FORESTRY
stewardship

CHURCH LEADERS GUIDE
Special thanks to:

Gina DeMarco, District Manager

Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD), RI

Gina developed the content for the Forestry Church Leaders Guide.

Gina also wanted to acknowledge her reviewers.
T.J. DeMarco, Chaplain
Christopher Modisette, RI RC&D
Marc Temblay, NRICD
Debra and Dick Went, NRICD

National Association of Conservation Districts

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
509 Capitol Court, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4937
P: (202) 547-NACD (6223)
F: (202) 547-6450
E-mail: stewardship@nacdnet.org
Web: www.nacdnet.org
Forestry Stewardship

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NACD and Stewardship Week

The National Association of Conservation Districts is the non-profit organization that represents the nation’s 3,000 conservation districts, their state associations and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards.

Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with more than 2.5 million cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on nearly 98 percent of the private lands in the United States.

NACD’s mission is to serve conservation districts by providing national leadership and a unified voice for natural resource conservation. The association was founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions should be made at the local level with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. As the national voice for all conservation districts, NACD supports voluntary, incentive-driven natural resource conservation programs that benefit all citizens.

NACD maintains relationships with organizations and government agencies; publishes information about districts; works with leaders in agriculture, conservation, environment, education, industry, religion and other fields; and provides services to its districts. NACD is financed primarily through the voluntary contributions of its member districts and state associations.

The association’s philosophy is that conservation decisions should be made by local people with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. The association’s programs and activities aim to advance the resource conservation cause of local districts and the millions of cooperating landowners and land managers they serve.

Visit www.nacdnet.org for additional information. To find your local district contact information, go to www.nacdnet.org/about/districts/directory/index.phtml

STEWARDSHIP WEEK INFORMATION

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship Week is one of the largest conservation-related observances. The 3,000 conservation districts that make up NACD manage soil and water conservation programs in virtually every community in the United States. Since 1955, NACD has sponsored the national Stewardship Week program by selecting a theme and developing materials for schools, communities and churches of all denominations. 2016 marks the 61st year to celebrate NACD Stewardship Week.

Stewardship Week, celebrated annually between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, reminds us of our personal responsibility to care for the natural resources for which we all depend. The celebration and observance of Stewardship continue throughout the year - not for just one week. The concept of Stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely.
Forestry Stewardship

The many wonders of the forest

For so many of us, the forest is a country drive away, tucked away in places foreign to our everyday activity. It can be our destination – our solace – but at first glance, the forest might also seem an imposing place, with secrets hidden behind every turn. Don’t be frightened by the unknown; step back, inhale its air, and take in all of its beauty ... its high-reaching treetops, the sounds of its inhabitants, and the vibrant colors it exudes.

The forest is such a joyous and generous place. It offers families the opportunity to take a peaceful walk and picnic on a sunny afternoon. The forest provides school children with the perfect atmosphere to learn about the great outdoors. It’s a refuge for the creatures which consume the plants and berries growing along its floor. The forest helps to produce the paper products we all need, and many of the herbs and spices that go into the meals we prepare. And it helps to cleanse the water we drink and the air we breathe.

It does so many wonderful things for us. But the forest needs us as much as we need it.

Too many of our nation’s private and public forest lands are overgrown with unwanted vegetation that can become a nuisance to wildlife and increase the threat of catastrophic wildfire. And there exists far too many people who abuse the forest by mistreating its holdings or failing to replace what they have taken from it.

Like a well-kept home, a forest needs someone to look after it – to clean it when it gets messy with litter and fallen branches, and to nurture it back to health when it’s been wounded. It needs stewards – those who can appreciate its gifts, and are willing to match its unselfish acts.

Want to help protect the forests near you? Seek out community groups involved in forest clean-up efforts. Volunteer to assist in local tree planting projects. Or, best yet, start by contacting your local conservation district. The staff will know where your time can be best spent.

The time to act is now. The forest is calling on you, hoping you will come and discover its many wonders.

