

# EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND CREATION CARE MINISTRY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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## A Pentecost Message from the Missioner of Environmental Justice

BY THE REV.  
MATTHEW MOORE

When the Spirit of truth comes, the Spirit will guide you into all the truth. So Jesus promised his disciples at the Last Supper. And the Spirit he promised them did indeed descend on them fifty days after he rose from the dead, transforming a collection of timorous fair weather friends into the Church.



Peter, who just a few weeks earlier had been afraid to admit that he even knew Jesus, stood up before a skeptical crowd and announced that a new era had begun. Having received that same Spirit of truth, we too are responsible for seeing and witnessing to the truth. And with a decisive new era of human history now well underway, the need for our witness has never been more urgent.

*The Guardian* recently conducted a survey of the climate scientists who contribute to the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC). These are the leading experts on the climate crisis. Of the 380 respondents, 80% predicted that over the course of this century global temperatures will rise to at least 2.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels, and more than 50% predicted a rise of at least 3 degrees. This is substantially higher than the 2 degree target set by the Paris Climate Accords. One day after *The Guardian* broke this earth-shattering news, *The New York Times* published a piece entitled "The doom vs. optimism debate," whose opening sentence read:

"Depending on how you look at it, the climate story is one that can inspire genuine optimism or a fair bit of doomerism." In all fairness to *The Times*, they did mention *The Guardian* survey, as one item among many others, buried down at the bottom in a list of "5 more things to know." Small wonder, if a news outlet as widely revered as the *Times* can see two sides to this story (or pretend to), that the urgency of the climate crisis still fails to sink into so many hearts and minds.



Missioner for Environmental Justice The Rev. Matthew Moore and Creation Care Ministry Co-Chair Rita Griffith addressing the congregation at Earth Day at the Cathedral of the Incarnation. Saturday April 20th, 2024.

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**"A Pentecost Message from the Missioner of Environmental Justice..." [cont'd]**

So it has never been more urgent for us to walk in the Spirit of truth, to see the truth, to speak it, and above all to do it. For there is after all another side to the dire picture that those who know best have confronted us with. The other side is that, as David King (chair of the Climate Crisis Advisory Group) wrote in *The Guardian* just this week, "We have agency to change this, and a thriving future is still on the table." This isn't the tepid both-sidesism of the Times, that lets us think that we might magically avoid the worst without substantially changing our ways. This is the articulation of a hopeful vision that requires us to take responsibility for changing our relationship to the earth and to one another.

The new way of life that King calls for resonates deeply with the gospel vision of human flourishing: "We must find joy in nurturing what is around us, from nature to the things we own. Fulfillment should come from quality, not quantity, and from nature, not new things." And this inner transformation must lead to an outer transformation if we are to "transition our societies into a sustainable period of ecological civilization."

We still have a choice between life and death. But to exercise that choice, we must pay careful heed to King's closing sentence: "This process must begin now."

May the Spirit who guides us into all the truth empower us to see the truth, to speak the truth, and above all to do the truth, for the sake of all that live on the earth.

## Liturgical Resources for a New Season



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



Summer in urban and suburban settings can be a time of relaxation and reconnecting -- with our own selves, with neighbors, family, and community in new ways. It is also a season of growth and fruitfulness in the natural world, here in the northern hemisphere of the Earth.

In the church, it can be a time of thoughtful reflection on the growth of God's life among us and within us -- and perhaps some gentle planning for fall programs and the enlivening of autumnal change in our communities.

Here are some resources for summertime activities that might reconnect you and your community to the growth of that abundance God intends for all creation --

- Caring for Creation in the Summer - <https://www.diomass.org/creation-care>
- Enjoying summer with creation care in mind - <https://godspacelight.com/enjoying-summer-with-creation-care-in-mind/>
- For the Love of Creation is a coalition of 35 Canadian churches and faith-based organizations, including The United Church of Canada, working together under a unified banner to educate, reflect, act, and advocate for climate justice - <https://fortheLoveofCreation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Take-a-Sacred-Pause.pdf>
- World Council of Churches - <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/walk-the-talk>
- Creation Care Bible Challenge - <https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/2633/the-creation-care-bible-challenge.aspx>

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## A Summer to Commune with Creation

BY DARREN J. GLENN



Enjoying nature as a spiritual practice is as crucial as defending it. These twin duties of appreciation and stewardship are sacred responsibilities that draw us closer to the divine. The summer season, with its abundance of life and beauty, presents a unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in God's creation. As we marvel at the natural world, we should also commit to protecting it, recognizing that our efforts to safeguard the environment are acts of reverence towards the Creator. Just as the Bible says in Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it," we too are called to nurture and preserve the Earth.

