A Resource For Congregations

Toolkit: Our Watershed Moment

An Initiative of the EcoFaith Network

We won't save places we don't love

We can't love places we don't know

We don't know places we haven't learned

- Baba Dioum, Senegalese Environmentalist

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Introduction:

Letter From the Bishop

Dear friends in Christ!

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

Psalm 19:1

We all live within the breathtaking environs of God's creation. As Lutherans, this is central to our understanding of what it means to be human. We are also all residents of the natural order, and one of its primary demarcations are watersheds – those natural habitats that support all life on earth. All living things share in this dependency on God, each other, and the created order

It is my great pleasure to introduce a remarkable set of resources prepared by the EcoFaith Network, an official program committee of the Minneapolis Area Synod charged with facilitating the synod's faithful stewardship of the earth. This emerging group and its leaders are dedicated to encouraging and, sometimes, challenging congregations to deepen their connection to God's creation.

I hope you see yourself as a part of this growing network and join in engaging a movement within our synod passionate about advocacy for the Earth, its citizens, and its creatures.

Enclosed you find a Tool Kit with an abundance of resources to support your congregational stewardship work. This portfolio includes litanies and prayers and sermon suggestions, as well as very pragmatic opportunities to improve the property and grounds with which your congregation is entrusted. It suggests actions that individuals and congregations can take to stretch their connection to the neighborhood as well as their liturgical life.

One project of the Network, “Gather at the River,” exposes participants to the natural watershed where a congregation is located. Under the theme #OurWatershedMoment, the Network is imagining a three-year campaign to connect water motifs in the life of the individual congregation – baptism as renewal and river as liberation.

Watershed discipleship is becoming a central understanding of our life of faith. It invites us as congregants to re-inhabit our context. We are literally “grounded” by our ongoing connection to place – theologically, spiritually, physically, and morally.

We are stewards of what has been entrusted to us. This Tool Kit provides many suggestions, ideas, and opportunities to live into this vocation, so that we can join in with the heavens in proclaiming the glory of God and God’s world.

Please let us know if we can help you. Here is the contact information to get ahold of us by email or phone: ecofaith@mpls-synod.org, 612-870-3610.

Resting in God’s mercy,

Bishop Ann Svennungsen

Introduction:

How to use this toolkit

Use the toolkit as it best fits your congregation! The resources in this toolkit have been compiled so church leaders can meet the needs of the congregation in a wide variety of ways. Let this be a resource to invite creative engagement and discernment in how our faith calls us toward environmental justice. This could be a quick or long term.

Here are some ideas and guidelines to get you started:

- Bring caring for creation through water into your church space
    - Display the Watershed Moment banner
    - Use the Watershed Moment prayer
- Experiment with worship and water
    - Utilize the Watershed Moment banner for worship and programming
    - Use the Watershed Moment prayer over time
    - Expand creation care of water into multiple church committees
- Plan ahead and make a water month
    - Gather a team (worship, music, education, outreach, etc) in advance
    - Explore then embed resources into worship, committees, and the life of the church for a month or more including but not limited to:
        - Invite watershed experts
        - Offer service opportunities
        - Political advocacy
    - Assist other churches and community groups in watershed discipleship

Finally, Thrivent action team grants are also a good way to have a little extra funds to explore ideas around watersheds:
https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/

Guiding Questions:

"What?"

What is a watershed? What is our watershed?

Where does our water come from and where does it go?

What does water mean for our local ecosystem?

What is the water quality of the water near us?

What is endangering our watershed?

"So what?"

So what does this mean to our church as a physical place in our community and watershed?

So as people of faith, grounded in scripture and Christian tradition, how do we think theologically about water? How does this impact how we think about our watershed?

So what are our roles and responsibilities?

"Now what?"

Now what can we do to care for the waters we rely on and that we impact?

Now what is one specific action or project our congregation will take to help protect and improve the waters around us?

Now how do we continue to reflect, learn, and grow in our watershed stewardship? How do we tell our story of where we are and what we're doing - and connect with other congregations in this journey?

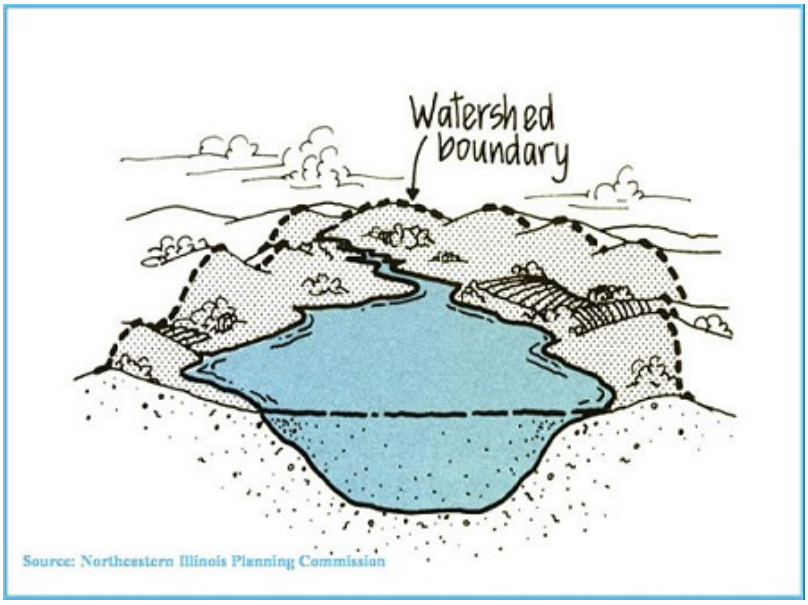
RESOURCES:

Education and Awareness: Watersheds 101

Once you have identified your watershed district, you can reach out to your local experts in water management. Folks at watershed districts are usually more than willing to teach folks about watersheds and the particularities of your watershed. Consider sending a couple of people from the congregation to go talk with the watershed district staff and bring back their findings, or invite someone from the district to come visit your congregation to share.

What is a watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that water flows across as it moves toward a common body of water, such as a stream, river or lake.



