faith communities to “put their faith into action in caring for God’s Creation.” Georgia Interfaith Power and Light focuses on energy conservation and provides educational resources and practical steps for congregations seeking to be responsible environmental stewards.

TITHE YOUR CO₂

HAWAII

HONOLULU, HI

With the impending peril of rising sea levels due to global warming, Hawaii residents face losing their beaches, homes and livelihoods; not to mention the islands’ invaluable natural treasures. Worse still, even the most optimistic scientific reports predict that many of Hawaii’s low-lying Pacific island neighbors face complete devastation.

Appalled by this forecast, members of the Church of the Crossroads United Church of Christ in Honolulu took charge and organized a Global Warming Task Force. In January 2007, this dedicated task force launched a three-part campaign to conserve energy within the church, educate and mobilize the Hawaiian faith community, and publicly advocate for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Just three months later, the task force held two events for people of faith as part of the Step It Up National Day of Climate Action. Partnering with the Sierra Club and others, the task force coordinated an interfaith rally at the state capitol where Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Native Hawaiian spiritual leaders united to call for a cut in carbon emissions of 80 percent by 2050.

The task force hosted a teach-in for the faith community. Hawaii Sierra Club director, Jeff Mikulina gave a slide-show on the implications of global warming for Hawaii, and local spiritual leaders led discussions about the moral and religious imperative to reduce



Chuck Burrows



Chuck Burrows

carbon dioxide. The historic day ended with a faith-themed global warming demonstration on a busy street corner in Waikiki beach. Holding up signs such as “For God so loved the world, shouldn’t we?” the participants encouraged people of faith in Hawaii to “Step it Up” and cut carbon dioxide.

To engage fellow church members, the task force holds a “Tithe Your CO₂” program one Sunday a month. The program provides action ideas for ways that individuals can cut carbon dioxide emissions, as well as community activities that combat global warming. In addition, Church of the Crossroads recently underwent an energy audit to find out how to conserve energy and reduce its carbon footprint. Just think of what positive change could happen if every church would step it up like Church at the Crossroads!



REDISCOVERING THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

BOISE, ID

Even though Pastor Tri Robinson grew up with a deep regard for nature, studied ecology in college and taught natural sciences for twelve years, he slowly lost touch with his environmental values after becoming an evangelical pastor. As he saw environmental degradation escalate, Pastor Robinson felt reconvicted about caring for the environment. He turned to the Bible for direction and realized that the call to environmental stewardship is present throughout Biblical teachings.

"It is the responsibility of every true Christian to take environmental stewardship seriously," says Pastor Robinson. "The Bible conveys that all of God's creation is important to Him, down to the last sparrow and blade of grass."

Pastor Robinson feels that in recent years many Christians have neglected environmental concerns because of political stereotypes. He felt nervous about giving his first sermon on environmental stewardship at his church, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Boise. To his surprise and delight he received a standing ovation!



Since then, environmental stewardship has been embraced by his church as a Christian value, not a partisan issue. They started "Let's Tend the Garden," a ministry that addresses environmental issues from a Christian perspective.

The church created opportunities for church members to explore God's creation, including wilderness outings, a community garden

and environmental service trips to restore native plant species and maintain trails in nearby national parks. "It's been really good for folks to get outside, where you can actually see God's fingerprints on everything and feel close to Him," said church member Emily Hopping. "These experiences nurture the desire to take care of creation."

Vineyard Boise now has a church scale recycling program, sells eco-friendly products and holds educational seminars on sustainable living. Recently, Vineyard Boise partnered with Sierra Club and Trout Unlimited on a stream restoration project. The project was held in conjunction with the Vineyard Boise's 2007 Environmental Stewardship Conference, which was attended by pastors and leaders from across the country.



FAITH IN PLACE

CHICAGO, IL

The Rev. Clare Butterfield grew up in the farm country of central Illinois. Many of her neighbors were farmers. As a young girl, she was particularly close to one neighbor, who used to grow sweet corn for the whole neighborhood. When that neighbor later died from cancer, Rev. Butterfield realized that his cancer was likely caused by regular exposure to pesticides, including those used to grow the sweet corn that her family had so enjoyed. This experience profoundly shaped her sense of her own responsibility for the environment.

"Asking people to expose themselves to poison so I can eat is immoral. Period. I am enjoined by my faith to love my brothers and sisters... I love nature. I love quiet places, trees, animals. But my deepest concern for the environment comes about because I love people. It's all one thing, this earth, and we are part of it," she said.

In 1999, Rev. Butterfield was one of the co-founders of "Faith in Place," an interfaith organization that works with communities of faith to make the connection between faith, caring for the environment and social justice. The name reflects the desire to cultivate



a deep love and respect for Illinois' unique community and ecosystem. Faith in Place equips people of faith in Illinois with the practical tools they need to become good stewards of the earth. They have worked with over 400 congregations of diverse faiths including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian, Baha'i and Unitarian.

Among many programs, Faith in Place has an extensive sustainable farming initiative. Through workshops, lectures and a children's after-school program, Faith in Place introduces people of faith to healthy, sustainable food choices that are kind to the land and the farmers who work it. They help people of

faith connect with local, organic food sources, via farmer's markets, a local organic bakery and community supported agriculture (CSA) farms. Faith in Place also established TAQWA Eco-Foods Cooperative, a co-op that features humane, locally-raised organic beef, lamb and chicken that meet Islamic dietary requirements. In addition, Faith in Place operates the Illinois Interfaith Power & Light campaign, which encourages a religious response to global warming.

PRAYING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONY

INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

In the summer of 2007, St. Luke's Methodist Church in Indianapolis, IN launched the Green Ministry to "celebrate God's creation by educating, encouraging and enabling the St. Luke's United Methodist Church community to conserve resources and renew environmental harmony."



To kick off the ministry, the church gave out 1,200 reusable shopping bags to members. Americans throw away over 100 billion plastic bags each year. Derived from nonrenewable resources, these bags never break down completely and they harm wildlife. Each year plastic bags floating in the world's oceans kill millions of birds and an estimated 100,000 sea turtles and marine mammals.

The Green Ministry offers classes on environmental issues from a spiritual perspective. They also provide "green tips" in the church bulletin. Each month, the Green Ministry holds educational events on sustainable living. In the past they have explored hybrid

cars, nontoxic cleaning products, environmentally conscious gift giving and green building options.

Church members are encouraged to take a pledge to care for God's creation. The pledge reads: "I believe all creation is a gift from God, all parts of creation are interdependent and God calls me to act responsibly toward creation for the sake of future generations.

Therefore, I will learn what adversely affects creation so that I can work to reverse problems; I will live more simply so there are adequate provisions for all; and I will pray for harmony in all of God's creation." As a reminder, participants sign the commitment on a leaf and hang it on the "Creation Care Tree" in the church lobby.

Sheri Ballard, a Green Ministry volunteer, reports: "The Green Ministry has enabled me to put my faith into action. It encourages me to be mindful of the environmental consequences of my everyday actions. In doing so, I am able to demonstrate respect for all life, including humanity. This constant remembrance of the interconnectedness of all life has enriched my faith."

COOL CONGREGATIONS

IOWA

CEDAR FALLS, IA

Inspired by their priest's counsel "to keep the faith, we must keep the earth," a small group of dedicated parishioners at St. Luke's Episcopal Church set out to combat energy-related environmental degradation. Church members created the "Cool Congregations" program to help people of faith take practical steps to slow global warming.

"Cool Congregations is a way to put your faith into action," says co-founder Sarah Webb.

Participating congregants attend a series of training sessions and make a pledge to their faith community to conserve energy within their own households. Participants calculate their carbon footprint, a measure of how much one's lifestyle contributes to global warming. They then identify four or five actions that will reduce their personal global warming impact by 10 percent. After one year, participants meet to recalculate their carbon footprint and submit their total carbon dioxide reductions to Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, an initiative of Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other faith communities to mitigate global climate change in order to "protect God's sacred creation and safeguard public health." IIP&L is offering a new resource this year for purchasing energy efficient products at a discount, ShopIPL.org.

In 2007, 35 families at St. Luke's achieved their goal to reduce global warming emissions to an amount equal to what 18 average cars produce in one year.



Speaking of her participation in Cool Congregations, Sarah Webb relayed: "I want to provide my kids with a clean and healthy environment to grow up in. When I learned they were proposing a new coal plant in my community, I was heartbroken. I didn't just want to oppose it; I wanted to offer a solution. If we reduce energy consumption, there will be less need for new coal plants."

Cool Congregations trained 90 congregations in 2007 and will be holding more workshops in the future. Cool Congregations is a program of Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, in partnership with the Sierra Club's Cool Cities program and others.

SUSTAINABLE SANCTUARY

PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS

In 2002, Village Presbyterian Church made a church-wide commitment to reduce its environmental impact and become faithful stewards of God's creation. With the goal of integrating environmental awareness into all aspects of church life, the church has since implemented a "Sustainable Sanctuary" program.

The Sustainable Sanctuary Task Force assesses church-wide practices and recommends ways to green church operations. As a result of its dedicated work, Village Presbyterian now has an extensive recycling program and purchases fair-trade organic coffee, non-toxic cleaning supplies and earth-friendly products with minimal packaging. To emphasize that taking care of the environment can begin with small steps, Village Presbyterian gave each of its 1,500 members an energy-saving light bulb.

"Whenever we engage in abuse of the environment, we sin against God, against His Creation, against all species-including our own," explains the church website. "[Sustainable Sanctuary] means expanding our church's mission to include the promotion of ethical, life-affirming, earth-friendly purchasing and waste disposal decisions."



Sustainable Sanctuary's biggest success is Village Presbyterian's paper recycling program. In 2003, the church added two paper recycling bins. Since then, they have recycled nearly 300 tons of paper. Each ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space, 7,000 gallons of fresh water, 390 gallons of oil and 4,100 kilowatt hours of electricity! The church receives \$25 for every ton of paper recycled and the proceeds go to the Youth Group Mission Fund.

For Earth Day 2007, the church invited religious author Dr. Marcus Borg to give a presentation on earth-keeping. In his message, Dr. Borg declared "it is not enough to love God; we must love what God loves, including his creation." Expanding on this theme, last fall Village Presbyterian hosted a series of classes on caring for the earth from a faith-centered perspective.

Village Presbyterian Church is a member of the Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition, an interdenominational coalition of congregations in Kansas City working to promote sustainable initiatives in religious communities.

EDUCATING AND NURTURING

OWENSBORO, KY

"To cherish what remains of the earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival," says Kentucky author and farmer Wendell Berry. The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in Owensboro, Kentucky, have taken Mr. Berry's advice to heart.

