

Dave Kimball of Billings, Montana, and Sarah Shimer of South Berwick, Maine, are recognized for their significant efforts caring for God’s Creation

by Presbyterians for Earth Care | Special to Presbyterian News Service



LOUISVILLE — A community garden organizer in Billings, Montana, and a sustainability coordinator and teacher in South Berwick, Maine, were recognized with Eco-Justice awards Saturday during the final day of the [Presbyterians for Earth Care hybrid conference](#).

The William Gibson Eco-Justice Award was presented to Dave Kimball for what PEC called “his exceptional and far-reaching service in visioning the creation and maintenance of an extensive community garden” at [St. Andrew Presbyterian Church](#) in Billings, Montana. Sarah Shimer, a science teacher at [Berwick Academy](#) in Maine, received the Emerging Earth Care Leader Award for a young adult.



Dave Kimball shows the community garden at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Billings, Montana, to a visitor. (Photo by Mike Ferguson)

At St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Kimball develops, encourages and inspires garden activities that have grown and improved over the last 21 years. The garden, with more than 50 families sharing plots and a half-acre mission garden, feeds community members and each year shares thousands of pounds of fresh produce with local food agencies.

Kimball has led church members and the community in learning about composting, eco-friendly insect control, crop rotation and non-chemical-based fertilization, and has offered instruction around sustainable agriculture and the importance of pollinators. The orchard, labyrinth, greenhouse, compost system and beehives offer more than just vegetables to the community.

PEC said that Kimball's initial and realized vision is community inclusion. Because of his vision, organizational leadership and cheerleading, today the St. Andrew Presbyterian Church Community Garden continues to follow a mission that is broadly community driven and oriented.

Kimball told those attending the conference he was “very surprised and humbled” by the award, named for the founder of Presbyterians for Earth Care.

“My name may be on the certificate, but I accept this recognition on behalf of all the people involved in forming the community garden,” the 50 families who grow vegetables there and the committee that supports their work, Kimball said.

“We’re a small church with a lot going on,” Kimball said, adding a word of thanks to his wife Gail “for putting up with my many hours at the garden. She’s been my backbone and my support.”



Sarah Shimer

Shimer first demonstrated sustainable practices and motivated others while in high school, working at [Camp Hanover](#) in Mechanicsville, Virginia. As a [Young Adult Volunteer](#) in Boston, she immersed herself for a year in food justice — the right to grow, sell and eat healthy, locally secured food.

In the warmer months she worked with the [Hartford Street Presbyterian Church](#) community members in Natick, Massachusetts, in their community garden. After the growing and harvesting season, she served the community at [A Place to Turn](#) food pantry in Natick.

At Berwick Academy, Shimer readily demonstrates Earth stewardship and sustainable practices to her students and colleagues in the community garden. “Sarah demonstrates great potential as a future leader of sustainability,” PEC said, “and will motivate many more to care for God’s Creation in the future.”

“I really appreciate you all considering me for this award,” Shimer told conference-goers. Camp Hanover “was really formational to my faith journey and my environmental journey.”

“I really value the work Presbyterians for Earth Care is doing,” Shimer said, “and I hope to continue doing that work in my life, too.”

Presbyterians for Earth Care concluded its conference Saturday. About 240 people attended online and at [Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center](#) and at three other sites: [First Presbyterian Church](#) in Berkeley, California, [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#) in Minneapolis, and [Westover Hills Presbyterian Church](#) in Little Rock, Arkansas.