

# EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND CREATION CARE MINISTRY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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## *Introducing two new Creation Care Leadership Team Members:*

**BENJAMIN SPIER**

St. Ann's & the Holy Trinity,  
Brooklyn Heights, NY



"A longtime parishioner and former vestry member at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn Heights, I currently serve on the outreach and B&G committees. My primary interests in environmental action are decarbonization and preserving biodiversity."

**IRENE ROSS**

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Islip, NY



"I started reading the book Celebration of Discipline. I found myself constantly drawn to the chapter, "The Discipline of Simplicity" and I started to see how our excessive consumerism affected the planet. Days after finishing the book, I heard a sermon from Reverend Matthew Moore, Missioner of Environmental Justice, on his visit to my parish St. Marks of Islip."

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creationcare@dioceseli.org*

## A Word from the Missioner of Environmental Justice



*THE REV. MATTHEW MOORE,  
MISSIONER OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE*

Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. Many of us heard these words from the prophet Joel on Ash Wednesday, as we set out on this year's Lenten journey. Joel warned a wayward people that a "great and powerful army [whose] like has never been from of old" was on its way. The people's only hope lay in repentance: not a superficial tearing of their clothes, but a breaking open of their hearts to make room for the God they had abandoned.

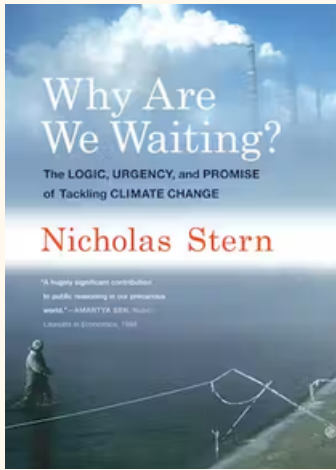
We can hear the approaching footsteps of another army whose like has never been, an army whose troops include droughts, floods, heat waves, melting ice caps, and rising seas. Like the people of ancient Israel, we face a catastrophe of our own making, brought on by our reckless use of fossil fuels. And for us, as for them, repentance is the only way out. For the good of the earth and all that lives on it, we must change our hearts, our minds, and our way of life.

Those who profit from the toxic status quo would have us believe that repentance for our addiction to fossil fuels will usher in a dismal future of diminishing economic returns. Lord Nicholas Stern gave the lie to such fear-mongering almost ten years ago in "Why Are We Waiting?" His painstaking economic analysis demonstrated that addressing climate change is not just compatible with, but strongly conducive to, prosperity and the eradication of poverty.

But much has happened since Lord Stern published that book. James Hansen, a leading authority on climate change, recently predicted that at some point this year average global temperatures will have risen by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, the threshold beyond which the consequences of climate change become truly catastrophic and irreversible.

**[cont'd on pg. 2]**

**A Word from the Missioner of Environmental Justice [cont'd from pg. 1]**



Stern, Nicholas. (2015). "Why Are We Waiting?: The Logic, Urgency, and Promise of Tackling Climate Change." MIT Press.

So for us the question would seem to be not "Why are we waiting?" but "Have we waited too long?" And the answer, for us, can be found at the end of that Ash Wednesday reading from Joel: Who knows whether God will not turn relent, and leave a blessing behind, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

The Bible tells us over and over that God's will for Creation is abundant life, and that God's ultimate vision for Creation is the holy mountain where the leopard will lie down with the kid, and God will judge with equity for the meek.

We can't chart the path that will take us there from here, but we can take steps in that direction here and now, and trust God to accept and amplify the offerings of our work. So let us pray, in this Lenten season, for that repentance, that change of heart and mind, that will empower us to do what we can for the good of the earth. None of us can do it all, but all of us can do something. As it says in the Mishnah, it is not our duty to finish the work, but neither are we at liberty to neglect it.

Matthew+



CREATION IN OUR DIOCESE: (Above, Left) Magnolia Blossoms in Floral Park, NY. (Above, Right), Cherry Blossoms in Floral Park, NY. (Below). Cherry Blossoms at Silver Lake Park, Baldwin, NY. Copyright: Zoe Parkes. (All Saints' Church Baldwin).



