

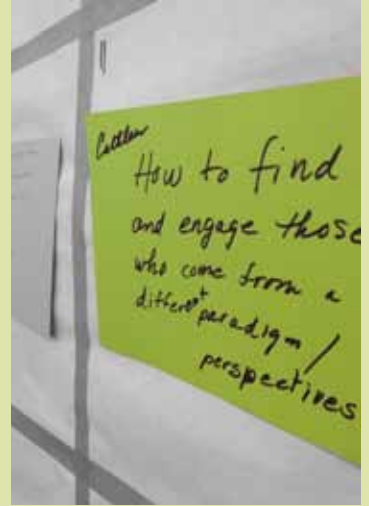
center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

SPRING 2013

EARTH ALMANAC



Mary Kay Ash, SSND



Callan
How to find
and engage those
who come from a
different paradigm/
perspectives

Earth Education



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus
170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN 56001-3138
507-389-4272
lcoons@ssndmankato.org

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE



From my office window I am treated to a daily reawakening of light to our side of the planet. This morning's show revealed itself through the skeletal trees of winter, dark bones against the red backlight of sky. I admit to not trying so very hard NOT to be distracted by the unfolding scene out my east window. The beauty is one of the best treats of the early morning and some days I just have to stop and stare. This observing, this absorbing of the new day... it's like a mini-celebration every morning!

I especially love mornings for the potential they hold, the hopefulness. The slow turning of night to day, the dark sky transforming ever so slowly until the world is overcome with the light. The daily metaphor seems strengthening and reminds me of the words of Desmond Tutu, to "do your

STAFF

Lisa Coons, Co-Director
Kathleen Mary Kiemen, SSND,
Co-Director

Center Advisory Committee:

Katie Boone
Cara Gorman
Scott Kudelka
Paul Prew
Lynn Rozen
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

little bit of good where you are. It's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Doing our little bit of good at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry means working to bring awareness of and support to folks living more sustainable, more connected lives. The transformation of our lives to living more sustainably may take some remembering, some re-remembering. We must remember as Vandana Shiva prods us to that "You are not Atlas carrying the world on our shoulder. It is good to remember the world is carrying you." Yes, the world is carrying us. What a relief, really, if we let ourselves feel it deeply.

The process of "re-remembering," of consciously taking part in life as but one member of the Earth family (and maybe not the most important one) may be equally challenging. As part of the Global North (the "first" world, the "developed" world) we are not accustomed to behaving as if we do not deserve the biggest and the best on the planet, even if our gluttony comes at the expense of others - both human and animal kin. But living a connected life may reveal to us that living with less is not only okay but is actually preferable to the life prescribed to us by consumerist culture.

One of the ways we at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry hold the space for remembering and re-remembering is the annual hosting of our Earth Conference. Our most recent conference theme was the Transition Movement - a movement all about connection and becoming engaged members of our communities. The energy that this conference tapped is exciting. There are many reasons to be attracted to the Transition Movement - and the work of transition in your own community. It offers hope for and a preference for a future where we live better using less. It offers transformation from a system built on the notion of conquering the earth to one where we

live with the life systems of our home planet. It can offer a rootedness in home and community, of being a part of something good.

The Center for Earth is working closely with the newly formed Mankato Transition group to offer our organizational support, resources and connections. The community has so many great things happening already, it's exciting and easy to see why this flame sparked. With work already being done in the area of energy conservation, renewable energy development, improving bike, walk and mass transit routes, local food initiatives, groups connecting folks with the beauty of the Minnesota River Valley, fair trade commitments and much more, there is no need to start from scratch. And the great thing is there is room for everyone in this work. Stay tuned as Transition Mankato unfolds in the coming months!

Organically yours,
LISA
lcoons@ssndcp.org

WISH LIST

...new or used!

- Children's watering cans
- Garden rakes
- Trowels
- Wheel barrels or garden carts
- Summer intern

SSND Earth Conference November 2012

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND

The Transition Movement southern Minnesota style happened November 3, 2012 at Good Counsel Hill, in Mankato when 125 people gathered for the 7th annual SSND Earth Conference to explore how they might help create resilient communities. Globally, the Transition Movement is an effort by local communities to offer solution to challenges that our Earth Community is facing. Locally, the Earth Conference key-note speaker, Patricia Benson, introduced the participants to some key values of this movement beginning with the idea:

"We truly don't know if this will work. Transition is a social experiment on a massive scale. What we are convinced of is this:

- *If we wait for the governments, it'll be too little, too late;*
- *If we act as individuals, it'll be too little;*
- *But if we act as communities, it might just be enough, just in time."*

Some of the movement's key values include creating relationships among

peoples and creation, building resilience across economic and social sectors and doing inner work that sustains us through challenges.

