



Caring for Creation at Taftsville Chapel

a Green Patchwork Congregation within the Mennonite Creation Care Network

CREATION CARE RECAP

January

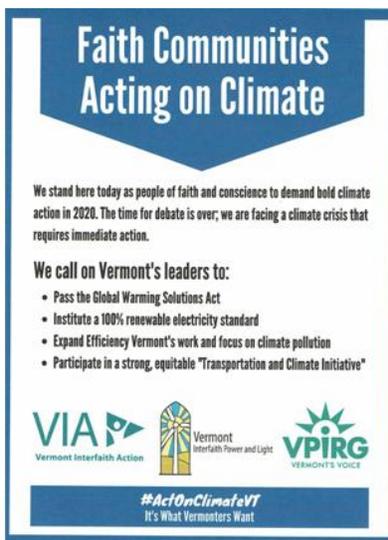
- **1/9** Nurturing a Culture of Creation Care within Congregations
MCCN webinar with Heather Wolfe was held for pastors and creation care liaisons across the Mennonite church. See the recording [here! \[drive.google.com\]](#)
- **1/25** Accessory, Books, & Clothing Swap
hosted by Heather Kulp was a wonderful way to reuse things within our own community. Items that didn't get swapped were donated to appropriate charities.



February

- **2/1** Sustainable Woodstock brought us together with two other local churches to share in our creation care activities. There is hope to organize a larger interfaith forum within our local area with regards to creation care.
- **2/16** Creation Care Affinity Group inaugural meeting. An action item for everyone that came out of our discussion is donating reusable bags to the Haven. We look forward to continued conversation on how to live our daily lives as good stewards of God's creation, being accountable to each other. Coincidentally, starting an accountability group within Mennonite congregations is the first [shared practice of 2020 announced by MCCN. \[mennocreationcare.org\]](#)

- **2/20** [\[vtipl.org\]](http://vtipl.org) **Faith Climate Action Day** [\[vtipl.org\]](http://vtipl.org) at the Vermont State House. This event was co-sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Power & Light from whom we received our insulation/weatherization grant.



March

- MC USA is sponsoring a Learn, Pray, Join initiative on Climate Justice during February and March. There are many resources available to congregations [on their website \[mennoniteusa.org\]](http://mennoniteusa.org). Climate justice recognizes the importance of caring for all God's creation together with caring for people who experience the most harm from climate change. May we commit to being more faithful in caring for the gift of creation and one another.



This post is part of Mennonite Church USA's Climate Justice: Learn, Pray, Join initiative.

We invite you to:

Pray for those who are most vulnerable among us and who are most impacted by climate change, including those who have already been displaced.

Pray for the waters, the plants, all living creatures and the earth with gratitude, that we may recognize their sacredness and participate in their restoration.

Pray that we will find the motivation to respond to climate change in our own lives, congregations and communities.

Pray for local, community and business leaders to help make communities healthier and greener while centering those who are vulnerable. Pray that our political leaders and world leaders would become more active in reducing carbon emissions worldwide.

Pray for the youth and future generations, who will live with the growing consequences of climate change.

LOOKING AHEAD

- **Sunday March 22nd** Heather W. will be guest preaching and leading adult Sunday school at Ambler Mennonite Church outside Philadelphia at the invitation of Dorcas Lehman who is finishing up an interim pastor role there. The congregation has been inspired by our story and is wanting to learn

more. Prayers are welcome for the Spirit's continued work as relates to our role as leaders in creation care within the Mennonite Church. While the hope was for Heather to go in-person to Ambler, given COVID-19 she will be connecting with them remotely (which leaves a smaller carbon footprint).

- **Earth Day** Wed April 22nd 2020, its 50th anniversary! The [theme for 2020 \[earthday.org\]](https://earthday.org) is climate action. Check out tips for [Honoring God's creation on Earth Day \[blessedearth.org\]](https://blessedearth.org) from Blessed Earth. Stay tuned for details of how we will celebrate together! This may include fun workshops such as how to make-your-own body care products (chapstick, shampoos, toothpaste, etc)



- **Movie Night!** As part of Earth month we hope to have a Movie Night! (Date/time: TBD) The Biggest Little Farm. Courtney saw this film and wanted to bring it to us as a community of believers to watch and discuss. [Watch the trailer here. \[youtube.com\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- **Arbor Day Friday April 24th.** [\[arborday.org\]](https://arborday.org) Plant a tree. Hug a tree. Pray for Trees. Donate to a Tree organization such as Vermont based [One Tree Planted \[onetreepanted.org\]](https://onetreepanted.org). Read [Reforestation Faith: What Trees Teach us about the Nature of God and His love for Us \[amazon.com\]](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1601621000) by Matthew Sleeth
- **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** (Apr 24-27) "[God's Earth and People Restored" \[advocacydays.org\]](https://advocacydays.org) A movement of the ecumenical Christian community, grounded in biblical witness and our shared traditions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
- **Green Up Day:** [https://greenupvermont.org/ \[greenupvermont.org\]](https://greenupvermont.org/) May 2nd, Celebrating 50 years!

