

The Green Steward

**The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Environmental Concerns Working Group
Metro Chicago Synod, ELCA**

Fall 2007

Green Congregations Workshop Fills the Hall

God's Spirit sometimes moves in amazing ways. We can speculate as much as we wish about what drew nearly 150 people to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights on a beautiful Saturday morning, October 13, when many of us could have chosen to do something else. But there they were. A few days before, 90 people had signed up, and we were already exceeding anyone's expectations. Those who have done this before might have been ecstatic to see 50 people. But people kept coming, challenging the volunteers in the host congregations to put out more tables and chairs to accommodate them right up until the moment when the program began. In the end, some 50 congregations were represented, including a smattering of Methodists and Catholics. Clearly, people wanted to learn what it would take to make theirs a green congregation, an assembly of people with an active concern for becoming better stewards of God's creation. The enthusiasm was palpable.

The session began with prayer, praise, and song suitable to the theme. Then Dr. David Rhoads, professor at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, provided a riveting presentation, in part about his own faith journey to realize that God's salvation is not merely for mankind but for all of creation, and in part about the daunting issues of care of creation that face us all in an age of looming climate change. Finally, Brother David provided all congregational green teams to sit together and craft plans for their own church to move forward.

All participants received a set of workbooks and materials to help them involve their own congregations, as well as copies of the book *Word and Earth*. The materials were made available by LSTC, which also supplied a team of seminary students aiding the conduct and preparation of the entire

workshop. In addition, Mike Stanch, a member of the synod's Environmental Concerns Working Group, who is also an energy audit professional, shared his expertise with congregations interested in energy projects.

The workshop was followed by a lunch for those who chose to stay, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation by Jim Schwab, chair of the [Environmental Concerns Working Group](#), about the Metropolitan Chicago Synod's work over the last 15 years in promoting lighting efficiency retrofits and about what the program has to offer now. Ken Westlake, a Working Group member as well as a member of Our Saviour's, then took the crowd on a tour of the church facilities to see the changes his own congregation had made in reducing its energy use.

October Synod Greening Event Prompts November Green Team Meeting at Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park

Erin Bouman, Intern
Lutheran Campus Ministry, Augustana

On Saturday, October 13, Mark Granfors, David Glover, Jim Schwab, and Erin Bouman attended a Green Team Training Event at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights. The event, led by LSTC Professor David Rhoads and sponsored by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and the Web of Creation at LSTC, offered thoughtful, theological reflection as well as practical and long-term solutions towards a more sustainable and faithful interaction with creation.

Workshop participants discussed a Covenant with Creation that included transformative personal actions under categories of education, energy use, cleaning products, water use, food, paper use, reduce/reuse/recycle, travel, work, nature, and public commitments. Participants also reviewed a Training Manual for congregations which includes a five-part action plan:

1. Transformation Through Worship
2. Transformation Through Education
3. Building and Grounds as Model
4. Discipleship at Home and Work
5. Public Ministry/Political Advocacy

(For more detailed information on the covenant and manual, see www.webofcreation.org).

Augustana's four representatives, energized by the workshop, committed to meet again Wednesday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. at Augustana to form a Green Team that will recognize and further act upon the many environmentally conscious efforts already happening in our congregation. Please join us at this meeting as we work "to be leaven, a catalyst for others to bring care for creation into all areas of parish life."

Synod Green Congregations Program Recalls Early Initiative By Augustana

David Glover

Many may be unaware of the fact that Augustana was thinking "green" 15 years ago. In 1992 Augustana held a month-long discussion during the adult forum hour to discuss ways that the congregation could be more environmentally friendly. This culminated in the final session facilitated by then ELCA environmental ministry coordinator Job Ebenezer during which the congregation decided to reduce its energy use through changing its lighting to higher efficiency fluorescent lighting. The project lowered Augustana's energy consumption by some 13,400 kWh per year. The 200,000 kWhs of energy use that were so avoided through the intervening 15 years have kept Com Ed from producing 67 tons of

carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, as well as around 400 pounds each of the air pollutants sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. In addition, about one pound (a significant amount!) of highly radioactive waste was avoided being produced from Com Ed's nuclear power plants. We have much to be thankful for avoiding placing these burdens on future generations.

Recent efforts by Augustana's property committee have significantly reduced our energy use from last year's levels — resulting in a cooler building even amongst this summer's warmer temperatures. Augustana well cares for its energy use. But we can do more. Please join the Green Team at 7:30 p.m. on November 14 as we look at the accomplishments that Augustana can build upon as we look to the future and identify those areas of our community life where environmental awareness can be improved.

