

Climate Justice Task Force

Report to the Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, Bishop Diocesan



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¹ Please note that all underlined text in this report is hyperlinked.



Executive Summary

Creation itself is the first incarnation of Christ, the primary and foundational “Bible” that reveals the path to God.

—Richard Rohr

Climate change is the greatest threat our church has ever faced. It is also the greatest opportunity we have ever had to show that our faith values can repair the immense breach we have inflicted upon Creation.

Reducing fossil fuel emissions requires a transformation of our relationship with Creation. We must end many social habits. We must end our tolerance of intolerance and our ignorance of the history of our harms to minorities and repair the breach that lives in our hearts. We must end the common understanding that Creation is simply a resource to be harvested or a profit to be had and renew our belief in the reality that all of Creation is a sacred relation, a loving gift to be shared. We do not manage Creation. We are only one strand in the web of Creation in which harm to the least harms the whole.

We need not be scientists to understand climate change and we need not be theologians to understand our frayed relation with Creation. We have been profoundly misled into adopting habits of the heart and habits of the head that both threaten our existence and paradoxically suggest that there is nothing we can do to help ourselves.

As our ancestors long ago left comfort behind to flee Pharaoh for the promised land, we must now leave the comforts, habits, and beliefs that damage Creation. Although there is no quick way to free us from the results of the fictions we have lived, each of us has the tools we need. To succeed we must listen to ourselves and others as never before, we must lovingly examine and understand our false beliefs and resulting harms as never before, and we must love and support each other as never before. This is the only

way to transform fundamentally how we see Creation, how we live within it, and how we repair the harms our systems and habits have inflicted.

Since Creation is interfaith, remedying the breach is interfaith. All faiths must hew to their duty to Creator and Creation. This work requires personal and congregational transformation. Fortunately, transformation is what our faith is about.

This report introduces some of the transformations we must undertake and then summarizes the latest on the science of climate change showing that we know what must be done scientifically but are stuck on what must be done politically. The scientific goals have been set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), but, in the view of United Nations President António Guterres, developed countries are making empty pledges that fall far short of addressing the harm we have created.

As a faith-based community, we can model what must be done. Although we cannot heal the entire world with our work, we can heal the world *here*. If we do so throughout our diocese, then other communities and organizations will follow.

The first step is to pledge publicly to do so. Next, we must pledge to study the problem and our lives to understand and relinquish the fictions we've chosen to live by. Faith formation thus becomes a vehicle to renew our relationship with Creation and deepen our trust in and reliance upon one another.

Our willingness to be vulnerable is key because there is no quick fix. This is a long and deep voyage. It will be terrifying to let go of long-held beliefs, but it will be exhilarating to find new truths and unexpected joy that come from taking that risk.

We must think of this transformation as less a change of faith than it is a *growth* of faith: letting go of the unworkable in favor of the workable. This letting go should be done within a circle of profoundly trusted people who see and support one another as they are to assist them to become what they are called to be.

There is no single path. The many recommendations noted in this report sketch out the spectrum of what could work. Just as institutional transformation requires institutional investment, personal transformation requires personal investment. This report strongly supports hiring a Canon for Creation Justice. Due to the breadth of Creation Justice mandate, the Canon should expressly support First Nations and all others who have experienced environmental discrimination. Without a dedicated position, we cannot adequately support congregations and congregants in undertaking this journey. Climate change will change the roles our churches play in our communities: We are likely to become emergency centers during heat waves, fires, and other disasters. We also address these new roles in this report.

These actions will cost us time and money, but the cost of failing to invest and act will be far higher. Finally, the investment most critical to success is one we can all afford. That is *love*. Love fills the sails of our transformation. We need only let go of the shore.



Our Bioregion, Our Sacred Home

“We know that . . . we are now demanding more than [the earth] is able to provide. Science confirms what we already know: our human footprint is changing the face of the earth and because we come from the earth, it is changing us too. We are engaged in the process of destroying our very being. If we cannot live in harmony with the earth, we will not live in harmony with one another.”

—Anglican Communion Environmental Network

Tucked on the Western edge of the continent, the Diocese of Olympia is a place Episcopalians not only inhabit: We call it *home*.

For many of us, it is home because of its incomparable natural beauty. Many among us

would say that we love these mountains, these waters, these islands, these lush fields; we find God here. The Olympic Rainforest with its giant trees is possessed of perhaps the most exquisite silence in the continental United States. The San Juan Islands and even deep into urban Puget Sound are places where you can see orca whales and even hear their exhalations. The Skagit Valley's blooms are matched only by the seasonal calls of the great flocks of migrating birds. And the salmon are the iconic and endangered centerpiece of our Salish Sea and coastal ecosystems. We inhabit the phrase "God's creation is at the heart of my spirituality."

Nearly 100 Episcopal congregations are spread over 24,742 square miles. Our communities are rural and urban. Some of our worshiping communities are perched on islands. Some are edged by farmland. Some are tucked into mountain ranges. Some sit on the edge of the vast Pacific. And many are situated in growing cities, suburbs, and the metropolitan corridor stretching from the Oregon border to the Canadian border.

But our Episcopal communities are not only *situated in* their "settings"; our parishes *inhabit* their places and are part of the family of life—human, animal, plant. When our home and kin are diminished, we are diminished.

Within the lifetimes of many Episcopalians, Western Washington has been transformed. Within a very short time we have seen troubling changes to our home. And the changes are not small. A cascade of impacts began generations ago with overharvesting and unchecked development. Succeeding generations proceeded with immorally unregulated pollution loads into air, land, and water. Plummeting fish populations, eroded mountainsides, and unnecessary flooding in areas in which building should never have taken place have taken their toll.

As our science advances, we continue to learn of the complex interweaving in the skein of life around us. This connectedness inspires awe in how this vast Creation functions. Salmon returning to spawn and dying in far upriver tributaries are the conveyors of vitally important nitrogenous nutrients from ocean to forest ecosystem. Their decaying, post-spawning bodies not only feed their young fry by supporting communities of stream

invertebrates, but they also are carried by bears and other predators far from the water, and eventually feed the ground that nurtures the entire forest ecosystem. Of the eight species of salmon, trout, and char that spawn in and utilize the watersheds and nearshore habitat of Puget Sound, four species are now listed as threatened. And their numbers continue to decline from multiple causes, primarily tied to human activity. Salmon are at the heart of the indigenous Native American cultures that have inhabited this Northwest coastal area for more than 20,000 years. For the Native groups here before western colonization, the richness of this land was such that there was no need to move dwellings seasonally. All was provided by nature's abundance, and this was respected and honored in cultural traditions and practices.

But capping off generations of abuse and overuse of the gifts God graced us with in this place we call home; we are now experiencing changes that cannot be ignored or hidden or denied.

Climate change has become climate *crisis*. We can no longer presume continuity in the resources we took for granted in this natural resource-based economy.

For those following the science, many of the changes we are experiencing now were predicted to come our way in 2050 or later. What many thought was a far-away possibility has become a visceral and very present reality. For example, over only the last few short years, virtually every congregation in our Diocese has been exposed to wildfire smoke. Inhabitants of Western Washington now have what was unthinkable only a few years ago: a "smoke season." We breathe smoke from fires to the north in British Columbia; from the east in the Cascades and beyond; and from Oregon and California to the south.

Many of our congregations have been in flood zones and mudslides. Coastal communities dependent on fishing have seen ocean warming and ocean acidification result in decreased abundance of fish, mass die-offs of fish and marine birds from lack of food or low dissolved oxygen, inability of oyster larvae to develop shells, and changes in species composition in marine ecosystems.

In many of our communities, the individuals and families least able to withstand loss—those without adequate financial savings and the ability to move if needed—have paid the price with their lives.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Episcopalians and other Christians in Western Washington joined forces to ask questions such as *What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ in these times of environmental decline?* and *How does our faith tradition inform and empower us?* These early efforts focused on networking, resources for congregational education and worship, and tools for advocacy, joining with others who cared about this web of issues.

But 2022 is a long way from 1992. Once again, the Church is called to ask vital questions about our role, our place, and our ministry within the communities we serve. And once again, the Diocese of Olympia has a unique role to play and special gifts to offer as we live faithfully in the world we are called to serve.



Introduction

Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.

– Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe.
May we know your presence here, seeking your will upon earth.
Grant all your creatures food for today and strength for our families.
Pardon our falseness as we forgive those who are untrue to us.
Do not forsake us in our need but lead us to new birth.
For the glory of life and the light of life, are yours forever. Amen.

– Celtic Lord's Prayer

After more than thirty years of globally coordinated research by the best of our scientists, there is no doubt that this climate crisis is caused by us, can be remedied

only by us, and now, due to our failure to act, is a serious threat to all of us and most particularly to the least of us. Those who've done the least to create climate change are the ones most harmed by it. Climate change is as unjust as it is horrific.

How bad is it? In November of 2021, UN Secretary General António Guterres summed up the first IPCC 6 report with four words: “**Code Red for Humanity.**” In 2022, Secretary General Guterres summed up the second IPCC 6 report with just three words: “**Delay is death.**” If we all rapidly and substantially cut our carbon expression, we can preserve a *difficult* future for our children. If we fail, they face a *dreadful* future.

