



Choices for Sustainable Living

“On my first Boy Scout trip, in the mid 1950’s, I learned the basic environmental principle that we should leave the campsite as we found it. We were told that the next group of hikers deserved no less, and that in fact we should clean the site up if those before us had been careless. I did not as a child understand that the campsite would be global or that the next hikers would include unborn generations.” -John Sitter

Sixteen people made up a diverse group of Westminster members and others who met over the summer in a discussion course called **“CHOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING”** that was sponsored by *Sustain Dane* of Madison, using materials from the *Northwest Earth Institute* of Portland, Oregon.

What is ‘sustainability’?

In recent years, the term “sustainable” has been popularized, particularly in discussions about personal lifestyle, business practices, and governmental policies. Underlying this intense interest in sustainability is a widely held belief that modern industrial society, with its focus on consumerism, is *not* sustainable.



Here Are Some Definitions of Sustainability:

- Sustainable development means meeting the needs of

the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Sustainability is part of a trend to consider the whole instead of the specific.
- Sustainability emphasizes relationships rather than pieces in isolation...it is not at all about regressing to primitive living conditions. It is about understanding our situation, and developing as communities in ways that are equitable, and that make sense ecologically and economically.
- Sustainability is human consumption based on using the earth’s resources at a rate slower than they regenerate.

The course readings explored sustainability at many levels—the individual, the community, and society as a whole, presenting the views of many leading writers as well as stories about individuals and organizations

making a difference.

Group members studied the materials while sharing new ideas, thoughtful conversation & good food.

Participants did not find any specific checklist to suggest it is possible to accomplish a global paradigm shift in, for example, 20 easy steps. Each person came away, however, with a heightened awareness of how we can change human consumption to use the earth’s resources at a rate slower than they regenerate.



Submitted by Sandra Cole

A copy of the course book, **Choices For Sustainable Living**, will be available in the church library.

