

CARING FOR CREATION NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2008

EARTH DAY SUNDAY is coming! Earth Day is April 22; you are encouraged to emphasize care of creation on the Sunday before or after Earth Day. There are many good materials available at <http://www.nccecojustice.org/EarthDay/index.html>. Share what your church does through this newsletter.

TWO EXCELLENT WEB SITES to help you live responsibly, find “green” products, where to recycle etc.

<http://www.newdream.org/consumer/index.php>
greenguide@thegreenguide.nationalgeographic.com

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM PRESBYTERY RESOURCE CENTER: Use them for Sunday School classes or special programs. Some churches have “movie nights,” complete with popcorn and discussion following the movie. One of the topics is care of creation.

This package includes three DVD's and one VHS tape that deal with environmental issues from theological, scientific, and practical points of view. They are appropriate for one session or several using discussion guides and Bible study.

KEEPING THE EARTH: RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE ENVIRONMENT 27 minutes, DVD. Produced by the Union of Concerned Scientists in cooperation with the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. Narrated by James Earl Jones. Quote: “Nature is God’s Textbook.” Theme: Creation is good and the diversity of life is a gift. The meaning of “dominion” in Genesis and the concept of “Sabbath” are discussed. This inspirational video calls for partnership between science and religion. Study guide included.

POWER SHIFT: ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY 26 minutes, DVD. Produced by California State and Consumer Services Agency. Narrated by Cameron Diaz. Quote: “Americans consume our body weight in petroleum products each week.” Theme: “Power Shift” means moving away from fossil fuels to renewable resources in order to save the planet. All life on earth is connected; we’re all in this together. Good list of practical suggestions. Suitable for teens and adults.

KILOWATT OURS: A PLAN TO RE-ENERGIZE AMERICA by Jeff Barrie. 38 or 56 minutes. DVD. Quote: “We’re poisoning our grandchildren, We’ve got to stop.” Theme: Very clear discussion of problems electric usage causes with graphic local examples – West Virginia mountaintop removal, Great Smokey Mountains air pollution, interview with Asheville physician on asthma in children caused by using coal to generate power. Includes concrete and compelling suggestions on how to use less energy. Suitable for teens and adults. Includes study guide.

GOD’S CREATION AND GLOBAL WARMING 15 minutes, VHS. Produced by National Council of Churches. Quote: “God’s covenant calls us to special responsibility.” Theme: Develops theological premise that all creation is special to God. Explores the meaning of “dominion” and “ecological justice.” Urgent call of world’s religious bodies to care for creation. Good resource for a 1- hour class.

There are many printed materials also available from Resource Center. Two new ones are on “Carbon Free Diets,” one for adults, the other for children. For more information, you may contact Rockwell Ward (wardrocky@yahoo.com) who reviewed these materials.

DRUGGING OUR WATER: We've been reading about it, but what can we do? Bottled water isn't the answer, because steps generally aren't taken to remove pharmaceuticals from it either. And bottled water causes many environmental and social problems. Expensive reverse osmosis filters may help remove drugs, but given that this is a long-term rather than an immediate threat, working to keep pharmaceutical drugs from reaching waterways is our best bet. When disposing of drugs, avoid flushing them down the toilet unless specifically directed to by your physician. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the American Pharmacists Association recommend the following disposal methods:

- Pour pills into a plastic bag before crushing to prevent airborne particles.
- Pour liquid medications into a plastic bag. (Birth control patches may be folded over and disposed of in the garbage.)
- Mix kitty litter or coffee grounds in the plastic bag containing the medication.
- Seal the plastic bag to reduce the risk of potential poisoning.
- Place sealed plastic bag in household trash for disposal.
- Remove and destroy *all* identifying personal information (on the prescription label) from the medication container.
- Recycle empty medication container as allowed in the local recycling area or throw it in the trash.

Remember: Don't hold onto excess pills once you're finished taking them. By the way, many free clinics welcome clean plastic bottles so you may be able to recycle yours. Check with your local ministry.

A PERFECT SEGUE INTO "WHAT TO DO ABOUT PLASTICS?"

How to Avoid Using Plastics

Bring cloth totes or string bags to your supermarket to carry groceries home.

Choose refillable, reusable containers made of glass, ceramic or stainless steel.

Choose packaging that's made from the most easily recyclable materials: paper, glass, metal cans. (Purchasing recycled paper products completes the recycling loop!)

Bring your own container to salad bars, delis, wherever they serve in plastic.

For wrapped foods, best choices are butcher paper, waxed paper or wood-based cellulose bags (available from Seventh Generation).

Avoid single-use, disposable packaging. Buy in bulk, the least-packaged option.

Microwave foods and drinks in oven-proof glass or ceramic. Never let plastic wrap touch food while in the microwave.

Avoid plastic cutlery and dinnerware. Use metal utensils and look for recycled paper products.

ECO-PALMS: Did your church use Eco-palms for Palm Sunday? Many did, but we'd like to know who. Read more at www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2008-03-07-green-palm-sunday_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip