THE GOOD EARTH: GROUNDS FOR RENEWAL

April 16, 2016—9:00-2:30
Come for all or part of the day. No business! No registration fee.

Refreshments: $3. Lunch: $12. Pay at the door (Cash or check, payable to: SWA)

TRANSFORMATIONS SPIRITUALITY CENTER
3427 Gull Road—Kalamazoo

ATTENDING?
Register online by April 11:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/swa-michigan-ucc-the-good-earth-grounds-for-renewal-tickets-22193451210
Or contact Sasha Gaskin at Michigan Conference Office by April 11:
sasha@michucc.org  517-332-3511

HOSTED BY THE SOUTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE, UCC
PAID FOR BY CONGREGATIONAL DUES TO SOUTHWEST ASSOCIATION

Information at: www.swamiucc.org

Feed the World Café is catering lunch for the day. Feed the World Café is a social impact restaurant offering fresh unique food using locally sourced ingredients. For every meal purchased at the restaurant and through catering, one or more meals are provided in our community.

Workshop Descriptions

“Pastors in Pastures: Soil, Soul, and the Feeding of Flocks”
This workshop presents an in-depth overview of the philosophy and practice of a unique ministry of clergy continuing education that is set on a working small family farm. Mindful that the root word of "pastor" is the Latin pascere which means "one who puts to pasture," this ministry is fitting in its approach to link pastor and pasture, human and humus, soil and soul.

“Cultivating Gardens, Cultivating Community”
Members of First Congregational Church in Coloma discuss their experience organizing a community garden and engaging their wider community through the project. The congregation cooperates with the local food bank, a Girl Scout troop, and others in this basic mission within the community. Conversation will include ideas for success, factors to be aware of, and joys along the way.

“Caring for Creation: On a Christian Ethic”
Scripture declares “The heavens declare the glory of God” and “All the earth is filled with the glory of God.” How do we experience the divine presence in and through creation? How is our care for creation a response to that presence? David Moffett-Moore will share from his book, “Creation in Contemporary Experience” and invite us to share from our experiences of God in creation.
The Holy Earth, by Liberty Hyde Bailey

The Holy Earth was written by Liberty Hyde Bailey 100 years ago. Dr. Bailey was raised in South Haven, Michigan. His family were members of First Congregational Church. While his book is 100 years old, it is very relevant to our time and concerns. The Holy Earth addressed the industrialization of society by utilizing the full range of human vocabulary to assert that the earth’s processes and products, because they form the governing conditions of human life, should therefore be understood not first as economic, but as divine. To grasp the extent of human responsibility for the earth, Bailey called for “a new hold” that society must take to develop a “morals of land management.”

Rev. Jeffrey Dick and John Stempien will share some of the aspects of this book and then open for discussion. A special 100th Anniversary edition of The Holy Earth has been published by South Haven native John Linstrom. The foreword to this book was written by Wendell Berry. Copies of the book will be for sale at the event.

“Making the Most of Every Growing Surface: A Congregational Learning Approach to Creation Care”
Congregational life affords a multitude of opportunities to learn and act upon humanity’s primary vocation, to protect, serve and learn from God’s creation. With the unfolding and increasingly severe impacts of peak oil, resource depletion and climate change, people of faith are more than ever looking for practical ways to respond. As a pastor and certified permaculturist, Marie Fleming has sought to capitalize on the myriad ways congregational programming can inspire and equip the beloved community to extend care to all of creation. This presentation offers practical examples for maximizing the many “growing surfaces” of congregational life by incorporating creation care priorities into its regular rhythms, from an all-church retreat that includes seed saving to an intergenerational Vacation Bible School called “Edible Landscapes and other Natural Wonders”

“Creation Care in Creating Worship”
After two Conference-led Appreciative Inquiry sessions, several smaller churches in the Association’s southwest corner decided to offer public worship on the care of creation. Planning was anchored in the concept that people come to the area because of the bounty of creation in the lakes, orchards, vineyards, wineries and breweries. Working together with similar, and yet not identical, points of view we planned and presented two “Celebrate Earth!” worship services in public parks. In this workshop we will share the process from inception to planning, completion and evaluation.

