



FAITH COMMUNITIES GO GREEN

STORIES



YOU TOO CAN HELP RESTORE CREATION

Submitted by Susan Fox

It started with a caterpillar and a child's question. It grew to a multi-faceted, intergenerational community, learning how to take better care of the earth and then sharing what they've learned with others.

There was a caterpillar who had eaten all the leaves off a stalk of milkweed. "What can we do Mommy, so it doesn't starve?" Mommy quickly found more milkweed. Then, she and the child learned what they could about the greater story of the decline of monarch butterflies and what could they do to help. 'Youth for Monarchs,' a service-learning program, was born. Their pilot program was launched at Christ the King Lutheran Church (CtK), in West Chester, OH. They researched and then created a monarch waystation, which serves a whole host of pollinators, and a 2,200 square foot prairie.



This was just the beginning for such events at CtK. Next came honeysuckle removal in their two acre forest, replacing the honeysuckle with native plants. People love being in the forest, it's healing for body and spirit. When people come out to help or tour the forest, they are always told the 'why', that God calls us to care for the earth. What CtK learns, it shares with others so it can be replicated, at whatever scale, at their own homes, places of worship, or businesses.

Next, mowing practices were changed so there is less pollution and better ground for bugs. And money was saved! Who doesn't like that?! Next, more native plants were put around the church – and people told why. Then, their community garden was expanded, all with donations, the work being done by an “older than average” church. Emphasis was made on soil health, nurturing the soil fauna which will in turn feed the vegetable plants and make healthier veggies. A Boy Scout pursuing his Eagle Scout badge, built an amazing compost center, again with education in mind. Neighbors bring us their pumpkins, leaves, and grass clippings. The most recent project, in our fourth year of emphasis on creation care, is a permaculture food forest, built, in part by our neighbors as well as our senior citizen members.

CtK was blessed with eight acres of land. It is still a lot of lawn, and the water flows off the property into the storm sewers. We have plans to change these things. Not every house of worship can do what we have done but everybody can do some. From there, it ripples out into peoples' homes and businesses. You too can help restore creation.

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