Using the Open Space model of dialog, participants took Patricia's witness, ideas and challenges into conversation around issues and concerns they surfaced. From this process, led by Katie Boone and Ronda Redmond, the 20 conversations were harvested, and as a way to encourage further dialog and commitment to action, this report is available to all participants. One conversation has led to the formation of a Transition Work Group in Mankato. If interested, contact Lisa Coons at lcoons@ssndcp.org.



Evaluations of the conference indicate an overwhelming appreciation for the event. We share some of the participants' own words:

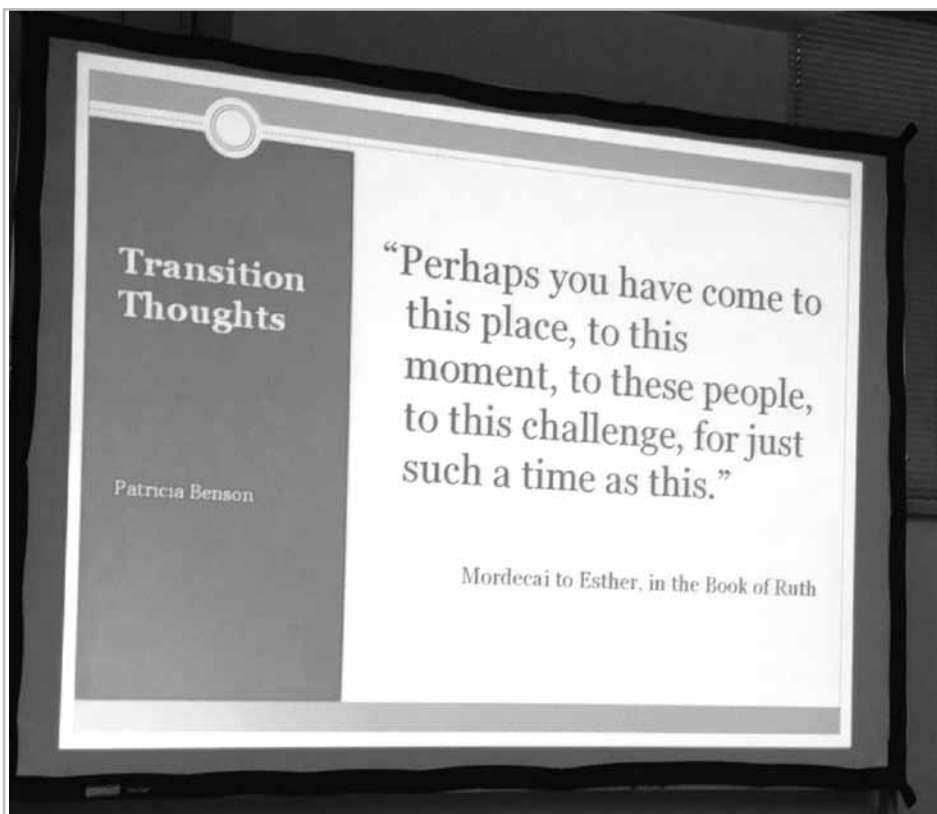
"It all comes back to relationships. I felt very affirmed to be here. Sometimes I feel so different and alone on this sacred journey."

"In gratitude for all the work and networking that went into this day."

"This was my first conference, and I look forward to the next one. It was inspiring and provided terrific information."

"Open Space opened/created new ideas. I think people were a bit hesitant to get into it, but the harvest was abundant!"

The 8th annual SSND Earth Conference is being planned for November 9, 2013. Stayed tuned. ☼



A STORY ABOUT FRACKING

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND



If you watch TV and hang around to view commercials, you've probably seen a tall blond woman dressed in a black suit walking across a great vista announcing the wonderful qualities of natural gas. She reports about the great reservoir of gas way below the surface of earth, how safe it is to extract, how it can make the U.S. energy independent and the thousands of employment positions this industry creates.

Well, there are other views about extracting natural gas. In case you haven't heard, it happens through a process called "hydraulic fracturing" or commonly called, "fracking." It is accomplished by pumping **lots of water** mixed with **sand and chemicals** deep into the ground **under**

extreme pressure. The bluffs, coulees and hills of western Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota have exactly the sand needed for this process. It is called silica sand. As a result, there is a rush to open mines, build processing centers and develop transportation infrastructure to ship this sand to the shale formations being mined in Texas, Pennsylvania, North Dakota and other areas. There is a big rush to enhance a frac sand industry in Minnesota.

THE CHALLENGE: we have a deep concern about what this rush, this frac-sand industry, is creating for the health of people, our communities, infrastructures and environment.

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM) is supporting and working with groups who want to slow this process down until we know more about sand fracking fall out. We are asking the state legislature to do these things:

- 1. Strong state-level permitting requirements that work with local control.** These state-level requirements would serve as a floor and would be in addition to any local land use ordinances.
- 2. A state moratorium in the impacted communities** on any new frac sand facilities to allow time for creating state require-

ments and to complete an in-depth study.

- 3. An in-depth state study,** such as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement. This study would help set state permitting standards and analyze the potential impact of the industry.
- 4. Permitting fees and taxes on the industry** that cover the costs of state regulation and damage to roads and bridges.

Learn more about the frac sand industry in your area and all around Minnesota from:

- Winona Area Citizens Concerned about Silica Mining (CASM), winonasand@gmail.com.
- Land Stewardship Project LSP: State Policy Staff, Bobby King at landstewardshipproject.org.
- Fact sheet from us at CESRM, contact Kathleen Mary Kiemen at kkiemensnd@yahoo.com.

Through it all, we believe that world citizens are capable of creating renewable energy resources that will provide economic growth and long-term living wage opportunities. Let Minnesota be among those who provide the incentives to make this happen. ☼

Our work is deeply enriched through the volunteer support and financial gifts made by others. We have many people to thank for their generous donations of time, talents and resources toward our work. We are grateful for how the following people and organizations have enabled and expanded our work over the past several months.

Your gifts make a difference - thank you!

Chelsea Anderson
Monika Antonelli
Katie Boone
Sara Brave Heart
Rosae Brown, SSND
Eleanor Coons-Ruskey
Anika Cristwell
Dee Czech
John Domeier
Cara Gorman
Elizabeth Haarsma

Beth Haltiner, SSND
Lalande Hennen, SSND
Rachel Hollerich,
Good Earth Mill and Grains
Rose Anthony Krebs, SSND
Scott Kudelka
Daniel Marie Kukowski, SSND
Kirsten Markiewicz,
Flour Power Bakery and Café
Melissa Martensen
Dwight McCabe

Tricia Nienow
Paul Prew
Ann Quade
DelRey Richard, SSND
Lynn Rozen
Patti Ruskey
Saint Peter Food Co-op
Curtis Speck
Mary Tacheny, SSND
Jim Vonderharr
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

TRANSITION MANKATO

BY LISA COONS, CENTER CO-DIRECTOR

Last November, we welcomed Pat Benson, an experienced teacher, homesteader and connector to our 7th Annual Earth Conference to deliver the keynote address on the topic of the Transition Towns Movement. She inspired many in the room to look to the Transition Movement (www.transitionus.org) for a hopeful response to the abundance of sad, bad news that seems to surround us. With the triple threat of climate change, fossil fuel resource depletion and an economic system based on endless growth all coming at us, well, it could get a person down. The Transition Towns Movement offers positive, hopeful and creative options to communities ready to explore something else. Still unsure what Transition is all about? One Transition Town member summed up the movement with this, "The

Transition Movement invites us to re-imagine and bring to life a new story about how we live as members of the Earth family. Using less, respecting more."



At the conference in November, a small group of folks gathered around the question of what "doing" Transition in Mankato would look like. It was an energizing discussion! Anticipating an interest in Transition fueled by the Earth Conference, we planned a follow-up meeting at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry library two weeks later to continue the conversation and open it to others as well. We also planned

a screening of the film "In Transition 2.0" and a discussion of the book *Transition Companion* for an immersion-type experience for folks to get "up to speed" on this exciting global movement. At the film screening on one of the coldest nights in January, organizers were hopeful that a handful might turn out on such a frigid night. To our surprise, 57 people came to see what Transition is all about, to join in on this community's plans or to find inspiration for their own community.

Transition Mankato has taken off! You can learn more or get involved in the positive, life-affirming work of the Transition Mankato group by contacting us at the Center, 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndcp.org. ☺

Local Food Salute –

Community Supported Agriculture with Living Land Farm



With spring on the horizon, many begin dreaming of the incomparable tastes of fresh, locally grown foods. For some, this is the time we pore over seed catalogs and plot out maps of our gardens. Community gardens start getting phone calls, e-mails and messages from folks interested in planting and growing their own gardens, growing a portion of the food that will feed them for a season and beyond. Planting gardens is a wonderful way to connect with the natural environment, to teach children where food comes from and to share in making our

communities more resilient to challenges such as climate change and fossil fuel addiction.

Another way to get great local produce is to become a member of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm. CSAs offer members the opportunity to share in the local food grown by farmers connected to the land with sustainable growing practices. And by choosing local food, members have a direct impact on the use of fossil fuels to grow, harvest, ship, refrigerate and access food. Want to cut your use of fossil fuels and all the pollution associated with that use? Eat local, sustainable food! CSAs are another delicious piece of the local food puzzle.

CSAs work like this – members purchase shares directly from farmers, and receive weekly or biweekly boxes of farm-fresh produce that changes as the season changes.

As part of our commitment to supporting our local food farmers, the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry has been a drop-off site for area CSAs for years. We continue this again in 2013 as Living Land Farm owned by Adam Ellefson and Lupita Marchan will utilize the Red Barn at Good Counsel as a pick-up site for Mankato members. Living Land Farm is a shining example of farmers growing great-tasting local food that benefits the people and the planet. Find out more about how to get in on this, contact Living Land Farm directly:



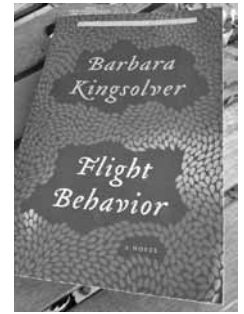
Living Land Farm

Adam Ellefson & Lupita Marchan
phone: 507-720-5364
email: livinglandfarm@yahoo.com
website: livinglandfarm.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Book Discussion – Thursday, March 28, 6 pm.
Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver.

Flight Behavior transfixes from its opening scene. In the lyrical language of her native Appalachia, Barbara Kingsolver bares the rich, tarnished humanity of her novel's inhabitants and unearths the modern complexities of rural existence. Characters and reader alike are quickly carried beyond familiar territory here, into the unsettled ground of science, faith, and everyday truces between reason and conviction.



Tuesday, April 23, 7 pm, J. Drake Hamilton from FRESH ENERGY will be in Mankato to discuss Climate Change and renewable energy options. Location TBA. Sponsored by the Better Together Network, a loose network of community groups in Mankato and North Mankato working toward sustainability.

SAVE THE DATE!

- Summer Solstice Celebration – June 21, 2013
- 8th Annual Earth Conference – November 9, 2013



BOOK REVIEW:

Turn Here Sweet Corn BY ATINA DIFFLEY

Reviewed by Scott Kudelka, Advisory Committee Member

I first heard about the book *Turn Here Sweet Corn - Organic Farming Works* by Atina Diffley from my friend Carrie Jennings, a glacial geologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Carrie highly recommended the book and I couldn't agree more. Atina opened up her soul in telling the story of her life and the ongoing struggle to be an organic farmer as the suburbs of the Twin Cities closed in on them and the constant challenges to grow healthy and delicious food.

"I am drawn to this corn and the rich fullness of the seed. With the side of my thumb, I break kernels into the cup of my hand. I rub them between my fingers and dribble them behind me - an eatable trail. I'm not sure what I am marking, or if I even want a way back to the woman I was. Farming this summer wasn't planned. It just happened - one seed and one plant at a time. I'm not sure where we're going next. I'm just here. In the present and right now that's a good thing. I break

another handful into my palm, roll them like dice, shake and toss them on the ground."

In this book, Atina tells the story of how she became interested in organic farming, how she met her husband Martin and how they created a life together producing locally-grown food and raised two children. *Turn Here Sweet*



Corn is a personal tale of how Atina and her family handled the loss of their land to the construction of a public school, destructive thunderstorms and Koch Pipeline Company wanting to build a crude oil pipeline

across their fields. Diffley also does a wonderful job at describing what it means to be an organic farmer.

"*Turn Here Sweet Corn* is an unexpected page-turner. Atina Diffley's compelling account of her life as a Minnesota organic farmer is deeply moving not only from a personal standpoint but also from the political. Diffley reveals the evident difficulties of small-scale organic farming but is inspirational about its value to people and the planet: - Marion Nestle, author of *What to Eat*.

