**GREEN CHURCH INITIATIVE ANNUAL UPDATE**

**April 2024**

The Core Area Ministry Leaders (CAMLs) have been working diligently with their teams to maintain the current attention to how our actions affect our planet while they research additional opportunities for both the church proper and for members of the congregation to do on their own. Here is a short summary of ideas being implemented/considered:

**Worship**

* Earth Day service April 21 – will focus on creation care
	+ Will include blessing of the recycle bins with new signs on what is recyclable
	+ Later that day BUMC will hold a Blessing of the Animals at the Lee Chapel outdoor site
* Bi-annual Outdoor service (May 19) – include creation care elements
* Eliminate paper bulletins April 21 (better engages online community, part of Green Church initiative).  Will have paper bulletins for Easter and Christmas Eve
* Second Sunday in November (annually) – service will focus on Creation Care
* Monthly – ensure creation care hymns and scripture are included in service
* Green church initiative will be a monthly agenda item

**Learn**

* The second JustFaith environmental class has just started. Both sessions have had 10-12 people
* April Learn event (April 21 during the Sunday School hour) will include opportunities for individuals and families of all ages to do hands-on activities benefitting creation: picking up litter, education on composting and creating rain barrels, potting small plants, upcycling plastic, creating reusable bags, earth day activities for kids, weeding, and much more!
* The Thursday morning prayer group recently added a creation care topic of the week about which to pray.
* We recently have begun dialogue with another UMC to aid them in the process of greening their church
* Plans have begun to add creation care material to the Social Justice library
* A team is looking at the creation care section of the BUMC website for enhancements and additions.

**Care**

* Discontinued using bottled water at any church function
* Using mugs for Fellowship coffee time
* Using plates and cutlery for any event where manpower is available to wash the items

**Share**

* Additional gleaning opportunities are being both added and explored. Extra food is shared with other food pantries
* Produce from congregation members’ gardens will be used by the co-op this summer
* One member of our Creation CareTeam, Frank Esposito, is part of the VAUMC Creation Care Team and sends us ways we can advocate (most recently the petition calling the 2024 General Conference to divest from fossil fuels)
* The entire Social Justice Team is on the mailing list of Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, visiting Richmond during the General Assembly, and staying informed about issues which occasionally include Creation Care initiatives

**Administrative**

* Developed and implemented a system to recycle paper, plastic, cans and glass
* Held electronic waste collection via a scout project. A team is discussing launching a recycling center in the fall for eyeglasses, used batteries, electronic waste.
* Are currently exploring resources for purchasing paper and toilet tissue made from recycled paper
* Developed new suggested Creation Care guidelines for the office
	+ Printers should default to double-sided and black and white. If making more multiple copies, print an initial copy to preview it before taking more copies.
	+ If you print something that is waste, but one side is still blank, place in the supplied “reusable paper”. If printing something internally, use back of “reusable paper”. You can also use this paper as scratch paper as needed.
	+ Recycle all paper.
	+ If receiving “junk” mail or catalogs from companies, when at all possible, switch to receiving them electronically.
	+ If ordering materials, always choose options that reduce packaging when possible.
	+ When possible, register for paperless billing.
	+ When getting rid of items in the church, use BurkeUMC Free or local Buy Nothing Groups to attempt to find someone who might wish to reuse them.
	+ Burke UMC will use online pay stubs and direct deposit when available.
	+ Scan documents and store in Sharepoint when possible.
	+ BUMC will buy recycled paper when possible.
	+ Print Return Labels and Stamps onto envelopes for larger mailings.
	+ Energy audit is scheduled for May with Dominion Energy
	+ All incandescent lighting in the building has been replaced with compact fluorescents or LED

BUMC first received a Green Church Award in 2023. The Creation Care team has submitted this information to the Virginia Annual Conference for consideration for a Sustaining Green Church Award.

**Genesis 2:15 (NKJV)**

**Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it**

**June 2024 Update:**

BUMC once again received a Green Church award at the 2024 Virginia Annual Conference