

EARTH STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

APRIL 22, 2007

A DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE FARMING COMMUNITY



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Earth Stewardship Sunday

This special observance of environmental Stewardship in worship comes on the Sunday nearest April 22, which is Earth Day. In 2007 Earth Day falls on Sunday.

Earth Day

Since 1970, Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22 every year. In this largest celebration in history, we encourage every congregation to participate and provide leadership for the celebration in your local community. Resources are available from:

<http://www.kycouncilofchurches.org/EarthDay.html>

Many, if not most, denominations have taken actions and passed resolutions which support environmental stewardship and sustainability. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), for example, have passed “A Bill of Rights for Future Generations” that calls upon each generation to act. “Each generation, sharing in the estate and heritage of the Earth, has a duty as trustee for the future generations to prevent irreversible and irreparable harm to life on Earth and to human freedom and dignity.” Further, “future generations have a right to an uncontaminated and undamaged earth and to its enjoyment as the ground of human history, culture, and of social bonds that make each generation and individual a member of one human family.”

Earth Stewardship Sunday is traditionally that part of the Christian year when people seek God’s guidance in how to be good stewards of the Earth, its creatures and living things. In 2007, during our observance of environmental stewardship, it is fitting that we should specifically ask for God’s guidance and blessing on the farming community – a community in deep crisis.

BACKGROUND ON THE FARMING COMMUNITY CRISIS

Kathy Miles, past chair of the KCC Rural Life Issues Committee, said “I am more and more convinced we are moving into another farm crisis”. Ben Poage, committee member, says, “this crisis may strike our rural communities in Kentucky with more vengeance than the crisis of the 80s, since livestock prices are already severely depressed and our mainstay, tobacco, is becoming less of an economic certainty”.

Record-low prices, adverse weather conditions, implementation of the 1996 Farm Bill, industrialization of pork production, and natural disasters all add to the economic pressure farmers and ranchers throughout the United States are experiencing. Farm income in North Dakota, for instance, has fallen 90 percent. Farm loan payments are

down, loan renewals and extensions are up, farm operators have been forced and decided to leave farming.

To help achieve this awareness, the rural church network of the United States and Canada has issued a statement of immediate concern on the farm crisis

Additionally, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference is calling for organizations and congregations to raise the awareness of both consumers and farmers too the escalating crisis in rural America.

The Rural Life Conference is mobilizing a “Green Ribbon Campaign” as a visible symbol of solidarity with the hurting farm community. Wearing a **green ribbon** will say “we care – in prayer”.

The Rural Life Issues Committee is promoting this symbolic visual act of concern as a part of the KCC call for a day of prayer for the farming community.



**STATEMENT OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN:
FARM CRISIS IN RURAL U.S. AND CANADA**

North America has entered more deeply into a chronic agricultural crisis. Our rural communities are suffering; rural land, air and water are at risk; rural producers are receiving record low prices for their commodities and local businesses are at risk. Our farm and rural families, many of which struggle to survive through the crisis of the 1980's, again find their livelihoods and futures seriously threatened.

Our Christian churches have heard the suffering of our rural people. This persistent suffering places our local church communities at serious risk. Our Christian leadership needs to rise to address this urgent, resurging crisis in rural North America. We need intentional compassionate outreach and ministry. We need to address boldly the economic forces at work in destroying local communities.

It is time to speak the truth to power; to bring the Gospel of Jesus to bear on global economic and social policies impacting our local, rural life. The Rural Church network of the United States and Canada requests that each denomination make this concern one of highest priority.

Issued by:

The Rural Church Network of the United States and Canada
Meeting in St. Louis, MO, November 18-21, 1998.

