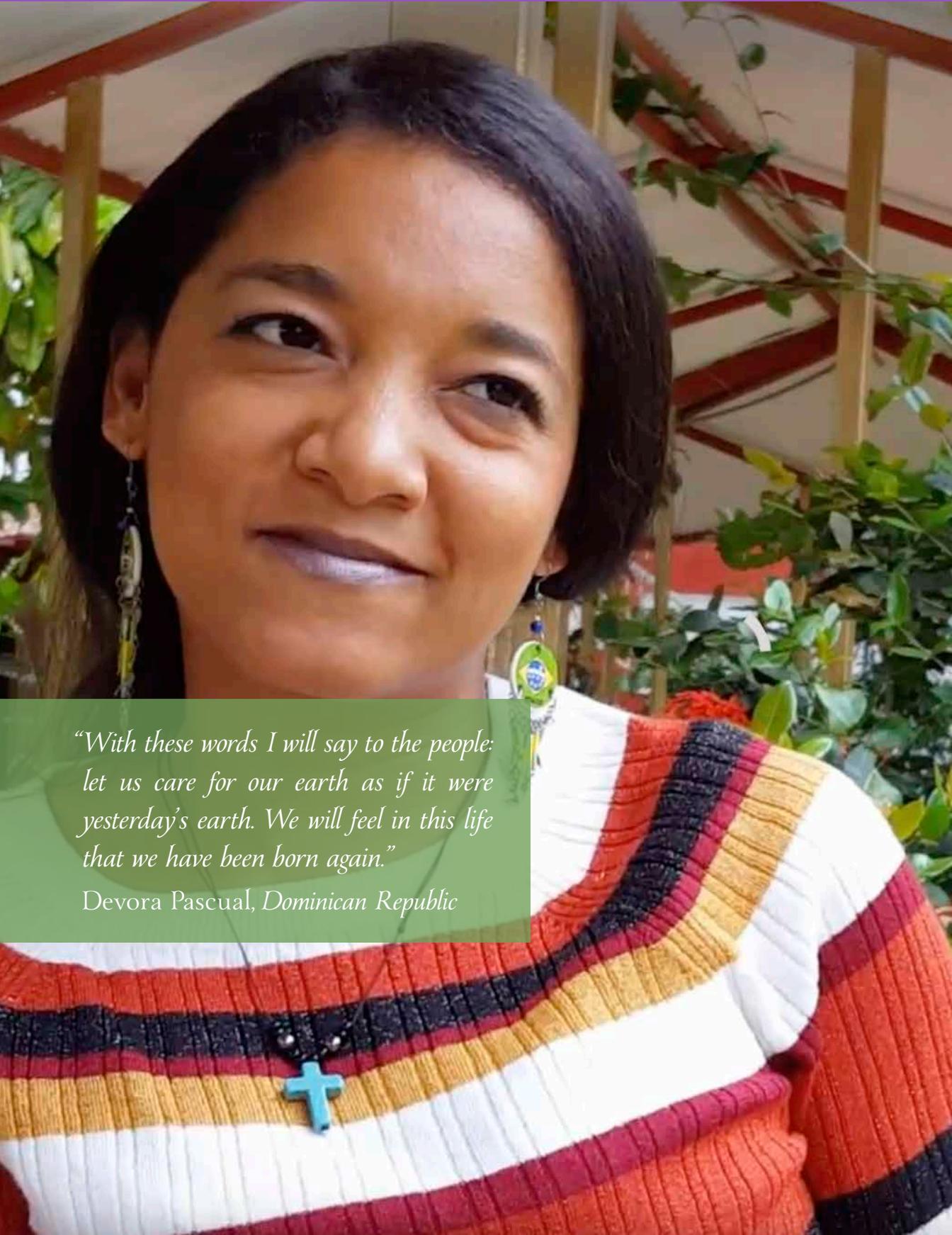


THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

GOOD NEWS TO ALL CREATION



*“With these words I will say to the people:
let us care for our earth as if it were
yesterday’s earth. We will feel in this life
that we have been born again.”*

Devora Pascual, Dominican Republic



FOREWORD

But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. Job 12: 7-10

Come, join with us to care for God’s creation. Meet the people who labor in the earth and on water with love, to the glory of God and in the love of Christ. We all share the common call of caring for our earthly home for love of neighbor and the work of the Gospel.



