

Dear Colleague,

Greetings to you during this season of Advent and winter! Although these are challenging times, we hope that resources like *Earth Notes* will help you to know how much we value and strive to support your congregational work.

We are pleased to announce a new support for your work in 2003: a series of five, **Greening Congregations Workshops** that will begin on Saturday, February 8. Each workshop will begin with an introduction to the Greening Congregations process. Then participants will gain practical resources for greening a specific dimension of congregational life (e.g., worship, grounds care, green building, education, etc.). Each of the five workshops will focus on a different dimension, based on results from the enclosed "Survey for Greening Congregations Workshops in 2003." Please take the time to fill out and return this survey so that we can tailor the workshops to meet your needs and interests. Each workshop will feature Colleagues, and other resource people from local churches and the broader community, who have experience in working on specific dimensions.

Enclosed in this mailing, you'll also find a copy of the "Colleague Sharing" – the notes from the Colleague Consultation that took place this past October. The Consultation was a very enriching experience for us – we are encouraged by your work and the depth to which your own "callings" are reflected in this work.

Peace be with you this Christmas and always,

Nancy & Tanya



Events for Colleagues and Congregations

Sunday, December 8: "Crisis as Opportunity: An evolutionary leap for humanity" an evening with Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris. 7-9 p.m.; Unity Center of Tacoma; 2102 S 23rd St., Tacoma; \$15. Elisabet Sahtouris is an evolution biologist and author. Through an artistic and moving multimedia presentation, Dr. Sahtouris will discuss how nature evolves in intelligent response to crises and how humanity follows suit. Hosted by Tacoma Unity Center – congregation of Colleague Rev. Deborah Olive. Call (253) 383 -2684 for more information and tickets.

Saturday, January 11: Living as if it Mattered – A Joyful Day on Simplicity, Spirituality, and Sustainability. 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.; St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, 910 Bowker St. SE, Lacey, WA; \$18 (includes the book, *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life* and lunch of soup and bread). We will reflect on the spirituality of simplicity and listen to various "calls": a call to greater equity and compassion and to a richer quality of life, and the actions that embody these goals. The workshop will be led by Earth Ministry's Mike Schut. Hosted by St. Benedict's – congregation of Colleagues Rev. Joan Anthony and Lee Irving. For a registration form, contact Earth Ministry using the information below.

Thursday, January 16: Farewell Gathering for Rev. Nancy Wright. 6:30-8 p.m., St. Mary's Convent, 1663 Killarney Way, Bellevue. Please come to this "open house" reception to celebrate Nancy's time with Earth Ministry, say farewell, and bless her in her ongoing ministry. For directions, please watch for January's *Monthly Update*.

Saturday, January 25: Reflection and Restoration along the Duwamish River (Seattle) and Mud Bay (Olympia). Both events: 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Please **RSVP** and we'll send you directions. We'll join with People for Puget Sound to remove invasive plants (Duwamish) and salvage native plants (Mud Bay). Both events will begin with lunch (please bring your own) and a time of reflection. Youth (over the age of 12) and youth groups are welcome.

Saturday, February 8: Greening Congregations Workshop (location and times TBA). This practical workshop will be divided into two parts: an overview of the Greening Congregations Process, and a session devoted specifically to "greening" congregational worship. We especially encourage members of liturgy and worship committees, and all who have a hand in designing worship, to attend. Please watch for our *Monthly Update* and *Earth Notes* for details.

Saturday, March 1: "Food & Faith: Joy, Justice, and Daily Bread" event. 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; Pacific Lutheran University, \$25; to register, contact Judith Jones at (253) 383-3056, x120; channel@associatedministries.org. As part of Associated Ministry's CommUniversity series, Mike Schut will facilitate the discussion of the industrialization of agriculture, sharing of practical steps individuals and communities can take to create greater sustainability, and reflection on the spirituality and sacramentality of food. The workshop will serve as an introduction to the recently published *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy, and Daily Bread*, an excellent resource for individual and congregational use.

Saturday, March 8: Colleague Consultation and Greening Congregations Workshop (location and times TBA). Our biannual time of sharing and learning with fellow Colleagues will be followed by a Greening Congregations Workshop. The focus of the workshop will be determined by the surveys that we receive from Colleagues – so please fill out the enclosed survey to let us know your preferences. Please watch *Earth Notes* for further details.



