

Dear Partners in Earth-caring,

Moderator's Reflection *By Diane Waddell*

God is good.

God has gifted us with this sacred Earth, with which we may choose to work in partnership toward healing the planet. Thanks to all of you who work toward this positive ethic of sustainability, including those in this General Assembly (GA) story.

My home presbytery is Heartland, which is urban, suburban, and rural/agricultural. I have come to greatly appreciate its prairie as well as those who tend it. The nearby Tallgrass Prairie in Northern Kansas Presbytery is striking. And continuing westward is a very 'down to earth' place entitled The Land Institute, near Salina, Kansas, a non-profit research, educational, and policy organization dedicated to sustainable agriculture. It researches Natural Systems Agriculture, which is a mimic of nature's ecosystems. Their mission statement begins with, "When people, land, and community are as one, all three members prosper..."



Rev. Seth Svary (right) with Diane at the PEC booth at General Assembly.

With appreciation for this ethic, Heartland Presbytery's earth care team (Earthkeepers) wrote an overture which was brought to GA by Heartland Presbytery. As an Overture Advocate, I signed in with the Committee on Social Justice Issues to speak. As per committee procedure, a commissioner moved that the Overture be discussed. That commissioner was the Rev. Seth Svary, who spoke fluently in favor of it (both in committee and on the GA floor). Another commissioner noted that he had just spoken with a farming friend who said he had used the system (of perennial grain hybridization) that the Land Institute researches and felt it was invaluable.

Seth came by the PEC GA booth later in the week. He is pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of Sterling, Kansas, whose family has been in farming in central Kansas for five generations and has been recognized for their work in conservation efforts.

They have a diversified operation including rotational crops of wheat, corn, soybeans, milo, and sunflowers with pasture which helps sustain cattle, sheep, and goats. Also, one of Seth's brothers, Josh, was Secretary of Agriculture for Kansas from 2009 – 2011 and currently is a Senior Advisor to the Environmental Protection Agency in Kansas. (See the GA article). This was all truly amazing. God is good.

I am grateful for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, which added "recommendation" to the Overture. The addition makes it more usable for environmental justice advocacy by the PCUSA, particularly the Office of Public Witness, "to orient their advocacy and programs concerning agriculture and food supply in accordance with the following principles and goals: renewability, sustainability, resilience, minimized carbon emissions, participatory research and decision-making, revitalized rural communities, strong local food economies, security of food supply, ethical treatment of animals, and fair and dignified treatment of persons working throughout the food chain." The overture did pass and will be a tool for continuing support of eco-justice in our denomination.

God is good. All the time. Blessed be.

Diane Waddell, Moderator,
Presbyterians for Earth Care

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UPDATE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES

by Rebecca Barnes-Davies

Environmental Ministries, headquartered at the PCUSA offices in Louisville, Kentucky, has had a full and wonderful summer of activity. I was able to witness and blog a bit about the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (and parallel “People’s Summit”) in Rio de Janeiro in mid-June (<http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/>). I attended the General Assembly at the end of June (beginning of July) and resourced committees on environmental concerns as well as promoted the Appalachian Carbon Project (this year’s carbon offset organization for General Assembly greenhouse gas emissions (<http://www.appalachiancarbonpartnership.org>)). I led a forum at the Presbyterian Women’s Gathering in mid-July and a workshop at the Joining Hands Against Hunger conference in Chicago in mid-August (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/hunger/together-for-justice/>).

I continue to be thankful for chances to learn and chances to teach, for meeting many fabulous Presbyterians, seeing those whom I’ve known from years back with PEC and meeting new advocates as well.

Now, as summer turns to autumn, we anticipate good things with the growing Earth Care Congregation network, the start-up of fall church programming, and the October Food Week of Action and World Food Day. I look forward to working with you. Feel free to be in touch any time!

Rebecca Barnes-Davies coordinates the Environmental Ministries office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Want to learn more? Visit <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/environment/>

IMAGES FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

submitted by Diane Waddell



Lauren Wright, YAV and Eco-Steward, at the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale, PA



left to right: Dick Gibson (PEC committee member), Jane Laping, Diane Waddell, Bill Somplatsky-Jarman (Coordinator of Social Witness Ministries), Rebecca Barnes-Davies (Associate for Environmental Ministries) and Sue Smith



Sue, Diane and Jane with Rev Randy Bush, pastor of East Liberty Presbyterian Church and PEC luncheon speaker

PEC AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY: WE WERE THERE!

By Diane Waddell

The Executive Committee represented Presbyterians for Earth Care at General Assembly in Pittsburgh, and reported that it was an excellent experience. It was the “GA” experience - lots of helpful networking, working to promote important issues of ministry, uplifting worship, and surprises daily.

