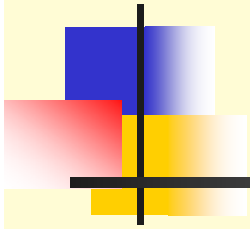


# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

[WMCREATIONCARE@YAHOO.COM](mailto:WMCREATIONCARE@YAHOO.COM)

[WWW.WMCREATIONCARE.CFSITES.O](http://WWW.WMCREATIONCARE.CFSITES.O)

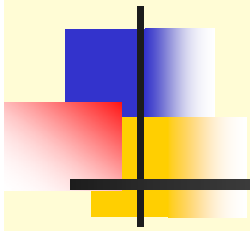
[RG](#)



A Survey of Churches and Worship Centers  
in the  
Holland / Zeeland / Saugatuck / Douglas and  
Surrounding Lakeshore Communities

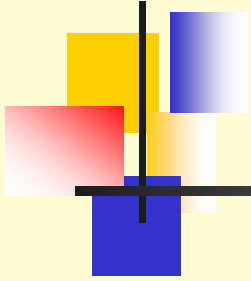
A RESEARCH PROJECT FOR

***WEST MICHIGAN CREATION CARE***



Prepared by:  
Megan Mullins, PhD

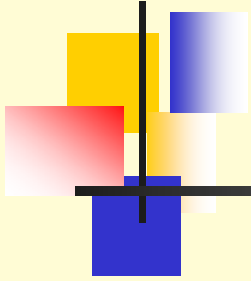
The Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research  
Hope College  
December 2007



## WEST MICHIGAN CREATION CARE

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An interdenominational group that provides a theologically based voice to contemporary public discussion of the natural world.

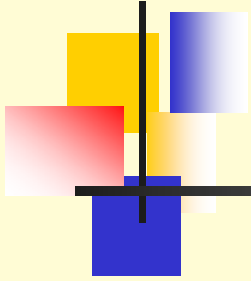


# WEST MICHIGAN CREATION CARE

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## Goals

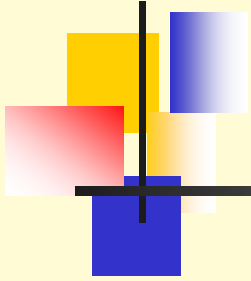
- Be a community where discussion and reflection encourage a faith-based understanding of God's love for creation and our proper place in it
- Be a place where local environmental concerns and solutions can be discussed and advocated
- Encourage area churches and worship centers, both individually and collectively, in their development of a voice for environmental stewardship.



## WEST MICHIGAN CREATION CARE

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Its members come from West Michigan lakeshore communities and represent lakeshore churches and worship centers. The group meets under the banner of Western Theological Seminary's *Journey Program*.



## RESEARCH PURPOSE

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- This presentation highlights results from a 2007 survey of church and worship center environmental stewardship practices.
  - The purpose of this research was to identify...
    - Existing activities,
    - Future plans, and
    - Service gaps
- ...in stewardship practices at churches and worship centers in Holland, Zeeland, Saugatuck, Douglas, and the surrounding lakeshore communities.



## DATA COLLECTION

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- Survey developed by West Michigan Creation Care with support and advisement from the Frost Research Center at Hope College.
- Data collected Oct. 1st - Nov. 15th, 2007.
- 140 surveys were distributed
- 42 surveys returned = 30% response rate



