

Winter greetings to the PEC and larger Earthcare community,

It is a gift to be in true community, whether the community be close or distant physically. It is good to be together as companions concerned about Creation...about environmental, economic, and social justice.

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

By Diane Waddell

Being together as a body at the "Ethical Earth Care: Keeping Creation Sacred" conference was mutually enhancing in our passion for ministry individually and collectively. I am so grateful for organizers, leaders, participants...all who were a part of this experience. Larry Rasmussen's message in person and through his printed works, including Earth Honoring Faith, embraces the mystical, the sacred/sacramental, the prophetic and that which is wisdom-seeking in working toward a flourishing social order and Earth community.

In and through all this work (called the Great Work, according to Thomas Berry), the individual and community work in partnership...with the living elements of creation. We are whole, together.

Both Larry and I are fans of (the late) Thomas Berry, PhD, a member of the Passionist Order. From the book, The Forsaken Garden by Nancy Ryley, Berry states, "We have to learn to live in the universe on its terms, instead of ours. But we have a long way to go before we learn how to restructure every human task and every human institution until they function in a harmonious relationship with the requirements of the planet...A return to the mystique of the Earth, to the dynamism and wisdom of the natural world, is a primary necessity if we are ever to establish a mutually enhancing human presence on the planet...Only in [the experience of sensing the world as sacred] will we obtain the insight and the energy we need to alter our commitment to absolute devastation of the Earth in search of economic gain."

Strength and wisdom to all as we work toward justice and equity individually and collectively,

Diane Waddell
Moderator
Presbyterians for Earth Care

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Servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God
(1 Corinthians 4:1b)



PRAYERS FOR ALL CREATION

By Paul Henschen

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them? Psalm 8:3-4*

Heaven and earth are full of your glory, O God!
How can we not stop and praise you for the wonders you bestow?
You give us community through our passion to care for your earth.
You give us minds to explore the intricacies of nature,
and hearts to marvel at how all things intertwine to form the whole.
You bless us with the joy of laughter shared,
the willingness to reveal our weaknesses,
the strength to overcome seemingly formidable odds.
How can we not embrace the gift of your image dwelling within to form our souls?
How can we not dedicate our strivings toward the line you set for us?
And so Creator God, we seek to reflect the love of your Son in a world gone mad,
to witness that handing over our lives is the key to true life;
through the vision you grant in the night sky we see what can be.
May our efforts never be in vain, gracious God, for we take our bearings from you;
shepherd us for the journey ahead and we will not wander with you behind us.
Great is our God,
compassion and restoration,
forgiveness and reconciliation leading the way,
until that time when heaven and earth shall be one
and all creation shall be full of peace, and your glory revealed.
Amen.

Steering Committee

Moderator:

Diane Waddell
(816) 262-4770
PECModerator@gmail.com

Vice Moderator:

Jane Laping
(828) 277-7342
PECViceModerator@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Sue Smith
(732) 291-3343
PECFinance@gmail.com

Regional Representatives

Northeast:

The Rev. Dana Eglinton
(609) 261-3026
PECRepNE@gmail.com

Southeast:

Nancy Fayer
(410) 750-1479
nancyfayer@verizon.net

Pacific:

Mary Roberts
(714)963-1087
PECRepPacific@gmail.com

Midwest:

The Rev. Paul Henschen
(701) 349-4007
PECRepMidwest@gmail.com

Northwest:

The Rev. Holly Hallman
(425) 736-2684
PECRepNW@gmail.com

Southwest:

Paul Homeyer
paul_homeyer@gensler.net

At-Large:

The Rev. Fred Milligan
(570) 575-5611
PECRepAtLarge@gmail.com

PEC Coordinator:

Tricia Bruckbauer
(202) 481-6932
presbyearthcare@gmail.com

Editor:

Abby Mohaupt
awmohaupt@gmail.com
(815) 985-8325



GET THE UPDATE EMAILED TO YOU!

In 2014, we will continue to encourage our members who are comfortable with email to get *The Update* in electronic form only. If you would like to make this change, please contact PEC's Coordinator, Tricia Bruckbauer, at presbyearthcare@gmail.com. Thank you!

A NO BRAINER

By Paul Henschen

Imagine a world where storms like Hurricane Sandy or Typhoon Haiyan become the norm. Imagine our country where drought ravages the bread belt and no longer can crop insurance save the day. Imagine a time when food prices soar so high millions starve and water is controlled by the rich. Climate change may lead us down this road, and it will not be a nuclear war or the communists or the terrorists that do us in. Nature will have its way, and it will bankrupt us and bring us to our knees long before we do it to ourselves. We must act now for the sake of our children, and even for our own sakes. And as Christians we must think about the poor of the world—the least of these—who will suffer so much more in the short run.

