



Tending and Keeping: A Guide for Local Creation Care Ministries



**PREPARED BY THE EDSD
CREATION CARE COMMUNITY**



EDSD
COURAGEOUS LOVE

The Episcopal Diocese of San Diego



"God so loved the world... and the power of that love and the power of our advocacy in the name of that love, not only can fix the [climate] crisis,... but can heal the deeper crisis that is behind it."

THE MOST REV. MICHAEL CURRY,
PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COP26 LITURGY FOR PLANETARY CRISIS: EPISCOPAL WORSHIP SERVICE



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***Refer here for a definition of terms and other resources**

Introduction

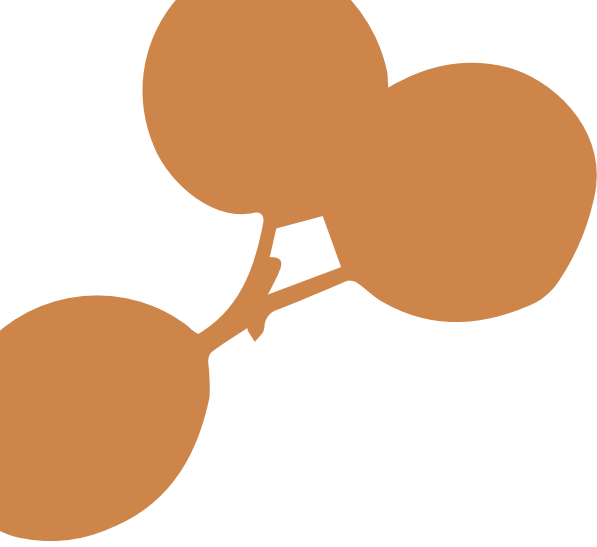
We are called to love as God loves. Caring for God's Creation reflects our commitment to follow Jesus' way of love. This love is intentional in our practices of placing Creation Care at the heart of our common life. This love is dynamic in our church-wide actions to safeguard the integrity of Creation as well as sustain and renew the life of the Earth and all of God's Creation.

For God's sake, we seek to adopt practical ways of reducing our climate impact and living more simply, humbly and gently on the Earth as individuals, congregations and as a diocese.



Above: St. Margaret's view of the desert reminds us of the sanctity of Creation and our vocation to get outside, into the world, and care for it.

As the climate crisis continues to impact all of us, and especially vulnerable populations in our communities and around the world, the call to live into our vocation as stewards of God's Creation and advocates for love, life, and liberation has never been more urgent. The Episcopal Diocese of San Diego (EDSD) joins The Episcopal Church (TEC) in its commitment to the ministry of Creation Care (CC) and appointed the Creation Care Task Force (now Creation Care Community, or CCC) to oversee this crucial work in the diocese. This group is excited to support parishes' growth in their care for Creation and sees this guide as a vital part of our work together.

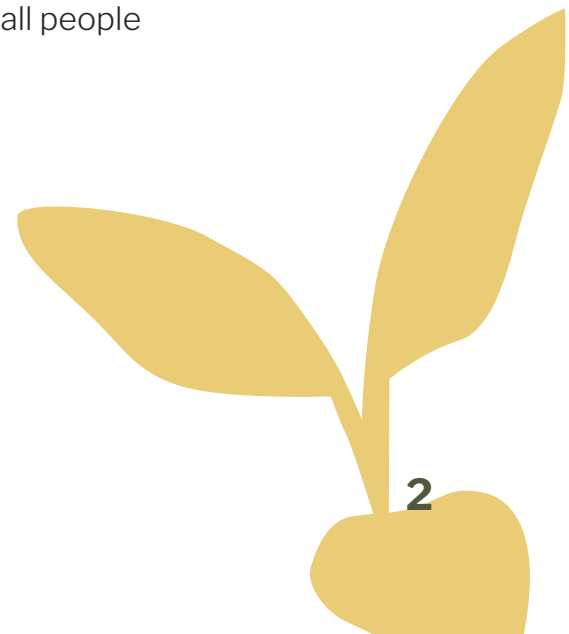
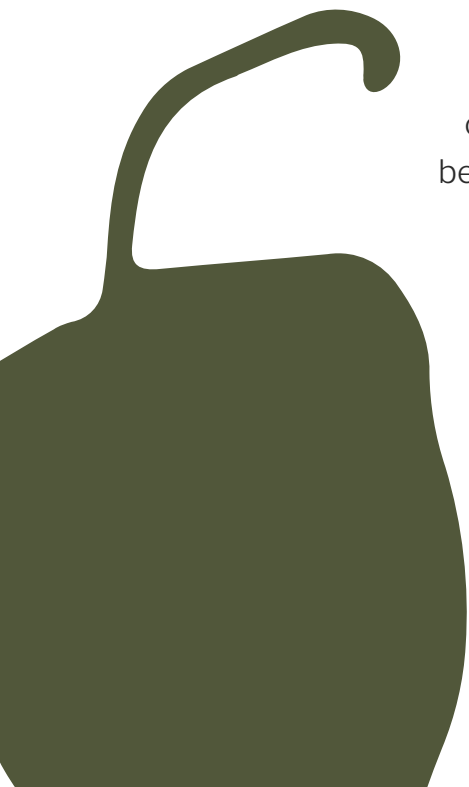


