

Be a GREEN LEADER



A communiqué from the NWPA Synod
Committee on Leadership Support

Volume II, Issue 1
January-February 2012

*It is you who light my lamp; the LORD,
my God, lights up my darkness.*

Psalm 18:28

Energy Awareness

The cold months of winter are a good time to curl up with a warm cup of tea, sit by the heater, and read a good book. The winter months are also a good time to think about the energy we use to keep warm, heat water for tea, and live daily life.

All energy sources have pros and cons. Coal is cheap and provides jobs, but mining practices and pollution can be problematic. Natural gas burns cleaner, but fracking may be an issue. Wind power is renewable and decreasing in price, but uses rare earth minerals and may be harmful to some birds. Are there any good choices? What's a person to do?

There are no perfect solutions, but being aware of our energy choices as individuals and a society is a crucial. Here are some thoughts and activities to be a part of a conversation about energy use.

Did you know?

- Portion of U.S. annual energy use created by the combustion of fossil fuels: *86 percent**
- U.S. contribution of global greenhouse gas emissions: *about 20 percent**
- U.S. population relative to the world: *5 percent**
- Amount of greenhouse gas emissions that have increased between 1970 and 2004:
 - *70 percent**
 - Amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would be reduced if the energy efficiency of commercial and industrial buildings improved by 10 percent: *equal to about 30 million vehicles**
- Portion of energy in buildings used inefficiently or unnecessarily: *30 percent**

* www.energystar.gov



Get Personal:

- Find out what your carbon footprint is and ways to reduce it:
http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html

- Complete an energy audit at home or congregation. For a helpful article visit <http://flourishonline.org/2010/09/first-steps-in-creation-care-for-church-facilities/>
- Learn about what sources of renewable energy are available in your area. Find out what is available from the electric company.
- If you are in the market for a different vehicle, think about fuel economy. Visit www.fueleconomy.gov
- Learn about energy usage in other industrial nations
- Take a trip to Camp Lutherlyn's straw bale house – (to visit, contact Lutherlyn's Environmental Education Program – leep@lutherlyn.com)



Take Small Steps:

- Take steps to weatherize your home.
- Turn down the heat by 2 degrees. (*1% savings for each degree for an eight hour period.*)
- Reduce water temperature by 10 degrees. *For each 10°F reduction in water temperature, you can save between 3%–5% in energy costs.*
- Change light bulbs to lower wattage bulbs, or to fluorescent or LED bulbs.
- Unplug unused appliances. (*Most appliances use electricity even when they are not turned on.*) Learn about “Vampire Power” <http://www.vampirepowersucks.com/Default.aspx>

Energy Fast:

Take an “Energy Fast” for a morning, one day, a week, or a whole month.

An energy fast can be a good and fun way to raise your own awareness of the energy you use. It can be done in any number of ways – here are a few possibilities. Be creative!

Less commitment:

- Turn off lights when leaving a room
- Put computers/laptops on more energy saving settings
- Unplug appliances/TV's etc. which are not in use. (Any appliance with a light uses energy even if it is not turned on.)
- Be mindful each time a light or appliance is turned on.

More commitment:

- Use as little electricity as possible beyond what is essential for heat and refrigeration.
- Keep a log each time a light or appliance is turned on.
- Take a day without using a computer

Visit Lutherans Restoring Creation for more ideas – <http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>

THANK YOU to Pastor Jim Steingass for his contributions to this communique! Watch for the next issue in the March-April newsletter to learn more about how we can reduce-reuse-recycle our resources.