

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND CREATION CARE MINISTRY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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A Word from the Missioner for Environmental Justice:

In our previous newsletter, we invited you all to join us for our first Creation Care Retreat. Thirty-three of us, representing fifteen parishes from across the diocese, gathered at the Mercer School on 1 October for an energizing day of fellowship, prayer, and planning for Ministry.

After Morning Prayer with Bishop Provenzano, we heard presentations on the climate crisis and on the identification of resources and partners in the community. For the balance of the morning everyone rotated through brief small group presentations on the following four areas of Creation Care: reducing parish emissions; greening our spaces; reducing, reusing, and recycling; and ecojustice advocacy. After lunch everyone attended a more in-depth session on whichever of the four areas resonated most strongly with them.

The theme of the retreat was "Planting the Seed." We are all excited to see how the seeds that were planted during our time together will bear fruit in the months to come. If you missed out on this retreat, never fear: we are already planning the next one, on Saturday, May 13th!

We are once again offering reflections (available by following [this link](#)) on the Revised Common Lectionary; the latest installment has a reflection for each of the Sundays in Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. It is our hope that this will be a helpful resource, not just for those who want to proclaim ecojustice from the pulpit, but for everyone who wants to make the connection between Scripture and Creation Care.



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



Planting the Seed Retreat, October 1, 2022

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

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Planting the Seed: Our Current Focus Areas

DARREN J. GLENN, EDITOR



At our first Green Teams Retreat, our Creation Care Ministry steering committee introduced the intended scope of this novel Diocese-wide ministry. In that introduction, we discussed the four general action areas that we are using to categorize the kinds of projects that we would like to encourage parishes to undertake (with our direct and ongoing support). Below, I've condensed the information that was distributed to our attendees in the hopes that it will inspire a few more of our dear newsletter readers who have yet to engage with the Creation Care Ministry to join our movement within the diocese as we enter a season of industriousness in this sacred work.



Planting the Seed Retreat, October 1, 2022

Eliminate and Reduce Parish Emissions

OBJECTIVE:

The goal of this group is to provide education, methods, and resources to help parishes reduce and then eliminate parish emissions.

PROCESS:

- Step 1: Measure Emissions
- Step 2: Conduct Energy Audit to Help Determine Alternatives (Behavioral, Systems)
- Step 3: Put it all Together and Make the Plan
- Step 4: Keep Measuring Emissions as you Put the Plan in Place

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

1. Metro IAF - Metro IAF New York, is a coalition of seven independent organizations in the New York metropolitan area that has been organizing to improve our city and our region.
 - <https://metro-iaf-ny.org/>
 - Joe Morris, Lead Organizer
 - joemorris03@gmail.com
 - 201-705-7988
2. The Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC) fights for structural change at the local, state, and national levels to attain racial justice, build community wealth, and realize a just transition to a 100% renewable energy future.
 - <https://lipc.org/>
 - Ryan Madden
 - rmadden@lipc.org
 - 914-924-3970)
3. Energy STAR - Since 1992, ENERGY STAR and its partners have helped American families and businesses save 5 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity, avoid more than \$500 billion in energy costs, and achieve 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas reductions.
 - More information: www.energystar.gov
 - Anna Dengler, Energy Star Team Representative
 - annadengler@hotmail.com
 - 914 589-5824

Greening our Spaces

OBJECTIVE:

The shared goal of projects under this focus area is to support direct stewardship of the lands under the Episcopal Diocese's purview in accordance with sustainable practices and in a manner responsive to community needs.

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

As we enter into the new liturgical year, we hear John the Baptist's uncompromising call to repentance alongside Isaiah's beautiful visions of a world renewed and the coming of Immanuel. Advent is so much more than just an overture to Christmas Day! It is a time for us to renew our hopeful confidence in the future God has in store for all of Creation, and to find our own place in the great work of salvation that began with the Incarnation and will culminate in the life of the world to come.

Now is the time, Paul tells us in the epistle for 1 Advent, to wake from sleep, and live honorably, as in the day that is still dawning. As we wake up to the tragic reality of what we have done to the earth, let us hear the Advent call to repentance (that is, to a change of heart and mind) and also with the Advent promise of cosmic renewal. Let us all strive to live honorably, as in the day, by doing our part to care for the beautiful, wounded earth God has entrusted to us.

On behalf of our growing Creation Care Community, I wish you all a holy Advent and a joyous Christmas season.