Update on 2008 Energy Efficiency Programs in Illinois

By Michael Stanch, Stanch Lighting and Energy

The Illinois state legislature, as part of its negotiations with Commonwealth Edison and Ameren in regard to the 2007 rate increases, included an Energy Efficiency portfolio requirement in the legislation that allowed these utilities to retain their rate increases. It should begin in June 2008 with energy efficiency incentive programs totaling \$40,000,000 for Com Ed customers. These amounts will increase to \$85,000,000 in 2009 and \$135,000,000 in 2010. It will include residential lighting and appliance recycling as well as commercial and industrial lighting, motors, controls, AC tune-up, chillers, food service equipment and vending machine controllers. The vast majority of the savings goals will be comprised of lighting measures for the first few years because of the quick paybacks. These programs should last well into the future and are the first time that these programs have been mandated in the state of Illinois.

For churches, the opportunities should be plentiful to take advantage of these programs. Our committee, the Environmental Concerns Working Group, will act as a facilitator to help our congregations in Com Ed territories take advantage of these programs. Take note that it does not include customers of municipal utilities.

Also, the state of Illinois will be administering similar programs for public entities like schools, municipals, colleges and universities. Ameren, the utility located in southern Illinois, will have programs like Com Ed but at about a one-third scale of Com Ed. For more information, please e-mail Mike Stanch at stanchmj@aol.com or call him at (630) 406-1338.

St. Paul's Undertakes Latest Synod Energy Project

The newest congregation to undertake an energy efficiency retrofit project with assistance from the synod's Energy Revolving Loan Fund is St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 545 S. Ardmore, in Villa Park.

Pastor Stephen H. Swanson and the church council have signed a new agreement for a \$4,500 loan from the fund, to be repaid at \$150 per month over 30 months. However, the congregation will also benefit from a \$4,400 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Fund (ICECF) to support lighting improvements in its day care in the church basement. ICECF has made direct grants to schools and child care centers for several years, some of which have gone to Metro Chicago Synod congregations as part of overall church retrofit projects developed in cooperation with the Working Group.

As with all other synod-financed projects, the loan repayments are based on the results of a professional audit. Repayments are tied to the predicted average monthly energy savings a congregation should achieve, relative to current usage patterns, although these can always be affected by changes such as increased use of facilities. In fact, Christ Lutheran Church in Clarendon Hills undertook a project in 2002 that so dramatically improved lighting in a previously poorly used basement room that it then became a popular child care center. Although this inevitably resulted in some increases in the otherwise reduced electricity bills, no one complained because it meant that the building was better utilized than it had been before the project was undertaken.

Typically, these audits are performed by Michael J. Stanch, an energy efficiency professional with his own firm, Stanch Lighting and Energy, who is also a member of the Working Group. St. Paul 's will be the sixteenth area congregation to take advantage of this unique program that is without peer among other synods in the ELCA. Implementation of the project is likely to begin some time in October and be completed this fall.

Work Completed at St. Mark's, Mt. Prospect

After two months of steady, dedicated activity by a team of congregational volunteers, aided on two Saturdays by Environmental Concerns Working Group "work days," St. Mark's Lutheran Church , 200 S. Wille St. , in Mount Prospect, has completed work on a project that, like St. Paul 's upcoming effort, combined a \$15,346 synod loan with a grant from the ICECF. The grant covered lighting improvements in the youth center that constitutes a separate building across the street from the main church building. This relatively large congregation has grown incrementally and expanded its building over half a century, so lighting changes were not completed in a single day.

St. Mark's, however, typified many congregations that have previously undertaken such projects by turning the entire project into an opportunity for extensive volunteer involvement in removing and replacing inefficient fixtures, installing new ballasts, and then installing new, more energy-efficient lighting that reduces overall energy consumption in the church facilities while consistently improving the quality of lighting.

Add to Our Contacts List

Does someone in your congregation need to receive our newsletter in the future? Do you have members particularly concerned about Christian care of creation? This is our premier issue, and we hope

to discuss more issues, share more news, and spread the vision of Christian environmental stewardship throughout the synod. People can add themselves to our future distribution list by sending a note with their e-mail address to Jim Schwab, chair of the Working Group, at jimjeanschwab@att.net. We will be happy to add to our recipients list. We will also be happy to receive news or ideas from contributors.