We are called to face a two-sided truth. The scientific side is largely proven and accepted: Scientifically, we know what to do and economically we can afford to do it. The political truth is altogether different. Ten of our eleven past presidents have openly supported facing climate change and other systemic harms to our environment yet none have found the political support to pass comprehensive climate change legislation. Pledges for change were then and are now defeated, diverted, or delayed by well-funded opposition forces, not unlike those used by the tobacco lobby to delay cigarette warning labels for forty years.

Internationally, the United States, Canada, and many other nations are stuck with pledges long on promise and short on substance. Secretary General António Guterres says that we are now “cataloging the empty pledges that put us firmly on track toward an unlivable world.” The Episcopal Church is now an official observer at the annual Congress of the Parties. Our delegates have worked very hard, but without the support of Congress no significant pledge can be made. No developed country has recognized that it has harmed other countries. Global fossil fuel corporations are using the entire process to broker an agreement to exempt them from liability.

As noted in our section on "The Science," we are quickly running out of time. We have fewer than eight years to hit our 2030 carbon reduction goal, and the United States is going backward, not forward. If we do not hit our 2030 goals, then the 2050 goals will be irrelevant. Our "Titanic" plows toward the icebergs at an ever-increasing speed. As of

early 2022, we were projected to reach a temperature increase of 1.5°C in 15 to 20 years. As of May 2022, the World Meteorological Organization projects we have a 50 percent chance of reaching 1.5°C by 2026.

In light of this situation, there's little wonder that many feel that nothing meaningful can be done to make our Congress act and that nothing that we do here can make a significant difference to the world.

We respectfully disagree. The unprecedented peril of climate change is also an unprecedented opportunity for faith communities to get the job done. Our political system has not failed; it simply cannot create the fundamental change needed without the engine of transformation that faith provides.

Without transformative political action by faith communities, the Underground Railroad and Abolition movement would not have succeeded. Without transformative faith communities, Civil Rights, desegregation, and voting rights would not have become, at least for now, the law of the land.

The singular power that communities of faith have that Congress lacks is *love*. We are not talking about sentimental love but instead the love that stands up to power: the love that stood up to Bull Connor, police dogs, fire hoses, and beatings and kept on singing, "We shall overcome." With such love, a few thousand can change the course of Congress but only if we are as devoted as we are united.

This transformation is something all of us can afford to do. We must transform ourselves and our profoundly tattered relation with Creation. We must let go of what no longer works to embrace what we truly need. This change begins not with the politics of party but with the politics of loving transformation, and it is accomplished by facing difficult truths.

The first difficult truth is that our culture, faith, and society are founded on a series of fictions that we've accepted as fact. Since the writings of Aristotle, for example, we've

accepted the fiction of hierarchy in which humans are superior to all other beings and some humans are superior to other humans due to their gender, culture, skin color, or sexual orientation. God didn't pick favorites. Such false hierarchies of status have cultivated new forms of intolerance that label difference as deviance. Hierarchy has flowered into other fictions like anthropomorphism, which places humans above all others while objectifying the rest of creation into "things" and "resources" from which to profit.

Next is the fiction that humans are the only "people." Nothing God created is inanimate. Everything God created has personhood. Our indigenous ancestors likely believed as Chief Seattle did:

"The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

Denying the reality of our indigeneity and its fundamental relation to all of Creation is what paved the way for the climate change crisis. It caused us to worship a caricature of Jesus, not the real person Jesus was, like Chief Seattle, a "First Nations" person whose homeland was colonized. He was a subject, not a citizen, of the Roman Empire. He, like St. Francis, felt that all of Creation was sacred and that hierarchic views of creation were erroneous.

Another fiction central to our lives is that we humans can "weave the web of life"; in other words, that we can use technology and the market to invent our way out of any problem.

And finally, at the root of climate change is the fiction that Christianity was a religion of empire destined to rule over Creation instead of being a humble and grateful strand of it. In time, this view led to a church that proclaimed that slavery and genocide were lawful and that the land and all creatures that lived upon it were no longer sacred and were simply resources to be bought and sold.

Taken together, these fictions have reduced human understanding of Creation from a sacred commonality to mere commodities in an economy in which growth is valued more than health and in which the Market has more wisdom than the Maker.

Chief Seattle knew the true law of the land:

"All things share the same breath—the beast, the tree, the man. . . .
[T]he air shares its spirit with all the life it supports."

Although some can feel the truth of his words, we are far from living it. Living it demands we abandon the fictions in our lives, admit their harms, and repair their breaches. Each harm is an injustice upon Creation; each reparation is justice to Creation.

This transformation will take immense courage and commitment, but we have both. As Karle Wilson Baker said, "Courage is fear that has said its prayers." The world looks to our nation, the most powerful democracy and the greatest historical contributor to climate change, to set the example for what should be done. Congress was unable for more than ninety years to pass voting rights legislation until people of faith organized and acted politically. Since the current global impasse is propped up by *empty* pledges, we must set the moral example by making *full* pledges. We can individually and congregationally pledge as if we were nations to admit our responsibility, to commit to reduce our carbon emissions, and to assist a congregation harmed by climate change.

If just half of us manage to pledge and calculate our carbon footprints and take responsibility, that will be news the world wants to hear. We will join with other faiths because every faith is based in love, and together, in our devotion to repair our harm to Creation, we will be stronger together than we could ever be apart.

We must also reach in as we reach out. We cannot address climate change without seeking Climate Justice. We must courageously challenge the fiction of whiteness many mistake for identity. Only we can decolonize our histories and understandings from fake

news, unjust privilege, Manifest Destiny, and systemic discriminations against those whose, land, labor, and dignity colonizers took without just compensation. We cannot repair our Creation without a profound understanding of how we have injured her.

This report next addresses first the "why" of this work and then the science behind this work. Thereafter we will share our recommendations for actions to be taken, faith formation and creation justice mindsets to be developed, and resources needed to support this most important work.

If we unite in love, there is little we cannot do. But we must act now.



Reasons for This Work

The world is not a problem to be solved; it is a living being to which we belong. The world is part of our own self and we are a part of its suffering wholeness.

—Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

Most of us are not trained climate scientists or researchers. We are friends, moms, dads, brothers, sisters, grandparents. You may not think your voice has an impact on climate change, but understanding what your connection to Creation is—who and what you value—helps tell the story of why we must respond, and that is exactly where we need energy and focus.

We invite you to consider what is your "why" for being in and enjoying Creation. If it were to disappear or be taken away, how would your life be changed? What will you do to fight for it? Maybe you'll share how much you love the first feel of fresh powder in the Cascades and that you have noticed changes to the snowpack. Maybe you will share

how as a parent you are concerned about your kids not being able to play outside because the playground equipment is too hot or because wildfire smoke makes it impossible to enjoy a summer evening outside. Maybe you'll talk about the cost of additional maintenance to ensure operational protections against changing weather. Whatever the reason, we encourage you to talk about why being in Creation is important to you and to find out what's happening and what opportunities there are to participate in solutions and share with others in your community.

In this report we have thought through this question of "why" from a faith perspective with the intention to provide resources to help in your neighborhood and parish. Let's grow stronger in faith together as we care for and restore God's Creation. Let's imagine a future together where we can continue to live, move, and be outside in wonder of nature and its bounty.



The Science

In 2021 we reached a new peak of 417 ppm (parts per million) of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere. This is way beyond the benchmark of 350 ppm recommended to maintain a temperature increase below 1.5°C and to avoid destabilization of Earth's climate, with consequent damage to all aspects of life on the planet. That year we witnessed catastrophic flooding and fires in our state with more to come. The year also featured long-term droughts around the globe; unheard-of heat in Siberia and the rest of the Arctic in the summer, triggering permafrost melt and release of methane (a greenhouse gas significantly more powerful than carbon dioxide); rapidly melting glaciers in Greenland; and failing ice shelves in Antarctica. A foot of sea rise is projected by 2050, threatening our ports and waterfronts and potentially extinguishing island nations and coastal communities. These are impacts in a world that is continuing

to warm from a level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that has been rising since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

And the pace of this change is accelerating. The pace of change is so rapid that most plant and animal species do not have time to adapt in behavior or move to a more optimal location. Hence, we are seeing a crash in Earth's biodiversity, undermining the stability of all ecosystems. The change we are triggering is not temporary. Even if we cut emissions significantly, the climate will take a century or more to correct, but will Earth's regenerative systems still function?

The UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report in August 2021 (*Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*) that states in the clearest terms possible that the science of climate change is settled (emphasis added):

"It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere have occurred. . . . The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole—and the present state of many aspects of the climate system—are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years."

UN Secretary General António Guterres in his opening address to COP-26, the Conference of Parties, which met in Glasgow in October/November 2022, did not mince words:

"Recent climate action announcements might give the impression that we are on track to turn things around.

This is an illusion.

The last published report on Nationally Determined Contributions showed that they would still condemn the world to a calamitous 2.7 degree [Celsius] increase.

And even if the recent pledges were clear and credible—and there are serious questions about some of them—we are still careening towards climate catastrophe."

