

Environmental Stewardship Greensboro

The Mission: Environmental Stewardship Greensboro (ESG), an interfaith volunteer organization, encourages sustainable life-style practices within faith communities and among all residents of Guilford County. ESG believes that caring for the natural world is a spiritual imperative as well as a practical one. ESG seeks to encourage, educate and support faith communities to be environmentally sustainable in their facilities and activities. ESG encourages, educates and supports their members to live sustainably in their homes and daily activities. ESG works in the community, and with other groups, to promote a spiritual understanding of ecological issues and to demonstrate practices that establish a mutually enhancing relationship between the human and non-human realms in all areas of life and living both in places of worship and the greater community.

The Dream: The faith communities in Greensboro and Guilford County own many buildings, acres of grass and woodlands and reach out to thousands of people. What if these groups decided, together, to make a commitment to take on the task of making their places of worship and grounds as environmentally sustainable as possible and then encouraged their members to take on this same responsibility in their own homes? What if like-minded people could share their efforts, encourage each other, share successes and pass on more sustainable ways to do things?

The Activities: Since 2007, members faith communities have meet as Environmental Stewardship Greensboro to share their successes and frustrations. An *all-day conference* was held with four speakers on environmental topics. Later, *four concerts* were organized into a weekend celebration of the life and work of Father Thomas Berry. The celebration brought public attention to a Greensboro native who has become a world-renowned spokesperson for the importance of shaping a sustainable future for the entire Earth community. A *six-week study curriculum* on Thomas Berry's book, "The Great Work", is now available as a free download at www.emergingecology.org/TGWStudy.

ESG received a grant from the Future Fund of the Greensboro Community Foundation to provide *98 rain barrels* for residents of the Glenwood Neighborhood Association who attended a seminar on wise landscaping practices. Within the participating congregations, ESG members have been conducting *energy audits*, installing energy-saving light bulbs, turning down the heat on water heaters, installing energy efficient appliances, replacing windows, recycling and making other similar kinds of practical changes. *Fundraising concerts* provide funding for Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) grants. YES grants have been made for *a community garden*, a "*Seed to Table*" program, for *promoting environmental stewardship in religious education* and for *starting a congregational recycling system*.

Recently, ESG has been working with NC Interfaith Power and Light (a program of the NC Council of Churches) to advocate for state-wide environmental action among congregations. Candidate forums have been held to make the voice of the religious communities heard within the halls of government.

ESG invites faith communities to make commitments to pursue environmental stewardship in their building and grounds. ESG conducts a **Green Congregation** initiative that encourages faith communities to conduct activities in five arenas: Worship & Celebration, Environmental Action, Education, Sustainable Living and Organization & Communication. (See the accompanying chart.) Since 2010, the Green Congregation Awards have been given to eight congregations.

ESG has coordinates a congregation-based #6 Styrofoam plastic recycling system in order to fill a gap in public programs and to provide a practical way of nurturing the growth of the Planet.

For **additional information**, email: Bill McNeil (mcneilplanning@gmail.com), Vance Archer (vance_d_archeriii@yahoo.com), Teri Flam-Goldberg (tjflam@aol.com) or Nelson Stover (StoverN@Bellsouth.net).

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Signs of Congregational Commitment To Building a Greener World

Prepared by: Environmental Stewardship Greensboro

Join Environmental Stewardship Greensboro and become a **Green Congregation!**

*Start by **naming a person** to serve as your congregation's liaison to the meetings of Environmental Stewardship Greensboro (ESG) – times and information are available upon request. Other steps that you can take are listed below. When you have completed **one from each** of the boxes in the top row and **two each** from the center and bottom boxes, ESG will recognize your commitment to creating a more sustainable community and world by presenting you with a **Green Congregation** certification. **Green Congregations** will periodically be featured in the local media.*

