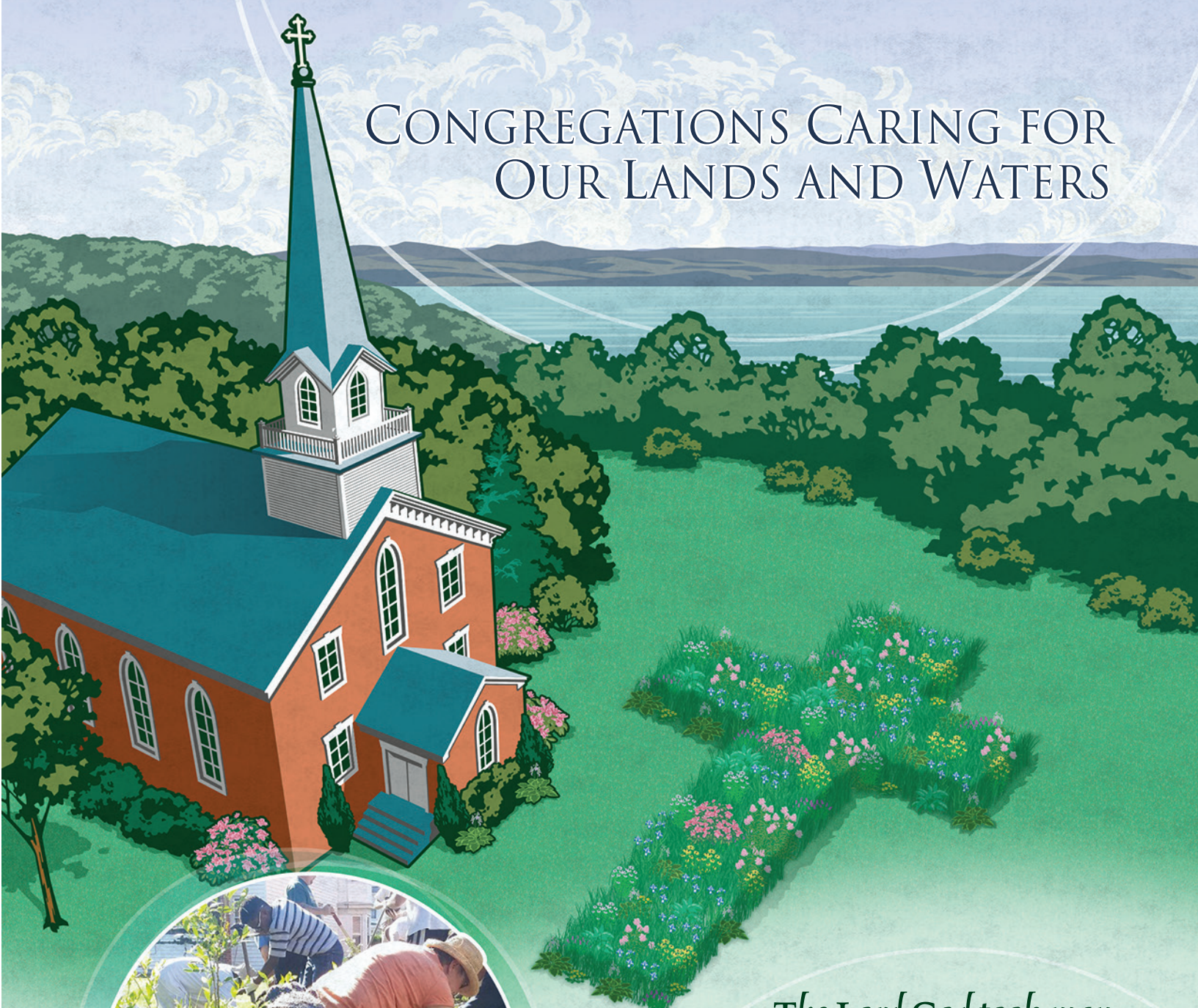


CONGREGATIONS CARING FOR OUR LANDS AND WATERS



*The Lord God took man
and put him in the garden
to work and keep it.*

Genesis 2:15

The Bible teaches that "God created the heavens and Earth" and "saw that it was good" (Genesis 1, 1-9). From the very beginning, God entrusted mankind to protect his beloved creation. It was one of the very first things God instructed.

