

December, 2016

Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church

EARTH CARE TASK FORCE PROPOSAL

Our Church's Opportunity to Make a Prophetic Witness on Our Planet's Ecological and Climate Crisis

The Presbyterian Earth Care Congregations Program offers resources to help us understand all aspects of the ecological crisis facing our planet, and what we as a church and as individual households can do about it, across four areas: education, worship, facilities, and outreach/advocacy.

The last time this congregation decided to confront a moral and ethical issue of such magnitude, we took action: We forged our Inclusion Policy of 1991 and decided that to begin with, we needed immediately “to do the right thing” (ordain Gay and Lesbians) and not wait until it was easy.

We have the opportunity to do so again.

For example, Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church spends about \$40,000 per year on fossil-fuel, carbon-polluting power from Duke Energy. Over the next ten years, with rising rates, a half a million of our dollars will be helping to accelerate the social and environmental catastrophe that is carbon-induced climate change.

To be prophetic, to “become the change” we know is necessary, to “do the right thing now,” means becoming carbon-neutral and waste-free. With careful research, we can seek new approaches to our church facilities (solar/geothermal installations, for example) that will help the planet rather than harm it, and likely deliver substantial budget savings as well.

Beyond such specific steps, this is an opportunity to transform consciousness, through the life practices of both the congregation as a whole and our individual households – through informed commitments and faithful actions first, and then also witnessing to the world.

GREEN FAITH: Our worship and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth. We hope to do things like the following:

- Four Sundays a year, preferably aligned with the solstices and equinoxes, will be devoted to Earth Care
- Earth Care awareness dramas, art, banners
- Earth Care moments of mission
- Earth Care readings, prayers, hymns
- Pesticide free flowers/plants in service
- Paperless services
- Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday
- An Eco-focused Lent discipline
- Communion by intinction

GREEN LEARNING: We will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice and community. We hope to do things like the following:

Winter Programs:

- Workshops. ecological identity, reducing your carbon footprint, recycling, solar power
- Encounters Presentations. Geology and the natural sublime, the spiritual path of American nature writers, reading *The Book of Nature*
- Environmental films
- National Issues Forum on Climate Choices: How Should We Meet the Challenges of a Warming Planet?
- Field trip to Cincinnati Art Museum (Nature in Art)

Spring Programs:

- Natural history field trips such as urban nature walk, spring migrations (Oxbow), wildflowers, old growth versus re-grown forest
- Encounters programs on personal ecology, husbandry, Cincinnati Parks

Summer Programs:

- Field trips beyond Cincinnati such as Fernald, Edge of Appalachia, Big Bone Lick
- Local field trips and tours such as farms and orchards, sustainable organic agriculture, green architecture, Nature Center, Mill Creek

- Encounters programs on nature in the backyard and neighborhood, resistance to urban nature

Fall Programs:

- MAPC building tour
- Reducing your carbon footprint Festival
- Green action retreat
- Encounters: summer adventures, stories and slides, Green Card stories

Children and Youth Programs:

- Godly Play focused on earth care
- Earth care component in confirmation classes
- TOMA events/projects focused on earth care

Other Programs:

- Newsletter/E-Mail messages on earth care activities
- A bulletin board on earth care
- Books and games with an earth care focus on the book shelves
- Art displays

GREEN OUTREACH: Our outreach will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships. We hope to do things like the following:

- Build a community of support with other congregations
- Become earth care leaders in our families, church, neighborhood, city
- Join other organizations and initiatives for dialogue, cooperative outreach, and shared resources (Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance)
- Take stands on local, regional and national earth care legislation
- Communicate stands to elected officials
- Respond to earth care issues raised by the PC(USA)
- Stand in solidarity with members of a community negatively impacted by environmental racism/classism/injustice
- Participate in Mill Creek, Little Miami and Ohio River clean-ups

- Take alternative transportation to church; set-up car pools

GREEN LIVING AND LIFE STYLE PRACTICES

GREEN FACILITIES: Our building and grounds will be managed, maintained and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations. We hope to do things like the following:

Church Buildings AND Individual Households:

Energy Conservation:

- A plan to become carbon neutral, save costs, and possibly realize a very favorable return on investment
- Conduct an energy audit
- Pre-season checkups to maintain HVAC system

Electrical:

- Install solar panels to provide up to 100% of the building's electrical needs
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Heating/Cooling:

- Replace aging or inefficient HVAC systems with (solar-electric powered) geothermal heat pumps
- HVAC programming to turn on and off at set times
- HVAC zoning so that all rooms do not need to be heated/cooled
- Outside doors sealed tightly
- Windows sealed tightly or double paned

Lighting:

- Complete a retrofit of LED lighting, programmable controls, and insulation upgrades through out the buildings

Heating Water:

- Church's water heaters are tankless or on-demand

Renewable Energy:

- Geothermal energy for heating and cooling
- Solar panels

- Wind turbine for power

Water Conservation:

- Dual flush and low-flush toilets
- Faucets with aerators

Recycling:

- A plan to become waste free
- Paper and paper products purchased and recycled
- Double-sided copying
- Aluminum, glass and plastic recycling
- Electronic equipment recycling
- E-Mail and Web communications
- Church members will receive instructions for recycling many home goods
- A church recycling center will encourage proper disposal of household materials

Food Consumption:

- Fair Trade Coffee
- Education about other food choices and sources

Cleaning Products:

- Less toxic cleaners: vinegar, baking soda, salt, borax

Church Grounds and Member Homes:

- Fossil fuel-based fertilizers
- Native plants
- Organic pesticides
- Bike Racks

Storm water management:

- Rain barrels and cisterns to catch water from gutter
- Permeable pavement in parking lot