*The best friend on Earth of man is the tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources of the Earth.*

-- Frank Lloyd Wright

Visit the NACD website for additional forestry information through the NACD Forestry Notes newsletter at http://nacdnet.org/news/publications/forestrynotes. NACD forestry education is highlighted at http://nacdnet.org/education/resources/
Forestry Stewardship Sermon Starter

Sermon written by Gina DeMarco, District Manager
Northern RI Conservation District

God’s Plan for
People and Forests: More than you can imagine!

A Christian Perspective on Responsible Forestry

All scriptures from the NIV

Introduction

Each year the National Association of Conservation Districts chooses a theme to help celebrate Stewardship Week throughout the United States. This year the theme is focused on forests. This intentionally lines up in unity with the United Nations declaration of 2011 as the “International Year of the Forests” to “make concerted efforts to raise awareness at all levels to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.” Understanding forests and our role in their stewardship as Christians can help us take an active part in these efforts. Understanding how these efforts play out theologically can motivate us and elevate our hope and faith!

Forests can be places of such beauty and reflection. They are an essential element to life itself. They provide habitat for wildlife in the form of food, water, cover and space. Even far outside of the forests’ boundaries, every day, people depend on forests. Clean water is a forest product. People living in major cities across America are benefitting from forested lands in the watersheds of their drinking water supplies, providing clean water. In New York City 8 million people drink water from the Catskills/Delaware Watershed which is protected at its source by 75% forested lands. The pervious floor of the forest filters and absorbs rain and runoff. The billions of large and small roots systems hold soil in place, preventing soil from eroding into water bodies and protecting soil for food production. Thousands of products that we use everyday come from forests. These products range from oxygen to chewing gum and medications to paper and wood. Forests are such an awesome place to contemplate, recreate, study and work. They provide so much to our basic needs that it may be hard to imagine that they are not currently in the state of God’s original intention.

Today, many forests across America are threatened due to the fragmentation of land through development, clear cutting, and the devastation that can be caused by invasive plant, insect, and animal species. Forest stewardship encourages people to manage their forest and related resources; to keep these lands in a productive and healthy condition for present and future
owners; and to increase the economic and environmental benefits of these lands. It consists of managing in a way that will ensure a variety of native tree and plant species that are at various stages of development. Fresh young undergrowth is imperative if a forest is to thrive in future years. When good forest stewardship practices are used, forest products can be harvested in a sustainable manner. Most of the forested land in the United States is in private ownership. Those who are forest land owners may not be aware that management of their private property has public consequences. If it is not managed with sustainability in mind, exploitation will occur, and the community will pay the price.

This in effect puts a burden on the community to assist forest land owners, and to help them grow in the understanding of forest management techniques. Harvesting trees is not a negative thing for forest health, and using renewable forest products from sustainable forests benefits the entire community. Clearing some land along the edge of a forest for wildlife is a positive land management option. Leaving some debris behind after a harvest provides shelter for wildlife and will compost into the soil. Beyond understanding forest management, the entire community has an obligation to assist in forest stewardship by diverse means. If we are to share the common benefits that forests provide, we should share in the costs, not only because it is the right thing to do toward our neighboring forest land owners, but because we are directed by God in Genesis to be stewards of the earth. There are many practical ways that we can reflect stewardship towards our forests.

You can:

- Thank God for God’s beautiful forests, ask for help to care for it, study what Scripture has to say about the creation.
- Ask your town officials to support “current use” land taxation policies allowing eligible land to be taxed on its existing use, not its potential use.
- Support legislation (State and local) that provides funds for forest land conservation.
- Encourage innovative, new development strategies that protect open space;
- Buy local: Support local people who make a living from their land by buying locally grown products - firewood, Christmas trees, lumber, and farm products.
- Update your community’s comprehensive plan to include a clear forest conservation component.
- Establish a town forest.
- Plant a tree.
- Become more aware of the bountiful forests and enjoy the resource. This will heighten your tendency to want to protect it.
- Recognize forestry as a land use that is the best possible alternative in terms of water quality protection. Trees don’t pollute! Forested lands provide urban areas with drinking water.
- Support conservation land practices in your community.
- Buy wood and paper products from sustainable forests.
- Recycle, reuse and reduce waste.
- Commit to practicing stewardship on your own woodland, and to use your experience and your woodland to teach others.
- Thank a forest land owner.
- Get out and take a walk in the woods.
The Scriptures support stewardship for forest and all natural resources, and there is a great promise, purpose and hope in working toward God’s directive.

