

Creation Care Ministry Report for 2023 Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island

In 2023, the Creation Care Ministry team continues its work to fulfill the charge from the 2018 EDRI Convention. The Convention charged the Diocese with establishing a task force to address issues of climate change, pollution, environmental justice, water resources and stewardship of church-owned properties. The Creation Care Ministry team received funding from the diocese of \$15,000 in 2023 to undertake these tasks. The work will continue in 2024.

On September 23, 2023, the Creation Care team mounted the second diocesan Conference for Creation Care, hosted by All Saints' Memorial Church, Providence. Forty members of the diocese, including the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Knisely, attended. The theme was "Love in Action: Environmental Justice." The Rev. Karyn Bigelow of the Washington, D.C.-based organization Creation Justice Ministries gave a keynote talk describing the basic social, theological and pastoral dimensions of Environmental Justice

Following her address Conference attendees heard from a panel of three local and regional voices. Jenny Mercado represented Nueva Voces, a program of the Olneyville-based Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. Silvermoon Larose, Assistant Director of the Tomaquag Museum, described her perspective on environmental justice and indigenous rights. The Rev. Dr. Matthew Moore spoke of his work as a leader of the Creation Care Community of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island. Emily Skeeahan, Project Manager of the Aquidneck Episcopal Parish Resilience Pilot Project (APREP), introduced that effort to attendees.

In June, 2023, the Diocese received a grant of \$18,000 to support a Creation Care project on Aquidneck Island. Entitled the Aquidneck Island Parish Resilience Pilot Project (APREP), the effort involves working with six parishes on the Island to encourage understanding of the vulnerabilities of parish facilities in the face of extreme weather events, the ways in which parishes might support surrounding communities when such events occur, and promoting awareness of issues of Environmental Justice. CC Ministry team member Emily Skeeahan, a marine scientist manages the project, which will be completed as of July 1, 2024. The results will be shared locally and nationally.

The CC Ministry continues to offer occasional outdoor liturgies called Wild Worship. The term describes outdoor experiences of environmental education combined with scripture, prayer, song and spiritual reflection.

The ministry team includes two co-chairs, the Rev. Norman MacLeod and Christopher Schillaci. Other members are Emily Skeeahan, the Rev. Tanya Watt, Nora Hall, the Rev. Virginia Army and Kaley Casenheiser.

Respectfully submitted by

The Rev. Norman MacLeod, Co-Chair