Mission

As followers of Jesus Christ, the CCC empowers individuals and churches in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego to love the Earth and all God's creation; to promote environmental justice for all as part of our spiritual life and practice through education, advocacy, and action; and to reduce our footprint by living more humbly upon our common home.

Vision

The San Diego Episcopal Diocese is a leader in collaborative efforts throughout the country and beyond to heal our Earth for the benefit of all people and all of God's creation.



CREATION CARE COMMUNITY

The CCC was established by the EDSO upon the recommendation of the diocesan Advocacy Committee in 2021. The group began meeting monthly in February 2021 and is comprised of representatives from congregations and ministries across the diocese. Working groups of the CCC include Education, Advocacy, Church Engagement, Food Justice, Planning, Communications and ad hoc groups like Collaborations.

In addition to the work done by each subgroup, the CCC has worked with EDSO to elevate the ministry of Creation Care institutionally. At the 2021 Diocesan Convention, the CCC submitted and successfully passed Resolution 21-06 “Putting into Practice Locally the

Episcopal Covenant for the Care of Creation,” committing EDSO to faithfully adopt and live into the Covenant for the Care of Creation of TEC. The CCC will facilitate and track the implementation of this resolution. One major way we hope to live out this call is through the support of parish-level Creation Care groups. The CCC is working with the diocese to further bolster EDSO’s commitment to climate action and justice at individual, parish, diocesan, and national church levels (see the EDSO Bishop’s 2022 Statement in the Appendix). Additionally, the CCC supports the transition to solar energy for parishes in the diocese as advocated in the passage of Resolution 20-03 at 2020 Diocesan Convention.



GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Under the banner of The Episcopal Church, we envision sharing these broad goals synthesized from the Creation Care Covenant:



LOVING FORMATION

For God's sake, we will grow our love for the Earth and all of life through preaching, teaching, storytelling, and prayer. We will celebrate this love through our individual and diocesan-wide worship and story sharing.



LIBERATING ADVOCACY

For God's sake, standing alongside marginalized, vulnerable peoples, we will advocate and act to repair Creation and seek the liberation and flourishing of all people. We will advocate together and with others in our communities to address the intersectional issues impacting environmental justice.



LIFE-GIVING CONSERVATION

For God's sake, we will adopt practical ways of reducing our climate impact and living more humbly and gently on Earth as individuals, households, congregations, institutions, and dioceses. We will make choices that lower our carbon footprint and contribute to the healing of God's Creation.

Relationships of Mutuality

The Community engages in the sacred work of Creation Care in concert with the churches of our diocese and the larger community in relationships of support, accountability, and solidarity.

→ **THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
CREATION CARE MINISTRY

→ **EDSD**

- ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
 - CREATION CARE COMMUNITY (CCC)

LARGER COMMUNITY
INTERFAITH GROUPS,
COMMUNITY ORGS,
PARTNERS

CCC supports work at churches, churches share updates as members of the CCC

→ **DIOCESAN CHURCHES**

church contacts and teams work with clergy, staff, vestries, and church members to develop CC ministry for each parish

Ongoing Creation Care Work

Episcopal churches throughout our diocese and the country have been caring for Creation for some time now. Our bishops are urgently encouraging a significant increase in church activity for care of Creation because the consequences are so dire.

Here are a few brief examples from churches that - with or without Creation Care teams - have provided opportunities for concerned congregations to pray, educate and take action for God's Creation.

PRAYER

The EDSO, St. Paul's Cathedral and St. James by-the-Sea celebrated the global Season of Creation during the Fall, 2021 with dedicated Sunday services, bulletin announcements and advocacy opportunities, other worship such as Morning Prayer or Centering Prayer, Blessing of the Animals and community events focused on Creation Care. The EDSO is encouraging the celebration of Creation Care Sunday throughout the diocese on April 24, 2022, and resources for this service will be available in late February.



Above: The Rt. Rev. Bishop Susan Snook presiding.

