



# **Becoming a Creation-Care Congregation**

A Self-Organizing Kit  
Guidelines and Resources

# **Lutheran Restoring Creation Congregation Kit**

## **Items in the Kit**

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# Why Lutherans Care for All Creation

**1. Theology:** We affirm God as creator of all. We have an incarnation theology that cherishes the continuing presence of God in, with, and under all reality. We see redemption as the restoration of creation, as “new creation.” We see the future straining toward the fulfillment of creation.

**2. Cross and Resurrection:** The gospel leads us to see God in solidarity with the human situation in all its pain and agony, especially the most vulnerable—humans and non-humans. A theology of the cross gives us solidarity with “creation groaning in travail” and stresses that God redeems *all* creation. Our affirmation of resurrection offers hope for new life in this world.

**3. Worship and Sacraments:** We affirm that the material is a vehicle of the divine and that Christ is present in such ordinary elements of life as grapes and grain—the basis for our delight in and reverence for creation. Our worship invites us into transforming encounters with God deep in the flesh and in the world. We are called to worship God *with* creation.

**4. Ecclesiology:** Our human vocation is “to serve and to preserve” Earth. We believe that the church exists for the sake of the world. We do not have an escapist theology. We are called to continual reformation in response to the needs and crises of this life. When Luther was asked what he would do if the world would end tomorrow, he apparently replied, “Plant a tree.”

**5. Ethics:** We have an ethic of faith-active-in-love for neighbor and for all creation. Liberated from a legalism that enslaves, we are freed to address new situations, such as the ecological state of the world. We do so not to dominate but as servants to our human and non-human neighbors. We do so not out of fear or guilt or arrogance but joyfully out of grace, love, and gratitude.

**6. Social Ministry:** With a heritage back to the Reformation, Lutherans have a history of social service to the poor, the elderly, the sick, the oppressed, the marginalized—through hospitals, homes for the elderly, social ministry agencies, Lutheran Immigration Service, and Lutheran World Relief. We extend that service to healing Earth community.

**7. Advocacy:** We ELCA Lutherans have relevant social statements: “Caring for Creation” and “Sustainable Livelihood for All.” We have a staff person in environmental/hunger advocacy in Washington and Lutheran Public Policy offices in many states.

**8. Scholarship and Education:** Many Lutheran scholars have written and spoken on ecology—in theology, ethics, biblical study, and social commentary. Colleges and seminaries of the ELCA have environmental ministry courses that prepare Lutherans for leadership in church and world. Many continuing education events for clergy and laity highlight creation care.

**9. Caring for Creation across the church:** Several synods with creation-care committees have declared themselves to be Care-For-Creation Synods. Many Lutheran congregations incorporate Earth-care commitment in their life and mission—worship, education, building and grounds, discipleship at home and work, and public ministry. Lutheran camps have brought environmental concerns to many people. The ELCA headquarters has a Green Team that works to model environmental action. The ELCA offers grants for environmental projects.

**10. Organizations for Earthkeeping:** Lutherans have led in the Green Congregation Program, the Green Seminary Initiative, the Web of Creation, promoting creation-care worship throughout the church year and the Season of Creation ([www.letallcreationpraise.org](http://www.letallcreationpraise.org)), and Lutherans Restoring Creation ([www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org](http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org)).

Lutherans are in a critical position to listen to the cry of the poor along with the cry of Earth and to take leadership in addressing these critical issues of our day. In whatever context you may be serving, we encourage you to participate in this endeavor.

## **Becoming a Creation Care Congregation Nature and Process of the Program: An Overview**

The purpose of this kit is to enable you to have a basic program and organization to function as a creation-care congregation as well as have access to the resources needed to carry out this program on an ongoing basis. Whether or not you are already active in greening your congregation, this kit will enable you to identify yourself with Lutherans Restoring Creation, provide an overall plan for your efforts, and help you to further your congregational commitment to ecology and justice.

This is not a certification program. No one will tell you what to do or require you to submit a report. Nothing is expected for you to do aside from what *you* choose to do in carrying out your commitments to the program. There is no cost for this program apart from what *you* decide to spend on your mission to care for creation.

Stated positively, this is a program of identification with the goals and mission of Lutherans Restoring Creation. It is a commitment program. That is, we are inviting you to embrace a mission statement for your congregation and then proceed to carry it out as you are able. You will be responsible to yourself and to Earth community for what you do and how you do it.