**Scripture Reading Romans 8:11-25**

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hopes that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

Forest lands are not in the state of God’s original intent. We learn in Genesis 3 that all of creation was marred from its original created state of harmony with God as a result of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, and the resulting curse or penalty. This penalty extends from mankind, to the ground, to man’s work and ultimately resulted in death and banishment from the Garden. The creation was cursed, not because of its own choice or action, but as a result of man’s sin. Today across America foresters and natural resource workers are struggling with the very fabric of the curse - the thorns and thistles spoken of in Genesis 3. This is occurring in the form of invasive species of plants that are choking out native plants and depleting food and habitat for wildlife. Invasive insects devastate the forest with disease and leave dead tree stands that are optimal for raging wildfires.

God specifically says that the reason he is sending mankind from the Garden is to prevent him from partaking from the tree of life and living forever. So what hope is there for man and creation to ever be what God intended us to be?

**Our hope is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.** We don’t read very much specifically about the tree of life *in between* Genesis and Revelation, but the bible is all about the tree of life
when we consider the cross of crucifixion as the remedy for sin, where Christ paid the penalty and provides opportunity for eternal life to those who will believe in and follow Him.

Galatians 3:13

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’”

Jesus is the key back into the Garden to partake of the tree of life through His redemption.

This redemption is so incredible and so exciting that all of creation is waiting with eager expectation for us to partake because all of creation, including the forests will benefit. All of creation shares this hope.

There are two stages of the fulfillment of this hope of redemption.

The first stage of redemption began with the work of Christ on the cross and is a foretaste of relief that is available to believers right now. This includes receiving the deposit of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7) upon our conversion from living a natural, sinful life, to living life in repentance of sin under the empowerment of the Spirit as a follower of Christ. Paul tells us that the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is now living in us. This deposit is one way that people are unique in all of creation. For creation, the first stage of redemption is tightly linked to mankind and the Romans passage uses the illustration of pregnancy to explain it. The earth is groaning because of the labor pains. The deposit has already been made, Jesus has come and He has begun a work of restoration, so that the children of God are already recognizing their role to be redemptive as He is redemptive. It’s sort of like bringing ice to the mouth of a woman in labor – it brings some relief. We get back to the work of God. Work is another trait that is unique to people and part of the reflection of the image of God in us. While all creatures are instinctively about foraging their food and some are quite busy, it is only man who is instructed by God in the garden to care for the rest of creation and it is only man who is called in the New Testament to be the hands and feet of Christ in sharing the gospel throughout the earth. This work is good. It was spoken into the purpose of man before the curse that directed that man would work by the sweat of his brow.

Work is God like. Christ came to redeem us and our attitude and call to work is part of that redemption. We can receive a foretaste of that now because Christ is already on the throne and we alone, again unique in all creation, have the Holy Spirit deposited in us upon our conversion. This very deposit testifies that we are the children of God.