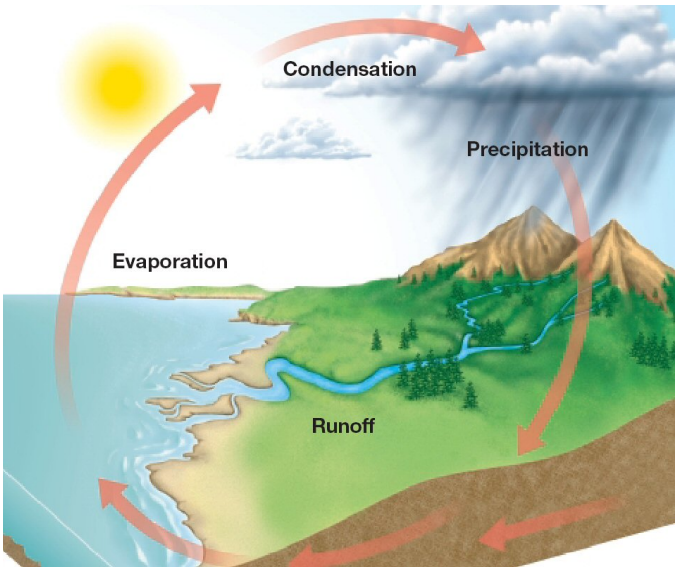
You're sitting in one right now! All of the land around you is part of a watershed. A watershed can be very large and drain thousands of square miles to a major river, lake or the ocean. It can also be very small and drain only a few acres to a small pond. Topography, the arrangement of the physical features of an area, determines where and how water flows. Ridge tops surrounding a body of water (though more subtle here in the Midwest than say, the Rocky Mountains) determine the hydrologic boundary of a watershed.

Imagine turning an open umbrella upside down while it's raining. Rain that hits anywhere within the umbrella's surface area would drain to the bottom and collect at the center of the umbrella. This is a simplified way of visualizing how water moves across a watershed.

Because water moves downstream in a watershed, any activity on the land or in the water that affects water quality or quantity at one location can change the characteristics of the watershed at locations downstream. This means everyone who lives or works in a watershed needs to take measures to protect watershed health.

The Water Cycle

The water cycle is called the hydrologic cycle. In the hydrologic cycle, water from oceans, lakes, swamps, rivers, plants, and even you, can turn into water vapor. Water vapor condenses into millions of tiny droplets that form clouds. Clouds lose their water as rain or snow, which is called precipitation. Precipitation is either absorbed into the ground or runs off into rivers. Water that was absorbed into the ground is taken up by plants. Plants lose water from their surfaces as vapor back into the atmosphere. Water that runs off into rivers flows into ponds, lakes, or oceans where it evaporates back into the atmosphere. And the cycle continues...



Trouble for water quality and quantity begins when areas are developed, since development dramatically alters the natural water cycle. Trees that had intercepted rainfall are removed. Natural depressions that had temporarily held water are graded to a uniform slope. The spongy layer of forest floor that had absorbed rainfall is scraped off, eroded, or severely compacted. Having lost its natural storage capacity, a cleared and graded site can no longer prevent rainfall from being rapidly converted into stormwater runoff.

The situation worsens after construction: rooftops, roads, parking lots, driveways and other impervious surfaces no longer allow rainfall to percolate into the ground. The increase in impervious surfaces also decreases natural recharge of groundwater, a source of drinking

water for residents of many watersheds. Urban land uses also degrade groundwater quality, if stormwater runoff is directed rapidly into soil without adequate treatment.

The substances on these surfaces — nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen; sediment; bacteria; hydrocarbon compounds like gas and motor oil; metals; pesticides; trash; and road salt — are all stormwater pollutants that are delivered to downstream waters.

Rain and melting snow act like a water hose, washing the landscape free of loose dirt and grime. While a good washing helps spruce up our communities after a long winter or summer dry spell, it does little for the health of our rivers, lakes and wetlands. That is because materials washed off the hard surfaces in our towns and cities eventually end up in the water, where they can become harmful pollutants.

Pollution caused by rain and snowmelt washing the landscape goes by several names. It is called stormwater pollution because it is caused by storms, runoff pollution because it is carried by rain and snowmelt runoff, and nonpoint-source water pollution, a technical name meaning it is different than point-source water pollution. Point source water pollution is the type of water pollution that comes from an industrial or wastewater discharge pipe — a definite point, or location, on the landscape.

Controlling stormwater pollution is a challenge because sources of pollution come from many locations across the landscape and is associated with weather — something we cannot control. Controlling stormwater pollution requires everyone's action, from the homeowner to the business owner - to the congregation!

Information from Minnehaha Creek Watershed and Capitol Region Watershed websites: http://minnehahacreek.org/education/watershed-basics, http://www.capitolregionwd.org/education/crwd-education-offerings/stormwater-101/#1

Resources:

Youth Education

WONDERINGS about Water: Faith, Science & Wacky Water Lesson Plans

"Wonderings About Water: Faith, Science & Wacky Water" is a two part series that brings playfulness and environmental consciousness together at your church. The lesson plans were written by Heidi Ferris, environmental educator and founder of Growing Green Hearts. The lesson plans here are designed to be intergenerational- to provide facts and service learning while keeping people wondering about water in our bodies, lakes, weather, and baptismal fonts. If intergenerational ministry is not an option, try lesson #1 for early childhood through elementary ages and lesson #2 for middle and/or high school students.

(See curriculum inserts below - these are free and available for use by congregations in the Minneapolis Area Synod.)

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

Introduction

In John 4:14 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life." From Genesis to Revelation, water is referenced in scripture all over the place. Water is simply wonderful and from its symbolism and story we grow. That's right- water is both simple and fills us with wonder at the very same time.

Have you ever wondered….How salty did the Red Sea taste? How does water go up the trunk of a tree? Why did God choose water as a meeting place for baptism? Was water the original energy drink? How do wells work differently today as in Jesus' time?

In waters' complex simplicity we stand on ground common to faith and science. The lessons here are designed to help bring forth joy, fascination, and questions about water. Curiosity and creativity are followed by water tricks and facts that we will be put to work in nurturing of water resources throughout God's creation.

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

WONDERINGS ABOUT WATER
Lesson #1:
How does soap work?

Gather students, or an intergenerational group, to explore soap suds and build bubble makers large and small. After creating and playing with bubbles, use the suds as a way to playfully clean up at church.

