

Creation Care Council Minutes Tuesday, May 15, 2012

1. Brief creation care updates from everyone

- *Emily's* gardening group launched this spring with 12 people, and has chosen to go completely organic this year. She also reported that she will study elementary education at the University of Windsor this fall.

- *Dave HW* hopes to get something started with his congregational creation care group soon. His attention this spring was directed toward the death of his father, April 4.

- *Karla* is enjoying gardening and had a nice kick-off for a community garden. She has found a taker for the creation care liaison role in her congregation.

- *Jennifer*: just hosted a NatureFest at Merry Lea. She also reported on a gathering of Mennonite congregations active in creation care in the Goshen area.

- *Jim* described roundtable discussions he participated in at a national convention. At one of them, Chris Meyer and Mark Regier of Everence discussed investment advocacy, including modern slavery and environmental issues such as fracking. It was interesting to hear how they are working both nationally and internationally on Everence's behalf, and to see both progress and challenges.

- Joanne reported that she and Will Braun have met with a group spun off from the Interchurch Northern Hydro Task Force. The group is interested in pursuing broader energy issues in MB, and bringing together both political advocacy and spirituality. She also attended an interfaith meeting discussing working together on climate change. Willard Metzger was also involved.

- *Luke's* congregation, Waterford Mennonite Church, had an official kick-off for its creation care group on earth day. He also visited and spoke at Albuquerque Mennonite, a Shades of Green congregation, and was impressed with the breadth of their thinking about creation care.

2. Minutes review:

- Correction: Jodi **Read**, not Reed

- A question about how we might give people the option of commenting on the issues page on our web site came up. Joanne suggested simultaneous posting on issues page and Facebook.

- At some point, we need to think about what our guidelines are regarding posting things on the issues page. How do other organizations like Peace and Justice Support Network do this?

- *Side note that came up here*: Recently we received a request to be listed as a sponsor of a fast intended as "a global nonviolent protest against wanton disregard for the natural world, and a spiritual affirmation that we are all part of that world, responsible for its careful

tending.” Jennifer is acquainted with one of the organizers. See <http://www.fastfortheearth.com/> While we continue to think of ourselves as a network rather than an organization that takes positions, no one objected to simply being listed as in support of such a fast.

3. Web review

Jennifer reported on the progress of the web revision and showed pages from the site via screen-sharing. The goal is to launch the site publicly by June 10. She noted the following:

- a. Sponsors have their own tab.
- b. Donations
 - Donor button is more prominent
 - donor page indicates what you get for your money.
- c. Score sheet is more prominent and has its own tab.
- d. A tab has been added for our own MCCN resources.
- e. Council members page illustrates what a page with pictures added looks like.
- f. Blog aspects of web site are still under construction.

4. Joanne’s meeting with Willard Metzger

Joanne had a recent meeting with Willard Metzger, who is the executive director of Mennonite Church Canada.

- Willard sees creation care as one of his three priorities.
- He is big on measurable goals.
- The conversation focused on how MC Canada and MCCN can best engage with each other, recognizing that staff time and funds are limited on both sides. What low cost but creative things can we do? Suggestions included:
 - o Better communication with each other
 - o Include something from MCCN every time the Equipping Packet goes out.
 - o Set a goal that by 2013, a certain percent of Canadian churches would be 100 Shades of Green congregations. If church-wide agency can help congregations focus on creation care, that’s great.
 - o Once our web site is live, walk Willard through our goals and web site to enable him to better represent MCCN with his constituency.
 - o Set up informal meetings with Menno agency leaders such as MDS.
 - o Eke out one day per month staff time in Canada for MCCN.
 - o Also note that all Canada area reps are now in place, thanks to Joanne.

5. Survey: Laurina Graber, a graduate student in environmental education at Merry Lea surveyed MCCN creation care liaisons as part of a research project. Her research indicated that MCCN is not yet well known in Mennonite circles. We also discussed the list of what liaisons were interested in having their congregations study, and thought this feedback could be helpful as we plan. For example, recycling ranked at the bottom of the list.

6. MC USA Assembly in Phoenix, 2013

Overall planning: Hannah Heinzekehr is Mennonite Church USA's convention planning coordinator. Dave HW has sent her an email, letting her know we are here. He has also been pleased that the creation care aspects of the Phoenix convention are being addressed without us pounding on doors. According to the MC USA Facebook page, the Phoenix convention center is LEED certified, uses cornstarch-based disposable plates, donates leftover food, composts waste, etc. Note the green pages for a denomination meeting in this center this year. <http://www.uua.org/ga/values/greeninggeneral/index.shtml>

Seminars: Luke has submitted about six seminar ideas through Goshen College and the MEA. We brainstormed about other ideas, presenters and themes:

- A seminar about the resources that MCCN can provide to make people more aware of who we are.
- How to build a green committee at your church.
- A place where liaisons can come together and hear from each other. How to do the scorecard...How to develop your congregation's web page on the MCCN site.
- Karla will be attending and would be willing to do a workshop on immigration/food labor issues if she could work with someone else. She will prepare a tentative description.
- Creating a community garden.
- Supply people with practical things they can actually do.
- Southwestern people? Dave HW mentioned Charletta Erb, who is moving to southern California to work with Bartimaes Cooperative Ministries. What about someone from Albuquerque Mennonite? Woman who did the extraordinary children's time Luke heard?

7. MC Canada Assembly, Vancouver 2012:

Joanne spoke with two plenary biblical speakers dealing with the theme, Dusting Off the Bible. Sheila Klassen Wiebe did not feel her passage lent itself to a creation care theme and was going a different direction, but Gerald Gerbrandt said, "I will take your suggestions very seriously." He will speak about how the church has adapted its understanding of the Bible over time, and a deepened understanding of caring for the earth could easily be one of his examples.