



*What deeper reflection are we called to in our time? Why?*

**Sunday**  
**March 1, 2009**

The ELCA's social statement [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice](#), reminds us that as Christians we acknowledge the sin that holds us and our world captive, and yet we also know that sin does not have the last word. Trusting in God's promises to redeem and restore our world, we are freed from sin and despair, and become captives of hope.

*Our tradition offers many glimpses of hope triumphant over despair. In ancient Israel, as Jerusalem was under siege and people were on the verge of exile, Jeremiah purchased a plot of land (Jer 32). When Martin Luther was asked what he would do if the world were to end tomorrow, he reportedly answered, "I would plant an apple tree today." When we face today's crisis, we do not despair. We act.*

Each Sunday in Lent we will rejoice in signs of hope: stories of churches and communities doing their part to clean up pollution, stop global warming and honor God's good creation.

Grace Episcopal church in Bainbridge Island, WA is one such church. In 2007 Grace sponsored its first "Carless Sunday", originally intended as a one-time event. Nearly half the congregation participated by biking or carpooling to church that Sunday, and parishioners drove an estimated 350 fewer miles than they would if they had driven as usual. Carless Sunday became a monthly event at Grace Episcopal during the warmer months of the year, and as they biked or carpooled to worship, participants discovered that their new earthkeeping habits didn't just reduce their carbon footprint, they also offered an opportunity to get to know their neighbors better and develop a stronger sense of community. Hallelujah!

Read more stories about churches like Grace Episcopal at the [NCC Eco-Justice Programs](#) Web site.

Does your congregation have a story to tell about caring for God's creation? Share it with us so we can inspire others! Send a brief description in an email to [mary.minette@elca.org](mailto:mary.minette@elca.org).

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God's work. Our hands.