Communion bread made from heirloom wheat grown by Honoré Farm (Marin County, CA)

In September, 2011, the Episcopal Church House of Bishops issued A Pastoral Teaching that said, in part, *"May God give us the grace . . . to accept the gracious invitation of the incarnate Word to live, in, with, and through him, a life of grace for the whole world, that thereby all the earth may be restored and humanity filled with hope."*

In keeping with the Episcopal Church’s long dedication to eco-ministry, a resolution was passed at General Convention in 2015 creating the Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation. The Advisory Council has enabled local and regional eco-ministries through more than 40 grants, supported networks to organize creation care within the provinces of the church, and began initial efforts to respond to areas facing environmental injustice.

The Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation invites you to move more deeply into the Jesus Movement by loving creation. Gather together in your churches, partner with other volunteers in the community, set a plan and watch what can happen as you become a blessing to God’s beloved community of life.

Contained here are but a few examples of creative thinking, backed up with intentional doing. We hope you are inspired. (Learn more about the Advisory Council and its full mandate on Page 3).

- The Episcopal Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation
The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus and The Rev. Stephanie Johnson, Co-Chairs

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Editor’s note: We express our appreciation to the grant teams who supplied the photographs and helped us find the words to tell their stories.



Episcopal Advisory Council for the STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

General Convention of 2015 created the Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation, thus advancing the Church's commitment to faithfully respond to the challenge of climate change and the work of safeguarding the integrity of Creation. Care of creation has been identified as one of three pillars, along with reconciliation and evangelism, of the Jesus Movement. Putting the Gospel at the center means recognizing that we are in radical, transformative and reconciling relationship with all of God's creation.

The Council's efforts focused on three areas:

1. To form Regional Consultative Groups (RCG's) for Creation Care within each province to:
 - a. Compile and develop materials for teaching the theology of stewardship of creation and faithful church practice;
 - b. Establish networks designed to share ideas and information on practical applications;
 - c. Be available for consultation to Dioceses and Parishes

To date, several provincially based RCG's have been piloted and the Advisory Council has proposed a series of recommendations for future network development.

2. Launch a small grants program. Episcopal churches and organizations can propose projects for funding that have connections between faith and eco-justice, engage local community partners, and contribute to the life and mission of the larger church.

Three grant cycles led to 100 grant applications and 44 grant allocations. Grants were capped at \$10,000 per application, and a total of \$334,419 was disbursed for this work. The results from some of these funded programs are described in this magazine.

3. Form small working groups to develop three eco-justice pilot projects. These projects respond to critical issues of eco-justice in three specific locations: Arctic Village in Alaska, coastal areas of Louisiana, and the Dominican Republic. They provide direct, needed institutional and visionary support for communities in the face of inequitable and damaging environmental burdens. Progress from the Dominican Republic initiative is featured in this magazine, and can be seen on pg.11.



The Province IV Regional Consultative Group's meeting in TN



The Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation meeting at Bishop's Ranch in California

YOU can make a difference! Visit www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship-creation to learn how you can help.



The ABUNDANT TABLE

“I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food”—and it was done. Genesis 1:29-30

The Abundant Table is creating abundance in food, but more than that, it is creating farm-based spiritual formation for an abundance of connection with land, food, neighbor and God. Their “*Open Farm*” concept welcomes diverse peoples to get their hands in the earth to experience the regenerative nature of God. Multiple church, environmental and other community groups work the farm, coming away with a new respect for the power of the land to feed and restore us to wholeness.



“Journey Together has really been unlike any other community or church activity.... At the end of our time together, participants return to the field to harvest produce for the family dinner. During this time, different people volunteer to share a grace, prayer or blessing. The time and experience is so intentional and I love seeing the spark ignite for participants as they fall more deeply in love with not only the vegetables, but with the earth and its Creator who provided it.”

Another goal is to facilitate intergenerational formation supporting individuals, families and small groups of all ages.

Called “*Journey Together*”, monthly Sunday afternoon worship services are held, sometimes at the Farm or at the local Episcopal Church. The eco-spiritual principles for this worship continue to be “*Sacrament is earth language, and we are people of the earth... arising from the soil. Sacrament should be our language, the language we pass on to our children and the language of the land we walk and the people we walk with...*” Faith formation is centered on hymns, rituals and educational activities grounded in the ecosystem and God’s creation - truly a biblical-agricultural-educational perspective.