Highlighted Resource

The 2002 version of *"Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?: Ideas for a Christ-centered Holiday,"* produced by/available through Alternatives for Simple Living, (800) 821 -6153, www.SimpleLiving.org, \$3. An insightful booklet that helps families plan and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. Contains many helpful resources (e.g., reflections, stories, a calendar, ceremonies, alternative giving information, etc.) for more meaningful and responsible Christmas giving.

News from Congregations

You will find many stories and practical tips in the accompanying **Colleague Sharing** Here are a few from other Colleagues.

- Colleague Lara Nachiem and the hard-working Christian Ecology group at University Presbyterian (Seattle) hosted a conference – “Caring for Creation: A Biblical Perspective” – on Saturday, October 5th. About 100 people attended this event, which highlighted the nationally known environmental theologians Dr. Loren Wilkinson and Dr. Calvin B. DeWitt. Workshops were held on a variety of topics: simpler living, raising environmentally conscious kids, recycling and conservation, “green” lawn and garden care, climate change, biotechnology and our environment, and social and environmental justice.
- Colleagues Kirk Anderson and Kathy Dawson (along with Nancy Wright) gave a three-person, creation-care sermon at the October 20th worship service Pilgrim Church/First Christian Church in Seattle. Kirk also gave the children’s sermon and focused on the miracle of salmon returning home.
- Colleague Elaine Somers, from St. Mary of the Valley Roman Catholic in Monroe, is looking for other Colleagues in her area who might like to work together to plan/host a creation-care event

We warmly welcome our new Colleagues:

Patty Bowman, St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral, Seattle
Cynthia Figge, Sammamish UCC, Issaquah
Lois Harrison, Richmond Beach UCC, Shoreline
Lorraine Hartmann and Nancy Kachel, Our Lady of the Lake Roman Catholic, Seattle
James and Beth Hood, St. Louise Roman Catholic, Bellevue
Sabrina Porter, Seattle Mennonite, Seattle
Susie Keith, University Lutheran, Seattle
Cindy Klein, Christ the Servant Lutheran, Bellingham
Margaret Sched, St. George Episcopal, Maple Valley
Henning Sehmsdorf, Lutheran Church in the San Juans, Lopez Island
Michael Szerlog, Suquamish Congregational, Suquamish
Wesley and Joyce Veatch, First Christian (Disciples of Christ), Seattle

May your work and vision be richly blessed!

Eco-tip

“**The Big Love Gift Guide**” (www.barkingowl.com/cc) encourages site visitors to “think about gifts that show what a big heart you have – that bring us back together and don’t cost the earth.” Here are some of their wonderful gift ideas:

- Breakfast in bed every Sunday for a month!
- Your undivided attention for a whole hour to do anything the other person wishes!!
- Babysitting vouchers.
- Plan a treasure hunt with treasure map.
- Plant a tree.
- Donate in the name of a loved one. For example, Alternative Gifts offers a wide array of gifts in the name of your friend or relative such as International Medical Assistance, Hurricane Mitch Relief, Literacy Training in Senegal, Conflict Resolution in Bethlehem, or Adopt-A-Reef in Indonesia. Contact Alternative Gifts at 1-800-842-2243, P.O. Box 2267, Lucerne Valley, CA 92356, altgifts@worldnet.att.net or www.altgifts.org.

For more creative ideas, go to www.newdream.org/holiday.



Litany/Prayer

An Advent Call to Worship

from Hildegard of Bingen (c. 1098-1179)

God is the foundation for everything.

This God undertakes, God gives, such that nothing that is necessary for life is lacking.

The earth is at the same time mother, she is mother of all that is natural, mother of all this is human.

She is the mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all.

The earth ... contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power.

It is in so many ways fruitful.

All creation comes from it. Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind, but also the substance of the incarnation of God’s son.



Action Alert

“Driven by Values: Protecting God’s Creation” campaign

The Interfaith Climate Change Network (National Council of Churches of Christ and the Coalition on Jewish Life and the Environment) is currently promoting this campaign encouraging all people of faith to contact the CEOs of our largest auto makers (Ford, GM, and Chrysler) and “let them know that you care for God’s creation and want them to make cars that are good for the environment and the economy.”

To send a simple, powerful message to these CEOs, go to www.protectingcreation.org. Please consider asking members of your congregation to do so as well.

May the blessing of light be on you, light without and light within ... And may the light shine out of the two eyes of you, like a candle set in the two windows of a house, bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm; and may the blessings of rain be on you – the soft, sweet rain. – Traditional Irish Blessing