



# **ECOFAITH NETWORK NEWS**

## **Late Summer 2018**

### **NEWSLETTER** (August/September 2018)

**Welcome to the Late Summer 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. The Network is guided by a Leadership Team of pastors and lay leaders from the five Synod conferences.

### **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.

**Speaker's Bureau Coming Soon-** Watch Network webpages for more information.



## Recycling: How Does It Work

*(excerpted from Fergus Falls Daily Journal, August 7, 2018)*

Minnesotans are pretty good at recycling. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, we had a 42 percent recycling rate in 2016, definitely higher than the national average of 34 percent. We still could be reducing, reusing and recycling a lot more to shrink our waste; however, we still throw away millions of dollars of recyclable materials every year

in Minnesota. Because all of the products we buy and use are manufactured using natural resources such as wood, metal ores and petroleum, using recycled materials helps to minimize the amount of virgin materials used in the manufacturing process. For example, it takes 4 pounds of bauxite to make 1 pound of aluminum that will be manufactured into 30 cans. When you recycle aluminum, an infinitely recyclable material, there is a reduced need to mine bauxite for aluminum. In addition, making cans from recycled aluminum uses only 5 percent of the energy required for mining and refining bauxite — a 95 percent energy savings! We know that recycling conserves natural resources and helps protect our environment, but the average person might not know what happens to their recyclables after they are picked up at the curb. Here's an overview of the process to increase your recycling knowledge.

### **Materials recovery facility**

Once your recyclables are picked up, or you bring them to a recycling center, they are brought to a recycling facility. Trucks drive onto the "tipping floor", a large area with separate bunkers for different types of recyclables. The trucks tip out recycling into the bunkers, and recycling workers use a skid steer to push material into piles. Each bunker has a door that opens into a materials recovery facility (or MRF, for short). A MRF is a facility that sorts and stores recyclables until they are sold to manufacturers.

### **Sort line and baler**

Materials are pushed from the bunkers onto a conveyor that moves the materials onto a high platform where they are dumped onto the sorting line – a long conveyor staffed with recycling workers. Recycling workers hand sort materials that come down the conveyor, pulling off trash and other items that shouldn't be in the recycling. Each kind of item they pull off is dropped into a chute beside the conveyor that empties into a large cage below the sort line. A large magnet at the end of the conveyor picks up steel cans as they move by.

After all trash is removed and the materials are sorted into separate cages, the materials are put into a baler. The baler compresses the materials and binds them with

wire to make huge bales that can weigh up to 2,000 pounds! These giant bales are stored in the MRF in stacks until they are shipped.

### **Shipping to end markets and processing into new materials**

When there is a large volume of one kind of material, it is loaded into a semi-trailer and shipped to an end market, a company who buys the material to process it into new goods. For example, cardboard bales may be shipped to a company in Minnesota that recycles the material into new cardboard boxes. Once materials reach an end market, they are used in the manufacturing process to create new products that contain recycled content. This process varies depending on the type of material. For example, plastic is often pelletized into plastic resin beads, and it can then be made into a variety of products such as bottles, fleece fiber for sportswear, or plastic resin building materials for decks and furniture.

**Buy items with recycled content.** The recycling process is not finished until you – the consumer – buy products that contain recycled content.

### **Top 5 Things NOT to put in your recycling bin**

- Plastic bags, extension cords, shredded paper, loose bottle caps, and ceramic glass

### **How Do You Manage Your Garden or Landscape?**

How you manage your garden or landscape can have an effect on the health of the soil, air, water, and habitat for wildlife - as well as people. The following practices can help you garden more environmentally friendly and sustainably:

- Soil and Water Conservation: 1) limit water use; 2) make a rain garden; 3) plant a buffer around bodies of water; 4) Xeriscape (water-wise landscaping); 5) use a drip or soaker-hose for irrigation (but check for leaking); 6) use mulch or ground cover to retain soil moisture and limit erosion; 7) collect rain water in a rain barrel; and 8) reduce or eliminate lawn.
- Controlling Exotic Species: 1) practice integrated pest management; 2) remove invasive exotic species; 3) keep cats indoors; and 4) use native plants.
- Organic Practices: 1) eliminate chemical pesticides; 2) eliminate chemical fertilizers; and 3) create a compost pile.



