

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Oaklyn, NJ

Environmental Policy Statement

Adopted by Congregation Council

PREAMBLE:

Creation is God's gift. Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the word of God spoken in creation, the love of God hanging on a cross and the breath of God daily renewing the face of the Earth. Therefore, we of St. Mark's Lutheran Church believe that human beings are called by God to the task of stewardship, the taking care of the earth respectfully for its own sake, and so that present and future generations may live on it and enjoy its fruits. The gifts of creation and the responsibility of stewardship were given to all of humanity. This is God's work through our hands.

God calls upon the church to participate in the redemption of individuals, all of humanity and the whole of creation. Therefore, ministries of environmental stewardship and environmental justice are significant in the mission of our congregation. We thus promise to become engaged in or to be engaged in these ministries by following Congregational life opportunities and practices that are consistent with our mission. These include, among others:

Congregational life:

- **Worship:** We will celebrate God's creation and declare that God calls upon us to participate in the redemption of the world by cherishing, protecting, and restoring creation.
- **Learning and Teaching:** We will seek to be a center for exploring scriptural and theological foundations for the caring of creation. As we learn more about the wonders of creation, we are called toward new possibilities of participating in God's redemption and justice.
- **Lifestyles:** We will form habits of sustainable consuming, conserving, and sharing that will serve to protect and restore the environment. In particular, we will reuse, repurpose, and recycle as many materials as we can and seek ways of limiting our consumption of fossil fuels.
- **Community, National, and Global Involvement:** Living within the covenant God makes with creation, we live in relationship with all things. Having been called to work for justice for the whole creation, we are full participants in God's ongoing creative work. We stand together in solidarity with all things, trusting in God's promised redemption of creation. Therefore, we are called to take action to provide an acceptable quality of life for present and future generations. In our community, the nation, and the world, our congregation will witness to and participate in God's redemption of creation by supporting public efforts and policies which protect vulnerable people and restore the degraded earth.
- Each year, we will review our previous year's work on environmental justice and consider other ways that we can participate in God's redemption of creation.
- We will seek to form partnerships that further strengthen the principles contained within this statement.

Practices

In our attempts toward ecological sustainability we will continue to pursue accepted practices in **Purchasing**, **Operations**, and **Capital Improvements** including but not limited to the following steps:

1. Purchasing

- Replace standard light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights or LED lights. Dispose of used bulbs responsibly.
- Buy post-consumer waste, recycled, process chlorine-free paper products.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Eliminate the use of Styrofoam plates and cups.
- Use organic, shade-grown, fair-trade coffee during events and in the office.
- Reduce pesticide use on the church and parsonage grounds as practical.
- Select products with the least possible waste packaging.
- Purchase from companies with good environmental and justice practices.
- Select low-VOC paints, carpets, and other products. Avoid vinyl chloride products.
- When purchasing, research the environmental aspects of the product(s). Do not select products based upon price alone.

2. Operations

- Replace energy-inefficient appliances such as refrigerators and freezers more than ten years old, as practical.
- Free the congestion from unnecessary mail by such means as electronic communications whenever possible,
- Always practice water conservation (e.g. low flow toilets, aerators on faucets)
- Recycle all recyclable materials.
- Reduce overall waste.
- Take all reasonable steps to insulate and weather-strip the building(s).
- Avoid energy-wasting practices, such as propping open a door instead of unlocking it.
- Inspect thermostats for accurate programming for efficient heating and cooling.
- Reduce environmental impacts from the lawn and garden in terms of water usage, chemicals, etc.
- Work to inspire other faith communities to participate in responsible purchasing and sustainable ecological practices.
- Use electric or human powered rather than gas powered lawn care equipment whenever possible.
- Be aware of materials that require special disposal (e.g. electronics, refrigerants, waste oil, tires, and batteries).
- Whenever possible use washable or recyclable plates, silverware, and tablecloths.

3. Capital Improvement

- Use green construction practices such as those specified by LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) in renovation or new construction projects.