



Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard

GOING GREEN: ENERGY AUDIT A WIN-WIN FOR ST. BERNARD

In Genesis 2, we are called to "cultivate and care for" the earth, so acting as stewards of the environment is part of our call to Christ as individuals and as a community of faith. In response to this call, and with the help of the PSE&G Energy Saver Program, St. Bernard is making great strides towards going green and reducing the environmental impact of our facilities.

Funded through a combination of PSE&G grants and zero interest loans, the parish is undergoing major updates to its lighting and HVAC systems. These upgrades will result in a cleaner, greener footprint, but also in energy savings that will offset the cost of the project's financing, even reducing overall monthly costs for the parish.

St. Bernard Finance Council member Bernie McElroy discovered the Energy Saver program a few years back while working with "SOUL-TIONS," a ministry he founded to provide mentoring to parishes in the areas of finance and operations. After working to help Holy Family Parish in New Brunswick gain acceptance and ultimately implement the program, Bernie thought it might also be a good fit

for St. Bernard. In July, he presented the idea to Msgr. Randy, who gave his full support to moving forward with the application process.

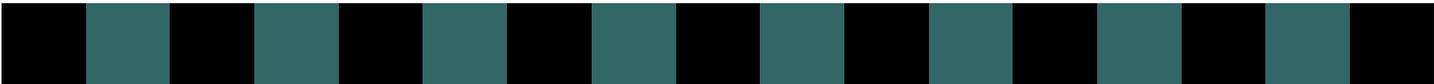
The process of being selected into the program took four months and involved providing comprehensive data about our energy usage and facilities and coordinating multiple on-site audits. Bill Chmielewski, our Director of Maintenance, and Finance Council member Brian Curtis were both instrumental during this exhaustive process.

Notice was received in late November that we had been approved for program and the upgrades to our lighting have already been installed by PSE&G. In March or April, the remainder of the work including the replacement of boilers and air conditioning units will take place. Look out for these improvements taking place on our campus!

By The Numbers

Annual Pollution Reduction That Will Occur as a Result of this Project at St. Bernard

Carbon Dioxide (a "Greenhouse Gas")	201,380 lbs.
Sulphur Dioxide (contributes to acid rain)	858 lbs.
Nitrogen Oxides (contribute to smog and estuarial damage)	367 lbs.



GREEN TEAM UPDATE

Last month, the SIA bulletin insert introduced our St. Bernard Green Team and our new parish membership in the GreenFaith movement. GreenFaith is an interfaith coalition for the environment whose goal is to help us to become better environmental stewards. We have joined together with five other local faith communities to form the Mid-Garden State Green Faith Circle. Other members of the circle include: North Branch Reformed Church, Temple Beth El, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset County, Islamic Center of Basking Ridge.

Why have all of these varied faith communities joined GreenFaith?

Each of these faith communities believes that God created the earth and gave it to us to care for. One of the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching is Care for God's Creation. This key teaching of our Catholic faith states that "We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. The environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored." Since the Industrial Revolution, humans have unwittingly done great harm to the environment and we need to increase awareness of ways to become better stewards of God's gift.

How exactly does GreenFaith plan to do this?

The focus of the GreenFaith Circle and each of its member faith communities is 3-fold:

Each faith community should consider making changes to its campus that would benefit the environment.

In connection with this, St. Bernard recently had an energy audit performed and will be implementing multiple changes that are beneficial to the environment as well as to parish finances. .

We will seek ways in which to provide our own faith community with information on changes that can be made in our own homes that will benefit the environment.

Beginning in January, a monthly "Eco-tip" will be included in the bulletin. These tips will provide simple changes to consider making in our homes. Stay tuned for other educational opportunities that are in the planning stage as well as a unique Lenten activity.

The Circle should undertake one group activity per year that will benefit the environment.

Last spring, circle members participated in clean up of local streams on Earth Day. This year, we are planning to distribute information on measuring our carbon footprint to help us to identify ways in which we can lessen the impact of our actions on the environment.

This Lenten season, the Stewardship Council and the St. Bernard Green Team invite you to *Take the Lenten Plastics Challenge*.



JOIN THE LENT PLASTIC CHALLENGE

GIVE UP BAGS, BOTTLES AND AS MUCH SINGLE USE PLASTIC AS YOU CAN FOR **40 DAYS**

Ten Tips for a Reduced Plastic Lent

1. Take paper bags with you to the supermarket to put your fruit and vegetables in
2. Visit your local greengrocer or farmshop to cut down waste
3. Give up buying bottled water or drinks and buy a refillable flask
4. Get a reusable coffee mug
5. Use a Bag for Life or cardboard boxes
6. Return to the milkman and get your milk delivered in reusable glass bottles
7. Reuse containers for storing leftovers
8. Refuse disposable cutlery and plastic straws at cafés, pubs and restaurants
9. Write to the managers of your local supermarkets and ask them to cut back on plastic waste
10. Buy package-free shampoo bars

The poster also features a logo for the Unitarian Universalist Federation of the Wilkes-Barre Area and an image of four crumpled plastic bottles.

Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

Please contact Mark Dransfield (dransfam@gmail.com or by calling 908-526-6649)

