**ORUCC Care of Creation Mission Team – Activity Report 2024**

**Members:** Jill Westberg, Joyce Pohl, Rachael Lancor, Chuck Kaspar, Fran Beach, Gene Dyer, Jack and Marilyn Schairer

**Mission/Focus/Purpose**

To be a means of support, education and action for those wanting to deepen their involvement in caring for creation.  In addition, Care of Creation exists to bring opportunities to the congregation for reflection and action on the care for our planet earth.

**Activities in 2024**

* FreeCycle: People from Orchard Ridge brought in items to give away (rather than throw away) and after service anyone was free to take home what they wanted. Items that remained were distributed to individuals and groups that could use them. Next year we hope to give many items to Good Shepherd for the people who use the food/clothes pantry there.
* Plastic drive: Together with the Mennonites we are collecting plastic (that can’t be picked up curbside). After we get 1,000 pounds we will receive a bench made from plastic.
* Involvement in writing a land acknowledgment, followed by 2025 Compassion Offering which will go to the Wisconsin Intertribal Repatriation Committee. The first of several steps in building a relationship with the Native Americans in Wisconsin.
* discussion of native plants at ORUCC plus reading of *Nature’s Best Hope* by Douglas W. Tallamy
* promotion of outdoor ministries

**What we are celebrating as a Mission Team**

I love how the sacredness of Creation has become part of the fabric of Orchard Ridge. Many of our members (and pastors) bring it into other areas: children’s programming, the gardens, worship, book club… -Jill Westberg

**What we envision for 2025**

* We hope to do more networking with other groups. For instance we will take part in Middleton UCC’s church’s Earth Day which attracts over 200 community members. We hope to involve Good Shepherd Lutheran in our FreeCycle in May. We will continue conversations with the indigenous people of Wisconsin.
* This spring  we will bring back Earth Day Celebration to Orchard Ridge on May 4, involving the children during the 9:00 hours, worship and an after worship fair in Friendship Hall.
* Jeff Epping, former director of Olbrich Botanical Gardens will speak about native plantings on Sunday, April 27th at 9:00.
* Tour of the Indian mounds at Edgewood College