

Peace Lutheran Church 2024 Creation Care Action Plan

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Introduction

Just three months after the People of Peace approved a multi-year climate action plan by Congregation resolution, the ELCA adopted a new [Social Statement on Earth's Climate Crisis](#). In it, the ELCA challenges all expressions of our church to the following actions:

- Promote creation care through preaching, worship, and educational programming.
- Consider adopting congregational commitments to creation care.
- Witness publicly to the climate crisis and “walk the talk” by
 - Achieving the same levels of greenhouse gas reduction that we urge the U.S. government to pursue (halving emissions levels from 2005 by 2030);
 - Investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems;
 - Reviewing how ELCA landholdings can be used to sequester carbon, promote biodiversity, and/or encourage other life-giving relationships with creation; and
 - Becoming “anticipatory communities” that model climate resilience (e.g., emergency shelters, cooling space, community gardens).
- Demonstrate our care for creation via our budgeting and investment of church funds—including screening fossil fuel stocks or engaging in shareholder activism regarding such funds.
- Promote scientific literacy and instruction about global warming and climate change in all our educational institutions.
- Engage in legislative advocacy at all levels of government, individually and collectively.
- Join with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the climate crisis.
- Engage in acts of community organizing to build stronger relationships and more resilient communities that can take action to create meaningful climate solutions and help people understand that they have the power to make lasting change.



We at Peace Lutheran have already made great strides toward these goals. We were recognized as an Earth Ministry/WAIP Greening Congregation in 2016 and an EnviroStar Partner in 2022 and a Champion this Nov. We committed ourselves to creation care with our sixth arena of ministry in 2020. We benchmarked our emissions using 2017 data and built annual assessments into our planning starting in 2022. Solar panels have generated energy on our roof since 2018.

Since 2015 cisterns and rain gardens have protected Puget Sound from runoff from our property, which now support our smallest neighbors with new native plants, the beginning of our *Peace Pollinator Project*. Our 2022, 2023 and 2024 budgets allocate funds for creation care. We have embarked on education programs at all levels about global warming and climate change. We hosted a Faithful Advocacy training by Earth Ministry/WAIPPL last February. For years, we have joined with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners during Interfaith Lobby Days to bring our creation care and social ministry concerns to the Washington State legislature. Last January, our congregation adopted a multi-year Climate Action Plan that embodies this work.

Throughout 2023 we advanced our work as Earth Keepers – increasing our focus on Earth-tending during worship services, adding motion sensors to reduce electricity usage from our lighting, improving our waste sorting signage, and having fun sorting recycling and garbage on Rally Day. We added plant-based dishes to our gatherings and increased our awareness of food waste as a global issue. We hosted an Earth Day Rainwise event, provided purchasing and gathering guidelines to the Council and stenciled “No Dumping” on storm drains throughout our neighborhood.



Rally Day Garbology Table

Every Sunday’s bulletin featured Acts and Prayers for Creation. Supported by a Thrivent Grant, the Creation Care budget purchased for each Peace household the animal-themed Advent devotional book, “All Creation Waits.” We assessed our 2022 carbon footprint and purchased credits supporting three projects to offset our 25.32 metric tons of CO₂e emissions from that year. We submitted our progress report to EnviroStars and were welcomed to the Champion Tier in November! Earth Ministry/WAIPPL awarded us with its inaugural Greening Congregation Award for our commitment to being, or working towards, a net zero goal.

2024 Plan Development

Many of us have worried about the planet’s plastic problem for a long time. The UN’s Environment Programme calls plastics pollution the “second most ominous threat to the global environment, after climate change.” Globally, we produce 407M tons of plastic each year, 30% more than the weight of all humanity. Less than 10% of that plastic is recycled. The rest ends up in our environment – and in us. So this past year, we audited single-use plastics in our facility to build the foundation beneath the *Replacing Plastics* campaign we’ll launch with Lent this year.

We'll continue to develop our *Cooking for Creation* and *Peace Pollinator Project* work in 2024. In crafting this plan, we again employed these four key strategies:

- Adopt, fund, and implement annual action plans built around Earth Ministry's Green Fields: Worship, Faithful Advocacy, Community Engagement, Buildings and Grounds, and Education.
- Monitor our progress annually using the Cool Congregations Calculator and Washington's EnviroStar program.
- Purchase carbon offsets annually to compensate for the emissions we can't yet reduce and in support of our Social Ministry objectives.
- Increasingly view all we do at Peace through a lens of Creation Care and Environmental Justice.