Blessings,

Matthew +

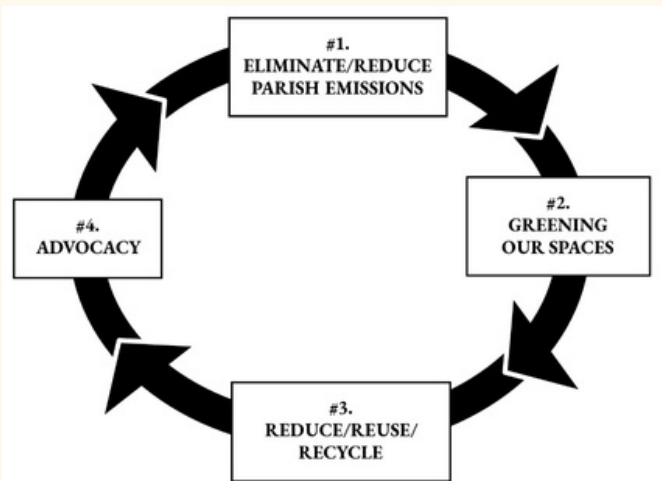


Illustration of the current four focus areas of the Creation Care Ministry

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'Tis the season... of excess

BY RITA GRIFFITH



I've loved Christmas since I was a child running around my small town in western Jamaica. The sparklers; the shops with tinsel hangings; the lights; the smell of baking cake; the balloons... For me, Christmas was a season of unbridled joy, almost detached from the poor little baby Jesus we sang about in carols.

Later, I tried to give my children that excitement too, and I confess that sometimes that meant being a bit over the top with the food and gifts.

As green Christians, we are faced with a dilemma. How do we spread the joy of Christmas – and it should be joyful – without indulging in the excess? We're determined to 'walk softly on the earth,' to curb our over-consumption, to always think of what the earth needs. But Christmas is a season of extravagance. We feel we have to have lights, Christmas trees, piles of gifts under the tree, and a laden table on Christmas Day.

Unfortunately, it comes at a cost. One report says Americans generate 25% more trash between Christmas and New Year's. Most of it is food, boxes, wrapping paper, Christmas trees, old electronics, and so on.

What's a green Christian to do? Here are a few suggestions about how we might try to cut down on Christmas excess without losing the joy.

Wrapping paper and bows:

Bows, fancy wrapping paper with glitter, and metallic paper are not recyclable. Choose the kind of wrapping paper that can actually be recycled – and do put it in the recycling, not the garbage. Alternatively, you can make cloth bags, which can be reused year after year. You can also use and reuse gift boxes and ribbons for years. When you do need new bows, try twine instead.

Christmas Tree:

There is a debate on whether a real tree or a fake tree is better for the environment. On the one hand, a real tree contributes to carbon capture when it's growing, and can be composted – but gets thrown out each year. On the other hand, a fake tree can last for years, but when it goes into the landfill it will last forever there because it is plastic. An alternative could be a living tree, which can be replanted after the holidays. Tip: make sure it's one that will take your lights and ornaments. Ask me how I know.

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My husband Bruce planting our living tree in 2019 and the same tree in 2022

Planting the Seed: Our Current Focus Areas, (cont'd)

PROCESS:

Step 1: Understand your community's ecosystem

Step 2: Examine community needs

Step 3: Develop land use strategies that respond to both your parish's place in the natural ecosystem and community needs.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

1. Sisters of St. Joseph - a Roman Catholic community of women in Brentwood who are stewards of several hundred acres in the heart of suburban western Suffolk County. They are working with a land-use ecologist to transform their campus to be a part of the rewilding movement.

- <https://brentwoodcsj.org/ministry-areas/ecology/>

2. ReWild Long Island - ReWild Long Island promotes sustainable landscaping by providing education and tools for residents of our communities to replace sterile conventional monocultures with wildlife-friendly vibrant natives and organic gardens.

- <https://www.rewildlongisland.org/>

3. St. Francis Episcopal Church - The Garden at St. Francis is a community reconnecting with the soil and water at the parish located on the South Shore of Long Island. Modeling a truly intersectional and community-responsive approach to environmental stewardship, this garden's focus is on growing produce to feed neighbors facing food insecurity.

- <http://www.stfrancisbellmore.org/the-garden>

Advocacy

OBJECTIVE:

Advocacy for ecojustice brings people together in an organized way to put pressure on business and on government at all levels—municipal, state, federal, and international—to enact the policies we need to address the worldwide crisis of Climate Change.

PROCESS:

There is a wide range of options to choose from if you want to get involved in environmental advocacy. Advocacy work can take many different forms including attending rallies and marches, organizing letter writing and phone calling campaigns, joining in lobby visits to legislators, or taking part in interfaith services and educational events that help to mobilize other people of faith. The following community resources can also help guide your next steps in taking action to advocate for our planet.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

1. 350Brooklyn: This is the Brooklyn affiliate of 350.org, the nationwide ecojustice organization founded by Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*, *Falter*, and other classic works on the environmental crisis.

- More information:

- 350brooklyn.org <https://350brooklyn.org/workgroups/>

2. NY Renews: NY Renews is a legislative coalition of over 300 environmental, justice, faith, labor, and community groups, working together to pass climate justice laws in New York state. NY Renews is now preparing to mount a campaign for a package of bills gathered under the umbrella of "Climate, Jobs, and Justice."