Materials

- Dish pan bins or ice cream buckets
- Slotted spoons, sieves, whisks, colanders
- Clean plastic recyclables such as: berry baskets, water bottles, onion bags, six-pack rings
- Dish soap (Note: Dawn brand contains the highest amount of glycerin which aids in the formation of bubbles)
- Cups, mugs, yogurt containers or buckets of various sizes to act as scoopers and water cups.
- Sticks, chopsticks, pipe cleaners
- Scissors to cut apart recyclables
- Water source and towels for hand-washing station, 5 gal bucket ¾ with water
- Old t-shirts to repurpose as rags
- Tarp or sheet to cover the floor if you are working inside

Scripture

John 4:14	Jesus describes living water
Psalm 1	The needs of living things lead to abundance
Genesis 1	God made all of creation and saw that it was good

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

Solid Science

How WONDERful water is! Soap acts like the peanut butter in the middle of the sandwich. Just like the peanut butter sticks to the bread on each side; the soap starts in the middle then sticks to the dirt on one side and water on the other. The dirt and water make a soap sandwich that then gets rinsed away leaving nothing but clean behind. Think about that the next time you wash your hands, dishes, bicycle or the car!

Where does the soap go? Soap and water down the sink, tub or toilet goes to the waste water treatment plant. Water that goes into the street or storm drains goes into nature. At a wastewater treatment plant, where the sink and toilet water goes, certain processes and plants are used to breakdown the pollution and soaps. Soap that goes into natural areas is pollution. In a lake or stream, soap acts like a fertilizer to grow an unnatural amount of algae. All of those extra algae makes water quality yucky and also blocks sunlight for fish and native plants. How can you keep soap out of streets, storm drains, lakes, rivers, and streams?

Wastewater Treatment Plant:
Water from sinks, tubs, & toilets is taken here by pipes where the dirty water is cleaned through a process of settling, filtering, sludging, aerating, and chlorinization.

Soaps:
These molecules have one end that is attracted to water and the other end attracted to oils and organics. The water-loving ends surround the dirt and oils forming micelles, little packets, that are then washed away with water.

Storm Drain (Storm Sewer):
Designed to take rain and snow melt away from hard surfaces such as streets, sidewalks, parking areas, & roofs. Drains directly to rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands.

WONDERINGS about WATER

Faith, Science & Wacky Water

Steps to Follow

1. Make the bubble solution in an ice cream bucket: For every 4 1/2 cups water add ½ cup dishwashing detergent. Stir. Let sit for 1-2 days. For stronger bubbles you may want to try these tricks: add more Dawn, mix in ¼ corn syrup, or add a small amount of glycerin.
2. Get ready for a hands-on, inquiry-based, group project activity: Discuss who will teach the basics, Guide kids of different ages in participating at different levels, Encourage questions, Be flexible.
3. Gather materials as listed above. Read through all of the steps. Decide on a place where the bubble making will take place and how you will move from there to an area or object that needs to be cleaned with soapy water.
4. Set up materials in a kid-friendly way: cover the floor if working inside, place materials at kid height to lessen spills, create space for one large circle with materials in the middle, place the rags in an easy access spot for spills and the final church cleaning project.
5. Share some water-related scripture verses (John 4, Psalm 1, Genesis 1) to get kids wondering about water. Questions are a powerful part of both faith and science, so even if the answers are unknown to you, be sure to encourage kids to question. Challenge the kids to ask as many questions, stories, and symbols about water as they can in 7 minutes or less.
6. Ask the group (or small groups with the larger group) to choose one of the water related Bible stories to act out. Discuss: Where is water both simple and complicated in the stories? How does God make God's presence known to us through story, water, nature, and service to others?
7. Read aloud some crazy facts about water and soap as listed above in the Solid Science section.
8. Set out bubble solution. Put a small amount of bubble solution in cups, containers, bins and buckets of various sizes. Be prepared for kids to circle around the buckets with large utensils or create their own tiny wands for testing on their own with the smaller cups.
9. Play, explore and have fun making bubble wands out of the recyclables, reusable kitchen tools, and pipe cleaners. Ask: How can you create your own magical bubble wand? Are all bubbles the same shape? Does it work better to blow air quickly or slowly into the soapy solution? How can you shape your fingers into a bubble maker?
10. The next step is to clean up while serving. Use the containers of bubble solution and rags to clean tables, chairs, floor, walls, or cars at your discretion. Dilute soap solution with warm or hot water as needed. If washing cars outside be sure to wash them on the grass to keep soap out of storm drains and water ways. Unused, clean bubble solution can be saved in sealed containers for a later date or poured down the sink drain.

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

WONDERINGS ABOUT WATER
Lesson #2:
How does water work?

Gather students or an intergenerational group, to explore some water chemistry facts and tricks then make lemonade from scratch. Lemon rinds will be used to clean in a non-toxic way.

Materials

- Cups
- Paper clips large and small
- Copies of the "Solid Science" water facts 1-5
- Pitchers
- Sugar or honey
- Lemons
- Ice
- Large spoons for stirring
- Knife
- Cutting Board

Scripture

Genesis 2:10-14	Rivers flow through these verses in the second creation story
Matthew 3: 16-17	Baptism of Jesus
Matthew 14:29-30	Jesus walks on water
John 2	Jesus turns water into wine
John 4	Jesus describes living water to the woman at the well

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

Solid Science

1. Water is a *universal solvent.* Water is a super hero when it comes to dissolving other chemicals within it. Oceans are salty because rain water, snow melt, and water underground dissolve minerals from the rocks and take those minerals to rivers, lakes, streams and eventually the world's oceans. Water is such an expert at dissolving that it can pick up and carry all sorts of chemicals with it; even harmful chemicals. Water that looks clean may carry pollutants that are harmful to wildlife and people.

2. Water is sneaky. Water can be all over the place and in different forms. Here on earth water can be a solid (ice), liquid (water), and a gas (vapor) depending upon the temperature. Water can be found up high in the sky like clouds and fog. Water is on earth's surface as in rivers, lakes, streams, puddles, and oceans. Don't forget about water underground in aquifers! One way to describe a well of today is a pipe that goes through layers of rock and sediment to reach the *water table*, where water is filling in the holes in the rock deep underground.

3. Water is surprising. Sometimes even natural chemicals can be harmful when dissolved in larger amounts. Rainwater washes our streets clean, but also carries pollution into nearby waterways. Leaves, for example, are high in chemicals that cause algae to bloom making waters unnaturally choked with green. Metals found naturally in some underground water sources can be poisonous.

