

## **R2022-09: A Call to Participate in Care of Creation and Address Environmental Injustice**

**Whereas**, the proposed 6th Baptismal Covenant (General Convention 2015) asks “Will you cherish the wondrous works of God, and protect the beauty and integrity of all creation?”; *and*

**Whereas**, On July 11, 2022, The House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church issued a statement during the final day of the 80th General Convention. “Climate change and environmental degradation are manifestations of our turning away from God,” the statement reads. “The effects of this willful separation from God resonate across our collective lives: All areas of justice are either worsened or made better depending on the health of the planet.”; *and*

**Whereas**, Diocesan Council has formed a Creation Care and Environmental Justice Commission with the purpose to provide liturgical and formation activities and materials, support parish energy efficiency efforts and a move toward use of renewable energy, help parish creation care ministries to consider alternative land use, local food production, waste reduction, creation based worship experiences, and other ministry concepts, support efforts for racial reconciliation; *therefore be it*

**Resolved**, that all institutions and congregations of the Diocese of Southern Ohio are strongly urged to engage the topic of care of creation and environmental injustices using the resources noted above

- a. To build creation care and environmental justice into worship and formation for children and adults,
- b. To look for and implement ways within the congregations means to conserve energy and reduce pollution and solid waste
- c. To take action to overcome impacts like energy burden, air pollution, and excessive heat index on community members disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards

*and be it further*

**Resolved**, that all institutions and congregations take specific action within their communities to share widely these efforts as a witness to our neighborhoods, using social media, local media, and diocesan outlets and share this good news with the Commission on Creation Care and Environmental Justice.

## Explanation

1. In August 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that, “unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach”. The report showed that, “emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900, and finds that averaged over the next 20 years, global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2021).

2. In January 2021, Diocesan Council formed a Creation Care and Environmental Justice Task Force. Since that time, the Task Force has

a. Offered and sponsored creation-inclusive formation activities and eco-catechesis across the diocese to help people grow in their understanding of creation care and environmental justice as part of our expression of Christian faith

b. Under the sponsorship of the Trustees of the Diocese, developed and administered the Energy Efficiency Grant Program which, to date, has awarded over \$180,000 in grants to parishes wishing to improve efficiency in their buildings

c. Embarked on a liturgy and formation project, in partnership with Faith in Life/Formation and the Center for Deep Green Faith to develop seasonal creation centered liturgical and formation resources. (This project is in its second phase of several and will continue, at a minimum, through Summer 2023)

d. Supported parishes wishing to form and grow Creation Care ministries

e. Proposed resolutions to Convention (2022) to encourage environmentally friendly practices and alignment with General Convention Resolutions

f. Supported creation and justice-focused bills in the Ohio Legislature

3. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church has a long history of addressing climate change and environmental injustice. Specifically, in 2022, the 80th Convention passed these related resolutions

a. 2022 – A088 Commit to Pressing Work of Addressing Global Climate Change and Environmental Justice as detailed [here](#)

b. A087 Net Carbon Neutrality by 2030 as detailed [here](#)

c. D064 Endorse and Encourage Green Deal Legislation as detailed [here](#)

## **Impact**

When congregations and diocesan institutions address climate change and environmental injustice through worship, formation, and local actions, the following benefits will be realized:

1. Congregants will be formed theologically and spiritually and become motivated to affect change in their communities.
2. By taking direct action in the areas of energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, land use, local foods and products, waste reduction, and other ministry concepts, congregations and diocesan institutions will be a witness to our neighbors affecting change on their part.
3. A spirit of hope will be created in the diocese and our communities where we can “see a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1-5a) and provide hope to our children and grandchildren.

## **Presented By**

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