

**Merry Lea's Autumn Hope Conference 2010:  
Earth as Ally: Facing Climate Change Together**

## **About the Presenters:**

**Luke Gascho**, Ed.D., will serve as moderator of the conference. He will deliver the keynote address Friday evening and lead the discussion portions of the weekend. Luke is executive director of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College. His interests include organizational leadership and the theology and practice of creation care. Luke is also a member of an Indiana board working to bring an Interfaith Power and Light affiliate to Indiana. Luke will deliver the opening address on Friday evening and lead the discussion sessions throughout the weekend.

**Dale Hess**, Ph.D., will lead the Saturday afternoon break-out session on climate change and farming. Dale directs the Agroecology Summer Intensive at Merry Lea. He is a plant pathologist by training and has extensive experience with food production systems in West and Central Africa. Dale will lead the breakout session on farms Saturday afternoon.

**Dave Ostergren**, Ph.D., is the director of Merry Lea's graduate program in environmental education. His background is in policy analysis and natural resources management. Dave will review the science behind global climate change in a Saturday morning session.

**Janeen Bertsche Johnson**, M.Div., is campus pastor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Discernment, encouraging the gifts of others and offering hope are part of her daily work. At one point, this took the form of beginning a 4-H group on earth care themes in the Goshen area. Janeen will preach on Sunday morning.

**Kathryn Mascaro** has master's degrees in plant biochemistry and pastoral theology. She is part of the Wildlife Friendly Places of Worship committee that established a certification program for congregations to preserve, enhance and restore wildlife habitat at places of worship. She is a member of the Environmental Stewardship Ministry of her own parish, Holy Spirit at Geist (Fishers); the ministry promotes native planting on the church grounds as well as recycling and water conservation. She interacts with Green Congregations (Indianapolis), a group of many denominations promoting environmental stewardship in all areas of life: at home, at work and at church. Kathryn will lead a Saturday breakout session on churches and participate in the panel discussion Saturday evening.

**Bill Minter**, M.S.F., is director of land management at Merry Lea and an assistant professor of Environmental Science at Goshen College. "I am called to help the human community consider how it interacts with natural systems—biologically, economically and sociologically," Bill says. Experiential education in an outdoor setting is his forte. Bill will lead the forest and prairie hikes on Saturday.

**Nate Simons** is director of Blue Heron Ministries, Angola, IN—a land conservation organization that is an official ministry of the Presbyterian Chapel of the Lakes. Taking care of God’s creation through the hands-on craft of ecological restoration is Nate’s life focus. “By the power of Christ’s resurrection, I am a reconciler of broken relationships. I want to help others see the glory of the Maker of the heavens and the earth round about them,” Nate says. Nate will lead a Saturday afternoon break-out session on managing private land. He will also participate in the Saturday evening panel, Bridging the Gap Between Faith and Science.

**Aaron Sawatsky-Kingsley** has worked as Goshen’s city forester for over four years. He is currently working on a master’s degree in Parks and Resource Management from Slippery Rock University, PA. Recently, he convinced a Voluntary Gas Tax group that they should donate their carbon tax to plant trees in underserved neighborhoods. Aaron also reports that he’s noticed a thin spot in the back of his hair. Is this due to climate change, raising two small children or something else? Aaron will lead a Saturday afternoon session on towns and cities and participate in the faith and science panel.

**Ryan Sensenig, Ph.D.**, is director of the Environmental Science program at Goshen College and the Lindsey Research Fellow at Merry Lea. Ryan studies grassland systems and has started a tall-grass prairie grazing experiment at Merry Lea to examine the effect of large herbivores on plant dynamics. Ryan is bringing his ecology class to the conference and leading Friday’s night hike.

**Paul Steury, M.S.**, is the K – 12 education coordinator at Merry Lea and teaches pedagogy and environmental issues in the graduate program in environmental education. Paul has undergone training through The Climate Project to present a faith-based version of *The Inconvenient Truth* in churches. He frequently speaks on climate change. Paul will participate in the Saturday evening panel on Bridging the Gap Between Faith and Science.

**Lisa Zinn**, doctoral candidate, teaches research methods and natural history in Merry Lea’s graduate program in environmental education. Her musical skills are also an asset to Merry Lea. Lisa will lead the phenology hike on Saturday and worship on Sunday morning.