

Creation Care Ministry monthly meeting notes

Tuesday, June 21, 2022, via Zoom

*Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of the Duwamish Tribe.*

Present: CJ Beegle-Krause; Richard Hartung; Libby Carr; Emily Meeks; Heather Millar; Ruth Mulligan; Marjorie Ringness; Doug Thorpe; Edie Weller; Richard Wesley; Carolyn White

Richard Hartung opened with a prayer. He mentioned that a Creation Care course at University of the South was useful in developing prayers.

The next **Creation Care newsletter** is due out later this month. Emily Meeks, one of the co-editors of the Creation Care newsletter indicated that she is stepping back to pursue other roles and expressed hope that someone else would offer to assume her editorial role. She and Doug have produced three excellent newsletters with pieces for reflection as well as news. Several people expressed their appreciation for her work. Heather Millar indicated that she has a journalism background and may step forward.

Richard Hartung reported from the **Actions team**. The first Climate Conversation held earlier this month was attended by about a dozen people. Richard expressed his appreciation to Marc Aubertin for co-presenting and sharing his expertise about food and the environment. The July 5<sup>th</sup> gathering will focus on topic of Energy and will be hosted by Richard Wesley, with Richard Hartung facilitating.

The proposed **Creation Care table in nave** is scheduled for last Sunday of each month but, after discussion, the table will be staffed after the 11:00 service. Carolyn has agreed to be present on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Earth Ministry banner and Green Cathedral banner can provide backdrop. Information will be offered about the Creation Care Ministry.

Richard H. indicated that a series of workshops is being developed by Lisa Altieri of Bright Action, which is the creator of our carbon tracker tool, Sustain Island Home. These workshops could be used in small groups. Marjorie suggested that the topics might be coordinated with other activities planned in the future. An example might be the Intergenerational series that begins tomorrow evening which has purposefully been planned to include a "justice" focus. Thank you to Wendy Claire Barrie and her team for her cross ministry focus on water as part of **Eat, Play, Love!** Put these gatherings on your calendars - Wednesday evenings, June 22, July 27, August 24.

Mark your calendars: a 2-part **Creation Care Retreat** is being developed that will incorporate the exceptional community building skills of both The Rev. Steven Crippen who has served on the SMC staff and our Rev. Jennifer King Daugherty. The retreat will be in two parts – the first will on Saturday October 1 from 9am-3pm. The second will be in early 2023. Possibly D-House or a church would be the location. **SAVE THIS DAY!** Kathy Minsch is leading the team developing the retreat. Heather offered a precis "Church is nothing without community."

Further updates:

The proposed **Carbon Offset for Cathedral Travel Recommendation** prepared to go to the Vestry has been delayed to July.

**Creation Care Library** is beginning to take shape; this will include donated books that will receive simple cataloging—title, author, subject headings—and a checkout sheet will be placed with the books in the newly created room behind the stage. The library will basically operate on an honor system. A list of the approximately 150 titles in the collection will be forthcoming. Thank you to Doug Thorpe, Ruth Mulligan, and Carolyn White for their work on the library development.

Edie Weller attended an informative Town Hall event - **Intersection Between Environmentalism, Racism and Privilege**, featuring author Leah Thomas and Hannah Wilson, co-chair of the Environmental Justice Commission of the City of Seattle. They spoke about steps to lessen the environmental crisis on marginalized communities who are most at risk for lack of community building: education, funding, hiring, and development of advocacy skills. A link to Edie's notes will be included in the next issue of the Creation Care Newsletter and are included at the end of these meeting notes. Leah Thomas is the author of *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People and Planet (2022)*.

Libby reported on the NW Interfaith group and its current focus.

We closed, reflecting on how our evening's discussion touched on our Mutual Ministry Goals.

Doug offered a poem by Ada Limon "Mountain Lion" and CJ closed the meeting with prayer.

Upcoming Dates:

- *Eat, Play, Love: Water of Life* – Wednesday evenings, June 22, July 27, August 24  
<https://saintmarks.org/2022/06/eat-play-love-2022-water-of-life/>
- Tuesday, July 19, 2022 - Creation Care monthly meeting **Zoom link**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83005786111?pwd=OUhyZG9UV1BUZ09ESStOSVJMVFUPT09>
- Tuesday, August 16 – Creation Care Ministry in-person gathering
- Climate Conversations:
  - July 5 – *What you can do about Energy*
  - August 2 – *What you can do about Water*
  - September 5 – *What you can do on the Carbon Tracker tool*
  - October 4 – *What you can do about Transportation*
- Saturday, October 1 - Creation Care Retreat, part 1

- Notes submitted by Carolyn White and Marjorie Ringness

## Intersection Between Environmentalism, Racism and Privilege

### Mission Statement

Creation Care at Saint Mark's Cathedral strives to faithfully address the crisis of climate change. As stewards of the life-giving goodness of God's creation, we will work with the Saint Mark's and broader world communities to educate ourselves and take action together to preserve our shared planet and sustain life for the generations to come.