Our global youth (Greta Thunberg and other youth activists) state the realities of the situation in unflinchingly clear terms. They have a keen perspective on the central justice issues at stake: how industrialized countries, primarily in the northern hemisphere, have plundered Earth's resources and people to achieve standards of living that are unsustainable and, in the process, have put those who are least industrialized and responsible for the climate problem at the highest risk of climate impacts. This is also true within the United States, where poor and minority communities are subject to far greater harm from both fossil fuel industrial pollution and the impacts of climate change. The youth call for action to address climate justice now.

On February 28, 2022, the IPCC released the Working Group II *Report Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, which focused on how climate change affects people and the planet. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres stated, "Today's IPCC report is an atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership." He added, "Delay means death."

The following was included in the report:

- Climate-related impacts are already widespread and some impacts are irreversible, even if we cut emissions and lower the temperature increase below the 1.5°C limit.
- Effective adaptation is critical. Poorer countries (mostly in the global south) and marginalized populations least responsible for climate change lack the resources to adapt effectively. Governments of the world's richest and most polluting countries need to commit resources to support the rapid scaling-up of adaptation in the countries that are feeling the brunt of climate change's effects.
- Where adaptation is no longer an option, the world is facing "Loss and Damage": loss of culture, loss of home and place, damage to habitable land. Addressing these losses must also be a priority for wealthier nations.

On April 4, 2022, yet another report issued by the IPCC stated urgently that “projected global emissions from (national pledges) mean that limiting global warming to 1.5°C is beyond reach and will make it harder after 2030 to limit warming to 2°C. Once again, Secretary General Guterres did not mince words:

“Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness.”



Recommendations

Action

1. Pledge to Care for Creation

“Together, we pledge to protect and renew the Earth and all who call it home. Together, we are living the Way of Love and make this commitment to specific actions.”

– Creation Care Pledge, The Episcopal Church

Recommendation: Each year we pray and discern how much money we plan to give to the church. We recommend a parallel but not competing practice: an annual pledge to care for creation.

Background: Pledging is central to faith. It keeps the lights on. Pledging for Creation Justice should be central to every faith. It keeps existence on. Committing to lowering our individual carbon footprints is important but no longer enough because most carbon expression is systemic, and the impacts of climate change inflict far greater harm on

poor and marginalized communities. Like COVID, climate change harms the “have nots” far more than the “haves.”

We cannot address climate change without addressing our environmental racism and other forms of systemic discrimination. We cannot continue to pretend to be a colorblind society when we have, for four centuries, systemically deprived our people of life, liberty, and property based upon their color.

Per the COP Paris Accords, every country is urged to pledge to reduce carbon expression and assist countries harmed by carbon expression. One reason developed countries and energy companies have not pledged to address their harms is that they are unwilling to face the injustice they have created.

Since pledges by key nations are “empty,” we, as people of faith, can set the moral example by making pledges that are “full.” As our forebears pledged to abolish slavery and later to seek civil rights, we can seek climate justice. We must also take collective action to reduce the carbon footprint of the systems we depend upon.

The Episcopal Church has written creation care pledges and covenants such as the Episcopal Creation Care Pledge and the Episcopal Covenant to Care of Creation to build upon. Each reflects a commitment to care for Creation such as by eliminating the use of single-use plastics, learning to use a carbon tracker, planting trees, and purchasing carbon offsets.

We can pledge to understand and undo injustice to Creation by assisting another congregation significantly harmed by climate change. As congregations we can set an example for what countries should do.

The following pledge is not fixed. Each congregation can adapt it to their needs. It is also optional. One need not commit to every term.

Proposed Pledge

1. I agree we have a climate emergency. I pledge to determine my carbon footprint (<https://www.sustainislandhome.org/>) and to reduce it by 50 percent by 2030.
2. I agree to urge my congregation to declare that there is a climate emergency. I pledge to determine the carbon footprint of our buildings and activities and to reduce them by 50 percent by 2030.
3. I pledge to educate myself about climate change so I can educate others about it. As part of my education, I pledge to complete a comprehensive climate change training such as Climate Reality Leadership Training (<https://www.climateRealityproject.org/training>).
4. To understand climate injustice, I pledge to complete the Episcopal Sacred Ground Program (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/welcome/>) this calendar year.
5. I pledge to learn how to write effective letters and op eds through, for example, thirdact.org or some other organization.
6. I pledge to support youth and other climate activists.
7. I pledge to urge my congregation to adopt a curriculum that teaches the need for the care of Creation to our children as a central part of our faith.
8. I pledge to stop using banks that provide major funding for fossil fuel extraction.
9. I pledge to reach out to a congregation significantly harmed by climate change here or abroad and seek ways to address their harm.

Taking Action: Pledging unites us in reflection and action through which we promise to study, understand, and renew our frayed relations with Creation and join with others to speak out on climate issues.

Results: Pledging shows we are serious about our faith and about climate change. As the situation worsens, more and more people will seek congregations that are facing, not fleeing, reality. As we embrace our deeper faith mission to seek Creation Justice, others will wish to join us.

Resources:

- <https://www.thirdact.org/> seeks to organize seniors (over 60) to take faith- and secular-based action on climate change.
- <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/> offers trainings that members of the Diocese should attend in groups when possible. They can be assisted by Climate Reality graduates in our Diocese.
- <https://episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground> offers a good overview of the Sacred Ground Process. This is a ten-week program that is done in a group process with a facilitator. Trainees have reported that it provides a profound introduction to the historical injustices we must address.

2. Use Your Voice to Advocate for Climate Justice

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

—The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Recommendation: We encourage church members to become faithful advocates, putting our faith and our voice into action on issues we care about.

Background: Actions to reduce our personal household toll on the environment can only take us so far in avoiding the most catastrophic climate impacts. Systemic change in government policies is necessary and urgent.

For many, communicating directly with legislators, testifying at legislative hearings, writing op-eds for newspapers, or joining in protest marches are big jumps beyond personal comfort zones. But faithful advocacy grounds the conversation in values: It’s heart-centered, it seeks justice and equity, and it’s hopeful. When you share your story (who you are, your personal connection to the issue, and what you value as a person of faith) with your legislator, it is immensely impactful and provides them with the backup to take a strong stance on an issue. *The faith community brings the moral voice to the table.*

As 501(c)(3) nonprofits, faith communities *can* take a position on a legislative bill and *can* educate others and ask them to act. What churches *can't* do is lobby for the election of a particular candidate.

Taking Action: We are fortunate to have two local nonprofits in Washington—Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light and Faith Action Network—that provide training, leadership, and support to individuals and congregations in using their voices to be effective advocates for the health and well-being of communities and the environment. In addition to providing notification about opportunities to testify or submit written comments on issues, they provide alerts about upcoming marches or protests where we can put our bodies forward in witness to injustice, standing with those most impacted by climate change and environmental degradation

Although we can take the following actions as individuals, supporting each other as a congregational group is the easiest and potentially most rewarding way to start engaging actively in being an advocate:

- Join one or both of these organizations so you are alerted about training opportunities early in the calendar year where you can hear about faith-community legislative priorities and learn how to testify, in advance of the legislative session.
- Register to participate in Faith Advocacy Day and/or Environmental Lobby Day, when both organizations coordinate meetings and conversations with your representatives.
- Once you've established a relationship with your representatives, follow up when you receive alerts that a particular bill is being discussed or voted on.
- Talk to your family and friends about what you care about and actions you've taken.

- Write a letter to your local paper, expressing your opinion about what needs to change for climate justice. Share that letter with your friends to give them ideas of what they could write.
- Write to your Congressperson or Senator with your personal story about why action is important on a pending bill in Congress.
- Join a protest march, vigil, or ceremony as a witness and in support of those who need our voices and our numbers to bring to light climate injustice. Bring a friend or cohort from your church with you. Share your stories afterward.
- Study the dynamics of structural and environmental racism and systemic inequality to better understand how to assist those harmed by it.
- Study the history of whiteness and white culture to understand how it has contributed to present climate justice problems.

Results: Legislation and other political action will be taken to address climate justice issues.

Resources:

- **Blog.** Episcopal priest Margaret Bullitt-Jonas is the Missioner for Creation Care in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ as well as Creation Care advisor for the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. She preaches, writes, and blogs extensively, including about her own transformation into a passionate advocate for action on climate change. <https://revivingcreation.org/category/blog/>
- **Book.** In *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*, Dr. Katharine Hayhoe shows how to have small conversations

with those who don't agree with you, basing your conversation on shared values. She is an Evangelical Christian and one of the most effective communicators on climate change.

3. Determine Your Carbon Footprint and Embrace Drawdown

"God so loved *the world* that he gave his only son . . . ' is not a pious platitude or a simple religious refrain. It is a declaration of God's purpose and mission in the world from the beginning to this very day. 'God so loved *the world*.' That's not just about us who are human. It's about the whole of God's grand and glorious Creation."

—Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, on keeping our promises in caring for creation with carbon-reduction techniques such as the carbon tracker tool

Recommendation: We encourage congregations collectively and individually to reduce their carbon footprint as much as possible to foster life-giving choices in how we inhabit the earth that has been given to us.