The Ursuline Sisters, a Roman Catholic order, were founded in 1535 with the primary purpose of education. St. Angela Merici, founder of the Ursulines, was a follower of Saint Francis and integrated his love of God's creation into her teachings. Today, the Sisters live on a large farm in rural western Kentucky. Each year, over 500 students visit to learn about caring for the environment and study the dynamic ecosystem of the farm. "Everything in nature has a purpose," notes Sr. Amelia Stenger. She contrasts this natural pattern with American habits. "Americans are very blessed and yet we are so wasteful. This over consumption of resources leads to a great deal of environmental degradation. We want to inspire values of simplicity, gratitude and care for the land."

The Sisters sponsor a Retreat Center which is attempting to build a 'green' meeting house to demonstrate energy efficient building technologies. When they could not find many local resources on sustainable building, Sr. Amelia, director of the Center, partnered with Sierra Club and successfully petitioned the county government to designate July of 2007 "Energy Awareness Month."



The partnership held energy education events each Saturday of the month, including a bike ride, tabling at the farmer's market and an energy display at the local museum. The initiative culminated with the GREENing Western Kentucky Expo. GREENing stands for "Getting Renewable Energy Education Now." The event was incredibly successful and exhibitors from across the state displayed energy efficient products and materials.

Today the Retreat Center is raising funds to build the Casa del Sol Environmental Education Center, a near zero energy demonstration building that will include solar technology, wind technology and renewable, recycled or reused building materials.

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

LOUISIANA

NEW ORLEANS, LA

After Hurricane Katrina, the thousands of members of Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church were the first to return to their homes in the Versailles neighborhood of East New Orleans. As city officials considered bleak reconstruction options, church members were already hard at work to rebuild their community. Led by the church's charismatic Father Vien, the close-knit and persistent Vietnamese community had electricity before the city even knew they were back. Despite their determination, this community had yet to realize the magnitude of the fight that lay ahead.

To deal with the enormous amount of debris left behind by Katrina, city officials rapidly approved the placement of a giant landfill one mile from the Mary Queen of Vietnam Church. According to Rev. Vien, this abrupt decision was suspicious because the city tried to open the landfill twice in the 1990s. The concerned community defeated both previous attempts. However, some residents believe that the cloak of Katrina's aftermath enabled city officials to go around normal legal proceedings and expedite opening the landfill.



The winds of Katrina had barely died down before hazardous waste was being dumped perilously close to the Versailles community. To add insult to injury, the unlined landfill is directly adjacent to a protected wildlife sanctuary. Water flows in and out of the landfill, directly contaminating the wetlands ecosystem as well as the community's canals.

It didn't take long for Father Vien and his parishioners to figure out that something was terribly wrong. Working in coalition with Sierra Club and others, they were determined to shut down the landfill. Thanks to their hard work and persistence, the community was able to halt landfill operations. Although this was a huge victory, it was only one step toward protecting their environmental quality of life.

More than 200,000 cubic yards of waste from Katrina was dumped in the landfill, which continues to leak toxins into a canal used by the Vietnamese community for irrigation and fishing. The landfill placement is an injustice that is bad for the environment, bad for the community and bad for local wildlife. The coalition members continue to fight to have the waste removed and disposed of in a responsible manner.

MAINE'S FIRST CHURCH-SPONSORED LOCAL FARM

MAINE

ROCKLAND, ME

As the gravity of global warming becomes more evident, members of First Universalist Church in Rockland seeks practical ways their congregation can reduce its carbon footprint. After discussing several ideas, they decided to focus on sustainable food choices in order to reduce their energy use and combat global warming.

Many people do not realize that food choices can contribute to environmental damage in a variety of ways. The production, processing, transportation, and packaging of food all have substantial energy costs, each greatly contributing to global warming. For example, the average American meal travels 2,000 miles from farm to dinner plate!

Buying food that is grown locally avoids the pollution that transportation causes — and it also provides families with fresher food. At a time when many small farmers are going out of business due to the growth of industrialized agriculture, eating locally can provide much needed support for the farmers and families in our communities.

These days, many members of First Universalist participate in community supported agriculture (CSA). A CSA is a subscription with a local farm to provide fresh produce on a monthly or weekly basis throughout the growing season. First Universalist contracts with Hatchet Cove Farm, a small organic family farm. Last year, the church's CSA subscription helped Hatchet Cove Farm pur-



chase the land they had been leasing and build a second greenhouse. The church also donates one CSA share to a local food pantry, presenting one more way to support the local community.

Rev. Mark Glovin reports, "the CSA has been wonderful for our church and also for Hatchet Cove Farm. It allows us to support a local family farm and provides us with fresh organic produce. In addition, we are given an opportunity to put our faith into action in a way that benefits everyone and lets us live more lightly on the earth."



RECONNECTING WITH THE LAND

BALTIMORE, MD

From a sophisticated water conservation system to green buildings, a biodiesel truck, and an organic farm, the Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center, a State certified Green Center, incorporates kindness to the earth in nearly every aspect of facility operations. And this Jewish faith-based retreat center does more than just model environmental sustainability; it is committed to cultivating a spiritually-rooted environmental consciousness through its hands-on educational programs, sustainable farming and community-service opportunities. Pearlstone's Baltimore Jewish Environmental Network (BJEN) assists community organizations in the process of "greening" their own operations.

Reconnecting Jewish spirituality with stewardship of the earth, Kayam Farm at Pearlstone integrates sustainable farming with ancient Jewish agricultural laws. Kayam demonstrates the close connections between the Jewish holiday calendar and agricultural cycles, and teaches Jewish agricultural laws, many of which reflect social jus-



tice values, such as reserving part of the fields for the underprivileged. The farm also donates ten percent of the harvest to local charities. "You practice compassion toward your neighbor through the way you treat the ground. It's a mutual relationship: as you feed the earth and the earth feeds you, so your community health reflects that," said Jakir Manela, the farm director.

Pearlstone, Kayam and BJEN work to "reconnect people with their food and with the earth, inspiring social and ecological responsibility in the Jewish community, greater Baltimore, and beyond." Kayam at Pearlstone includes a five-acre organic farm, two miles of hiking trails and a large native habitat restoration project. Kayam and BJEN hold a variety of hands-on agricultural and environmental education programs throughout the year on topics such as: sustainable agriculture, Jewish agricultural and environmental principles and wildlife restoration. In 2007, Pearlstone hosted over 11,000 guests, 2,700 of whom participated in helping on the farm, maintaining trails and planting trees.



INTERFAITH ACTION ON GLOBAL WARMING

LITTLETON, MA

The Rev. Fred Small believes that people of faith have a calling to take action on behalf of the environment. "To heal the wounds of our planet and its peoples, to restore right relations among all God's creatures, to apportion the earth's abundance with equity and generosity — these challenges will demand all our courage, creativity, devotion, and sacrifice. Will people of faith heed the call?" poses Rev. Small on the web site for his organization Religious Witness for the Earth (RWE).

Based in Massachusetts, RWE calls itself a "national, independent, interfaith network dedicated to creating a society in which human beings live in loving, just relationships with one another and with all Creation."

Small founded the organization in 2001 because he felt that religious groups were not doing enough for the environment. "I wanted to explore how to apply the lessons of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., to a challenge of comparable moral urgency," he explains.

In only seven years RWE has achieved many great goals, including leading numerous interfaith prayer services calling for climate action, circulating a New England Interfaith Call for Climate Action petition signed by hundreds of clergy and lay people, working to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge via petitions and



meetings with decision makers and testifying at numerous state and federal hearings on energy conservation.

In March 2007, RWE led hundreds of walkers across Massachusetts on the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue. At the culmination of that walk in Boston, thousands gathered for an interfaith worship and rally — at the time, the largest global warming demonstration in U.S. history.

EATING IS A MORAL ACT

MICHIGAN

ALMA, MI

In 1991, the U.S. Catholic Bishops released a statement affirming that “at its core the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God’s creation.”

Answering this call to action, a diverse group of nuns, priests, farmers, educators and lay persons formed Michigan Catholic Rural Life Coalition (MCRLC). Founded in 1991, MCRLC seeks to understand the connection between food, agriculture and environmental issues through the lens of faith, specifically Catholic social teaching. The group is a member of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, a national organization which brings together the Catholic Church and care of rural communities and natural resources.

MCRLC promotes a sustainable food system that nourishes people, local communities and the earth. MCRLC serves as an educational resource for the Catholic community in Michigan and assists the Catholic Dioceses in advocating for land, food, agricul-



Paul Stankewitz



Paul Stankewitz

ture and environmental issues. They also encourage and facilitate related interfaith dialogue.

MCRLC’s most popular presentation is *Eating is a Moral Act*, which demonstrates the many ethical implications of our food choices. *Eating is a Moral Act* raises questions such as: “How is our food produced? How are the workers treated? Are the animals viewed as God’s creatures? Is the soil, water and air cared for in the spirit of stewardship?” Perhaps even more significantly, it asks the question, “How often do we pause to reflect upon where our food comes from?”

“Food plays a central role in our cultural and faith traditions,” said MCRLC spokesperson, Paul Stankewitz. “Moreover, food embodies God’s grace and provision. For this reason, we must examine how food is being abused and

learn to make sustainable food choices that support, rather than exploit, people and the earth.”

MCRLC continues to educate the public about the need to promote equitable stewardship of the land.

CATHOLICS TAKE ACTION ON GLOBAL WARMING

MINNESOTA

ST. PAUL, MN

In response to the U.S. Catholic Bishops call for action on global warming, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis co-sponsored “Global Warming: A Catholic Perspective” in 2006. One thousand people from 95 parishes attended the event to address the impacts of global warming on the environment and, in particular, the world’s poor communities.

“The atmosphere surrounding us that supports life is a God-given gift,” said Archbishop Harry Flynn. “It must be protected. And it must be protected today so that tomorrow others will enjoy this gift.”

Out of this gathering, the Archdiocesan Global Warming Action Team (GWAT) was formed. GWAT, a multi-congregational effort, is a team of parishioners that work to reduce carbon emissions in Minnesota through grassroots organizing and education. GWAT has been active in educating parishioners and public officials about the benefits of renewable energy.

“As Catholics, we profess to believe in simplicity, caring for the poor and the common good,” said Deacon and GWAT coordinator Glenn Skuta. “These are tenets of our faith and if we apply them to caring for creation, we can help sustain our earth and its inhabitants.”

GWAT provides resources for organizing action on global warming and other environmental issues within individual parishes, including educational materials, theological perspectives on caring for creation, ideas for individual action and ways to conserve energy within parish facilities.

Several parishes have now established their own GWAT teams. For example, St. Joan of Arc in Minneapolis launched a Green Power Campaign to encourage parishioners to purchase wind energy. They also produced a DVD on the moral implications of global warming and are leading the Minnesota Energy Challenge, where individual parish families commit to reducing CO₂ emissions.