### Vision

Our love for God and for the Earth requires that we limit our carbon emissions as a church and in our personal lives so that all of God's creation might thrive. As a community and as individuals we strive to not only reduce our carbon footprint but also to drawdown excess carbon in our atmosphere through a range of positive solutions to create a healthier human society as we cherish God's creation. It is our goal for Saint Mark's Cathedral and its congregation to have a net zero carbon footprint by the year 2030.

### Objectives

1. *Connect* - Make the deep connection of this work to our spirituality and develop spiritual practices that inspire and support our daily living.
2. *Educate* - Educate members about the harm resulting from excessive carbon in the air and ways to reduce and offset household emissions.
3. *Commit* - Recognize our commitment as a unique opportunity and responsibility in our time to address the many social justice issues tied to the climate crisis.
4. *Encourage* - Find positive ways to encourage households to reduce and offset their household emissions, including an opportunity to contribute collectively to a special fund at Saint Mark's that supports specially selected offset programs that address environmental and social justice issues, independent of Saint Mark's programs. (This item is separate from any Saint Mark's budget items to reduce carbon emissions in Cathedral facilities.)
5. *Engage* - Through engaging in collective action that makes an effective impact, we will grow into the joy of transcending our fears and sense of powerlessness.

## Seattle Town Hall program on May 10, 2022

Leah Thomas, author of *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People and Planet* (2022), recently spoke with Hannah Wilson (Farm Manager at Yes Farm, leader of the Black Famers Collective and co-chair of the Environmental Justice Commission of the City of Seattle) as part of a program offered by Town Hall.

Their conversation focused on Thomas' work in the field of environmental justice with direct focus on intersectionality – how to understand and give voice to environmental issues and actions through multiple perspectives of race, gender, physical and cognitive ability, age and other factors.

Thomas described her motivation to enter into environmental advocacy because she realized she saw little evidence of contributions to environmental science and sustainability by Black scholars and professionals. This was especially so during the crucial time of protests related to both racial justice and climate change in recent years.

Observations and recommendations from Thomas' conversation with Wilson:

### **Education:**

Environmental science curricula in both predominantly Black and white academic programs need to be more inclusive and deepen their focus on intersectionality around topics of racial & social justice, environmental racism, and climate justice.

Access to environmental education at all levels should be a priority. Social media has a role to play in expanding access to multiple levels/cohorts of people (though this is not necessarily the primary teaching platform).

### **Hiring:**

Thomas advocates for increasing staff diversity (in terms of race and other dimensions) across every level of environmental organization, including academic programs. It's not enough to have an officer for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. More opportunity needs to be given for BIPOC and other non-dominant voices to contribute to analysis, goal setting, community interactions, and overall action.

More established, white-led environmental organizations need to examine and confront their legacy of not hiring diverse staffs.

### **Funding:**

Thomas identified the need to broaden the funding of smaller environmental organizations (majority are non-profits), particularly those led by BIPOC staffs. She noted that 8 of the largest and best-known environmental organizations receive about 70% of grants and other funding, while Black-led organizations receive less than 2%. This distribution needs to shift to build capacity for action over a broader base.

### **Advocacy development:**

Thomas and Wilson both advise getting to know local climate & environmental justice organizations and coalitions, as well as the issues most salient to that community or region. This will increase the capacity for advocacy as well as deepen relationships and coalition-building.

Thomas and Wilson both see a connection to disability justice, especially the need to include voices and ideas from those with ability issues who might not have an easy time physically participating in meetings or actions.

Both speakers were very clear that many serious environmental issues face BIPOC and other marginalized communities right now – action is needed to help people live healthy, productive lives now, not only in future (white) generations. The complexity of climate change and its impacts – and other environmental challenges – calls for an intersectional perspective and participation NOW!

White allies need to be aware and intentional in working with diverse communities:

- Be aware of bringing a “white savior” attitude (that whites need to help/lead others in defining the critical areas of focus and action)
- Recognize that there is ***always*** more to learn: be open to what BIPOC and others have to contribute from their own experience and priorities. Do not attempt to speak for communities that you aren’t actually a part of.
- LISTEN to others and respect their right to give input into issues of deepest concern to them.

### **Resources:**

***Black Nature*** – poetry anthology of Black community’s experiences in nature across the last century

**Project Green** – environmental liberation ([www.projectgreengr.org](http://www.projectgreengr.org) ?)

**The Intersectional Environmentalist Platform** – resources to accompany Thomas’ book

**Video of this program** – [www.townhallseattle.org/event/leah-thomas-with-hannah-wilson/](http://www.townhallseattle.org/event/leah-thomas-with-hannah-wilson/)

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