

Central Lutheran Church

MESSENGER

June 2008, Portland OR

Going Green at CLC

Have you noticed a bit more variation in the temperature of the worship space lately? We have turned the furnace off during the week, and are heating the room only on Sundays (and sometimes Wednesdays for bell choir). (The furnace has since been turned off for the season.) When I came to Central, I was pleasantly surprised by the cozy temperature in the church midweek. Organists are used to bundling up to practice – hats, jackets, maybe an electric heater aimed at the legs – because during the winter, 55 degrees is a warm day in the church! I didn't know why Central was different, but I sure enjoyed it!

Then in March, I read Central's energy audit (a study of energy use in the building) and learned that the worship space has been kept at 64 degrees constantly **for the sake of the organ**. I was startled and dismayed. Pipe organs were in common use long before central heating was available in churches, and in some very cold climates! Temperature does affect the tuning; for things to sound right you need to tune the organ at the same temperature as you worship and worship at the same temperature as you tune. But organs suffer no ill effects from being cold during the week and warming up on Sunday, so the thermostat has been turned down.

So I now have a hat and a fleece at the church for midweek practice. And I like it this way. I get to take a baby step toward a simpler life. The spiritual work of directing air through organ pipes is more precious, knowing that the air and climate are a bit safer from our impact. And the cool temperatures remind me to thank God for the chance to live on earth and experience creation – what a blessing!
Janis Lord

Forty percent of the greenhouse gasses generated for Portland are created by the energy used in buildings, so making your home more efficient is an important way to reduce your carbon footprint. On June 11, Oregon Interfaith Power and Light will make two presentations on energy efficiency in your home, be sure to attend. In the meantime, here are some tips from Central's Green Team to keep cool efficiently this summer:

Draw shades and close windows as the day starts to heat up. Open up again when outside temperatures are below inside temperatures.

Use fans to circulate air--moving air feels cooler

If you have air conditioning, set the temperature 10 degrees lower than outside temperatures for better energy efficiency.