

## **CARING FOR CREATION NEWS**

November 2006

### **Twenty-Eight Balloons**

Walking the half-mile stretch of Lake Michigan beach between Ransom and New Holland streets one Sunday, I found spread along the way the remnants of twenty-eight balloons—still tied with festive colored ribbons. Some were white—perhaps from a wedding celebration, while others from other rituals were blue, orange, green, and red. Yet others still bobbed in the waves, unreachable on an autumn day.

Who hasn't thrilled to watch a helium filled balloon dancing through the air on its way to the heavens? Except they don't go to heaven. The helium escapes, rising through the stratosphere—a resource lost forever. The balloons and ribbons plummet back to earth. Birds, fish and wildlife try to eat the brightly colored blobs, or become tangled in the ribbons. God's creatures die because we wanted to celebrate.

The shore, the lake, our hillsides become the final resting place for gummy latex shreds, and tangled bright ribbons. The Caring for Creation Ministry asks that we all consider alternatives to the ritual of releasing balloons. Just as we learned to throw birdseed instead of rice at weddings (as rice swells in the bellies of birds and kills them) let's brainstorm ways to celebrate without balloons. Throwing flower petals, holding a pinwheel in the wind, flying a kite, planting a tree, giving a living plant—all are ways to mark important events. Bring your ideas to the Caring for Creation Ministry.

submitted by Jean McFadden