“One of my favorite aspects of Journey Together was the Parent and Me component with little ones five and under. They delighted in the mud and the water, the crunchy carrots and the colorful ladybugs, fully present and engaged with the ecosystem around them.”

Contact: The Rev. Nicole Janelle, Executive Director, The Abundant Table (revjanelle@gmail.com)



The Episcopal Church and Creation: PARTNERSHIP

BUILDING - IOWA CREATION STEWARDS AND FAITHLANDS

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Psalm 96:12

There is a ground swell within the Episcopal Church to establish meaningful paths to preserving the environment, with the Church acting as both the stewards and leaders we are called to be. Iowa Creation Stewards and FaithLands are two such examples.

Iowa Creation Stewards adopted a dual goal: to network and gather interested Episcopalians with other community members regionally for Rogation-inspired worship and forums on local environmental concerns; and to transform church-owned land into postage-stamp sized teaching gardens, utilizing their natural features of native prairie and water-quality.

From these efforts, Trinity Episcopal Church, Emmetsburg, Iowa, and its partners have completed and dedicated a new church prairie garden; and members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Grinnell, scattered seeds for their own prairie garden. The Cathedral of St. Paul, Des Moines, has created an urban green space with a crescent of connected rain gardens and labyrinth. The rain garden is a level depression or shallow bowl made in the ground that captures and cleans 12 swimming pools full of water annually.

More importantly, there is an awareness throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa for churches and land owners to join hands to create lasting regional environmental change.

Plainsong Farm and Ministry

A separate project sought to do this work at national, interfaith scale. Plainsong Farm and Ministry, partnering with Greenhorns, set about to launch “FaithLands”, convening faith leaders who care about ecology and agriculture with land owners and land trust organizations. Representatives of different ages, religions, races and ethnicities gathered for two and a half days to learn from one another, building strong relationships for the cultivation of future work. They have developed a website to share images and resources from their time together. Ultimately a toolkit will be developed for use throughout the Episcopal Church enabling Dioceses and Vestries to establish relationships for agro-ecological work.

There are many other initiatives, too many to mention, that set the tone for the vital work that lies ahead of us so that we may be God’s people caring for God’s planet.





A Solar Project in Haiti: EMBRACING THE POWER OF THE SUN

Then God commanded, “Let there be light”—and light appeared. Genesis 1: 3

In the mountainous terrain of Haiti, over 10M people struggle for bare necessities—electric power being a very basic need. A unique partnership between U.S. Episcopal Churches, Haitian Schools, Voices and Actions for Haiti (a Haitian NGO) and DigitalKap (a Haitian solar energy company) is focused on building solar installations in different locations benefiting as many people as possible.

The first of these is a 10kWh system at Cerca-la-Source at St. Marc’s Episcopal School supported by the Virginia Haiti Collaborative in the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Miraculous things are happening because of this new energy source: the school has the only operating printer and copier in a two-hour radius, so certain hours of the day the townspeople can pay a token to make copies; the school can now keep ice, and in true entrepreneurial spirit, is selling cold drinks; and the mayor is offering to buy



electricity for the government buildings if the school has some to spare. All of this leads to the financial viability of the school, while reminding the children and the entire community that gifts from the sun are gifts from God.

“Voices and Actions has changed my life in so many ways through their programs. Voices and Actions is a blessing.”

Voices and Actions operates a farm in Trouin, where the next solar project is in progress. With this energy source, the farm will be able to power fans for the chicken coops, pump water in the tilapia pond, and support farming for goats and pigs. Animals are sold to the village women at wholesale; they then sell them at retail pricing, earning money to feed their families. The supporting church for this project is Trinity Church, Washington, VA.

More solar installations are planned, and the summer of 2018 will see Solar Energy Academies in partnership with DigitalKap at Episcopal Colleges and Schools in Hinche, Trouin and Les Cayes training local residents how to build and maintain solar power installations, building the nascent solar energy workforce to meet the needs of the future.

“It’s been a while since we had people caring for us and thinking of ways to make our lives better.”