This is a program for any and every congregation—large or small, urban or rural, old or young, wealthy or poor, of any ethnic identification. For each congregation, there are multiple ways for you to carry out a commitment to God’s creation. Maybe you have already done a great many projects that are Earth-friendly as part of your commitment to care for Earth. Then this program will count and celebrate everything you have already done, provide some structure to your efforts, and enable you to act in solidarity with other Lutheran congregations.

### **The steps are simple**

- 1. Approval of a Covenant with Creation.** The pastor(s) and church council approve the mission statement on behalf of the congregation, expressing your creation-care commitment in the following five areas: worship, education, building and grounds, member discipleship, public witness. You can make the commitments public in a brief ritual within a worship service.
- 2. A Green Team and the Action Plan.** As part of this process, the pastor and church council authorize the establishment of an individual liaison or “green team” to record, carry out and report the commitments through the action plan. The church council or another committee may serve to carry out the creation care commitments.
- 3. Promote your identity.** Fill in and display the certificate identifying your congregation as a creation care community affiliated with Lutherans Restoring Creation. Promote this identity among the members. You may also want to display the “Ten Reasons Why Lutherans Care for Creation.” Encourage the congregation members and request the committees to participate in carrying out the commitments.
- 4. Report and renew.** We encourage the green team to report their projects and events to the church council/ congregation and to redo the action plan process on an annual basis.

### **Getting Started**

The program can begin from any place—pastor, interested lay people, a standing committee, the church council. Once there is some interest, take the program to the pastor and church council for discussion, approval, and implementation on behalf of the congregation. If desired, have the congregation approve the plan at a duly constituted congregational meeting.

This is not a top-down program. It is directed by you at the congregational level. You are free to change, adapt, and add to the program. Edit the mission statement to meet your needs and commitments. Develop your way of implementing the program and adjust the action plan to serve your situation; celebrate all that you do.

Lutherans Restoring Creation stands ready to assist you in providing this program, in making resources available for its implementation, and for promoting your story online as you choose to share it with us.

### **The “Green Team”:**

**1. Formation.** A green team may come into existence in a variety of ways: a self-designated group that approaches the pastor and the church council for authorization, appointed by the pastor and the church council, or recruited in response to an educational program on Earth care or a care for creation worship service.

**2. Maintain Momentum.** Maintain the green team through regular meetings, representation from various committees, invitations to current and new members.

**3. Choose a name:** Green Team, Creation Care Task Force, Earth-Care Committee, Stewards for Conservation; choose a name that acts as a welcoming banner to all. Discuss what words in your community have politicized connotations and try to veer away from those that may alienate anyone in your congregation.

**4. Leaven for the Entire Congregation:** The use of “Team” is our term for the group that sees that the commitments to care for creation are carried out, because a “team” functions differently from other committees. The team may take the leadership on some projects, but mainly it does not serve like other committees. It is like leaven in the congregation to see that the various committees, staff, youth group, older adult organization, Bible Study Groups, and functionaries of the church carry out the various programs. [See the directions for the use of the action plan.]

**5. Alternatives.** We recommend that a distinct group, such as a Green Team, has the responsibility to give leadership in carrying out the Earth care commitments. However, there need not be a separate group. The functions of the Green Team can be carried out by a standing committee such as the social ministry committee or the stewardship committee or by the church council representatives from the various committees, as long as the arrangement is working well to carry out the commitments of the mission statement.