All of creation knows about this deposit, the call of God on our lives to care for the creation, and of our adoption as heirs of God – as His children. And it is so excited it’s like creation is standing on the side lines at a parade waiting with eager expectation, cheering us on, actually groaning as if in child birth, for us to be revealed to the whole world. Our work is an investment into God’s kingdom on earth.
The second stage of redemption for mankind is to be received upon the return of Christ when we shall partake fully of His redemption. Our bodies will literally rise from the grave in a glorified state, like that of Jesus' risen body - to suffer no more. Jesus himself is the first fruit of resurrection and is constantly interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25). He came and dwelt among us, teaching us about the Kingdom of God he was initiating. He suffered, died and was buried and most importantly he rose again! This is the distinct Christian hope. This hope is not the kind of hope that is equated with a far off dream - like a wish. It is the expectant hope that is called an anchor for our souls, firm and secure (Hebrews 6:19 – 20). It is a hope that has already been received, in part, as a deposit. It is a thrilling expectation that God himself has promised. It a living hope (1 Peter 1:3b -4). It acts like a life in us – it breathes and has a living pulse. (Crosby) This hope extends beyond mankind – to all of creation. We have a host of saints who have gone before us cheering us on to the finish line (Hebrews 12:1)! Not only this, but all of creation is waiting in eager expectation of what we will do. This should bring us great joy and peace. It should invigorate us with motivation to be about the work that God has ordained for us to be busy - about until his return.

Because He rose and dwelt in a glorified body, we also have a hope regarding the redemption of our own bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-57). No more crying, no more tears. Work in our fully redeemed state, in our glorified bodies upon the return of Christ, will not cause us to be tired, sick or bored. On the contrary our work will release creative energy, beauty, blessing and restoration to the rest of creation.

Creation is groaning and waiting in eager longing for the revelation because when Christ returns and we become fully redeemed and restored to His image, receiving our glorified bodies, the earth will also be reborn. The harmony that was present in the Garden will return. Jesus is going to renew the earth in a similar way that He renews our bodies. This is not the same as creating the earth out of nothing as it was in the beginning – it is restoring and refreshing the existing earth.

Revelation 21:2 – 4)

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.'"

But first the Lord will cleanse the earth of evil, injustice and violence.

2 Peter 3:10 – 13

"But the day of the LORD will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a
loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But in accordance with his promise, we wait for a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.”

After this “grand finale” of labor pains – the fire of God’s judgment falling, the earth will be re-established as it was in the Garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:33 – 36

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. They will say, ‘This land that was laid waste has become like the Garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.”

Using the analogy of the pregnancy, this is the “baby” the earth is waiting for. The lion will lay down with the lamb! Justice will prevail because Jesus Himself will reign as Judge.

Isaiah 11:3 – 9

“He will not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The infant shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the viper’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

This message is an announcement of Good News! Jesus has risen from the dead and because of this we and all of creation has hope.

Biblical scholar N.T. Wright shares in his book, Surprised by Hope, “The point of resurrection… is that the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die…What you do with your body in the present – by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself – will last into God’s future. These activities are not simply ways of
making the present life a little less beastly, a little more bearable, until the day when we leave it
behind altogether… They are part of what we may call building for God’s kingdom.”

1 Peter 1:13 – 21

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace
to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed… For you know it was not with perishable
things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed
down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without
blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in
these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the
dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Concluding in Revelation, we seek to imagine what forests will be like to be in the completely
redeemed state:

Revelation 22:1-2 & 14

‘Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the
throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side
of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month;
and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations…..Blessed are those who
wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city
by the gates.”

We really only have a glimpse of what the full redemption will mean to mankind and all of crea-
tion, but this verse speaking of the tree of life having twelve crops of various fruits – one each
month – and leaves for the healing of the nations - gives us plenty of fuel for our imaginations!
As beautiful and productive as the forests are now, they will be even more glorious when the
Kingdom of God reigns on earth in its fullness. In the meantime, we can invest our lives in being
redeemptive toward all of God’s creation, both mankind and nature, knowing it is an investment in
the Kingdom of God on earth.

Maranatha! Come LORD Jesus!

I am the heart of your hearth, the shade screening you from the sun; I am the beam that holds your house, the
board on your table; I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead; the wood of your cradle, and
the shell of your coffin. I am the gift of God and the friend of man. – Author Unknown
Litany from Psalm 96
Developed by Gina DeMarco

Leader: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Response: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day!

Leader: For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Response: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day!

Leader: Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.

Response: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day!

Leader: Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity.

Response: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day!

Leader: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!

