

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND CREATION CARE MINISTRY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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Invitation from the Editor: Creation Care Fall Retreat

DARREN J. GLENN, EDITOR



Welcome back to the official newsletter of the Creation Care Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, where we keep you informed on the sacred work that our Diocese-wide organizing team and our parish-based Green teams have been doing to promote environmental stewardship and environmental justice.

This sophomore issue of our newsletter comes a little over a month ahead of the Creation Care Ministry's first retreat in October at the Mercer School.

On behalf of our growing team of nature-loving clergy and laity from across the diocese, I humbly extend an invitation to each and everybody who has a genuine interest in the work of environmental stewardship and justice and is curious about the ways they can turn that interest into action. This retreat is for you and we have been working hard to structure our workshops around meaningful support of each parish's ambitions around this work.

If this heartfelt invitation was in any way successful, and you are looking to RSVP to the very first Green Teams Retreat of our diocese's Creation Care ministry, please register online by [following this link to the sign-up form](#). Please accept my assurances that you won't regret it. If you are undecided about attending the retreat, please email us. We can help you discern whether joining us for the retreat is right for you. And we are happy to answer any other questions as well: just email us (creationcare@dioceseli.org).

*To subscribe to this newsletter, email us at:
creationcare@dioceseli.org*

A Word from the Missioner for Environmental Justice:



THE REV. DR. MATTHEW MOORE
Missioner for Environmental Justice
Co-Chair, Creation Care Community
Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Dear Friends,

As we come to the end of this hot summer, and look toward the start of the program year, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Fall 2022 edition of our Creation Care newsletter.

The extreme heat that has recently afflicted so many nations is a stark reminder of the urgency of our work. At the same time there are signs of hope, most notably the environmental provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. Though less than we need, it is more than we could have hoped for just a few short weeks ago.

When I visit the parishes of our diocese, the one question I hear without fail is "What can we do?" This newsletter answers that burning question: you can get started on your own Creation Care ministry by joining us for our first Green Team Retreat, which will take place at the Mercer School of Theology on Saturday, October 1.

The Green Team Retreat is an opportunity to spend a day of prayerful discernment and dialogue with our Creation Care leadership team, and others from across the diocese who share your passionate concern for the well-being of the earth and all whose lives depend on it.

By the end of the day you will know what Creation Care project you are called to work on, and you will know how to start working on it. You will also be in touch with others who will share in that work with you. Look for an email soon, with a detailed invitation and a registration link. We hope you will decide to join us for what promises to be a wonderful day, and a landmark in the development of the Creation Care Community.

[cont'd on pg. 3]

Community Question:

What are you doing to feel a part of creation this summer?

EVELYN MEADE

St. George's Church, Hempstead

I feel connected to creation by planting flowers and taking time to enjoy the beauty of summer."

JACKLYN LLOYD

St. George's Church, Hempstead

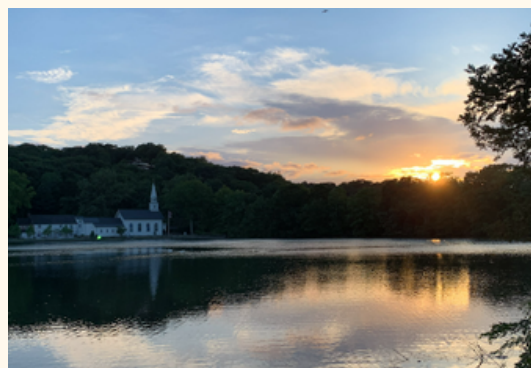
"A few ways I am connecting to and feeling a part of creation are working on greening my home, use green cleaning products, recycling and eliminating paper statements by requesting electronic copies only. I have also recommended these steps taken to family members and friends. When the weather is manageable, I plan to walk closer distances instead of driving to help eliminate emissions from the air."

