

Environmental Stewardship Greensboro

The Mission: Environmental Stewardship Greensboro (ESG), an interfaith volunteer organization, works to encourage 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 and also 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 environmental issues and to promote sustainable practices in all areas of life and living in our 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 of more than two dozen faith communities have met together as Environmental Stewardship Greensboro to share their successes and frustrations. During its first year, ESG carried out five cooperative projects. An *all-day conference* was held with four speakers on environmental topics. *Four concerts* were organized into a weekend celebration of the life and work of Father Thomas Berry. In honoring his 93rd birthday, 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", was developed this is now available for download, free of charge.

In cooperation with the Glenwood Neighborhood Association, ESG received a grant from the Future Fund of the Greensboro Community Foundation to provide *98 rain barrels* for residents of the neighborhood who attend a seminar on wise landscaping practices. Within the participating congregations, ESG members have been conducting *energy audits*, installing energy-saving compact florescent (cf) 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 to St. James Presbyterian Church for a *community garden*, to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro for a "Seed to Table" program, to 1st Lutheran Church for *promoting environmental stewardship* and to the Islamic Center of Greensboro for *starting recycling*.

ESG invites faith communities to make commitments to pursue environmental stewardship in their building and grounds and to include environmental stewardship as a regular part of their on-going programs. 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.

Since 2011, ESG has coordinated a #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 (mcneilplanningsolutions@mindspring.com), Cindy Bathgate (spindolina@yahoo.com), Eric Hoekstra (Hoekstraeb@Yahoo.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 monthly meetings of Environmental Stewardship Greensboro (ESG) – for meeting times and information visit www.greenschemesnc.com/esg. 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.*