Background: Carbon reduction applies to church facilities and, perhaps more importantly, to members of the congregation. Congregants can achieve this goal through *measuring* their carbon footprints and *taking actions* to reduce their footprint *collectively* at [Sustain Earth, Our Island Home](#), the carbon tracker tool designed for use by The Episcopal Church. When participating together, the entire congregation is strengthened and empowered, serving as a model to the larger community.

Taking Action:

- **Diocese-Wide Implementation of the Carbon Tracker Tool.** We recommend that two or three people in each parish become familiar enough with the Sustain Earth, Our Island Home carbon tracker tool so they can help others with

questions as they arise. This will require sustained communication and coordination, training, and follow-up user-group meetings to maintain momentum.

- **Facility Improvements.** Although improvements to facilities may be large and out of reach financially, many small operational changes can be made to reduce the facility carbon footprint. Here are just a few examples:

- A no-Styrofoam/minimal plastic policy for all events
- A minimal travel policy
- Carpooling
- On-line meetings to alternate with in-person meetings

Facility improvements can even become opportunities for stewardship in that parishioners can support improvements in honor or memory of someone they love. For example, at Saint Mark's, parishioners helped fund the EV Charging Station and a water bottle filling station.

- **Energy Audits.** An energy audit is an assessment of the church to look at current energy consumption and then identify energy efficiency measures that can make the church more efficient. A small investment in an energy analysis may also expose some less expensive improvements to facilities that could save money on utility bills as well as significantly reduce the facility carbon footprint. Small grants through the Bishop's Committee on the Environment (BCE) and other organizations may be available to underwrite an energy audit. At some future date, the parish may feel called to raise money to make bigger improvements.

Results: Together, using our carbon tracker, we can show our personal and congregational transformation. We can explore group financing and support each other's endeavors. Our actions will inspire others to commit to act.

Resources:

- **Partner geographically.** For small parishes, it may be helpful to collaborate with other parishes in their geographic regions found [here](#).
- **Carbon tracker training.** A recording of a June 2021 training with the developer of the carbon tracker tool can be found [here](#).
- **Diocesan Carbon Tracker Workshop** (2021) includes experiences of members from the dioceses and can be viewed [here](#).
- **Grants** from the Bishop's Committee on the Environment and Earth Ministry/Interfaith Power and Light can be found [here](#).

[Drawdown, Seattle](#) has many resources available for people and organizations attempting to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. These resources are based on the comprehensive book *[Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming](#)*, by Paul Hawken (editor). [Here](#) is a handout that summarizes the [Drawdown solutions](#) in brief paragraphs, many of them within the scope of the church. The Drawdown website is also rich with recommendations, TED talks, and film and book recommendations that provide context on why to carbon track.

4. Offset Your Unavoidable Carbon Emissions

“We have developed a covenant which calls on us to reduce our carbon footprint and calls on the Episcopal Diocese of the Southern Philippines to increase their efforts in tree planting.”

—Bishop Greg Rickel, 2012

Recommendation: We recommend that congregations collectively or members individually offset their unavoidable carbon emissions by donating to designated and vetted carbon offset funds and ministries.

Background: Carbon offsets are essentially trades between carbon emissions in one place in favor of cutting back elsewhere, the goal being carbon neutrality. If you need to fly on a plane, for example, you can neutralize the carbon your flight emits by

purchasing an equivalent carbon offset. Your offset purchase might fund the planting of a tree or the capturing of emissions from a landfill. When carbon offsets are purchased, others are being indirectly compensated for performing the service of removing your unavoidable carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

Taking Action: Carbon offset programs should only be utilized after first reducing carbon footprints as much as possible. Consider these steps as a guide:

- **Measure** your carbon footprint using the carbon tracker tool at www.sustainislandhome.org. Then take the following steps.
- **Reduce** your footprint as much as possible by taking actions suggested by the carbon tracker.
- **Offset** your unavoidable carbon footprint by making a financial contribution to a carbon offset fund.

Consider these carbon offset funds:

- [The Carbon Offset Cooperative Mission](#) is a reforestation partnership between the Diocese of Olympia and the Diocese of Southern Philippines.
- Another very effective carbon offset program, is [Carbon Offsets to Alleviate Poverty \(COTAP\)](#), which pays farmers in developing countries for planting and maintaining trees that capture and store CO₂. COTAP focuses on certified forestry projects in least-developed countries that create life-changing income for the world's poorest people. COTAP is a U.S.-based, 501(c)(3) organization.

A financial contribution to either of these organizations will also be a tax-deductible gift. There are many offset programs available that could also be considered. We recommend researching to ensure their approaches are valid and effective.

Results: Carbon offsets allow us to reduce our impact now while helping those impacted by our historical fossil fuel use.

5. Prepare for Environmental Emergencies

“Our churches are uniquely situated to provide quick and essential services during an emergency because we are already in the neighborhoods and communities where disasters happen. Because we have the opportunity to act as Jesus to help those in need, our parishes and mission churches can prepare themselves to offer respite for people who live near us and for aid workers to come in to assist in recovery. We live in an area where fire, heat, power outages, flooding, and earthquakes can happen. How quickly could you open your doors to provide protection, warmth, phone charging, a hot meal, or quiet space to pray and rest?”

– The Rev. Patty Baker, Vicar, St. Clare’s, Snoqualmie

Recommendation: Congregations commission a resource/action plan so they are ready when and if they are called upon in a natural disaster to be a place of hospitality or assembly point for congregations, community members, and helpers (medical, fire fighters, etc.), offering a place of shelter and emotional and spiritual support.

Background: Floods, fires, smoke, heat. These are regional issues deeply impacting the communities in which our parishes live.

“The Episcopal Church welcomes you” is taking on new meaning in our generation. Congregational buildings are prominent public spaces. They are typically centrally located. They have plumbing and electricity and often showers as well. During a public outage, the electrical power in some of our parishes is more likely to be operational than in many private homes. The people will come.

Taking Action:

- In the summer of 2021, on Vashon Island, local congregations were approached by the Medical Reserve Corps to see if their spaces could be available for respite from heat for people in need during the “heat dome,” when temperatures soared beyond historical record. Air conditioning is uncommon in Western Washington.

- As far back as 2007, St. Clare's, Snoqualmie, found itself offering a new ministry. The Vicar, the Rev. Patty Baker, tells the story of how St. Clare's opened its doors when the Snoqualmie Valley experienced a major flood:

"Part of our response was to open our doors to a local preschool for three weeks while the school was being repaired. We also responded to a request from PSE to act as a central location while their workers replaced approximately 600 gas meters that were flooded out. As a result, both organizations supported our local foodbank through donations to St. Clare's. It was our chance to act as Jesus to help those in need."

Here are some suggestions for getting started:

- **Network with your community.** How are local organizations, such as the Medical Reserve Corps and the Fire Department, planning for community disaster response? Are there other churches in your community who are asking similar questions about the role of faith communities?
- **Identify the scope of the role your church could play.** Consider your congregational building and its setting.
- **Prepare for disaster.** Identify individuals in your congregation who can mobilize and lead in times of disaster. Ponder the training experiences that might be planned and taken in advance.
- **Consider the Vestry and other leadership.** Identify issues like insurance, building safety, storage of water, space for camping, electrical generators—all will likely come into play.

Results: The congregation recognizes disaster preparation ministry as *a ministry needed in our time. The congregation begins to prepare now, BEFORE the natural*

disaster hits. The congregation is seen as an integral part of the greater community by members and non-members alike.

Conclusion: In 2022, many more Episcopal congregations will find themselves being asked to play a new role in their communities, especially in smaller communities where there is less access to public spaces. As this task force looks ahead, we anticipate that this trend will only continue and accelerate. How are congregations equipped to respond? What are some of the resources the Diocese can offer to support them when these congregations review the decisions they may need to be making soon and regularly?

Resources: The Rev. Patty Baker is also the Partner in Response and Resilience at Episcopal Relief and Development. She can provide multiple linkages with ERD.

6. Collaborate with Others

“I don’t believe in magic. I believe in the sun and the stars, the water, the tides, the floods, the owls, the hawks flying, the river running, the owl talking. They’re measurements. They tell us how healthy things are. How healthy we are. Because we and they are the same. That’s what I believe in.”

—Billy Frank, Jr., Nisqually Tribe

Recommendation: Congregations are encouraged to reach out and collaborate with other local communities of faith; tribal and cultural communities; and non-profit organizations that are active in Creation Care and climate justice to learn together, support commitments to act, and amplify the power of any action.

Background: Our Pacific Northwest has numerous organizations—both faith-based and secular—that have been advocating for the environment for years and, in some cases, decades.

These might be regional and faith-based, like Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light; local and secular, such as a Land Trust in a particular county;

statewide like the Sierra Club/Washington State, or national like 350.org. These are allies and partners, such that no congregation needs to develop actions on their own but can join in and be empowered by what is already well underway.

In addition, listening to the words of indigenous people or people from other cultural and faith traditions deepens our awareness that sustaining the earth is something we all must share in and that comes from very deep and universal knowledge and tradition.

