

Green Team News

August is National Water Quality Month. Water has such symbolism in Christianity, and we often remember and pray over the water of our baptism. But do we think about the gift of water when we turn on the tap to drink, cook, or bathe? We are blessed indeed with access to clean water, but many of our state and national waterways are under threat and are rated “impaired” under the standards of the Clean Water Act. There are things that you can do to help protect our waterways:

- 1. Wash your car at a car wash:** Even though it might cost more than washing your car at home, taking your car to a car wash saves water and prevents toxic chemicals from being flushed down your storm drains that eventually empty into our lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans Professional car washes are legally required to drain into sewer systems so that the water can be treated before being re-used.
- 2. Pick up after your pet:** Animal waste is full of nitrogen which can remove oxygen from the water leaving it completely unusable for aquatic life.
- 3. Don't use fertilizer made with phosphorus:** After heavy rainfall or watering, these chemicals can leak into nearby groundwater sources. Try using organic materials or waiting for drier weather if you absolutely need to use lawn care products.
- 4. Do not flush expired or unwanted medication down the toilet:** These products have toxic chemicals that should not be flushed down the drain. Instead, take them to a drop off box at a pharmacy or police station near you.
- 5. Learn how to properly dispose of leftover paint:** Even house paint thrown in the trash can impact local water.
- 6. Take used oil or antifreeze to a service station or recycling center.**
- 7. Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater:** Installing a rain barrel will not only save you money, but can also be used for watering your lawn or washing your car.
- 8. Be sure to also test your water quality at home.** Even if your city has great water quality, issues with your home plumbing system can still damage the quality of your drinking water and your appliances. For example, older pipes can corrode over time and leech chemicals into your water supply, or contribute to drain clogs.