

Creation Care Resolutions Passed at Diocesan Convention – October 2022

Resolution 4 - Creation Justice Pledge

Submitted by: John Kydd (Chair) and The Rev. Gail Wheatley on behalf of The Bishop's Task Force on Climate Justice.

Resolved, that the 112th Convention of the Diocese of Olympia recommend the study,
 2 reflection, education in congregations about the Creation Justice Pledge and encourage
 3 congregants and congregations to study the pledge, adapt it to their local context, and adopt it,
 4 and be it further

5 **Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia consider providing a web page for those adopting
 the 6 pledge and which would provide resources for assisting in determining their personal
 and 7 congregational carbon footprint.

Explanation

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. The primary 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.

The Episcopal Church has written creation care pledges and covenants such as the Episcopal Creation Care Pledge <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/pledge/> and the Episcopal Covenant to Care of Creation <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/> 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, or 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 pledge is not fixed. Each congregation can adapt it to their needs. It is also optional. One need not commit to every term. As commitment grows, the pledge can grow. The Pledge allows clergy to assess the interest of their congregants. Members of the Bishop's Task Force on Environmental Climate Justice and others can assist in providing content for the diocesan webpage.

Creation Justice 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.climate realityproject.org/training>).
4. To understand climate injustice, I pledge to complete the Episcopal Sacred Ground Program (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/>) this calendar year.
5. I pledge to learn how to write effective letters and op eds through, for example, <https://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 justice. 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 may wish to join us.

Resolution 5 - Considering Adoption of a Season of Creation

Submitted by: John Kydd (Chair) & The Rev. Gail Wheatley on behalf of The Bishop's Task Force on Climate Justice

- 2 **Resolved**, that the 112th Convention of the Diocese of Olympia join other Episcopal dioceses in considering adoption of a Season of Creation, and be it further
- 3 **Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia incorporate this five-week season into its Diocesan
4 calendar for promotion and education in our diocese, and be it further
- 5 **Resolved**, that this Convention commend to and encourage all congregations in our diocese to
6 study and creatively adapt the Season of Creation to celebrate and better understand Creation
7 in their locality

Explanation

Creation Season (September 1-October 4) is celebrated by billions of Christians around the world. It begins on September 1 with the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation <https://www.creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html> and concludes with the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4.

The Season of Creation started in 1989 when Patriarch Dimitrios proclaimed September 1st as a day of prayer for creation. September 1st is the first day of the Orthodox church year so this was a celebration of God's Creation. The World Council of Churches extended it to a season from September 1st to October 4th by adding it to their annual calendar.

Pope Francis adopted the Season of Creation in 2015. The Anglican Communion recognizes the Season of Creation and resources provided by Anglican Communion Environmental Network has provided several here: <https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/season-ofcreation.aspx>

Climate change now threatens all worship. As nations fall short of commitments needed to address global climate change, faiths can provide critical support by standing for the sacredness of Creation and Justice. Too many see creation as a series of resources instead of a web of sacred relations. Our faith worship can elevate the importance of addressing climate change and our capacity to adapt to it. Our first commandment is to protect and serve the garden of creation (Gen 2:15). Let us do so with beauty and ceremony worthy of God's gift of Creation.

Two Season of Creation resources packed with prayers and song offer many ideas for interested congregations. The first is from both Dioceses of Massachusetts. It can be found at <https://www.diomass.org/creation-care>. Their 2022 theme is "Listen to Creation" <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

The second is from South Africa which promotes the wonderfully mutual concept of "ubuntu"

("I am because you are") extending it to eco ubuntu ("we are because the planet is"). Their Season of Creation Manual can be found at: <https://www.greenanglicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/manual-2022-final.pdf>

For example, their five-week season celebrates: 1) Land Justice and Ubuntu, 2) Water Justice, 3) Gender and Climate Justice, 4) Justice for all God's creatures, and 5) St Francis and Ubuntu.