At the PEC booth, dozens of persons came by to discuss eco-justice including what their churches have been doing towards environmental sustainability. We were thrilled to make new contacts and check in with PEC members. We enjoyed hosting ‘booth guests’ including Associate for Environmental Ministries (EM), Rebecca Barnes-Davies; Rev. Dr. Randy Bush, our luncheon speaker; Lauren Wright, Young Adult Volunteer and new Eco-Steward; and PEC award winner, Tom Quigley. Thanks to all who came by to connect and support this eco-justice ministry.

A highlight was the luncheon held at First Presbyterian Church in their beautiful chapel. Many of our PCUSA partners updated us on their work including Leslie Woods (Office of Public Witness), Ruth Farrell (Presbyterian Hunger Program), and Rebecca from EM. Newly elected GA Moderator Neal Presa came by with words of encouragement.

The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush, pastor of East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, brought both history and hope in his keynote message. In a dialogue relating back to Creation, he noted, “There is nothing on earth that can say to something else on earth, ‘I have no need for you’. Plants, animals, minerals, whatever – all things need all things. To exist is to co-exist. To be fully human, to be a child of God, is to understand and accept that first rule....[A]nd we exist to partner with God in maintaining the health and integrity, the wholeness, of this planet. Unfortunately, however, we have become “uncreators”, damaging the planet...and must find ways to move forward in “relationships, reconciliation, dialogue and trust”. (Amen.)

Congratulations to our annual award winners who gratefully received the PEC awards. Tom Quigley of the Grenshaw Presbyterian Church won the William Gibson Achievement Award for his work in community gardens, particularly the Garden of Etna. Earth Covenant Ministry of Atlanta received the Restoring Creation Award. ECM is a partnership of ten congregations in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta which has become a tangible resource for creation care.

Many thanks to Rev. David Carlisle, pastor of the Springdale United Presbyterian Church, where Rachel Carson was baptized, for arranging a visit to her Homestead and the surrounding area. Rachel was born and lived in Springdale and became a true spokesperson in the environmental movement largely because of the envi-

ronmental stressors from pollution in the area caused by industry as well as chemical toxins. Smokestacks are still visible from her bedroom window. The beautiful Chatham University School of Sustainability and the Environment is part of her legacy.

Another amazing part of the GA experience is the fact that Pittsburgh is currently a beautiful, environmentally friendly city...due to a lot of work by citizens there. It was unfortunately just as true that conditions in the city for about 100 years, up through the 1960s were devastating to the environment (and all who lived in and around the area). Up to and through that decade, the air was so sooty that a person could not be outside during the day for more than about 15 minutes before having to shower or change to light-colored clothing. One could not buy a white car because after a number of months, it would literally change color. Some waterways were becoming dark and thick.

PEC is pleased that at this assembly, therefore, an overture passed on support of the EPA. This overture was sponsored by Baltimore Presbytery (with thanks from PEC), having been originally pursued in Heartland Presbytery. The overture received excellent comment/additions from ACSWP – the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy - which will allow for excellent environmental advocacy through the PC(USA). Comment included recognition of “PC(USA)’s support of landmark environmental legislation such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act (whose 40th anniversary is in 2012), the Safe Drinking Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Endangered Species Act, which affirm the national mission of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and would Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) and the Office of Public Witness to urge Congress to restore the EPA’s full oversight authority under the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts (which are currently restricted) as they relate to the waters of the United States.” It would also “direct the Office of Environmental Ministries of the General Assembly Mission Council [now Presbyterian Mission Agency] to identify resources addressing legal and environmental issues with regard to extraction of natural gas in order to educate Presbyterians and protect the environments in which they live, worship, farm, and locate their camps and conference centers.”

Again, thanks to members and partners of PEC in this GA experience. Please help the PC(USA) as we all work toward the goals expressed in the overtures passed as we all seek environmental and social justice.

And we have already have started planning for the Detroit GA in 2014!!!

HOPE AND PRESBYTERIANS FOR EARTH CARE:

A New and Recurring Section

FINDING HOPE

by Diane Waddell

A fun and refreshing focus for all of us is in God's wonderful gift of children. This is a PEC story of HOPE – summer edition.

In June, we received a letter from Michelle Jones, Children and Youth Director for Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Blue Springs, Missouri. Michelle said, "At the beginning of our Sunday school year our kids brainstormed and then in good Presbyterian manner, decided via vote on where they would like to donate their Sunday school offering. They decided that they wanted their offering to go toward helping the environment. A silent vote was taken (using beads to cast their votes into cups next to the respective pictures so that the younger ones knew what they were voting for). 'Helping the environment' won hands down. This was something that the kids were apparently very passionate about. I started looking on PCUSA's website for ministries for the environment, and found PEC. Our kids were very creative and came with their offering each Sunday - some used part of their allowance, some checked weekly in their parents' cars, and under couch cushions for loose change, and one kid even kept a jar and every penny he found was donated to this offering. They watched each Sunday as our collection jar became more full, and heavy with change. A few pennies here and there don't seem like much, but with everyone putting their pennies together, we are able to make a difference. Even young children want to help and be a part of something. We just need to give them the opportunity. ... We'd like to send our Sunday school offering of \$54.78 to your organization."