**"Are YOU feeling inspired by nature in your community?"**

send us your photographs of parks, gardens, and nature trails that remind you of the wonder of God's creation!



CREATIONCARE@DIOCESELI.ORG

**"Do YOU plan to change your consumer habits for Lent?"**

send us your answers!



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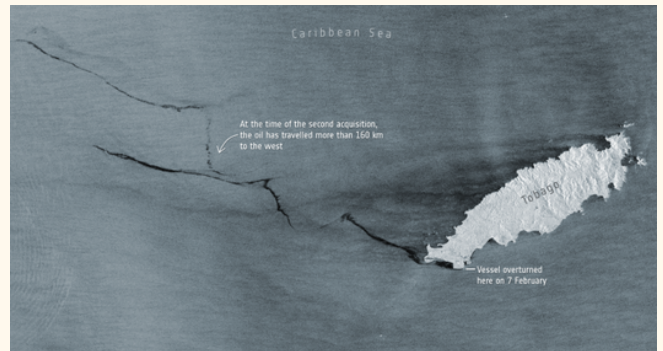
## Lent: A Time for New Consumer Practices



BY DARREN J. GLENN, EDITOR

Lent, the season of reflection, penance, and sacrifice in many Christian traditions, including the Episcopal tradition, is most often considered an opportunity for us to contemplate our habits as individuals and actions and the impact that we are having on our immediate communities. In my imagination, Lent can also provide a timely opportunity for communities to contemplate their impact on the environment—a theme that you will no doubt notice in this issue of the Creation Care Community Newsletter. These are thoughts that I had even before I discovered the news of the current oil spill that is devastating marine life in my home country of Trinidad and Tobago.

The recent discovery of oil vessels leaking diesel fuel into the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Tobago, just ahead of the pre-Lent-related tradition of Carnival, serves as a stark reminder of the pressing need to reconsider our dependence on industries that harm the planet. I find the coinciding of this historic ecological catastrophe with the celebration of excess before the observance of Lent an opportunity to address how our excessive consumption, particularly of fossil fuels, is continuing to shape the world around us, increasingly marked by disharmony and a danger to Creation of sinful proportions. The refusal to give up commerce in the oil and gas sector puts ecosystems in the Caribbean and beyond at risk, demonstrating, at the most basic level, a lack of the very discipline and temperance that we associate with Lent.



Satellite Imagery documenting the February 2024 Oil Spill off the coast of the Caribbean island of Tobago. 02/16/2024. Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tobago\\_oil\\_spill\\_ESA25487958.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tobago_oil_spill_ESA25487958.gif)

As a moral compass, we understand that the Church has an imperative to encourage its members to make sacrifices that not only inspire personal growth but also contribute to the preservation of the environment. We are increasingly coming to understand that the Church also has an imperative to encourage all throughout our society to abandon practices that cause disharmony and harm. Many industries, however, remain obstinate in their harmful practices, ignoring the sanctity of life on Earth, and refusing to transition towards

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# Why Lent is the Perfect Time to ‘Go Green’ (...and how to look through an ecological lens during this season)

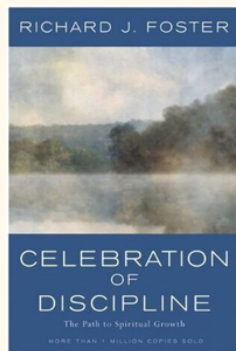


BY IRENE ROSS

Caring for the environment is a reflection of God. And when you think of it, everything is related to the four pillars of Lent: fasting, prayer, abstinence, and almsgiving—and many of them relate to several pillars at once.

“The earth is God’s original gift to every creature that lives on it,” said the Reverend Dr. Matthew E. Moore, Missioner for Environmental Justice, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island and Co-Chair, Creation Care Community, in a recent sermon. Fasting = Simplicity.

In his book, “Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth,” Richard Foster explains that simplicity begins with an inward focus and unity—The Divine Center. Foster cautions that when we lack that center, we’re led to an attachment of things, resulting in exploitation, self-centeredness, excessive consumerism and materialism—which results in terrible events like war, poverty, deforestation, and overall spiritual decline.