4. Water is a sticky liquid. It's the water molecule's silly cartoon shape that makes it stick to other molecules of water. The science way of saying water is sticky is *surface tension*. The chemical name for water is dihydrogen monoxide, or H_2O, because each water molecule is made up of 2 atoms of hydrogen and 1 atom of oxygen. Thanks to water molecules sticking to themselves and dust in the atmosphere- earth gets rain drops!

5. Water is slippery. Glaciers slide down valleys and ice skates glide across the rink. Since water melts when the temperature goes up, a little heat from friction can melt a thin layer of water. That thin layer of water can be slippery enough for skating for sport, sliding sheets of ice, or a tumble on a slippery floor. Slip-slide- and away we go!

6. Water floats when it freezes. Most other liquids sink after going from a liquid to a solid, but water's wonderfulness strikes again! Water is able to float when it freezes because the chemical structure and shape form a crystal that is less dense when it is a solid and more dense as a liquid. Density means how tightly packed the atoms or molecules are. Next time you have ice in your lemonade or go ice fishing on a frozen lake, think about how different Earth would be if ice sank.

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

Steps to Follow

1. Get ready for a hands-on, inquiry-based, group project activity. Figure out who will: Teach the basics, Guide kids of different ages in participating at different levels, Encourage questions.
2. Decide where the discussion and hands-on portions of the activity and lemonade making will take place. This could be the same place or perhaps the church kitchen is available.
3. If the group is large, plan to divide up into smaller groups of 4-8.
4. Gather materials as listed above and place them onto a supply table or cart. Read through all of the steps. First, each group need will cups, a pitcher of water, and about 50 paper clips. After 20-30 minutes, each group will need a 1 gal pitcher, a large spoon, 4 lemons, 2 cups sugar, and water.
5. Explore surface tension by "floating" paper clips on water in cups. Work in small groups using cups half full of water. Slowly set the clips onto the surface of the water. Note that metal ships will "float" in the sea because the metal ships hull pushes water out of the way. The force pushing at the ship keeping it afloat is called *buoyancy*. The paperclips are NOT displacing water here as ships do. The paperclips get trapped in water's stickiness called *surface tension.*
6. Both science and faith are WONDER-ful places to ask questions. Model questioning for kids by asking questions and exploring with them through this activity. Sample questions include: I wonder if this would work the same way with ocean water? Would a bent paperclip place the clips on the water better than my fingers? What if the water were warm? Is this surface tension what makes it so water bugs can scoot across the surface of a pond?
7. Assign each group two scripture verses from the list: Genesis 2:10-14, Matthew 3: 16-17, Matthew 14:29-30, John 2, John 4. Each group is to read the verses then discuss the role, symbolism, or part that water plays in the story.
8. Ask each group to read the 6 wacky water facts, one at a time, from the Solid Science section above. After each, the group should act out ways they have experienced water being weird, wacky, and wonderful in this way. Hmmm… Did water show any of these properties in the Bible stories that were read by the group?
9. Making lemonade will showcase water as a *universal solvent* (sugar dissolves in the liquid water) and how water floats as solid ice (unlike most of those solid paperclips). For every 4 cups of water each team will need 1 cup of ice, 5 lemons, and ½ cup of sugar.

(continued)

WONDERINGS about WATER
Faith, Science & Wacky Water

10. Each group member can guess how many stirs it will take to dissolve ½ c sugar into the 4 cups of water. Using the pitcher, add the sugar to the water start the timer and stir. The group leader can cut all lemons in half using the knife and cutting board. While the group members take turns stirring, other members of the group can be squeezing the lemons. Add the fresh lemon juice to the pitcher with the sweetened water. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the ice and enjoy!
11. The last step is to clean up while serving the church at the same time. Lemon rinds can be used for cleaning in these ways. Use those that work best for your group size and situation.
    a. Soak lemon rinds in white vinegar for a week then combine 50/50 with water for a powerhouse, non-toxic, multi purpose cleaner.
    b. Place rinds in trash cans for an instant deodorizer.
    c. Clean coffeepots by swirling the peels with ice and salt inside the kettles.
    d. Sanitize cutting boards by rubbing the rinds over the surfaces.

Did you get all of that?

- ☐ The Bible contains stories of God's love nourishing people and communities and water is at the heart of many Biblical stories, used in many ways.
- ☐ Water is both simple and complex. We can learn and grow from stories of water in scripture and science.
- ☐ God's creation surrounds us and then some- we are in it, made of it, and part of it.
- ☐ God calls us to care for and nurture God's creation- including the water above us, around us, in us, and underground.
- ☐ Understanding water chemistry is one step in the environmental stewardship act of nurturing water that nurtures us.
- ☐ Caring for earth's shared water is environmental stewardship. We can all examine the impacts of our choices on creation.
- ☐ Faith and science both have questions, and questions are good!

About the Author

Heidi Smith Ferris *helps kids to play, learn, and love nature. She is founder of Growing Green Hearts LLC and creator of Connect-the-Dots: Faith, Science & Youth Leadership. Growing Green Hearts provides science education through site visits, teacher trainings, and natural coaching. Heidi has fifteen years of science teaching experience with early learners through high schoolers providing environmental curriculum expertise for schools, faith-based groups, libraries and nonprofits. Heidi and her husband, Kjell- an ELCA pastor, and their two daughters are members at Peace Lutheran in Plymouth, Minnesota.*
www.GrowingGreenHearts.com

Resources:

Worship

Water Prayer

Creator God, fountain of life,

We praise you for the gift of water:
for lakes and rivers, wetlands and rain, oceans and aquifers;
for water we use daily for washing and drinking.
Through water we are drenched in promise—
liberated from sin and death, fear and oppression,
as we are joined to the life and death of Jesus Christ in baptism.
Just as your Spirit moved over the waters in the beginning of creation, move over our waters now—
_____(*Name bodies of water near your church, and/or the watershed in which you are located; i.e. the Mississippi river/watershed)*___

Move us to love these waters as you do. Fill us with a vision of a renewed creation, and give us the will to be faithful stewards of our watersheds.