Taking Action: Here are some suggestions for building relationships:

- Through Diocesan coordination, promote easily accessible networking amongst congregations to capitalize on the unique strengths, interests, and experiences of different congregational communities.
- Connect with the environmental non-profits that are working at the local level for causes that have a clearly felt connection to the local concerns of the congregation.
- Connect with other local faith communities to learn from each other's faith statements about sustaining the earth and participate together in workshops, teaching, and action in the community.
- Connect with local tribes: Since all the land we have was appropriated, we owe First Nations a profound duty of support. In dialogue with tribes, we should
 - Review the history and background of the relationship of the Episcopal Church and indigenous peoples and institute the practice of land acknowledgment. Go to <https://ecww.org/land-acknowledgement/> to start.
 - Support the return of traditional lands to tribes.
 - Support recognition of tribal status.
 - Support preservation of sacred peoples (salmon, shellfish, herbal plants, cedar, and others).
 - Support payment of real rent.
 - Stand with tribe members to protect treaty rights and waters such as the Salish Sea, lakes, rivers, and streams.

By repairing our relations with others, we are repairing ourselves.

Resources:

- Faith Action Network: <https://fanwa.org/>
- Faith in Place: <https://www.faithinplace.org/home>
- Green Muslims: <https://www.greenmuslims.org/>
- Unitarian Climate Elders: <https://eldersaction.org/>
- Greenfaith: <https://greenfaith.org>
- Citizens Climate Lobby: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>
- Third Act: www.thirdact.org
- Sunrise: <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/>
- Fridays for Future: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>

7. Green Your Congregation

“How will we bring climate and environmental justice concerns into the religious life of our community – into our preaching, prayers, and worship? What spiritual grounding do individuals need in a climate-changed world?”

--The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
Missioner for Creation Care, Episcopal Diocese of Western
Massachusetts & Creation Care Advisor, Episcopal Diocese
of Massachusetts

Recommendation: Whether you’re just starting out or well on your way, strive to make your congregation more environmentally sound.

Take Action: If your parish has not begun creation care activities, here are some questions to help you get started:

1. What would engage the congregation the most? You can’t do everything—that’s part of the paralysis we sometimes experience. So, try one thing that might

generate interest as a beginning. It might be water, air, food, day/night lighting, transportation, recycling, composting/gardens, or plastics.

2. Would a guest speaker or preacher provide motivation?
3. Could a consultant meet with the Vestry or other group to jump-start something in particular or help narrow the focus of possibilities?
4. Has there been resistance in the past? What might you do to lessen resistance?
5. Remember, “success” cannot be defined by how many people do or don’t participate. If one person makes a positive change in their own environment, learns something new, or recycles their paper, swaps out lightbulbs, or buys a hybrid, that’s a win.

Here are some ideas for greening your congregation from the recently retired rector of St. Andrew, Port Angeles, the Rev. Gail Wheatley:

- Make a get-rid-of-Styrofoam plan. Ask/require groups who rent church space to commit to the same as part of the rental agreement.
- Replace paper products, utensils, and drinkware with compostable products. Even if there is not a local facility for large-scale composting, these will decompose faster in the landfill than will anything coated in plastic.
- Donate 2 percent (or some other fraction) of all bequests (free money) to a fund until there is enough to put on solar panels.
- Install one or two charging stations in the parking lot.
- Plant only native species on the grounds. No more rose beds. Invite a Master Gardener, a county Extension Agent, or someone from a native plant nursery to coffee hour to learn more.
- Use LED lights inside and out, including for the parking lot.
- Put dusk-dawn timers on all outside lights.

- Consider permeable paving, such as the parking lot.
- Install dark sky shields on the parking lot and exterior lights.
- Use carbon offsets for Rector/Vestry travel each year.
- Include a Creation Care donation line-item in every annual budget, even if it's \$100. Take up money for a donation to the Diocese of Southern Philippines, for example, Audubon, or your local Streamkeepers or SurfRider Foundation.
- Do the work to become a Greening Congregation (pretty easy) or Green Faith certified (more involved).
- Become a backyard sanctuary or a Good News Garden and get the signs. This works at home or at a parish.
- Have an outdoor service.
- Walk the parish boundary on Rogation Sunday.
- Start a worm bin for food scraps. Bless the soil and distribute bags of compost annually on Rogation Sunday.
- Get Green Grants to help replace single pane windows, seal outside doors/thresholds, and install ductless heat pumps on timers.
- Help folks recycle by having a place for them to bring recyclables if they would otherwise have to pay to take them in.
- Sing The Blue Green Hills of Earth a couple of times a year. St. Andrew's added an additional verse to include our local rivers.
- Say yes to Land Acknowledgment statements and relationships with local tribes. Tribal contact information is located on this Land Acknowledgment page on the Diocesan website.
- Use higher percentage recycled paper in printers.
- Use brown (unbleached) paper towels in bathrooms.
- Use (and make) beeswax fabric and other reusable non plastic food/storage wraps.
- Have a bike/walk/carpool to church Sunday.
- Participate as a parish in a local beach cleanup. See WA CoastSavers.
- Adopt a Highway for litter removal near you.

- Do your own thing or partner with other churches/interfaith on Earth Day (April 22) activities. Bring in a speaker or preacher, plant some trees in a restoration project, or have a local-food potluck. Check with your local or tribal library to see if they are planning events or speakers. Consider an annual Earth Day Pledge for Stewardship of Creation as a diocesan request.
- Learn about Earth Hour, the last Saturday in March around the world. Next year, on March 25, is the Feast of the Annunciation. Promote energy conservation. Ask your city council to make a proclamation and/or participate as a city.
- Learn about Land Trusts in your area. Learn about the local indigenous peoples' conservation efforts and historical care of the land and its resources.
- Get information from the diocese on Holy Hikes and take a group or make up one of your own. We live in paradise—go anywhere and look down as well as up/out!
- See if there are upcoming star parties near you and join in. Olympic National Park has a resident astronomer in the summer, and pre-COVID there were nighttime walks and star parties at Hurricane Ridge. Other national parks and state parks near you may have them as well.

Faith Formation

1. Offer Intergenerational Opportunities to Explore Creation Care

“Creation and climate work presents a spiritually rich opportunity for all generations to work together to make changes and support one another as well as honor the contributions all can make.”

—The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Olympia Diocese

Recommendation: Create opportunities for people of all ages to learn about and work together to care and advocate for the planet.

Background: We have, within our church family, a unique opportunity to do the cross-generational work of Creation Care. As faith formation moves away from the traditional mode of Christian education where everyone is grouped by age toward an

intergenerational model, we can set the stage for youth to be inspired by elders and, conversely, for elders to be inspired by youth. As we face climate crisis, the greatest challenge of our time, we need the solidarity and creativity that comes with collaboration across all ages.

Taking Action: When intergenerational ministry is done with intention, people from different generations develop relationships and make connections that would likely not ever occur outside church. To create this kind of inclusive culture at your church and to capture the collaborative power of all ages together, think about how to shape your Creation Care efforts so they can be more inclusive of age difference.

Ideas can be as simple as the following:

- **Cooking sessions.** Grandparents help children and youth bake communion bread with natural ingredients found locally.
- **A church movie night or matinée.** Choose films that speak to climate crisis issues. Youth v. Gov., 2040, and The Biggest Little Farm are films that will inspire all ages.
- **Monthly whole church gatherings** involve all ages in fun, food, and worship. Use themes and scripture that highlight God's Creation, use repurposed materials for crafts, and emphasize composting and recycling practices.
- **Group hikes, pilgrimages, and retreats** offer a way for everyone to come together in the outdoors and reflect on the beauty of the natural world, which is so immediate here in the Pacific Northwest. Creation Care Pilgrimages can be supported and staffed by parishes and adults of all ages, whether by driving the "sag wagon" of supplies or cooking a meal at an overnight stop.
- **Letter-Writing.** Together determine the issues that matter the most to your congregation, especially in the surrounding community. Start a letter-writing campaign (after the Sunday service). All of us can write to a city council member, and even the youngest can draw picture to illustrate the issue.
- **Making signs and march** or stand on a street corner together to protest for the issues that matter the most to you—locally and globally.

Results: Intergenerational activities capitalize on and combine the experience of age and the energy of youth to tackle seemingly insurmountable issues like climate change in ways that are life-giving for all.

Resources: Following are just two examples. Go to the [Diocesan Resource Center](#) for more ideas):

- [Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table](#) is a seven-session curriculum for congregations that explores the relationship between the way we eat and the way we live. The study uses scripture, prayer, and stories from the local and global community to explore five key aspects of our relationship with food.
- [Faith and Nature: The Divine Adventure of Life on Earth](#) is an eight-session, downloadable, intergenerational faith-formation resource focused on appreciating and living in harmony with God's Creation. The study includes photos and illustrations to use in activities and discussions.

2. Engage Children & Youth in Climate Justice

“I have learned you are never too small to make a difference.”

—Greta Thunberg, Teen Climate Activist

Recommendation: Initiate and invest in programs that connect, educate, and support children and youth on climate justice and on our responsibility as Christians to care for Creation.

Background: Youth have consistently led the charge for climate justice, holding world leaders accountable and taking to the streets to demand immediate changes for the benefit of the environment. In the Diocese of Olympia, children and teens can set a powerful example for their congregations.

But acute awareness of climate crisis at such a young age comes at a cost. Talitha Amadea Aho, author of *In Deep Water: Spiritual Care for Young People in a Climate Crisis*, observes that “the young people of today do not remember stability. They see the world through crisis-colored glasses. Climate change is creating a spiritual emergency that is hitting their generation harder than any other.”

