

The Green Steward

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

Spring 2008

Still Time to Register!

***Earth Week Green Fair
A Green Congregation Workshop***

**Saturday, April 19 8:00 to Noon
Ashburn Evangelical Lutheran Church
3345 W. 83rd Street
Register at Synod Office: 773-248-0021**

The Metro-Chicago Synod is sponsoring an "Earth Week Green Fair" on Saturday April 19, 2007, from 8:00 until noon at Ashburn Evangelical Lutheran Church at 3345 W. 83rd Street, Chicago. The Green Fair is a follow-up to last October's Green Congregation Training Workshop. All churches, whether they have already started a greening program, or are thinking about beginning one, are invited! This second workshop will offer an opportunity for churches to see what area congregations have been doing, to exchange ideas and concerns with one another, and to receive practical suggestions for how to address glitches and/or build on their existing programs. Local ecological organizations and those who have helped churches become more environmentally efficient will also be at the fair to provide your church with additional resources and help explore with you a range of greening strategies.

Whether you have done little or much, this workshop is a chance for your congregation, regardless of what stage you are at, to reassess where you are and to get some direction by talking to experts and to each other about additional ways that you can green your parish. An important goal of the program is to encourage congregations to

build intentional helping relationships with each other. There will be a breakout session in which green teams from the same region will come together in order to share some of their greening strategies and struggles. This discussion will be a chance to reflect on the work you have done in your parish, to see neighboring parishes as partners and resources, and to receive encouragement to help strengthen your commitment to caring for creation.

Please mark your calendar and plan to celebrate Earth Week with us by participating in the Green Fair. Each team is encouraged to prepare some materials that others may take with them describing the work your congregation has undertaken. You may, for instance, list in order the steps you took to start a recycling program in your church. Do you have a green mission statement? Include that. Or you may want to set up a *simple* display showing what your congregation has done. Your materials need not be complicated. They should be geared toward helping other congregations.

For congregations who were unable to attend the fall workshop, we will have free resources on how to introduce care for creation into the life/ministry of your parish.

There is no charge for the event. However, in order to help us adequately plan for set-up and food, please register your congregation and the approximate number of participants with Erma Alvarez at the Metro-Chicago Synod office, phone 773-248-0021 or e-mail at ealvarez@mcselca.org.

For more information about the Green Congregation Program, see the Web of Creation site located at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago: www.webofcreation.org. You may also address any questions you may have to the event organizer, Sumie Song at wofc@lstc.edu.

Congratulations, St. James

For the last two months, the Environmental Concerns Working Group has been assisting St. James Lutheran Church, 7400 W. Foster Ave., in Chicago, with its major new lighting retrofit project. Earlier this year, the synod Working Group approved a loan to St. James of \$5,553 from the Energy Revolving Loan Fund to support the project, much of which has involved a dramatic relamping of the congregations' downstairs gymnasium. Pastor Susan Schneider has been a visible and enthusiastic supporter throughout the project. The Working Group has supplied volunteer labor on two Saturdays to supplement church volunteers who helped remove old ballasts and lamps and install the new fixtures to achieve serious energy savings. The project is now nearly complete, and we congratulate St. James for moving forward.

A Heartfelt Thank You

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod and its Environmental Concerns Working Group have expressed their gratitude to two Chicago-area congregations for helping to grow the Energy Revolving Loan Fund. In February, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, which also hosted the October 2007 Green Congregations Workshop that drew 150 participants, voted to contribute \$2,000 from its congregational endowment to augment the loan fund. Meanwhile, Pilgrim Lutheran Church approved the conversion of an accidental overpayment of \$313 into a donation to the fund. With these new donations, the fund is now very close to \$60,000 in working capital to serve the congregations of the synod with new energy efficiency projects. Currently, as a result of these donations and the ongoing repayments from other congregations with active loans, the Working Group has available about \$20,000 for new loan applicants. Now is a good time for your congregation to request an audit and consider its potential for better energy stewardship. Contact Jim Schwab (773-218-2560) or Mike Stanch (630-406-1338) for more information.