

# **STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION ENABLERS PROGRAM**

## **“What is an SCE?”**

### BACKGROUND

The 1990 General Assembly adopted an ambitious and comprehensive social policy statement entitled “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice.” It contained recommendations for all levels of the church to increase efforts to help heal and defend God’s Creation.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has made a credible response since 1990 and has been recognized as a leader among the denominations. Yet, clearly so much more needs to be done if we are to respond with the “adventurous faithfulness” described in the policy. Nearly thirty congregational and presbytery leaders from all across the church gathered in Louisville in 1994 to assess the current level of awareness, programming and witness on behalf of God’s Creation. Several goals were set forth which everyone unanimously believed would strengthen our common witness and respond to the growing activity in the church around these concerns. One included the formation of a network for Presbyterians concerned about God’s Creation. This was accomplished with the launching of Presbyterians for Restoring Creation at the 1995 General Assembly.

A second goal was the forging of a more intentional linkage between the congregations and presbyteries and the General Assembly Council. This would help resource the growing interest of congregations and individual Presbyterians.

We hope that there is concern for God’s Creation in the congregations in each presbytery. We encourage presbyteries to recruit a dedicated person, recognized officially by the presbytery, to serve as a Stewardship of Creation Enabler (SCE). This person could be either a volunteer or a staff person.

### PURPOSE OF STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION ENABLERS

Stewardship of Creation Enablers are called to serve presbyteries as educators, motivators, and facilitators of action to protect God’s Creation. They are to assist congregations and other groups within the church to gain the knowledge and skills to sustain long-term, spiritually vital commitment to God’s Creation. They are to facilitate engagement by congregations and committed church members with other groups in their own communities and around the world seeking to address immediate environmental problems and to find long-term solutions. As enablers of others, they will be an important conduit for the national staff team, as well as local, regional or national ecumenical environmental ministries, to resource, alert and mobilize Presbyterians on behalf of God’s Creation. They will also strengthen the outreach by presbytery committees to congregations and enhance communications between congregations and among individual Presbyterians.

### STRUCTURAL LINKAGE FOR A SCE

In discussing the proposed SCE program, the Environmental Ministries Staff Team, which Rev. William Somplatsky-Jarman convenes, felt it desirable that the Stewardship of Creation Enabler be named officially by the presbytery and linked intentionally to a committee of the presbytery or ex-officio to the council. This will facilitate reporting on the SCE's work and collaboration on program activities and witness. It would enhance the integration of concern for God's Creation into the ongoing life of the presbytery.

Many presbyteries already have committees addressing issues related to God's Creation, either in their own right or as sub-committees of a mission or social justice or peacemaking committee. In such cases, perhaps it would be appropriate to recruit someone active in this work to serve as the SCE. In other cases, it may be necessary to identify someone active in the life of the presbytery or in a congregation who would serve and link them to an appropriate presbytery committee even if it is not focused currently on the work of restoring creation. In either case, the Office of Environmental Ministries is willing to assist the presbytery in finding the right person to serve as a Stewardship of Creation Enabler.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCE

What characterizes the "right person?" A SCE should be gifted as an educator and facilitator willing to work with congregations and church members where they are and to move them forward. The person should be knowledgeable about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its governing bodies and be active in a congregation. The SCE should demonstrate concern for and have an understanding of environmental and justice issues; be an effective networker who works collegially with others; communicate effectively both written and orally. The SCE should have the ability to interpret concern for God's Creation in a theological context; an ability to empower others, including committees, and to lift up the call to help restore God's Creation before official church structures; ability and experience in planning and administering programs.

### SUPPORT FOR A SCE

The Stewardship of Creation Enabler will not be cast adrift. The Office of Environmental Ministries will insure that the SCE: 1) can participate in an initial comprehensive training event, 2) have opportunities for periodic renewal and skill-building, 3) be equipped with the print and video resources (perhaps at the presbytery resource center) needed to enhance their work with congregations, 4) receive regular communications to keep them current on new resources and program ideas, 5) receive consultation with the staff team when needed, 6) be supported in networking among the other SCE's, including sharing of models from successful SCEs, and 7) will have opportunity for ecumenical collaboration and sharing, as several other denominations are also pursuing this model.

We realize there is a financial burden in many areas of the church. This program initiative is not intended to add to that burden but to enhance our mutual mission through collaboration. While the General Assembly does not have the financial resources to provide either a stipend or regular program support funds, we are committed to this effort and would welcome the opportunity to work with you to find the most logical and efficient way to make it happen.

Below is a SCE information sheet that should be returned to the address given once a person has been designated. If you have any questions or need additional information, please grant us the opportunity to be of assistance.

### JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A PRESBYTERY LEVEL SCE

As of May 2009, approximately 60 “Stewardship of Creation Enablers” (SCEs) have heard the call to address eco-justice issues in their presbyteries. At present, the structure of those positions within each presbytery varies.

What follows are some aspects of the job that seem to be common among enablers regardless of their presbytery structure:

1. SCEs coordinate systematic contact with pastors and congregations—calling and visiting, and sometimes participating in worship services or other events.
2. SCEs develop and support a network of congregational contact persons.
3. SCEs are thoroughly familiar with the Presbyterian Environmental Ministries Program and its resources, and they participate in national conferences and training events as they occur.
4. SCEs promote educational efforts concerning eco-justice issues by teaching church school classes, developing curricula, and leading retreats and workshops for members of their congregation.
5. SCEs attend and participate in presbytery meetings.
6. SCEs prepare written material on eco-justice issues (e.g., articles, newsletters, event updates, etc.) which are distributed throughout the presbytery.
7. SCEs stay abreast of legislative issues and keep committee members informed.
8. SCEs maintain contact with other eco-justice organizations in their community.
9. SCEs assist the “Restoring God’s Creation” Committee Chairperson in keeping records of congregational positions, presbytery wide events, ecumenical and secular contact persons, etc.
10. SCEs work with other presbytery staff persons to assist with the mission of the presbytery.
11. SCEs work out a regular reporting process with the presbytery committee they are serving on and act as resource persons during these committee meetings.

Please return to: Office of Environmental Ministries  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
100 Witherspoon Street, Room 3221  
Louisville, KY 40202  
katie.holmes@pcusa.org

## STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION ENABLER PROGRAM

1. Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of SCE: \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (work) \_\_\_\_\_

(home) \_\_\_\_\_

(FAX) \_\_\_\_\_

(cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

3. Congregation (City, State) SCE attends: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Presbytery committee to which SCE is linked: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Presbytery staff person with whom SCE will work most closely:

6. Any other information about the SCE that might be helpful (church and community activities, hobbies, special interests, education, etc.):

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