Foster, Richard J. (1998). “Celebration of Discipline: The path to Spiritual Growth.” Harper San Francisco

1. Don’t just buy things to impress others or “shop just to shop.

“ Avoid excessive consumerism,” said Rev. Dr. Moore. “As a species we make war on the earth, recklessly plundering its bounty to meet our own insatiable desires for material comforts.

## **Lent: A Time for New Consumer Practices, (cont’d)**

more sustainable alternatives, inevitably resulting in tragedies such as the one playing out in Trinidad.

I invoke the concept of praxis as we consider how our daily actions contribute to the world we inhabit. Adopting sustainable and regenerative practices during Lent and beyond can lead to a significant impact. (Literally “practicing” for the world we want to live in). What if our collective efforts to engage in regenerative work could shape a world that prioritizes environmental well-being? Reusing items. Planting trees. Supporting local environmental organizations. There are so many options that we as Christians have to step into an eco-conscious praxis during Lent. The specific practice that I want to narrow in on is that of how we spend our money. Governments and corporations make choices that affect ecosystems daily, but as consumers, we also wield substantial power in shaping the world through our purchasing decisions.

Our consumer habits have the power to sustain or interrupt the influence of large corporations on our planet. Just as Lent is seen as a sacred practice to bring individuals closer to God, sacrificing certain purchasing habits can be viewed as a sacred practice that aligns us with the well-being of the planet. While complete avoidance of fossil fuels or certain industries may be challenging, it is essential to question and seek alternatives in our daily choices. Protesting and advocacy notwithstanding, I cannot easily stop any government in North America nor the Caribbean from investing in oil and gas expansion and putting our ecosystems at risk. But I can choose to bank at an institution that is not supporting oil companies. I can ask if my favorite clothing stores, or coffee shops, or skincare brand is contributing to pollution, labor rights violations, or genocidal violence in other parts of the world. And that will inform my praxis... my sacrifice for Lent. We must recognize the power we hold as consumers to vote with our dollars for the world we want to live in. And what a better time to assess what to relinquish, than Lent?

He continued: But the earth does not have an infinite capacity to recover from the wounds we inflict on it. And so because we see the earth from our self-centered point of view, we are pushing it to the point where it where it can no longer support civilization as we know it.”

2. Subscribe to online publications and news services, as opposed to print.

3. Eliminate the use of plastic bottles and cups. Install a water filter in your home and bring a mug to use at your church’s coffee fellowship.

4. Invest in your Prayer Life. When done intentionally, avoiding excessive consumerism can shift your focus to more meaningful things, like prayer.

5. Share a devotional or service bulletin. This practice not only reduces waste, but it also might spark a lively conversation and strengthen your relationships.

6. Subscribe to an online email, devotional or video. You’ll cut waste and allow you to connect and reflect.

7. Abstinence from other environmentally harmful activities in your life. Even the simplest things impact the environment. For example, large consumption of beef requires clear-cutting, which creates deforestation. Raking leaves makes your yard look pretty, but it also removes seeds and other food for wildlife.

8. Almsgiving- “Those who sow sparingly shall also reap sparingly”...2 Corinthians. This can take many different forms. Tending your church’s garden and plant seeds; (this is actually the best time to plant seeds for Perennials so they’ll germinate and grow in time for the Spring); donate your time to church charity activities; clean out your closets to donate (gently used) items so others can enjoy what you no longer use.

# Liturgical Resources for Your Lent



BY THE  
REV. MARK GENSZLER  
AND



THE REV. MAXINE BARNETT

While we may be in the midst of Lent, the point of Christian practices of repentance is always to orient us to the reality of God's work in the world, in us, drawing us all further into that abundant life for all creatures that is always proclaimed and present in our midst. 'Lent' comes from words meaning 'a lengthening' -- it was a word used for springtime, itself, and the lengthening of hours of daylight. Many other languages and cultures simply use a word for this season that speaks of its length of forty days. The forty days, themselves, are not meant to be so important in their counting (is it forty, really?), but in what the number forty holds in our sacred stories and texts: a fullness, 'all the time needed for the project'.

