

REPORT OF THE GREENING NIAGARA COMMITTEE

In our diocese, our churches and our people have long expressed a concern for creation that is consistent with the fifth mark of mission of the Anglican Communion: "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth".

More recently, this concern has been articulated in the diocesan vision. The Greening Niagara committee seeks, through its ministry, to enable all of us to live out this mark of mission as part of our commitment to God's mission in our world. Below we've highlighted some of our work over the past year.

Approval of Mandate

On October 14, 2008, Synod Council approved the mandate for the work of the Greening Niagara committee. The mandate outlines the immediate priorities of the committee and the scope of its work in our diocese. Our work focuses on four key areas: developing and implementing sustainable best practices, greening our buildings in partnership with the Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings (BACCB), animating parishes by equipping and inspiring local green teams, and educational initiatives to reflect theologically about issues pertaining to creation.

Greening Facilitators

We developed a ministry position description for a parish Green Facilitator: someone who is the point person at the parish for matters pertaining to greening; gathering a group of volunteers together to form a green team and liaising with the parish leadership and Greening Niagara committee to reduce the parish's footprint on the earth and undertake practices which are more sustainable. Parishes were invited to designate a Green Facilitator as part of their vestry reporting forms and forty parishes have done so to date.

Gathering & Producing Resources for the Webpage

If you haven't already found it, you'll want to check out our webpage on the diocesan website at: www.niagara.anglican.ca/green. The Greening Niagara committee has worked hard over the past few months to produce and gather several new resources for use in your ministry. Among the new resources, you'll find detailed information about the options available for church energy audits, suggested best practices for various aspects of ministry, and a report by the St. James' Greening Group on green cleaning. Check back often as resources are continually added as they are developed and compiled.

Developing & Piloting the Green Parish Accreditation Program

In response to a motion from this synod in 2007, a good deal of our energy over the past year went into the development of a Green Parish Accreditation program. Sue Carson and Susan Curran deserve our gratitude for spearheading this work. The goal of the program is to encourage parishes in their work towards undertaking their ministries in a more sustainable manner. Similar programs have been developed in the dioceses of Ottawa and New Westminster. As part of the program we also developed a tool, the Niagara Home Challenge, for individuals to use in their own homes. This past summer nine parishes participated in a pilot of the Green Parish Accreditation program. We're grateful to these parishes for their willingness to participate, and for their feedback regarding how we can improve the program. We're looking forward to unveiling the full program at Synod in November.

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Encouraging Participation for Earth Hour, Earth Sunday and the International Day of Climate Action

Throughout the last year, our committee has encouraged parishes to participate in opportunities to reflect upon our faith's concern for creation. Bishop Michael's pastoral letter supported KAIROS' call to Canadian Christians to participate in Earth Hour on March 28 as a symbol of our concern for the care of creation. Several parishes held vigils during the hour; and overall energy demand in Ontario was reduced by more than six percent during Earth hour. Many other parishes held an Earth Sunday service on the Sunday before Earth Day (April 19). At the time of writing this report, several parishes are also planning initiatives as part of the International Day of Climate Action (350.org) which is scheduled for Saturday, October 24th. This is an international campaign to bring awareness to climate change by reminding our politicians and decisions makers to pursue strict goals around carbon emissions in advance of the upcoming meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark. The focus is on the number 350, which represents 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, which scientists have identified as the safe upper limit of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. We're currently at 385.92ppm.

Supporting Parishes & Ministries in their Greening Work

Members of the committee have been available to give support, advice, and wisdom to various groups and individuals throughout our diocese about sustainable practices for our ministry. We've made presentations to Synod Council, the Secretaries of Niagara Anglican Parishes, and the Canterbury Hills Board. We're also committed to working as partners with the BACCB and with Niagara's Justice Camp. Our goal is to be partners with the parishes and people of our diocese. At the same time, we hope that in the course of your work you'll also share wisdom with our committee too. We invite you to contact Russ Kelk (firstrover@aol.com) or Bill Mous (billstjames@bellnet.ca) with information and resources that we might share with the diocese or if we can be of assistance to you in the work of your parish or ministry.

Over the past year a great deal of work has been done in order to lay a solid foundation for our diocese's vision of more fully living into what our faith teaches in regards to environmental sustainability issues. In the coming months we look forward to working with even more parishes and groups in our diocese to 'green' our ministries. The Green Parish accreditation program is an excellent start, and we hope to report that next year many parishes have become accredited green parishes.

Lastly, we are grateful for the wisdom and energy that each of the members of the Greening Niagara committee brings to our ministry:

Ms. Liz Armstrong	The Reverend Laura Marie Piotrowicz
Mrs. Catharine Bennett	Mr. Michael Skafel
Ms. Sue Carson	Mr. Dean Sutton-Greenhalgh
Ms. Susan Curran	The Venerable Michael Patterson,
Mrs. Patricia Davis	Ex-officio
Mr. Michael Edwards	Mrs. Karen Nowicki, Staff Support
The Reverend George Henry	

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Russell Kelk
The Reverend Bill Mous
Co-Chairs