

Be An Advocate for God's Creation

By: Chuck Thomas, NGLS Vice President

Wasn't this year a great year for fall colors? As I traveled around the Northern Great Lakes Synod in early October, I couldn't help but marvel at the splendor of God's creation! Yet, my sense of wonder has been tempered by deep concern. It troubles me to see good stewardship of God's creation being pushed to the back seat by societal and corporate desires. I worry about the environmental legacy we will leave for our grandchildren and their children due to the current federal policies of rolling back the EPA Endangerment Rule, cutting the science and research divisions of the EPA, and reducing permitting requirements for development, logging, mining, and oil and gas exploration on public lands.

Regardless of your political leanings, in accordance with our Church's social teaching, "Caring for Creation" approved in 1993, we as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) share a deep love for all of God's creation and a profound responsibility for it. Made in the image of God, we are called to continue what God is already doing for the earth (Psalm 104), enabling it to flourish. God assigns humans to care for the earth as God does, in loving servanthood. (Philippians 2:7, Genesis 2:15).

Locally, we can establish Caring for Creation teams in our congregations to shepherd environmental stewardship projects. Some relatively easy tasks include adopting a section of highway to keep it clear of litter, starting pollinator gardens, increasing recycling efforts at your congregation, composting kitchen waste, and advocating for more green space and less paved or built-up areas in your local communities.

At the State and Federal levels, we can advocate for elected leaders who endorse environmental protection policies that allow for wise use of our natural resources while simultaneously protecting God's creation. And through advocacy efforts, we can make sure our current elected leaders know our desires on specific issues. The ELCA offers an established Environmental Advocacy program webpage (found at [this link](#) or search for *ELCA Environmental Advocacy*). The Caring for Creation Today information found at the link will provide ready-to-send advocacy letters under the "Take Action Now" button, making it easy to reach out to elected leaders as new issues arise. Together, our voices can make a meaningful difference in shaping policies that reflect stewardship of the earth.