

Earth Notes

A Newsletter for Earth Ministry Colleagues

February 2002

Dear Colleague,

At this time of year, congregations that follow the Christian liturgical calendar dress their sanctuaries in green (banners, altar cloths, etc.). This calendar period is called “ordinary time,” and it’s set aside for personal and congregational growth. The color green can also serve as a visual reminder of our common desire to see congregations grow “greener” – that is, to stretch their circles of compassion to encompass all of God’s creation, especially the most vulnerable parts.

This coming week, on **Saturday, February 16**, we will come together for another **Colleague Consultation** to focus on what “sustainable greening” might look like in congregations. Colleagues who have been cultivating “greening” within their congregations for many years, will share their personal experiences (the “ebbs and flows”) and help us all to do the same. Nancy will give a brief presentation on the theology/spirituality behind sustainable congregational greening, and Tanya will walk us through recent revisions to the Greening Congregations process. Anyone considering this process should know about these revisions; so if you can’t attend the Consultation, please contact us for an update. As usual, we will also have times for reflection and lively sharing among Colleagues, as well as learning about resources for Earth Day. We hope that you will join us.

In this mailing you will also find a recent list of your fellow Colleagues. We hope that you will contact other Colleagues – in your region or denomination – as you feel inspired to do so.

God’s Blessings,

Tanya Marcovna Barnett & Nancy Wright

Events for Colleagues and Congregations

Tuesday, February 12: Troubled Waters: Can We Hear and Respond to the Voice of the Salmon? 7 – 8:30 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church (congregation of Colleague Suzanne Gordon), 6512 23rd Ave. NW, Seattle (in Ballard). This evening (cosponsored with other nonprofits) will help us to understand the reasons for the steep decline in Northwest salmon populations, ways that we can respond, and ethical and spiritual dimensions of the issues. RSVP to Earth Ministry.

Thursday, February 14: Citizens’ Lobby Day. Olympia, meet at United Churches of Olympia (congregation of Colleagues Rae Verhoef and Yvonne Wilhelmson), 110 E. 11th St. Sponsored by local environmental groups, advocates will address transportation, water protection, and opposition to cuts in environmental protection. For more information, and to RSVP, contact Rachael Straz at People for Puget Sound, (206) 382-7007 or rstrasz@pugetsound.org.

Saturday, February 16: Colleague Consultation. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. St. Mark’s Cathedral (congregation of Colleagues Ruth Mulligan and Chris Christensen), 1245 10th Ave. E, Seattle. Our biannual time of sharing and learning with fellow Colleagues. Please see the opposite column for more details; directions to St. Mark’s on the next page. **To RSVP and to carpool**, contact Earth Ministry.

Saturday, March 9: Living As if It Mattered: A Joyful Day on Simplicity, Spirituality, and Sustainability. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. University Congregational United Church of Christ (congregation of Colleagues Kate Nelson, Susan Cook, and Liz Gilbert), 4515 16th NE, Seattle (in the University District). Michael Schut, from Earth Ministry, and Cassandra Carmichael, from the Center for a New American Dream, will lead this interactive, practical workshop. Learn about tools for simplicity and sustainability for yourself and your congregation. For more information and to RSVP, contact Earth Ministry.

Highlighted Resources

- ***The 2002 National Council of Churches of Christ’s Earth Day Sunday Resource Packet***
The NCCC Eco-Justice Working Group’s resource is entitled “Caring for God’s Creation: Making the World Safe for Children.” It contains a call to worship, prayers, confession, suggested hymns, and other resources aimed at calling attention to those among us who are most vulnerable to ecological pollution: infants and children. You can download this packet from the internet at www.webofcreation.org/ncc/earthday/2002
 - ***The Interfaith Climate Change Network***
The ICCN is an electronic advocacy network on the issue of global climate change that provides members with information and suggestions about what they can do at home, in congregations, by joining others, and through public policy advocacy to protect creation. The network is sponsored by the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and the National Council of Churches of Christ. To join, go to www.protectingcreation.org and click on “Join the Network” to fill out a registration form. You will receive periodic emails containing legislative alerts and other suggestions for responding to climate change. The website itself provides a wealth of resources as well.
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Stories & News from Congregations

Please call, email, or write us to let us know of what’s happening in your congregation. We’d love to share your stories with other Colleagues.

(Stories & News continued ...)

