

Eco-Palms and Your Church: Your Role in Supporting Social and Environmental Justice



*Photo courtesy of
Lutheran World Relief.*

More than 300 million palm fronds are harvested each year for U.S. consumption alone — most of them for Palm Sunday, but also for floral displays for church-related events. Your congregation's commitment to purchase eco-palms plays an important role in protecting forests, local jobs, and sustainable livelihoods in the harvesting communities.

Eco-palms are purchased directly from the communities at 5 to 6 times the normal payment per frond. Families are able to depend on a more stable source of income and benefit from additional value-added processing that takes place within the community.

Placing your order early ensures the best availability. Palm Sunday falls on March 16, 2008. The last date congregations can order eco-palms in time for Palm Sunday 2008 is February 20, 2008.

Purchasing eco-palms for your congregation helps ensure a market for the palms, which in turn means that communities can depend on fair and stable wages and that the forests can be protected.

What You Can Do:

Instead of receiving palms from a wholesaler in Minnesota this year, churches should be able to order directly from their local florist. One of three participating Charlotte-based wholesale florists has also agreed to mail eco-palms to churches that are outside of its distribution area. Florists that order from one of these Charlotte-based wholesale florists—Derita Floral Supply, Floral Trends and L & M Wholesale Florist—will be able to get eco-palms imported by Continental Floral Greens. One or more of these wholesalers may supply florists in the presbytery's geographical area. Please check with your local florist.

Churches are encouraged to

- (1) contact their florists right away, and
- (2) let us know (a) when they placed their order, (b) contact info for the florist taking the order, and (c) the quantity of eco-palms ordered.

Churches can email this information to Dennis Testerman, Stewardship for Creation Enabler for the Presbytery of Charlotte at preach84@hotmail.com. We want to make sure that the harvesting communities in Guatemala and Mexico are kept posted on the demand so that they can plan for a timely harvest for Palm Sunday.