



We are Pollinators

An EcoFaith Network Report on the 2022 Pollinator Pilot Project

In the escalating ecological and climate crisis, we often feel powerless, even as we grieve for what is and can be lost. God, however, does not call us to resignation. For the people of Christ, this is not despair time. It is Kairos time, and God is waking us up for faithful action together.

Last spring, 2022, the EcoFaith Network's leadership team asked a question: *How can we come together as a synod in faithful action for the sake of all the beloved of God's creation? What is something that every congregation in our synod could do, no matter the size of our membership, our budget, or the land where our church is located? What is an action we can all take, which may seem insignificant on our own, but together can powerfully serve the regeneration of life?*

Our imaginations turned to pollinators. These tiny, apparently powerless, often overlooked and disregarded creatures, whose drastic decline endangers so much upon which we depend, are a key to the regeneration of life itself. We all steward plots of land, even as small as pots of dirt, which are or can become pollinator habitat and Monarch Way Stations ~ not only our church grounds, but also our homes and our neighborhoods.

We dreamed. What if congregations all over Northeastern Minnesota advocated and planted for pollinators? Together, we could truly make a difference! Our churches could be models for their neighborhoods! We would be experimental demonstration plots for God's holy desire to heal and restore the web of creation!

The EcoFaith leadership team decided to embark on a Pollinator Pilot Project. A steering committee chaired by Tom Uecker (Gloria Dei and Monarch Buddies, Duluth) mentored six congregations over the summer in their first year of planting for pollinators. Four other congregations were inspired to start as well. Together with congregations who have already been gardening for pollinators and Monarchs, there are now 19 pollinator congregations in our synod! Many of these congregations participated in the EcoFaith Summit, ***The Pollinator Plot: Cross+Pollination in a Time of Ecological Crisis***. The national network, *Lutherans Restoring Creation*, also got wind of what we are doing, and asked us to present at the March 28 Creation Connections Call (a monthly zoom gathering across the ELCA).

Based on what we have learned from our pilot congregations, this year we are inviting all congregations to become part of a synodwide pollinator project. We will provide support from the pollinator project steering committee, the mutual encouragement of other congregations, and through our new EcoFaith website ([_____ Get Involved//pollinator project](#)).

We are also inviting the synod in assembly to consider a resolution to become a Pollinator Synod, meaning, a synod "embracing a vision for regional regeneration of pollinator habitat", and "walking together as the synod to live into our call as pollinators of the gospel in our witness to God's love in Jesus Christ for all creation, sharing practices across our synod and beyond". We would be the first Pollinator Synod in the ELCA, but maybe not the last.

In this critical and decisive time, a Kairos moment, what we do with our specific plots, wherever we are, matters. How we live as demonstration plots of the Gospel paradox that God's power is shown in weakness matters too. We are pollinators, offering active hope, both in our communities, our synod, and in the upper Midwest.

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