- Lynda Flanagan, a Colleague from St. Leo Roman Catholic Parish in Tacoma, recently wrote that “St. Leo Emergency Services is selling Equal Exchange coffee and tea as part of Seattle Audubon’s Faith-based, Shade-grown Coffee Program.” With money raised from sales of the coffee and tea, the Emergency Services is better able to respond to requests for rent, utilities, prescription medicines, and other basic necessities from those who need them the most. They order about \$500-worth of coffee and tea every three weeks and sell it to between fifteen and fifty parishioners. To learn more about this program, go to www.seattleaudubon.org/Coffee/home.html or call (206) 523-4483.
- Elizabeth Winder Noyes is a Colleague from St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral in Seattle. The Cathedral’s Social Justice and Peace Committee will host “Caring for Creation: Lenten Day of Reflection on the Columbia River Pastoral Letter.” It will take place on Saturday, February 16 in Cathedral Place Hall (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.) with Loretta Jancoski (former dean of the School of Theology and Ministry at SU) as the facilitator. Because it coincides with the Colleague Consultation, we encourage you to go where your heart leads you.
- Sharon Kenyon, a Colleague from Fairwood Community United Methodist in Renton, recently sent this note: The church has been actively appreciating, praising, caring for, restoring and protecting “God’s Creation.” The church has a wonderful church Mission Statement that is a reflection of the congregation, with five objectives that follow. To better reflect who the congregation is and what they do as a congregation the following objective was added, which communicates the congregation’s relationship with God and God’s Creation: Answering God’s call to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it. Fairwood’s latest greening activity was a snowshoe trip at Mt Rainier. Being it was Sunday, a *Wilderness Service* praising God was included.

Welcome! to our new Colleagues:

Jo Baim – Trinity Episcopal Church, Seattle

Susan Cook – University Congregational, United Church of Christ, Seattle

Liz Gilbert – University Congregational, United Church of Christ, Seattle

Karen Sy – Central Lutheran, Seattle

...blessings on your “greening” efforts.

Eco-tip

As mentioned on the previous page, Cassandra Carmichael will join us on March 9. Among the resources she will share with us is the Center for a New American Dream’s “Turn the Tide” program. The following tip comes directly from this program,

found at www.newdream.org/ttooffline. Please join us on March 9 to learn more.

Eat one less beef meal each week.

Meat production is extremely resource-intensive - livestock currently consume 70 percent of America's grain production! Their grazing accounts for 800 million acres (40 percent) of U.S. land, and 18 percent of all water consumption is devoted to producing feed for livestock. Feedlot beef is particularly wasteful. If only 1,000 of us take this action, we will save over 70,000 pounds of grain, 70,000 pounds of topsoil, and 40 million gallons of water each year!

Litany/Prayer

A prayer from St. Basil the Great (329-379)

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom thou givest the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of [humans] with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for thee, and that they love the sweetness of life.

Action Alert

Protect Children and Wildlife from Mercury

Mercury is an extremely toxic substance that can harm human health and wildlife even at very low levels. Fetuses and young children are especially at risk because of their developing nervous systems. In Washington state, Senate Bill 6533 and House Bill 2686 will reduce mercury by banning its use in products such as thermometers, thermostats, and automobiles. These bills will also establish safer, more effective recycling and disposal systems to ensure that mercury is managed properly.

To voice your support for these bills, leave a message for your state senator and representatives at (800) 562-6000. To learn more, and to email a message, go to <http://actionnetwork.org/campaign/NoMercury>.

Directions to the Colleague Consultation at St. Mark’s Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E, Seattle (in Capitol Hill), (206) 323-0300:

- From the South, take I-5 N to Seattle. Take the Olive Way exit (#166) and merge onto Olive Way and continue on it for about ½ mile. When you get to Broadway, turn left. Continue on Broadway, which will turn into 10th (veer right). The Cathedral will be on your left on 10th – come to the south side of the Cathedral and look for signs.
- From the North, take I-5 S to Seattle. Take the Boylston Ave. exit (#168A) towards Roanoke St. Stay straight to go onto Boylston Ave. E. Turn left onto E. Roanoke St. Turn right onto 10th Ave. E and go for just under a mile. The Cathedral will be on your right – come to the south side of the Cathedral and look for signs.
- Buses #7 and #9 run along 10th. For more information, go to <http://transit.metrokc.gov> or call (206) 553-3000.