

Earth and Spirit Ministry: An Initial Proposal

1) Implementing the Climate Pledge proposed by the Bishop's Task Force on Climate Justice

John Kydd

Bishop Rickel was the first to sign this pledge. It is a simple and practical method for individually and collectively engaging the challenges of climate change and climate justice. It aims to help us work together in ways that make sense to us.

2) Reducing our Carbon Emissions – at home, at Grace, in our communities

Marcy and Gary Lagerloef

We plan to gather individuals to form a Grace team that would join the Climate Smart Bainbridge challenge to reduce the Island's carbon emissions by 25% by 2025 and 90% by 2045. This involves using the carbon calculator that is recommended both by the City and by the Diocese and is an element of the Pledge. We would be joining Kol Shalom, Cedars UUC and other congregations in showing leadership in this area. We also wish to explore the feasibility of options to reduce carbon emissions at Grace by replacing the oil-fired furnace with a heat pump and installing solar panels either on the roof or in a stand-alone array. Our efforts will be in collaboration with other sustainability programs on the Island, including Sustainable Bainbridge, Zero Waste Bainbridge, and Climate Smart Bainbridge, as well as other faith communities through the Interfaith Council. Alone, the climate issues before us feel intractable and overwhelming; together in community, with purpose and small do-able steps we can regain a sense of hope and joy as we learn and take action.

3) Sister Climate Congregations

Susan McDonald (writer) John Kydd, Dusty Collings

UBUNTU – I am because you are.

ECO UBUNTU – We are because the planet is.

We feel that it is right to consider Anglican communities in the Southern Hemisphere and ask the question, "What can we do to help those impoverished by the lived experience of climate change?" We need to look outside of ourselves and our own communities for answers. John Kydd and Susan McDonald will continue to grow existing relationships through the Church of the Holy Spirit in Cape Town, South Africa via liaison Murray Bridgman along with administrator Angie Tate and mission pastor Ronald Able. We propose to provide support to implement their efforts to complete their recently built Life Center. Their ministry serves and uplifts their local communities, many already living in deep poverty and further impoverished by climate change.

This could include funds for community gardens in nearby local settlements, indigenous planting in larger desertified places, and multiple agricultural projects in nearby Phillipi, (including) the wider region of Cape Town. Susan plans to visit in Dec-Mar 2022/23 and will maintain ongoing relations (already for 12+ years). John plans to visit in Nov 2022. See: chscapetown.org/chs-life-centre/

Note: *Eco Ubuntu* is a concept shared by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. *Ubuntu* is a long held African concept and practice that acknowledges what we are: not individual beings, but dependent on the existence of others; most literally: “A person is a person through people.” *Eco Ubuntu*: “If Ubuntu encourages us to cultivate and care for ourselves, for our families and our brethren, so too should we care for our larger, extended body –the veld, bush, soil, air, water, and the wetlands. We need to widen the circle of our Ubuntu as we become aware of the totality of what we are. Our bodies extend into the soil, into the air, into the rivers and oceans. Let us practice planetary Ubuntu, widen, and deepen the circle, act with love to all that we are, to our entire community, to our extended planetary being.

4) Cultural Transformation

Deborah Milton

We need to bring the power of love to mainstream conversation. Love can revolutionize the way we live, so that Care for Creation becomes the center of being human. Love can help us transform our cultural world view from that of dominator to one of kinship, restore kindness to humankind, renew our sense of belonging to Earth, and remind us to be humble as we learn to engage with life’s ongoing Mystery.

We anticipate offering monthly programs to inspire love for Creator’s Creation, to nurture island wide community, and to envision actual behavioral and systemic changes for mutual benefit and to support thriving for all life. Our inaugural event is scheduled at Grace on October 20th and 23rd. We are contributing to a global, online summit called: Global Earth Repair. See this flyer for details.