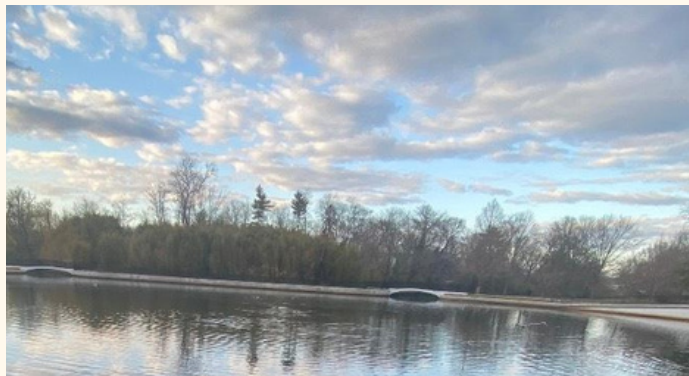
What is the project? The slow - or quick! - conversion of heart to which we are all called as creatures of God, here on this planet hurtling around the sun. Our increasing participation in the ongoing praise and project of all creation, which is to regain ever more the image and likeness of our creator - in whose image we are made.

What practices further this project? What ritual life reminds us of this image-of-God, toward which we turn (repentance) for life, health, and the healing of all things?

Perhaps 'give up' single-use plastics in Lent? Or engage in a carbon fast?

Or, ask what a place you tend - or are responsible for - might be yearning for, in ever fuller life: a tree planted? Native flowers requiring less watering and aiding pollinator insects? Wild grasses rather than a monoculture of a lawn? How about embracing a local wetland (which also helps local sewers not discharge 'waste' in these increasingly strong rainstorms we have thanks to climate heating)?

Springtime, and its lengthening, is the time to think of many of these things. What sort of life do we pray to further? What shall we plant? What actual seeds is the Holy Spirit planting among us, even now?



CREATION IN OUR DIOCESE: (Above) Silver Lake at sunset, Silver Lake Park, Baldwin, NY.  
Copyright: Zoe Parkes, (All Saints' Church Baldwin).

In our ritual life together, perhaps adapt the Prayers of the People to draw out the many ways in which we humans have abused the other creatures with which we share this planet, our common habitat. The litanies of repentance common to Ash Wednesday are a good template -- and it is always good to locate our repentance in the specific: which waterways and aquifers have we polluted? Name them, so we may pray for an amendment of life in our relationship with them. (This complete Lent curriculum can also be useful at any time of year, to help us learn to see, and act.)

If useful in your planning, look beyond Holy Week to the great season of Easter: what signs of the power of the Resurrection do you and your community discern even now? Where is there life, unlooked-for? Where does God-who-is-love 'stand back up' that which has been cast down? Where is this apparent in your habitat?

We can give up those plastic eggs and still have a - terribly pagan! - Easter egg hunt. (And, here are lots more interesting tips for parish and home...)

It is a constant dialog, and a constant revelation, this learning to see where and how God brings new life out of death. This basic mystery is the *Pascha*: the 'Passover of our God.' This is in the world, in this world. We must ask: do our practices in Holy Week tell this story? Does our ritual life reconnect us to the resurrection of all things, the 'first fruits' of which is 'The Resurrection' of our Lord? Where might we adapt and listen, proclaim the truth of the suffering of the world around us on Good Friday - in truth and in repentance for our own complicity in the many ways in which 'The Empire' (then, and now) still oppresses all that would live.



CREATION IN OUR DIOCESE: (Above) Tanglewood Preserves, Rockville Centre, NY.  
Copyright: Zoe Parkes, (All Saints' Church Baldwin).

For, after all, Lent is a time to return us to the practices that enable us to live ever more fully in the love, grace, and mercy of God-who-is-love. 'Lenten practices' might just be good practices--individual, communal--for the life-of-the-resurrection year round.

Or, as the beautiful Collect - used in several places in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, including on Good Friday and at the Easter Vigil - has it: '...let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by the One through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All things. All creatures of God. Amen? Amen.