



ECOFAITH NETWORK NEWS

Winter 2018 NEWSLETTER (January 9, 2018)

Happy New Year!

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

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. The Network's goal is to be catalyst for encouraging creation care awareness and actions throughout the Synod's 133 congregations.

Now Available—EcoFaith Network on the Synod Website. [Click Here](#)

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.

Save the Date

EcoFaith Summit: Renewing Energy: People, Planet, and Promise
March 17, 2018, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids

Following the successful Watershed Summit of 2017, the EcoFaith Network will host a one-day Summit exploring our role as individuals and congregations in promoting the use of renewable energy, it's value to the health of our planet, and the role renewable energy plays in keeping our promise to God to be stewards of creation. And, learn how congregations in the NE Synod are using renewable energy to meet their energy needs.

The keynote speaker is J. Drake Hamilton, Science Policy Director for Fresh Energy. She is an expert in climate and energy policy at the state and national levels. Her responsibilities include scientific analysis and policy development for clean energy solutions to global warming that will maximize economic opportunities.

Mark Your Calendar Today To Attend. Watch For More Information.

“Like” the EcoFaith Network Facebook Page—[click here](#)

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.

Here’s a couple of examples of stories recently featured on the Network’s Facebook page.

- **Minnesota Winters Aren’t What They Used to Be**

Even though we're in the midst of a frigid cold wave, a recent report illustrates just how much temperatures are actually changing in Minnesota. The report from nonprofit group Climate Central shows that winters are warming faster in the Great Lakes and Great Plains than anywhere else in the U.S. In parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and northern New England, winters have warmed at an average rate of more than 1 degree per decade since 1970. Mankato and Minneapolis ranked among the fastest warming cities with a 6 degree increase; Fargo is 5.9 degrees warmer and Duluth registered 5.8 degrees warmer. Read more about the report at: www.mepartnership.org/minnesota-winters-arent-what-they-us.../

- **St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, in the EpiCenter of Pipeline Discussions**

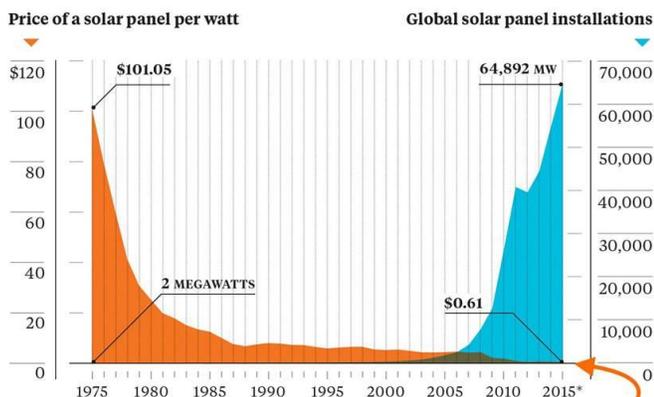
St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids is in the epicenter of discussion about potentially adverse impacts of the abandonment of the current Line 3 pipeline, which has an easement that runs directly in front of the church and also runs through the Wellhead Protection Area of the City of Grand Rapids. The church council adopted a resolution that mirrored that of the City Council calling for safe removal of the pipeline. In November, St. Andrews hosted community conversations about a potential work-plan for the current Line 3 pipeline abandonment with Enbridge. See <http://www.brainerddispatch.com/business/energy-and-mining/4380328-grand-rapids-serves-ground-zero-enbridge-line-3>

- **Solar Power is Booming in Minnesota**

The state's solar gardens are a nationwide model for community-level energy generation. Learn More. <https://www.sierraclub.org/s.../solar-power-booming-minnesota>

Solar on Fire

As prices have dropped, installations have skyrocketed.



*Estimate. Sources: Bloomberg, Earth Policy Institute, www.earth-policy.org

Down to \$0.447 in August 2016

In the past couple of years, the costs of new electric generation by solar and wind have become lower than for generation by coal, natural gas or nuclear. And, a report published in July in the MIT Technology Review projected that within two years, the cost of new grid scale solar or wind power combined with grid scale batteries “will be less than that of building natural-gas plants to meet future energy demand” – with the batteries resolving the concern over what happens when in periods of low wind and no sun.

These advances not only create opportunity to have energy that is clean, reliable and affordable, but they also create huge opportunity for jobs and businesses. For instance the fastest growing job type in the U.S. now is wind energy technician

Save Money and Reduce Your Congregation's Ecological Footprint

First Lutheran Church of Aitkin Goes Green and Saves Green

Steve Spigarelli of First Lutheran Church (FLC) in Aitkin reported as of July 31, 2017, FLC had reduced its electricity usage by 18.5% and water usage by 37% compared to 2016. "These efforts to reduce our ecological footprint are a result of two environmental audits that were arranged by our Creation Care Ministry" said Steve. "Of the targeted improvements made by our Property Ministry, about 40% of our lighting has been converted to LEDs; some hot water lines have been shut off; and old toilets have been replaced with more efficient models. Not only have we reduced our ecological footprint, but we have saved about \$2000 in energy and water costs.

Contact your local utility for an energy audit that can identify ways to save energy and money by going green at your church. Audits are usually free-of-charge and financial incentives and rebates are often available. The EcoFaith Network also offers grant assistance. See the EcoFaith Network [Grant page](#) for micro-grants and other energy conservation financial resources.

How is Your Congregation Caring for God's Creation?

The EcoFaith Network would like to hear about your initiatives and events related to caring for God's creation. We will share the stories as a model for other congregations and opportunity for networking. Do you have an event you want publicized? Send stories, photos, event notices to ecofaith@nemnsynod.org

Outdoor Trivia *(see answers below)*

1. Minnesota was recently ranked 9th in the country, and 1st in the Midwest, for what "green" metric?
2. At less than 60°F, what northern community has the lowest average summer temperature of any Minnesota city?
3. Northern Minnesota is home to two continental divides, separating waters that flow in three different directions—North to Hudson Bay, east to the Atlantic, and south to the Gulf of Mexico. What are the names of those divides?

When asked what he would do if the world would end tomorrow, Martin Luther replied: "I would plant a tree today."

Answers to Outdoor Trivia: 1) Energy Efficiency; 2) Grand Marais; 3) Laurentian and St. Lawrence

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