THE GREEN RIBBON CAMPAIGN
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE
4625 BEAVER AVENUE
DES MOINES, IOWA 50310
[HTTP://WWW.NCRLC.COM/GREENRIBBON.HTML](http://www.ncrlc.com/greenribbon.html)

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference is expressing its solidarity with farmers at this time of crisis by a “green ribbon campaign”. Farm prices are at a historic low, farm families are suffering from low prices, weather related disasters, the loss of a safety net due to the last Farm Bill. The “Green Ribbon” symbolizes HOPE. We pray for family farmers. We invite others in the religious community and in all walks of life to wear a green ribbon to show that you care. We ask everyone, urban and rural, to offer support, encouragement, and neighborly care for farm families suffering distress. We ask legislators at the local, state and federal levels to work for a more effective legislation to protect our environment, to support a family farm system of agriculture, to support healthy rural communities. Our green ribbon means that this is “A TIME TO ACT.” The National Commission on Small Farms has published a report calling for significant policy changes in agriculture. The “Green Ribbon Campaign” signifies that it is time for action to support our families and our rural communities.

Please join with others in your local church, community, farm organization in wearing a green ribbon. Tell others why you are wearing it. Wear it over your heart on the outside of your clothing. Any green ribbon will do. Get one at any store. Offer one to someone else from your surplus. Pray and think of something you can do. Be a sign of hope!



WORSHIP RESOURCES

THE HOLY EARTH A DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE FARMING COMMUNITY

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Minister: The earth is divine.

People : *Not made by humans,*

Minister: God created the earth.

People : *Therefore it is hallowed.*

Minister: God caused the spirit to move over the face of the earth,

People : *and humans found what God had done was good.*

Minister: God gave humankind responsibility for all the earth,

People : *dominion implies responsibility and stewardship.*

ALL **The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, - the world and those who dwell therein.**

A HYMN OF PRAISE: For the beauty of the earth.

A PRAYER OF APPROACH:

Our Creator God, You have made this wondrous world with its land and sea and air.

You have made all that lives and grows and placed them in our care.

In the fullness of time you took upon yourself human form to live among us in order that we might be raised to a life of glory and peace in your presence.

We come together in worship now to experience anew the goodness of your creative love.

We come to offer in worship now our confession for the misuse of your gifts; we come to express thanks, and to seek through your living spirit and your holy word new directions for our lives and world.

We come in the powerful name of Jesus whose victory at the cross overcame the world.

We pray now as he taught: "Our Father (etc)

SCRIPTURE READING AND HUMAN CONFESSION:

(based on Gen. 1 & 2)

Minister and choir: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water.

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called light "day" and darkness was called "night". Evening came and morning came: the first day.

Congregation: *In the beginning there was Earth, and it was with form and beauty. And humankind dwelt upon the lands of the earth, the meadows and trees, and we said, "Let us build our dwellings in this place of beauty." And we built cities and covered the earth with concrete and steel. And the meadows were gone.
And we said, "It is good."*

Minister and choir: God said, "Let there be a vault in the waters to divide the waters in two." And so it was. God made the vault, and it divided the waters above the vault from the waters under the vault. God called the vault "heaven".
Evening came and morning came: the second day.

Congregation: *On the second day, humankind looked upon the waters of the earth, and we said, "Let us put our wastes in the water that the dirt will be washed away," and we did.
And the waters became polluted and foul in their smell.
And we said, "It is good."*

Minister and choir: God said, "Let the waters under the heaven come together into a single mass and let dry land appear, and so it was. God called the dry land "earth" and the mass of waters "seas", and God saw that it was good. God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed bearing plants, and fruit trees bearing fruit with their seed inside, on the earth." And so it was. The earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seed in the several kinds, and trees bearing fruit with their seed inside in their several kinds. God saw that it was good.
Evening came and morning came: the third day.

Congregation: *On the third day, humankind looked upon the forests of the Earth and saw they were beautiful. And we said, "Let us cut the timber for our homes and grind the wood for our use." And we did. And the land became barren and the trees were gone.
And we said, "It is good."*

Minister and choir: God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide the day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years. Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth." And so it was. God made the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars. God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was good.
Evening came and morning came: the fourth day.

Congregation: *On the fourth day, humankind saw that animals were in abundance and ran in the fields and played in the sun. And we said, “Let us cage these animals for our amusement and kill them for sport.” And we did.*

And we said, “It is good.”

