

St. Paul Area Synod  
Care of Creation Work Group

Our work group is now in its sixth year. Our mission statement says:

“We are called to care for God's creation as an integral part of our Christian faith and identity. The Care of Creation work group is dedicated to embrace this calling. We are a group which explores life-giving ideas; where best practices within our synod and the large church and community can be shared, where action and advocacy are encouraged, and where we become part of the public and teaching voice of the church.”

When this group organized back in 2018, we were not sure where it would all lead. We were just a group of Lutheran Christians who believed that care of creation had become a very important endeavor in our present time. In fact, some of us believe that it may be the most important calling we have today as God's people. In the past thirty years we have emitted more carbon into the atmosphere than was emitted in the two centuries prior. And according to Isak Stoddard, an Uppsala University climate researcher, the wealthiest one percent of the world's population emits twice as much as half the human population. We are witnessing warmer temperatures around the world and, as a result, many more intense weather events. All this calls into question of how well we are taking care of God's good creation, not just for our sake, but for the sake of all God's creatures who inhabit this planet and the generations yet to come. Our work focuses not only on climate but on multiple ways that our human activity degrades creation.

We continue to meet monthly except in the summer, and although we take advantage of the Zoom platform, we are doing more in-person meetings. We have had tables at Tool Kits as well as at Synod Assemblies. We have connected with many people and congregations and hope to do more of that. We have learned that many congregations are already doing things to try to reduce our carbon footprint.

At the meeting we held last September, we decided to prioritize our actions and initiatives. Number one on our list was Visibility and Relationships. We think that personal contact with pastors and leaders, as well as interested individuals, is vital. We have begun some of this work but more remains to be done. Our presence at Tool Kits, Synod assemblies and EcoFaith Summits helps but we know there is more outreach to be undertaken. A couple of our members have taken it upon themselves to initiate contact with our member congregations.

Another important initiative is to foster communication with legislators and yes, even skeptics, some of whom are legislators. We follow closely the work of Lutheran Advocacy to inform ourselves about the legislative process. We would like to encourage every member of our Synod to believe that advocating for creation care is part of their Christian calling.

Our partnership with the Northeast Minnesota Synod's Eco-Faith Team continues to grow. We partnered in the publishing of the monthly newsletter [Green Blades Rising](#), and held a joint retreat last August at Camp Onomia to delve deeper into our mission and to talk about where we go from here. We just held our annual Eco-faith Summit in Duluth this past month and the theme was “The Pollinator Plot”. Further expanding our reach this Summit was co-presented by EcoFaith Network of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Creation Care and our St. Paul Area Synod Care of Creation. You can read all about it on our website as we now have a joint website that is up and running. It is <http://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/>. It contains multiple resources for congregations, pastors and community action. Please check it out! We still have much room to grow as a group and it could be that you might want to be part of our journey.