### **Accepting the program and Approving the Covenant**

1. The purpose of accepting the program and approving the mission statement is to engage the entire congregation through its leadership to be aware of our Christian vocation to care for creation and to participate in this mission of the congregation. The benefit of pursuing efforts in five areas serves to make the mission comprehensive and to generate an identity of Earth-care as integral to the congregation. The program gives structure to your efforts in Earth-care and makes them intentional and public.
2. A first step would be for those who initiate the process to make the church council aware of the proposal to accept the care for creation mission for your congregation. In turn, the council may want to make the statement known to the whole congregation through a newsletter and/or bulletin insert. Invite input about the program and the covenant's affirmations.
3. When you distribute the Covenant, make it clear that this is part of a program to be a care-for-creation congregation identified with Lutherans Restoring Creation. Make it clear that this is not a certification program and does not commit the congregation to any particular actions, projects, or expenses apart from what the congregation itself chooses to do. Use the statement "Why Lutherans Care for Creation" to establish the reasons for the program.
4. We encourage the clergy and church council to read the statement carefully and to edit or adapt it to your situation and congregational ethos. In a formal procedure, the council will approve the affirmation, identify/authorize the liaison/green team, and establish any protocols for responsibility and reporting. You may want to have the covenant approved in a plenary meeting by the whole congregation.
5. You may want to consider incorporating into the overall mission statement of your congregation a phrase or sentence reflecting your commitment as a creation-care congregation.
6. Announce the approval of the program and the mission statement through the newsletter, bulletins, and personal witness at congregational gatherings. Urge people to participate in and support the effort. Consider using the brief ritual in this kit that can be part of any worship service as a way of integrating the program into the life of the congregation and acknowledging the sacred nature of our common vocation of Earth-Care.
8. Consider renewing the commitment to be a congregation that cares for creation on an annual basis, such as at an Earth Sunday service in April or perhaps at a service in the fall when you also ask members to make their personal stewardship commitment: (See "Covenant with Creation" and ritual in this kit).
9. You may want to let the larger community in which your church is located know about your Earth-care commitment via a local newspaper or through your synodical media outlets.

## **Congregational Care-for-Creation Covenant**

As a congregation committed to care for creation, we affirm God's creation in all its glory and beauty. We acknowledge God as the source of all things. We acknowledge Christ as the redeemer of all things. We acknowledge the Spirit as the sustainer of all things. As a result, we strive to respect all of life as sacred. We accept our vocation as Earth-keepers who care for creation. We accept our responsibility to live justly in relation to our fellow human beings in ways that all creatures may mutually thrive together.

**Worship:** We seek to worship throughout the year so that we express our gratitude and praise to God as creator, redeemer, and sustainer. We are committed to glorify God intentionally together with all creation. In worship, we will celebrate creation, confess our sins against creation, grieve the losses of creation, and commit ourselves to care for Earth.

**Education:** We seek to learn about the biblical, theological, and ecclesial traditions concerning creation, including the biblical mandate from God for us to care for Earth. We also seek to learn about the present degradations of creation due to human activity, how these degradations are related to human exploitation and oppression, how we as religious people are implicated in these matters, and what we as Christians can do to heal and restore creation for future generations.

**Building and Grounds:** We agree to assess the impact that our activities and the use and maintenance of our property may have upon creation—in such matters as energy and water use, cleaning products, lawn care, paper use, food choices, recycling and waste, and transportation. We will strive to make choices that lessen our negative impact on Earth and that serve to renew and restore Earth community.

**Discipleship as Home and Work:** We encourage ourselves as individual members of this congregation—at whatever age, economic level, ethnic group, or walk of life—to care for creation in our personal lifestyle, in our homes, and at our work—knowing that our habits and practices can contribute significantly to care for creation. We seek to foster a closer relationship with nature so that we can live simply and walk lightly upon Earth.

**Public Ministry:** We seek to change the systems that foster the degradation of creation and to rectify the injustices that result from it. And we seek to alert our members to environmental legislation that protects creation and to encourage their active participation in the development of public policy. We encourage members to engage in civic activities that foster ecological health.

Because we desire to leave Earth a better place for our children, we will promote love and respect for creation among our youth, teach them responsible Earth practices, and engage them in projects that restore creation. We will pursue this mission in a grace-filled manner, seeking to find hope and joy in the commitments and sacrifices these provisions may entail and in the restorations they engender. We seek to let our care for creation be known to others.

## **Action Plan Guidelines**

- 1. Study the action plan:** Consult the Manual and the websites/ resources listed with each item for more information.
- 2. Choose one project from each category for the year.** Count the projects you are already doing and add more where feasible [e. g. celebrate Earth Sunday]. Be sure to choose from each of the five areas. As you proceed fill in the *Action Plan Form*. Choose more than one project if it seems feasible.  
**Choose actions/projects that . . .**
  - Have support in the congregation
  - Have committed people to carry them out
  - Are affordable for the congregation
  - You have energy and inspiration for
- 3. Delegate the responsibility:** Identify which individuals or committee will be responsible for carrying out each project. Contact them to see if they are willing to do it [e. g. The Worship Committee]. Offer access to the resources available to do the project [e. g. two websites].
- 4. Identify a committee member to follow up:** designate a member from the creation-care team to offer support to the committee to whom the project has been delegated and follow up to track the project through to completion. Or use the liaison representatives to the various committees who are on the church council [e. g. a liaison from the Creation-Care team to the worship committee].
- 5. Make the project ongoing:** When it is completed for that year, set things up so that the project will continue into the next year [e. g. Put the celebration of Earth Sunday on the worship calendar as a regular part of each year].
- 6. Report:** Report your successes to the church council and the congregation. Promote your identity as a creation-care congregation [e. g. Church newsletter with pictures of Earth Sunday celebration. Local newspaper].
- 7. Start again for the next year.** Begin process of choosing projects for the following year. Begin with #1 above. [e. g. celebrate The Season of Creation]. Be sure to revisit the overall vision provided by the five areas.
- 8. Other.** If the projects recommended in the action plan do not fit your situation, consider opportunities that use the resources of your congregation or serve the needs of your community.

