

## GOOD NEWS FOR ALL CREATION

Submitted to the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, 118th Convention, 2019

Sponsored by: The Social Justice Commission and the Missioner for Creation Care

**Resolved**, that the 118<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts affirms the Episcopal Vision for Creation Care<sup>1</sup> put forward by Bishop Michael Curry and The Episcopal Church, and calls upon all our clergy and lay members to: take the pledge to Creation Care and “place the care of God’s Creation at the heart of our common life” as we work to grow a (1) loving, (2) liberating, and (3) life-giving relationship with the whole of God’s Creation; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the 118<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on all our clergy and lay members to meet the Loving Goal #1, demonstrating our love and concern for Earth, by: Getting Out There and enjoying and appreciating the natural world; creating and expanding networks dedicated to the care and protection of God’s Creation; engaging in prayer and worship (sometimes outdoors) and in preaching and formation; and sharing stories of our love for God and God’s Creation in programs for all ages; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the 118<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on clergy and lay members to meet the Liberating Goal #2, “to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable victims of the impact of climate change, especially women, poor people and people of color,” by advocating for climate justice. Congregations are urged to join with other faith and secular climate action groups to advocate to protect vulnerable people/land/species, and actively to support legislation at municipal, state, and federal levels that would keep fossil fuels in the ground and support a rapid, just transition to a clean energy economy, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the 118<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on clergy and lay members to meet the Life-giving Goal #3, to support mutual efforts to live more simply, humbly and gently on the Earth and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. A few ideas include, but are not limited to: participating in carbon-footprint tracking programs, particularly The Episcopal Church’s “Sustaining Earth, Our Island Home” carbon tracker;<sup>2</sup> promoting conscious food decisions and, as feasible, moving toward a plant-based diet; supporting local and sustainable agriculture and local land trusts; planting trees; conserving energy and transitioning to renewable energy; and divesting from fossil fuels.

### **Explanation:**

Our diocese is committed to following Jesus and to protecting the world that God entrusted to our care. In a time of climate emergency, we are determined to bear witness to our faith in a God who has power to bring life, restore hope, and make all things new.

The resolution “We are Still In,” passed in 2017 at our 116th Diocesan Convention, made it clear that the science is unambiguous: climate change is real, largely caused by human activities, and already having destructive effects worldwide. We called upon

congregations and individuals to set a moral example in their energy choices, to preach about our moral obligation to protect God's Creation, and to proclaim publicly the urgency of the climate crisis.

The resolution "Creation Care in Our Congregations: Living Lightly on God's Good Earth," passed in 2018 at our 117<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention, called on all parishes 1) to create a Green Team of one or more individuals to help the parish strengthen energy conservation and efficiency and encourage public advocacy around environmental issues; 2) to undertake an energy audit for all parish buildings in order to reduce the parish's carbon footprint; and 3) to report back on progress made.

Last October, the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report<sup>3</sup> on what it will take to keep the Earth's average temperature from warming more than 1.5° Celsius, the level that countries around the world agreed is a reasonably safe upper limit for maintaining life as we know it on this planet. The only way to avoid hurtling past that threshold is to carry out a "rapid and far-reaching" transformation of human civilization at a magnitude that has never happened before.<sup>4</sup> Such a radical transformation of society has what the report calls "no documented historic precedent," yet it must be carried out breathtakingly fast: the world has perhaps just over ten years in which to prevent climate catastrophe.<sup>5</sup>

Month by month, year by year, land, air, and oceans are breaking records for heat. We recognize that we need to ramp up our actions and that God's power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/creation-care/episcopal-vision>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sustainislandhome.org/> Although individuals are welcome to enroll in Sustain Island Home one by one, the Website is especially designed for congregations. If you'd like your congregation to be introduced to Sustain Island Home, please contact Rev. Eric Elley (860/394-8728; email: eelley@live.com).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/10/08/world-has-only-years-get-climate-change-under-control-un-scientists-say/?utm\\_term=.de02ced1ef13](https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/10/08/world-has-only-years-get-climate-change-under-control-un-scientists-say/?utm_term=.de02ced1ef13)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/10/08/world-has-only-years-get-climate-change-under-control-un-scientists-say/?utm\\_term=.de02ced1ef13](https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/10/08/world-has-only-years-get-climate-change-under-control-un-scientists-say/?utm_term=.de02ced1ef13)