

*center for*  
Earth Spirituality  
& Rural Ministry

WINTER 2016

# EARTH ALMANAC



*Earth Education*



School Sisters of Notre Dame  
*Central Pacific Province*

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

*center for*  
Earth Spirituality  
& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus  
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Mankato, MN 56001-3138

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STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE

# ORGANICALLY YOURS

BY LISA COONS, CESRM CO-DIRECTOR



This morning I heard the January cardinal.

Below zero temps, bundled to the hilt, but dressed for work and heading to the office, not to hiking in the woods in the near distance, I was in a hurry to get from the front door to the car.

And there it was.

And again.

That simple song consisting of two high notes and the empty air sound that follows.

I stopped in my tracks through the snow dusting and listened. This is the winter birdsong that for me signals the turning of the earth wheel. It reminds me we are headed out of the darkness and toward longer days with even more birds adding their own songs.

Maybe, like me, you have these touchstone moments in nature that you count on. Even with our weather gone all unpredictable and crazy on us, there remains a foundation for us to know we are here now at this moment, in this place. Not to save but to be with. To accompany. To live into. We are becoming even as we continue on our paths, continuing to learn what it is to be a human on this planet.

As you may know, we at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry continue our work now and plan into the future to facilitate learning about sustainability, spirituality and living with an awareness that we are part of a vast community of life on this planet. We believe that with these tools – a deepening spirituality, a deepening commitment to sustainability and a deepening awareness of our place, we will continue moving forward toward a better future.

I am reminded of one of my favorite quotes by Thich Nhat Hanh, "Don't say I will depart tomorrow...even today I am still arriving." With all the dire predictions for the planet and the future of humanity, let us not underestimate our own arriving and the "arriving" of our Earth. Each moment is a new opportunity. A new recognition. A new moment.

Organically yours,

Lisa



## STAFF

### CO-DIRECTORS

Lisa Coons  
Kathleen Mary Kiemen, SSND

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Jolly Corley  
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Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EARTH CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS SOIL

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN SSND, CESRM CO-DIRECTOR



Keynote Speaker Audrey Arner delivers her keynote address to participants at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Conference.

*the sacred primarily with cathedrals, churches, temples, places where miracles occurred, where prophets were born or where their remains lie, or 'lofty' places.*

*I looked up miracle: 'a highly improbable or extraordinary event, development or accomplishment that brings very welcome consequences.'*

*The life-giving and life-absorbing earth beneath our feet begs us to recognize that in the woodlands and prairies, what sustains our farms and gardens, and is under buildings and pavement, is **all holy ground. Miracles are taking place there all the time.***

After a lunch of locally grown food, participants heard from six other speakers who shared in two panels, one panel focusing on soil as a Common Good, the other on how healthy soil helps us to live healthy lives. The ideas shared offered practical examples of how participants can care for soil and advocate locally and nationally



Participants stroll through the Community Gardens during the morning's silent reflective walk.

for policies that protect soil.

One highlight for many participants in this

year's conference was the opportunity to spend a short reflection time outside listening to what soil might be sharing with them. Here are a couple of the many positive evaluation comments shared by participants:

- *"The reflective walk was a great balance to the keynote address. It allowed the opportunity to internalize the robust content."*
- *"The conference was so rich – showed the importance of weaving personal narrative into advocacy to persuade others."*

The day concluded with the tradition of sharing door prizes of handmade items, canned goods, local honey, and containers of rich compost.

In the final ritual participants made a commitment to continue to find ways to honor this miracle soil, care for it and advocate on its behalf.

Who would ever think dirt could be talked about for an entire conference day?

If you had been at Good Counsel Conference Center in Mankato on November 7, you might have joined 120 participants in a spirited reflection on this special gift of planet Earth. This event - the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Conference - was hosted by the SSND Earth Committee of the Mankato campus and the staff of the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry.

The conference, "**Soil: Holy Ground, Wholly Alive,**" began with a morning keynote address by Audrey Arner, farmer and community organizer, who gave emphasis to the spiritual nature of soil.