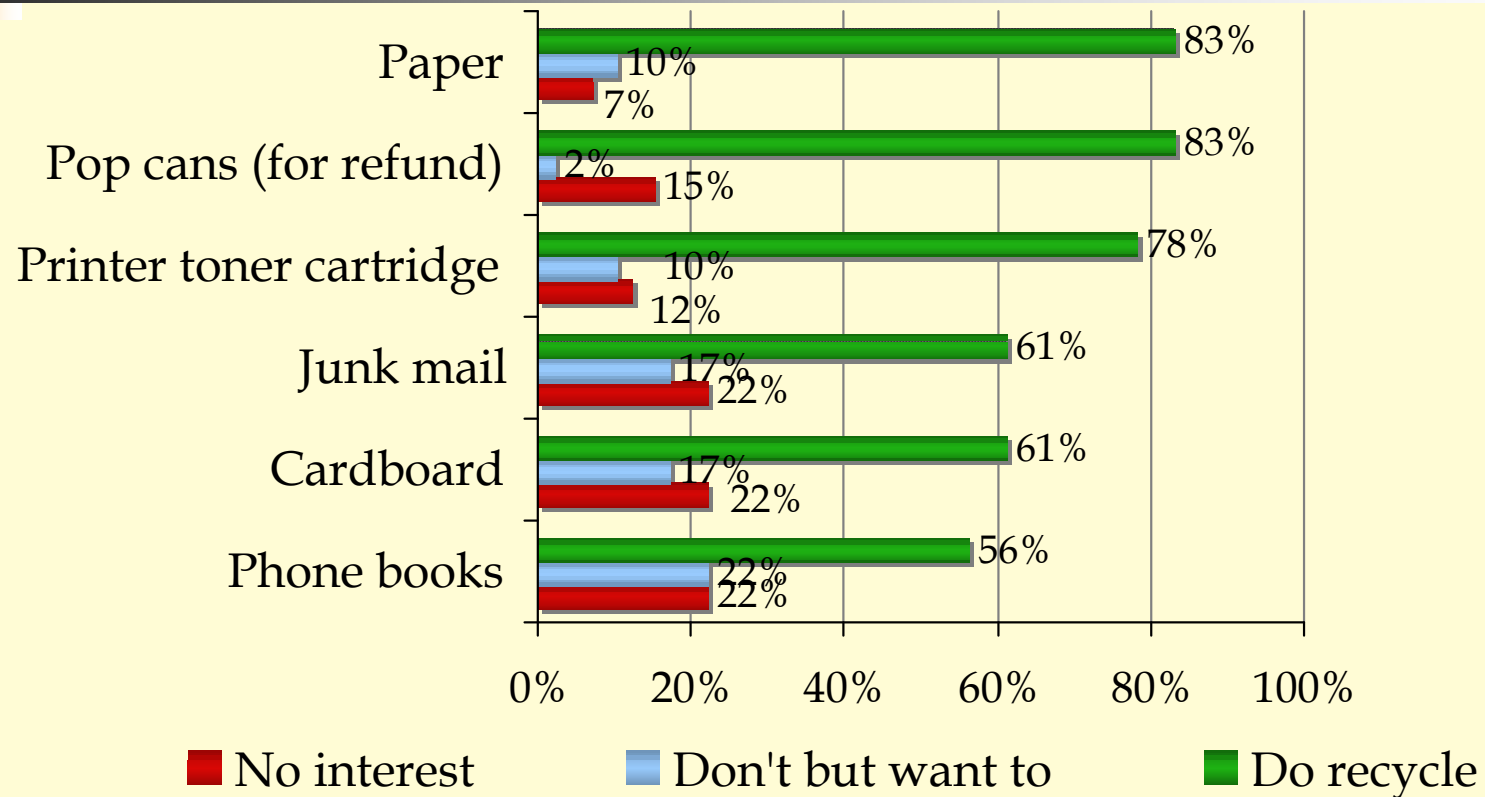
## KEY FINDINGS

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- *Most stewardship practices of those churches and worship centers surveyed entail recycling and conservation of energy consumption through changes in lighting and water usage.*
- *More had educational curriculum on stewardship practices for children than adults.*
- *Respondents asked for more education and resources on this issue.*