Contact: US: Delia Heck, Ph.D., Ferrum College (Dheck@ferrum.edu)
Haiti: Patrick Eugene, CEO DigitalKap (sales@digitalkep.com)



Experience THE RIVER OF LIFE

Then God commanded, “Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear”—and it was done. God named the land “Earth,” and the water which had come together he named “Sea.” Genesis 1: 9-10

In 2017, Kairos Earth/Church of the Woods, Canterbury, N.H., in cooperation with the seven Episcopal Dioceses of New England, led a 40-day, 395-mile River of Life Pilgrimage on the Connecticut River, from its source to the sea. The mission for the pilgrims who were “on the river” included times of quiet reflection, and time for thanks and prayers for the liquid treasure that is so vital to that region of the country. Pilgrims could connect with God, with each other, and with congregants from churches they visited along the way – always giving thanks for the gift of water. Fifty-two people, ranging in age from 11 to 83, paddled as river pilgrims. Forty more paddlers joined the core group of pilgrims for a day-paddle.



Along with daily prayer practices including extensive silence on the water and in camp, pilgrims engaged in daily rituals of blessing, mourning, and celebrating the landscapes, watersheds, natural and human communities along the river.

To further facilitate prayer and study, pilgrims read from a 250-page River of Life Prayer Book, prepared especially for this trip, which is now available for purchase. Following the example created on this first expedition, three smaller-scale pilgrimages are taking place in 2018 and other groups across New England are planning their time on the water. An illustrated manual “*Practical Guide to Wild Pilgrimage*” is soon to be published and distributed to each Diocese.



“The River of Life Pilgrimage on the Connecticut River was one of the most transformative spiritual experiences of my life. I discovered new ways of being and praying. Through the River of Life, I learned that we Christians in the 21st Century are indeed pilgrims called to: travel lightly, rely on the hospitality of others, and trust that God will show up in new, surprising and life-giving ways. These are important lessons for us as Christian leaders, and for the Church as a whole, as we move forward in these post-Christendom times. I will always be thankful to God for the gift of the River of Life Pilgrimage.”

The Right Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Ph.D. (Bishop Diocesan, Episcopal Church in Connecticut)

Contact: The Rev. Stephen Blackmer, Executive Director & Priest, Kairos Earth/Church of the Woods (sdblackmer@kairos earth.org), Jo Brooks, Director of Operations and Spiritual Programs, Kairos Earth (jbrooks@kairos earth.org)



Honoré Farm EXPLORING THE VITALITY OF WHEAT

*Let both grow together until the harvest:
and in the time of harvest I will say to
the reapers, Gather ye together first the
tares, and bind them in bundles to burn
them: but gather the wheat into my barn.
Matthew 13: 30*

Honoré Farm is all about wheat, and turning the wheat into flour. The goal, through education and research, is to return to the stewardship of the land and ancient ways of growing heirloom wheat, thus supporting human health and spirituality. Imagine every Episcopal altar serving communion with bread or wafers made from sustainably farmed and milled wheat!

Started in California, Honoré Farm and Mill sought to expand and to determine whether their model of wheat farming and processing could be replicated in other climes by other churches. Plainsong Farm and Ministry in Michigan heeded the call. There, a combined community of seven different churches from three denominations is doing the planting and harvesting, providing social interaction, spiritual reflection, agricultural education and connection to the land. Community Planting Day and Community Harvest Day are visible, high water marks of this continuing ministry, which now heads into its second year.

The process begins by blessing the soil and the seed, as was ancient practice. After hours in the sun, the sowers gather for a farm lunch and break bread together. They can speak of their shared renewal - of being in contact with the soil through the planting of wheat.

Honoré Farm and Mill continues to offer workshops to teach others so more seeds may be sown.

“One small quarter acre may not seem to make much difference, but as a demonstration plot of the kingdom of God, showing that people of faith care for Creation and value the facts that science offers, we hope to shine a light in the darkness.”