Although the church can play a role in forming future leaders and empowering children and youth in the arena of climate justice, it can also be a safe place to share concerns and to unpack anxiety—through prayer and other spiritual practices, through collective activism, and through opportunities for conversation that directly address the despair and mourning that are normal responses to a world in the midst of an existential crisis.

Taking Action:

- **Get Outdoors**

- Cultivate a love of the outdoors by creating opportunities for children to get outside in order to appreciate the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.
- Consider youth pilgrimage models like the Youth Wilderness Pilgrimages led by the Rev. Bill Harper or the Diocesan Youth Creation Care Pilgrimage.
- Offer scholarships for children to go to Camp Huston.
- Build or enhance the playground on your church property so children have their own dedicated outdoor space.

- **Provide Leadership Opportunities**

- Support and shine light on children who want to help “green” your congregation. At Grace, Bainbridge Island, a nine-year-old spearheaded a drive to put recycling bins and trash cans in each room of the church. A high school student built and mounted an owl house onto one of the large trees on the property and then explained her project at the lectern on Sunday during announcements.

- Send youth (and adults) who want to make a difference to the Online Climate Reality Training led by Al Gore and a team of world-renowned scientists, activists, innovators, and more.
- Invite youth to be members of your Green Team.
- **Use “Green” Curricula.** These are just a few examples. Go to the Diocesan Resource Center for more ideas:
 - Abundant Life Garden Project is an interactive, scripture-based children’s faith formation program developed to share the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. It’s free to download.
 - Wild Wonder is camp curriculum that helps parents and churches get kids outside and spark their imaginations as they learn about God and explore the world around them.
 - ReNew: The Green VBS is an environmentally focused VBS program from Sparkhouse.
 - *In Deep Water: Spiritual Care for Young People in a Climate Crisis* helps to keep young people at the center of your community. Whether you are a peer or a caring adult, *In Deep Water* will show you how to offer ecologically informed spiritual care for youth.

Results: By supporting a connection to nature, by providing safe space for sharing concerns, and by nurturing emerging congregational and community leader roles, the church equips children and youth to face the climate crisis with hope and resilience.

3. Train and Mobilize Church Members as Climate Stewards

“It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Recommendation: Climate Stewards are the equivalent of Wardens for Creation Justice. One or more could be appointed from each congregation and be trained to assist members to work on Creation Justice. They could work with and receive support from the proposed Canon for Creation Justice (see below).

Background: To implement a diocese-wide effort, we need representatives from every congregation. Stewards will lighten the load carried by the Rector. In time, every congregation will ideally choose to implement some form of a Creation Justice Ministry.

Taking Action: Stewards could be trained as organizers by Climate Reality Leadership Corps and others. They should be able to assist members through programs like Sacred Ground and Climate Reality and to support ways to make Creation Justice central to faith formation.

Results: Clergy are stretched thin and Climate Stewards will function like Wardens for Creation. They will be in direct communication with the Canon for Creation, provide information about congregational needs, and assist congregants in climate-related actions and reflections.

Resources:

- Racial justice intersectionality: [Sacred Ground](#)
- Creation Justice advocacy training: [Creation Justice](#)

4. Connect to the Land

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”

—John Muir, *The Yosemite*

Recommendation: We urge the Diocese and individual congregations to explicitly link their activities to the natural world, on church properties and throughout western Washington.

Background: The Episcopal Church in Western Washington is blessed with beautiful terrain: Its boundaries stretch east to west from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and north to south from Canada to Oregon. Its area is home to three national parks and dozens of state parks, with Episcopal Churches found at sea level on the islands of the Puget Sound and the Salish Sea but also in the mountains at 10,000 feet. The splendor of God's Creation is all around us, and with this gift of proximity it makes sense for the church to be a catalyst for connection with the outdoors whenever possible.

Taking Action: So many of the Episcopal Churches in Western Washington have been trailblazers in these areas; there are many great models throughout the Diocese to emulate both "being" and "doing" in natural environments:

- Outdoor services
- Beekeeping
- Community gardens and outdoor labyrinths/playgrounds on church property
- Native landscaping on church properties; tree-planting and reforestation; lawn reduction and removal
- Trail building and maintenance on and near church property
- Community service projects to restore local wildlife areas
- Creation Spirit Talking Circles. Rev. Rachel Taber Hamilton has very capably led this circle process which seeks to re-introduce indigeneity with Nature.

These recent activities serve as models and can be fully customized to the local level and for different levels of abilities:

- Holy Hikes. The ultimate goal of this ministry is to help individuals be renewed in their love-relationship with the earth, the universal church, and their Creator. Holy Hikes bring people together to foster an encounter with the Sacred.
- Sunday Stairway Walks. In this program, young adults explore and learn about different neighborhoods and Episcopal parishes within Seattle.
- Young Adult Wilderness Pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is a backpacking trek into the Northern Cascades with an intentional spiritual focus.
- Good News Gardens. The goal of these gardening projects is "transformational agrarian ministry that feeds body, mind, and spirit."
- The Creation Spirit Talking Circle. This is a pilot project to restore our personal relations with nature. It is challenging and intensive and can create profound personal transformation. Ideally, it will be made available to all who are interested.

These Diocese of Olympia retreat centers offer a way for local churches to meet in a natural setting without great expense:

- Saint Andrew's House
- Camp Huston

Results: As we connect with the land, we reconnect with Creation. We find ourselves becoming able to retrieve relations with Creation held by our ancestors long past. Having outdoor services allows us to prayerfully give communion to a tree or other place of nature that calls to us. Together, we can renew long-lost relations.

5. Adopt Liturgies and Seasonal Practices That Revere Creation

"How can we use nature to cultivate an awareness of God? How do we enter a space of reverence, where there are no walls and no ceilings and yet where we find a room we share with Creator Spirit?"

—Sophronia Scott

Recommendation: We urge the Diocese and individual congregations to shine a light on Creation and our relationship with it through liturgies and other seasonal observances.

Background: It is becoming increasingly clear in Christian communities that our faith is not separated from God's created world outside the church walls. In Genesis, we are reminded that God created all that is and will be and found it to be good, very good. We have been given a charge to care for all that was given to us to sustain and provide for the air, land, and sea and all that is in them. Destruction of the environment is destruction of the heart of God. Rather than keeping Creation Care and Justice work separate from liturgy, bringing it to worship as a focus has the power to transform our hearts, minds, and actions to address the needs of an increasingly needy planet. Involving the congregation in liturgical action and prayers for God's created world will deepen the interest of the congregation as well as of individuals and families to take their own steps, large and small, all of which will add up to making a difference in the life of the world.

Taking Action:

- **Explore a variety of Eucharistic prayers, Collects, Prayers of the People, and music related to care for Creation.** Consider a theme for the year to weave into each week's Eucharistic celebration. Plan to include youth and all members in a variety of ways, including coffee hours, banners, music, art, bulletin boards, and newsletter information.
- **Establish a Creation season.** Many parishes have done so, usually in the fall. St. Andrew's, Port Angeles, had an eight-week season, opening on St. Francis Sunday and closing with Christ the King; the intervening six weeks were themed differently each year. Here are some examples: mountains, water, sky, color/spectrum (great LGBTQ link), biosphere reserves, "spheres" (atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere), animals, sacraments (grapes, wheat, yeast, honey).

At St. Andrew's all weeks were intergenerational with processions themed to the topic/season. Special music was written, sourced, or collected from across the Book of Common Prayer. They used Rite II Prayer C with some weekly modifications of language for the theme (copies of a sample liturgy can be requested from St. Andrew's), art or objects brought from home related to the themes, a specialized petition for the Prayers of the People, and a seasonal blessing.

- Collects: 19. For Rogation Days, BCP pp. 258–59
- Prayers for the Social Order #27–39, pp. 823–27
- Prayers for the Natural Order #41–44, pp. 827–28
- Many Celtic worship resources from Iona or North Umbria

Results: A congregation intimately involved in Creation Care and Justice through its worship (especially over a short or long season vs. on a single Sunday) will transform the hearts of those who worship. Individuals and groups will benefit from the support of others and be strengthened to do work at home or on the job that advocates for earth care and the justice issues surrounding it. Liturgical practices that ground Creation Care in loving God, the planet, and all who share it make something like recycling not only a good thing to do, but also part of our Christian mission and response to our baptismal covenant to work for justice.

Resources:

- "Celtic Spirituality and the Environment" is an article filled with references to the ancient past and Celtic thought.
- Carmina Gadelica is a collection of folk poetry, charms, incantations, blessings, and prayers from Christian and pre-Christian belief in Western Scotland.
- J. Philip Newell is perhaps the foremost author on Celtic Christianity and spirituality. Here are some of his works:
 - *Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation*
 - *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality*
 - *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace*

- *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World*
- *Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter*
- *The Rhythm of Life: Celtic Daily Prayer* by David Adam
- *A Holy Island Prayer Book* by Ray Simpson
- *The Green Bible* with a foreword by Desmond Tutu comes with a 100-page introduction that is an essential read and reference. Contributors include Tutu, NT Wright, St. Francis, and Wendell Berry. Sample articles include “Reading the Bible through a Green Lens,” “The Power of a Green God,” “Loving the Earth Is Loving the Poor,” and “Teachings on Creation through the Ages.”
- *Stewardship of Creation: A Thirty Day Discipline* can be used for personal devotions. Many congregations also include one page at a time as a bulletin insert.
- *Creation Season Liturgies from New Zealand*
- *The European Christian Ecological Network*
- *Skiturgies: Pageants, Plays, Rites and Rituals* offers several resources for the Blessing of Animals and St. Francis.
- *Creation Care Prayers* from the Church of England
- The Diocesan *Liturgy and Arts Commission* is a tremendous resource for creative liturgical ideas to incorporate, none of which necessarily involve any expense.