“A High Calling: Making Environmental Ministry Central to a Church’s DNA”
Whether it is taking on climate change or addressing the lead poisoning of children, environmental ministries could not have a higher purpose or calling than they do now. If the followers of Jesus today care about the air we breathe, the water we drink, or the world in which we live, then environmental justice ministry should undoubtedly be a central strand in any church’s DNA. This workshop will focus on exploring how that can be done. We will talk about how congregations can discern their calling to care for creation, how they can reinvigorate their sense of covenant with God, how they can join one of the most exciting movements in the world today, and how they can foster a deeper sense of connection to God, each other, and the world in which we live.

“Seeing the Holy With the Eye of Your Heart”
Wherever we are we are surrounded by, and ‘one with’, the Holy. Our time this afternoon will invite us to see creation with both the eye of our body and the eye of our heart; to see the Holy in all that is, including ourselves. Sr. Christine will share her experience of “seeing the Holy” through the lens of the camera and journaling, as well as through prayerful reflection and contemplating the world around us. There will be time for some personal reflection outdoors (with or without camera and pen) and sharing the fruit of our reflection together.

“Gardens of Hope: Introduction to Permaculture Gardening”
Permaculture gardening is more than the easiest way to grow a beautiful, low-maintenance edible landscape. It provides us with a meaningful path to create a more beautiful, healthy lifestyle, while healing the earth's ecosystems, lowering our environmental footprint and investing in a more just and sustainable way of life for all.
“Eight Avenues for Creation Care Ministries”
There are multiple ways for a congregation to engage in creation care ministries, and increasing numbers of excellent resources to help. We will identify and explore the natural entry-points for congregational creation care and some resources to support each one.

Presenter Information

Brooks Berndt is the Environmental Justice Minister for the United Church of Christ. Before coming to the national headquarters of the UCC in Cleveland last year, he served for eight years as the pastor of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Vancouver, Washington. In Vancouver, Berndt was active in opposing the largest proposed oil terminal in the country. With J. Alfred Smith, Sr., he has coauthored Sounding the Trumpet: How Churches Can Answer God’s Call to Justice. Cornel West has praised the book as "a masterpiece...with deep spiritual truths." His visit with us and his ministry on our behalf is funded through congregational gifts to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM).

Jeffrey Dick is the pastor at First Congregational Church UCC in South Haven. John Stempien is a school teacher and former director at the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum in South Haven.

Marie Fleming is a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor certified in Permaculture Design and Teaching. She is a founding member of Indiana Green Chalice, a regional ministry resourcing Disciples congregations for creation care. A native of South Haven, Michigan, Marie lives in Bloomington, Indiana, with her husband, who is also a pastor and permaculturist.

Jeff Hawkins is a farmer, ordained ELCA minister, church consultant, husband, father and the director of HOPE CSA (which stands for Hands-On Pastoral Education using Clergy Supported Agriculture) in North Manchester, Indiana. Jeff served as the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church for 16 years until 2003 when he began serving fulltime with HOPE CSA. He and his wife, Kathy, live on a 99-acre farm that was started by his grandparents. You can read more about Hope CSA at www.hopecsa.org.

Mike Hoag is a Certified Permaculture Designer, homesteader, Agroforest researcher, and plant geek with Lillie House Permaculture in Kalamazoo, where he works to promote Permaculture and help people create landscapes that reflect their values and support their dreams. He is also a core organizer of Van Kal Permaculture, Michigan Safe Energy Future, and the Climate Change Coalition's Sustainable Food Group.

Deborah Kohler is interim minister of St. Paul’s UCC in Watervliet. David Stout pastors both Pilgrim UCC and Riverview Park Christian Church in St. Joseph. Eric Stricklin serves as minister of First Congregational Church in Coloma.

David Moffett-Moore is senior pastor of Portage UCC. He holds a Ph.D. and a D.Min. and is the author of six books, including “Creation in Contemporary Experience,” copies of which will be available for purchase. He and his wife Becki have four grown children and five grandchildren, all of whom enjoy playing and exploring in nature.

Christine Parks, CSJ, a Sister of St. Joseph, serves on the Leadership Team for the Congregation of St. Joseph. Prior to this she was Spiritual Director and Program Coordinator for Transformations Spirituality Center. She continues practice as a Spiritual Director and an occasional presenter of programs for Transformations Spirituality Center.