Contact: The Rev. Elizabeth DeRuff, Honoré Farm and Mill (Elizabeth@honoremill.org)
The Rev. Nurya Love Parish, Plainsong Farm (nurya@plainsongfarm.com)



St. Columba: BEEKEEPING – AND JOB CREATION

He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Deuteronomy 26:9

Just 20 minutes from downtown Memphis, St. Columba takes advantage of its beautiful 145 acres with beekeeping and honey harvesting. In 2017 the number of hives grew from 8 to 13 with a harvest of 575 pounds of honey. With the introduction of many new hives in 2018, the anticipated harvest could exceed 4,000 pounds! The harvested honey is of excellent quality, and demand has outpaced supply.

The beekeeping operations are part of a partnership with Thistle & Bee, a non-profit social enterprise that works with the survivors of sex trafficking. St. Columba hosts their one acre farm, where they focus on honeybees and pollinating flowers. Their unique partnership has created real opportunities for sustainability and scalability. With the increased number of hives and the work that ensues there is, most importantly the opportunity for significant and meaningful employment for four of these survivors to date.



Together, St. Columba and Thistle & Bee also provide education for youth and adults on the importance of bees. During July, St. Columba becomes a classroom for its 850 day campers. Volunteers and staff celebrate Honey Harvest Eucharists, held with sermons celebrating



community, faith, collaboration and the environment.

Long term, St. Columba also has dreams of growing its composting processes, creating recycling space and adding healing retreats for survivors to an already busy agenda.

“Watching children’s eyes widen as they learn about the amazing complexity of bee life, observing sex trafficking survivors react joyfully as honey trickles from the extractor, and seeing a whole community come together during the Eucharist to celebrate this special ministry has been incredibly rewarding.”

Contact: Suzanne Cantwell, Saint Columba Episcopal Conference and Retreat Center
(suzanne@saintcolumbamemphis.org)

Holy Hikes

Founded in San Francisco, Holy Hikes now has seven chapters, ranging from Ohio and Indiana to Vermont and West Virginia. The mission is to enjoy the fellowship of hiking in beautiful natural settings, combined with prayer and the eucharist, while working with local non-profits toward improved watershed management.



Hoop Houses

A hoop house is a 10' x 50' greenhouse. St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church in Rochester, N.Y. has a flourishing hoop house for growing and distributing fresh vegetables in impoverished neighborhoods. Church, community and local youth volunteer as the happy gardeners.

Composting and Low Carbon Farming

The Church of the Nativity, Raleigh, N.C., has launched *Becoming the Good Soil: Bearing the Fruit That Will Last* in Raleigh and throughout the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. The Church of the Nativity, by establishing composting stations, has become “A Zero Waste Church”, and uses the compost to enrich the soil for community gardening.



Eco-justice: SEEKING SOLUTIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

*Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has
been made. John 1:3*

The Episcopal Church, and in fact, all of the world's major religions, believe that protecting the earth is a core religious value, and that all peoples deserve a safe, healthy, toxic-free place to live, work, play and worship. There are places throughout the world where people are at disproportionate risk. We live in a world that speaks of borders, but there are no borders to pollution and degradation.

In the Dominican Republic, The Episcopal Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation partnered with the non-profit environmental group GreenFaith and the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic to take the first steps in addressing environmental injustice there.

Through a week of workshops, prayer, and lively discussion, local environmental and religious leaders, as well as other stakeholders, started to analyze what actionable work could have a lasting impact on their population.



While the Dominican Republic has a national interest in social injustice, the group decided initially that organizing within Archdeaconries allows for the best local identification of their specific needs, with coalition building strongest within each region. Each Archdeaconry will hold educational workshops, develop relationships, share resources, and initiate programs such as school gardens, recycling programs, and promoting green areas.

The work has just begun and the task is large. Similar seedling eco-justice programs have been initiated by the Advisory Council in Alaska and coastal Louisiana.





Dominican Republic Eco-Justice site leaders

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*“God saw all that God had made, and it was very good.”
(Genesis 1:31)*

Everyone has a ministry to care for God’s creation by:

- connecting with local faith communities engaging in eco-ministry
- planting a congregational garden
- reaching out to diocesan and provincial leadership for collaboration
- supporting local apiaries, growers, green spaces, and native wildlife habitats
- reducing energy use and choosing renewable energy
- advocating at the local, national and international level about environmental injustices
- checking out The Episcopal Church website for educational resources and grants
- praying for God’s good earth and all God’s creatures
- teaching Jesus’ love for all creation

Visit www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship-creation
to learn how you can help.