

St. Mark's Cathedral Creation Care Ministry monthly meeting
Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 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 all the Coast Salish tribes.

Present: Kathy Minsch, Marjorie Ringness, Ruth Mulligan, CJ Beegle-Krause, Emily Meeks, Sue Ratner, Sue Mitchell, Wayne Duncan, Jennifer Daugherty, Judy Andrews.

Marjorie opened with the Land Acknowledgement and Wayne read an opening prayer.

The group was then invited to offer a response to this question: What is something you are looking forward to in the coming year, and why?

UPDATES:

Wayne reported about the possible **collaboration with the Visual Arts Ministry** on an exhibit of works by two artists portraying farm workers and agricultural themes in Washington State, which ties in well with climate justice and the effects of climate change on farm workers. Wayne has not heard back yet from one of the artists, but we are hoping this event can happen in the fall.

Kathy reported that **March 4 is the date set for a second Creation Care retreat**. Once again, the Rev. Stephen Crippen will facilitate and the Rev. Jennifer King Daugherty will assist and participate. It will be held at D House. Kathy said there is a small planning committee, but to contact her if interested. .

Kathy also reported that the **Legislative Advocacy group** is forming again to track bills during the 4-month state legislative session. Contact [Kathy](#) if you would like to participate. Several from our group attended the Earth Ministry workshop last week about faith advocacy and the state legislative process.

Marjorie reported that Gordon Miller will share from his book *Wisdom of the Earth* and his edition of Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* at a **Sunday forum on March 19**. This will tie in well with Lent, the vernal equinox, and all the signs of new life at that time of year. The forum will include images from the books.

Marjorie reported that we are still waiting to hear from John Kydd and Lisa Graumlich about a possible Diocesan forum on their experiences at **COP27**.

The group spent time discussing two of the recommendations listed in the [Bishop's Task Force on Climate Justice Report](#): 1.) **A Pledge to Care for Creation**, and 2.) Adopting a Season of Creation. These two recommendations resulted in 2 resolutions being adopted at Diocesan convention in October. Our discussion focused on a Creation Care pledge and how St. Mark's might adapt the suggested language to better reflect our community. Marjorie, Judy, CJ, Emily, and Kathy will draft a suggested St. Mark's Creation Care pledge and bring it to the group at our next meeting. Ruth suggested using it to help inform our strategic planning at the upcoming Retreat. Sue R. and Emily mentioned that the Sacred Ground training will likely be hosted by the Restorative Justice and Systemic Change group at St. Mark's sometime within the next 18-24 months. We will discuss the adoption of a Season of Creation in more depth at a future meeting. The 2 Diocesan resolutions are copied at the end of these notes.

Judy reported on **Resolution A020 adopted at General Convention** in July – **to Support a Decade of Action to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals**. Created by the UN in 2015, the SDG provides a framework for approaching the Church’s call to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development. The resolution and goals are included at the bottom of these notes. We will continue to review this resolution and consider how our work can support SDG. A copy of the resolution is at the bottom of these notes.

Marjorie and Kathy reported on the work of the **Actions Team**. This group recently reviewed the Climate Conversations so far - attendance, topics, and improvements to be made. Richard Hartung has also come up with topics for the next several months, with Reduce, Reuse and Recycle proposed for the next 3 months. We asked for input from those at this meeting. It was noted that having an outside presenter is beneficial. Ideas mentioned were to invite Ridwell, and City of Seattle recycling outreach staff. With Cathedral Day falling on Earth Day this year (April 22) Emily suggested that there be an in-person Climate Conversation or booth where folks could share and get ideas. Perhaps have some kind of a giveaway. Jerusalem Greer of Good News Gardens will be at Cathedral Day this year as well, which may help promote Creation Care.

The group offered suggestions for **future Creation Care forums** – something with families, beekeepers, how to start a garden, etc. It was suggested that a Rogation liturgy (in May) be combined with another event to increase attendance.

The group spent a few minutes reflecting on how our meeting tonight touched on St. Mark’s Mutual Ministry goals of 1.) Creation Care and Carbon Reduction, 2.) Restorative Justice and Systemic Change, and 3.) Innovative and Intergenerational Community.

Kathy closed in prayer.

Minutes submitted by
Marjorie Ringness & others present

Next Meeting Tuesday, February 28, 2023

**MOVED FEBRUARY MEETING DATE TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH SHROVE TUESDAY CELEBRATION ON THE
THIRD TUESDAY OF FEBRUARY**

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.

- 2 **Resolved**, that the 112th Convention of the Diocese of Olympia recommend the study, reflection, education in congregations about the Creation Justice Pledge and encourage congregants and congregations to study the pledge, adapt it to their local context, and adopt it, and be it further
- 3 **Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia consider providing a web page for those adopting the pledge and which would provide resources for assisting in determining their personal and 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.climaterealityproject.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.

A020 Support Decade of Action to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Final Original Documents

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention express continued support for the ways in which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become the cornerstone of development policy and action of the Episcopal Church's institutions, agencies, dioceses, and congregations and provided a framework for approaching the Church's call to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage all parishes, dioceses, and jurisdictions to support the UN's Decade of Action (2020-30) to achieve the SDGs by (1) educating themselves about the SDGs using United Nations, Anglican Communion and Episcopal Church resources; (2) developing their own educational resources to translate the core Christian values and imperatives of the SDGs in ways that can be easily grasped, shared, and put into action; (3) undertaking self-audits to assess how their existing mission work and ministries already address the SDGs; and (4) sharing stories about how they are working toward the SDGs and furthering the work that Jesus calls all of us to do; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention commend and acknowledge Episcopalians who are already working towards the SDGs, including the Episcopal presence at the annual UN High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs and Episcopal Relief & Development which continues to educate the Church about the SDGs and work toward the SDGs through its programs and priorities.

A020: Support Decade of Action to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Funding request: none

The [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) are a UN-created framework adopted in 2015 to coordinate organizations across the globe in building a sustainable future. In the Episcopal Church, the SDGs provide a framework for approaching the Church's call to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

The SDGs are worth naming; each is connected to the Gospel and our mission:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation

7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Resolution A020 “encourage[s] all parishes, dioceses, and jurisdictions” to not only learn about and teach these goals, but to undertake “self-audits to assess how their existing mission work and ministries already address the SDGs.”