Amen

Thanksgiving for Baptism

In addition to praying for the water, the Thanksgiving for Baptism call and response is an ideal moment in the liturgy to incorporate water into worship. Here's a sample of a re-written Thanksgiving for Baptism used during the Easter season by Calvary Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis. It is a good example of lifting up water imagery in the Biblical narrative, naming local waterways that relate to the narratives of the community, as well as connecting to the liturgical season.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who calls us beloved children,
who gathers us into one flock,
who leads us in grace and mercy.

C Amen

P In the witness of Easter we celebrate being joined to
the Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism.
In her guiding and renewing we are encircled with God's love and forgiveness.
We give thanks for the gifts of water and baptism into new life.

C We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.

P Through the waters of the flood you delivered the family of Noah.
In the wilderness you provided water for Hagar and Ishmael and promised a new life.
Through the Reed Sea you let your people Israel, and Miriam sang of your liberating power. At the well Jesus meets a Samaritan woman and speaks of living water.
By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

C We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life— for Lakes Nokomis, Hiawatha, Cedar Lake, and Lake of the Isles. We praise you for the rivers and creeks that remind us of your ever-flowing grace— Mississippi, Minnesota, Minnehaha, St. Croix. We praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ, and in this Easter season we thank you for the images of new life— flowers in bloom, trees with foliage, people reaching out to neighbor. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

P For this gift of baptism, thanks be to God! Allelujah!

C Allelujah! Amen

Ideas for Water in the Worship Space

A powerful way to invite connection to water is by bring water from your local watershed into the worship space. Perhaps bring a pitcher of water taken from a nearby lake or stream in a prominent place. Perhaps pass a vessel of water through the congregation

during song or prayer. What would it look like to have local water in the baptismal font or samples from various surrounding areas lined up on the altar? If the water isn't very clean, what does that call us into? If we wouldn't want to baptize the children of our congregation with the water in our backyard, what does that say? How can we respond and lift up our water - both the ways that it is beautiful and the ways that it suffers? How do we honor water within the walls of the sanctuary where water takes on sacramental meaning and purpose?

Great resource - "How's the Water?" from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, scroll to the bottom of the page for the "your water" link to find out water test results for your local lakes and streams:
http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/hows-the-water/hows-the-water.html

Connections with Scriptures, Stories, and Liturgical year

In the year of Luke (Liturgical Year C), the gospel readings offer a few opportunities to develop water or river themes:

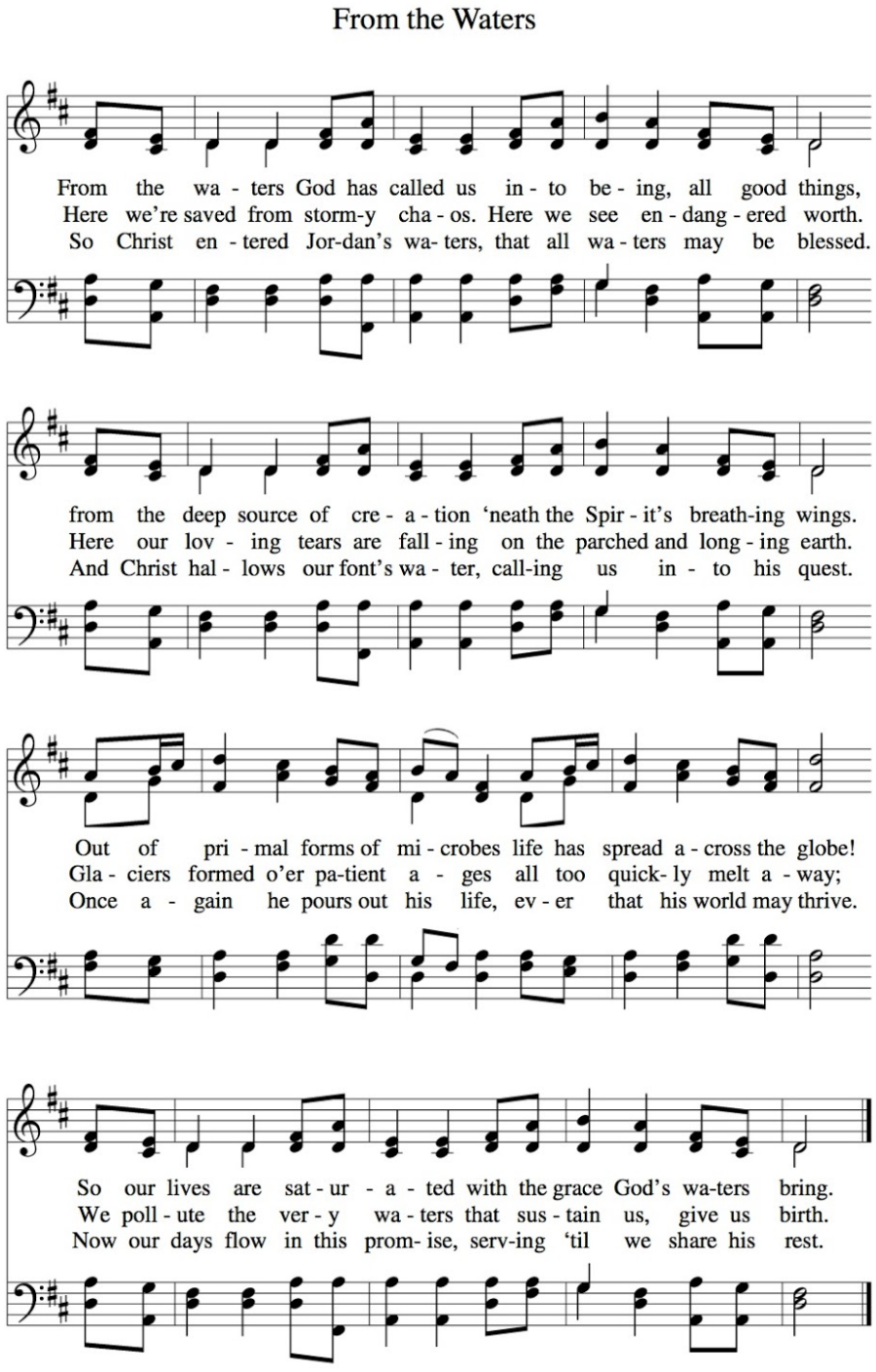
- 1 Advent Luke 21:25 Distress among the nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.
- Baptism of Our Lord Luke 3:15-17, 21-22. Jesus' is baptized by John at the Jordan.
- 2 Epiphany. John 2:1-11. Jesus turns water into wine.
- 5 Epiphany. Luke 5:1-11. Over "deep water" of the Lake of Gennesaret, Jesus calls his first disciples."