Resources and Staffing

1. Hire a Canon for Creation Justice

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

—Howard Thurman

Recommendation: Create a Creation Care & Climate Justice Department at the Bishop's Office with a Canon to oversee its operations.

Background: We need someone on diocesan staff who will lead and guide this work, pull together in some cohesive way all this information, and disperse the information, make links to other programs, and coordinate with other departments and people. To fully realize a Diocesan movement for the care of Creation calls for centralized leadership. Comparable Episcopal positions do exist:

- In The Episcopal Church, the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers is Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Evangelism, Reconciliation & Creation Care.
- The Rev. Melanie Mullen serves as the Director of Reconciliation, Justice & Creation Care.
- At the Diocesan level, the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas is Missioner for Creation Care in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. This suggests the possibility of a job-share arrangement with a nearby Diocese or denomination.

Taking Action: If systemic change and coordinated effort are truly the goal, then an investment in a staff person dedicated to this effort is necessary. This staff member would do the following:

- Coordinate a speakers' bureau of traveling homilists and guest preachers who can speak to the issues and help congregations connect with solutions.
- Maintain a webpage with a calendar of events to promote Creation Care programs.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for ideas/curriculum.
- Collaborate with existing entities like Earth Ministry: Interfaith Power & Light; Drawdown Seattle; and The Episcopal Church's Creation Care office.
- Integrate Creation Care leadership training into existing education venues: Iona School, the College for Congregational Development, the Bishop's Leadership

Conference, Diocesan Convention workshops, and Better Together Faith Formation Conference.

- Convene Creation Care leaders from local parishes to confer about plans and ways to support one another. Convene meetings for any in the Diocese to share best practices in Creation Care. Maintain a database and mailing list of people who are engaged with climate justice and Creation Care to more efficiently connect events/programs and participants. Note the need for a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to automate and track the interest and activity of church members across the Diocese. Interfaith Power and Light effectively uses EveryAction CRM systems to keep down staffing costs and enhance organizing.
- Survey individual congregations on the status of their Creation Care efforts to determine what is actually going on at the local level.

The Canon would require a volunteer support committee or advisory board.

2. Move Resources into Socially Responsible Investments

“People of conscience need to break their ties with corporations financing the injustice of climate change.”

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Recommendation: Using screening criteria, the Diocese and congregations should move to divest from fossil fuel–related investments and invest in environmentally responsible vehicles.

Background: At the beginning of the twenty-first century, fossil fuel companies continued to ignore the unfolding climate crisis. Instead, they pursued business as usual, exploring new areas for more fossil fuel and lobbying the U.S. Congress for continued subsidies. In 2012, a movement began among environmentalists to

encourage colleges, foundations, and churches to divest their holdings of fossil fuel companies. The divestment campaign focused attention on the fossil fuel industry's destructive business model, which depends on the continued burning of fossil fuels and information campaigns that deliberately misinform stockholders and the public about the negative effects on the environment of burning fossil fuels.

In 2013, the Bishop's Committee for the Environment (BCE) petitioned the Diocese of Olympia's Board of Directors, which controls the investments in the Diocesan Investment Fund (DIF), to divest the portfolio of two fossil fuel companies that comprised about 4 percent of the total holdings. At the Board's request, the BCE took the matter to the Diocesan Convention in the form of a resolution. The resolution passed with a 234 to 169 vote. It asked the Board to divest of the two stocks within five years. During those five years, the BCE continued to press the Board to divest, but it did not do so.

Numerous discussions between the BCE and the Board of Directors occurred. The BCE encouraged the Board to follow Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) protocol in investment decisions for the DIF. This protocol reflects our biblical and faith-based prophetic call for justice and caring for creation.

In 2015, a resolution was passed at the National Convention of The Episcopal Church calling on it to divest of its fossil fuel investments. It encouraged dioceses and parishes to consider fossil fuel divestment. The Episcopal Church Fund was subsequently divested of fossil fuel investments and now operates under an ESG investing protocol.

In 2018 (five years after the initial resolution), the BCE introduced another resolution asking the Board of Directors to divest of the two remaining fossil fuel holdings. It passed by a convincing voice vote (no count was tallied of the votes). This resolution also required that the Board of Directors report to convention each year, detailing action or non-action on divestment, until fossil fuel divestment was accomplished.

Determining what to invest in and divest from becomes challenging once the dirtiest stocks are eliminated. The criteria are complex, and there is no national policy. The European Union has agreed to screening parameters titled the Sustainable Financial Disclosure Regulations (SFDR), which might help frame our endeavor. The Diocese needs to clarify socially responsible investment criteria for churches and individuals and possibly maintain a web presence for standards and recognized sustainable investor groups.

An example of a screening criteria follows:

Environment

1. Is the company involved in fossil fuel exploration, production, or generation?
2. Does the company derive more than 5 percent of revenues from nuclear power?
3. Is there a pattern of environmental litigation against the company? Has the company been involved in an environment-related scandal?

Social

1. Are there any ties to biological, nuclear, and chemical weapons?
2. Does the company manufacture firearms?
3. Does the company derive more than 5 percent of revenues from gambling operations?
4. Does the company derive more than 5 percent of revenues from pornography sales or production?
5. Does the company derive more than 10 percent of revenues from alcohol sales or production?
6. Does the company derive more than 5 percent of revenues from tobacco sales or production?
7. Does the company manufacture opioids linked to abuse?
8. Is there evidence of persistent unsafe work conditions?
9. Is there a pattern of large-scale discrimination?
10. Does the company have ties to systemic human rights abuses including forced and child labor?

Taking Action:

- The Board of Directors should report annually on its investment holdings to the Diocese of Olympia at Diocesan Convention. The report should include any divestment decisions made during the current year.

- Diocesan churches should be encouraged to review any investments they hold using the ESG protocol.
- Following an educational series of workshops, individual Episcopalians should be encouraged to divest of fossil fuel stocks and invest instead in earth-friendly stocks. This action is easily accomplished now as almost all investment firms and advisors have “green” portfolios available.

Results: The original divestment campaign was successful as the Board of Directors did divest of its fossil fuel stocks. Most churches with investments have them in the Diocesan Investment Fund. Thus, the churches do not hold fossil fuel stocks. Divestment is a powerful tool for catalyzing social progress and can be equally powerful now in motivating companies to change their environmental practices for the better.

Resources:

- [Environmental, Social and Governance \(ESG\) Investing | Investor.gov](#)
- [“We Need Universal ESG Accounting Standards”](#) by [Robert G. Eccles](#) and [Bhakti Mirchandani](#) (Trinity Church, Wall Street), *Harvard Business Review*

3. Reorganize the Bishop's Committee on the Environment

“If not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

—Congressman John E. Lewis

Recommendation: Reorganize the Bishop’s Committee on the Environment (BCE) to address the current demands of the climate crisis.

Background: Early in the 2000s, the Diocese of Olympia was blessed with individuals whose growing concern about the impacts of human activities upon the environment led

to action. Earth Ministry was founded by the Rev. Carla Pryne and Ruth and Jim Mulligan and was quickly supported by others from the Episcopal community. In 2008, the Episcopal Church held a national conference, Healing Our Planet Earth (HOPE), in Seattle. Speakers included Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, a marine biologist, and Bishop Stephen Carlson, a Canadian indigenous Episcopalian. Episcopalians who attended HOPE joined together to revitalize the Bishop's Committee for the Environment of the Diocese of Olympia.

Since then, the BCE has worked to raise awareness of the climate crisis and of the connection between Creation Care and our baptismal promises. It supports diocesan churches with Green Grants as they work to reduce their carbon footprint. The Green Grant program has jump-started over \$390,000 of energy- or water-saving projects for diocesan church buildings and grounds.

The BCE educates Episcopalians and their congregations through workshops, shared resources, and retreats.

In 2011, Bishop Rickel sent J. B. Hoover and Nancy McConnell to Mindanao in the Philippines to explore a possible Creation Care partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Philippines. The Carbon Offset Partnership that resulted has led to the planting of more than 100,000 trees on Mindanao; the planting is supported by the donations of individuals and churches in the Diocese of Olympia that choose to offset their excess carbon emissions. And now the Carbon Offset Project has developed a science-based monitoring project that validates the actual offset from the tree plantings.

The work of the BCE has been carried out by volunteers from diocesan churches who met in person or via phone conference before the pandemic. The churches that participate are representative of the Diocese. They are small and large and from various regions.