Divestment seems to some a futile path to go down to reverse our society's addiction to fossil fuels. The point of divestment is not to bankrupt any companies nor is it an economic strategy. Rather it is *a prophetic and moral action*. Divestment reverses investment by taking money out of stocks, bonds and other holdings in companies that are practicing immoral behavior. Divestment seeks to sway public opinion by raising the moral issue and touching peoples' consciences so that they will demand a change.

To say that climate change is not happening, or that it is happening and not caused by human activity is both denial and a sin. Such a high percentage of climate scientists say that climate change is caused by human activity that it is ridiculous to believe otherwise. The truth is that it is probably blind greed and a lust for power that causes leaders to commit such a grievous sin. As people of faith we cannot sit idly by and not take action. Divestment is one way to act, but it is also a powerful statement by a people who seek to act prophetically driven by their moral outrage.

A fossil fuel divestment overture is coming to General Assembly when it meets this summer in Detroit. This overture has now been passed by one presbytery and one concurring presbytery—the process now needed to bring an overture to GA. At least twelve church sessions have passed the overture. It is expected that

more presbyteries and churches will do the same before this summer. Delegates to GA need to be educated with the facts about what divestment is and how important this strategy is to awaken the moral conscience of the nation. As one session member of a church that voted for the overture commented, *It's a no brainer*. Your PEC regional representative will be sending you a copy of the overture with additional facts about it. Get involved, educate yourself, take the issue to your GA delegate and make sure they understand the importance of the divestment overture.

Seeing the Signs of the Times: A Practical Theology for Living in a Changing World

A Regional Conference
September 2 to 7, 2014
Anchorage, Alaska

The Yukon PEC invites 37 people to journey to their beautiful state for a moving (from Anchorage to Fairbanks) examination of four dramatic signs of climate change: shrinking glaciers, vanishing polar ice caps, melting permafrost and the affects on living things, including people.

Alaskan scientists on the scene, Alaska Native indigenous leaders, and Alaskan faith leaders will lead in a praxis model of engagement with, and reflection on, one area's challenges in a time of radical climate degradation. Mark your calendars and watch for complete details at www.presbyearthcare.org.

THEIR SPIRIT IGNITED A FIRE WITHIN ME: Reflections on *Ethical Earth Care: Keeping Creation Sacred*

By Ann Owen

What an incredible experience it was to be sequestered for a few days at the PEC conference in October with 100+ others passionate about creation care. In reflecting back on this wonderful gathering and the amazing people there, a Wilferd Peterson quote comes to mind:

Walk with the dreamers, the believers, the courageous, the cheerful, the planners, the doers, the successful people with their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. Let their spirit ignite a fire within you to leave this world better than when you found it.

What a joy to be surrounded by so many that are igniting spiritual fires in their respective communities! And what made the conference doubly magical was having our biennial gathering at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center here in Little Rock, which won PEC's Restoring Creation Award 10 years ago. I love having the opportunity to show off this amazingly green camp, and to share this delightful city that I've called home for the past 15 years.

This year, I was very pleased that PEC named Ferncliff Executive Director David Gill the winner of the William Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award. David became the director at Ferncliff in 1997, the year I moved to Little Rock, and since then I have watched Ferncliff become one of the most sustainable camp and conference centers in the country under his leadership.

Just in time for this year's conference, David and his crew completed the new straw bale-walled and solar powered Eco Center that will serve as a center for creation care and the home for the Solar Under the Sun Solar School. David is one of the "people with their heads in the clouds... their feet on the ground," and their heart in the game.

I was also proud that the Restoring Creation Award went to Solar Under the Sun, which trains volunteers to design and install solar power systems with communities that lack reliable electrical power. I got to participate in

the first Solar School four years ago, and since then SUTS has completed nine training sessions, trained 191 missionaries, and conducted 50 solar mission outreaches in Haiti, Ukraine and Kenya. Chris McRae, Executive Director, accepted the award and is also one of the "dreamers and successful people" with whom I want to walk!



The feet of the women who practiced yoga every morning during the conference. Photo by Abby Mohaupt

It was such a blessing to have as our conference keynote, Larry Rasmussen, who is regarded as one of the world's foremost Christian environmental ethicists. He challenged us with a dramatically new way of thinking about human society, ethics, and the ongoing health of our planet. We all found the workshops to be enlightening, the worship and music inspiring and the opportunities for conversations with other earth stewards enjoyable.