Worship – conveying our environmental ethic in worship throughout the liturgical year

- Recognizing that creation is a lens through which we already approach many services throughout the year, not only in the creation petitions that are included every Sunday but also in liturgy, hymns, and sermons, propose to the Peace Worship Planning Team:
 - Again emphasize Earth-tending with services in January, June and October
 - Continue an awareness of Creation Care as it relates to the readings, etc. in other services throughout the year (ongoing)
 - Publish Prayers for Creation in Sunday bulletins (weekly)
- Encourage engagement for Earth-tending services by returning the Seasons of Creation Tree to the narthex, providing prompts appropriate for the occasion. (ongoing)
- In partnership with our Social Ministry Team, seek opportunities to include their justice-related emphases and charitable activities in worship services through prayers, sermons, children's messages, etc. (ongoing)
- Explore ways members can bring house plants or flowers from their gardens to enhance the worship space and bring the outdoors into the sanctuary. (ongoing)



Creation Tree banner

Education – exploring the connections between our faith and the Earth with Peace learners of all ages

- Utilize the “Discipleship at Home” section of [Ecofaith Recovery](#)'s Watershed Discipleship toolkit throughout the year for our weekly Acts for Creation. Dedicate one or more CCT *Peace Notes* articles to Watershed Discipleship.

- Enhance our PLC Creation Care webpage with information, progress reports and volunteer and engagement opportunities. Use all communications tools available to us to tell Peace Lutheran's stories. (ongoing)
- Create a series of communications for our *Replacing Plastics* program based on [EarthDay.org](https://www.earthday.org)'s *Planet vs. Plastics* campaign including its [Plastic Pollution Quiz](#) and the [Plastics Tracker](#). Publish articles, tips and information during Lent, Earth Month, Plastics Free July and holiday season in *Peace Notes*, Sunday bulletins, on website, on narthex bulletin board and social media.
- Engage our youth in the *Replacing Plastics campaign* by
 - Inviting them to help us find the plastics in our society, focusing on a single type of item each month. (Feb. kickoff)
 - Visit the eldest Sunday School class to discuss how they want us to continue building the campaign. (Fall)
- Partner with Adult Education planners to integrate book and/or film studies of biblical and Lutheran connections to explore the ways plastics damage all of creation and create advocacy possibilities. (ongoing)
- Communicate sustainability practices to PLC membership through Peace Notes articles, website and social postings and presentations. (ongoing)
- Publish weekly Acts for Creation in Sunday bulletins. (weekly)

Buildings and Grounds – practicing stewardship and sustainability in how we manage our facility and land

- Continue developing the *Peace Pollinator Project* by adding more native pollinator plants to PLC's grounds with spring and fall plantings.
- Share ideas with the Properties Committee to support sustainable landscaping and grounds care.
- Develop *Replacing Plastics Campaign* to eliminate single-use plastics everywhere possible within our church facility and encourage the same practice in the homes of Peace members.



**Peace Lutheran Church
Pollinator Project Site**

- Create a *Replacing Plastics For Lent* program to launch by Ash Wednesday on February 14. The program will begin with an invitation to evaluate our individual plastic usage. Then each week will feature ideas for eliminating plastics from our homes and in our shopping carts.
- Participate in the global *Plastics Free July* program, including sharing its 31 Days of Tips calendar.

- Gear up for plastics-free holidays including helping the Bazaar team remove single-use plastics from the event.
- To the best of our ability, re-create our carbon footprint from 2005 to accept the ELCA's challenge to congregations to halve those emissions levels by 2030. (Summer)

Community Engagement – extending our mission as Earth Keepers beyond our own congregation

- As part of our ongoing *Peace Pollinator Project*,
 - Sponsor and host a Pollinator Pathway neighborhood block party (May/June)
 - Hold a neighborhood Native Pollinator Plant swap on the Peace patio with materials the curious can take if they stop by to investigate so they learn about the Peace Pollinator Project and Pollinator Pathways. (Sept.)
 - Explore building a native plants exchange box, modeled on our little library, where we and our neighbors can leave native plants for adoption or adopt some for their own. (Spring)
- Extend the reach of our *Replacing Plastics Campaign* by
 - Sharing our *Replacing Plastics For Lent* campaign with other Westside Interfaith Network congregations, inviting them to use it as they wish. (Jan.)
 - Posting the *Replacing Plastics For Lent* actions to the PLC and Peace Connection Facebook pages, as well as the Creation Care page of the PLC website. (Q1)
 - Throughout the year, posting relevant, vetted posts related to plastic issues to our social media and website. (ongoing)
 - Hosting a “Swap your SUP” event after the April 21st service to share information on the impact of single-use plastics (SUP) and a display of sustainable substitutes for them, such as bamboo “paper” towels; bamboo TP; shampoo and conditioner bars; water bottles; silicone or beeswax sandwich bags; mesh produce bags made from repurposed plastic bottles or textile; laundry detergent sheets and coconut fiber dish “sponges.” We plan to give our members a couple samples each—one to use at home and one to give away to a friend or family member outside Peace, with the explanation that we're trying to reduce the use of SUP by replacing them with sustainable alternatives, and inviting them to try it with us. Using the Season of Creation Tree, ask folks to note what they've done to swap out SUP and pin their ideas to the tree so we can compile



them for sharing through our website and other communications. (The CCT plans to apply for a Thrivent Action Grant to fully or partially finance this event.) (April)

