



ECOFAITH NETWORK NEWS Spring 2018 NEWSLETTER (May 2018)

Happy Spring- At Last!

Welcome to the spring 2018 newsletter of the EcoFaith Network of the NE Minnesota Synod/ELCA.

Touch the Earth Lightly

The words of a favorite Lutheran hymn "Touch the Earth Lightly" (LBW) convey a strong message about creation care and our sacred role as caretakers of God's creation. "Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently, nourish the life of the world in our care. Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender, trust for the children tomorrow will bear." Where do you experience God's love and presence? Many will say in the beauty and wonder of nature—in delicate snowflakes, the sound of the loon calling, the eagle flying overhead, or the glow of the sunset over the lake. Humans were given an enormous responsibility for God's creation as outlined in Genesis 1:26. To paraphrase this common verse, humans were made in God's image and given dominion over the fish of the sea, birds of the air, and over all living creatures and creations. Perhaps the word "dominion" gives a false impression that humans have the right to exploit the earth's resources. Looking further to Genesis 2:15, scripture says God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to "dress it and keep it" which can be interpreted "to serve." Rather than dominate and exploit the earth and its resources, we as humans can glorify God through our services to the earth and care of all of creation—as individuals and as caring, creation-loving congregations.

What is the EcoFaith Network? The EcoFaith Network is a growing network of ELCA Lutheran congregations and their members in northeastern Minnesota with a mission to live out God's call to be stewards of the earth for the sake of the whole creation. Through social media, seminars, resources on current environmental justice issues, project micro-grants and active inter-and intra- congregational conversations, the EcoFaith Network encourages grassroots creation care actions among the Synod's 133 congregations and leadership within their communities.

Now available—EcoFaith Network resources on the Synod website.

Learn more about the EcoFaith Network, grant resources available for congregational and community creation care initiatives, tips on starting a Green Team at your church, and many other resources. [Click here](#) to go to the EcoFaith Network pages.

Summary of March 17, 2018 EcoFaith Summit “Renewing Energy: People, Planet, and Promise”



On March 17, 2018 approximately 45 people representing congregations around the NE MN Synod attended the one day EcoFaith Summit to explore our role as individuals and congregations in promoting the use of renewable energy, its value to the health of our planet, and how God’s faithful promise of redemption of all creation has the power to inspire and renew our purpose as stewards of the earth. J. Drake Hamilton, Science Policy

Director for Fresh Energy, was the keynote speaker bringing a message of hope that Minnesota will be a big part of the solutions necessary to reduce world-wide carbon emissions to help stem the now growing and devastating impacts of global climate change. Various congregations shared their story of how energy conservation has helped their congregations save “green” by going green. For a summary of the Summit presentations and key note address by J. Drake Hamilton, [click here.](#)

Here are some additional renewable energy resources for congregations:

[Energy Star Program for Congregations](#)

[Energy Star Action Workbook for Congregations](#)

[Faith and Clean Energy Congregational Toolkit](#)

[Energy-Themed Worship Mini-Toolkit](#)

Dreaming of a healthier home but not sure where to start?

Use the [Healthy Living Home Guide](#) by Environmental Working Group (EWG) to help find safe alternatives to harmful chemicals that might be lurking in your home. The guide contains tips on 20 different categories of areas of the home where exposure to the chemicals in the air and water can be reduced. EWG also produces the [Dirty Dozen/Clean 15 Shoppers Guide](#) to pesticides in food.

Learn how the warming climate could turn the Boundary Waters into a barren grassland

The iconic Boundary Waters may seem unchangeable and stoic, but humankind's action over time are far too much for nature. Researchers at the University of Minnesota discuss how changes in climate can change, and already are changing, the Boundary Waters. [Read more...](#)

"Like" the EcoFaith Network Facebook Page

As individuals or from your congregational Facebook page, "like" the EcoFaith Network Facebook page to get weekly Green Tips for Sunday bulletins and monthly newsletters; learn about upcoming Creation Care events; and read interesting and current stories of environmental news. See: <https://www.facebook.com/nemnecofaithnetwork/>

Here's a recent Green Tip

Think Twice About Using Chemical Herbicides **IS ROUNDUP A SAFE HERBICIDE?**

Roundup (Glyphosate) was introduced by Monsanto in 1974, as an herbicide (weed killer) that is "as safe as table salt". For about 20 years Roundup was used as a total vegetation killer and it was not used in agriculture because crops were killed by it. But in 1996 Monsanto introduced genetically modified (GMO) crops that are resistant to Roundup. Now many different crops have been genetically engineered to resist Roundup, such as corn, soybeans, and cotton, and Roundup is the most widely used herbicide in U.S. agriculture. Recent testing by non-government labs has found residues of Roundup in many U.S. foods, including honey, oatmeal, eggs, flour, beer and infant formula. The International Agency for Research on Cancer and the State of California recently classified Roundup as a "probable carcinogen" (causes cancer). Currently, the U.S.EPA has no restrictions on Roundup, but there are numerous lawsuits in progress against the EPA and Monsanto, claiming cancer and other health effects from exposure to Roundup.

How is your congregation caring for God's creation?

The EcoFaith Network would like to hear about your creation care initiatives and events. We will share the stories as a model for other congregations and opportunity for networking. Send stories, photos, event notices to ecofaith@nemnsynod.org.

EcoFaith Plastics Quiz (see answers below)

1. How long can it take for a plastic bag to decompose in the ocean?

- a) Up to 5 years
- b) Up to 10 years
- c) Up to 15 years
- d) Up to 20 years

2. How many plastic drinking straws do American use per day?

- a) 1 million
- b) 300 million
- c) 500 million
- d) 5 million

3. How much water is required to produce a plastic water bottle (including the filtered water inside)?

- a) 2X the amount of water in the bottle
- b) 3X the amount of water in the bottle
- c) 5 times the amount of water in the bottle
- d) The same amount of water as in the bottle

To request information or resources from the EcoFaith Network or to be removed from this distribution list, email ecofaith@nemnsynod.org

Answers to Outdoor Trivia: 1) d; up to 20 years. 2) c; 500 million (shocking); 3) b; 3X the amount of water

Reduce plastic use.