

By The Rev. Kris Litman-Koon

Communion With Creation

Lutherans gathered at the coast for collaboration on green ministries

Though the wrong seems off so strong, God is the ruler yet

The Lowcountry weather was not its normal ideal during the recent weekend of November 15-17, but that did not hinder twenty-five Lutherans from gathering at the Coastal Retreat Center to discuss, learn, pray, reflect, and be motivated for God's work of caring for creation. These individuals hailed from South Carolina, Washington DC, Maryland, and Colorado, and all left with a greater understanding of being created in the image of God, and how that directs our interaction with the whole created order: intentionally, graciously, and reverently.

The forum began with a focus on local issues and moved to more expansive issues. Members of the Isle of Palms sea turtle rescue team gave a presentation Friday evening that allowed everyone to see that some of the greatest green successes can be found at the local level. In addition, the sea turtles rescue offered an example of how individuals, groups like congregations, broader communities and municipalities can work together, even if the issue being addressed is specific to another region of the country. Throughout the weekend, the conversation expanded to cover broader topics that have a wider impact, like ocean pollution and climate change.

The weekend was sponsored by Lutherans Restoring Creation, which is an independent network within the ELCA that consists of dedicated stewards of earth and neighbor. Many of the conversations revolved around Christians' unique role within the broader environmental movement, which in a nutshell is



that we proclaim God's promise of hope and healing for all in Jesus Christ. Conversations that revolve around God as well as conversations that revolve around environmental degradation understandably lead us often to erect mental defenses. So a highlight of the weekend was having a live video presentation from Rachel Malena-Chan, who is an environmental communicator from Vancouver. She specializes in helping people move from their anxieties regarding the environment (which often lead to inaction) to meaningful actions of care.

A recurring meme throughout the weekend was this: the matters of concern for creation can be meaningfully and faithfully addressed, and what it will take is a long-term commitment of both personal actions and calling for systemic changes. As those two go hand in hand, Christians should recognize that these

parallel our baptismal responsibilities of personal acts of faith as well as communal care for others and the world (ELW p.228).

If you are interested in being involved in the SC Synod's ongoing work regarding creation care, please contact Pastor Kris Litman-Koon at Pastor.KLK@gmail.com. □



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