**Evaluate and adjust:** Meet regularly (once a month or once every two months). As you work through the year, evaluate your action plan. Where needed, go back and retrace steps to make sure your action plan is being carried out. Affirm where it is working. When the steps suggested here are not working for you, revise the plan and adjust it to your needs and situation.

**Remember the overall goal:** To incorporate care for creation into the identity and mission of your congregation so that there is an ethos of care for God's Earth in all that you do.

## **Lutherans Restoring Creation: Action Plan Form**

Name of Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Care for Creation Shepherd (name, e-mail, phone#) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Worship:**

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Committee/group to refer to: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Person to follow up \_\_\_\_\_

c. Next step by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Education:**

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Committee/group to refer to: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Person to follow up \_\_\_\_\_

c. Next step by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Building and Grounds as Model:**

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Committee/group to refer to: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Person to follow up \_\_\_\_\_

c. Next step by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Discipleship as Home and Work:**

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Committee/group to refer to: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Person to follow up \_\_\_\_\_

c. Next step by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Public Witness and Policy Advocacy:**

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Committee/group to refer to: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Person to follow up \_\_\_\_\_

c. Next step by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lutherans Restoring Creation**

## Action Plan Ideas

The goal is to make a difference by transforming attitudes and commitments and by embracing concrete actions that reduce human ecological impact on the earth and contribute to justice for people affected by environmental degradation.

### Part 1. Transformation through Worship: “Let all creation praise God”

(all resources found if searched on [LetAllCreationPraise.org](http://LetAllCreationPraise.org))

- a. **All Worship:** Render every service as creation-care worship: call to worship, confessions, prayers, and blessing/commission, plus scriptures, hymns, and sermons.
- b. **Season of Creation.** Observe a four-week optional season to celebrate creation as part of the church year, with liturgies, sermons, and alternative scripture lessons, etc.
- c. **Special Worship Services.** Observe a special day, such as Earth Sunday in April [[www.creationjustice.org](http://www.creationjustice.org)], Rogation Sunday, or a “Greening of the Cross” service in the Easter Season.
- d. **Blessing of the Animals.** Hold a service near the time of St. Francis Day (in October) or any time in the church year.
- e. **Appoint the sanctuary.** With creation-care banners, greenery, art.
- f. **Green your worship practices:** energy-saving lights and heat; altar plants, local wine, green cleaning products, eliminate/recycle/reuse paper, intinction.
- g. **Other:** For example, develop your own worship resources and occasions for celebration.

### 2. Transformation through Education: “Know your traditions and your world”

- a. **Earthbound:** Adult education for this six-part video series produced by the ELCA to explore the theological foundations of Earth care and to examples of Lutheran Institutions carrying them out. [[www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org](http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org)].
- b. **“Caring for Creation.”** Organize a forum or study group to read and discuss the ELCA Social Statement. Copies available from the ELCA with guide. See the 52 excerpts from this social statement for use for use in the church bulletin each week.

- c. ***Awakening to God's Call to Earthkeeping.*** An ELCA curriculum for adult forums or study groups. Or consider using the ELCA Lenten series "Creation Waits with Eager Longing" Copies available at [[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)].
- d. **Youth.** Try the "Know Trash? No Trash!" program designed by Lutherans Restoring Creation, read stories from other Youth Groups, raise funds through a recycling program. More info at: [www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/ministry-areas/youth](http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/ministry-areas/youth)
- e. **Children.** Kid's books abound with environmental themes (The Lorax, The Giving Tree, etc) but for integration of scripture try: *I Love God's Green Earth: Devotions for Kids Who Want to Take Care of God's Creation* by Michael and Caroline Carroll (Tyndale House Publishers, 2010).
- f. **Other:** For example, organize forums with local experts or develop a Bible study.