In today's world, the environment is in tremendous need of our care. Churches and congregations are in unique positions to make positive environmental choices and continue the good work that God has asked us to do.

Planting a
rain garden at
Waugh Chapel,
Cambridge, MD





*For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.*

Isaiah 44:33

Here, in the land that surrounds the Nanticoke River, we are blessed with abundant natural and economic resources that depend on clean waterways.

The rains and melting snow wash over the land, creating a runoff of stormwater that can carry many harmful pollutants to our streams and rivers. These waterways carry such a deep connection to this region's past, as well as its present and future.

Farmers, fishermen, sportsmen, and residents all depend on healthy streams and rivers to sustain the things they love and the lives they live.

Throughout the Bible, scriptures reflect God's love as "living water," sustaining both body and soul. People are baptized in rivers. Giving water to the thirsty is an act of discipleship. Water is as precious now as it was then, and there will never be a time when water is not crucial to our lives.

Churches in the Nanticoke region have many opportunities to help improve water quality. Taking action both inside and outside of your church can protect God's creation and serve your congregation.



Stream cleanup at C
Baptist Church, Salis

*But someone will say,
"You have faith and I have works."
Show me your faith apart from your works,
and I will show you my faith by my works.*

James 2:18



*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,
"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

John 7:38



OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Rain can be a blessing from above, but harmful runoff is man-made. The hardened surfaces in our modern landscapes cause massive amounts of water to rush toward rivers and streams. Parking lots, buildings, compacted soils, and even areas of mown grass add to the destructive runoff that causes flooding and erosion in our communities. And the expense of traditional “green” grass lawns (mowing, fertilizing, replanting, and erosion correction) can add significant costs to any budget.

Your churchyard can become a beautiful, water-absorbing oasis that slows destructive water flows, reduces property maintenance costs, and welcomes people and all of god’s creatures. The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has funding available to help you. Please consider the following:

Tree Planting

A mature tree can soak up 50-100 gallons of water while the roots direct even more water into the ground. Trees provide shade and absorb humidity to help reduce cooling costs. Even paved areas like sidewalks and parking lots require less repair and maintenance when they are protected from direct sun exposure. A lovely grove of trees can provide a shady location for worship, weddings, and fellowship events.

Rain Barrels

Installed at downspouts, rain barrels collect and store water that can be used for outdoor gardens and trees.

Native Plant Gardens

Plants that are from here thrive here! They are adapted to our climate and other conditions that can stress non-native species, requiring less care once established. Plus, many native plants can provide food and shelter for local birds and pollinators. These gardens could be designed to host ceremonies or contemplation areas.

Meadows

Large areas of mown grass can be replaced with meadow grasses and wildflowers. The longer roots of these plants absorb far more water than regular lawn grasses while beautifying the grounds. Local birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other creatures can find food and shelter in a meadow. Walking paths can be mown for the enjoyment of the congregation, with memorial benches and other garden accents placed for peaceful refuge and reflection.



Painting a rain barrel at Old Trinity Church, Church Creek, MD

Planting a rain garden at Waugh Chapel, Cambridge, MD





Native trees and shrubs provide food and habitat for native birds while creating a beautiful place to perform outdoor ceremonies and renewals.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS FOR CHURCH GROUNDS

Clean Ups

Anything on the ground can become pollution in our streams and rivers. Driven by wind and stormwater, debris like plastics, cigarette butts, food waste, and engine fluids from vehicles can cause harm to water quality and wildlife.

Routine clean ups will greatly reduce the impact of avoidable pollution and provide service opportunities for church members.

Chemical Use

Fertilizers wash into waterways and cause algae blooms, reducing oxygen levels and suffocating fish. Pesticides are poisons that can kill more than pests when they wash into our creeks and rivers. If these applications are necessary, follow directions and measurements precisely and never apply them prior to rain or snow.