Taking Action: The BCE should continue its work in the Diocese of Olympia but be retooled as follows:

- To work with and under the leadership of the recommended Canon for Creation Justice
- To develop an action agenda from the recommendations in this document with the approval of the Bishop of Olympia
- To use multimedia digital tools to connect with all diocesan churches and to celebrate the work of those churches
- To use multimedia digital tools to build a deeper relationship with the Diocese of Southern Philippines, our partner in the Carbon Offset Partnership
- To continue to insist that the Diocese of Olympia advocate for environmental justice
- To develop a meeting and membership structure that works for post-pandemic needs
- To continue to administer Green Grants
- To report on its work at Diocesan Convention
- To rename itself the Bishops Committee on Climate Justice

Other possible goals of the BCE relevant to the current worsening climate crisis follow:

- **Anticipate Impacts and Recommend Adaptations.** There could be annual or periodic briefings by the Committee to the diocese about the impacts of climate change on our congregations and communities and how to adapt to them. More detail.
- **Understand the Roots of Our Antipathy.** The Committee should seek the wisdom of long-term group leaders to determine what standards are most likely to support transformation. One example of this is the Touchstones for the Circle of Trust. More detail.
- **Define Paths to Kenosis.** Climate change calls us to move from desiring to have the world to being humbly within it. It frames many aspects of the climate justice. More detail.

- **Transform into Ecological Citizens of an Ecological Civilization.** David Korten's recent white paper addresses this issue but leaves many concepts open to be defined by the group. The Committee should study this and related works to seek paths to an ecological self and an ecological state, society and civilization proper for our diocese. More detail.
- **Translate the Global into the Local.** The IPCC and the COP will increase in power over time so we must begin to study and understand the issues they are facing and become more active in deliberations. We are blessed with having two members of our diocese being active members of the National Congregation. We must translate into common knowledge what the Paris Accords are and how they affect us, what the present challenges are, and where help is needed.
- **Identify Sister Climate Congregations.** Climate change has not hit very hard here in the Pacific Northwest for many of us. In less developed countries it has hit very hard. Sister Climate Congregations are formed when one of our congregation's links with a congregation that has been subjected to significant climate harm. More detail.
- **The Practical Is Political.** We will not secure the political change we need without practical political actions. This Committee should keep track of the political actions considered nationally by groups such as Sunrise, 350.org, Interfaith Power and Light, ThirdAct.org, Greenfaith.org, FAN, and Earth Stewards and make recommendations as to which political actions seem to be the best fit.
- **Results:** Reorganizing the BCE means reinvigorating the efforts of a very effective lay-led committee. Attention to climate crisis is paramount, and, even if a Canon for Creation Justice is in place, she/he/they will require the guidance, reach, and collective impact of an advisory body.

Resources:

- Healing Our Planet Earth: Stewardship of the Earth—The Episcopal Church, The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, former Presiding Bishop.

Conclusion

We're arriving at a new beginning, one where we must unlearn before we can learn. Our way of seeing the world has put blinders on our capacity to see the harm our ways have inflicted on all of Creation. We are at the beginning of a new story that we must first write with our hearts, our deeds, and our relations. It is less ours to discover than it is ours to uncover because most of what we need to know lies long neglected and deep within.

This time we are not alone in the world but together as the world. Together there is nothing we cannot face, nothing we cannot feel, nothing we cannot repent, and nothing we cannot repair.

Creation is calling.

“This is a differently shaped universe than many of us thought—and leads to a very differently shaped spirituality. As Bill Plotkin says, spirituality becomes a ‘sinking back into the source of everything.’ Suddenly we realize, of course, that God is not ‘out there,’ but God is in all, through all, and with all.”

—Richard Rohr

Readings and Other Resources

This is not intended to be a bibliography. It is intended to be the start to a Creation Justice Book Forest. In a Book Forest, each book is accompanied by a brief review noting why and how the book had value for the reader. The reader's name follows the review. Future readers may add their remarks with their names. This process allows the diocese to measure of the book's popularity and to consider whether a purchase of it would be reasonable. Readers from different congregations could contact each other based on the reviews to deepen their understandings. Kinship can be woven from shared interest. The metaphor of "forest" is suggested because most books are rooted in contact with other books and most personal transformation is rooted in interaction with others. Readers of a "Book Forest" are encouraged to root into each other as well as the book.

- Amadeo Aho, Talitha. *Deep Waters, Spiritual Care for Young People in a Climate Crisis*.
- Chandler, Diane J. *Creation Care: A Call to Christian Educators and Church Leaders*. This book examines the ethical responsibility for Christians in terms of addressing climate change and Christian scholarship on Creation Care.
- Charleston, Steven. *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*.
- Charleston, Steven. *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage*.
- Clare, Mary M., and Ferguson, Gary. *Full Ecology: Repairing our Relationship with the Natural World*.
- Davis, Ellen. *Scripture, Culture and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*.

- DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It Is so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples History of the United States*.
- Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. *As Long as the Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice from Colonization to Standing Rock*
- Goodall, Jane. *Reason for Hope*.
- Harris, Melanie L. *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth Honoring Faiths*.
- Hayhoe, Katherine. *Saving Us*.
- Jennings, Willie Janes. *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging*.
- Karelak, Andreas. *Climate Courage: How Tackling Climate Change Can Build Community, Transform the Economy and Bridge the Political Divide in America*.
- Korten, David. *Ecological Civilization, from Emergency to Emergence*.
- Macy, Joanna, and Johnstone, Chris. *Active Hope*.
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*.
- NSRV. *The Green Bible*.
- Painter, Nell Irwin. *The History of White People*.

- Robinson, Mary. *Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience and the Fight for a Sustainable Future*.
- Singh, Annelise A. *The Racial Healing Handbook*.
- Spellens, Stephanie, the Rev. Canon. *The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline and the New Hope for a Beloved Community*
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

Appendix: Additional Detail

The following material is hyperlinked from the text.

Adaptation

As Climate change continues, there will be significant increases in food prices due to droughts, shortages, and the migration of new pests. Housing and home insurance costs will climb. We will likely face tropical diseases (such as malaria) as the increase in temperature allows disease-bearing insects to migrate north. Although all this may seem dire, we are blessed with many high-quality IPCC projections of such change and many quality programs for adapting to such change. We must also fathom our faith to secure new tools for adapting to change. Adaptation can be viewed negatively as a series of wrenching losses or it can be reframed as a collective communion with a changing Creation. Adaptation can be portrayed as a brutal “survival of the fittest” process or be reframed to be the survival of those best able to fit into the needs of a

rapidly changing creation. Here “fitness” is the capacity to fit into a beloved and resilient community that will seek new niches to live within a changing Creation.

Antipathy

We have, for decades, gathered those who clearly saw the problem, created programs to address it, and found that relatively few people had the time or interest to be involved. This is reflected on the national political stage and the world stage at COP. Very substantial sums have been invested by some corporate interests to reframe the climate problem as one of individual and not of institutional responsibility while strongly lobbying national political interests to view climate-correcting measures as a threat to the family. Very similar tactics were used in the 1960s to assert that desegregation would “destroy the family” and “destroy public safety.” Then as now, implementing change is portrayed as a job destroyer when failing to implement change is a proven job destroyer. Another domain of diversion is the immense investment in asserting that yet-to-be-developed technology will solve the problem. All of these streams of disinformation converge to assert that nothing meaningful can be done (because inaction is human nature) or should be done (because of the paradoxical opposite that we have the unlimited capacity to invent our way out of problems with technology).

One mandate of this Committee should be to dive beneath the symptoms to seek a better understanding of the disease. For example, the sources of resistance to taking responsibility for climate change appear akin to those of resistance to taking responsibility for systemic racism, slavery, displacement, and genocide of First Nations people and others. In each case, some form of responsibility must be taken and some form of reparation is due. Yet, unlike the Germans who made reparations to the Jews, we avoid taking responsibility for the acts of our ancestors. ***Our reality seems dictated by what we seek to accumulate and to avoid.*** A corollary is that transformational capacity is compromised by our fear of vulnerability.

If true, this suggests that transformation is more likely in small group processes through which a high degree of trust is achieved. Big group meetings can help pass on

information but they inhibit vulnerable sharing because trust has not yet been built and confidentiality has not been maintained.

Kenosis

There's much we need to let go of in order to have room for this new and dynamic state of being offered by our peril. This falls into the social science realm of decolonization. This committee should study the various recognized processes of kenosis and recommend those that best fit the needs of the diocese.

Ecological Civilization

We should also explore giving legal being status to natural systems (rivers, lakes, fish, forests) so that they can have representation just as we have created the legal fictions of corporations, cities, states, and other entities. We cannot afford the present economy's normalization of avarice and failure to properly value systems of nature. Another model of civilization must be sought and transitions planned.

Sister Climate Congregations

Although most of these congregations would likely be overseas, some could be in highly damaged areas in the United States. By supporting online meetings between youth and adults and families, we would see what no book or IPCC report can provide: the actual human impacts of climate change. As we come to see the impacts of our lifestyles on the lives of others, transformation becomes less difficult. Since no countries to date are admitting harm and committing to reparation, we can do so with one congregation in ways we can afford. The committee should locate congregations overseas willing to consider being Sister Climate Congregations and make them available to the diocese.