MOTHER MARIE TATRO

Vicar for Community Justice, EDLI

St. Ann's and the Holy Trinity

From the "purple mountains majesty" to the "shining sea," I have had the immense privilege of enjoying diverse corners of God's Creation this spring and summer. It began in spring at a CREDO conference in the mountains of New Hampshire—at the Barbara Harris Conference Center—where faculty and clergy colleagues from around the country helped me to enjoy my environment in a much more intentional way, with a deep focus on the holiness all around me. The same was true at our Clergy Conference in Long Beach, where sunrise morning prayer on the beach found us in God's holiest Cathedral. Then, in the early summer, I swam in a deep quarry in the hills of Vermont, and hiked many beautiful woodland trails. That week with my family felt equally sacred.



Cont'd on pg. 4

A Word from the Missioner for Environmental Justice, (cont'd)

In this newsletter, you will find a number of resources to help your congregation observe the Season of Creation, which begins on Sunday, September 2, and concludes on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This observance originated in the Roman Catholic Church and has been widely adopted by Christians of many traditions, Anglicanism among them. We encourage you to work with your clergy and lay leadership to weave this observance into your parish's worship life.

As a further aid to the integration of ecojustice into parish life, we have prepared a series of ecojustice-oriented meditations on the Revised Common Lectionary, [available here](#). The first installment of this series covers all the Sundays in the Season of Creation, and all following Sundays in this liturgical year – Year C. Meditations for Advent through Epiphany will be provided in the next edition of this newsletter.



Though we all wish we didn't have to do this work, it comes with a blessing: the blessing of fellowship with all who understand that love of God, love of our neighbor, and love of the earth, are inseparable.

On behalf of the Creation Care Community, I give thanks to God for all of you, and for all that you have done and will do to answer God's call to care for Creation.

Blessings,
Matthew+

Consider Killing Your Lawn

WRITTEN BY RITA GRIFFITH



I often walk the mile and a half from home to Tanner Park, Copiague, and as I pass the houses on the way, I play a little game in my mind: brown lawn, green lawn. These days, with the heat and the drought, it tends to be brown lawn, brown lawn, brown lawn, green lawn. I'm very thankful for those brave folks who, in lawn-proud Long Island, have let their lawns go brown. It means they're not watering.

Do you know how much drinking water we use on our lawns? In 2013, *Newsday* [reported](#) that while residents of Nassau and Suffolk already use more water than the average in the rest of the country (130 gallons vs 100 gallons per day), that total jumps to 500 gallons per day in the summer, 90 percent of it going to lawns. In August 2022, Suffolk County Water authorities [said](#) they fill a water tower in Southampton with a million gallons at midnight and it is nearly all gone by 7:00 a.m. – 70 percent of it to water lawns.

If you have had a chance to visit the UK, you'll have noticed that the front yards, no matter how small, are mostly always gardens. In contrast, we in the USA very early on bought into the idea that green lawns were the perfect showcase for our homes. For this, a Long Islander bears much of the blame.

[William Levitt, of Levittown fame](#), had ordinances about the grass around his houses, which spread nationally. The Natural Resources Defense Council [says](#) every year America's lawns use nearly 3 trillion gallons of water. In addition to the water, lawns consume 200 million gallons of gas (for mowing), and 70 million pounds of pesticides.

But apart from looking nice and green, environmentally lawns really give back nothing. We don't see butterflies and bees on our nicely manicured lawns, and the pesticides we use to maintain them kill bees and, with run-off, aquatic life. We're not even watering very efficiently because much of our sprinkler water pours out onto our sidewalks. So, we are wasting precious water – and other resources – just for the look of it.

What if we were to let our water-hogging lawns go brown and instead plant native plants in our front yards that would only need water from what rain we get? In fact people are doing this now.

A 2019 CBS [report](#) highlighted [Rewild Long Island](#). They encouraged homeowners in Port Washington to replace their lawns with native plants, including, according to one woman "blueberry bushes, wild strawberries, and cranberry bushes, black-eyed-Susans and anise hyssops." She replaced her grass with creeping phlox – which, like [wild thyme](#), is an alternative to turf. She didn't need to water as these were plants that were suited to the amount of rainfall in the area. After that, her yard was filled with many different types of butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.

There's also a growing [no-mow movement](#) around the country, with a simple idea: let your grass and wildflowers grow as they will. There's a section of the grounds our Cathedral of the Incarnation which is now un-mowed, creating a habitat for the bees they've recently started keeping.