ONGOING WORK cont'd

EDUCATION

Within the past year, EDSO CCC has supported two collaborative book studies, *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change* by Jim Antal; and more recently, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a planning collaboration between St. Bart's and St. Paul's Cathedral, with session facilitators from across the diocese. Our next diocesan collaboration will be with Christ Church Coronado, St. Bart's, and St. Paul's Cathedral, again inviting facilitators from other churches.



Above: Artistic rendering of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, created by Anna Lentz on [Spring Bird](#).

ONGOING WORK cont'd

ACTION

Several effective collaborations have resulted in a variety of actions:

In October 2021 St. Bart's *Be the Change Festival* collaborated with individuals and community groups to offer education on electrification choices for transportation and homes. They will be inviting churches to participate in the second such event in 2022.

With the Interfaith Coalition for Earth Justice, St. Paul's Cathedral participated in an October, 2021 Faiths 4 Climate Justice Sunday liturgy and rally initiated by GreenFaith, a global interfaith organization. After a Sunday church

service and advocacy table, the Monday interfaith rally culminated in the presentation of a list of five climate and equity inclusions to the County Regional Decarbonization Framework.

The CCFT Food Justice work group is collaborating with several churches, UCSD Cooperative Extension, San Diego City College, and Camp Stevens. In 2022, they applied for a grant to help expand access to healthy produce. This expands investment in local, community-grown food to reduce our carbon footprint and provides healthy produce for some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

St. Margaret's is networking with the non-profit Desert Compost to provide a composting program and resource for the low desert communities. In the future when they move to phase two of the program they hope to bring in more faith communities.



Left: Desert Compost and St. Margaret's collaborating at an event.

Engaging Your Church

Like so many endeavors, we come to tasks with various levels of interest and knowledge. For example, some of us are new to the idea of Creation Care but have a sense of its importance; others may have already started to address recycling and the use of non-disposables at their churches; and still others might be collaborating with like-minded churches or community organizations to take action on environmental racism. As at our communion table, ALL ARE WELCOME! Along with this Guide, our Creation Care Community is here to support your church community in starting a Creation Care team regardless of your prior level of knowledge or participation.

There are many different team models. No matter how we do this good work, the object is to advance the Care of Creation! Some teams have started from a discernment process with other church members. Some are sub-teams of a peace and justice ministry. Others focus on a specific project. Ideally the team would try to become educated on a spectrum of Creation Care concerns in order to tap into the interests of potential members as well as to understand the interconnectedness between Creation Care, environmental justice, and other justice issues.

Below: Imam Taha Hassane speaking at the *Faiths 4 Climate Justice* rally.



ENGAGING YOUR CHURCH cont'd

Every church has its own unique personality, so how you proceed depends on your sense of what might work best. You may want to engage one or more church members to determine possible ways to advance your ideas. Perhaps having a Creation-centered sermon with a later announcement about an introductory program would garner interest from the wider congregation. It also helps to have one-to-one conversations which can uncover interests as well as percolate the importance of Creation Care action. You might announce a film screening and discussion, book study, or several-week program on Creation Care with time



Above: Stay Cool for Grandkids group at St. Bart's Be the Change Festival.

Right: St. Paul's Simpler Living ministry with a climate action banner outside the Cathedral.



devoted to learning each other's interests and passions when it comes to this issue. Our oldest Creation Care ministry, the Cathedral's Simpler Living ministry, began over eleven years ago with the *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective* study.

Prior to the first meeting you might invite the congregation to complete a survey on what areas of Creation Care are most important to them. Or at an early meeting you might include time to hear what interested members envision regarding Creation Care for the church and wider community.

ENGAGING YOUR CHURCH cont'd

Some teams might begin or continue with a four-to-six week program on Creation Care including setting a spiritual foundation; educating on issues of the day related to water and air pollution, factory farming, fossil fuel production, and food insecurity in vulnerable communities; learning about the resources that TEC has to offer such as the Creation Care pledge, the carbon tracker, and our own Church Engagement Guide; then gauging interest for starting or renewing a Creation Care ministry.

Other points to consider when forming any new group is developing norms for communication that resonate with the members. Finding a regular day and time that is compatible with everyone's schedule is useful. You might want to include the elements of food or fun! These ideas are most relevant to forming a new team. If your team is folded into a larger ministry, realistically you may be adapting

to the existing structure within your ministries, and that's okay, too: as long as you can find wiggle room for Creation Care within that group. It may be helpful to note that new ideas can infuse energy into established groups.

Some Creation Care teams may find interested support from secular organizations that want to widen their circles of information and action. Collaboration is an important part of this work. Finding strength in numbers, we encourage meaningful collaborations among our diocesan churches as well as within our local communities (with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular groups).

Fear not: you do not walk this way alone! The CCC has the resources and enthusiasm to support and encourage teams that will multiply the good work we can all do together to take action in this climate emergency.