Scriptures and Biblical stories with strong water connections:

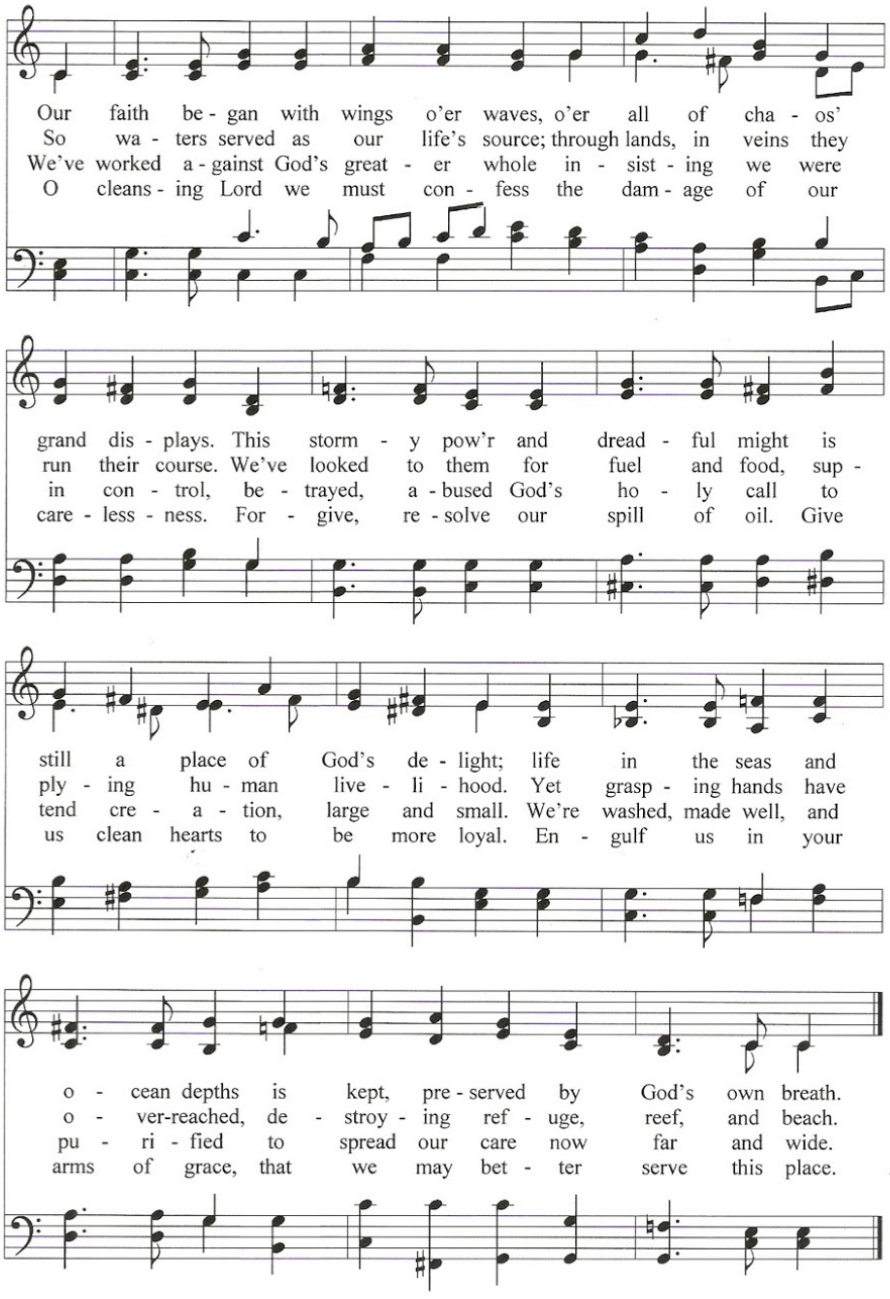
- Genesis 2:10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden
- Exodus 7:17-19 Polluted river was a plague of Egypt
- Psalm 107:33-37 "He turns rivers into a desert . . desert into pools of water (Lent 4A; Easter 4B)
- Proverbs 25:26 "like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain . . "
- Isaiah 12:3 "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.. ." (Advent 3C)
- Isaiah 35:6b-7 " "For waters shall break forth in the wilderness. . "
- Isaiah 41:17-19 "I will open rivers on the bare heights . . . "

- Isaiah 43:2 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. .” (Baptism of Our Lord C).
- Jeremiah 31:9 “I will let them walk by brooks of water. . “ (22 Pentecost B)
- Ezekiel 32:14; 34:18; 36:25 God will make their waters clear; When you drink of clean water . . . ; Ezekiel “I will sprinkle clean water on you . .”
- Ezekiel 47:1-12 Water flowing from the Temple. . . Everything will live where the river goes
- Amos 5:24 - “But let justice roll down like waters. . .”
- Joel 1:19-20 The wild animals cry because the streams are dry
- Joel 3:18 “In that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine. . .”
- Zechariah 14:8 “On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem . . .
- Matthew 14:22-29 “. . . And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. . .“
- Mark 1:9-11 “. . And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart . .” (Baptism of our Lord B)
- Luke 5:4 “Put out into the deep water . . “ (5 Epiphany C)
- John 2:9 “When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from . .” (2 Epiphany C)
- John 3:5 “. . no one can enter into the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. . .“ (2 Lent A)
- John 4:5 -42 “. . .Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, . . “ (3 Lent A)
- John 7:37-39 “'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'”
- Titus 3:5 Through the water of rebirth and renewal
- 2 Peter 3:5-6 The earth was formed out of water
- Revelation 7:2-3 God's angel said, damage not the earth or seas
- Revelation 7:17 “. . .and he will guide them to springs of the water of life. . .” (All Saints A)
- Revelation 21:5-6 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega .. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. . .” (All Saints B)
- Revelation 22:1 “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal. . .”
- Revelation 22:17 “. . . Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.”