Some of us live in incorporated villages that, in keeping with Levitt, insist our front yards and lawns must look a certain way. It's time for us to advocate for those rules to change, considering the increasing population pressures on water resources, and the need for every one of us to adjust our practices to the warming trends due to climate change.



Let's do it. Kill the lawn and plant some native flowers.

Community Question, (cont'd)

Next week, we will head to Provincetown, MA: a community both beautifully radical, and radically beautiful, where I always feel at peace and safe (in a world that, for me, has often been neither of those things). That land was first occupied by the Wampanoag Tribes, which means "People of the First Light." What we now call Cape Cod – and Provincetown in particular – is one of the first places in America to be grazed by the morning light each day. My hope is that during my visit I will regard the start of each day as a mini-Easter morning, say a prayer of thanks to the Wampanoag for their stewardship of this land, and ask God to forgive us for our past sins. May each "First Light" shine in all of our hearts this summer, and always.

THE REV. LILO CARR RIVERA, MSW, MDiv.
Assistant Rector
St. Ann's Episcopal Church, Sayville

"This is the first summer that my family has had a dog (we brought him on board early last September). Chico gets my husband, teenage son and I outdoors and into nature much more than we used to (both my husband and son had never lived outside New York City before we moved). Walking with him has kept me keyed into the changes the seasons. As we take him for walks around the neighborhood, we notice the changes in the bushes and sky and weather much more than we did before we had him. Like most dogs, he has a powerful sense of smell. He often sniffs deeply and meaningfully at blades of grass or random leaves or the air - he's experiencing an aspect of God's creation through nature that is completely unknown to me. Experiencing the world vicariously through him has renewed my sense of God's mystery unfolding in the physical world around us.

RON AND NANCY SCOTT
St. Mary's Church, Hampton Bays

"This summer we have been feeling connected to nature through our gardening. We've been growing mostly tomatoes, and cucumbers."

BETTY SPARROW
St. Mary's Hampton Bays

"We have been trying to take care of creation by taking care of our personal home as best we can."



In Observance of The Season of Creation:

WRITTEN BY THE REV. MARK GENSZLER AND THE REV. MAXINE BARNETT



September marks the 'Season of Creation,' an ancient-yet-new evolution of our liturgical calendar embraced by both the western and eastern streams of Christianity in the past decade. This focus for the month preceding the feast of Francis of Assisi (Oct 4) offers a rich opportunity to engage what abundant life for all creatures looks like -- particularly for the Earth, the most vulnerable of the creatures of God. And, while September might be the 'season of Creation', you can find resources to help your community deepen its year-round practice.

Curious about integrating some of this thought into your community's liturgical practice? Wanting to stand at the intersection of ecojustice and racial/economic justice? Just want to read up on it all? We have gathered some links for you, resources developed in other communities linked with ours. And, don't forget to spend some refreshing time with our Missioner Matthew Moore's [eco-justice lectionary commentary](#), -- so rich!



---The Episcopal Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts have developed an incredibly thoughtful, liturgical... and very Episcopal planning resource. You may read and download it [here](#). It can inform your liturgical practice, community action, work with children and families of all sorts, intersectional justice work... And here is the page on the Episcopal Church's [web site](#) with Season of Creation resources. And, here is the [same, en espanol](#).

---Curious about the wider ecumenical conversation surrounding this work? The 'Laudato si' movement [has a great web page](#). "Laudato si..." is the first line of the great Franciscan canticle of the creatures ("Praised be you, my Lord, for Brother Sun..."), from which [Pope Francis' influential encyclical](#) takes its title.

---Sunday school curricula for the young, and from the wider Anglican world? [Right here](#). Check out Green Anglicans in general, [here](#).

---September 1 will mark the World Day of Prayer for all Creation. Read up, and find resources [here](#).

---Want to situate this work in the context of the wider Anglican Communion? [Visit here for context and many resources](#), liturgical and community-action-oriented.

Explore more! Introduce things to your community -- they will thank you for the interpretive tools you give them, integrating their religious practice with the needs of the world.