### 3. Building and Grounds: "The church as an alternative community"

- a. **Energy Stewards Initiative.** LRC program for congregations to reduce your energy use/costs and carbon footprint, with online tracking of energy data, an action plan, and consultation and accountability through regular webinars. Or get an energy audit and follow steps to reduce energy. For more info contact your local utility or visit: [www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/project-elca-cuts-carbon-emissions](http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/project-elca-cuts-carbon-emissions)
- b. ***Comprehensive Environmental Guide for Churches, Their Buildings and Grounds.*** Use a checklist along with the full guide for an overall environmental inventory of your congregation, and take action. Download the entire guide - some info may be outdated, but the ties to faith and ideas are timeless. [www.webofcreation.org/Environmental%20Guide.pdf](http://www.webofcreation.org/Environmental%20Guide.pdf)
- c. **Choose a specific project:** Replace all incandescent bulbs; retrofit fluorescent lighting; develop a recycling program; reduce paper use; purchase green cleaning products; make Earth-friendly food choices; eliminate Styrofoam; develop Earth-friendly lawn care, among others.
- d. **Use of land:** Community garden; restore to prairie; maintain any natural habitat; plant trees; create a sanctuary or peace garden; nurture animal life.
- e. **Know your property as an "Earth community."** Get to know the trees, plants, animals, insects, birds, and other creatures who live with you on this space. Live in such a way that all of you may thrive together. Pray for them. Worship with them. Include

some in your church directory as your creation family. For directions, go to:  
<http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/stewarding-your-property-as-an-earth-community>.

#### **4. Discipleship at home and work: “Love your neighbor/ Care for Creation”**

- a. **Covenant with Creation:** Plan a worship service in which members can identify Earth-friendly the Earth-friendly practices they are willing to commit to at home and work. Use a brief ritual that makes these commitments a stewardship offering. Example covenants and ritual available at [www.letallcreationpraise.org](http://www.letallcreationpraise.org).
- b. **Conduct a workshop on making your home Earth-friendly.** Use the material available in the *Comprehensive Environmental Guide for Congregations, Their Buildings and Grounds* as a guide to inform members about the areas of greening they can do. <http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/congregations/building-and-grounds>.
- c. **Support groups.** Excellent for change of habits and accountability for “eco-recovery.” Use *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life* [[www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org)].
- d. **Devotional resources:** Recommend creation-care resources to members for personal devotions. Ask people to sign up to follow a discipline with a resource for a season of the church year.
- e. **A retreat in nature.** Lead a retreat for people to get closer to the natural world. For guidelines, see <http://www.letallcreationpraise.org/retreat-on-awe-and-mystery>

#### **5. Public Witness/ Policy Advocacy: “The church exists to serve the world”**

- a. **Hands-on project.** Learn what environmental projects are happening in your area and what organizations are sponsoring them. Recruit members of your congregation to partner with them in the effort. Restore a habitat, clean up trash, plant trees.
- b. **Informational forums.** Learn what environmental organizations are in your community and invite a representative of one or more to present a forum on their program. Promote the ways that your congregation can support their efforts.
- c. **Legislative forum.** Invite the head of the Lutheran Public Policy office in your area to preach and present a forum at your congregation. Or invite a local official familiar with local state and regional issues around the environment. If there is a critical issue in your area, plan a forum for information and conversation about it.

- d. **Action alerts:** Invite members to sign up to receive action alerts via e-mail from ELCA e-Advocacy Network: <http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Advocacy/Get-Involved>. The process for contacting legislators is made very simple.
  
- e. **Partner with other faith communities.** Join with others seeking to green their congregations. If no such organization exists, start one by asking the green team of one or more other congregations to meet with you and share ideas. Or, if you have been active for several years, offer to mentor another congregation in becoming a creation-care community.

# PERSONAL COVENANT WITH GOD'S CREATION

Every action has consequences on other humans and on the earth. Become aware of the outcome of your actions, reduce your impact on others, and walk lightly on Earth. Consider these practices to be a spiritual discipline. Have others in your household sign as well and decorate and post this record of your goals to catch your attention - keep it sacred!

*I pledge to work toward the following environmentally safe practices:*

## 1. EDUCATION

- \_\_\_ Learn about the environmental crisis and ecological justice.
- \_\_\_ Read about or join a study group fostering voluntary simplicity.

