

Care for Creation Survey Results

Congregations respond about their creation care activities to reduce energy use

by Donna Rasmussen, Care for Creation Network

At the beginning of this year, all the congregations in the Northeastern Iowa Synod were asked to complete a survey about their creation care activities. A summary of those results will be available at the 2025 Synod Assembly by stopping by the Care for Creation display table.

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA adopted a resolution to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 50% by 2030. In 2023, an Action Plan was developed by the Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network, with assistance from the ELCA Coaching

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Program and funded by the synod, to lay out steps for assisting member churches with making progress with creation care activities that help meet the goals set out in the 2023 resolution. One of the first steps in the Action Plan was to develop a survey/checklist in order to determine what steps congregations have already taken, to provide information about the benefits of those activities, and to determine what help congregations might want or need, or what advice or assistance they may be able to offer other congrega-



tions wanting to do similar activities. Congregations were asked to complete the survey by Feb. 28, 2025.

Of the 139 congregations in the synod, 41 congregations responded to the survey, a 29% return rate. From the checklist, congregations indicated all the operating practices that apply to them within each category. The highest percentage of activities were in the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) category, with anywhere from 70% to 98% of the congregations completing an activity that reduced energy use in their facilities. This could range from something as simple as making sure windows and doors are closed when heating or air conditioning is on to investing in the installation of programmable thermostats or energy efficient HVAC systems. These types of things have significant economic benefits to the congregation, which may be the reason for the higher adoption rates. There were individual activities in other categories which also had very

high adoption rates often related to cost savings realized by the congregation, such as reducing paper use.

One purpose of the survey was to identify congregations willing to offer advice or assistance to other congregations that are interested in implementing a particular practice. There were 16 congregations that indicated a willingness to be a resource to other congregations. The Care for Creation Network has identified this as a significant way to expand creation care activities in the synod since the Network can only do so much as a small volunteer group. With the knowledge and expertise of those congregations who have been through the process of completing projects, much more can be accomplished.

For more information about the survey, or if your congregation would still like to complete the survey, contact the synod office to connect you with a member of the Care for Creation Network.