It's incredible how much more connected I feel when I'm actively involved with an endeavor. Serving on the PEC Steering Committee these past two years with moderator Diane Waddell and all the other dedicated members, as well as the planning team for the conference, was so enriching for me! I'm glad that I said yes when I was asked to serve, as I've been so encouraged by the believers, the doers and the courageous PEC members that generate so much goodness in the world and make me want to do the same.

GET READY FOR ECO-STEWARDS IN 2014!

By Vickie Machado

The Eco-Stewards will be heading to North Central Florida for their upcoming 2014 trip. This year's place-based program, **Food and Faith: Unit-ing Together in a Southern Foodshed**, explores the connection of communities to the land as we look at how Gainesville, Florida utilizes its surrounding natural resources to build life-giving and meaningful relationships.

Our time will focus primarily on the interconnected food and water webs of North Central Florida. Our trip will include discussions on local food, faith, nutrition, workers' rights, intentional Christian communities, sustainability, and the ever-pressing water issues faced by much of this region.

The week will consist of service, community dialogue, and an exploration of local areas including but not limited to community gardens producing food for homeless shelters, a local micro-farm rethinking the food system, a house of hospitality, nearby springs, and the Ichetucknee River. Throughout our program, we will be reflecting on and sharing our own Eco-Faith journeys.

Eco-Stewards has been an integral part of young adult ministry as it gathers participants, ages 20-30, from across the nation for a weeklong program that connects their faith to local environmental

justice issues. They return to their communities and homes with a deeper sense of connection and a renewed spirit to continue the justice work in their areas.

We depend heavily on donations for this work to continue. Support can come in the form of individual sponsorship and/or other monetary donations to help support our mission. Please check our website for ways you can connect. <http://ecostewardsprogram.wordpress.com/>.

Additionally, if you know of any young adults (ages 20-30) who might be interested, please have them fill out an application, also found on our website.



Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the Presbyterian Church(USA). PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church. Founded in 1995 as a grassroots organization to help the denomination educate and energize church members to address environmental concerns from a faith perspective, it works in partnership with PC(USA)'s Environmental Ministries Office and the Office of Public Witness to promote earth justice with a biblical and theological base. Regional representatives recruit presbyteries, churches, organizations, and individuals to help form a national network of Presbyterians to work toward the common goal of restoring creation for ecology and justice. Check out PEC's web site at www.presbyearthcare.org If you would like to become involved or have questions, contact Tricia at presbyearthcare@gmail.com or your regional representative.

ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES UPDATE

I write with great thanksgiving for the work and witness of Presbyterians across the country who are actively engaged in caring for God's earth. We have a long history of creation care in our Presbyterian policy, Reformed theology and tradition, and in our scriptures. It is humbling and inspiring to hear the stories of congregations and individuals who are addressing current needs and advocating for justice.

In 2013, Environmental Ministries celebrated reaching over 122 certified PCUSA Earth Care Congregations, hosting webinars on eco-justice worship and the EPA ENERGY STAR for Congregations resources, developing new pages of the website on fracking and water concerns, witnessing Presbyterians coming together over climate change concerns (specifically to ask questions about PCUSA investments in fossil fuels), sponsoring an alternative transportation week at the PCUSA national offices in Louisville, KY,

GREEN FAITH and DIVESTMENT

You may have been hearing the term *divestment* a lot recently. Divestment from fossil fuels is increasingly up for discussion in many institutions, especially houses of worship.

PEC membership, at our annual meeting at Ferncliff on Oct 18, voted enthusiastically to support the work of PCUSA Fossil-Free (PCUSA Divest). We encourage you to talk with your General Assembly commissioners about divestment and begin a conversation in your congregation and presbytery. We will share our booth at General Assembly with PCUSA Fossil Free and will work to encourage the work of 350.org and PCUSA Fossil-Free.

Divest & Reinvest Now! is GreenFaith's campaign to support fossil fuel divestment and reinvestment in a clean energy future by faith communities.

Here are two great ways to engage members of your faith community and introduce them to this growing movement:

- Offer a sermon on fossil fuel divestment and clean energy reinvestment.
- Have a discussion on the topic with your members.

To help you get started, GreenFaith provides [free sermon tips and discussion materials](#) on the topic. They'll also give you a free copy of [Moral Ground](#): a new collection of writings on religion and the Earth. Simply [request](#)

By Rebecca Barnes

and meeting Presbyterians caring for God's earth in places like Manassas VA, Wooster OH, Santa Fe NM, and Little Rock AR.

