

**St. Mark's Cathedral Creation Care Ministry monthly meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 19, 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: Marjorie Ringness, Sue Ratner, Ruth Mulligan, Elizabeth Clark-Stern, Judy Andrews, Carolyn White, Richard Hartung, Steve Thomason, Sean Russell.

Marjorie opened with the land acknowledgement and brief blessing. We went around the zoom box to introduce ourselves to Sean, who was visiting from St. Luke's parish in Renton.

Elizabeth offered a spiritual reflection, centered on a passage from The Gospel of Thomas - God is present in everything.

Steve and Judy shared information about the **Seattle Clean Building Accelerator Program**. This program from the City fits well with St. Mark's goal to be carbon neutral by 2030, as it requires compliance with laws within that time frame. The city is providing coaching and is very supportive. Judy Andrews, Kathy Minsch, and Ruth Mulligan are working with a team from St. Mark's to help us comply with the regulations involving documentation, measurement, and creating a target. St. Mark's is already well on its way to achieving these goals, but is at a point where some big projects will need to be undertaken soon. It is still being determined what additional support will be asked of the Creation Care Ministry.

Steve also shared about the development of the updated **Healthy Communication Guidelines** adopted by the vestry this past June, a copy of which is at the end of these notes.

Elizabeth shared plans for a **Sunday forum on October 8 - *Finding Hope in a World of Climate Change***, to be hosted by the Creation Care Ministry. Elizabeth will lead a discussion about carrying hope and spiritual practices, which lead to actions. We will have copies of the suggestions for spiritual practices and actions that we had out at the Ministry Fair. (Also attached at the end of these notes.) Emphasis will be on the *spiritual*.

Richard reported on the work of the Actions Group. The [story sharing project](#) has begun, with a few stories up on the webpage, and Richard has developed a summary of the project to send to other ministries and encourage them to share their stories. The group is exploring a possible **field trip** to a recycling facility in November, which could easily involve families with children. A farm visit is still being considered. Monthly [Climate Conversations](#) are continuing, and we decided to keep these going at least through June. Anyone interested in helping with the plans for these projects is welcome to attend the Actions Group meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 3pm, via [zoom](#). The group will meet next on October 11<sup>th</sup>.

A new edition of the **Creation Care quarterly newsletter** will be coming out early next week.

Marjorie reported on the progress of work on the **Greenbelt**. Forest steward Robert Hayden led a great tour of the greenbelt last Sunday, and work parties are planned for 9/30, 10/14, 10/28, and 11/18. Sign up [here](#). Guy Oram and Kathy Minsch are helping to coordinate and lead St. Mark's volunteers.

We will be reviewing our **Greening Congregations** status with Earth Ministry in the coming weeks.

We decided to *not* host a table in the back of the nave on this last Sunday in September since we just basically did this activity at the Ministry Fair earlier in the month.

The **Creation Care Ministry will meet in person on a quarterly basis**, beginning with the meeting on November 21. It was determined that we would see if hybrid meetings can be arranged.

We are encouraged to attend upcoming events:

- [September 28](#) - a forum hosted by the Diocese of Olympia with [Bishop Moral of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Philippines](#)
- [September 30](#) - Diocesan [Convene](#) workshops in Everett. Some relate to Creation Care.
- [October 1](#) – [All Our Relations, Snake River Campaign](#)
- [October 7](#) – [Composting Workshop](#), in conjunction with the 20s/30s group.

Click on the links for details.

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.

Elizabeth shared a closing prayer.

**Next meeting Tuesday, October 17, 2023 – via [Zoom](#)**

Minutes submitted by  
Marjorie Ringness & others present

## Healthy Communication in Community

*We are committed to these norms within the Saint Mark's Cathedral community and the spaces we hold together:*

1. We **listen with empathy to understand** until the speaker has finished, and we do not interrupt.
2. We **ask clarifying questions**.  
*For example, "Thank you for sharing. May I ask a clarifying question?"*
3. We graciously **allow space for different opinions** and remain present.
4. We **speak for ourselves**, not our cohort, our group, or anyone else.  
*For example, "I disagree with this" vs. "Everyone is saying that you..."*
5. We **use "I statements"** whenever possible.  
*For example, "I feel disrespected when others interrupt me."*
6. We **keep confidentiality**.
7. We **hold each other accountable to these norms** without shaming, blaming, or judgment. *For example, "Would you be willing to rephrase that as an "I" statement?"*
8. We **say what needs to be said to the person who needs to hear it**, and we do not participate in gossip or destructive language about others.
9. We **speak the truth in love**. Lying is disrespectful and anti-community. We know there might be more than one truth in a system, but we strive to tell ours and own it.
10. We **create safe spaces** in which all voices can be heard.
11. We **resist judging others** when tensions arise. Comparisons are a form of aggression.
12. We **acknowledge that power dynamics impact our communication** (such as primary language, education, physical and cognitive ability, cultural and racial differences, gender, sexuality, and age), and we seek to honor our equality in Christ and the sacredness of the other.

