

CARING FOR CREATION – December 2007

AT CHURCH

* **ECO-PALMS:** The Eco-Palm Project, a component of the PC(USA)'s Enough for Everyone program, is paving the way for increased wages and a better-protected ecosystem for the communities that harvest palms in Mexico and Guatemala. At least four PWNC congregations used Eco-Palms in 2007. Information will be available at the beginning of next year for ordering for Palm Sunday.

* **CHURCH STRUCTURES:** A creation-friendly building guide entitled, "Building A Firm Foundation: A Creation Friendly Guide for Churches." The resource is designed to support churches in building structures faithfully and sustainably. Whether churches are breaking ground, remodeling, or managing their grounds, this guide addresses ways that churches can strengthen their church budgets and engage the entire church in continuing care of God's creation.

"In our recent report 'Bottom Line Ministries That Matter,' we found that churches saved between \$8,000-\$17,000 per year by adopting sustainable building practices from switching their light bulbs to adding on solar panels," said Cassandra Carmichael, director of Eco-Justice Programs for the NCC. "'Building a Firm Foundation' guides churches on how to implement steps needed to achieve these savings." This building guide is grounded in Christian theology reflecting principles of stewardship, justice and sufficiency. It can be downloaded at: www.nccecojustice.org/gbbounce.html

SAVE WATER AT HOME: Did you know that simply by pushing the "cold/cold" button for four out of every five loads of laundry you can cut 72 pounds of CO2 emissions this month alone? Keep it up for a year and you'll save more than \$60 in energy costs too! If every American household makes the switch to cold water for four out of five loads, together we'll **save \$6.7 BILLION per year and keep nearly 50 tons of carbon out of the atmosphere** – the equivalent of removing 10 million cars from the road!

U.S. energy consumption is a major cause of climate change and, according to the Rocky Mountain Institute, water heating accounts for approximately 19 percent of total home energy use. Today's more efficient clothes washers and laundry detergents make it possible to get both white and colored clothes clean in cold water. Unless you are dealing with extraordinarily tough stains, washing in hot water is more likely to clean out your wallet than your apparel.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans use a combined 5,900 million gallons of water in & around our homes each day: to cook, wash dishes, flush toilets, shower, bathe and tend to our lawns. If we take into account the water that is used by industries, businesses, and institutions, each American uses an average of 650 gallons each day.

Waterless Car Wash? As severe water shortages sweep our area, dumping buckets of water to clean the car seems a little extravagant. On average, full-service car washes used 37 gallons for a wash, while washing at home consumes even more. With most garden hoses spouting out about 10 gallons of water a minute, the average driveway wash uses between 80-100 gallons of water, while sending oil, detergents, and other pollutants down the storm drain. Fortunately, there are cleaning products that use less water than it takes to brush your teeth. Two possibilities are EcoTouch (www.ecotouch.net) and Green Earth's Waterless Car Wash (www.greenearthcarwash.com).

FOR MORE RESOURCES: Go to: <http://c3.newdream.org/more/resources.php>

FOR OTHER IDEAS: Go to http://www.thegreenguide.com/blog/diy_diva/947

[Make Your Own Play Dough](#)



My kids loved play dough, especially when they made it themselves. Home made play dough is fast and easy to make, and completely safe. We found it smoother and more malleable than store bought and it stores well in air tight plastic containers. It also dries nicely so we would whip up a batch whenever we wanted or needed to make holiday decorations, beads for necklaces, doll house furniture, dishes or new little figurines.

Here's the recipe a friend shared with us, but you can find more recipes for home made play dough at www.simplymoms.com.

1 cup flour
1 cup warm water
2 teaspoons cream of tarter
1 teaspoon oil
1/4 cup salt
food coloring

Mix all ingredients (add food coloring last). Stir over medium heat until smooth. Remove from pan, let cool slightly, and knead until blended and smooth.

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Waterless Car Wash?

As severe water shortages sweep the country, dumping buckets of water to clean the car seems a little extravagant. Fortunately, ol' Betsy can now get a good monthly scrub down using less water than it takes to brush your teeth. Spray on a waterless car wash that breaks down grime and can be wiped off without the rinse. Eco Touch's waterless car wash uses just 4-6 ounces of water per wash and polishes as it cleans (\$12.99/22 oz. www.ecotouch.net). Green Earth's Waterless Car Wash (\$23/32 oz. www.greenearthcarwash.com) will get between 7 and 10 washes per bottle.

FAQ: On average, full-service car washes use 37 gallons a wash, while washing at home consumes even more. With most garden hoses spraying about 10 gallons of water a minute, the average driveway wash uses between 80 and 140 gallons of water while sending oil, detergents, and other pollutants down the storm drain.