JESUS PEOPLE AGAINST POLLUTION

COLUMBIA, MS

In 1977, an explosion destroyed the Reichhold Chemical plant in Columbia, Mississippi. Reichhold abandoned the plant, and left hundreds of barrels of highly toxic waste buried precariously close to a nearby neighborhood. The waste leaked, contaminating the water supply of the largely African American and low-income community.

When Columbia native, Evangelist Charlotte Keys, learned about the contamination in the early 1990s she decided to do some investigating. She was heart broken and infuriated by what she found. Many community members lived dangerously close to the Superfund site where the chemicals were buried. Children played in streams contaminated by the poisonous chemicals, and she saw children and their families fall ill. What's worse, little was being done about it.

Not one to stand by and do nothing, Evangelist Keys founded the environmental justice nonprofit Jesus People Against Pollution in



1992. Since its foundation this organization has fought for community access to healthcare and the relocation of local residents.

Evangelist Keys says her fight is not just a matter of justice, but rather that it's about living out her faith in Jesus Christ. Evangelist Keys describes Jesus' model as one of sacrificial love, caring for the poor and healing the earth. She believes Jesus demonstrates how humans are to treat one another and live rightly on the earth. "When we poison our environment, we're not only defiling God's creation, we're poisoning each other. Jesus cares about his people, it's a sin to stand by and watch his people suffer," she said. "I know God wants me to help the people in my community."

Evangelist Keys believes that greed is one cause of pollution, and that those with money should be doing more to help communities in need. "Humanity has become self-destructive, abusing the environment and one another for the love of money," she said. "Wealth is temporary; we're all just passing through this world. Why not use our resources for good instead of greed?"



EAT YOUR VALUES

KANSAS CITY, MO

Concerned about ecological degradation, All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Kansas City, MO. formed a Green Sanctuary committee to identify tangible ways the church community could help restore the environment. "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence" is a foundational principle of the Unitarian Universalist faith. "We're all connected. If we cause harm to one part, our actions affect the health of all species, all existence," explains All Souls church member and Sierra Club volunteer, Terry Wiggins. "The Green Sanctuary program is a way for our church to be respectful of that connection."

In 2001, the Green Sanctuary Committee launched its first initiative, a church-wide recycling program. Since then, the church has been engaged in a number of different environmental endeavors from creating a native plant garden to conducting classes on global warming and selling fair trade organic coffee, tea and chocolate.

One of the committee's main efforts is to educate church members about sustainable food consumption. To demonstrate planet-friend-



ly food choices, the Green Sanctuary Committee hosts "Eat Your Values" lunches for the congregation where they serve local, organic fare. "Local food doesn't require the packaging, refrigeration, and transport that generate huge amounts of waste and pollution," explains Wiggins.

The lunches emphasize vegetarian fare since contemporary methods of meat production have an enormous impact on the environment. Most meat comes from factory farms which generate massive amounts of manure waste that pollute surrounding air and water resources. Furthermore, raising animals for food requires substantially more water and other resources than producing plant-based foods. The Green Sanctuary committee encourages church members to eat less meat and buy local, organic meat products.

To eliminate waste at the lunches, they use real dinnerware and compost all of the leftovers. At the most recent lunch, they created only one pint bag's worth of trash! The lunches have generated a wonderful response and other church committees use the "Eat Your Values" lunch as a template for their own events.

CAMPUS MINISTRY EDUCATES COMMUNITY ON GLOBAL WARMING

MONTANA

MISSOULA, MT

In the fall of 2007, Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) at the University of Montana teamed up with an ecumenical group called the Western Montana Spiritual Development Council to host “A Faith-full Response to Global Warming: Honest Community Conversations about Climate Change.” The Rev. John Lund, the campus pastor for LCM, says opening up a dialogue about global warming is essential for the faith community.



“Regarding climate change: if you recognize the dignity and sacredness of life, it’s a moral imperative,” he says. “It’s our lifestyle that’s created this problem, so we have a greater burden of responsibility.”

According to Lund, when they first started thinking of educating people on the topic, they knew it could not just be a one-shot event. “There are so many different layers and issues when you get into it. You can’t do it in just one weekend,” he explains.

Lund arranged for speakers from many backgrounds to take part in the five-week series, including experts on forestry, ethics, and philosophy, and including Lund himself. “We also talked about how

one communicates issues of the environment to the faith community and from the faith community out into the greater community.”

The speakers’ series was a big hit and inspired the Caring for Creation Network where students, local church members and other interested individuals meet once or twice a month to empower each other and provide resources for local congregations to work on environmental issues. It has also spawned a series of related workshops with coalition partners on faith and the environment.

“The real challenge still is for congregations to see this as a core part of who they are, and what they’re about. What are tangible and practical ways to make a difference?” says Lund.

When talking about faith communities caring for the environment, Lund says its about overcoming assumed dualities that no longer make sense. “God is with us, within our lives, within our relationships, and in nature and creation. We can’t separate ourselves from creation and we don’t exist without creation. We’re a part of the ecosystem.”

THE BIG GARDEN

NEBRASKA

OMAHA, NE

For thousands of years communities gathered to cultivate the land for food and celebrate its harvest. But due to today’s industrialized agricultural system, this vital form of community collaboration has all but disappeared. People now are often disconnected from their food and the land that so generously provides it. Even more disheartening, many of us would not even recognize our neighbors down the street, let alone the folks in the poverty-stricken neighborhood across town who may suffer from malnutrition and hunger.



When Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede sought a way to rally her Methodist community in Omaha around these issues, “The Big Garden” was born. One of the most extensive community garden projects in the country, The Big Garden seeks to develop food-producing urban gardens in the impoverished neighborhoods of east Omaha.

The project empowers neighbors to grow their own nutritious food by providing individual lots on garden sites. Respect for the earth is a central component: the gardens are organic, and the project includes education on organic methods, composting and water conservation. Health education is also an important part of the project.

Bulletin boards at all of the gardens provide healthy recipes and advice on nutrition and disease prevention. The project is run by the United Methodists Ministries and is funded in part by grants from the USDA Community Foods Project grant, The United Methodist Church, other congregations, and individuals.

The Big Garden has been a resounding success. In 2006, the five original gardens harvested more than 3,000 pounds of fresh produce, one-third of which was donated to local food pantries. Today, there are thirteen gardens and that number is expected to expand to 30 in the near future.

Community gardening is a great way to connect people from all different walks of life and the Big Garden project is a remarkable example of community-building across diverse borders. Gardeners include Burmese and Sudanese refugees, boy scouts, 80-year old Catholic nuns, members of the Latino and African-American communities, Korean immigrants, and hundreds of Methodist youth who have donated more than 1,000 hours of service. This amazing project demonstrates the endless potential that community gardening provides through reconnecting us with our food, the land, and each other.



A SUNNY SUNDAY

ELKO, NV

Several years ago Pastor Pat Mecham found himself contemplating a poster with a message about not polluting the environment. It triggered something, “I began to wonder what God has to say about environmental stewardship,” says the longtime Presbyterian pastor. Consulting the scriptures for guidance, Pastor Mecham discovered a clear biblical mandate to care for the earth.

“God put Adam and Eve in the garden to tend it, not destroy it,” Pastor Mecham explains. “We have a biblical obligation to take care of the environment.”

With stewardship in mind, Pastor Mecham’s church, the First Presbyterian Church of Elko, recently installed solar panels on its roof, becoming the first church in Nevada to participate in a state-operated program to encourage renewable energy. “What we’re saying to the community is that we’re proud to take care of the environment.”

The solar panels are a great financial investment as well. The church received a \$50,000 rebate for participating in the program and they expect that the money saved in energy bills over the next decade will pay for the \$119,200 system, which has a 25-year-plus lifespan. With traditional energy costs steadily going up, the church could save even more money than anticipated.



Solar energy has immense potential in the sunny state of Nevada, and the First Presbyterian Church of Elko’s example is sure to be followed as churches from all over the region continue contacting Pastor Mecham for advice.

The First Presbyterian Church of Elko is proud to participate in the renewable energy program and fulfill their Christian stewardship responsibility of both their financial and natural resources.



CHURCH GOES GREEN FOR GOD

NASHUA, NH

Taking care of the environment is catching on at First Church of Nashua, Congregational United Church of Christ. The Nashua, N.H. church began its move to become greener in the spring of 2007, when member Shane Zeman proposed it to the church’s social justice committee.

To Zeman, being environmentally-friendly should be part of church life. “I think faith does play into this,” he explains. “We need to take care of what we’ve got. No matter what, I think God would want us to take care of the Earth. It’s not that hard to take steps (to be green). Everyone can do it.”

The first thing Zeman and a church social justice committee did was show the movie ‘An Inconvenient Truth’ to the church. More than 70 people showed up for the event, which was followed by a discussion on what the church should do next.

The committee then took the lead on starting a recycling and energy conservation program for First Church, and the social justice committee agreed that an energy audit of the church would be a



Photo by Bea Jillette

good first step in tackling energy concerns. Following the audit’s recommendations, the church upgraded its fluorescent lights with new energy-saving technology.

In August 2007, First Church also supported volunteers who came through town on the “Re-Energize New Hampshire” march, a campaign sponsored by the Sierra Student Coalition to promote ways individuals could help stop global warming. The church fed and housed the volunteers, and also sent members to the local rally.

First church is now showing environmentally-themed movies every quarter to continue the green discussions. Zeman continues to contribute by writing a church newsletter column about green tips, noting that the church members continue to show an interest in creation care, especially in how it relates to future generations.

“We’re dealing with environmental and social justice issues,” he explains. “I have two kids, and to me, it’s about what kind of world we leave for them. I don’t want them to suffer through what we are predicting.”

GREEN FLAG, GREENFAITH SCHOOLS

NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

GreenFaith is one of the country's oldest religious-environmental coalitions, and the main reason that New Jersey has so much faith-based action for the earth. One of its flagship programs, Lighting the Way, has made it possible for religious groups to receive a solar array at no cost, and to pay for their system out of savings generated by the panels. 25 religious facilities have 'gone solar' through this program and more are on the way. "People get so overwhelmed by environmental problems," said the Rev. Fletcher Harper, GreenFaith's Executive Director. "This shows them that they can be leaders."



GreenFaith also offers energy audits to help religious institutions conserve energy, along with resources to help them use non-toxic cleaning supplies, conserve water, reduce their solid waste flow, and implement 'green' purchasing programs. The organization also conducts Environmental Justice Tours in urban communities several times annually. GreenFaith's interfaith staff provides religious-environmental education programs and retreats to help people from diverse backgrounds connect with nature and understand the Biblical basis for

environmental care. GreenFaith's Rabbi Lawrence Troster says, "Most people have very meaningful spiritual experiences outdoors. We help them understand what these experiences mean, and give them the chance to discuss them with others."

