

# Faith groups get seedlings

By JULIA WOEHNER  
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MARQUETTE — The U.P. EarthKeeper Team is distributing 12,000 white spruce and red pine seedlings this weekend to churches of various faiths throughout the Upper Peninsula.

The EarthKeeper Tree Project will deliver about 12,000 trees to 100 churches, according to Natasha Koss of the Superior Watershed Partnership.

Locally, about 3,000 trees were passed out Saturday to representatives from churches Saturday morning at Messiah Lutheran Church in Marquette.

"The Superior Watershed Partnership is a supporter of EarthKeepers in that we bring to the table the environmental projects. Each year EarthKeepers does one token event and our organization is the one that brings in the environmental side of it," said Koss.

Kyra Fillmore, EarthKeeper communication coordinator, separated trees at Messiah and assisted with the distribution.

"I'm really excited about this," said Fillmore.

"Basically the idea was to get as many churches as we could involved in this project and then see how many (trees) we could give," Fillmore said.

Many of the trees will be blessed at services today prior to their distribution.

Mike Grossman, of Temple Beth Shalom in Ishpeming, came to pick up 40 trees to plant in Negaunee's Old Town area and on his property. He blessed a box full of trees prior to leaving Messiah this morning, as did members of other faiths.

Churches generally received 100 to 200 trees to plant on their property, camps or throughout their communities — as well as for distribution to members.

One church in Minocqua, Wis. also participated. Ontonagon and Baraga counties will receive their trees May 9.



Above, Kyra Fillmore, EarthKeeper communication coordinator, sorts seedlings that the group handed out to area faith groups at Messiah Lutheran Church in Marquette on Saturday morning. About 12,000 trees are being distributed throughout the Upper Peninsula to churches of various faiths. Below, participants and volunteers gather around a batch of trees to bless them prior to their departure from Messiah Lutheran Church in Marquette. Representatives from various congregations picked up the seedlings on Saturday morning at predetermined locations around the Upper Peninsula as part of the Upper Peninsula EarthKeeper Tree Project. (Journal photos by Julia Woehner)



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