"The Earth is what we all have in common"

Wendell Berry

FACT:

Winters are warming. Burlington, VT has seen the greatest warming of any city in North America with average temps 7 degrees higher than 50 years ago. (data source: Climate Central, 2017)



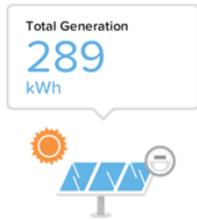
Meet a Permaculture Plant:

Umbrella Plant Regeneration.

Regeneration is at work among us. The umbrella plant in our sanctuary that was pruned back is sending forth new growth. It is a reminder of an important principle of permaculture: regeneration (the capacity to bring into existence again), not merely sustainability (maintaining what already exists). Living systems are naturally regenerative, they renew themselves unless we deplete their resources. Our role is to give back to the ecosystem and support regeneration. It will be a joy to watch our permaculture gardens come back to life this spring. With them we are giving back to nature and in turn they will give to us.

To learn more about regeneration as relates to permaculture: <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-11-02/permaculture-regenerative-not-merely-sustainable/> [resilience.org]

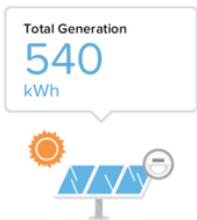
December



January



February



This Quarter

Generated: 1,060 kWh

Used: 1,520 kWh

Donated: 0 kWh

Estimated Value to BBC: \$56

Estimated Value to TCMF: \$200

Total Value for Quarter: \$256

Grand Totals

Generated: 34,179 kWh

Used: 15,920 kWh (14,175 kWh from Solar, 1,162 kWh from the grid)

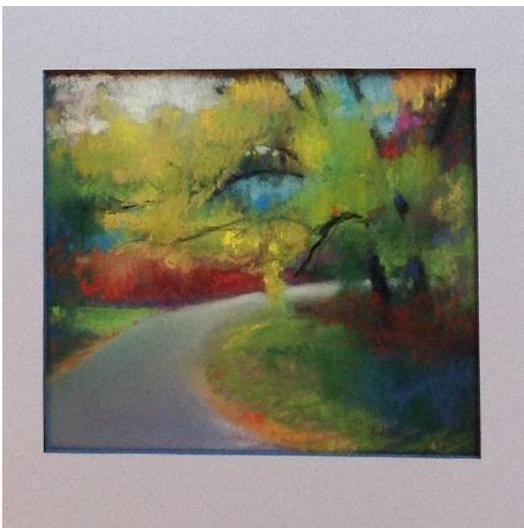
Donated: 19,421 kWh

Estimated Value to BBC: \$4,802

Estimated Value to TCMF: \$2,704

Total Value: \$7,506

Note: Our generation was low this quarter because some of the panels were removed to accommodate the chimney repairs.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - LYNDY KNISLEY

Q: What is something you love about creation?

A: The first thing that comes to mind is “variety”; landforms change ten miles in any direction. I love the boisterous colors of Autumn and the variety of greens in Spring. My family camped across the country to see as much of this variety as we could.

Q: What is something you do to care for creation?

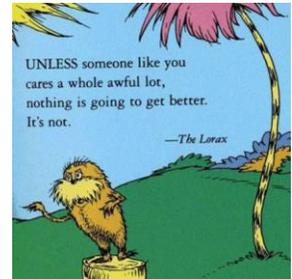
A: In paintings I try to “think God’s thoughts after him” as someone put it, to capture seasonal landscapes so they are unmistakably the work of God. Assemblages honor my parent’s DIY life. As survivors of the Depression, they conserved natural resources with organic gardens, my Dad built our house and the furniture within, and everything was made “from scratch.” Gently experienced items were

always re-purposed before there was a term for that. Over time, I learned to care for creation by grabbing torn, stained, and broken things on their way to to dump. I see so much potential for remaking; it's all raw material - and who among US does not need to be Redeemed?