What a wonderful gift of hope and support! We thank these children (about a dozen ages 3 through 11) Michelle, and all the supporters at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church.



HOPE might be pictured as an empty tomb, or a new born baby; maybe a bright red apple or an sunrise. However we picture it, HOPE always gets to have the last word even as we tell the story of how humans are impacting our earthly home. HOPE is also organic food, children playing and, in this case Meg, in her garden, measuring her tomatoes, growing healthy food and having fun.

(Photo by Sarah Moore-Nokes)

PUTTING THE HOPE BACK INTO THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

by Patrick David Heery

It feels a little strange to be writing about environmental hope. I grew up hearing about the destruction of rainforests, species extinction, and any number of apocalyptic visions due to climate change. As a child, I plastered drawings around my neighborhood with great spirals of smoke consuming the earth. I scared my parents by telling them that the earth would be better off if the human race were eliminated. I wanted to make things better, but that just didn't seem likely.

In his book, *The Nature Principle*, Richard Louv describes speaking with an auditorium full of high school students. To his surprise, the youth really got into the conversation. Seeing his bafflement, a science teacher explained, "You said something positive about the future of the environment. They never hear that."

But they are hearing it now, and so am I. The environmental movement is changing: it is now less about warding off disaster or accruing benefits; it is about a vision of local, sustainable communities gathering around farmers' markets, contemplative hikes, urban re-design, and creative political action. It is a participatory, relational vision reframing old questions like "How do we stop environmental degradation?" into "How do we create a different kind of society?"

It is a movement for hope. Four years ago, a few Princeton Theological Seminary friends and I helped found *ECOS: Environmentally Conscious Organization of Seminarians*. From the beginning, we decided ECOS was chiefly about relationships: with each other, with the earth, with God, and with the

Continued on page 5

COMING SOON:

Taking up this theme of hope, Presbyterians for Earth Care, the Presbyterian Environmental Ministries, and *Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice* (www.justiceUNBOUND.org) are teaming up to create a Nov/Dec 2012 issue on the spirituality, relationships, and hope that are at the foundation of our eco-justice ministry.

HOPE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Princeton staff who cared for our immediate environment (and who were often rendered invisible). For our first Earth Day, we worked shoulder to shoulder with grounds crew as we built a compost bin, tilled a community garden, planted trees, cleaned up the campus, and began energy conservation efforts. We also talked. We learned each other's names. We ate together. We formed a worshipping, acting community that went on to address local water and food issues, spiritual practices, daily energy use, LEED certification, and seminary-wide policy changes.

The systemic implications of movements like these remain to be seen, but if enough communities like these emerge – and if they connect – we may have more than hope; we may have *living* alternatives that directly challenge the economic and political status quo.

Rev. Patrick David Heery is an ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Having graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2011, he works for the PC (USA)'s Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in Louisville, Kentucky, as the managing editor of Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice (www.justiceUNBOUND.org).



The ECOS seminary group with one of the Princeton grounds crew
(photo provided by Patrick David Heery)

Be happy in your hope,
stand your ground when you're in trouble, and
devote yourselves to prayer.
Romans 12:12 (Common English Bible)

ECO-STEWARDS 2012 REPORT

By Fred Milligan

The 2012 Eco-Stewards event was held in Boston and Vermont with leaders Rob Mark, Becky Evans and Dawn Sample and Eco-Stewards Rick Herron, Emily Kinsel, Vickie Machado, Katie Mahowski, Jake Melnyk, Mary Schmidt, Olivia Taylor and Lauren Wright.

For more information and more photographs from this year's Eco-Stewards Event please see our blog posts at <http://ecostewardsprogram.wordpress.com/2012/>.

REFLECTIONS FROM AN ECO-STEWARD

By Lauren Wright

When I showed up to Boston for the Eco-Stewards conference, I really didn't know what to expect. Up until this year, I had naively floated through life loving nature, but not really knowing why. I loved nature, but I had never connected it to my faith. I never felt the responsibility to actually care for the environment.

Why is that? I feel there must be something broken in the church.

I'm reminded of a speaker during the conference who told us about protesting the Keystone Pipeline in front of the White House. As the protestors were getting riled up, they formed a circle and started proclaiming their purpose for protesting. They verbally took ownership of why they were so boldly objecting and willing to go to prison. One shouted that their protest was in honor of another imprisoned environmentalist. Another yelled that they were doing it for future generations. Each expression was recognized by cheers and applause. The speaker stepped up and cried that he was protesting because as a Christian he felt called to protect the environment. The crowd responded in wide-eyed silence. He said that you could've heard a pin drop.