Stream cleanup at Oak Ridge Baptist Church, Salisbury, MD

INSIDE THE CHURCH

Because everything God created is connected in nature, the way we manage natural resources indoors plays a major role in how we care for the Earth. Imagine the Garden of Eden if Adam and Eve had access to disposable everything! It would have been a very different place. We now seek, and have become used to, comfort and convenience. It comes at a huge price economically and environmentally. To reduce waste and operational costs, consider the following:

Coffee Hour and Meal Times

Replace disposable dishware and cutlery with reusable items. Run water only when needed while dishwashing. An energy efficient dishwasher will eventually pay for itself by replacing the cost of continuously purchasing and disposing of paper and plastics. Recycle all paper and plastic, avoid Styrofoam products, and consider using biodegradable items. Some food waste can be composted for gardens. Replace bottled water with tap water or larger 5-gallon dispensers.

Bathrooms and Kitchens

Repair any leaks in pipes and fixtures and replace older fixtures with low flow toilets and faucets. Consider motion-sensing faucets that turn off automatically. In kitchen sinks, and use strainers instead of garbage disposals.

Lighting

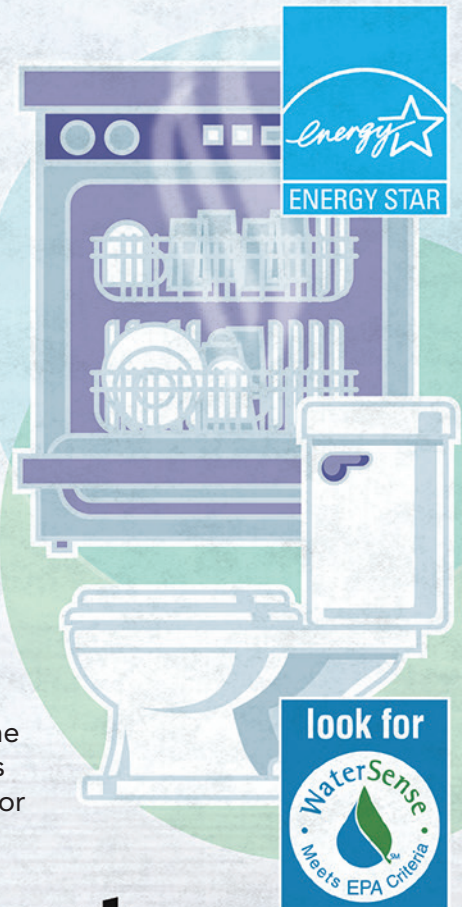
Replace old incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient LEDs. The initial cost is higher but the new lighting will last longer and use less energy. Remind people to turn off lights and consider motion detector lighting.

Heating and Cooling

Programmable thermostats are easily installed and can deliver substantial energy savings. Consider participating in programs like "Beat the Peak" (Delaware Electric Coop) or "Energy Wise Rewards" (Delmarva Power) and reduce electric use on high-use days. Replacing tired systems with energy efficient units will also save costs and resources.

Reduce Paper Use

Instead of giving everyone a program on Sunday, project the document on a wall or offer it online for people to view on their phones. In classrooms, select craft activities that use recycled materials instead of new paper or craft foam.



energy wise rewards™
Maryland

CELEBRATE THE EARTH!

Earth Day provides your church with an opportunity to honor God's creation every year. Encourage your congregation to learn and participate.

Bible Studies and Sermons

There are many scriptures to study and discuss regarding the Earth, our natural resources, and Creation Care. Invite local experts in the environmental field to speak at your church.



Team Volunteering

Look for volunteer opportunities in the community and encourage church members to participate in plantings, cleanups, and fundraising events at local watershed and other environmental organizations.

Support

Adopt a local environmental organization and raise funds throughout the year to donate to their cause on Earth Day.



Oak Ridge
isbury, MD



The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance would like to come out and share some ideas that would be good additions to your church grounds. Often, we have funding available to buy plants and trees.



The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance welcomes all religions to learn more about what they can do to care for our lands and waters.

Please contact us at
info@NanticokeRiver.org or
410-443-8878 for more information.



Planting a rain garden at
Waugh Chapel, Cambridge, MD

Special thanks to ShoreRivers for their photographs of volunteers planting a rain garden at Waugh Chapel, Cambridge MD

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