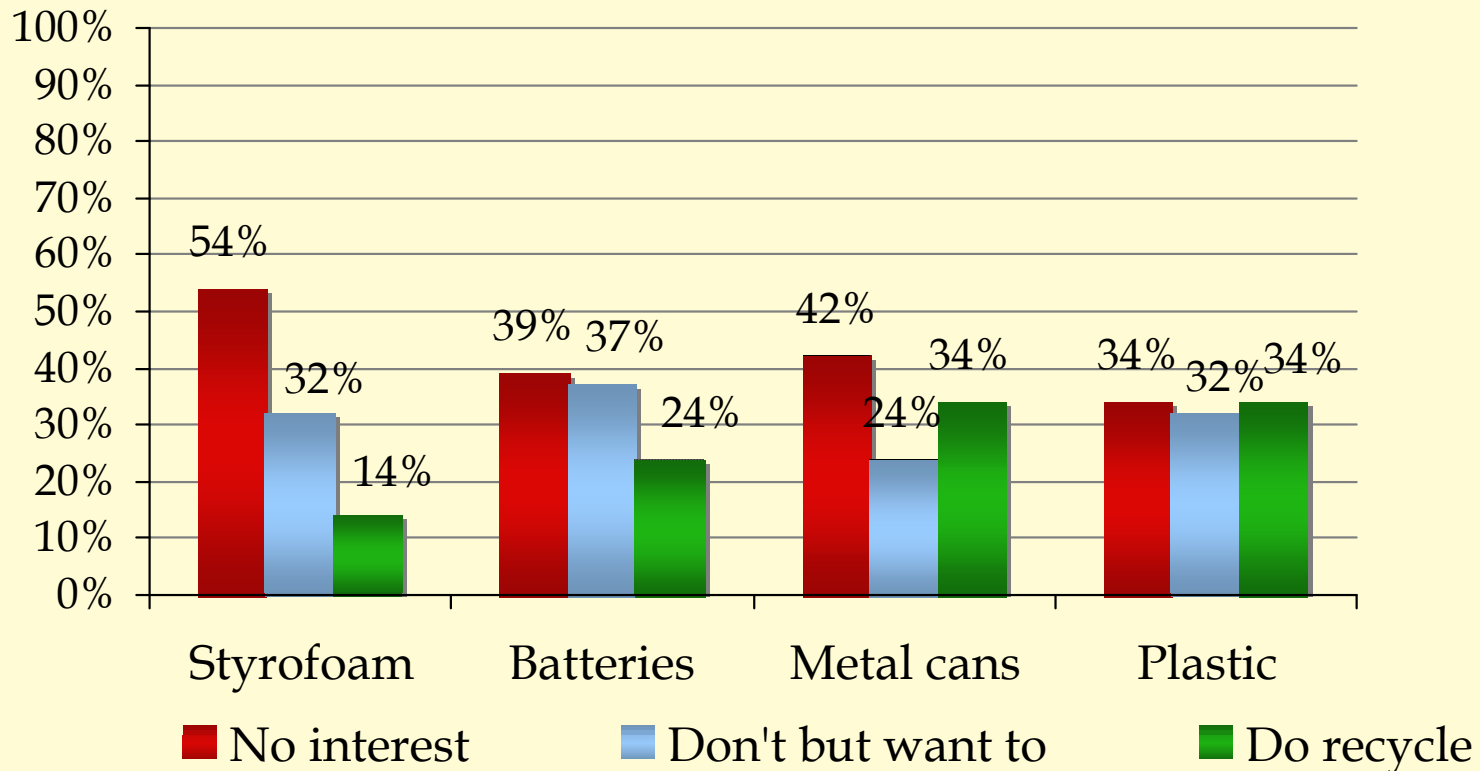


# MOST FREQUENT ITEMS RECYCLED



Most popular recyclable items were paper and aluminum cans.

# LEAST FREQUENT ITEMS RECYCLED



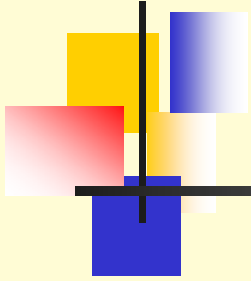
Styrofoam and metal cans were least likely to be recycled.



# ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL RECYCLING?

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- 43% said their church or worship center encourages individuals to recycle by...
  - Talking/teaching/providing information,
  - Sorting recyclables, or by
  - Making recycling containers available/providing recycling at the church.



## COMMENTS...

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*Containers at church for used ink jet cartridges, pop cans and bottles, separate trash receptacles in office and kitchen.*

*Newsletter articles.*

*Right now only by talking. We don't have a specific plan.*

*We furnish information about what is recyclable, who accepts the various items, cost, contact info, etc.*



## ON ENERGY USE...

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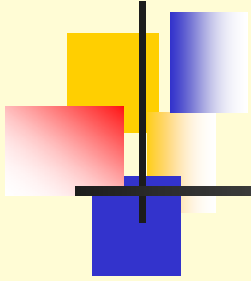
- 20% of respondents said their church had completed an energy audit. Of this group...
- *3 churches/worship centers were willing to share their audits with West Michigan Creation Care members.*



## TOP 6 CHANGES WITHIN LAST 5 YEARS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

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- To reduce energy consumption...
  - 54% had switched to florescent light bulbs,
  - 42% had switched to reduced energy bulbs,
  - 39% had made changes to heating use,
  - 29% had made insulation changes,
  - 49% had changed water and toilet use, and
  - 34% had made changes to windows.
- No respondents reported using solar, wind, or bio-fuel as alternate forms of energy.



# EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

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- 10% reported using curriculum based on stewardship of natural resources.
- Curriculum used were...
  - Printed materials, DVDs, presentations, informal conversations, and Internet resources.
- 20% had invited a person speak to the congregation on environmental stewardship.



## CURRICULUM FOR CHILDREN

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- 35% reported having included environmental stewardship in their programming for children. This programming consisted of...
  - Camp programming,
  - Earth Day classes and activities,
  - Trash pick-up,
  - Recycling, and
  - Inclusion of environmental stewardship in teaching about creation.





## PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS/ SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

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- 24% reported having someone from their organization attend special events on environmental stewardship, such as those sponsored by...
  - Land Conservancy West Michigan,
  - National Council of Churches,
  - WEST group,
  - Creation Care, and
  - The Step It Up rally.



## EXISTING MISSIONS/TASK FORCES

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- 9 respondents (22%) said their church has a mission group or task force addressing environmental stewardship. Those groups identified were...
  - Green Team (3),
  - Caring for Creation Ministry,
  - Ecology Group,
  - Stewardship Committee,
  - Faith in Action, and the
  - Taking Grace Green Commission.