## Farmer Direct Coffee vs Fair Trade: What Should You Know?

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) now offers a new line of coffee sourced directly from farmers rather than the previously available fair trade coffee. For many years Fair Trade Coffee was the best choice for buying coffee that supported the local farmer instead of mega corporations. However, Fair Trade coffee is purchased from a cooperative that requires many fees from the participating farmers. Farmer Direct coffee is purchased directly from the individual farmer which requires fewer fees and more profit for the farmer--\$0.80/lb to the farmer vs. \$0.20/lb when purchasing through Fair Trade channels. If your congregation purchases Farmer Direct coffee from LWR, every delicious cup helps transform poor communities that depend on their coffee crop to feed their families because farmers are given a stable, predictable, and higher price upfront for their beans. This coffee is more expensive than buying Folgers coffee but it's the right thing to do with the added benefit of getting to know the farmer who has provided your coffee. [Click here](#) for more information from LWR.

### Here's how it works:



## Minnesota Faith Leaders Speak Out About Enbridge Line 3 Pipeline

*The following editorial was published on the opinion page of the Star Tribune on June 11, 2018 just prior to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioner's ruling that granted a certificate-of-need for Enbridge to proceed with steps to install a new pipeline through Central Minnesota, possibly endangered pristine waters, groundwater and possibly the drinking water supply for Minneapolis/St. Paul.*

### **Dear members of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission:**

We are leaders from many religious traditions. We are rabbis, imams, priests, pastors, deacons, elders, and others, among thousands of people of faith and conscience who oppose the Enbridge Energy Line 3 pipeline. Today we speak to you with one voice asking you to reject the Line 3 replacement because of the harm it would do to the Anishinaabe people.

The proposed Line 3 pipeline would carry toxic heavy crude oil 337 miles through northern Minnesota, threatening our state's clean lakes and rivers. In so doing, it threatens Native treaty rights and lifeways. Line 3 would run through the Mississippi headwaters and through many waters that grow wild rice. This is a sacred food to the Anishinaabe.

The Anishinaabe signed treaties with the U.S. government that guaranteed they retained rights to hunt, fish and gather throughout large areas of northern Minnesota — including lands Line 3 would cross. The state review process should have addressed these critical treaty issues head-on instead of sidestepping them. Approving Line 3 would continue a long tradition of taking positions against politically marginalized Indigenous communities and putting the burden on them to fight for their rights in court.

Enbridge has a history of pipeline spills, and any spill in wild-rice areas would be devastating. Even if there were no spills (an implausible outcome), this pipeline would be a massive new investment in fossil-fuel infrastructure at a time when the threat of climate change requires a new direction. Climate change poses a grave threat to Minnesota's people and ecosystems. Worse, climate change disproportionately harms poor people, Indigenous people and people of color. Faith leaders worldwide have spoken about the need to take urgent action on climate change, in statements such as the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change; a Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis; "The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change"; "Bhumi Devi ki Jai!: A Hindu Declaration on Climate Change"; and Pope Francis' Laudato Si' encyclical.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce concluded that this pipeline is not needed for regional energy needs. We acknowledge that some people support the project because of the construction jobs it would create; however, Line 3 is a step in the wrong

direction. We need new jobs as part of a “just transition” to a new renewable-energy economy, with construction projects that make Minnesota a better home for everyone.

