



Four Winds Center for Spiritual Ecology is a mission group of Emmanuel Lutheran Church which began in 1995. It was created to bring the "Creation Spirituality" renewal movement to Emmanuel and the Rockford community. Originally called the "Forest City Center for Creation Spirituality" this was a new "reformation" that was to recover what was lost in Western Christianity and Western culture.

What we lost was the "mystical" journey, our direct experience of God, and the "prophetic" call to embrace those put outside the gate because of race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, or religious affiliation.

What we embraced was the call of Jesus to follow and transform, not just confess and believe.

We believe in the Divine presence in all things and beings in Universe, and in the "Original Blessedness" of all Creation.

We do not believe in "Original Sin," which has been believed to have tainted all things, especially the body, sexuality, sensuality, and even the Earth since St. Augustine codified the concept in 387 AD.

We are renewing our intimate relationship with Creation, and our passion for Ecological Justice.

We are creating places for ceremony, ritual, and the arts because we believe in their importance to the healing and empowerment of the soul.

We honor science and the new scientific story of the Universe.

Four Winds has brought the following to Emmanuel and the greater Rockford community:

- Luminous speakers like theologian Matthew Fox, author Andrew Harvey, Linda Leonard, poet John O'Donohue, and activist Mary Cosby.

- Workshops with potter Margery Bankson, native leader Nick Hockings, native and Franciscan Jose Hobday, spirit doll maker Tricia Spirzmueller, Ho Chunk and Lutheran Heidi R.
- Opportunities to teach from the "Earth Charter," a United Nations global ethic.
- The "Ark of Hope," a carved and painted chest filled with books of prayers for the world by children from many nations, and now it includes prayers from Rockford as well.
- David Korten came to speak of *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. A group met following this that became Rockford's "Green Communities Coalition," a city-wide climate change movement.
- Ceremonies to heal the split between religion and the Creation: a Cosmic Mass, ceremonies on the Equinox's and the Solstices (the Winter Solstice now at Severson Dells), Candlemas, and an annual Earth Day Ceremony at the YMCA log lodge.
- Interfaith events such as: The "Children of Abraham Trialogue" programs with Pastor Jim Roberts, Imam Shpendim Nadzaku, and Rabbi Binah Wing; spiritual poetry of the East and West at Barnes & Noble; Sacred Sound evenings; and the annual Rumi's Wedding Night.
- Mystical/prophetic spirituality with book reviews at Barnes & Noble, Matthew Fox's Four Paths of Creation Spirituality, mask workshops, labyrinth ceremonies, and other Art as Meditation events.
- Sponsored Devotional chant nights (Emmanuel's Mishkan) and Kirtans with Ragani, Shantala, and Sean Johnson and the Wild Lotus Band.
- Spiritual concerts with Joe Jencks, Brother Sun, and others.