

Jason Glombicki

During a hot summer week in Boston young adult Christians from a variety of backgrounds assembled to discuss issues related to environmental justice. The reason they assembled was to attend the Young Adult Ecumenical Forum (YAEF), which proved to be an excellent opportunity to kindle a passion for environmental concerns in relation to the Gospel. There is something about taking time out of the summer to gather and reflect on environmental issues in an ecumenical setting that allows each individual to learn, reflect, and grow from one another.

As a Lutheran, it was invigorating to learn what steps other denominations have taken to move towards sustainability and to battle the ever-present concern of environmental racism throughout our country. During one of the presentations, we were given the opportunity to learn about the steps that the United Church of Christ has taken to battle environmental racism and the continued need for change after their most recent study. Likewise, during various small group discussions participants were able to dialog about their own experiences within their denominations and inform group members about what steps their local congregations and church bodies have begun to take to battle the environmental crisis before us.

In harmony with this dialog was the opportunity to worship ecumenically while reflecting on the environment paired with our Christian calling to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. Using reflective, participatory, and liturgical worship techniques the forum was transformed into a haven for Christians in pursuit of love, peace, and understanding. It is the call of the Gospel and the desire of the ELCA to move forth in our ecumenical relations with one another, and YAEF allowed for young adults to fully experience ecumenism. This environment allowed participants to understand and appreciate the differences within Christianity while strengthening his or her own beliefs and denominational understanding. This experience made YAEF one of the most valuable ecumenical experiences available to young adults this summer.