## 2. GREEN YOUR LIVING SPACE

### Energy Use

- \_\_\_ Alternative energy: solar/ geothermal/ purchase wind from your energy company.
- \_\_\_ Purchase Energy Star appliances (refrigerator, dishwasher, washer/dryer, water heater, dehumidifier) and high efficiency furnace, air conditioner, and windows.
- \_\_\_ Get programmable thermostat. Lower thermostat in winter; raise it in summer. Change settings when away. Use ceiling fans.
- \_\_\_ Clean/ replace filters for all appliances/furnace with filters.
- \_\_\_ Replace all incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- \_\_\_ When not in use, turn off lights, TV, computer, appliances. Prefer natural light.
- \_\_\_ Turn off TV, computer, microwave, etc. at the strip/ plug.
- \_\_\_ Run full loads in dish washer, washer, and dryer. Use short cycles/ clothes line.
- \_\_\_ Use microwave/ toaster oven/ slow cooker rather than oven/range.
- \_\_\_ Set refrigerator at 36F to 42F, freezer at -5F to +6F, and water heater at 120F.
- \_\_\_ Use cold or warm water when washing clothes; rinse in cold water.
- \_\_\_ Insulate walls/ attic. Repair leaks around windows/doors. Lock windows to seal.
- \_\_\_ Repair hot water leaks. Insulate water heater ("blanket") + hot water pipes (wrap).

### Water Use

- \_\_\_ Do not let water run while doing tasks.
- \_\_\_ Install low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators.
- \_\_\_ Repair faucet leaks and toilet runs immediately.
- \_\_\_ Take a short shower rather than a bath, and shower less often.
- \_\_\_ Wash dishes and laundry on full load.

### Food

- \_\_\_ Buy fair-trade +/- or organic products.
- \_\_\_ Buy local produce and products.
- \_\_\_ Buy only what you will consume, and then use all you buy.
- \_\_\_ Put on your plate only what you will eat, and then eat all on your plate.

- \_\_\_ Know where your food comes from and appreciate all who made it:  
<http://www.nourishlife.org/>

### **Paper Use**

- \_\_\_ Use recycled, post-consumer paper products for kitchen, bathroom, and cleaning.
- \_\_\_ Avoid paper towels; use cloth napkins and handkerchiefs.
- \_\_\_ Use electronic media rather than paper.
- \_\_\_ Use recycled, post-consumer, acid-free note/office paper or tree-free paper.
- \_\_\_ Use the paper completely on both sides.

### **Reduce/ Recycle/ Reuse**

- \_\_\_ Buy less stuff you have to throw away (tips at [www.goingzerowaste.com](http://www.goingzerowaste.com))
- \_\_\_ Find out exactly what your town recycles and whatever is left look up here:  
[www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/organizing-tips-techniques/recycle-anything](http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/organizing-tips-techniques/recycle-anything)
- \_\_\_ Use non-toxic products whenever possible: check <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>
- \_\_\_ Make your own consumables/toiletries: [http://eartheasy.com/live\\_nontoxic\\_solutions.htm](http://eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm)
- \_\_\_ Do not put grease or strong chemicals down drains.
- \_\_\_ Buy products with no/less packaging.
- \_\_\_ Compost: create nutrient-rich soil *and* prevent methane exhaust landfills  
[http://eartheasy.com/grow\\_compost.html](http://eartheasy.com/grow_compost.html)
- \_\_\_ Use canvas bags for shopping or reuse paper/plastic when shopping.
- \_\_\_ Find out if there are community sharing options nearby (Tool Libraries,  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org))

### 3. TRANSPORTATION

- \_\_\_ Purchase a car with high miles/gallon. Maintain engine/tire pressure. Change oil/air filter.
- \_\_\_ Over 55 miles per hour is least efficient: drive more slowly. Easy stops and starts. Do not idle.
- \_\_\_ Where feasible walk, bicycle, carpool or take public transportation.
- \_\_\_ Flying is the “dirtiest” way to travel, but if you have to, offset your carbon use: carbonfund.org
- \_\_\_ Consider alternatives: shop online, web conference meetings,

### 4. WORK

- \_\_\_ Green the work space and work practices: office, shop, factory, classroom, farm
- \_\_\_ Advocate with employers to green your company, agency, or institution.
- \_\_\_ Promote greening among fellow workers and clients/customers/students.

