

The Earth Day Sunday Resource

An eight-page resource has been prepared to help you celebrate Earth Day Sunday. It contains bulletin inserts, worship materials and background information. It can be ordered from Environmental Justice Resources at 800-762-0968. The price is \$.75 each for 1 to 19 copies: \$.20 each for twenty or more. The order number is EJ0035.

Though it may be too late to prevent global warming, we can design policies and take actions to slow it down.

The resource is also available without cost on the Internet at:
<http://www.webofcreation.org/NCC/Earthday.html>.

Energy Stewardship Congregations

A growing number of congregations are attempting to be good stewards of God's creation by reducing their use of energy. One way to use less energy is to make your facilities more energy efficient by taking measures such as: using compact florescent bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs, doing an energy audit, installing programmable thermostats and light sensors etc.

For more information, call the Energy Stewardship Congregation program (formerly known as the Energy Star Congregation program) at 800-288-1346. This is a project of the Eco-justice Working Group of the National Council of the Churches of Christ.

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Celebrate and Protect God's Creation:
Earth Day Sunday 2000



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Earth Day Sunday 2000

"Good Stewards of God's Gift of Energy"
is the theme for Earth Day Sunday for 2000.

A Message from the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of the Churches of Christ

Though every day we honor God's good gift of creation, on Earth Day Sunday, we give special thanks for all of the wonders of creation.

Because Earth day (April 22) is between the western Good Friday and Easter, your congregation may choose another Sunday for its Earth Day Sunday celebrations such as April 30, the Sunday after Easter or April 2 a day that many evangelical Christians will celebrate as "Creation Sunday".

This year we celebrate the gift of energy. The Bible teaches that all of God's gifts are given with the expectation that we will take care of them responsibly. However, we have not been good stewards of energy which we often waste or misuse. Our over-reliance on fossil fuels contributes to pollution and climate change.

God heals what human beings have broken. Christians are called by God to participate in God's healing and restoration of creation. When we use energy conservatively and efficiently, when we use forms of energy which minimize pollution and mitigate climate change, we witness to God's work in the world.

May God bless you in your effort to heal and protect God's creation.

Richard Killmer, Director, Environmental Justice, National Council of Churches, 212-870-2385.

Inside this brochure is a bulletin insert. Photocopy it and plan to include it in your bulletin on Earth Day Sunday.

Becoming Faithful Energy Stewards

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God... in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:19-21)

CALLED TO "TEND AND KEEP"

The Bible tells us that on each day of creation God saw that all was "good" and on the last day that it was "very good". Indeed, according to Genesis 9:10, God has established a covenant "with every living creature" and with the earth itself (Genesis 9:13).

The biblical word "covenant" implies mutual trust and responsibility, and describes the special relationship between God and all creation. Humankind has been given an important role in this covenant relationship. God calls us to "tend and keep" this garden call Earth (Genesis 9:13).

"THE LAND MOURNS"

But we all know that we have not always been faithful partners in this covenant. In our sinfulness, we have hurt each other and the rest of creation. The biblical prophet Hosea warned that as a consequence of human disobedience and selfishness "the land mourns and... even the fish of the sea are perishing" (Hosea 41-3).

Today we are recognizing in new and alarming ways the truth of the prophet's warning. Most climate scientists now agree that our increasing over consumption of fossil fuel has led to climate change.

Consider these facts:

- Each year we are pumping nearly seven billion tons of heat-trapping carbon into atmosphere.
- The eleven hottest years on record have all occurred since 1980.

2500 of the world's leading atmospheric scientists agree that global warming has already begun. They warn that if we do not curb automotive and power plant emissions of global warming pollution, we will change the climate, triggering more extreme weather, floods and droughts that would damage croplands and forests, deadly heat waves, a rise in the sea level that would flood coastal areas, and severely affect human, animal and plant health and survival.

A FAITHFUL RESPONSE

Christians believe that God heals what human beings have broken and calls people of faith to participate in the restoration of creation. When we use less energy in our homes and churches and use it more efficiently, and when we move away from our reliance on fossil fuels and use instead more renewable energy sources, we point to and participate in God's healing of creation. Though it may be too late to prevent climate change, we can design policies and take actions to slow it down.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

→ **Become an "Energy Stewardship Congregation":**

Examine your congregation's and your own individual energy consumption. Your church can make a commitment to use less energy and to make your building more energy efficient.

* For more information on the "Energy Stewardship Congregation" program call 1-800-288-1346.

→ **At home and at church:**

- ♦ use compact fluorescent light bulbs;
- ♦ tune-up your heating and air conditioning systems;
- ♦ invest in office equipment that is labeled Energy Star;
- ♦ install programmable thermostats and sensors on lighting;
- ♦ buy the most efficient model furnaces and air conditioners and correctly "size" them to your needs.

→ **Walk, bike, and use public transportation whenever possible.**

→ **Encourage your local, state, and national elected officials to endorse a "Clean Energy Agenda"**

which would include:

- ♦ clean power
- ♦ clean cars
- ♦ clean air
- ♦ clean investments

* For more information about the "Clean Energy" Agenda, go to "Web of Creation" at:
www.webofcreation.org/NCC/CleanEnergyAgenda.html.

A Climate Change Information and Strategy Packet is available without cost by calling 1-800-9climate. It includes *It's God's World: Christians, Care for Creation and Global Warming* - a five session Bible study for congregations.