*"We have been taught to identify*



# PARTNER WITH US ON OUR GOOD WORK

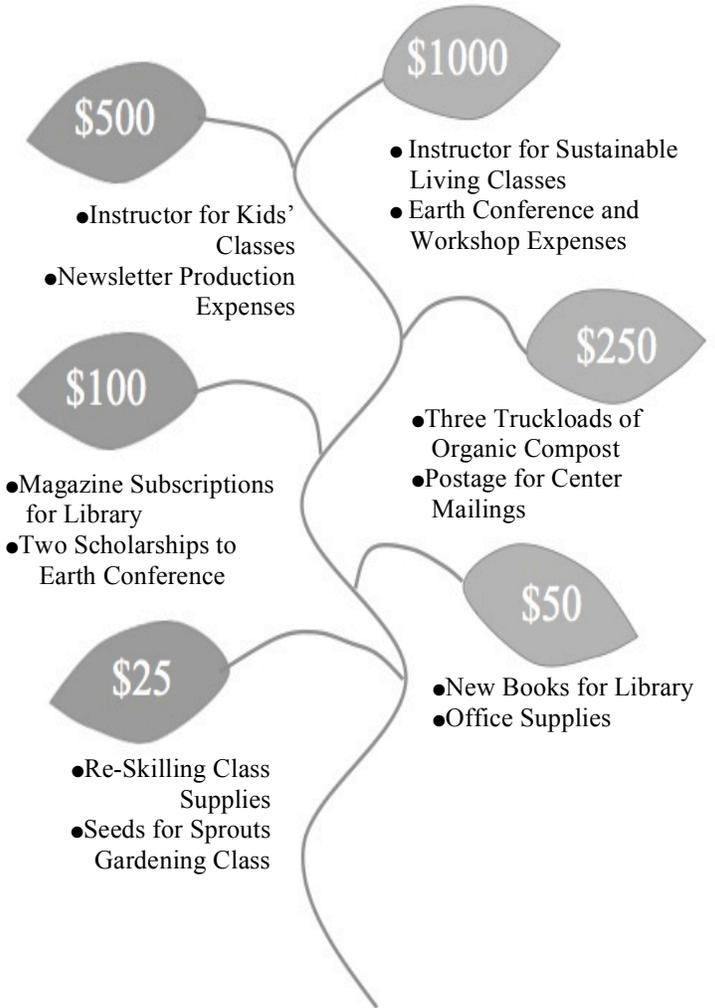
## BECOME A CESRM SPONSOR!

Through outreach and educational programs the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry touches the lives of hundreds of people right here in the greater Mankato area. You can become an integral part of the work CESRM is doing in your community by becoming a CESRM sponsor. Every donation large or small will make a difference.

Our organization needs your support. We work in the local community to educate about Earth issues you care about. We re-connect people to the natural world and their desire to do better. We reach children, elders and everyone in between. We provide a perspective on Earth care, climate issues and community resilience that is unique and much-needed. We work at the grassroots for systemic change, nurturing others and inspiring their growth. We do some good. We know you do, too. We believe that together we can do better.

We invite you to help sponsor our work and make a donation today! Choose your level and know what ever the amount, large or small, you will be aiding CESRM and making a difference in our community.

Donations made through the Sponsorship Program will go to CESRM's general budget fund. We are deeply rooted and sustained by your support. Thank you!



CUT ALONG LINE

### DONATION PLEDGE CARD – RETURN TODAY!

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# VOLUNTEER REFLECTION

BY NICOLE SOLEY, CESRM INTERN

As a CESRM volunteer, I have been inspired by the work of the center and its empowerment of others. The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry has helped many community members cultivate an understanding of the importance of caring for Earth, as well as the importance of eating, preparing, and growing local, healthy foods. Seeing the Center's work in the community gardens on Good Counsel, my own understanding of Earth care and healthy food cultivation has strengthened. Additionally, I have realized how important community is to having access to local healthy food, while, on the other hand, having access to local healthy food is essential to community longevity and sustainability.



One thing that I took away from my experiences at CESRM was the necessity for human relationships in food growth, preparation, preservation, and consumption. At CESRM, relationships are essential for the organization. Through connections with others, members of the community are able to grow, harvest, share, consume, prepare, and preserve food. Through relationships, knowledge is exchanged about gardening processes. Goods are exchanged and traded in these relationships, restoring the mythical “borrow a cup of sugar from your neighbor” precedent that doesn’t exist elsewhere. These relationships I have seen exist at CESRM have restored my faith in community. Through interning at CESRM, I have hope that the solutions to today’s problems lie where life begins: the soil itself and the relationships that are formed in caring for it.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### “Earth, Our Common Home: Dialogue with Pope Francis and Inspired Others.”

**Wednesday, March 2 and 16,  
6:30-8:00 PM**

Pope Francis’ encyclical was welcomed around the globe by everyone who cares about the future of life on our planet. Join us to explore with others the inspirations and challenges of the Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’: Care of our Common Home*.

