

Earth care Activities 2018

At Saint Mark we believe in Everyday Stewardship. Stewardship is about making choices and what we do every day of our lives. It is more than giving money to the church. Therefore, the work we do as individuals and as a church to save God's creation, our Earth, is stewardship of the environment. Our pastors model and lead our members to take environmental stewardship seriously. They choose hymns and prayers that reflect our need to focus on our responsibility for Earth's renewal. We use the screen in worship to reduce the number of bulletins, which contributes to efforts to eliminate paper and the copier and reduces use of chemicals. We encourage all members to consider the number of copies needed for meetings and classes and to recycle as much as possible at church and at home.

We were recertified as a PC(USA) Earth Care Congregation for the 7th time in 2018. To become certified as Earth Care Congregations churches take the "[Earth Care Pledge](#)" and complete activities and projects in the fields of worship, education, facilities and outreach.

This year Roy gave the annual Earth Day sermon on April 22. He created a video to accompany the sermon.

<https://www.facebook.com/122254914454977/videos/2300491219964658/>

We also had the opportunity to share on our blackboard in answer to the question: How do you express gratitude for God's Creation?

The Saint Mark Library also held an Earth Day Celebration and created a pollinator exhibit with books and materials. We shared fliers with the congregation on bees, single use plastics, and how to create a pollinator garden.

<https://www.fws.gov/alaska/pollinator/pdf/how%20to%20make%20a%20pollinator%20garden%20handout.pdf>

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/bee-deaths-FS.pdf>

<http://www.mdpestnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/BeeFactSheet0616-004.pdf>

Members walked, carpooled, or took public transportation to church on the annual Alternate Transportation Sunday, May 6. Some of us were encouraged to keep walking over the warm months.

This was the fourth season for Saint Mark's Butterfly Garden, located on the upper parking lot side near the kitchen at the back of the Church. Today, the garden contains a variety of perennial plants that are important host and nectar sources for butterflies and their caterpillars. Our Butterfly Garden Work Day was May 12. We continue to monitor the contracted landscapers to maintain vigilance with regard to the use of pesticides and organic fertilizers. We were rewarded by the presence of Monarchs on their migration and even a cocoon was laid on one of our milkweeds.

On May 16 Saint Mark hosted the new Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (MC-FACS). This group began in Northern Virginia and has spread across the

river. MC-FACS works in partnership with Interfaith Power and Light to enlist the moral power of faith groups to reduce carbon emissions, and will provide opportunities to participate in climate justice activism and advocacy.

At its August meeting, the Saint Mark Session approved the participation of our church in the National Capital Presbytery's (NCP) Earth Care Network and affirmed its new charter. The network has been in existence for over ten years with the participation of many of the churches listed in its charter. The NCP Mission Coordinated Committee (MCC) wants to formalize the process by which networks, which are groups entrusted with making grants from the NCP's mission funds, are established. Mission networks consist of 7 or more local congregations partnering together for a common cause. They are self-identified and self-directed groups. Each network will have a MCC liaison to report the work of the specific network back to the MCC. Mission networks are created when the participating partner churches present their common cause to the MCC and receive approval from the MCC to be a mission network.

At the September Presbytery meeting, Bill Merritt on behalf of our Property Ministry reported on the \$2000 grant that was awarded for the changing over our lighting to all LED. In the Education building 176 lamps were replaced, in classrooms, hallways, library, offices, and entranceways. On the exterior 11 pole lights (parking lot), 18 wall sconces, and 20 recessed lamps were replaced. In addition to the expected energy savings of approximately \$4500 a year, the project costs will be saved after only about one year; after that, we will reap great savings in our energy use at the church! Based on the Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, we estimate overall KW savings to be 4,995 and KWh savings at 44,909. Therefore 32.9 metric tons of CO2 will be saved.

On November 18, we had the distinct pleasure to welcome renowned climate scientist and Christian, Dr. Katharine Hayhoe to speak at Saint Mark. It was a remarkable evening. Her talk was informative and uplifting. More than 250 people registered to attend, most not Saint mark members, so it was an outreach opportunity as well. We were joined by Interfaith Power and Light of the District, Maryland and Virginia whose staff developed a response card for attendees to commit to energy reductions and attention to climate change and global warming.

For more information on any of these activities or to join the Saint Mark Green Team, please contact Elder Alison Bennett at alison.bennett72@gmail.com.