

**Provided by the Eco-Justice Team of the
Congregational Support Network,
Presbytery of the Cascades**

**CARING FOR CREATION:
GOOD EARTHKEEPING IDEA # 4
Support Your Local Farmer**

WHAT:

- Purchase as much of your food as possible from local sources in season.
- Get to know your local farmer and learn how they grow your food.
- Work through your congregation to make fresh, nutritious local food accessible to all.

WHY:

- We honor God's good gift of daily bread by making food choices that embody justice and land stewardship.
- Keeps local family farm agriculture economically viable during a time of increased global competition and consolidating markets.
- Enables money to circulate through the local economy.
- Reduces use of fossil fuels for transportation. The average food item travels 1,300 miles!

In 2002, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA approved a report called "We are What We Eat." It calls on the Presbyterian Church to participate in the current agricultural revolution--largely driven by the globalization of our food system-- that is affecting everyone who produces and consumes food. The interdependence between food producer and consumer is more significant than ever. This provides a unique opportunity to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ through our daily food production and consumption decisions that will support sustainability, stewardship, compassion and community. The report's recommendations for the church are reflected below.

HOW: (See page 2 for resources and websites).

- Purchase food from farmers' markets, stores and co-ops that offer local food and buy directly from farm stands and ranches. Aim to purchase 10 percent of your food from local sources.
- Offer your congregation's parking lot as a farmers' market and promote the existence of farmers' markets within your community and region.
- Hold a congregational meal that features local and seasonal ingredients. Invite a farmer to share why they farm and what was involved in getting the food from field to table.
- Purchase a share in a community supported agriculture farm and purchase a share for a food pantry or soup kitchen through your church.
- Sell farmers' market coupons at church, if available in your community, to give to people in need, so that they may select food that suits their cultural preferences.

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Give us this day our daily bread. . .



Caring for Creation Good Earthkeeping

Idea #4: Support Your Local Farmer

Resources for Eating Locally and Seasonally

Find the farmers' market, farm stand up-pick, or community supported agriculture farm nearest to you.

Oregon Farmers' Markets:

www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/directory.html

Oregon Farm Stands:

www.oda.state.or.us/admd/sr_mkt/index.html

Community Supported Agriculture Farms:

www.nal.usda.gov/afsice/csa/csa/state.htm

Food Alliance Certified Farms in Oregon

www.foodalliance.org/partners/farm.htm

Useful Books

Shannon Jung. Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2004.

Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman Wirt. Simply in Season: Recipes that celebrate fresh, local foods in the spirit of More-with-Less. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2005.

Study Guides for Congregations

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. et. al. Just Eating: Practicing Our Faith at the Table. Call Presbyterian Distribution Services at 1-800-524-2612 to order or download at www.pcusa.org/hunger/food.

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. We are what we eat, A Report Approved by the 214th General Assembly.

Mike Schut. Food and Faith: Justice, joy and daily bread, Denver: Living the Good News, 2002. Includes an excellent collection of essays on food and an eight-session study guide.

Community Food Security Resources

Community food security is defined as "all persons in a community having access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food at all times from local sources." Community food security joins together concerns for nutrition, economic development, hunger, family farms and sustainability.

Community Food Security Coalition.

www.foodsecurity.org

FarmAid: www.farmaid.org

Oregon Food Bank:

www.oregonfoodbank.org/ofb_services/food_programs.html

Oregon Interfaith Community Food

Partnership: www.emoregon.org/inec.html

WHY (World Hunger Year)

www.worldhungeryear.org

Stories from Presbytery of the Cascades:

Rose City Park Presbyterian Church in NE Portland is vital community partner for the Hollywood Farmers' Market, held on a street adjacent to the church from May to October. The church provides a meeting space for the farmers' market board, supplies volunteers, and advertises the market with a banner. Also, youth from the church take leftover produce from the market to a nearby soup kitchen. One plus for the church are the new members that have been drawn to it through the market.

Central Presbyterian Church in Eugene is a participant in an interfaith effort called "That's My Farmer." Central is one of nearly 20 congregations that come together every spring to celebrate local agriculture. At the annual celebration, all the Eugene area Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmers tell their stories, thus deepening consumers' appreciation for farmers and farming. In a CSA, customers pay up front for a season's worth of produce. Each farm has information table so that people can decide which CSA works best for them and sign up on the spot. Recently, the project has sold farmers' market coupons that build in funding to make coupons available to low-income people.