*Our Lady of Good Counsel  
Conference Center,  
Good Counsel Hill,  
Mankato MN*

Suggested donation: \$10/session  
(More if you can. Less if you can’t)

*Facilitators: Sisters Kathleen Mary Kiemen and Jeanne Wingenter SSNDs*

### Sustainability Expo

**Sunday, March 20, 2016**

**10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**CSU Ballroom**

**Minnesota State University**

- Build a resilient sustainable community
- Create a better future together
- Learn new skills
- Have fun!

We are looking for exhibitors, presenters, learners, and local organizations who are interested in participating in creating a sustainable and resilient community together.

Please contact Monika Antonelli at [monika.antonelli@mnsu.edu](mailto:monika.antonelli@mnsu.edu) or Jane Dow [janedow@hickorytech.net](mailto:janedow@hickorytech.net).

### “Time with Earth: A Retreat on Earth-Spirituality”

**Friday, April 1, 6:00– 8:30pm**

**Saturday, April 2, 9- 3:00 pm**

Welcome as we reflect with Earth to understand her majesty and challenge via input, quiet and sharing. In this retreat we will consider the principles that guide our planet, how they can guide us and participate in the creative ritual of the Council of All Beings.

*Our Lady of Good Counsel  
St. Joseph Hall Room 229,  
Good Counsel Hill,  
Mankato MN*

Registration: \$75 which includes Saturday continental breakfast and lunch (Overnight accommodations available for \$30)

*Presenters: Sisters Kathleen Mary Kiemen and Jeanne Wingenter SSNDs*  
Please contact Kathleen Mary Kiemen at [kkiemensnd@yahoo.com](mailto:kkiemensnd@yahoo.com) or at (651)690-2533

# THANK YOU

For most organizations, the thank you list is one of the most important aspects of a newsletter. While at this time, the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry receives the major part of our funding from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, we are so very grateful for the many contributions of time, talent and treasure from so many! This support shows us how much you value the work we do and want to ensure it continues. Thank you for every bit of it!

Jim Ackil  
Angie Becker  
Virginia Bieren SSND  
Grace Brosnan  
Drea Brown  
Rosae Brown SSND  
Donna Casella  
Jolly Corley  
Dave and Dee Czech  
Suzanne Eichler SSND  
Paul Eskridge  
Mira Frank  
Full Circle Organics  
Tiana Gee  
Carol Ann Gosse SSND  
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Audrey Lindenfelser  
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Thomas  
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Diane and Dave Runkle  
Gladys Schmitz SSND  
School Sisters of Notre  
Dame Earth Committee  
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Community: *Alene Kuhn,*  
*Joyce Pietsch, Kathy Ravn,*  
*Marion Welter, Mary*  
*Eugene Braun, Mary*  
*Tacheny*  
Loriann Stanton SSND  
Jerry Stump  
June Marie Tacheny  
SSND  
Mary Tacheny SSND  
Karen Thein SSND  
Doris Welter SSND  
Jeanne Wingenter SSND  
Alice Zachmann, SSND  
Therese Ann Zamiller  
SSND  
Therese Zeman

We are grateful to have  
received memorials gifts  
to honor former

Community gardener Laurie  
Pengra who was a valued  
member of our gardens.

Thank you to:

Jim and Kay Ackil  
Penny Banwart  
Diana Bendreau  
Bob and Susan Brown  
"Friends from Gustavus  
Adolphus College"  
Deen and Jasper Hunt  
Kathy Rosen  
Frank and Theresa Stampf

Minnesota State University  
First Year Experience  
Students

Led by Cheryl Rolphing:

Taylor Blohm-Bivins  
Jessica Boykin  
Josh Clarey  
Nick Filla  
Josh Halloran  
Isaac Jones  
Matt Kahnk  
Mike Manson  
Chayeng Moua  
Tanner Oleson  
Quincy Simpson  
Kyle Walz

Minnesota State University  
Honors Program

Students:

Nicole Johnson  
Brooke Jones  
Okhumhekho Kassim  
Tyler Keller  
Chad Lease  
Katelynn Malecha  
Alex Mills  
Anna Rice  
Nicole Soley  
Spencer Sulflow  
Cory Strand  
Jacob Tschann  
Jaci Ulrich  
Kellie Wong

We, the CESRM Staff and  
Task Force Planners,  
extend a special thank you  
to all the generous people  
who contributed to the  
inspiring day of our 10th  
Earth Conference in  
November: our Speaker  
and Panelists, Earth  
Committee Members, Gift  
Contributors for Door  
Prizes, Good Counsel Staff  
in Food Preparation,  
Hospitality, Maintenance,  
and all participants of the  
Conference. We couldn't  
do it without you all!

## COMMUNITY GARDENS VISIT

In November Erika Allen, daughter of *Good Food Revolution* author Will Allen, stopped by the Community Gardens during a visit to Mankato.