Water Hymn Ideas



Our Faith Began with Wings O'er Waves



Text: Utphall, 2010 Music: MELITA, John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

Hymns from the ELW:

455 Crashing Water at Creation

459 Wade in the Water

331 As the Deer Runs to the River

423 Shall We Gather at the River

881 Let All Things Now Living

837 Many and Great, O God

For more resources relating to worship (litanies, prayers, hymns, scriptures, etc), check out the websites “Let All Creation Praise” - http://www.letallcreationpraise.org/home - and “Lutherans Restoring Creation” - http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home/congregations/worship.

Resources

Theological Resources on Water

Ched Myers

Ched Myers is an activist theologian, biblical scholar, popular educator, author, organizer and advocate who has for 35 years been challenging and supporting Christians to engage in peace and justice work and radical discipleship. He has a full website of resources on the topic of “Watershed Discipleship,” which deeply develops a theologically grounded imagination for environmental justice - starting in the land and water immediately beneath, within, and around us: http://watersheddiscipleship.org/

In a recent article for Sojourners Magazine, Ched Meyers discusses how Watershed Discipleship invites Christians to “re-inhabit” that corner of creation in which we reside. (A Watershed Moment, Sojourners, May. 2014 5pp.) This free article can be ordered at http://www.chedmyers.org/awatershedmoment.

Dr. Myers' develops biblical resources for his argument in Ched Myers "Everything Lives Where the River Goes" See the article at: https://sojo.net/magazine/april-2012/everything-will-live-where-river-goes.

His argument is developed more fully in his Reinhabiting the River of Life (Rev 22:1–2): Rehydration, Redemption, and Watershed Discipleship. Water lies at the center of our Christian sign of baptism and our current ecological crises and, thus, deserves deeper theological treatment. This paper explores visions of “redemption as rehydration” in the prophetic literature, then it traces resonant themes into the Apocalypse’s “river of the water of life” (Rev 22:1). It next explores how water provides a “metaphorical map of God” and why hydrologic systems should be a key characteristic of how humans dwell in creation. The paper concludes with a call to watershed-based discipleship as a faithful response to Christian mission amidst our looming environmental catastrophes. Link: http://missiodeijournal.com/article.php?issue=md-5-2&author=md-5-2-myers

Larry Rasmussen

One of the world's foremost Christian environmental ethicists, Dr. Rasmussen has mentored a generation of Christians in eco-theology and “green religion.” He spearheaded the “greening” at the Union Theological Seminary as an institution and rooted his courses and scholarship in the practice of environmental justice with communities and community leaders. He has published more than a dozen books, including the landmark, award-winning Earth Community, Earth Ethics. He is currently directing a 10-year project on Earth-honoring Christianity at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

Larry Rasmussen, "Just Water," Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, 2009:

- Link to video at Nobel Conference website: https://gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2009/rasmussen-lecture.php
- Link on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vcp56IvCwf4

Dr. Rasmussen addresses the social ethics of water, including water democracy and water justice, and other questions climate change will present. He will also speak to the coming collision between the global corporate consumer economy and the Earth’s economy and the state of our ethical framework to handle the water crises.

Check out his book “Earth Honoring Faith” (Oxford Press, 2013) for more of his insights.

Ben Stewart

Ben Stewart, in the chapter on “Water” in his *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth’s Ecology* (Fortress Press, 2011), p. 23-38, observes the psalmist of Psalm 104, contemplating “an *entire watershed,”* and asks, “how might a vision as grand as Psalm 104 be glimpsed at our local baptisms and in our worship spaces?”

Gordon Lathrop

“Baptismal Ordo and Cosmology,” in *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Fortress Press, 2003), pp. 104-15. Dr. Lathrop developes the cosmological and ecological dimensions of the use of water in our baptismal practice. The water in the font reminds us “that what goes on here is not only about human culture but also about cosmos. The water comes here from elsewhere in the world's water system, from a river or lake or underground stream, ultimately from the rain itself. . . If the water is before us in abundance, it may awaken in us inchoate but powerful longings for both a cleaner earth and a widespread slaking of thirsts; it may give us a place for our reconceiving death and life within this watery world; it may give us a cosmic center.” Teaching the faith, he argues, “involves, as its first and basic move, teaching that there is a world and not just chaos, that this world is created, and that human beings have a compassionate and caring role within that creation.” Candidates in formation for baptism should be helped to “learn lament and beseeching as well as thanksgiving, thanksgiving as well as lament and beseeching.” Join with them, he suggests, “in praying for other species of life than merely our own, in commending to God the diversity and well-being of these species, in thanking God for their existence. Perhaps even mountains and rivers and seas—even solar systems and galaxies—could enter our prayers. Baptism must not be about saving us from this company, but with this company.”

Further Resources

The following link offers a whole host of materials for observing a “Water Month,” available on the Lutherans Restoring Creation Website: http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/system/app/pages/search?scope=search-site&q=Water

Resources

Discipleship at Home

Postcard of action steps - “10 Ways to Protect Your Watershed” (Printable summary below)

10 Simple Ways to Protect Your Watershed

Here are simple actions each one of us can take to help protect our watersheds and waterways.

1) DON’T CLUTTER THE GUTTER. Our storm drains don’t go to a treatment plant – they discharge directly into the closest waterway! Don’t dump paint, motor oil, pesticides, cleaning products or other hazardous household materials into storm drains. Likewise, don’t sweep your lawn clippings or leaves into storm drains.

2) MINIMIZE WHAT YOU FERTILIZE. Nutrients from fertilizer runoff can lead to excess plant and algae growth in waterways. Minimize your use of lawn and garden fertilizers and maintain a fertilizer-free buffer strip along shorelines.

3) SCOOP THE POOP. Pet waste left out in the yard, on sidewalks or on roadsides washes away when it rains and is a major contributor to bacteria problems in local waterways. Dispose of pet waste properly by putting it in a sealed bag in the trash, flushing it down the toilet, or burying it in your yard.

4) READ LABELS. Runoff containing too much phosphate (“P”) helps feed algae blooms and weed growth in area waterways. Use only phosphate-free automatic dishwasher detergents, deck cleaners and lawn fertilizers. Triclosan, an ingredient found in toothpaste, deodorant and many antibiotic hand cleaners has been found to alter hormone regulation in fish. Micro beads, found in many skin care products, are also harmful for aquatic life.