- More information: <https://bit.ly/CCConPage>

- E-mail: mmoore@dioceseli.org

3. The Sierra Club: One of the oldest and most influential environmental organizations in the United States, the Sierra Club in New York is focused on the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, which aims to transition the United States to 100% clean electricity by 2030

- More information: <https://coal.sierraclub.org/>

- Email Shay O'Reilly (shay.oreilly@sierraclub.org)

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Planting the Seed: Our Current Focus Areas, (cont'd)

4. **GreenFaith:** GreenFaith is a leading worldwide interfaith ecojustice organization. They are currently in the process of building a strong presence in New York state, especially in New York City, the most important source of finance for the fossil fuel industry. "Faiths 4 Climate Justice" campaign, comprising grassroots actions across the world to urge meaningful international action on climate change.

- Visit: <https://greenfaith.org/faiths4climatejustice/>
- Email: mmoore@dioceseli.org

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of Creation Care projects that fall under the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" area is to find solutions to over-consumption in our parishes. In an effort to be an example for how to care for creation, we aim to reduce use of single-use items, address food, material, and clothing waste in parish activities, and implement more eco-friendly waste management.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- Visit: <https://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html>
- Visit: <https://gwipl.org/go-green/green-congregation-guides/>
- Visit: <https://www.sunshineguerrilla.com/2018/08/how-to-find-zero-waste-and-eco-friendly.html>

**Resources for a Greener Winter**

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

As we turn to Advent, and the Christmas-Epiphany cycle in the northern hemisphere, here are some excellent resources and suggestions for your community to reorient some of their holiday and winter customs along creation-care lines. Many of our customs have a certain amount of (unnecessary) waste built into them, but there are many wonderful ways to observe - as did the ancient church - the slow return of the post-solstice light, establish justice with our vulnerable neighbors - including the earth - and point in all things to the one always coming among us with "...healing in his hand."

Want to ditch wrapping paper?

- <https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/how-to-have-a-green-christmas/>

Or orient your community's practices toward a 'greener' Advent?

- <https://episcopalcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Caring-for-Creation-with-a-Green-Advent-and-Christmas-1.pdf>

Or have a simple list of '10 things you can do' in the new year at your fingertips to share?

- <https://nccumc.org/creation/2021/01/creation-care-moment-for-january-10-ways-to-care-for-gods-creation/>

Or, for Epiphany, consider blessing your houses and dwelling-places by asking how you may live more lightly on the Earth right where you are, which will be more than blessing enough. (But, go ahead and chalk your doorways, too...)

A blessed Incarnation to you, and a year of grace (and justice and healing) in 2023.



Living Christmas Tree at Grace Episcopal Church, Massapequa.
PHOTO: © Ernest Isip/Grace Church Massapequa

Tis the season... of excess, (cont'd)**Christmas lights:**

One article says: 'The United States uses 6.63 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity each year to power holiday lights – that's enough energy to run 14 million refrigerators!' We can cut down on electricity usage by using LED lights, using fewer strings, and cutting back on how long they're on - maybe switch them on an hour later and turn them off when we go to bed.

Christmas Dinner:

Let's try our best not to throw out the good and delicious left-over food from Christmas dinner. Package it in smaller take-out type containers and freeze it to be used later. Freeze the turkey carcass and ham bone to make soup later on in the year, like Gov. Michael Dukakis. Send food home with your guests. Don't leave it in the refrigerator to spoil and be tossed.

Serving the Christmas Dinner:

Can we try this year to use regular plates, forks, etc., at dinner rather than disposable? Pretend we were our grandparents, who would never dream of serving such an important meal on anything but the good China.

For Earth's sake, let's have a merry, joyous, exciting, and green Christmas this year!

Community Question:

What is one change you think you will make in 2023 to better care for creation?

PEDRO MENDOZA

Parishioner, St. John's Episcopal Church, Huntington NY

"I think what I can do in 2023 is to increase my plant-based food consumption and eat vegetables more. Newer culinary inventions are made all the time from Vegan steak to vegan turkey. So those foods are something I'd like to try, to help conserve the environment and be healthy too."

BETSY HILL

Parishioner, St James of Jerusalem in Long Beach

"In 2023, I will continue working on my garden and the church garden to reduce lawn area (which requires mowing) and increase native plantings."

EVIE HACKETT

Parishioner, St. George's Church, Hempstead

"For 2023, I do hope to encourage each person I encounter to consider using more plant-based or environmentally safe products."

LISA KAPLAN

Parishioner, All Saints' Church, Baldwin

"In order to help preserve God's precious creation, I plan on reducing my personal carbon footprint as follows: turning my thermostat down and putting on a heavy sweater and socks. Also, to economize on my fuel usage, I will limit the days I drive to do errands."