# HOW WEST MICHIGAN CREATION CARE CAN HELP CONGREGATIONS

- 18 respondents (43%) said that West Michigan Creation Care could help their congregation by...
  - Providing education (information, tools, resources) (61%),
  - Speaking to congregations about environmental stewardship (11%),
  - Establishing networks via in-person or email contact (11%).



## COMMENTS/THEMES...

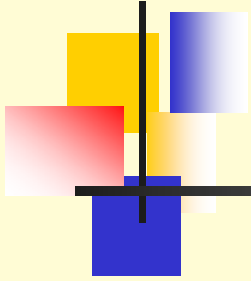
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*Keep sending us more information. We are quite serious about this and want to move from the talking stage to action.*

*Give us practical advice on how to care for God's world.*

*Put the issue in front of the congregation and provide some educational materials or a special speaker.*

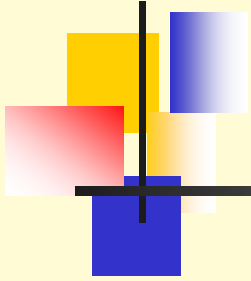
*Send info via email with new ideas/suggestions.*



## OTHER STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

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- A few other projects occurring at churches or worship centers were mentioned such as ...
  - Development of nature trails/Recreation of wetlands,
  - Task force on climate change and study groups,
  - Environmentally friendly building upgrades,
  - A youth club with environmental projects, and
  - Reduction of energy bills through thermostat upgrades and conservative water use.



## OTHER DESIRED ACTIVITIES

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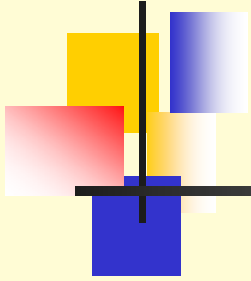
- Participants said they would like to see more...
    - Children's activities related to stewardship,
    - Adult education related to stewardship,
    - Increased product recycling,
    - Use of environmentally friendly products,
    - Increased energy efficiency, and
    - Increased education on stewardship and integration into worship goals and practice
- ... at their churches or worship centers.



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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- Most respondents report their churches/worship centers are active in environmental stewardship through recycling and by making changes to improve energy efficiency.
- However,
  - Under half encourage individuals to recycle, and
  - Most curriculum on environmental stewardship is included in curriculum for children rather than for adults.

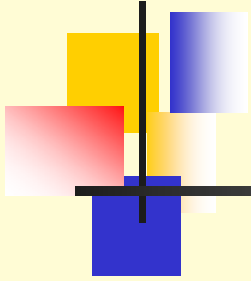


## *Additionally...*

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- While churches/worship centers said they want more information on this issue...
  - Less than 20% had invited someone speak to their congregation about this issue, and
  - Less than 25% had staff or church members who had attended faith-based workshops, seminars, or conferences on this issue.
- A few respondents did indicate they are invested in this topic and are already working on projects addressing environmental stewardship.

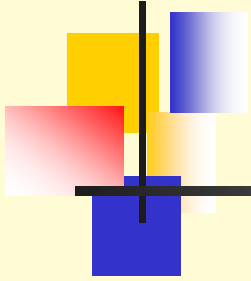




## CONCLUSION

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There is a clear and identified need for education on environmental stewardship practices in these churches and worship centers.



## CONTACTS

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	<a href="http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp">www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp</a>
National Council of Churches of Christ	<a href="http://www.nccecojustice.org">www.nccecojustice.org</a>
Reformed Church of America-Care for Creation	<a href="http://www.rca.org">www.rca.org</a>
Evangelical Environmental Network	<a href="http://www.creationcare.org">www.creationcare.org</a>
Coalition on the Environment & Jewish Life	<a href="http://www.coejl.org/index.php">www.coejl.org/index.php</a>
Michigan Interfaith Power and Light	<a href="http://www.miipl.org">www.miipl.org</a>
Local West Michigan environmental links	<a href="http://www.greenwestmichigan.org">www.greenwestmichigan.org</a>
Energy Information	<a href="http://www.westmichiganenergy.org">www.westmichiganenergy.org</a>
W.M. Strategic Alliance/Green Infrastructure	<a href="http://www.wm-alliance.org">www.wm-alliance.org</a>
U.S. Green Building Council	<a href="http://www.usgbc.org">www.usgbc.org</a>
WMEAC-Religion, Ecology & Spirituality	<a href="http://www.wmeac.org">www.wmeac.org</a>
	<a href="mailto:wmcreationcare@yahoo.com">wmcreationcare@yahoo.com</a>
	<a href="http://www.wmcreationcare.cfsites.org">www.wmcreationcare.cfsites.org</a>