- *Cooking for Creation* demos, potlucks and recipe swap events
 - Encourage and/or provide a plant-based soup for each Lenten soup supper with table tents explaining the dish and sharing recipes whenever possible. (Q1)
 - Host a vegetarian potluck and/or recipe swap October 20 in recognition of World Food Day on October 16th and the role plant-based eating can play in more equitably and sustainably feeding us all. Explore door prizes, inviting members to bring a dish, a friend, and if possible a recipe to share.
 - Provide plant-based treats for fellowship time following every Creation Sunday.
- Exhibit at the Duwamish River Festival (Aug.) and West Seattle EcoFair (Sept.) at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church's Walmsley Center to share all we've done and are doing at Peace and learn from other exhibitors and attendees how we can do more than support others' efforts.
- At least quarterly, purchase and distribute Creation Care related books through our Free Little Library.
- Track West Seattle's efforts to reduce our community's environmental impact by helping to raise awareness among the congregation of events and resources.



Cooking for Creation samples at 2023 Bazaar

Faithful Advocacy – putting our faith into action to reform the political, social and corporate systems that perpetuate environmental racism, pollution, poverty, and injustice

- Help organize carpools for Westside FAN member churches to join Faith Action Network's Interfaith Lobby Day in Olympia. Prior to Lobby Day, provide Peace members with a link to Earth Ministry/WAIPPL's recorded Faithful Advocacy training on YouTube for all interested in participating or just learning more. (Feb.)
- Provide news stories, articles, and images that come from trusted sources to Community Engagement social media and website programs, in Sunday bulletins and through the Seasons of Creation Tree, emphasizing invitations to take action. (ongoing)

2024 Budget

Line items:	Cost Estimates:
Neighborhood Peace Pollinator Project block party	\$500
2023 Carbon Offset Investment Fund	\$300
<i>Cooking for Creation</i> events (covers professionally prepared plant-based entree, door prizes)	\$300
<i>Replacing Plastics</i> Swap out your SUP (single-use plastics) event materials	\$200
Quarterly (or even monthly) purchase of Creation Care related books to distribute through our Free Little Library	\$200
Speaker/other fund to support local events	\$500
2024 CCT Budget:	\$2,000

2024 Calendar of Activities

January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism of Christ Sunday plus plant-based treats at coffee hour • Develop year-long <i>Replacing Plastics</i> campaign • 2023 carbon footprint assessment • 2005 carbon footprint assessment 	February (Ash Wed. 2/14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick off <i>Replacing Plastics'</i> #FewerPlasticsForLent program • FAN's Interfaith Lobby Day • Engage our youth in the <i>Replacing Plastics</i> campaign • Provide a plant-based soup for each Lenten soup dinner with <i>Cooking for Creation</i> information/recipes
March (Easter 3/31) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #FewerPlasticsForLent and Lenten soup dinner contributions continue • Creation Care books in Free Little Library 	April (Earth Day 4/22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support EarthDay.org's <i>Planet vs. Plastics</i> campaign with additional communications • Swap your SUP event after service 4/21
May <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peace Pollinators Program</i> planting • Sponsor and host a Pollinator Pathway neighborhood block party in May or June 	June – Season of Creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation Care books in Free Little Library • Offer plant-based treats at coffee hour throughout the Season of Creation
July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 Days of <i>Plastics Free July</i> 	August <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duwamish River Festival
September <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support God's Work, Our Hands 9/8 • West Seattle EcoFair Labor Day weekend • Neighborhood <i>Peace Pollinator Project</i> native plant swap • Creation Care books in Free Little Library 	October <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cooking for Creation</i> potluck and recipe swap 10/20 • <i>Peace Pollinator Project</i> planting • St. Francis of Assisi worship service highlighting Creation Care followed by plant-based treats at coffee hour
November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick off Plastics-free holidays communications • Focus on <i>Cooking for Creation</i> for Thanksgiving 	December <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation Care books in Free Little Library • Continue Plastics-free holidays communications