

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC)


PRESBYTERY EARTH CARE PROGRAM

PEC CONFERENCE, STONY POINT NY, AUGUST 8, 2019



Information from Presbytery Earth Care Team Interviews

- **Presbyterians for Earth Care is developing a Presbytery Earth Care Program to engage presbyteries in creation care through formation of earth care teams.**
- **PEC Regional Representatives and Coordinator conducted 14 Interviews.**
- **Presbyteries with earth care teams interviewed, by region:**
 - Northeast – Hudson River**
 - Central East – Baltimore, National Capital, West Virginia**
 - Southeast – Greater Atlanta, Charlotte**
 - Midwest – Northern Plains, Heartland, Giddings-Lovejoy,
Northern Waters, Twin Cities**
 - Southwest – San Gabriel, San Fernando**
 - NW/Mountain – Cascades**

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- **Insights about Presbytery earth care team formation:**
 - This has been almost exclusively a bottom-up process.
 - PEC does not know of a presbytery that has initiated an earth care team.
 - Instead, committed churches have joined together to form one.
 - Requires a highly passionate, energetic person to get it started.
 - No specific approach; each presbytery is different.
 - Where already established, Earth Care Congregations form a natural nucleus for Presbytery earth care teams.
 - PEC will provide training and resources to presbyteries interested in connecting with individuals who are leading their churches toward sustainable and respectful creation care through worship, education, facilities, advocacy and outreach.
 - Presbytery earth care teams will collaborate with individuals and churches in their presbytery to become better stewards of God's creation.

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (PTCA) Earth Care Congregations

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| ▶ <u>Central Presbyterian Church (applying), St. Paul</u> | Medium urban |
| ▶ <u>Cherokee Park United Church , St. Paul</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>Church of the Apostles</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul</u> | Small urban |
| ▶ <u>New Life Presbyterian Church</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>Oak Grove Presbyterian Church</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>First Presbyterian Church of South St. Paul</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church</u> | Small suburban |
| ▶ <u>The House of Hope (applying), St. Paul</u> | Medium urban |
| ▶ <u>Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis</u> | Large urban |

PTCA will soon have largest number of ECCs of any Presbytery = 11

Highlights of PTCA ECCs' earth care activities

Church of the Apostles Earth Angels

- Encourage members to be better Stewards of Creation in weekly e-blasts.
- Regular pick up of litter at Chateaulin Park in local "Adopt a Park" program.
- Annual Earth Day events.
- Installed solar panels on church roof in 2012.
- Removing invasive species from local parks.
- Planting native wildflower species onsite.
- Providing butterfly and bee friendly gardens on the church grounds.
- Promoting awareness of local recycling/reuse opportunities such as "Soles for Souls", electronics and holiday lights recycling.
- Working with consortium of area churches on climate change programming and advocacy.



New Life Presbyterian Church -- Planting Seeds of Hope Community Garden

- 3-part charter agreement among 1/3 church members, 1/3 surrounding community non-church members, and 1/3 immigrant populations.
- Grows vegetables for about 28 individuals and families.
- All garden plots rented at cost of \$32 per season including water.
- Designated clean up days keep the garden well managed.
- Designated plots volunteers plant, grow, and deliver fresh vegetables to area food shelves, managed by participating gardeners and church volunteers.
- Prohibit use of herbicides or pesticides, limit use of fertilizers to ones approved by Garden Coordinating Committee.
- Volunteers conduct all maintenance, manage food shelf plots and are gardeners.



Oak Grove Presbyterian Church Green Committee

- 2nd Annual EV EXPO Sep 13, 2019, co-sponsored by American Lung Association.
- Test drive latest electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids.
- Dealer models: Tesla Model 3, Nissan Leaf, Chevy Bolt/Volt, Ford C-Max Energi, Ford Fusion Energi, Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, Chrysler Pacifica PHEV, Audi e-tron, Fiat 500e, Mini PHEV.
- EV and plug-in hybrid owners showing cars and tell about driving experiences.
- EV chargers, electric bikes, electric mowers & snow blowers, tools on display.
- Mechanic testing EV/hybrid batteries.
- Green Committee leads tours of energy, water and landscaping projects, rooftop solar, LED lighting, energy-efficient HVAC, rain gardens, EV charging stations.
- Church youth providing free car washes (donations accepted).
- 20 KW of solar rooftop panels.
- 50 KW+ of solar from community solar garden near state prison operated by RenaSola.
- Xcel WindSource customer for the equivalent of 100% of power use.
- Renewable energy = 160% of total power usage.
- "Offsets" for 100% of carbon emissions from church's natural gas usage.



Cherokee Park United Church

- Partnered with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and collaborated with the Covenant Presbytery of Texas to approve 2018 GA overtures to spur Congressional action on climate change.
- Primary partner with local, state and national Citizens' Climate Lobby.
- Host of outreach events including showing of Chasing Ice and West Side resident and photographer Monica Bryand's: "Birds Tell Us It's Time to Act; Climate Endangered Birds of MN".
- Rain gardens improve water runoff quality.
- Conversion to LEDs reduced energy usage 60%.
- Largest solar array on any MN church 2012.
- Providing 100% of electricity usage while returning 16mWh to grid.



First Presbyterian Church of South St. Paul Steering Committee

- In 2013, recognizing responsibility as Christians to restore creation, members turned weedy, unused land behind church into organic community garden.
- 19 plots rented to members and neighbors to grow nutritious food.
- Master Gardeners use section to run seed trials for the University of Minnesota and provide free classes to learn more about organic gardening.
- Gardeners are responsible for maintaining and operating the garden.
- Volunteers use 8 plots to grow veggies for food shelf and to sell at the Sunday morning Farmer's Market.
- Since 2013, donated 4,901 pounds of organic vegetables and \$4,215 cash from the Farmer's Market to Neighbors Inc. food shelf.



Westminster Presbyterian Church EcoJustice Ministry Team

- Westminster incorporated 50+ sustainability features into ODOF addition.
- 25-year community solar contract w/RenaSola for 100% of electric power.
- Rainwater conservation/re-use systems for on-site irrigation and interior greywater distribution (toilets, janitorial); plaza fountain and site irrigation.
- Saving ~\$10,000 annually in city stormwater management fees and water charges.
- Future display of real-time performance metrics on monitors in the church, WPC website.
- Green roof reduces heat island effect; 40% native Minnesota plantings.
- Converting all exterior/interior lighting to LEDs, extensive use of natural light and Low-e windows in new addition.
- Recommissioning HVAC systems and mechanical equipment -- 'smart' to optimize energy management.
- All waste is organics/recyclables in 42 recycling/organics/waste 3-bin sets, comprehensive catering policy, increase overall recycling rate to >75%.



Westminster Presbyterian Church EcoJustice Ministry Team

- Works with clergy to include earth care themes in worship through sermons, prayer, music, in Sunday/Wednesday evening services, daily devotionals, etc.
- Co-sponsored Sunday School 2019 arts month on environmental themes.
- Annual EcoJustice Sunday social justice and evening forums on current environmental issues.
- Recent topics: GA divestiture and carbon pricing overtures, BWCA-adjacent sulfide mining, other water conservation/quality issues, climate change and carbon pricing, pipelines through tribal lands, Cuba drinking water systems, food justice, red-lining & eco-justice, and more.
- Divestiture: Westminster Session sold Texas oil well owned for decades; proceeds deposited in general fund.
- Save the Boundary Waters advocacy, opposition to sulfide mining at edge of Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.
- Collaboration with Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota Faith and Clean Energy Campaign to adopt '100% by 2040' Renewable Energy Standard (RES) in the 2018/2019 Legislative Session.