5) Creation Care Gardening

Nancy Peregrine (writer), Renee Ziemann, Marcy Lagerloef and John Kydd

Too often people feel hopeless and helpless in the face of global threats from climate change. Too often in despair they give up as I almost did. It’s hard for individuals alone to affect any personal solution in the face of huge problems, yet nearby nature offers a personal hands-on solution. Anyone can partner with the personal – individual home garden or neighborhood park. Some ways to do this are:

Local – Conserve, expand, and create habitat for local beneficial wildlife including pollinators, birds, and even large mammals. We will explore what backyard gardens offer in spiritual and practical solutions that positively affect climate change. Provide advice, link, and radiate tips for success with others in the community by education, sharing and celebrating. Nancy will create educational workshops about bumblebees and other wild pollinators.

Community – Partner with other organizations such as local garden clubs, Pea Patch and Master Gardeners to liaise and to offer workshops and demonstration gardens. Explore and partner with other faith-based gardens locally and internationally, for example partners in South Africa, Ethiopia, and our own Grace Garden.

National and International – Discover and exchange ideas and solutions forming throughout the nation and in other countries. This can empower individuals, offer education, encouragement, and widen impact. Possibly partner with organizations like Women 4 the Land in Indiana, Mercy Corps and Episcopal Relief.

Food and Farm – Support and empower small business gardeners especially women and minority owned.

6) Supporting and Sustaining our Youth

James Rufo-Hill, Anne Kundtz

Our youth need and deserve support to understand and address Climate Change. They are the most affected and the least empowered to address climate change. We plan to develop curricula, workshops and other methods to empower our youth to act on climate change issues. This work should directly support or work in parallel with Grace Youth Programs.

7) Supporting and Sustaining Our Youth — Going Out to Go In

Emily Chamberlain

As a teacher of writing and personal growth classes at a Quaker school for much of my career, my greatest joy was using the writing process to help my students discover a deeper sense of who they fully and truly are, give voice to the parts of themselves that go unheard, and be witnessed by their peers. Drawing on that experience and on all that I learned from the *amazing* kids I had the privilege of teaching, I'd love to explore the possibility of offering a program at Grace combining private writing and other modes of expression (drawing, working with clay, etc.) as a way of helping participants weave deeper connections with themselves, each other, and the world around them.

I am interested in the capacity of the imagination to bring young people into a an "I/Thou" relationship with the other-than-human world – and to open their awareness to aspects of themselves they can't access otherwise. I am also interested in how the central task of early adolescence – the search for self – is connected to the formation the kind of "ecological identity" which has inspired visionaries like Thomas Berry (and many other activists and spiritual leaders, who can trace their life's work back to a seminal experience in childhood) to devote themselves to the care of creation.

Within the context of our Grace community and the Earth & Spiritual ministry, I imagine the offering to be one of personal (and hopefully spiritual) formation – and as the more inwardly focused piece of a larger, collaborative effort combining youth advocacy and action around the climate crisis with reflective practice.

Depending on the time frame and level of interest, the format could take shape in a variety of ways – as a series of short, one-two hour sessions; as a longer, more intensive experience; or as a component of the existing youth ministry in coordination with Lara. Whatever the format, the emphasis initially will be on the value and purposes of private writing as a vehicle for self-exploration and expression, followed by a more explicit focus on activities inviting participants to “go out” (either literally or imaginatively) to “go in” and reinforcing the fundamental sense of that inner/outer world connection. The program will culminate with a final “soul-mapping” project, in which each participant will have the opportunity to create a detailed map of their inner landscape, translate the images that emerge into writing, and take the other members of the group on a “guided tour” of their “soul countries.” In my experience, this more in-depth exploration of the beauty and richness of their inner lives holds a lot of meaning for participants -- and has been nothing less than profound for me!

8) Adopting a “Season of Creation” at Grace

John Kydd

The proposed Season of Creation is from the first week of September through the first week of October. At this season we can take stock of our relationships with Creation in our Faith and in our Lives.