Minister and choir: God said, “Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth within the vault of heaven.” And so it was. God created great serpents and every kind of living creature with which the waters teem, and every kind of winged creature. God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply upon the earth.” Evening came and morning came: the fifth day.

Congregation: *On the fifth day, humankind breathed the air of the earth. And we said, “Let us dispose of our wastes into the air for the winds shall blow them away.” And we did. And the air became filled with the smoke and the fumes could not be blown away. And the air became heavy with dust that choked and burned.*

And we said, “It is good.”

Minister and choir: God said, “Let the earth produce ever kind of living creature: cattle, reptiles, and every kind of wild beast.” And so it was. God made every kind of wild beast, every kind of cattle, and every kind of land reptile. God saw that it was good.

God said, “Let us make mankind in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of the heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth.”

We were created in the image of God, male and female we were created.

God blessed humankind, saying to us, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth.” God said, “See, I give you all the seed bearing plants that are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed bearing fruit; this shall be our food. To all wild beasts, all the birds of heaven and all living reptiles on the earth I give all the foliage of plants for food.” And so it was. God saw all that was made, and indeed it was very good.

Evening came and morning came: the sixth day.

Congregation: *On the sixth day we saw ourselves; and seeing the many languages and tongues, we feared and hated. And we said, “Let us build great machines and destroy these lest they destroy us.” And humankind built great machines and the Earth was filled with the rage of great wars.*

And we said, “It is good.”

Minister and Choir: Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. On the seventh day God completed the work of creation, resting on the seventh day. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day rest was needed after all the work of creating.

Such were the origins of heaven and earth when they were created.

Congregation: *On the seventh day we rested from our labors and the Earth was still, for mankind no longer dwelt upon the Earth.*

(Adapted from: New Ways to Worship, by L. Christensen)

SOLO (OR CHOIR) “In the beginning, Lord” – Woodward (see page 14) or “Turn Back O Man”

THANKSGIVING: Psalm 103 (NEB) (by a lay reader)

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING: “We Thank Thee O Our Father”

THE OFFERING RECEIVED AND DEDICATED: (in usual manner)

CHOIR: (an anthem of praise and adoration) (Suggestion: “The earth, the sky, the oceans” – Kaan) (The Hymn Book, #289)

THE SERMON: (“The Holy Earth” or similar topic)

PRAYERS OF RESPONSE: (led by minister or lay leader)

THE HYMN: “O God of Bethel”

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

IN THE BEGINNING LORD
(6.6.8.4.D)

1. In the beginning, Lord,
You made the world in love,
And gave man stewardship of earth
And skies above!
You gave the ocean deeps, The riches of the land,
The rushing rivers, shining hills into our hand!

2. The centuries have passed, And now at last we see
We've used these riches for ourselves,
Forgetting Thee!
Behold the barren hills,
Grey clouds across the sun,
Imprisoned rivers, dying seas –
What have we done?

3. We are ashamed to see Earth's riches sadly spent –
Our stewardship we have betrayed,
And we repent!
O help us now restore this world which you have made,
And give us strength that this great task
Be not delayed! – Amen.

(Suggested tune: Leoni)

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A SERVICE OF WORSHIP: THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

A LITURGY OF CELEBRATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING AND
COMMITMENT

Taken from "God's Earth, Our Home" - - produced by the National Council of Churches

CALL TO WORSHIP

Reader: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all that dwells therein

All: *We live in God's world, we are not alone. We share this life with the heavens and the earth, with the waters and the land, with trees and grasses, with fish, birds, and animals, with creatures of every form, and with our brothers and sisters in Rural America*

Reader: God saw all that was made, and behold, it was very good.

HYMN

(celebrating the beauty and mystery of creation)

ACT OF CONFESSION

Call to confession (using different voices)

God's creation is being abused and violated.
We as human beings so often see ourselves as
 separate from creation, not woven into the web of life,
The reference to having "dominion over the earth" is used to exploit
 and destroy the earth.
As individuals and as societies,
 we become dependent on a lifestyle of limitless growth.
We are quick to blame and judge others rather than accept responsibility
 For the part we play in destroying our environment and the rural
 Communities it hosts.
We use more than our share of the earth's resources.
We are responsible for massive pollution of earth, water and sky.
We thoughtlessly drop garbage around our homes, schools, churches,
 Places of work, and places of play.
Much of the world struggles for survival –
 good food, clean water, adequate homes.
We squander resources on technologies of destruction.
Bombs come before bread.
Industrial farms come before family farms.