My hope in being involved in Eco-stewards is to be a part of a movement for change within the church for Eco-justice in the name of Christ. I hope that one day I can proclaim Christ as my reason for caring for the environment, and that I'm supported with resounding cheers, applause, and Amens.

THE UPDATE IS LOOKING FOR A NEW NAME!

After a good run, PEC is hoping to re-name our quarterly newsletter and we're looking to you for suggestions for that new name. Got a suggestion? Email Abby Mohaupt (the editor of *The Update*) at awmohaupt@gmail.com

REFLECTIONS OF RETIRING STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PRESBYTERIANS FOR EARTH CARE

John Preston, Northeast representative:

I see PEC as a fellowship that is mediating between paradigms of faith and practice in a post-modern world where certainty about absolutes and reliable narratives are rapidly fading. The narrative of individual salvation and the narrative of constant economic growth are a part of the old and dying paradigm. PEC and its members stand at the boundary between the old paradigm and what is to come.

There are three signs of the death of the old and the birth of the new. They are:

1. The move from social justice to eco-justice. Concerns about social justice have been linked with concerns for environmental justice in what we now call eco-justice.
2. The move from dualism to the idea that reality is of a piece, a unity. The biological, earth, and cosmological sciences speak of one reality.
3. The move from Lord of History to God of Creation.

I have appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this process of prophetic change through my participation in PEC as a steering committee member. I wish my Northeast replacement my best wishes in the term ahead.

Jerry Rees, Midwest representative:

I feel privileged to have served two two-year terms on PEC's Steering Committee as its Midwest Regional Rep. I feel I received much more than I gave. It was educational and inspirational to encounter kindred spirits from across the country.

During the 4 years, there was much positive change: a new name, a new logo, an updated website, the filling of empty positions, the hiring of effective coordinators, and the formation of an advocacy committee in which I will continue to be involved.

Much has been done, but much more remains. Do we have enough time to do enough to make enough of a difference?

As I struggle to keep hope alive, I am buoyed by Bill Brown's words spoken at the 2011 PEC conference in Colorado: "How do we find hope amid the data of despair and the lack of progress? We don't. Hope finds us. Hope is a gift of God that offers itself when the stories and lessons of our faith are read anew for just such a time as this. . . . Hope is the gift of resolve against the odds. "Hope that is seen is not hope" (Rom 8:24).

UPDATE FROM THE PEC ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The PEC Advocacy Committee has set four priorities for 2012: Hydraulic fracking, mountaintop removal coal mining, Keystone XL pipeline, and Coal export. Visit our website at <http://presbyearthcare.org/index.html> to read more about how the priorities were chosen, and read the PEC Policy Priorities for 2012.

UPDATE FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN UNITED NATIONS OFFICE

By Mark Koenig

The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (<http://www.uncsd2012.org/>) met from June 20-22, 2012. At the Rio+20 Conference, world leaders, along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups, came together to shape how we can reduce poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet to get to the future we want. In the conference's outcome document, "The Future We Want," the nations of the world renew their "commitment to sustainable development and to ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations." The document includes recommendations for the United Nations, Member States, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. Read the whole document at <http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html>.

Here are some sources of information on the conference and sustainable development:

- Rio+20 - UN News Centre - <http://www.un.org/apps/news/html/rio/>
- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/food/rio-plus-20/>
- UN Environmental Programme - <http://www.unep.org/>
- UN Development Programme - <http://www.undp.org/>
- Millennium Development Goals - <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Ideas for individuals, congregations and communities include:

- conducting energy audits
- saving energy and using renewable energy sources
- recycling waste
- reducing CO2 emissions
- promoting organic and fair trade products
- using Community Supported Agriculture
- providing good public transport
- building cycle paths
- providing safe drinking water

Rev. Mark Koenig is the director of Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. Follow the work of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/un/>

2013 CONFERENCE ETHICAL EARTH CARE: KEEPING CREATION SACRED



October 16-19, 2013

Keynote Speaker:

Larry L. Rasmussen, ThD,

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center,
an amazingly green retreat center in
Little Rock, Arkansas.

Visit presbyearthcare.org for more information

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the Presbyterian Church(USA). PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church. Founded in 1995 as a grassroots organization to help the denomination educate and energize church members to address environmental concerns from a faith perspective, it works in partnership with PC(USA)'s Environmental Ministries Office and the Office of Public Witness to promote earth justice with a biblical and theological base. Regional representatives recruit presbyteries, churches, organizations, and individuals to help form a national network of Presbyterians to work toward the common goal of restoring creation for ecology and justice. Check out PEC's web site at www.presbyearthcare.org. If you would like to become involved or have questions, contact Shantha at presbyearthcare@gmail.com or your regional representative.



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