At its core, this is a moral issue. Many of us signing this letter come from Christian and other traditions that in recent years have taken formal positions acknowledging the role of our faith institutions in the mistreatment and deep trauma done to Indigenous peoples. (These include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Community of Christ, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church.) We have committed ourselves to seeking ways forward for healing and repair. Our signatures here represent an effort to live out that commitment. Leaders from many religious traditions traveled to North Dakota in 2016 to support the Standing Rock Nation as it tried to stop the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL). Some national religious leaders took formal positions in support of Standing Rock. At Standing Rock, the world was reminded of the fundamental truth that water is life. People of faith know this deeply — our connection to creation is not simply as consumers of it. It is a sacred duty to protect life on Earth for its own sake.

Many of the actions of faith leaders at Standing Rock didn’t come until after DAPL was being built and there was conflict on the ground. All signers of this letter wish to join together in stating our clear opposition to Line 3 and ensuring that it is never approved. We are ready to open a new chapter in how we treat our environment and how we relate with our Indigenous neighbors.

Signatories include: Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA; the Rev. Brian N. Prior, bishop, Episcopal Church in Minnesota; Imam Asad Zaman, executive director, Muslim American Society; elder Elona Street-Stewart, synod executive, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, PCUSA; Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beth El Synagogue and Minnesota Rabbinical Association co-chair; Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakota-Minnesota area, United Methodist Church; the Rev. Sharon Prestemon, conference minister of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ; Julia Nerbonne, executive director, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light; and the Rev. Curtiss DeYoung, CEO, Minnesota Council of Churches, and steering committee member, the Poor People’s Campaign. A longer list of signatories is at [tinyurl.com/line3-opposition](http://tinyurl.com/line3-opposition).

[Click here](#) for a fact sheet on the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline.

## **How Is Your Congregation Caring for God’s Creation?**

The EcoFaith Network would like to hear about your congregation’s creation care initiatives and events. We will share the stories as a model for other congregations and opportunity for networking. Send stories, photos, and/or event notices to [ecofaith@nemnsynod.org](mailto:ecofaith@nemnsynod.org).

## **Featured Initiative: Iron Range Earth Fest 2018**



On April 2018, **Messiah Lutheran Church/ELCA in Mt. Iron, Minnesota** hosted and co-sponsored the 10<sup>th</sup> annual ***Earth Fest***, an event coordinated by the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability to celebrate local traditions and practical resources for sustainable living in northeastern Minnesota. The event, themed “Reclaiming Traditions for a Sustainable Future,” was attended by over 1,200 people. The emphasis is on local products, services, foods, entertainment and local wilderness. There are speakers, demonstrations, family hands-on activities, entertainment and exhibitors and vendors. Each year the Earth Fest hosts two competitions: Green Innovator’s Expo for Iron Range students and the Community Sustainability Initiative contest for anyone with a unique sustainability inspired project idea. The EcoFaith Network of the NE MN Synod has awarded annual grants in support of the event. For information on next year’s Earth Fest in mid-April, 2019 see: <https://www.irpsmn.org/earthfest>

For more information on EcoFaith grants for congregational events, see: <http://www.nemnsynod.org/ecofaith-grants-for-congregations.html>

## Upcoming EcoFaith Events:

### **Energy Savings for Congregations, Sunday, September 23, 2-4 pm**

#### **Hope Community Presbyterian Church, Virginia, MN (212 S 5<sup>th</sup> Ave)**

Free and open to the public, learn how to save money for your church's ministry while protecting the planet. Churches who have saved energy and money will provide guidance for congregations and there will be an inspirational documentary screening. Sponsored by Congregations Caring for the Earth.

### **Fall Harvest Dinner- Lutheran Church of the Cross/Nisswa**

#### **Tuesday, October 2, 2018 6 pm**

The Creation Care Team of Lutheran Church of the Cross/Nisswa invites area churches to attend the annual Fall Harvest Potluck to celebrate the bounty of this year's harvest and God's blessing on creation. Bring a dish to share—perhaps even from your own garden's harvest. The event includes a special presentation "Climate Change Impacts on Global Ecosystems: It's More Complicated and Dangerous Than We Think" by Willis Mattison, a professional ecologist and citizen advocate. During his professional career, Mattison was a research scientist at the Mayo Clinic and a regional director for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. He is a current member of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board's Environmental Review Advisory panel. Mattison will present his perspective on the magnitude of human influence on climate change and efforts needed in reforming energy, resource extraction, and agricultural systems to address this world problem. Drawings for door prizes, including Jerry Raedeke prints, will conclude the evening. For more information, email: [raedekel@gmail.com](mailto:raedekel@gmail.com) or call 218-963-3877.

