

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Last Wednesday, my letter to you was on the topic of Earth Day. Yesterday, marked the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, and I hope you found ways to celebrate God's creation! If not, please keep thinking of ways that you and your family can help to make the earth a safer, healthier place for all living things.

While God calls us individually to care for creation, churches and church-related organizations can adopt environmental missions and practices, too. I recall visiting churches that had taken on environmental mission emphases. Some created community gardens to supply food to families-in-need and area food pantries. Some initiated recycling programs, whereby aluminum, paper, and other commonly recycled items were broadened to include household batteries, toothpaste tubes, snack wrappers, and other materials. These churches had an environmental project or two that they pursued, as well. Projects such as reforestation, wells and water purification systems, climate change advocacy, endangered animals, etc... Some pursued social justice issues to advocate for human beings or other living things affected by corporate or environmental pollution in their communities, counties and beyond.

The ELCA's Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, has issued a statement regarding Earth Day 2020. It is available for you to read on the ELCA website homepage. In it, she references the ELCA's social statement entitled, "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice."

On a regional level, the La Crosse Area Synod has a Creation Care Team. The Creation Care Team sends out information to pastors in order to encourage awareness of God's creation, highlight available resources, and suggest potential mission projects. If you are interested in learning more, or would like to participate in activities of the Creation Care Team, please contact the Synod Office.

All of us have a role as stewards of God's creation. That role begins with our own "carbon footprint." What might God be calling you/your family/St. Paul's Church to do for the sake of the world?

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Cathy