All: *We are killing the earth:*

Voice 1: As mountains of garbage pile up, as uranium and nuclear wastes threaten life for centuries to come, as we use trees faster than they can regrow, as our precious agricultural land loses its fertility.

ALL: *We are killing the waters:*

Voice 2: As toxic chemicals and human wastes are dumped into lakes, Rivers and oceans, as fish and plants die from acid rain, as ground water is poisoned.

ALL: *We are killing the skies:*

Voice 3: As the global atmosphere heats up from chemical gases, as the ozone layer is destroyed, as clean air is poisoned by car and truck pollution.

ALL: *We are killing our farming communities:*

Voice 4: As industrial livestock farms create massive over-supply, as low prices force families from the land, as rural communities wither and die.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: *We confess these sins to you are God, Creator of the universe. You have set before us life and death. Too often we have chosen death. We have not loved the earth as you love it.*

PERIOD OF SILENT MEDITATION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Reader: Know that our God is a God of love as well as of judgment. God promises to be with us as we struggle to be faithful. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF GRACE

ALL: *Holy and great Creator, we recognize as your people that these problems will not be easily solved. Give us the courage to truly repent and change our ways. May we genuinely ask for forgiveness from you, from the earth, from farming communities and from future generations. May we live this day faithfully loving your creation as you love it. May we walk together toward the future with hope.*

PERIOD OF SILENT MEDITATION

(Participants may offer their own prayers for grace)

EXPERENCING THE WORD (Scriptures, Meditation)

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

Single voice: We are thankful for the passion of the children and youth among us who push us to recognize the urgency of the environmental crisis.

ALL: *Thank you creator and giver of passion.*

Single voice: We are thankful for the wisdom of the aged among us who remind us of what it means to respect the earth and to live in community with one another.

ALL: *Thank you creator and giver of wisdom.*

Single: We are thankful for the insights of farm families among us who draw on their rural culture and teach us about the sacredness of the earth and who to live in kinship with it.

All: *Thank you creator and giver of insight.*

Single voice: We are thankful for the inspiration of those among us who have already begun to live their lives in ways that show a caring for the earth, water, air and farming communities.

ALL: *Thank you creator and giver of inspiration.*

(Participants may offer thankgivings in word or deed.)

ALL: *We thank you God for all signs of hope that keep us from despairing and point us toward new ways of living.*

ACT OF COMMITMENT

Reader: We have confessed our part in hurting the earth and those whose lives depend on economies related to the earth. We have expressed our thanks for creation and those who care for it. We are ready to commit ourselves to a new way of living. Let us think about the hard questions that can lead to this kind of change, such as: How do we leave behind the ways that have abused the earth? How do we show that we care for all creation? What can we do to stop those whose action cause great pollution problems? What can we do to save farming communities?

(period of silent meditation)

OFFERINGS

HYMN

COMMISSIONING

Reader: God said: "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt; their loud cry of complaint against their slave drivers I have heard. I know well their suffering" (Exodus 3:7). In the power of the Spirit go forth, seeing the affliction of the earth as God sees it, hearing creation's cry of complaint as God hears it, knowing its suffering as God knows it.

ALL: *We commit ourselves anew to seeing the affliction of the earth, and the farming communities it supports, hearing their cry, and knowing their suffering. We commit ourselves to learning more about the changes that are needed. We commit ourselves to embarking on that long and difficult road toward life lived in harmony with all of God's creation.*

In covenant with God and with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we are called to action in the name of Jesus the Christ.