### **Paul Douglas: A Christian's Perspective on Climate Change**

#### **Saturday, September 22, 2018 10 am at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Brainerd**

#### **Saturday, October 6, 2018, 1 pm at Lutheran Church of the Cross/Nisswa (5064 County Rd 13, Nisswa)**

Don't miss two opportunities to hear Paul Douglas, one of Minnesota's best known and respected meteorologists, talk about climate change from a Christian perspective. He is the co-author of the book "Creation Care" and believes that it is our personal responsibility to protect God's creation for current and future generations. He will discuss what is happening with climate change and how it will affect all of us. By connecting the dots between science and faith, Paul will offer realistic and hopeful solutions for Christians to take the lead in addressing climate change. The September 22 event is sponsored by Lord of Life Lutheran Church Creation Care Team and BLUE (Brainerd Lakes United for the Environment). The October 6 event is hosted by the Creation Care Team at Lutheran Church of the Cross/Nisswa and the EcoFaith Network of NE MN Synod/ELCA; co-sponsored by Area ELCA churches. Both presentations are free and open to the public.

## Green Tips:

Use green tips in monthly newsletter, congregational Facebook pages, weekly Sunday bulletin, or post on a bulletin board to create awareness of our Christian responsibility to care for the earth. Weekly Green Tips are added to the EcoFaith Network Facebook page and will soon be available on the EcoFaith webpages.

## **China Not Longer Accepting US Plastic**

*(submitted by Laura Raedeke, Creation Care Team, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Nisswa)*

China, the world's largest importer of scrap such as plastic since 1992, is no longer accepting these products due to the huge volume of plastics that are mainly low quality single-use items, such as garbage bags, bubble wrap, beverage bottles, and plastic packaging for food and tobacco items that cannot be profitably recycled. This means an estimated 111 million metric tons of plastic waste will pile up by 2030, with the U.S. contending with 37 million metric tons of extra waste that has nowhere to go but already burdened landfills. Researchers at the University of Georgia warn that such heavy loads of garbage worldwide will continue to leak into oceans and even spill into neighborhoods (see the journal *Science Advances* for full report). Since 1950, nearly 9 billion metric tons of plastic have been produced - more than four Mount Everest's worth of trash - often polluting the environment, including deep oceans where a plastic island twice the size of Texas floats. Plastic has been discovered in the bellies of dead whales and seabirds, and has contributed to 61percent of global beach litter. As plastic ages and degrades, their chemicals are released into the environment, accumulating in the tissues of marine animals and in seafood, while on land leaching into soils and groundwater. WHAT YOU CAN DO: refuse to purchase plastic that is used only once, and urge public officials to push for sound policies that responsibly recycle or dispose of larger plastic items.

## Creation Care Resources

### **Resources Available from the ELCA.**

We are called by God to "keep the earth" (Genesis 2:15). [Click on this link](#) for resources from the ELCA and educational materials to help you, the individual, and your congregation grow in your own faith journey to appreciate fully and cherish creation and find different ways to engage in earth-keeping activities.

### **App for Choosing the Right Energy-Efficient Lighting**

The Right Light App at <http://rightlightapp.org> is a free resources that helps people pick out the perfect energy-efficient LED light bulb. The app was created by the Clean Energy Resource Teams and University of Minnesota Extension.

## **“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/>

**To request information or resources from the EcoFaith Network or to be removed from this distribution list, email [ecofaith@nemnsynod.org](mailto:ecofaith@nemnsynod.org)**