During the colder months, we often retreat indoors, isolating ourselves from the natural world. This separation--however necessary--can easily lead to a sense of alienation. This detachment diminishes our ability to see nature as a reflection of God's majesty. Romans 1:20 reminds us, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made." Reconnecting with nature during the summer helps us realign with these truths and reduces the spiritual disconnect that colder months can bring.

Long Island, New York, offers numerous stunning locations where one can bask in the splendor of God's creation. Some of these include Montauk Point State Park, Sunken Meadow State Park, and Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. You might also enjoy the serene beauty of Planting Fields Arboretum, Fire Island National Seashore, and Jones Beach State Park.



Bayard Cutting Arboretum:  
Great River, NY.  
Retrieved from: <https://oneflylife.com/bayard-cutting-arboretum-a-long-island-state-park/>

Visit the Long Island Sound at Wildwood State Park, or explore the lush greenery of the Bayard Cutting Arboretum. The vibrant ecosystems at Connetquot River State Park Preserve, the scenic beauty of Hither Hills State Park, and the tranquil waters of Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge; each an opportunity for spiritual reflection.

This summer, I challenge you to be intentional about experiencing God in nature. Make time to visit these beautiful spots and allow yourself to be moved by the divine presence in the natural world. Psalm 19:1 declares, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Embrace the awe and wonder that these moments of communion with nature bring, and hold onto that feeling throughout the year. Let these experiences deepen your spiritual practice and reinforce your commitment to both enjoying and defending God's creation. As Psalm 95:4-5 reminds us, "In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land." Let this summer be a season of profound spiritual growth as you reconnect with the natural world.

# Earth Day at the Cathedral of the Incarnation



BY IRENE ROSS

How does God direct us to think about what's happening to the world he created? This was the question posed by Kyle Pope, guest preacher at the Cathedral of the Incarnation Earth Day celebration.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now and not only in the creation, but ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly while we wait for adoption—the redemption of our bodies...Romans 8: 22-23

This links the pain experienced by the earth with the pain in our own bodies. It reminds us that we are part of the earth.

A parishioner and vestry member of St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, NY, Pope included remarks from Pope Francis; Boston Theologian Fr. James Keenan; and California Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Marc Andrus, all thought leaders in the spirituality of environmental impact.

The story is often told from the scientific, political, or economic perspective. But, he noted, what is often NOT told is the fact that it's also a spiritual story. "Most of the people who have been most hurt by the climate crisis are the very ones who have done the least to cause it."

And, he added, that divide is only going to get larger, between those who have resources to protect themselves to those that don't—and become vulnerable to homelessness, joblessness, disease and starvation.

"My goal today is to reframe the way we think about climate change—to put it into the realm of faith and into our hearts," said Kyle Pope. "If we can do that, with God's help, we might have a shot at solving it."

The sermon is well worth the eight minute listen. [You can hear it in its entirety here.](#) See extracts on pg. 4.

Other Earth Day activities included:

1. Fun exploration of the importance of pollinators from Beekeeper Caroline Cosgrove.
1. A special Eucharist from Rt. Rev Bishop Provenzano.
2. Flora decorated the altar, with many being able to take them home later.
3. Lunch—and the opportunity to visit with clergy and lay persons from all over the diocese.
4. Launch of the Bishop's Canopy 2030, aimed at increasing tree cover in the Diocese.