For select congregations and faith-based schools, GreenFaith has offered major support through the Sustainable Sanctuaries and Green Flag, GreenFaith Schools programs. These programs provide these groups with support to make the environment a major focus through religious-environmental education, green facility maintenance programs, and public education. Over two dozen Jewish, Christian and Muslim institutions have taken part. The results have been dramatic. At Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, for example, the program helped students institute a recycling program that will save the school \$9,000 a year in waste-hauling costs. "seeing the positive outcome of [our] work has really inspired me..." relayed Shayna Schor, a student leader. The schools program has been a joint program of GreenFaith and the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

CATHOLIC CHURCH HELPS FAMILIES SAVE MONEY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE, NM

As part of a year-long education and energy conservation campaign, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light (NMIPL), Sierra Club and nearly a dozen local congregations partnered in a "light bulb exchange program" to raise awareness about saving energy and money while also helping stop global warming.



Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Albuquerque quickly turned the light bulb distribution initiative into a neighborhood affair. Care of creation is one of the values of this NMIPL member congregation. Seeing an opportunity to put their values in action, members of the congregation and its social justice committee successfully distributed 3,000 energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) on two consecutive weekends.

"People could exchange four old bulbs for four of the CFLs," says Don Conklin, committee member and church administrator for Holy Rosary. "We had publicized the exchange for weeks in advance, along with information about global warming.

Holy Rosary's social justice committee member Joanne Angel was pleased to see the community working together. She enlisted the youth group to make posters about how the bulbs will cut electric

bulbs, and the church distributed bulbs in their food pantry baskets. Some parishioners took the initiative to go door to-door to elderly and homebound neighbors changing bulbs.

"It was exceptionally successful, especially among the immigrant and elderly families," says Angel. "We have to be good to each other and to the environment. Everyone can make a little difference."

"We in the U.S. are the biggest users of energy and producers of carbon dioxide, but global warming especially effects the poor among us and abroad. Holy Rosary's actions reflect a deep understanding of the gifts of creation and the call to justice," said Joan Brown, Franciscan sister and Vice President of NMIPL.

"When I got the call saying that all 3,000 CFLs had been distributed during the first two weekends of March, I was in awe!" says Sierra Club organizer, Shrayas Jatkar.

The parish's social justice committee continues to educate the church and community on environmental issues, says Conklin, because it is important for faith communities to care for the environment. "This comes right from our understanding of creation."



JEWISH COMMUNITY RIDES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

NEW YORK, NY

Hazon, which means “vision” in Hebrew, is a Jewish environmental organization in New York City that works to create a healthier and more sustainable Jewish community, as a step towards a healthier and more sustainable world for all. Hazon encourages the Jewish community to make a difference by living more sustainably using a range of environmental issues to renew and reframe Jewish life. Hazon has two program areas: outdoor adventures and the relationship between Jewish tradition, food issues, and contemporary life. They also raise money for some of the most cutting-edge environmental initiatives within and beyond the Jewish world. Through these programs, Hazon seeks to touch people’s lives directly.

The New York Jewish Environmental Bike Ride which is part of Hazon’s Outdoor Adventures program is its largest annual event. It takes place Labor Day weekend and combines a two-day Shabbat retreat and a two-day ride. Hazon helps organize the 250-mile Arava



Institute & Hazon Israel Rides, which offer a unique way to see Israel. The ride supports a masters program in environmental leadership that brings together Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians. Hazon also runs other rides and hikes in the US and Israel including the Heschel Hazon Hike in early 2009.

Hazon’s food programs are renewing the 3,000 year old tradition of “keeping kosher.” In the past four years they have launched 19 Community Supported Agriculture projects in the American Jewish community — a number they expect to grow in coming years. Hazon has educational resources on sustainable food choices, as well as an award-winning blog The Jew & The Carrot (JCarrot.org) blog. Hazon

hosts an annual Food Conference in Northern California.

Hazon’s programs foster community that is passionate, joyful, and progressive and that emphasize respect and diversity. All of their programs are open to everyone.



BAPTISTS ON AN ENVIRONMENTAL MISSION

DURHAM, NC

What does faith have to do with the environment? At Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, this question sparked a churchwide reflection on what members deem “God’s call for us to be in right relationship with creation.”

“Creation care goes beyond environmental stewardship; it recognizes the interdependence between humans and all aspects of creation,” explains the church’s Environmental Mission Group website. Seeking a ‘kinship perspective,’ Watts Street provides congregational opportunities to reflect, learn, and take action to restore their relationship with the environment.

Through the “Kids and Nature Connect” summer program, church members help cultivate a love of nature by getting children outside to hike, garden, spend time with animals, and participate in nature related drama and art activities. Other activities include nature themed scavenger hunts and recycling old items into art projects.

Last year, the Environmental Mission Group hosted “Energy Matters,” an educational series on energy related environmental degradation and global warming. They held screenings of “An



Inconvenient Truth” and “Kilowatt Ours,” two documentaries that demonstrate the impacts of our society’s voracious energy appetite. The church also provided practical energy conservation tips for the congregation and hosted an alternative energy presentation.

Promoting personal responsibility, the church challenged each household to reduce their global warming impact. Thirty-five families participated in the challenge, each reducing carbon emissions by ten percent. The church installed energy efficient light bulbs and is

investigating other methods of cutting churchwide carbon emissions.

Recently, Watts Street launched “Food and Faith,” an initiative that explores the nexus of faith, food, agriculture, social justice and the environment. The church also purchases locally grown food for its weekly Wednesday dinners and composts the leftovers.

Laura Webb Smith, coordinator of the Environmental Mission Group, said the church is inspired to do more every day. “At Watts Street, we want to provide hopeful solutions for environmental issues,” she explained. “As people of faith, we believe we can work together towards a better future.”

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NORTH DAKOTA

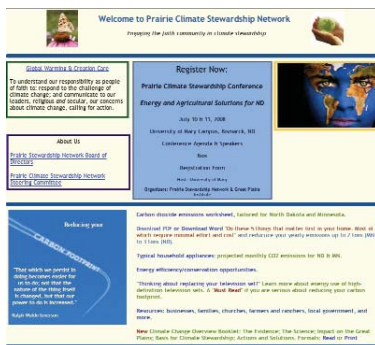
ASHLEY, ND

“Global warming is so different. There is not one particular thing to blame or make clean up its act. This is about all of us — so imagine what we can do if it is about all of us.”

Those are words from Renee Gopal of North Dakota’s Prairie Stewardship Network (PSN). According to Gopal, PSN’s mission is to engage the faith community in climate stewardship.

“We need to understand our responsibility as people of faith to respond to the challenge of climate change and to communicate to our leaders, religious and secular, our concerns about climate change,” says Gopal.

PSN was formed in early 2007 to provide a means for engaging communities of faith in North Dakota on creation care and climate stewardship. Gopal says PSN’s website is their most used resource and provides a means for engaging communities of faith in the state on creation care and climate stewardship. “We emphasize that our response to climate change must be a cooperative one,” she says. “Climate change comes across as an overwhelming issue. We want



to show it can be done, that it is being done and that we have to get behind it.”

Gopal added that because North Dakota is primarily a farming and ranching state, they had to adjust their approach appropriately.

The resources PSN’s website offers are tailored for North Dakota citizens, boasting an adjusted carbon calculator worksheet with options for farming and ranching equipment. “We emphasize energy efficiency first and foremost, robust development of renewable energy and deployment of technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from fossil energy sources,” she explains.

The response has been good so far, as PSN has been speaking at various events across the state and many congregations have requested PSN’s popular memo on five things one can do at home to make a difference. Gopal credits the support and commitment from PSN’s diverse board and steering committee for the organization’s success.

RESTORING NATURE AND RECONCILING PEOPLE

OHIO

DAYTON, OH

According to Jewish and Christian teachings in the book of Genesis, God gives humanity a special vocation to till and tend the Earth. Since 1991, Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) has tended the “garden” at Mount St. John in Dayton, Ohio, home to 100 acres of woodlands, wetlands and prairie. This Catholic community’s focus on land stewardship and restoration is a unique aspect of their ministry.



“Human impact on the earth is so pervasive that you can’t let nature go and expect it to return to what it was,” says biologist and Marianist Brother Don Geiger, founder of MEEC. “You have to know the ecosystem and provide what it needs to be good stewards of God’s creation.”

Restoration began in a barren pit left by highway construction; today, the land is home to a thriving community of grasses and wildflowers, and hosts ground nesting birds, amphibians and other wildlife. MEEC worked with a diverse coalition of secular and religious groups to create this new oasis.

“Restoring the natural community brought together a diverse community of people,” says land manager Michele Banker.

“Restoration teaches us how we impact nature and illustrates our common reliance on the services nature provides.”

MEEC continues this bridge building work by equipping scientists in the Ecological Society of America to collaborate with community based environmental justice groups from low-income neighborhoods. Churches traditionally have been at the forefront of the environmental justice movement and Sister Leanne Jablonski, an ecologist and pastoral minister who directs MEEC, says that education and dialogue are the keys to breaking down cultural barriers. “Nature brings everyone together around the same table to contemplate mystery, reflect on beauty and provide for the common good,” she explains.

Staff and volunteers are growing the MEEC community in a variety of ways. They train congregational liaisons to educate and motivate their faith communities, host public programs, offer land consultations and publish research in secular and religious outlets. They also recognize the importance of the arts in environmental ministry by hosting a yearly art and education exhibit that explores the relationship between human and natural communities.

GREEN VISION INSPIRES EAGLE SCOUT

SKIATOOK, OK

Boy Scout Travis Dollar grew up in Skiatook First United Methodist Church — a church that values protecting the environment. “We’ve always been environmentally conscious,” says Skiatook Pastor David Stephenson. In his teachings, Pastor Stephenson often emphasizes “taking care of God’s gift of creation.” When the church built a new sanctuary, they chose to install a geo-thermal heating and cooling system to reduce energy use and electricity bills.

Inspired by his church’s witness, Travis decided his Eagle Scout project would be to establish a recycling center in his small community of Skiatook, Oklahoma. Pastor Stephenson and fellow church members eagerly embraced the project, forming a recycling committee to advise Travis on fundraising and planning for the project.

Since then, Travis and the church committee have launched a successful effort to get necessary permits and raise the funds needed to build the recycling facility. Skiatook United Methodist even included funding for the recycling center in their missions budget, donating \$1,500 to the project.

These days, Travis is promoting recycling within the Skiatook community. For the local Pioneer Day Parade, he built a float out of crushed soda cans. “I guess you could say that my Eagle project



Beverly Dollar

is not just about bringing a recycling drop-off to Skiatook, it is about teaching the citizens of our community how to conserve energy and make our world a better place to live,” says Travis.

