

Rose City Park Reduces, Reuses and Recycles!

In 2006, Rose City Park Presbyterian formed a Creation Care Team to serve as an ongoing resource for greening the congregation. Rose City has held many education classes over the years on the topic of stewardship of creation and a few action projects. In 1991, the church invited congregants to take a pledge to reduce their impact on creation. Also, individual members have been involved in making a difference. For example, in 1992, former member Gilbert Shibley helped to form Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns, a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

The Creation Care Team placed its focus in several areas: energy efficiency, recycling, fair trade, and initiatives to help members improve environmental practices. Most members have busy lives so they meet on an as needed basis, using e-mail in between. This works fine for them. Warren Aney, chair of the Presbytery's Eco-Justice Team, gave the group a boost when he visited for Earth Day in 2006 to share ideas.

Energy Efficiency

Making buildings more energy efficient is widely recognized as one of the most important things to do to reduce impact on creation, especially with regards to global warming. It is also a way to save church funds. Rose City got a free energy audit from Energy Trust of Oregon (www.energytrust.org) that identified two major areas for reducing energy use (and costs!). First, there was significant energy loss where steel framed windows met the brick building. The caulking was eroded away and causing heat waste. These windows have been repaired and energy efficient storm windows installed. Second, most of the fluorescent lighting in the building was of an older and less efficient vintage. Work is under way to replace lighting in most-used areas such as offices, common areas and the Fellowship Hall (which is in use 6 days a week). Charlotte Matthews has taken 81 pounds of old ballasts and 57 4' light tubes for proper disposal by a local company. (Never put fluorescent light tubes in the regular trash!) Efforts to improve energy efficiency will continue as funds allow.

The church has educated members about home options for energy and water efficiency through Oregon Interfaith Power and Light's ShopIPL fundraiser. The congregation sold compact fluorescent light bulbs and water-saving showerheads to raise awareness and funds at the same time. The fundraiser provides harder to find energy efficient bulbs such as floodlights for outdoor use. (For more information go to www.emoregon.org/power_light_php.)

Recycling

It is fairly easy for people in the Portland Metro area to be good recyclers because of curbside recycling. However, there are a number of items that don't get picked up at the curbside. Plastics and batteries are among them. The Creation Care Team has worked to make it easy for people to recycle by accepting these items on the first Sunday of the month at church. Thanks to the leadership of Charlotte Mattheews, they have taken 310 pounds of plastics to Far West Fibers for recycling as well as over 100 pounds of batteries to Metro's Hazardous Waste facility for proper disposal. The Green Team will undertake an extensive education in Spring 2008 about proper disposal of these items.

Plans to strongly encourage use of Metro Recycled Paint, low VOC paint, composting, compact fluorescent light bulbs, reducing, reusing and recycling continue. Reusing items is an overlooked way to reduce consumerism while building community at the same time. Churches are ideally suited for this. A book exchange is planned for summer of 2008 followed by a Christmas decoration exchange in October and an earth stewardship pledge in fall 2008 in conjunction with the church's stewardship campaign.

Fair Trade Coffee

Since December 2006, the Creation Care Team has served fairly traded coffee from the Presbyterian Coffee Project. They have also sold more than \$2,200 worth of fairly traded coffee, tea, hot chocolate mix and chocolate bars to our congregation members on the first Sunday of every month. This is not a fund-raising project, but could be in the future with more involvement.

Supporting a Farmers Market

For many years, Rose City has supported the Hollywood Farmers Market (HFM), held on the street adjacent to the church, by providing volunteers and meeting space. They now provide office space for the market manager. The support of the congregation is deeply appreciated by the farmers and the many volunteers of HFM, one of Portland's most successful farmers markets.

For more information contact: Charlotte Matthews at moosewoman@comcast.net

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