

Dear Friends,

What an amazing community Kileen and I have moved into. When the environmental group hosted our Earth Day Fairs in Aberdeen, SD, in a population of about 25,000 people, it took us about 4 years to get up to 15-20 booths, 5 speakers, and around 150 people to show up to the Earth Day Fair. Last night we have 28 booths, 9 speakers, and I am guessing we exceeded 200 people showing up. We had people coming out of the woods (literally) to pitch in and contribute in some form or fashion. I don't know how this is going to grow because we were almost using every single square foot of space to host the event. We set up 28 chairs for our speakers and had to pull more out quickly as some of the audiences were closer to 45 people coming to listen. It was neat that we had very few glitches last night considering we have not done this here and Kat Meyo, director of Cook County Local Energy Project, has not done something like this before. Her contributions made this the success it was.

What is even more heartening for me, is that there were lots of conversations that this is not a one and done event, but we find ways to continue to work to create a better county, community, and world. We have a couple groups that I didn't know existed in our area who are wanting and willing to do what they can help us heal our planet. I am heartened by the people in our congregation who are wanting to see what we as a church can do for our church, this county, and again, healing the planet.

This does not mean that I believe that we will heal the planet in time or that the future is all rainbows and good times. We will not solve the global climate crisis because it is already happening. We can't move into despair and hopelessness and think that that nothing we will do will matter. I do believe that events like last night and a community spirit will help us possibly stave off the worst. If nothing else, bind us together as a human species, renewing our relationship with nature and all life, and planting the seeds so that the 7<sup>th</sup> generation made have a better world than our grandkids.

There are things we can do now and ways we can prepare ourselves and the world for its toughest battle in many centuries. I am lifted up by the spirit of the community and have hope that we can come together and face whatever comes with compassion, some hope, and a courage that comes from and through the love of God.

Peace

Pastor Enno