

### CARING FOR THE EARTH...by faith

By faith we are to show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Caring for the earth is not just an Earth Day event, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet.

In January of 2020, our church posted in the newsletter about a workshop being offered on Earthkeeper Training. Jim and I decided it looked like something we were interested in attending. We are thankful to our church for posting this event. We attended the workshop at Trinity UMC in Southport. The workshop covered many topics relating to God's creation and how to be stewards of it individually and as a community. The workshop also covered information on how a church could become a "green church". This is something we are in process of doing at Hayes Barton under the direction of the Creation Care Ministry team. The pandemic has slowed the process, but we will get this accomplished. Opportunities like this one, offered by Hayes Barton, are examples of the ways our church uses money to truly make a difference in our community and world. Our donations go towards valuable projects like The Green Church Initiative and conference offerings like Earthkeeper Training.

As we are sheltered in due to the pandemic, Jim and I have enjoyed the awe and wonder of nature's splendor. We find it brings us peace as we enjoy our time outside on the porch or working in our gardens. Sometimes, we forget to take time to stop and notice the beauty and wonder of God's creation all around us. By slowing down and observing our surroundings during the pandemic, just seeing the beauty and creativity has had a profound effect on our spiritual life.

We used to feel that chipmunks and squirrels were such an annoyance. Now we just love to watch them scurry around the yard seeking food. Jim has a chipmunk and a squirrel that comes up to visit us and eat out of his hand. We have also fallen in love with all kinds of birds. We make them homemade suet, then just sit back and watch them enjoy eating. Sometimes we have 5 or 6 birds waiting in the tree to come to the feeder to enjoy the suet. We planted milkweed to attract monarch butterflies. We were able to raise the butterflies from all four stages of development and then release. We found that all of these things was such an amazing and beautiful witness to God's creation.

#### Prayer

*Creator of the universe, help us to trust in you for all things. I know you are Lord over everything, including everything in my life.*

*Amen*

*Ruth and Jim Bryan*

Creation Care Committee