VALUING LAND FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND A HEALTHY CREATION

PORTLAND, OR

Among the top priorities of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and its Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns Program (INEC), is helping protect farmland, forestland and natural areas for the good of the whole community. Sprawling development and population expansion in Oregon has come up against a long tradition of protecting agricultural and forest land, causing conflict in many communities around the state. In response, INEC initiated a number of projects to shed light on responsible approaches to land use.

“We wanted to provide some kind of moral perspective,” explains Jenny Holmes, INEC director. “We offer dialogues among people of different faiths, farmers, tribal members, politicians, environmentalists and others on divisive environmental issues.”

The land use work of INEC provides an excellent example of dialogues among diverse constituents invited together by INEC. To help promote good stewardship, INEC has undertaken a land use study, hosted field trips for religious leaders and convened stakeholder dialogues in vulnerable areas.

One field trip focused on the agriculturally rich Hood River Valley, which drains directly from the glaciers on Mt. Hood and comprises one of the Oregon’s most ecologically diverse river basins. Increasingly, it attracts urbanites looking for a slower pace of life.

The field trip included a journey to an irrigation and hydroelectric water diversion to view an innovative fish screen mechanism installed by local farmers to protect migrating salmon and filter sediment from the water that is used for irrigation. Participants visited farms that rely upon irrigation the water, and witnessed the success of the innovation. Such projects, which emerge out of constructive dialogue among people of diverse perspectives, are the kinds of solutions to environmental conflicts that INEC promotes.

Religious principles of stewardship, sustainability and social justice guide the land use efforts of INEC. A recently published statement reads, “As people of faith, we believe that the land is a gift from God, entrusted to our care and stewardship for the benefit of the common good.”

EMO board member Kent Harrop noted in a published opinion piece on land use, “Within the Christian and many other faith traditions, the idea of neighborhood includes all that lives and gives life.”

Land use is only one of many environmental issues that INEC has gotten involved in since the early nineties. Over the years, INEC has engaged the faith community around water and salmon issues in the Columbia River Basin, especially as they relate to environmental justice and tribal issues. It has long established programs on food sustainability and global warming.

STUDENT LEGACY OF CREATION CARE

PENNSYLVANIA

ST. DAVIDS, PA

Eastern University is a Christian school near Philadelphia with more than 4,000 students. Recently, many of the students put their money where their mouth is on environmental issues, voting in 2007 to pay an additional fee to help offset the cost of using 100 percent wind power on the campus. The commitment to use 100 percent wind power was first made in 2002, and this past fall the university finally attained this goal.

Sixty-three percent of Eastern's 1,500 residential students voted to pay \$25 each for the wind energy surcharge. University officials said this decision did not surprise them.

"Environmental stewardship is an essential component of the university's mission, and this wind energy purchase is just the latest demonstration of our ongoing commitment," said Eastern President David Black. "After considering the damaging effect of fossil fuels on the health of the globe and its people, our students have concluded thoughtfully that this ethical issue demands a response."

Achieving 100 percent wind power also netted the university the 2007 "Green Power: Turn It On" Award from Penn Future, an organization that promotes the development of renewable energy sources in Pennsylvania.



Ben Hoover, an Eastern student, says choosing wind energy was the morally correct decision for the students. Hoover is part of Earthkeepers, a student club "devoted to promoting proper stewardship of God's creation through education and service." "Members of Earthkeepers agree that environmental stewardship is a fundamental aspect of Christian faith," explains Hoover. "We have a biblical mandate to love, serve, manage and protect what God has given to us, and our act of caring for the creation is a form of worshipping the Creator. Also, humans are integral members of the environment and therefore will be affected by positive and negative changes within it. The biblical command to care and love other people must include caring for the environment in which they live."

CATHOLIC CHURCH INSPIRES ISLAND-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

PUERTO RICO

CAGUAS, PR

For Father Pedro Ortiz and the Catholic parish of *Nuestra Señora De la Providencia* in Caguas, Puerto Rico the connection between God, the community and environmental protection is second nature. In order to directly address issues of environmental degradation and social justice which they understand to be intrinsic to their Catholic faith, the church formed the *Alianza Comunitaria y Ambiental en Accion Solidaria* (ACAAS) or Community and Environmental Alliance in Solidarity in April, 2007.

The parish sets aside portions of its liturgical calendar for reflection on relevant social issues. In 2007, Holy Week was dedicated as a time think about creation. During this season parishioners gathered in small groups for prayer, discussion and community reflection on environmental issues. From these small group discussions, the original idea to found ACAAS was born.

ACAAS is now a group of 100 community organizations, environmental non-profits, churches and universities from across the island who share a common concern for the environment, sustainable development and community engagement. Through grassroots community engagement and public education they work to create



an environmentally conscious community equipped with tools to participate effectively in the public and private decision making processes that affect their quality of life. The diversity of their partnership uniquely positions them to do so.

Recently, the Alliance is focusing its attention on energy issues, the economy and global climate change. In partnership with local universities, they have held five public forums on related topics in various parts of the island. An April 2008 forum took a closer look at a newly proposed gas pipeline, an issue that is growing in importance to local residents.

Nuestra Señora De la Providencia functions as a coordinating body for ACAAS and remains at the heart of the Alliance as its parish founder. "As human beings we have not respected creation. We are not the only species on the planet, but we act like we are," Father Ortiz explains. "The way in which we see creation fails to recognize the balance and interconnectedness of all species and, ultimately, has resulted in a problem of violence not only against creation but also against the society and communities we are all a part of." *Nuestra Señora De la Providencia* and ACAAS recognize human responsibility to take care of the environment and it is what inspires them to action.



INTERFAITH SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL WARMING

NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI

In January 2007, a dozen Rhode Island religious leaders from different faiths met to discuss working together to confront the threat of global climate change. Out of that meeting, Rhode Island Interfaith Power and Light (RI-IPL) was born.

“There are common themes across all faith traditions that move us to combat global warming: That we are called to be stewards of



the earth and preserve life for future generations — and that in loving God and our neighbors we must protect the planet and care for the poor, who disproportionately suffer the affects of global warming,” says RI-IPL Director Howard Brown.

To educate people of faith, RI-IPL publishes a quarterly newsletter of energy conservation tips and success stories, offers courses on global warming for congregations, including “Greening the House of Worship” and “Save Energy Costs and Save the World,” and shows Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth” film to congregations around the state. They also organize interfaith eco-hikes for children, where kids learn about the environment and global warming through fun, interactive games.

In January 2008, RI-IPL hosted “Greening your Congregation,” a conference on what religious communities can do to mitigate global warming. Exceeding expectations, the conference drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 150 clergy, educators, lay leaders and interested people of faith.

RI-IPL is affiliated with the national organization Interfaith Power and Light, which serves 4000 congregations in 26 states. National IPL is helping to mobilize a religious response to global warming and promoting renewable energy and efficiency and conservation.



CHARLESTON’S FIRST GREEN BUILDING

CHARLESTON, SC

Founded in 1681, the Circular Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina, is one of the oldest congregations in the South. The magnificent stone building is located in the heart of historic Charleston and tourists often stop to admire its unique Romanesque style. Members draw strength and vigor from the church’s rich history, which has a long record of innovative leadership.

The congregation prides itself on being socially and ecologically conscious, initiating a number of environmental initiatives and community outreach projects. When the growing congregation voted to renovate and expand the church meeting house, everyone agreed that the new structure should incorporate as many sustainable features as possible. They wanted the new building to stand as a public witness to the congregation’s commitment to being good stewards of the environment.

In May 2007, their vision was realized and Lance Hall opened its doors as the first green building in Charleston. It includes a number of green features, such as a vegetative roof, energy efficient windows, geothermal heating and cooling systems, and a rainwater collection system for landscape use. The architects didn’t sacrifice beauty for efficiency, either, as the stunning building replicates traditional Charlestonian architecture and even boasts a large porch overlooking a quiet meditation space.



Frank Harmon Architect PA

Circular Church is also making plans to become carbon neutral and to certify the churchyard as a backyard wildlife habitat.

WHERE THE EARTH MEETS THE SKY

SOUTH
DAKOTA

HILL CITY, SD

The staff members at Borderlands Education and Spiritual Center recognize that nature holds immeasurable value because it is an avenue through which many people come to experience God. “According to the Christian tradition, there are two means through which the character of God is revealed to us: through scripture and God’s creation,” explains the Rev. Linda Kramer, an Episcopalian priest and Borderlands Center director. Borderlands Center seeks to introduce visitors to the splendor of nature, instruct them on sustainable living and preserve the unique prairie wherein it is located.

Borderlands Center, an interfaith facility, is situated in the rolling hills of the Pe Sla, or Reynolds Prairie, which is surrounded by



Jim Margadant

pine forested mountains known as the Black Hills. “It is one of the few places left where you can still hear the silence and see the stars at night,” says Rev. Kramer. Antelope, elk, deer, wild turkey, coyotes and mountain lions live in the area, and wildflowers, herbs and medicinal plants cover the hills. According to Rev. Kramer, many people visit Borderlands Center to seek God in this pristine natural setting.

Unfortunately, development is encroaching on the unspoiled Pe Sla prairie, a place that is sacred to the Oceti Sakowin Oyate (Seven Fires Nation) of Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people. Pe Sla means “peace at the bare spot.” The prairie is a sacred area of prayer for peace and healing where the Lakota continue to hold ceremonies and pilgrimages. Lakota spirituality is incorporated into many of Borderlands Center’s educational and spiritual programs.

Borderlands Center is spearheading efforts to preserve the prairie, including a large tract of land that had been put on the market for development. Today, they are raising money to protect more vulnerable land and organizing a Neighbors Coalition to coordinate preservation efforts. “Places like Reynolds Prairie, where one can look all around and see nothing but nature, are vital.... We need to remember that sometimes contributing to our world means leaving it just as it is,” concludes Rev. Kramer.

LIVING WATER

TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE, TN

To Joyce Wilding, caring for the environment should be central to a Christian’s life. “To have peace on earth, we must have peace with the earth,” reflects Wilding, Environmental Ministry leader at Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Christ Church Environmental Ministry has many sustainable initiatives, but their main focus is on water conservation and stewardship. “In Christianity, water symbolizes the hope of renewal. Water itself conveys this spiritual meaning through its properties of cleansing and healing. Yet we continue to destroy watersheds and contaminate many semi-pristine water sources,” says Wilding.

“What does it mean when water is so scarce that our primary symbol of renewal is no longer available? Or when water is so contaminated that its capacity to heal has been lost?” asks Wilding.

Embodying her thoughts, Christ Church Cathedral partners with the Cumberland River Compact (CRC) to protect and preserve the local Cumberland River and its tributaries. Church members participate in stream restoration projects, sustainable building programs,



and educational events. Members are encouraged to grow native plants, which require less water, in their yards and at their workplaces.