*Good Food Revolution* is the MSU Common Read for the 2015-16 school year. Allen was in town to give the Common Read Keynote Lecture on growing food and creating a sustainable food economy.

She visited the Hill with a group of First Year MSU students who were volunteering in the gardens.



# REAL FOOD FOR REAL PEOPLE

## Bread Pudding

Using the last bits of our food reduces waste, saves us money, and increases our resourcefulness. This recipe works equally well with stale bread or bread ends you've saved. Point is...it's delicious!

2 T. butter  
½ loaf of stale or dry bread  
¼ c. sugar or honey  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1 egg  
2 c. fruit (whatever you have on hand will do.)  
1 tsp. vanilla  
½ c. milk (more may be added to fully soak the bread)  
½ c. chopped nuts

Preheat oven at 350. Put butter into an 8 x 10 baking dish and place in the oven. In a large bowl, beat together the egg, milk, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon until well mixed. Break up the stale bread and stir this until the bread is well coated. Stir in pecans. Remove the pan with melted butter from oven and pour mixture in, leveling it off as much as possible. Bake for 40 minutes.

## Winter Cole Slaw

The cabbage is vastly underappreciated, in my humble opinion. Perhaps this is because so many of us have had it so poorly prepared – boiled to within an inch of its life. But cabbage is one of the most versatile and nutritious vegetables. Add to that – sturdy, abundant, delicious, and affordable – what's not to love? Grated, it's a crisp and nutritious replacement for lettuce in winter tacos and burritos. Lightly braised in good oil with garlic and onions, it's divine. Tossed in a soup, any soup, near the end of cooking, it adds just a little something mmmmm. Here is a recipe for winter slaw when you are craving green crunchy things and the spring lettuce is still months away. Dressed with a simple vinaigrette, it is a light and refreshing offset to the many heavy winter foods we eat. Best of all, it's EASY!

4 c. grated cabbage (or sliced thinly)  
1 carrot, grated or one small apple chopped small  
¼ c. minced onion  
2 T. vinegar (apple cider or red wine)  
2 T. salad oil (you choose)  
2 tsp. honey  
Salt and pepper, to taste.

Throw the veggies in a bowl. Whisk the other ingredients and pour over veggies. Stir and let sit 30 minutes, if you can.

## SSND ADOPT A LAND ETHIC STATEMENT

BY MARY TACHENY, SSND

Aldo Leopold, author of *Sand County Almanac*, coined the phrase "land ethic" to state our relationship to the larger ecological community of which air, soil, water, plants, animals and humans are interdependent parts.

These words of Leopold inspired our efforts as School Sisters of Notre Dame to express our reverence for and care of Earth, our "common home." It was our hope to formalize a statement of belief about our gift of land. The development of a Land Ethic became this statement of belief, and supports our actions now and into the future.

The SSND Earth Committee first initiated the idea at the local level and grappled with the task of what we could say to influence attitudes and behaviors. After much study and discussion, basic principles and concepts were written for ourselves and our own land use.

At about the same time an international group of sisters urged action on that level. We were reminded that our Constitution as a religious community, revised in 1986,

already called us to "accept responsibility for the earth" and "educate with a world vision."

It was not a difficult jump, then, to go beyond our local Land Ethic to a broader geographic area. So the Earth Committee called the rest of the campus centers of our province, located in Wisconsin, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi, Guam, and Japan to the creation of an All-Province Land Ethic statement. After three years work of education and discussion, consensus was reached and all of us pledged support for the Central Pacific Province Land Ethic. The five principles of belief are as follows"

Principle 1: Earth is a sacred community.

Principle 2: Reverent and responsible preservation of Earth is a necessity for survival of water, soil, air, plants and animals. Our buildings and our landscapes of each campus, as well as the homes in which each resides, are sacred to us. We have a strong reliance on these gifts of Earth.

Principle 3: God's creation is diverse and interdependent. What happens to one part affects all other parts, calling us to live an ecologically sound life.

Principle 4: Dialogue and collaboration with other communities of life is more effective for systemic change than working by ourselves. Collaboration is most effective at the local level.

Principle 5: We value our charism of education. Because of our love of creation we practice good care of the land. The choices we make can and will educate ourselves and others as we heed the signs of the times.

In this statement we want to continue to keep the message alive for ourselves and for others so that Earth, our "common home," is respected, cared for, and loved.

*Full statement can be viewed online at:*

[www.ssndcp.org/explore/land-ethic-statement](http://www.ssndcp.org/explore/land-ethic-statement)

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EARTH CONFERENCE



# WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