**We will, with God's help.**



### **Nourish Your Soul, to Better Care for the Earth**

1. Commit to nourish your relationship with God in your inner life. Only an intimate connection to Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit can bring us the inner freedom to live in our world today with integrity, courage, and joy.
2. Practice Centering Prayer, ideally 20 minutes twice a day. Resource: *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening* by Cynthia Bourgeault. Attend Centering Prayer at Saint Mark's, Tuesday evenings 7pm in the Nave. Contact Linzi Stahlecker at [lstahlecker@saintmarks.org](mailto:lstahlecker@saintmarks.org).
3. Walk with intention to notice and connect with divine love when you walk in the woods. This is called "Forest Bathing." Meditate or pray in nature.
4. Explore the Christian mystical tradition, a tradition that is integrated with the divine in the natural world. Resources: Richard Rohr's *Center for Action and Contemplation*, Cynthia Bourgeault's *Wisdom Way of Knowing*, Ilia Delios's *Christogenesis*. Online courses are available in each of these institutions. Attend Saint Mark's Wisdom School either in person, or on Zoom.
5. Explore how HOPE can be a Renaissance of faith that can give you the inner freedom to make ethical, life-affirming choices. Says Cynthia Bourgeault: "Hope is a primordial force from the center of the earth in your own being that gives you courage and strength, regardless of the outer circumstances" and is not tied to outcomes.
6. Seek out examples of all the *positive* things going on across the globe, including by grass roots organizations and consortiums, and stories of individual conviction and bravery. Subscribe to Nice News free daily emails at <https://nicenews.com/>.
7. Limit and discern your consumption of news. The messages are so often alarmist and distorted, and pit Americans against each other - an assault on non-dual consciousness. Resource: *Love Your Enemy* by Arthur C. Brooks.

**Join the Creation Care Ministry at Saint Mark's** <https://saintmarks.org/justice/creation-care/>



### **10 Ideas to Live Lightly on the Earth**

1. *Clothing:* Discover the joy of purchasing vintage/gently used clothing, either online or at a local consignment shop. Donate clothes you no longer wear to Goodwill or another charity rather than consigning them to landfill.
2. *Cars:* Explore an alternative way to get to church. Rather than drive by yourself, take the bus, carpool with a neighbor, or bicycle. Drive less - consolidate errands, walk, bicycle or bus.
3. *Travel:* Donate to carbon offset funds through Saint Mark's at <https://saintmarks.org/> to off-set your travel and household carbon footprint. Donate as a gift to your loved ones.
4. *Household Carbon Footprint:* Sign up at [www.sustainislandhome.org](http://www.sustainislandhome.org) to learn how to calculate it and what practices to adopt for reducing it. Our goal for the Saint Mark's community is to reach net zero carbon by 2030.
5. *Plastics:* Take your clear, clean plastic bags to grocery store recycle bins, or subscribe to Ridwell at <https://www.ridwell.com/> to recycle thin film plastics, clothes, lightbulbs, batteries and much more.
6. *Trees* – Plant a native tree in your yard or neighborhood or join a Saint Mark's Greenbelt work party this fall – 9/30, 10/14, 10/28, 11/18. Contact Guy Oram to register at [guy.d.oram@gmail.com](mailto:guy.d.oram@gmail.com).
7. *Food:* Explore the creativity of cooking fabulous plant-based recipes. Try a Meatless Monday to get started. Buy and/or grow organic food. Buy locally.
8. *Movies/Books:* Learn about Climate Change from Michael Moore's *Planet of the Humans* (free on You Tube), *The Climate Book*, a compellation of essays by scientists, activists, mothers, and others from all over the world, edited by Greta Thunberg; *Saving Us* by Katherine Hayhoe and more.
9. *Environmental Groups:* Join nonprofits working on climate change, such as [350Seattle.org](http://350Seattle.org), [ThirdAct.org](http://ThirdAct.org), and [Earth Ministry/Interfaith Power and Light](http://EarthMinistry.org).
10. *Advocate:* Talk with your elected representatives and candidates about climate change issues. Comment on local, state, and federal legislation and policies.

***Do one thing, tell people about it, then do one more thing....***