### 5. NATURE

- \_\_\_ Enjoy as kin the plants and pets in your living space.
- \_\_\_ Take ten minutes a day to enjoy/love nature (sit outside, pet an animal, garden).
- \_\_\_ Use devotional materials that enhance your love of nature and your care for it.

### 6. PUBLIC COMMITMENTS

- \_\_\_ Advocate for environmentally friendly legislation and policies.  
<http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Advocacy>
- \_\_\_ Restore a local habitat; protest a local environmental violation.
- \_\_\_ Contribute to social justice organizations and environmental organizations.
- \_\_\_ Invest in socially responsible stocks and bonds that foster eco-justice.

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Litany for our Personal Covenant with Creation**

L: For the marvelous grace of your Creation, we pour out our thanks to You, our God.

**C: We praise you, O Lord  
for plants growing in earth and water,  
for life inhabiting lakes and seas,  
for life creeping in soils and land,  
for creatures living in wetlands and waters,  
for life flying above earth and sea,  
for animals dwelling in woods and fields.**

L: How many and wonderful are your works, our God! In wisdom you have made them all!

**C: But we confess, dear Lord,  
As creatures privileged with care and keeping of Your Creation that we have  
abused Your Creation gifts through arrogance, ignorance, and greed.**

**We confess, Lord, that we often are unaware of how deeply we have hurt Your  
good earth and its marvelous gifts.**

**We confess that we are often unaware of how our abuse of creation has also been  
an abuse of ourselves.**

**For our wrongs, Lord, we ask forgiveness. We offer our repentance. We promise to  
reverence Your Creation as a gracious gift entrusted to us by You, our God. We  
promise anew to be stewards and not pillagers of what You have entrusted to us.  
We offer our covenant with creation to pledge our commitment to care for Your  
good Earth.**

L: Creator God,

You have given us every reason to learn and promote this wisdom of lives lived in harmony with Creation. May You daily be present with us, gracing our service, our loving, our striving, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

**C: Amen**

**Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC)**



## Resources for Creation Care Congregations

The goal of the LRC program is to incorporate creation care into the full identity and mission of your congregation and to foster an *ethos* in which everyone considers creation care to be part of your life together and your witness to their community. Therefore, choose actions and programs that contribute to this goal.

As you work your creation care congregational program, you may want to expand the choices for the action plan to make bolder plans, to draw upon particular assets, and to address local needs and opportunities. Consult the many additional resources on the websites sponsored by LRC.

- 1. LRC Manual for Congregations.** This manual has many ideas for eliciting the full participation of the congregation as well as some principles for pursuing creation-care. There is also an excellent manual for congregations developed by students at Luther College, with many ideas and resources.
- 2. An Expanded Action Plan.** The congregational manual includes a much fuller action plan following the same categories as in your action plan: worship, education, building and grounds, personal discipleship, and public witness/policy advocacy. You will find there more choices and links to more resources. Explore the site for additional ideas.
- 3. Renewing your program and taking advanced steps.** The manual includes many ideas for maintaining a vital creation care program and for taking it to the next level. If you find that the actions in the action plan have been exhausted by your efforts or you want more choices, consult the ideas in these sections, which come at the end of the manual.
- 4. Stories.** For ideas and inspiration from others, consult the story section on the LRC website to see what programs and projects have been carried out by other Lutheran congregations
- 5. Theological foundations.** There are reflections for each of the five areas, identifying the biblical, theological, and ethical foundations for choosing programs and taking actions in each area of the action plan. These are helpful for study sessions or adult forums. Check out the "Theology" section on the left sidebar for more resources.
- 6. Special LRC Congregational programs.** Consider joining the *GreenFaith* certification program for Lutheran Congregations. The program includes mentoring to complete a set of actions and events. LRC also sponsors *Energy Stewards Initiative*, a program that features online tracking of energy use, an action plan, and bi-monthly webinars that guide you through a process designed to lower energy use and carbon footprint and to free up funds for other ministries. Go to the sections of the LRC website on the left sidebar to access information.
- 7. Online resources and networks.** LRC sponsors [www.letallcreationpraise.org](http://www.letallcreationpraise.org), a website devoted to care for creation worship throughout the year, featuring resources to celebrate an

alternative four-week Season of Creation with alternative lessons, liturgies, and ideas. Our Facebook page is constantly sharing other great sites and materials – [follow us!](#)

**8. Be creative.** We encourage you to develop your own resources for this program. And we hope you will share them with us so that we can energize and inspire other congregations to join this effort to restore creation.