AMEN

John 11: 5 – 15
2 Corinthians 9:6 -15
Phil 4: 4-7
Matt 6: 7 – 15; or 24 –end; or 7: 7 – 12

SERMON

MEDITATION:

Long before the time of man in this world, there was seeding and fruiting. In an infinite variety each species produced its own seed particular to itself.

L: My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord.
C: *With my mouth will I ever be sharing your truth from generation to generation.*

In an indescribable complexity of temperature and humidity, of shelter and exposure, plant and soil, plant and plant, plant and animal – inter-reaction grew and bred.

L: My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord.
C: *With my mouth will I ever be sharing your truth from generation to generation.*

Human beings began to exercise their long stewardship. They gathered seed and sowed it for food. They diverted streams. They cleared trees. They dug wells. They made their own selection of plants to grow and animals to rear.

L: My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord.
C: *With my mouth will I ever be sharing your truth from generation to generation.*

The human race, at times, has thought only of its own needs and has forgotten the particular good that is in each created living thing.

L: Have mercy on me, O God, after your great goodness.
C: *According to the multitude of your mercies, do away with my offense.*

But still the seed is good: some sow it and tend it. Others gather it, package it and distribute it.

And there are improved seeds: seed that bear heavier heads of corn, seed when ground that make better bread; and this is the work of human skill

L: So teach us to number our days.
C: *That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Farmers tend their cattle and hogs and improve their herds, delighting in the promise of each calf and litter pigs.

L: So teach us to number our days.
C: *That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

There are improved strains, improved cultivation's, but all the time that marvelous inter-reactive system of the created order is altering and shifting and adjusting.

L: So teach us to number our days.
C: *That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

(There should follow, or be inserted here, an offering of seeds, etc. The following simple form is proposed, spoken by different people.)

Seeds we bring: We ask you to bless them, Lord.
Fields we bring: We ask you to bless them, Lord.
Gardens we bring: We ask you to bless them, Lord.
Pigs we bring: We ask you to bless them, Lord.
Calves we bring: We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Minister: In the name of the Lord I bless them for human use and in their own goodness. May they be a blessing to us, material and spiritual; may we who care for them and enjoy them reap material and a spiritual fruit.

HYMN

(The service may suitably end with a form of reconciling covenant said together.)

L: Brothers and sisters, we covenant today with one another:
C: *With every living creature and all on which we depend.*

L: With all that is on earth and with earth itself.
C: *With all that lives in the waters and with the waters themselves.*

L: With the creatures of the air and with the air itself.
C: *With all that is warm with life and with believing fire.*

ALL: *We commit ourselves today to put away all selfishness and greed and embrace one another in love and joy and peace.*

(This may be sealed with some symbolic act, such as the passing of the peace.)

Thus reconciled, prayers of intercession for the whole creation may appropriately be offered here, perhaps preceding the collection.)

ANOTHER **HYMN** may be sung

FINAL BLESSING:

May the one that provided the seed for sowing, the hand for doing, the mind for thinking and the heart for loving, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you and preserve you all the days of your life.

OTHER RESOURCES

Visit <http://www.kycouncilofchurches.org/EarthDay.html> for more Earth Sunday Resources

http://www.ncrlc.com/1directory4_imgs/new_images/GRcolor-vertical01.jpg has a “we support family farms” poster

SPEAKERS’ BUREAU

The KCC’s Commission on Justice Ministries’ Program Unit on Local Economies and the Environment (PULEE) has established a speakers’ bureau. The following individuals are willing to speak to your Church or community group about the following topics:

Topic	Contact	Telephone	E-Mail
How Your Lifestyle Affects the Environment	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
Low-Maintenance (Air Friendly) Landscaping	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
Saving Time, Money, and the Environment	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
Building Better Communities	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Energy Problems and Solutions	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Clean Water Issues	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Industrial Agriculture	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Morality of Eating and Local Economy Issues	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Environmental Challenges in Kentucky	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Kentucky History and the Environment	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
One Spirit, One Will, Zero Poverty	Evelyn Vaughn	502-239-4317	eyvaughan@aol.com
How to Organize a Community Hunger Walk	Evelyn Vaughn	502-239-4317	eyvaughan@aol.com
Renewing the Covenant: God's Power, God's Balance	Richard Shore	888-44-JMUIR	