5) LET IT GROW. Don’t mow your lawn shorter than 2 ¾” to 3 ½ ”. This will allow it to conserve water in the soil, helps develop deeper, healthier roots for grass, and it shades weed seedlings so they don’t get sun. After mowing, leave your grass and leaf clippings on the lawn. They will decompose rapidly and naturally fertilize your lawn.

6) DO “BUFFERING”. Plant native trees and shrubs and establish a “no mow” zone along the shores of streams and lakes. These bufferstrips will help protect water quality, control erosion, filter stormwater runoff and provide essential fish and wildlife habitat.

7) USE NATIVE PLANTS in your landscape. They require less water and fertilizer and are more resistant to pests and disease since they are already adapted to local conditions.

8) HOLD BACK THE FLOOD. Impervious surfaces such as pavements and roofs cause rain to run off rapidly, which can cause flooding and stream bank erosion during rainstorms. Minimize runoff by redirecting downspouts into vegetated areas, installing rain barrels or planting a rain garden. Use the stored water for your garden and other landscaping.

9) GET PUMPED. Septic system failures can be costly and can contaminate groundwater and nearby surface waters. Have your septic system inspected and pumped every three years.

10) BE WATER WISE. Do your part to reduce the volume of wastewater from your home. Use low-flow faucets, showers, and toilets and repair any leaks. Take shorter showers, and turn off the tap when brushing your teeth. Run dishwashers and clothes washers only when full, and wash your car and water your lawn only when necessary. You will not only be conserving water but also saving money!

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR WATERSHED

1) DON’T CLUTTER THE GUTTER
2) PLANT NATIVE PLANTS
3) PREVENT RUNOFF
4) SEPTIC SYSTEM CARE
5) CONSERVE WATER USE
6) DO BUFFER STRIPS
7) MINIMIZE WHAT YOU FERTILIZE
8) SCOOP THE POOP
9) READ LABELS (Look for No-Phosphate)
10) LET IT GROW (4” Lawns Save Water)

Resources

Advocacy

News updates on water and public policy:

http://www.inforum.com/news/3923026-dayton-make-water-systems-spending-priority

http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/minnesotas-impaired-waters-and-tmdls/tmdl-projects/special-projects/metro-area-chloride-project/road-salt-and-water-quality.html

http://www.mncenter.org/mcea-in-the-news.aspx

http://www.startribune.com/half-of-s-minn-waters-found-too-polluted-for-safe-swimming-fishing/301702651/

http://www.startribune.com/from-runoff-to-ruin-the-undoing-of-minnesota-s-lakes/321099071/

http://www.bluestemprairie.com/bluestemprairie/2015/04/there-will-be-tears-mpca-releases-water-quality-report-for-half-of-states-81-major-watersheds.html

Stay tuned, we will be looking at how we can bring voice to issues surrounding water at the next legislative session. In this work we work closely with our partner Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota, as environmental care is one of their core issues. More on their facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Lutheran-Advocacy-Minnesota-100113576746897/

If you have an interest in advocacy and want to know about upcoming events and actions in the wider community, email us at: ecofaith@mpls-synod.org

Ideas to consider around advocacy:

- do a letter writing campaign or take an offering of letters during worship
- plan to meet with your legislators during session
- show up to a public rally relating to water and climate

Next Steps

Take Action

However you learn or engage with the materials in this toolkit, it is critical that our reflection as faith communities compel us into action.

What does the *"Now what?"* look like in your context? What do you feel called to, in better caring for and stewarding these waters of life that surround us? **What is one small, concrete step that your congregation can take?** What is a larger picture you can work toward and live into? How can the EcoFaith Network leaders support you in your efforts?

Possible action steps:

- Plant a rain garden
- Eliminate pesticides and reduce salt in management of turf grass and parking lots
- Work with your watershed to analyze possible property improvements
- Plant native plants
- Cultivate a garden on your church property
- Coordinate starting or contributing to working a community garden
- Mix your own non-toxic cleaners (check out Hennepin County's website for ideas)
- Get rid of styrofoam cups/plates used at events by the church
- Organize a leaf-raking team during the fall
- Put in permeable pavers when replacing pavement in parking lots or patios
- Look at green roof options in new construction projects

And these are just some ideas to get you thinking - there are a host of other possibilities! Think creatively! Ask community partners! Let us know if you want some more ideas.

Do reach out to us and let us know how we can walk with you - ecofaith@mpls-synod.org, 612-230-3300 (synod office number - feel free to leave a voicemail if needed)

Next Steps

Share your Watershed Moment

Stories move people. They help us to connect to one another. They grow our knowledge and awareness. Finally, they lead us into action. The stories you create as you engage with this toolkit matter, and we want to help you tell them.

The following questions are a guide to gather the narratives of how your congregation has experienced a "watershed moment." This allows the EcoFaith leadership team to learn from what you encountered and share your story.

How can we share our stories?

First gather the basic info about your congregation and how you interacted with this toolkit.

Then, consider exploring some of these questions to delve deeper:

- What did you learn in engaging the questions and ideas surrounding faith, water, and watershed?
- How do you see things differently than you did before?
- Why should other congregations try this out too?
- What does is mean to do this work as a person of faith and as a faith community?
- What was the coolest story/moment that happened in the process of exploring watersheds and faith?

Tips and Guidelines

- Be brief and clear in describing your experience
- Use quotes! Direct quotes help us share your particular voices
- Send pictures! Visuals are such a powerful way for others to see and connect
- Engage a variety of storytellers - ask both youth and adults, pastors and non-staff leaders in your congregation. We are the church together, so let's hear from you!

Share your Findings:

Email us with your reflections at ecofaithcomm@mpls-synod.org. Again, we are eager to hear from you, both to learn from your experience and share your stories with other congregations around the synod.

If you feel comfortable writing about your congregation's story and using social media platforms, please do share a post about your reflections yourself as well:

On Facebook - **EcoFaith Network MPLS**

www.facebook.com/ecofaithmpls

On Twitter - **@EcoFaithMPLS**

www.twitter.com/EcoFaithMPLS

Hashtags:

- #EFNwatershed - Primary # for Watershed Moment
- #EFNconnect - Opportunities/examples for growing connections with other churches/organizations/etc.
- #EFNaware - Raising awareness of issues, facts, and opportunities for advocacy, etc.
- #EFNaction - Opportunities/examples of people taking action to care for water
- #EFNyouthlead - Stories of youth taking action and leading in care for water