## Liturgical Resources for a New Season [cont'd]

- A 6-week curriculum to help children experience what it means to be good stewards of the earth - Green Church: Caretakers of God's Creation by Daphna Flegal and Suzann Wade
- Website of Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Ph.D., is an Episcopal priest, author, retreat leader, and climate activist. - <https://revivingcreation.org/>

Included are resources for looking ahead to September and what the Church Universal is beginning to call the 'season of Creation' -- thoughtful liturgies, community activities, activism and contemplation, and useful curricula, too! Use this summer time to connect with others in your community around common work (for summer, fall, or winter!) to reorient our common life for the good of the whole creation and the true health of the human creature in community with the whole!

CCC's Second annual Earth Day at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, NY. April 20, 2024.  
Copyright: Teddy Byrne

BELOW: Acolytes from the Church of The Transfiguration of Freeport



ABOVE: The Praise Dance Ministry from St. David's Episcopal Church (Cambria Heights).



RIGHT: Bishop Provenzano and Cathedral clergy and staff at the Earth Day Eucharist.

LEFT: Members of the Creation Care Community Leadership Team, The Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, NY. April 20th, 2024.

Photos: Teddy Byrne



# Extracts from sermon preached on Earth Day

BY KYLE POPE

[...]

Right now, the changing climate has become part of our great global war of words and ideas. [Some 2 billion people] are eligible to vote this year, in the biggest election year in the history of humanity. And in many of those elections...the earth's future will be on the ballot. The decisions that voters make this...year could well determine what happens to the planet. That means that the climate crisis...has become a fight over political identity. [...] My hope today is to reframe the way you think about the climate story – to bring it out of the world of politics and into the realm of faith and hope...

[As a journalist I've worked] in newspapers and magazines and academia, as a reporter and a foreign correspondent and an editor in chief. Five years ago, I became concerned that [the scale of the climate problem] wasn't being matched by the resources inside newsrooms needed to cover it. So I started a nonprofit to encourage newsrooms to do a better job. That nonprofit is now the largest media collaborative in the world, encompassing 500 newsrooms, on every continent, representing a combined audience of some 2 billion people. And I have to say...newsrooms are doing a better job. [...]

They're telling the science story. The scientific consensus that the earth is warming, and that it's caused by us – our burning of fossil fuels – is overwhelming... They're telling the political story. Elected officials and those seeking office see climate as a talking point... Journalists are covering that debate. They're telling the business story – about the shift to electric vehicles and the green transition and the shift from an economy built on fossil fuels to one that isn't. [...]

But here's the story they're not telling...They're not talking about the fact that the climate story is a spiritual story, too. Most of the people who have been most hurt by the climate crisis so far are the people who did the least to cause it. And that fact is only going to get more stark, as the world divides itself into people who can adapt and protect themselves from a warming earth, and those who cannot. The crisis will supercharge the inequalities we already see, and will render millions of people homeless, without jobs, and more vulnerable to disease and starvation...

[Pope Francis frames ] it this way:

*The world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. As usual, it would seem that everything is the fault of the poor. Yet the reality is that a low, richer percentage of the planet contaminates more than the poorest 50% of the total world population.*

[...]

Turning away from what is happening to our planet...is no longer an option. We see changes happening outside our window, we feel it in our bones. [...]

[Romans 8:22-24] speaks directly to the spiritual pain we can feel when we reflect on the state of God's great earth...

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*

[Job 12:7 remind us] that we are part of the earth. I suspect many of us have felt that pain when we see lakes and rivers that have dried up. Animals who have lost their habitats. Fires that have destroyed our forests.

[Without hope], paralysis sets in.

[...]

[Luke 12:22-24 reminds us that faith can rekindle our hope]: *Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!*

[...]

If the climate crisis is a spiritual crisis, then the solution is a spiritual one, as well. That is where our hope lies. If we can begin to see this as not just a political and scientific and business story but one that is about something more fundamental –our commitment to our neighbors, our calling to help out the most vulnerable among us, our sense of right and wrong in the world, our love for the planet God has given us. ...Then we have everything we need to fight this fight. Get involved. Connect your spiritual life to protecting the life around you. Work in defense of the planet God created for all of us.

[...]

Amen.



ABOVE: Klamath National Forest. 2022. Firefighters observing wildfire of 2022. Retrieved from [WikiMedia Commons](#).

BELOW: Rustenburg, South Africa. 2022. Dry lakebed. Retrieved from [WikiMedia Commons](#).