Each year, the Environmental Ministry hosts “Weeds to Wreaths,” an intergenerational project to remove invasive plants. Removing invasive plants encourages native plants to grow, which are adapted to local rainfall, soil and temperature conditions. The church members use the pulled vines for the base of Advent wreaths. Ministry leaders have sold water “gifts” at the

parish Alternative Christmas Fair, including funds for CRC rain gardens, native plants, and water-related educational projects.

Recently, Christ Church Cathedral launched an effort to eliminate bottled water use, educating its members and the public about the withdrawal of large quantities of water from springs and aquifers for bottling. Water bottling has depleted household wells in rural areas, damaged wetlands, and degraded aquifers, and each year billions of plastic water bottles end up as garbage or litter. The Cathedral encourages members to purchase reusable drinking containers, and they have eliminated bottled water from church events.



A CALL TO CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

DALLAS, TX

In 2006, Texas' largest Baptist organization affirmed that Christians have a biblical mandate to take care of the environment. The Christian Life Commission, the Ethics and Public Policy branch of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, publicly acknowledged the threat of environmental degradation and resolved to "practice faithful stewardship of the environment in concrete ways in [their] churches and in [their] everyday lives and advocate for sound environmental policies in the public square."

Citing an environmental perspective inspired by the Bible, the Commission launched an initiative to educate Texas Baptists about stewardship of God's creation. According to the Commission, "Creation is God's artwork; it reveals God's character. Scripture affirms God's love for all of creation. [And] we are called to care for and protect it. Additionally, when we harm God's earth, we harm God's people."

The Caring for Creation initiative provides resources for Texas Baptists on how to integrate environmental stewardship into church life, make



sustainable lifestyle choices, advocate for sound environmental policies and communicate concern for the environment to the corporate sector.

A number of Baptist institutions in Texas now have sustainable initiatives. Hardin Simmons University, a private Baptist university in Abilene, has an extensive electronics recycling program and is moving towards powering its campus with renewable wind energy. Mega church Prestonwood Baptist is currently saving \$1.2 million annually from implementing an energy efficiency overhaul of its facilities. "We want to celebrate these successes and encourage individuals to take part and engage in caring for creation," says Suzii Paynter, director of the Commission.

Today, the Christian Life Commission is mobilizing Baptists to support efforts to put a moratorium on building new coal-fired power plants in Texas. Suzii Paynter got involved when she saw a growing number of children suffering from asthma, which is linked to air pollution. "Many Texas Baptists are concerned that emissions from the [coal] plants are jeopardizing the health of local residents," says Paynter. "This is a moral issue."



BUILDING GREEN IN DOWNTOWN SALT LAKE CITY

SALT LAKE CITY, UT

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is helping revitalize downtown Salt Lake City, and it's doing so in a green manner. City Creek Reserve, Inc. (CCRI), a real estate development arm of the church, is directing the construction of a transit-oriented, 20-acre mixed use project which will include residential, retail and office space. The results from this smart growth strategy will greatly reduce Salt Lake City's dependence on the automobile. This initiative is one

of 60 pilot projects in the country selected to help the U.S. Green Building Council finalize its new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) certification process. They are also striving for LEED NC (New Construction) certification in their new residential towers.

The LEED ND program looks at development of entire neighborhoods, not just single buildings. According to an April 2008 Deseret News article, LEED ND certified projects use "construction and design methods that place a high priority on good health, the natural environment and quality of community life... [and] encourage



Conceptual rendering provided by City Creek Reserve, Inc.

walkable communities and more efficient energy and water use."

CCRI's planners used sustainable principles in the design of the complex: more than 50% of the demolition debris is being recycled and landscaping will consist of only native plant species.

The decision to pursue LEED certification was a natural outflow of the values of the LDS faith. CCRI Director of Architecture and Engineering Bill Williams says long

term sustainability is central to the project. "As you look at the tenets of our religion, there is a notion that we must be good stewards in all that we do," explains Williams. "It is our hope that this project will be prosperous, while standing true to our values of wise stewardship and giving back to the community."

Williams and the CCRI designers hope this project will be a catalyst for further neighborhood redevelopment, noting that it allows residents and visitors to celebrate the unique natural beauty and rich history of Salt Lake City. City Creek Center is slated to be completed in 2012.

DIVERSE PATHS OF WISDOM TOWARD AN EARTH RESTORED

VERMONT

EAST MIDDLEBURY, VT

Spirit in Nature (SpIN) Interfaith Path Sanctuary is a unique natural sanctuary that seeks to bring people of diverse spiritual traditions together to contemplate how deeply connected all faiths are to nature. In turn, the founders hope that this reflection and dialogue will “promote education and action toward better stewardship of this sacred earth.”

The sanctuary consists of a network of ten interconnecting walking paths, representing ten different faiths including the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Quaker, Unitarian Universalist and Interfaith traditions. Each path is one-half to two miles long and includes posted spiritual reflections on nature. The paths meet at a circle, emphasizing the interconnections of all spiritual traditions, humanity and the earth. The sanctuary also hosts educational programs, creative art activities, public lectures and guided walks.



Dan Shea

HABITAT RESTORATION AND A GIVING GARDEN

VIRGINIA

STERLING, VA

With the declaration that “because we worship and honor the Creator, we seek to cherish and care for His Creation,” the Community Lutheran Church of Sterling, Virginia, established an Earthkeeping Ministry (EKM) in 1994.



The EKM created a wildlife restoration and environmental education project called the Hedgerow Habitat Trail. The trail seeks to demonstrate stewardship of the environment and provide opportunities for recreational and spiritual reflection. The trail is open to the community for educational purposes and has been the site of numerous service projects.

The EKM also runs Community Lutheran Church’s Giving Garden, which provides organic produce to local low-income families. Each spring, Sunday school classes plant the garden and it is maintained and harvested by church volunteers.

EKM volunteers are now in the midst of creating a Memorial Garden to serve as a space for remembrance, reflection and meditation. The Memorial Garden will be composed of native plants, and renewable or recycled materials will be used for the structural features in the garden.

Volunteers and members of the EKM attend monthly work days to maintain the Hedgerow Habitat Trail and two gardens and to work on other environmental initiatives. To inspire others, the EKM also provides eco-friendly tips in the weekly church newsletter and maintains a bulletin board in the church lobby with information on environmental stewardship, educational and volunteer opportunities, and environmental campaigns.



A CUP OF JUSTICE IN THE CITY OF COFFEE

SEATTLE, WA

Sunday morning coffee hour is a weekly highlight for the members of University Lutheran Church in Seattle, but the hot coffee and fellowship aren't the only things that make this gathering special. The church is proud to support farmers and the environment by serving and promoting fairly-traded and sustainably-grown coffee.

Many coffee-growing regions are experiencing widespread poverty and environmental degradation. In conventional coffee trading practices, many small farmers don't get a fair price for their coffee beans. Their wages often do not even cover basic living expenses, which prompts farmers to pile on the pesticides and overwork the land in efforts to yield larger crops. Fair Trade certified products ensure that farmers are paid a fair wage, helping to stabilize communities and promote environmentally friendly farming practices. Today, Fair Trade benefits over 800,000 farmers in 48 countries.

University Lutheran serves Equal Exchange coffee. Equal Exchange's Interfaith Program partners with congregations



and faith-based organizations to educate people about Fair Trade and provide fairly traded products. The Sunday coffee hour isn't the only time congregants can enjoy a hot cup of fair coffee, either, University Lutheran also sells the Equal Exchange coffee, tea and cocoa out of the church office.

Aside from Fair Trade coffee, the church is engaged in a number of environmental initiatives including recycling, sustainable landscaping, greening the church building, and advocating for clean, renewable energy. University Lutheran Church is a member of Earth Ministry, a Seattle-based

Christian ministry that works with hundreds of congregations to advocate for environmental issues. The Earth Ministry website asks: "Who are these good people, and why do they do what they do?" In their own words, "We are young and old. We are multi-racial. We strive to be faithful stewards of God's creation, to care for our neighbors, and to work for justice and peace in our community and in the world."



CHRISTIANS FOR THE MOUNTAINS

DUNMORE, WV

"The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world, and all that lives upon it." (Psalm 24:1) That's a core principle of Christians for the Mountains, a grassroots network of Christians who fight mountaintop removal mining in the Southern Appalachia Mountains.

In places like Appalachia, mining companies blow the tops off mountains to reach a thin seam of coal and then, to minimize waste disposal costs, dump millions of tons of waste rock into the valleys below, causing permanent damage to the ecosystem and local communities.

This destructive practice, known as mountaintop removal mining, has damaged or destroyed approximately 1,200 miles of streams, destroyed forests on some 300 square miles of land, contaminated drinking water supplies, flooded communities, and devastated wildlife habitat.

Christians for the Mountains works to fight mountaintop removal by raising awareness about the problem in conversations with religious leaders across America. They organize flyovers of mountaintop removal mine sites so that religious leaders can see the devastation up close. They also provide a DVD that tells the stories of the individuals, families and communities who are harmed by mountaintop removal mining.



Christians for the Mountains calls on Christians to speak out against mountaintop removal mining and other ecologically destructive practices, and to restore and care for the earth we all cherish.

ISLAMIC GROUP UNITES FAITHS TO HELP ENVIRONMENT

WISCONSIN

WEST BEND, WI

“It is He (God) who has made you His viceroys on earth” (The Qur’an, 6:165). Inspired by this passage, the Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin (IEGW) shares Islamic environmental teachings with its members, the larger Muslim community and the general public. They work to apply teachings to daily life and to form coalitions with interfaith environmental organizations in Wisconsin in order to create a more just and sustainable future.



Journal Sentinel/Went-Graff

IEGW completed a successful energy awareness campaign in the fall of 2007. Partnering with the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign (WICEC), the IEGW helped organize Interfaith Energy Awareness Month, which garnered more than 100 pledges to use energy saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Those pledges added up to savings of 84,600 kilowatt hours of energy and prevented 122,700 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, earning the group the distinguished 2007 Energy Star Change a Light Pledge Leader recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

IEGW founder Huda Alkaff said caring for the environment is central to the Islamic faith and is supported by many passages in the Quran and the Hadith. To help spread the message, Alkaff said she regularly meets with the imams from many different mosques and encourages them to share the connection between Islam and caring for the earth.

“They’ve been very receptive and willing to do it,” said Alkaff. “The earth is mentioned more than 450 times in the Qur’an. I formed [IEGW] to bridge the gap between the practice and the belief.”

The 2007 energy awareness initiative is just one example of IEGW’s work. The organization also holds free workshops for Muslims where participating individuals and families learn ways to apply the Islamic environmental and stewardship teachings to their daily lives, reduce waste, conserve energy and water, eat healthier foods and build a stronger sense of community. The organization also participated in the 2007 fourth annual Wisconsin Interfaith Earth Month.

