



PRACTICAL HOPE: LIVING WITH RESPECT IN CREATION

ATTENTION CHURCH LEADERS!

Clergy, Board Members, Church School Coordinators, Property Managers, Presbytery members... and any who care about the state of the Earth!

*In the midst of the world's crisis of climate change and global warming we have been awakening to a new sense of urgency to 'live with respect in creation'. With more and more of the news of the day including troubling weather patterns and evidence of environmental destruction, we cannot despair, but need to live a **practical hope**. Hope may dawn upon us, but there are things we can do each day to move towards that healing light. It comes to us as we take small steps – one at a time – in God's Way of truly caring for each other as we focus on caring for the earth.*

We are **encouraging you** to lead your congregation in joining with others within Maritime Conference in a program of **“Practical Hope: Living with Respect in Creation.”**

Right now, we're asking you to:

- **Launch** your church's "Practical Hope" program in **worship** on the Sunday nearest **Earth Day** (Apr. 20th or 27th). Earth Day is a call to awareness about how we live in relation with the earth and is marked on April 22nd. A liturgy of celebration, confession, thanksgiving and commitment is included with this mailing as a resource for that Sunday's launch. Also included is **“A Green Moment”** to be read as a Minute for Mission during that Sunday's time of worship.
- **Celebrate Earth Day** and your church's participation in Practical Hope with an **activity** that promotes environmental sustainability. Some examples for congregations and Sunday Schools are included. BE sure to include your plans in your "Green Moment" sharing.
- **Name** someone to be your congregation's **Green Enthusiast**. This person will be the one to receive and share information and resources on the program on behalf of and to share with your congregation.
- **Complete** the short one page **questionnaire** re: your church life and environmental practices that is included with these resources. **Send** the completed questionnaire and the name of your congregation's Green Enthusiast to Laura Hunter at the Maritime Conference office **by May 14th**.

At the Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference, Sackville, NB, May 29 – June 1st, the Practical Hope program will bring you:

- **an overall picture of the current environmental practices** among congregations as a result of compiling the questionnaires sent in;
- **a Focus Group** to dialogue around the current environmental practices of congregations and to identify and discuss resources and projects that would be most helpful to those engaging in "Practical Hope";

- the “**Climate Change Bus**” - an interactive, hands-on display showing how different types of renewable energy work and demonstrating innovative methods of energy conservation and how we can make lifestyle changes that help make a difference. The bus will be in the Civic Centre parking lot all day Saturday May 31st for us to visit.

This summer:

June 27 – 29 “Earth, Our Home” Camp Abegweit and Maritime Conference are sponsoring **an all ages weekend** to spend time reconnecting with nature and learning our Earth story. There will be star-gazing and beach walks, information talks and geocaching, art in nature crafts and campfires, and creation centred worship. Go to www.marconf.ca or www.ucpei.isn.net & click on “forms” for information or registration

July 14 – 16th Practical Hope is sponsoring “**A Theology of Hope in a Time of Climate Change**” at **Tatamagouche Centre** - an opportunity to hear and dialogue **with Stephen Bede Scharper**, Associate Professor of Environmental Ethics, Centre for Environment, University of Toronto, and the Department of Anthropology (UTM). A widely published essayist and popular lecturer, he is Faith and Ethics columnist for the *Toronto Star*, and author of *Redeeming the Time: A Political Theology of the Environment*.

In coming months, your congregation’s Green Enthusiast will be sent details outlining and promoting congregational **Fall Workshops for Practical Hope**, news of upcoming events, and more information and resources.

Enclosed / Attached:

1. Worship resources for Earth Day Sunday launch of Practical Hope;
2. “A Green Moment” to be shared with congregations;
3. Suggested activities for congregations / Sunday Schools to practice Hope / environmental sustainability;
4. One page questionnaire to complete and return.

Please send the name of your congregation’s Green Enthusiast, and the completed questionnaire to: Laura Hunter, Maritime Conference Office, 32 York Street, Sackville, NB, E4L 4R4 - by May 14th, 2008.

Thank you!

*From the Environmental Working Group,
Church in Action Committee,
Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada*