

St. Andrew's Meadow

by Jan Bilden, St. Andrew's Creation Care Team and EcoFaith Leadership Team

St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids has a new project: a planned meadow of natural flora designed to provide pollinator habitat, to beautify their landscape, and to emphasize the congregation's commitment to creation care.

The church buildings on 16th Street NW are nestled into the woods behind a stand of pines, a pollinator plot and a large mowed area fronting the road. Enbridge Energy's pipelines run underground from the northwest side of the city and under this mowed area, so when congregational president Conley Janssen heard they would be doing some work on the lines and disturbing the ground, he informed the congregation's EcoFaith Advocates team and they went to work. Consultations with Prairie Restoration, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District, and Itasca Extension followed and Conley negotiated with Enbridge, as they are committed to restoration following work. The result is that this fall Prairie Restorations will be seeding an area about 100 yards by 25 yards with a mix of natural northeast MN grasses and native wildflower pollinator mix. The company will be monitoring and helping to maintain the site for at least a year after planting, including necessary weeding processes and it will take two to three years before it is self-sustaining.

Replacing the mowed area with a meadow will add to the natural beauty of the site, support pollinators, and make a statement to the community about how the congregation is caring for God's creation. And the volunteers who mow the area are quite pleased too!

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