

Eco-Justice Team Annual Report for 2010 by Team Chair Barry McPherson

**“Science and religion are the two most powerful forces in creation.
Together they can save the creation.” E.O. Wilson**

Now in its fourth year of existence, the Eco-Justice Team continued to serve the congregation and wider community, thanks to the work of a core group, the prayers of many, and the grace of God. Two wonderful steps taken this past year set the tone for a healthier view of Creation by the congregation – and the Team claims no direct credit for them. The church went back to using re-usable glass cups for serving communion (thanks mainly to **Marguerite Sanchez**), and started using 100% organically grown products for the communion elements. These steps speak volumes about the congregation’s interest in caring for Creation -- by holding one of our most important sacraments up as an example of how to strive for purity and sustainability. No more throw-away cups and no more “lowest price” communion elements tainted with artificial chemicals to represent the body of Christ.



Another important step is that the Team started work on getting our church certified by the Presbyterian Church USA as an Earth Care Congregation (see <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>). Forms are being filled out to see if we’ve scored enough points (organic coffee and communion elements, energy efficient furnaces, community garden, paperless worship services are types of things that score points). Then Session will be asked to approve submission of the application in early 2011.

The Team met less often in 2010, but we are now up to 53 people on the email distribution list who share information, inspiration, and suggestions via this network. Most are from our congregation (including two college students). We’re glad to have a few from Atonement Lutheran Church and other churches in the area. We typically have 3-8 attendees at our monthly meetings. Thanks go to the “hard core” of **Jim Dunlap, Mark and Cindy McConnell, Bill Johnson, Mark Saelens, Beth Hubbard, and Pastor Don Taylor**. We appreciate those who’ve occasionally attended, and hope they can attend more often.

Events Held in 2010: On January 31st, the Team’s held its fourth annual *Soup Salad & Speakers* event after church – with about 40 people attending. Led by **Beth Hubbard**, the Team cooked up a fine lunch made largely from locally grown or harvested ingredients that were organically grown. This was followed by two science talks that focused on how we are affecting the chemistry and biology of the ocean: **Dr. Burke Hales** of OSU presented a terrific talk about CO₂ levels rising in the atmosphere, which is increasing the corrosive power of the ocean, and that is making it hard for some organisms to grow shells and survive. **Angie Sremba** of our congregation presented very interesting information from her graduate student work at OSU on the loss of



genetic diversity in whales of the southern Atlantic and Antarctic oceans due to heavy whaling in the last century.

The Team tried to organize outdoor trips again in 2010 to help the congregation gain a better appreciation of this beautiful part of God's Creation on the central coast, but were thwarted by weather or other issues. We are hoping in 2011 to do more kayak trips and other outdoor trips, plus another eco-tour (such as viewing solar electric panel installations that generate electricity, an organic food restaurant, a forest education center, and an ocean wave research center at OSU). We hope you can go with us to learn more about God's Creation, and efforts to achieve ecological and economic sustainability.

Efforts to Inform and Inspire in 2010: The Team used articles in nearly every church newsletter (*The Beacon*), a bulletin board in the main church hallway, Minutes for Creation Care during Sunday worship services, a webpage (www.newportpc.org/content/eco-justice-team), and books and flyers in the church's library as the main ways of providing information and inspiration.

Projects Done in 2010: The Eco-Justice Team not only continued obtaining coffee for the after-service coffee on Sundays, they expanded the program to include all coffee served in the church in order to promote eco-justice on a more global scale. The Team obtained coffee that is organically grown, fair-traded, and grown as locally as possible (e.g., Mexico). Most of this coffee was obtained through the Presbyterian Coffee Project (www.pcusa.org/coffee), but an increasing percentage was obtained from a local coffee roaster. The coffee was purchased with financial donations from the congregation.

Through the hard work of **Mark McConnell**, the 12th St Community Garden project initiated on our church property 3 years ago was a success again in 2010. Gardeners from the community paid \$15 / plot to cover water costs to grow food for their families. Organic gardening techniques and locally appropriate vegetables and flowers were emphasized. The 12th St. Community Garden was expanded with the addition of a *Plant A Row* program (PAR) approved by the Team and then by Session late in the year. PAR is a national program that will involve people from our congregation and wider community growing vegetables to feed the hungry in our community (see www.12thstreetplantarow.com). About 12 new rows and 3 raised beds were added to the garden with the help of **Al Eames** and his tractor, including plowing and adding compost this fall. **Jim and Kathy Myers** initiated this great project and will be overseeing it.



Again, the Team claims no direct credit, but under the capable leadership of Building Committee Moderator **Jane Haskell**, the church installed several new furnaces. These are high-efficiency furnaces that will substantially reduce the church's greenhouse gas emissions, fuel consumption, and heating bills.

Participation on the Eco-Justice Team of the Cascades Presbytery: We continued to be represented by **Barry McPherson** on this regional team. He served as co-chair of the Team along with Deanie Anderson of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Salem. **Barry** made a presentation on "Conducting Creation Care Field Trips" at a pre-Presbytery workshop in November (held in Portland). He helped plan and conduct the Creation Care



Fellowship Conference in Salem on November 6th, which brought in people from churches throughout the Presbytery. Two national figures spoke at this conference titled "Inspiration, Prayer, and Action". **Susan Mills and Paige Schindler** of our congregation participated, along with a high school friend of Paige's.

Actions Needing More Attention: The Team accomplished most actions listed in the church's Eco-Justice Mission and Goals Statement adopted by Session in March 2010 (see www.newportfpc.org/content/eco-justice-team). However, there are two actions that the Team wished it had made more progress on. We helped get the church moving significantly far on the first action and are optimistic about making better progress on both actions in 2011. The actions are:

- Maintain and support paperless and electronic communications while maintaining strong communication with the whole church family, making a special effort in 2010 to encourage many folks away from paper Beacon newsletters to the web-posted version.
- Investigate the use of alternate energy sources such as solar, wind, and natural light, with a special effort toward installation of photovoltaic panels on a new roof over the eastern wing of the church.

Thanks!! Thanks go to many people in this congregation who have helped make the Eco-Justice Team so successful to date. We look to your continued support in 2011.

If you are interested in joining the team or just being on the email list, please contact Barry McPherson, Chair of the Team (503.708.8688 or bdmcpherson@coho.net). The Eco-Justice Team meets in the church at 7 PM on the first Wednesday of each month.

If You Love the Creator, Take Care of Creation.