Atina Diffley is an organic vegetable farmer who educates consumers, farmers, and policymakers about organic farming through the consulting business Organic Farming Works LLC, which she owns with her husband, Martin. From 1973 through 2007, the Diffleys owned and operated Gardens of Eagan, one of the first certified organic produce farms in the Midwest. To contact Atina and Martin Diffley, visit www.organicfarmingworks.com. ☺

THE CENTER FOR EARLY SPIRITUALITY AND RURAL MINISTRY'S

REAL FOOD FOR REAL PEOPLE

The key to good local eating in late winter and very early spring is to take advantage of easily stored vegetables. A refrigerator, emptied of unused condiments and questionable beverages can be packed in with locally-grown great tasting root vegetables like carrots (with the tops trimmed off to discourage sprouting), turnips, beets and rutabaga (reclaim the rutabaga!) and stored for many months. Locally grown storing potatoes, onions and garlic kept in a cool dark place also keep for months and we've eaten winter squash stored from the previous fall in late summer as the new harvest threatens to come in. ☼

Oven-Roasted Root Vegetables (with an optional kick)

This can be a side but we eat it most often as a full meal deal served with any number of winter pickles.

- 1 large onion, sliced in half then in into thin "half-moons"
- 3 good-size carrots, unpeeled and sliced on a diagonal into one-inch pieces
- 2 – 4 potatoes, unpeeled & cut into bite-size pieces
- ¼ butternut squash or 1 large sweet potato, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 small-medium beets, washed and cut smaller than bite-size
- 1 turnip, peeled and chopped small
- A handful of winter greens like kale, if you've still got some growing
(add at the end of cooking just long enough to wilt them)

Marinade:

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 T. balsamic vinegar or fresh lemon juice
- 5 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- ½ tsp. salt, more or less to taste
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 to 2 T. rosemary or sage (fresh if you have a plant; dried, if not)

Optional Kick – add 1-2 tsp. of dried red pepper, or one T. of jalapeno (keep the seeds in for more heat) or other preserved hot pepper.

Toss all the ingredients (except the greens, if you are using them) in a big bowl and stir to coat everything evenly with the garlick-y, herby marinade. Bake in an oven dish at 450° for 30 minutes. Stir vegetables, lower the oven temperature to 400° and roast for 15 minutes. Stir well and continue to roast for another 10 to 15 minutes, until tender and slightly caramelized.



Vegetarian Chili

- 2 large onions, chopped small
- Minced garlic to taste (4-5 cloves)
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 – 3 peppers chopped (I use a combination of green, red and yellow)
- 2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 – 2 potatoes, diced with skin on
- 1 – 2 cups canned or frozen corn
- 1 – 2 cups carrots (diced or grated)
- 3 – 4 cans beans (kidney, black and butter)
- 4 cups diced tomatoes (I usually do fresh but can use canned with juice)
- 1 T. cumin
- 3 T. chili powder
- 2 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. coriander
- 1 tsp. salt
- tomato juice



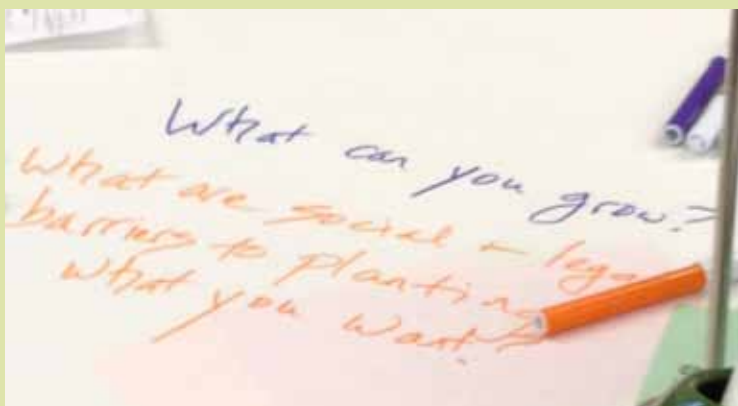
Saute all vegetables with the spices in olive oil or butter (everything except beans, tomatoes and juice). Additional vegies I have added are zucchini, yellow squash and sweet potatoes. Basically you can use any fresh vegies you have on hand. Once vegies are tender, add drained and rinsed beans and tomatoes. Add the amount of juice to the soup to reach the thickness you want. Heat – taste to make sure amount of spices suit you and add additional if needed. This amount will make 10 – 15 standard size soup bowls.

Scenes from
this year's
Earth
Conference

7TH ANNUAL EARTH CONFERENCE

TRANSITION:
CO-CREATING
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Photos by Katie Boone
and Melissa Martensen



Mark your calendars! 8th Annual Earth Conference, Saturday, November 9, 2013