



Glenwood United Parish
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Becoming an Earthwise Congregation 2010

Earthwise Committee:

Darby Bowen, Chair
Gary Rose
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Anniversary Committee:

Caryl Nelson, Co-Chair
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“Becoming an Earthwise Congregation” – this is the theme for the 125th Anniversary celebration of Glenwood United Parish. Glenwood United Parish is a merged congregation with current affiliations through the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ. The official merger of Glenwood Methodist Church and Glenwood Union Congregational Church took place in 1971. Prior to this combination, many members of the Presbyterian Church in Sedan joined the Union Congregational Church, and several members of the Grove Lake United Methodist joined Glenwood United Methodist Church. The current church building was constructed in 1977 and continues to serve its membership today. This year (2010) marks the 125th Anniversary of the Union Congregational Church, the youngest of the current affiliations. Programs have been held monthly beginning in September, 2009 with several previous ministers invited to participate in worship services, along with special programs emphasizing the theme of “Becoming an Earthwise Congregation”. The culminating event will be held on August 22, 2010 with a special Sunday morning worship service and a program, all held at the Lakeside Ballroom in Glenwood.

Education: The membership of the Anniversary Celebration Committee quickly grasped the UCC resolution and made it a focal point of reflecting on the past, celebrating the present, and looking to the future of our congregation and God’s creation. The Earthwise programs are listed below. Those months with programs not appearing were celebrated with visiting ministers or UCC/UMC representatives. A complete listing of monthly programs can be viewed at www.glenwoodunitedparish.com

Earthwise Programs:

September 13 - Neely Crane-Smith from the Center for Energy and the Environment

October 18 - Brynne & Dean Pass, Constructing a Compost Unit.

November 8 - Luan Johnsrud, Pope County Soil & Water Conservation District Water

December 6 - Char Zimmerman, Alternative Giving

January - Dick/Rita Benson, History of the Methodist/UCC Churches

April - Sunday School/Youth, Earth Day

May 5 - “Godly Women Out of History”, 7 pm

August 22 - Celebration Worship Service

Direct Earthwise educational materials have included a monthly article in the church newsletter and quotes or reminders taken from “Living Green: 365 Ways to Make a Difference”, placed in the weekly bulletin. Copies of the monthly articles are included with this packet for reference.

Recycling: “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” has been a major theme of the education piece. The majority of the monthly articles include items that fit this category. The spring season also brings out many topics to promote that fit into this area: Following are items promoted in the church newsletter and weekly bulletins to members:

Friday – **April 9 (during Government Week)** – the Pope/Douglas Waste-to-Energy Facility in Alexandria held an open house offering information about their facility, expansion project and services. Tours were also provided. (Glenwood is located in Pope County, Minnesota)

Thursday – **April 22 – Earth Day** – An Eco-Fair was held at the Woodland Elementary School in Alexandria. A flyer regarding this was the April article for the newsletter and is included with this information.

Thursday – **May 5** – Recycling of E-waste at the Glacier Ridge Computing in Glenwood. Most electronic items could be dropped off at no charge.

Saturday – **May 15** – TKI (Tom Kraemer Inc) sponsored a Community Cleanup Day along with several other vendors in the area (the City of Glenwood, other waste vendors, etc.) They accepted a wider variety of items, at reduced rates on this particular day.

On Saturday, **May 9**, the church sponsored a cleanup day at the church. This was advertised as a “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” event with the request for help below. Timing was excellent as many items were disposed of at the Community Cleanup Day.

Spring Cleaning Day at the Church
Saturday, May 8 8:00 am – Noon

It has been a long time since there was a thorough cleaning at the Church. We will be concentrating on four main areas, the kitchen, the library, storage areas/ closets and the sanctuary/entry. With a lot of help we will be able to finish in four hours.

*The goal is to empty all shelves and cupboards in the kitchen, library and storage areas and clean them. Sort (**Reduce**) and wash items before returning them. Some items will be designated for the annual rummage sale (**Reuse**), some will be thrown (**Recycle**). This will leave us better organized with more useable room. In the sanctuary and entry the goal is to dust and polish all wood and metal surfaces.*

Everyone is asked to bring/donate appropriate cleaning supplies for the area they will be working in. (i.e.: wash buckets, all purpose cleaners, rags and sponges or dust clothes and furniture polish). Also, if you have a hand vacuum or smaller power vacuum, even if not needed in your area, please bring it to be shared.

Rummage Sale. The last few years, the church has held an annual rummage sale, which definitely fits into the “Reuse” portion of this area. Parishioners donate items with proceeds going to a specific fundraiser. This year’s event will likely be in the Fall with monies designated to the Furnace Fund. Members have already been reminded to collect items to contribute from household spring cleaning.

Earth Day: The Sunday School children presented the monthly Earthwise program for the Anniversary event on Sunday, April 25 centered around Earth Day. The t-shirts they are wearing (pictured below) were donated by the Anniversary Committee to all Sunday School children and younger. They read “**EARTH DAY IS EVERY DAY!**” As they entered the church, they sang the following song, which is to the tune of “The More We Get Together”:

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Cause your Trash and My Trash

Recycle, Recycle

Make up way too much Trash.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

It's easy to do.

It's easy to do.

They came up with their own project which was a recycle box for weekly bulletins. They explained how they made the box (*with chicken wire and paper mache from old bulletins*); they explained what it was for – to *recycle weekly bulletins*; and they explained what it is not – *not a garbage can for non-paper garbage*.