KID'S CARE CORNER

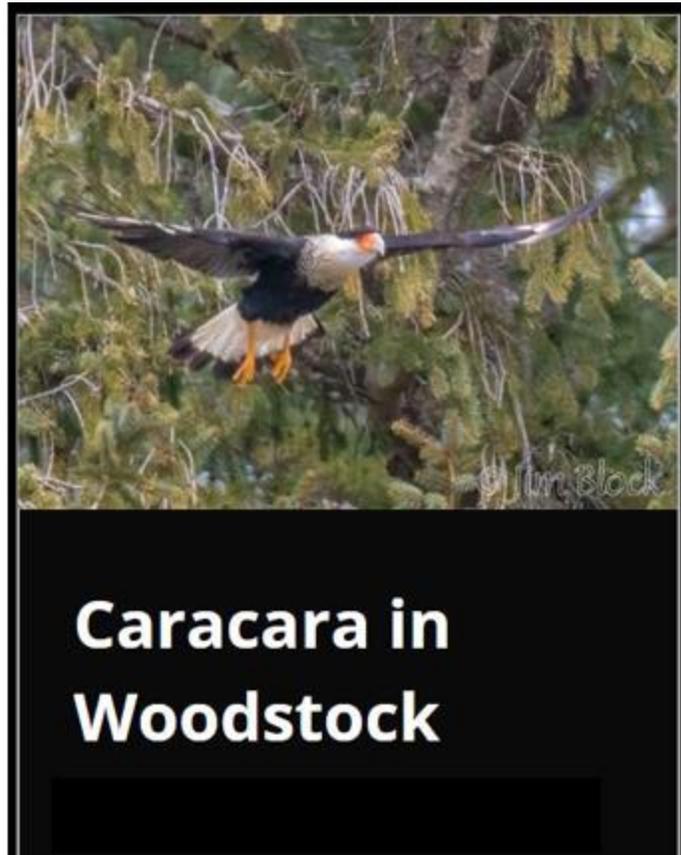
Read [The Lorax](http://en.wikipedia.org) [en.wikipedia.org] by Dr. Suess (his personal favorite).

Think about ways that like Lorax, you can "speak for the trees".



DO JUST ONE THING

Become a citizen scientist. Track seasonal changes of plants and animals in a nature notebook. When did you first observe the return of a robin? When do the lilacs bloom? Record and report the information online database of the [USA National Phenology Network \[usanpn.org\]](http://usanpn.org). Data collected helps to create a fuller picture of how our world is changing as climate changes. Just last week, birders identified a crested Caracara (non-migratory raptor native to Cuba) in Woodstock!



A NOTE FROM STEVE

On Groundhog Day, we began a two-part series in response to Nathan Kulp's interest in a sermon about "Care for animals".

In the Bible there is a unique recognition of humans having the distinct role of being formed in the image and likeness of God, but throughout the Bible God cares not only for humans, but for every living creature.

In Genesis, God creates land and water, fish of the sea, birds of the air, animals of the land and God entrusts vegetation to humans for consumption (not until later are animal-based foods mentioned, after the Flood in the time of Noah). Death is not part of the original picture in Genesis--there is no record of any animal eating another animal, or a human killing another creature in the first two chapters of the Bible.

Although this original Edenic vision is compromised, the writers of the Jewish scriptures continue to convey God's concern for the well-being of animals.

Proverbs 12:10 says, "A righteous man knows the soul of his animal."

In Exodus 23:4-5, it says, "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it."

Jewish Law prohibits causing unnecessary suffering to animals. For example, one of the instructions to Noah was: "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it...". This is understood to mean to not eat the flesh of a living animal (which is to say:

you cannot perpetuate an animal's suffering by either eating it alive or ripping-off parts of it for consumption while it was living).

Abstaining from cruelty and pursuing compassion towards animals may not look the same for everyone. It might look like pulling over to help a turtle cross the road so that it's not hit by a car. It could mean taking into consideration where construction takes place (housing developments, business practices, etc) so that the habitats where animals live are preserved. It could look like making sure that the food that we eat is sourced through humane treatment of animals--this could include asking questions about how humane the slaughtering practices are for the animals who are consumed (and it might lead you to the conclusion that no slaughtering practices are humane).

According to the Hebrew Bible, Not only does God care about animals, not only should we care about animals, but our non-human neighbors can be companions and teachers to us, in the journey of life. What can they teach us?

Words from Job 12 say:

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish in the sea inform you.

Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In God's hand is the life of every creature
And the breath of all humankind."

We do well to learn from our animal-neighbors, because just like Balaam's donkey they may perceive things that we do not.

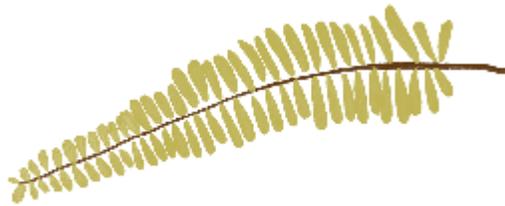
EXPLORE MORE

Check out results of a VPR poll on climate change:

<https://www.vpr.org/post/poll-shows-respondents-split-over-vermonts-response-climate-change#stream/0>
[\[vpr.org\]](#)

Earth Day tips

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-tips/> [\[earthday.org\]](#)



CONTACT US

Have ideas, stories, resources you'd like to share related to creation care?

Contact Heather Wolfe,
Taftsville Chapel's creation care liaison

[EMAIL HEATHER](#)