“It’s great to work with the interfaith community,” Alkaff explained. “It gives me strength, as we all face the same things. We just keep on encouraging each other.”

WALKING TOGETHER ON SACRED GROUND

WYOMING

CODY, WY

In early 2007, the Rev. Warren Murphy, director of the Wyoming Association of Churches, was growing more and more concerned about environmental degradation. Rev. Murphy knew that the religious community in Wyoming had a lot to offer. What he didn’t know was how to overcome the traditional mistrust that kept the faith community and environmental groups from working together. A vision was born; Rev. Murphy decided to bring the two parties together to consider ways they could work together to protect the planet.

Rev. Murphy contacted local environmental organizations to discuss the idea. Remarkably, the Wyoming Conservation Voters Education Fund had just received a grant to work with faith groups. Together, they planned a 3-day retreat and invited religious leaders and representatives from local environmental groups.

The response was phenomenal and representatives from a variety of religious denominations and environmental organizations participated, including the Sierra Club Wyoming Chapter. Aware of stereotypes held by each community, Rev. Murphy was interested to see how the conversation would progress.



Jason Marsden

The participants quickly realized that they had a lot in common. Many of the environmentalists were people of faith and several of the religious leaders were engaged in environmental initiatives. “By the end of the weekend you couldn’t tell who was from which community,” reported Rev. Murphy. The participants realized the incredible potential of working together to combat environmental degradation.

Out of the retreat an idea was born and in September 2007, local faith groups and environmental organizations co-sponsored a conference entitled “On Sacred Ground: Faith and the Environment.” With the mission of “protecting the earth that God has given us,” the event was the first effort in Wyoming to involve people of faith in environmental initiatives. The conference was a resounding success, with over 200 participants discussing everything from habitat loss to the social justice implications of global climate change.

Taking home what they learned, participants from at least six cities in Wyoming are actively continuing “On Sacred Ground” activities in the form of local affinity groups that bring together faith communities and local environmental organizations to address environmental issues. Wyoming’s success demonstrates the value of working together to protect the planet.



NATIONAL RESOURCES

A Rocha USA

P.O. Box 1338, Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830.992.7940 • www.en.arocha.org/usa/

Blessed Earth

www.servegodsavetheplanet.org • contact@servegodsavetheplanet.org

Canfei Nesharim

111 Eighth Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10011
info@canfeinesharim.org • www.canfeinesharim.org

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

116 East 27th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY, 10016
212.532.7436 • www.coejl.org

Earth Sangha

10123 Commonwealth Blvd., Fairfax, VA, 22032
703.764.4830 • www.earthsangha.org

ENERGY STAR for Congregations US EPA, Climate Protection Partnerships

1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC, 20460
888.782.7937
www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations

Evangelical Environmental Network

4485 Tench Road, Suite 850, Suwanee, GA, 30024
678.541.0747 • www.creationcare.org

Floresta

4903 Morena Blvd, Suite 1215, San Diego, CA, 92117
800.633.5319 • www.Floresta.org

Forum on Religion and Ecology (Yale Divinity School)

Bellamy Hall, 638, 354 Canner Street, New Haven, CT, 06511
203.432.9947 • <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion>

Indigenous Environmental Network

P.O. Box 485, Bemidji, MN, 56619
218.751.4967 • www.ienearth.org

The Interfaith Power and Light Campaign and The Regeneration Project

220 Montgomery Street, Suite 450, San Francisco, CA, 94104
415.561.4891 • www.theregenerationproject.org

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences

93 Court Road, West Midlands, Birmingham, England, B12 9LQ
44 (0)121 440 3500 • www.ifees.org

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50310
info@ncrlc.com • 515-270-2634

National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Programs

110 Maryland Ave. NE, Suite 108, Washington, DC, 20002
202.544.2350 • www.nccecojustice.org

National Religious Partnership for the Environment

49 South Pleasant Street, Suite 301, Amherst, MA, 01002
413.253.1515 • www.nrpe.org

Presbyterians for Restoring Creation

P.O. Box 2855, San Anselmo, CA, 94979
415.451.2826 • www.prcweb.org

Restoring Eden

P.O. Box 877, La Center, WA, 98629
360.574.8230 • www.restoringeden.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Environmental Justice Program

3211 4th Street NE, Washington, DC, 20017
202.541.3000 • www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth

P.O. Box 11, Lyme, NH, 03768
503.595.9392 • <http://uuministryforearth.org>

Web of Creation and The Green Seminary Initiative

www.webofcreation.org

*For a complete listing of national resources please visit:
www.sierraclub.org/partnerships/faith*



REGIONAL RESOURCES

ALASKA

Episcopal Diocese of Alaska

1205 Denali Way, Fairbanks, AK, 99701
907.452.3040 • <http://home.gci.net/~episcopalak/>

Alaska Interfaith Power and Light

1830 East Parks Hwy., Ste. A-113; PMB #351, Wasilla, AK, 99654
paul@akipl.org • 907.982.1231 • www.akipl.org

ALABAMA

Camp McDowell Environmental Center

105 DeLong Road, Nauvoo, AL, 35578
Maggie@campmcdowell.com • 205.387.1806
www.campmcdowell.com/cmec/index.htm

Faith Apostolic Church

2001 Cleburn Ave. SW, Birmingham, AL, 35211
205.925.6098

ARIZONA

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church

3809 E. Third Street Tucson, AZ, 85716
stutaylor@mindspring.com • 520.325.1001
www.stmarkspresbyterian.org

ARKANSAS

Camp Mitchell

10 Camp Mitchell Road, Morrilton, AR, 72110
campmitchell@gmail.com • 501.727.5451 • www.campmitchell.org

CALIFORNIA

California Interfaith Power and Light

220 Montgomery Street, Suite 450, San Francisco, CA, 94104
susan@theregenerationproject.org • 415.391.4214
www.interfaithpower.org

Sierra Club Caring for Creation Program

3435 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 660, Los Angeles, CA, 90010
juana.torres@sierraclub.org • 213.387.6528 x 226
www.sierraclub.org/ca/socalforests/people_of_faith.asp



COLORADO

Catholic Diocese of Pueblo

1001 N. Grand Avenue, Pueblo, CO, 81003
 info@dioceseofpueblo.com • 719.544.9861
 www.dioceseofpueblo.com/

Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs

228 N. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO, 80903
 info@diocs.org • 719.636.2345 • www.diocs.org/

CONNECTICUT

Buddha Gaia

Middletown, CT • buddha.gaia@hotmail.com • 860.759.4975
 http://buddhagaia.bffct.net/

Connecticut Interfaith Power & Light

484 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT, 06105
 info@irejn.org • 860.231.8554 • http://ctipl.org

DELAWARE

Coalition for Climate Change Study and Action

Wilmington, DE • chadtolman@comcast.net • 302.478.3516

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Friends Committee on National Legislation

245 Second Street NE, Washington, DC, 20002
 202.547.6000 • www.fcnl.org

Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light

4500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20016
 allison@gwipl.org • 202.885.8684 • www.gwipl.org

FLORIDA

Faiths United for Sustainable Energy

Woldenberg Center, 4144 Chase Ave, Miami Beach, FL, 33140
 FUSE@FUSENOW.org • 877.775.3873 • www.fusenow.org

Fund for Christian Ecology

P.O. Box 12921, Gainesville, FL, 32604
 240.266.5673 • www.christianecology.org

Northland A Church Distributed

530 Dog Track Road, Longwood, FL, 32750
 info@northlandchurch.net • 407.949.4000
 www.northlandchurch.net

GEORGIA

Earth Covenant Ministry

P.O. Box 5404, Atlanta, Georgia 31107
 404.270.9784 • www.earthcovenant.net

Georgia Interfaith Power and Light

P.O. Box 5866, Atlanta, GA, 31107
 info@gipl.org • 404.588.9978 • www.gipl.org

Peachtree Baptist Church

2108 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, GA, 30329
 404.634.2463 • www.peachtreebaptist.net

HAWAII

Church of the Crossroads

1212 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96826
 ccrhi@hawaii.rr.com • 808.949.2220
 http://churchofthecrossroadshawaii.org

Hawaii Interfaith Power and Light

kahubt@hawaii.rr.com

IDAHO

Vineyard Boise

4950 N. Bradley, Boise, ID, 83714
 admin@letstendthegarden.org • 208.377.1477
 www.letstendthegarden.org

ILLINOIS

Faith In Place

2532 W. Warren Blvd., Chicago, IL, 60612
 info@faithinplace.org • 312.733.4640 • www.faithinplace.org

INDIANA

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

100 W. 86th Street, Indianapolis, IN, 46260
 brandtb@stlukesumc.com • 317.846.3404 x 339
 www.stlukesumc.com

IOWA

Iowa Interfaith Power and Light

iowaip@gmail.com • 515.270.2634 ext. 16
 www.ncrlc.com/cool_congregations.html

St. Luke's Episcopal Church,

2410 Melrose Drive, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613
 st.lukes@cfu.net • 319.277.8520 • www.st-lukes-episcopal.org

KANSAS

Village Presbyterian Church

6641 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS, 66208
 dwight.tawney@villagepres.org • 913.262.4200 • www.villagepres.org

KENTUCKY

Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center

8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY, 42356
 astenger@maplemount.org • 270.229.0200 • www.mscenter.org

Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light

P.O. Box 5084, Louisville, KY, 40205
 timdarst@aye.net • 502.458.3268 • www.kentuckyipl.org

LOUISIANA

Mary Queen of Viet nam Church

14001 Dwyer Blvd., New Orleans, LA, 70129
 vinhtran@maryqueenofvietnam.org • 504.254.5660
 www.maryqueenofvietnam.org

MAINE

First Universalist Church in Rockland

345 Broadway, Rockland, ME, 04841
 mail@uurockland.org • 207.594.8750 • www.uurockland.org

Maine Interfaith Power and Light

P.O. Box 4834, Portland, ME, 04112
 info@meipl.org • 207.721.0444 • www.meipl.org

MARYLAND

Pearlstone Conference & Retreat Center

5425 Mt. Gilead Road, Reisterstown, MD, 21136
 dickgoldman@pearlstonecenter.org • 410.429.4400 x 203
 www.pearlstonecenter.org

MASSACHUSETTS

Religious Witness for the Earth

P.O. Box 642, Littleton, MA, 01460
 rwe@religiouswitness.org • www.religiouswitness.org

Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light

1773 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA, 02445
 MIPandL@MIPandL.org • 800.406.5374 • www.mipandl.org



REGIONAL RESOURCES

MICHIGAN

Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies
3770 Lake Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546
616.526.9952 • www.ausable.org