The following workshops and classes are available to any congregation or community group:

Ecological Justice	Joseph Mitchell, CP	502-451-2220x123	jmittellcp@yahoo.com
Religion Meets Ecology	Joseph Mitchell, CP	502-451-2220x123	jmittellcp@yahoo.com
Meditation	Joseph Mitchell, CP	502-451-2220x123	jmittellcp@yahoo.com
Conversations That Matter	Joseph Mitchell, CP	502-451-2220x123	jmittellcp@yahoo.com
Oil on Ice (film & Discussion)	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Cleaner Cars Curriculum	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
CLAIRA driving simulation	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov

The following videos are available for your Church or community group from the following individuals:

The True Cost of Food	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
The Meatrix	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
The Future of Food	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Kilowatt Ours	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
The Mercury is Rising	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
Overuse of Animal Antibiotics	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
The Day the Water Died (Exxon Valdez)	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
The High Cost of Cheap Chicken in the Bluegrass State	Aloma Dew	270-685-2034	aloma.dew@sierraclub.org
many videos and other materials	Millie McGovern	502-348-1571	smmcgovern@scnazarethky.org

The following PowerPoints are available for your Church from the following individuals:

Low-Maintenance Landscaping	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
How Your Lifestyle Affects Air Pollution	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov

The following resources are available for your Church from the following individuals:

"Save Plaent Polluto" Video Game	Phyllis Fitzgerald	502-574-5322	phyllis.fitzgerald@louisvilleky.gov
Living Waters for the World	Evelyn Vaughn	502-239-4317	eyvaughan@aol.com
Loretto Earth Newsletter and Cabins	Susan Classen		

Many of our problems—immigration, environmental, justice, labor, health—come down to food: who has it, who grows it, the true cost, how will we sustain life on Earth in a future where water, labor, arable soil, and local economies are threatened; where monocultures destroy small sustenance farmers; and where justice belongs to the wealthy? Who really pays the true cost of the food we eat? What would Jesus think about our lifestyles?

Because eating is an intimate act that places us in communion with God, each other, and creation it is an issue that our churches need to discuss and emphasize. How our food is grown, where it is grown, how workers, neighbors and animals are treated, how the soil, air and water are treated, the environmental impacts on climate change, and the effect on our health are issues which need to be discussed in our churches. If we truly care about poverty, hunger, injustice, and environmental degradation of God’s Earth, we must face this challenge of the morality of eating. Because we must lead in educating our congregants to make wise and sustainable choices, to at least think about those choices and the effects on others and the future of the Earth—take the pledge:

**For the Bounty of the Earth,
An Eater's Pledge for Sustainability**

Because we believe God has made us stewards of the earth;
because as people of faith, we believe in a sustainable lifestyle where all have enough;
because we believe food should be produced under socially just conditions;
because we believe all God's people have a right to safe and nutritious food at a fair price;
because we believe that eating is an intimate and spiritual act as well as an agricultural and environmental act; that it is, indeed, an act of communion;
because we believe we should have food production that does not hurt air, water or land;
because we believe in a closer connection between people and the earth, and between food consumers and growers;
because we believe food production is an act of creation;
because we believe that the transportation of foods great distances contributes to global warming and harms the health of the planet and its people;
because we believe that what is often called a "local food economy" is good for our community's economy, local farmers, the environment, public health, and justice;
because we believe that food choices are moral choices that have a global effect;

we hereby pledge

- ❖ to ask tough questions about the food we eat,
- ❖ to work to see that all who were involved in our food's production are treated fairly,
- ❖ to insist that the earth is not damaged by our food's production or transportation,
- ❖ to eat seasonally,
- ❖ to eat food produced locally,
- ❖ to choose foods without antibiotics and hormones,
- ❖ to make sure we and our church serve sustainably grown and local food,
- ❖ to realize that food choices are moral choices, and
- ❖ to share these concerns with others as part of our duty of stewardship of God's creation.

Signed _____ **Date** _____