They pointed out the brown stems on the side of the sanctuary (shown in the picture), which were bare as their program began. They indicated each student had completed a pledge to do something to help clean up their part of the world or to conserve energy. They read their pledges to the congregation, which included such items as: turning out lights, picking up garbage, riding their bike. They then passed out the green leaves in the form of a pledge card to the congregation and asked everyone to make a pledge as to what they would do to help the environment.

The program was excellent and the tree was filled with pledges before leaving that Sunday. The tree remains in the sanctuary as a reminder of the children's contribution.



Energy Commitment: An Energy Assessment was completed by Xcel Energy on the church property in November, 2008. Over the past 10 years, all windows and/or frames have been replaced in the entire church building. Two major items listed in the assessment were; 1) *Upgrade lighting.* This is being upgraded with more energy efficient bulbs over time and the majority having been replaced. 2). *Replace old vented furnaces with more energy efficient units.* This is a very costly item for the size of the congregation; however, a furnace fund is in place. The plan is to replace with dual heat pump units and to remove the existing 33 year old units.

Energy and Environment Speaker: Neely Crane-Smith from the Center for the Energy and Environment (CEE) in Minneapolis was the speaker to the congregation on Sunday, September 13, 2009, the kickoff day for the year-long Anniversary celebration. Neely works with communities, homeowners, schools, neighborhoods and congregations to organize energy efficiency and conservation programs. With Neely's help, the congregants took the Minnesota Energy Challenge; a total of 28 households completed the forms. This puts Glenwood United Parish at #32 out of over 250 church teams on the Challenge, with a total savings of more than \$3,000.00 and over 40,000 lbs. CO2 each year.

Church Commitment: As part of the Anniversary Committee, an Earthwise committee was formed. The membership of the committee includes four people (with great assistance from other church members), who are Darby Bowen, chair; Gary Rose, Rita Rose and David Elwood. In an effort to become more Earthwise as a church entity, the committee put together a list of items for the church council to consider.

No longer mow the road ditch. The church property contains a steep road ditch that has typically always been mowed. Over the past few years it has been mowed/not mowed by members who felt it should be natural. At the April, 2010 church council it was determined, that the road ditch ***will no longer*** be mowed. It will be left natural, with natural vegetation. It will likely be trimmed or mowed by the State Highway Department in the fall when all road ditches are maintained. This is also a safety measure and will encourage more volunteers to take a turn mowing the church lawn.



**Area to plant low growing
Bush or shrub**



**Road Ditch Area – to be left Natural
(It is steeper than it appears)**

Reduce paper. This is a plan that is already well underway.

Eliminating numbered contribution envelopes. This has already been done even though the pew envelopes indicate a person can request envelopes, the church no longer provides the numbered packets. The majority of people write checks and place them in the offering plate without an envelope. Those who give cash are welcome to use those from the pew or provide one from home.

Using e-mail. This is likely the biggest reduction in paper. With a target date of July 1 2010 it is planned to begin sending the church newsletter electronically to those who have e-mail. Those who don't will continue to receive their newsletter through regular mail. This will decrease \$\$ due to a reduction in paper and postage costs and is Earthwise beyond the cost factor. This could also be efficient in weekly or regular reminders to the membership of events/happenings in the church life.

Adopt-A-Highway? This is an idea being presented to members as a question. Members were asked in the May newsletter to give their opinion. This would be a community oriented project and promote the church and our values among the community. Are members willing to join in picking litter from a section of road ditch as a group? Typically it is done twice a year and would be a chance to socialize and promote environmentally friendly practices. Sunday school children will likely be included, but must be 12 years old before participating. Adults beyond parents are needed. Members were encouraged to talk to one of the committee members to contribute to the effort of beautifying our road sides.

Future Items: Additional items are being considered by the committee to be done as projects in the not-too-distant future.

Plant more trees on the property. The property has some areas that are quite steep and planting a lower type bush or shrub would provide cover and minimize mowing on the steep areas. Also, placing trees along the west property line is being considered. The property does already have several trees providing vegetation.

Café Conversations. This has been an idea brought up within the Pulpit/Search Committee for a new minister. One of the members of the committee has an empty space downtown where this could take place. It would be a place for people to gather and discuss current issues rather than "coffee shop talk/gossip" that is unappealing to many.

Follow Legislation more closely. This is an area where the committee and the congregation need to be more vocal. As individuals, many supported an expansion project at the Pope-Douglas Waste-to-Energy Facility in Alexandria. As a congregation we fell short here, with hindsight, a resolution in support of the project would have been a commitment move, as tax dollars were requested from the 2010 Minnesota Legislature for a major expansion. The project was not funded within the energy bill (unless something magically happens by the end of May, 2010). The expansion is moving forward but not at the same scale as it would with the public funding. The major energy issues need to be followed more closely, whether local, State or national, and opinions need to be stronger as a concerned entity.

2010 Submittal: As the congregation has taken on the effort to become more Earthwise during 2009 and 2010, there are many items that were already happening or have been easy to incorporate into regular practices. The leadership (council) has incorporated practices as well as the pastoral leadership. The current interim minister, Rev. Duane Grage (UMC), has been excited about the theme and believes the congregation to be very forward thinking in its effort and continually includes this theme in his messages. Through this combined effort, the hope is to have an environment and congregation to continue and improve Earthwise efforts beyond the Anniversary celebration.