

Eco Ministry Summary, 2009
Reformation Lutheran Church
Media, PA

The Eco Ministry at Reformation Lutheran Church was begun by The Rev. Leah Schade, Associate Pastor, in 2004. With a team of 5-10 members, Eco Ministry meets monthly.

The mission statement of the Eco Ministry committee is as follows: *The Eco-Ministry of Reformation, in association with the pastor, shall oversee the program of church recycling and education regarding care of God's creation, including, but not limited to: conservation of energy and consumption, care of earth's resources, protection of natural habitats and eco-systems, advocacy opportunities, and care and maintenance of church property and buildings regarding good ecological stewardship. It shall encourage the use of teaching and worship materials that promote the themes of ecology, and seek to provide parishioners with opportunities for practicing stewardship of the earth. One of the primary aims of the committee shall be to hold a worship and educational event for the congregation at least once a year.*

In the five years since its inception, Reformation's Eco Ministry has built an impressive list of accomplishments.

EDUCATE AND INFORM

Eco Ministry Fair - Since our inception in 2004, we have held an Eco Ministry Fair each year close to Earth Day in April. These fairs have featured:

- Natural Lands Trust and Hildacy Farm. Questions posted for people to answer and stimulate thought about eco friendly practices, activities for children and exhibits.
- Native Energy. Compact Florescent bulbs were distributed and a bug and bird display were presented.
- Mark Wallace, Swarthmore Religion Professor, and author of *Finding God in the Singing River*. Displays on habitats, birding, compact fluorescent bulbs and hazardous waste recycling.
- Our own horticulturalist, Wayne Norton, with presentations on birdfeeder building and seed planting, exhibits on nature photography and worm farming.

Movie Nights - Presented An Inconvenient Truth preceded by a pot luck dinner. This was well attended by both church members and visitors from the community, and lively discussion followed. Another year we presented The 11th Hour. In the Spring of 2009 we plan to present WALL*E.

Eco tips are printed in the weekly bulletin to encourage good earth stewardship.

Adult forums on ecological topics have been presented, including composting workshops and bible studies on earth stewardship.

Vacation Bible School presentation on ecological stewardship as part of theme on God's creation.

Something from Nothing Contest awarding prizes to individuals who created decorations, useful items or "just for fun" projects out of recycled materials.

RECYCLING AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Paper Recycling: Our paper recycling through Abitibi has been a huge success. In the year 2008 we raised \$883.75. We average about 4 tons of recycled paper every month. For every ton of paper recycled by our church, we save the environment:

- 4102 kwh of electricity
- 7000 gallons of water
- 60 lbs of air pollutants
- 3.11 cubic yards of landfill space

We contribute 10% of the profit from our paper recycling to a worthy cause. This year we gave the ELCA \$150 for a water pump in Bolivia. We also plan to purchase a sign board to be installed in the spring near the recycling bins. This will help inform the public about events at Reformation, especially ones with an ecological emphasis. We have also donated to our missionaries in Africa for their fish farm. In 2008 we purchased a bench made from recycled plastic for outside the door with proceeds from the paper recycling.

Other recycling programs include: cell phones, toner cartridges, and eyeglasses. The money received from the toner cartridges was used to help offset the cost of switching to recycled paper in the church office.

Switch to recycled paper – The Ministry advocated for a switch to recycled paper products in the church office. To quell the arguments against the additional cost, the proceeds from their toner-recycling program were offered to offset the overage during the first three years.

“Green Building” – During the church renovation we worked with the architect to ensure that green building practices were put into place. See list below.

Labeled bins and bags were placed around the church to encourage recycling of waste generated at church. The church has separate containers for paper, cardboard, and mixed recyclables (plastic, aluminum and glass).

The Recycling Area at the bottom of the stairs from the new narthex, features a bulletin board with notice of cleanup events and tips on environmental stewardship.

New Energy Efficient Lighting Installed – A group of members pulled out all the old light fixtures in Social Hall and the Community Room and our electrician replaced them with new fixtures that will be 70% more efficient. These new fixtures will save money for the church on electric bills and minimize our church’s carbon footprint by using less environmental resources.

Nature Path and Habitat – We worked with Eagle Scouts to create a nature path along the back property of church. We also planted butterfly friendly plants by the bench on the path and have received certification as a butterfly habitat.

Energy audit of the church was conducted post-construction. This will provide a baseline to measure cost-effectiveness of future energy saving endeavors.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Spring and fall **road clean-ups** on Rose Tree Road.

Promoted the distribution of **reusable plastic water bottles** advertising Reformation Lutheran Church at the Media Food Fair.

Touring the Chester **trash to steam plant** and discussing its impact on the citizens of Chester and Delaware County.

Reformation Lutheran Church Media, PA Environmental Building Practices for New Construction and Building Renovation

Energy-saving fluorescent lighting using electronic ballasts and low-mercury, high-output T8 lamps.

1.6 gallon per flush toilets

Recycled fiber content carpeting

Insulating glass in narthex facade

New windows have insulating low-E (emissive) glass to save on air conditioning costs

Paints with low quantity of volatile organic compounds (VOC)

Low VOC / high solids water based (vs. Petroleum based) foundation waterproofing

Masonry from local plants (saves fuel on shipping)

Stormwater recharge basin recharges the groundwater and reduces pollution from surface flow by filtering into the ground rather than running off into streams

Thermal break aluminum storefront reduces heat transmission to exterior in winter

Wood used in framing is a renewable resource

Parallel-strand engineered wood structural beams produced from small pieces of wood puts less stress on older growth forest for larger pieces of wood.

Casework fabricated from domestic hardwood rather than imported and unregulated tropical hardwood

High thermal resistant insulation saves fuel: R-30 in ceilings, R-21 in walls.

Gypsum drywall with recycled gypsum and paper content.

Acoustic ceilings have recycled paper content

Lead-free drinking fountains.

Reuse of existing parking lots saved oil-based paving

Clerestory windows provide natural light in main corridor reducing the need for electricity generated using fossil fuels.