Michigan Catholic Rural Life Coalition
7552 N. Luce Road, Alma, MI, 48801
director@michigancatholicrallife.org • 989.466.9322
www.michigancatholicrallife.org

Michigan Interfaith Power and Light
138 Goodell, Wyandotte, MI, 48192
info@miipl.org • 877.475.6424 • www.miipl.org

MINNESOTA

Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, Office for Social Justice
328 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN, 55102
skuta@juno.com • 651.470.7572
www.osjspm.org/globalwarming.aspx

**Congregations Caring for Creation:
MN Interfaith Power and Light**
651.646.4096 • www.c3mn.net

Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota (MN)
105 University Avenue West, Saint Paul, MN 55103
651.224.5499 • <http://lutherancoalitionforpublicpolicyinminnesota.memberlogde.org/>

MISSISSIPPI

Jesus People Against Pollution
P.O. Box 765, Columbia, MS, 39429
keysjap@aol.com • 601.736.7099 • <http://www.jpap.org/>

MISSOURI

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Kansas City, Missouri
4501 Walnut Street, Kansas City, MO, 64111
office@allsoulskc.org • 816.531.2131 • www.allsoulskc.org

MONTANA

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Univ. of Montana
538 University Ave., Missoula, MT, 59801
lcum@bigsky.net • 406.549.7821 • www.montanalcum.org

NEBRASKA

The Big Garden Project
Omaha, NE • 402.898-9862 • www.gardenbig.org

NEVADA

First Presbyterian Church
1559 Sewell Drive, Elko, NV, 89801
Pastorpat11616@frontiernet.net • 775.738.3430 • www.elkofirstpres.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE

First Congregational Church of Nashua
1 Concord Street, Nashua, NH, 03064
senglander@firstchurchnashua.org • 603.882.4861
www.firstchurchnashua.org

NEW JERSEY

GreenFaith
46 Bayard Street, Suite 401, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901
info@greenfaith.org • 732.565.7740 • www.greenfaith.org

NEW MEXICO

Holy Rosary Catholic Church
5415 Fortuna Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM, 87105
Donedward8308@yahoo.com • 505.836.5011

New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
P.O. Box 27162, Albuquerque, NM, 87125
info@nm-ipl.org • www.nm-ipl.org

NEW YORK

Hazon
45 West 36th Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY, 10018
info@hazon.org • 212.644.2332 • www.hazon.org

New York Interfaith Power and Light
ebennet1@nycap.rr.com • www.nyipl.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Watts Street Baptist Church
800 Watts Street, Durham, NC, 27701
contact@wattsstreet.org • 919.688.1366 • www.wattsstreet.org

North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light
1307 Glenwood Ave., Suite 156, Raleigh, NC, 27605
info@ncipl.org • 919.828.6501 • www.ncipl.org

NORTH DAKOTA

Prairie Stewardship Network
9195 70th Avenue SE, Ashley, ND, 58413
psn@praiestewardship.org • 701.647.2532
www.praiestewardship.org

OHIO

Marianist Environmental Education Center
4435 East Patterson Road, Dayton, OH, 45430
meecc@udayton.edu • 937.429.3582 • <http://meecc.udayton.edu/>

OKLAHOMA

First United Methodist Church of Skiatook, Oklahoma
1007 South Osage, Skiatook, OK, 74070
info@skiatookumc.org • 918.396.2519 • www.skiatookumc.org

OREGON

Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
0245 SW Bancroft Street, Portland, OR, 97239
emo@emoregon.org • 503.221.1054 x 214
www.emoregon.org/earth_concerns.php

PENNSYLVANIA

Eastern University
1300 Eagle Road, St. Davids, PA, 19087
lolson@eastern.edu • 610.341.5800 • www.eastern.edu

Interfaith Coalition on Energy
7217 Oak Ave., Melrose Park, PA, 19027
215.635.1122 • www.interfaithenergy.com

PUERTO RICO

Alianza Comunitaria y Ambiental en Accion Solidaria (ACAAS)
Parroquia Nuestra Sra. De la Providencia, Caguas, PR, 00725
alianzacomunitaria@gmail.com • 787.743.8200
<http://alianzacomunitaria.com/alianza/>

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Interfaith Power and Light
230 Lantern Lane East, North Kingstown, RI, 2852
info@riipl.org • 401.267.0029 • www.riipl.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Circular Congregational Church
150 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC, 29401
circularchurch@bellsouth.net • 843.577.6400
www.circularchurch.org

SOUTH DAKOTA

Borderlands Ranch
23120 S. Rochford Road, Hill City, SD, 57745
Linda@borderlandsranch.org • 605.574.4746
www.borderlandsranch.org



TENNESSEE

Christ Church Cathedral

900 Broadway, Nashville, TN, 37203
 joycewilding@comcast.net • 615.255.7729
www.christcathedral.org/environmentalgroup.html

EarthCare

EarthCare, Inc. P.O. Box 23291, Chattanooga, TN 37422
 mail@earthcareonline.org • 706.278.3979 • www.earthcareonline.org

Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light

Knoxville, TN • glenda@tn-ipl.org • www.tn-ipl.org

TEXAS

Christian Life Commission

333 North Washington, Dallas, TX, 75246
clc@bgct.org • 214.828.5190 • www.bgct.org/CLC

Texas Interfaith Power and Light

221 East 9th Street, # 403, Austin, TX, 78701
bee@texasimpact.org • 512.472.3903 • <http://txipl.org>

UTAH

City Creek Center

15 E South Temple Street, Suite 800, Salt Lake City, UT, 84150
info@citycreekcenter.com • 866.554.5588
http://www.downtownrising.com/city_creek/

VERMONT

Quaker Earthcare Witness

173-B N. Prospect Street, Burlington, VT, 05401
 802.658.0308 • www.quakerearthcare.org

Spirit in Nature

P.O. Box 255, East Middlebury, VT, 05740
cspooner@sover.net • 802.388.3694 • www.spiritinnature.com

Vermont Interfaith Power and Light

P.O. Box 728, Richmond, VT, 05477
info@vtipl.org • 802.434.7307 • www.vtipl.org

VIRGINIA

Community Lutheran Church

21014 Whitfield Pl., Sterling, VA, 20165
earthkeeping@communitylutheran.org • 703.430.6006
www.communitylutheran.org

Virginia Interfaith Power & Light

P.O. Box 12516, Richmond, VA, 23241
pat@virginiainterfaithcenter.org • 804.643.2474 • www.vipl.org

WASHINGTON

Earth Ministry

6512 23rd Ave NW, Ste 317, Seattle, WA, 98117
 206.632.2426 • www.earthministry.org

University Lutheran Church

1604 NE 50th Street, Seattle, WA, 98105
pastorron@comcast.net • 206.525.7074 • www.ulcseattle.org

WEST VIRGINIA

Christians for the Mountains

Rt. 1 Box 119-B, Dunmore, WV, 24934
information@christiansforthemountains.org • 304.799.4137
www.christiansforthemountains.org/

WISCONSIN

Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin

P.O. Box 1021, West Bend, WI, 53095-1021
interfaith.earth@yahoo.com

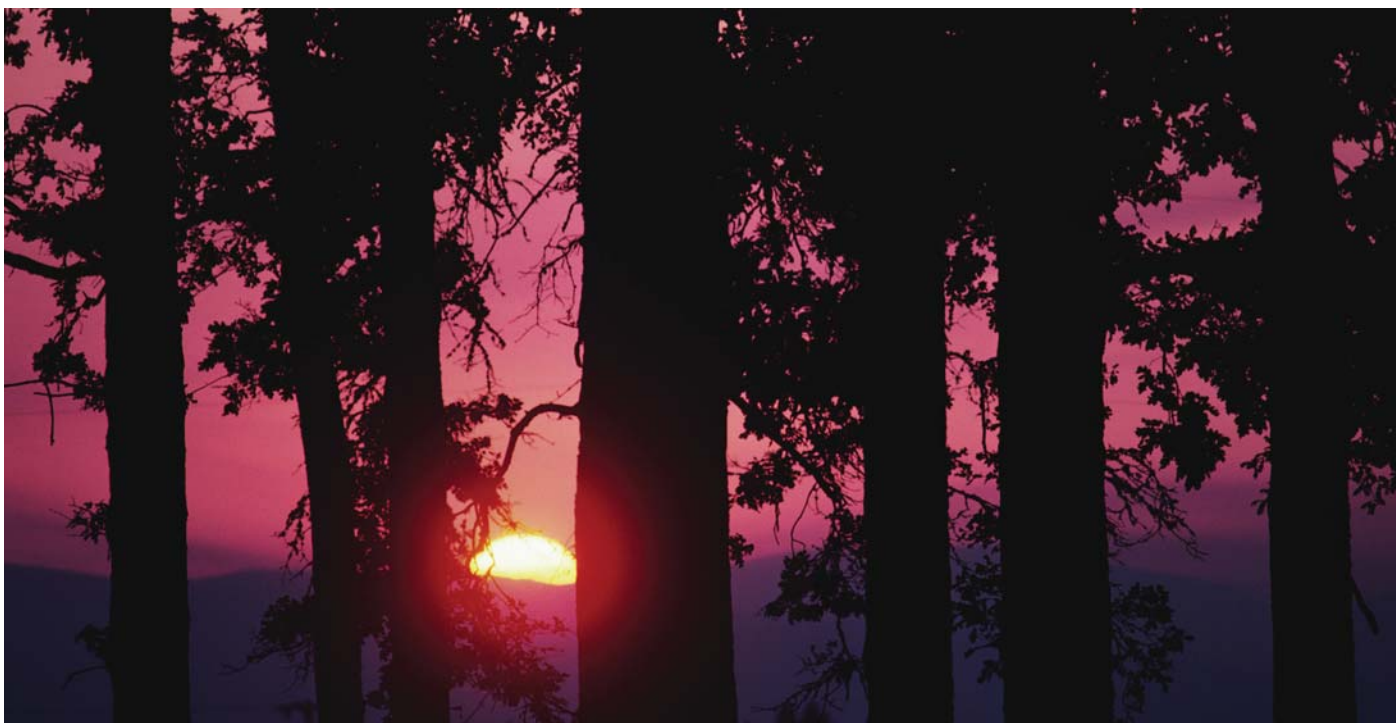
Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign

4032 Monona Drive, Madison, WI 53716
info@wicec.org • 608.222.7339 • www.wicec.org

WYOMING

The Wyoming Association of Churches

1131 13th Street, Suite 210, Cody, WY, 82414
Wychurches@wyoming.com • 866.527.7026
www.wyomingassociationofchurches.org





NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: (415) 977-5500
Fax: (415) 977-5799

NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS OFFICE

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Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 547-1141
Fax: (202) 547-6009

For more information:
www.sierraclub.org/partnerships/faith