Response: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day!

All: Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed. Isaiah 55:12-13
Gina DeMarco, God’s Plan for Forests and People: More than you can imagine!

Scripture References in sermon from the NIV:

Romans 8:11-25

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hopes that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’

John 16:7

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 6:19 - 20

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.
1 Peter 1:3b - 4

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

1 Corinthians 15:51 – 57

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immorality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21: 2 - 4

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.’

2 Peter 3:10 – 13

“But the day of the LORD will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But in accordance with his promise, we wait for a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.”

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Isaiah 11:3 – 9

“He will not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The infant shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the viper’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

1 Peter 1:13 – 21

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed….For you know it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Revelation 22:1 – 2 and 14

‘Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations…..Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.”

**Other Scriptures for sermons on forest theme:**

Matthew 13:31 – 32 A single tree can provide shade, habitat, fruit, nuts and many benefits to people and wildlife. When a single tree becomes a part of a forest, this benefit is multiplied and the amount of life it can sustain is tremendously diversified. One of the products that a forest provides that cannot be provided by a single tree is clean water. This tree/forest analogy can be compared with living our lives as a Christian in solitude and living our lives as part of a Christian community.

John 15:1-17

1 Kings 4 Solomon’s wisdom described talks about his knowledge of plant life, animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. This is part of the wisdom that men from all nations came to hear. Solomon was knowledgeable about the Cedars of Lebanon and he used them to build the temple for the name of the LROD. 2 Kings 6.

Isaiah 44:9 – 20 On creation worship and idolatry.

Jeremiah 17: 7-8 “But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”
Suggested music for forestry theme sermon
Submitted by Gina DeMarco

- The Trees of the Field
  by Steffi Geiser Rubin & Stuart Dauermann

- It is well with my soul - by Horatio G. Spafford

- Blessed Assurance - by Fanny Crosby

- Therefore The Redeemed - by Martin Sanchez

- Ascribe To the Lord - by David Vilianti

- Nothing but the Blood - by Robert Lowry

- They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love - by Peter Scholtes

- I’ve Been Redeemed - Author unknown
Additional Forestry Resources

Backyard Woods
US Forest Service, NACD, National Arbor Day Foundation
www.arborday.org/backyardwoods

Backyard Woods provides a guide and tip sheets on how small acreage owners can enhance the scenery in their backyard woods, provide habitat for wildlife and utilize the land as an extra source of income.

Discover the Forest
http://www.discovertheforest.org/
Games, Activities and find a forest near you!

Finding my Forest Guide
For Grade 3-8
Lessons for students, family activity and a checklist for accomplishments on outdoor activities and more.
Guide available in PDF format at:
www.findingmyforest.org

Nature Explore
A collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. The goal of this comprehensive, research-based initiative is to help children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children’s daily learning.

http://www.arborday.org/explore/

Connection Children with Nature
Family Activities
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www.plt.org
A collection of activities for families to use in the outdoors. Great bible school additional activities as well!
Visit http://learnoutside.org/familyactivities.html

These activities are modified from Project Learning Tree's PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide. The PreK-8 Guide can be obtained by attending a Project Learning Workshop. For more information on how to attend a PLT workshop please contact your state PLT coordinator. Visit http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/25_120_0.html for a listing.

Project Learning Tree helps young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the outdoors with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Take your children, grandchildren, neighbors' or friends' children outside and try one of these activities from the Every Child Learns Outside link above.

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Forestry Litany

Forestry Program Insert

Forestry Program Blank

national forestry resources serve an essential role in our environment. They provide us with a variety of benefits, including clean air, clean water, and recreational opportunities. Forestry programs work to ensure these benefits are sustained for future generations.

At a national level, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) provides support and resources to help forestry programs thrive.

E-mail: stewardship@nacdnet.org
Web: www.nacdnet.org

National Association of Conservation Districts
(NACD) 509 Capitol Court, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4937
P: (202) 547-NACD (6223)

Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future
National Association of Conservation Districts

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