Whether through social media, email or phone communications, or in-person conversations, Presbyterians are busy doing good work and Presbyterians for Earth Care is a huge part of this work. I look forward to gathering with Presbyterians in Detroit this summer at the General Assembly of the PCUSA and seeing what new statements and policies our denomination might make—encouraged by you—on God's call to care for the earth. As we move further into the new year, I give thanks for this precious work entrusted to our care, for the earth that is always new and amazing, and for colleagues like you who join in this work. May we continue to be faithful to the call.

By Fletcher Harper, Executive Director of Green Faith

[your free copy](#) by sending GreenFaith the date of your sermon or discussion.

On top of that, [GreenFaith is offering two prizes of \\$250](#): one prize for the best sermon, and one for the best discussion, on fossil fuel divestment and clean energy reinvestment. GreenFaith will announce the winners and runners-up on June 15, 2014, World Environment Day.

Presbyterians for Earth Care is a proud co-sponsor of the Divest & Reinvest Now Campaign's initiative to promote sermons and discussions by faith communities on divestment and reinvestment!

It's time to step forward. Schedule a sermon or discussion today, and invite members of your wider community to attend.

When it comes to the planet's future, this is a key moment. Will your faith community rise to the occasion?

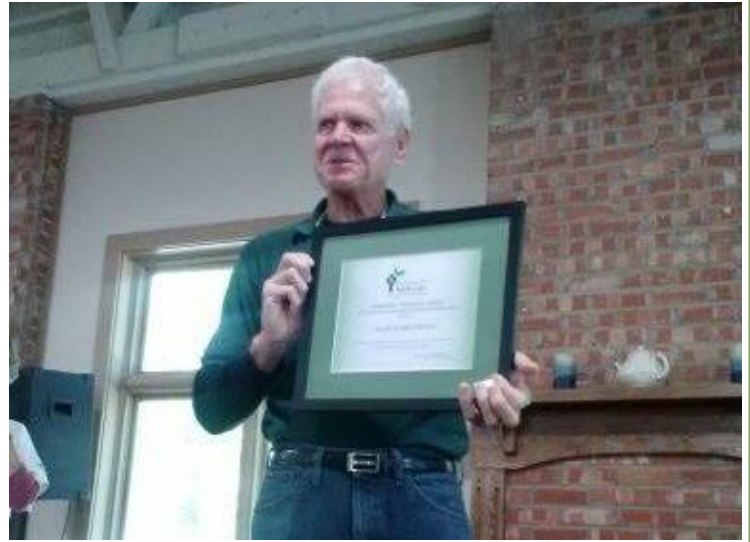


ANNUAL MEETING NOTES

By Diane Waddell

PEC Annual meeting was held at Ferncliff Camp and Conference on Oct. 18. A highlight was sharing our annual awards to recognize individuals and organizations for their forward thinking and leadership in caring for God's creation.

David Gill, Executive Director of Ferncliff Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center, received the William Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award. Since 1997, Rev. Gill has steadily led Ferncliff to be one of the most sustainable camp/ conference centers in the country. Under Gill's leadership and direction, Ferncliff built an entirely new youth camp with geo-thermal for heating/cooling and the recently completed Eco Center that will serve as a center for creation care and the home for the SUTS Solar School.



Chris McRae receives the award for Solar Under the Sun



David Gill with Ann Owen

Solar Under the Sun received the Restoring Creation Award for environmental work of an organization. It is a ministry of Synod of the Sun that trains volunteers to design and install solar power systems in partnership with communities that lack

reliable electrical power. This organization is now establishing solar at a rate of almost two installations per month. In the past four years, SUTS completed nine training sessions, trained 191 missionaries, and conducted 50 solar mission outreaches in three countries: Haiti, Ukraine and Kenya. Chris McRae, Executive Director, received the award.

PEC recognized the work of Regional Reps Ann Owen and Andrew Plocher who have completed a two year term. Ann was also recognized as hospitality chair for the conference and co-chairing the pre-conference tour. We welcomed the new SW Regional Rep, Paul Homeyer, who was elected by e-vote.

Potential changes in the by-laws, which had been emailed to the membership, were reviewed. After a subsequent recommendation, it was voted that there be no changes in the election of the nominating committee. Other by-laws changes were approved.

PEC membership unanimously approved a motion to endorse the Fossil Free PCUSA overture.



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NEW in 2013:

Please note that you now must opt-in to receive a hard copy of the PEC newsletter via US mail. If you do not check the opt-in box above, you will receive the newsletter via email only.