Above: Kids having fun with the Lorax Log at Camp Stevens.



Resources

Our Toolbox is a living resource that we will continue to update regarding:

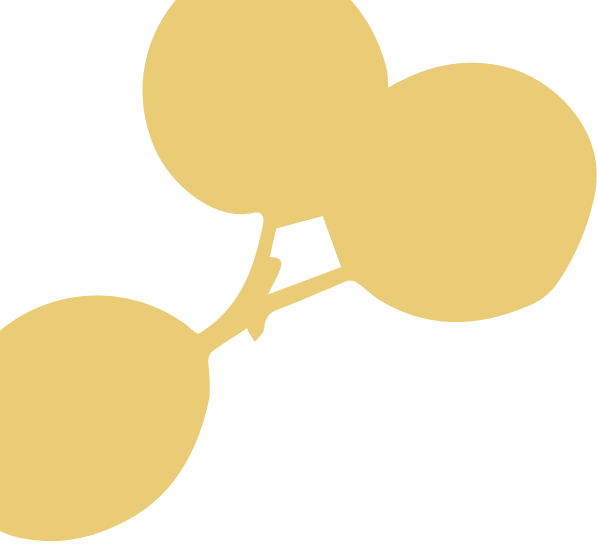
Action/Advocacy
Collaborative Forums
Education
Events

Greening the Church
Spiritual
Films
Organizations



HOW CAN WE HELP?

The CCC is available to provide support and resources to churches, and an organized structure for the ministry of Creation Care in the diocese. The main focus of the CCC is to help parishes get started in their community, as well as support any pre-existing groups or efforts in their work. We are happy to provide a one-to-one contact to support you through this process. As parish-level Creation Care teams and efforts continue to grow, we hope to connect the churches within our diocese through future climate education, advocacy, and event opportunities and collaborations. This group will also continue to update our resources online as living documents and will keep the diocesan Creation Care network updated through communication throughout the year.



Next Steps

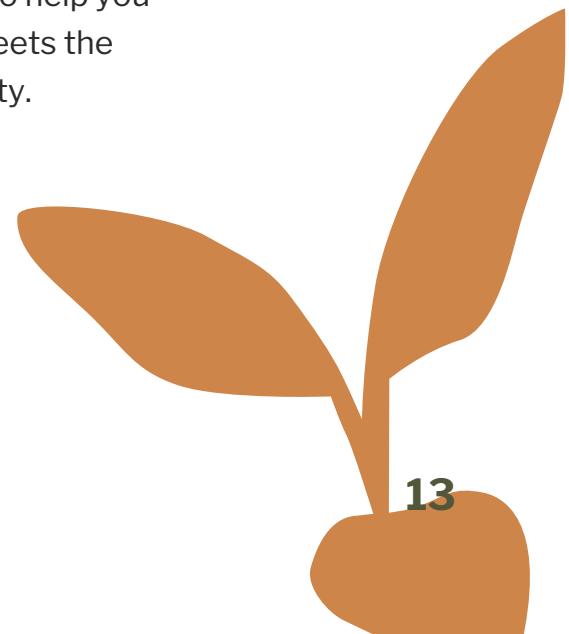
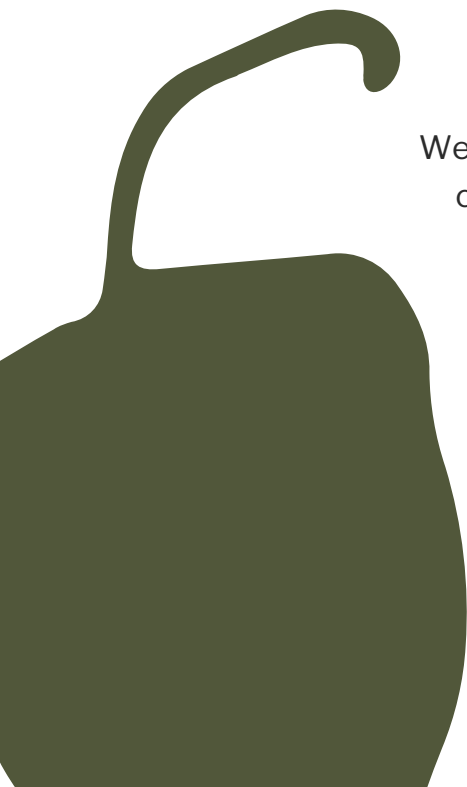
We hope to hear from you! Please contact us with any questions you have or thoughts you might like to share before moving forward. We can discuss what might be useful in order to either consider or begin a team or other approach to Creation Care efforts in your church. If you choose, we can connect you with a CC resource person who will support you as you begin this journey.

CONTACT

Reach us through our webpage:
edsd.org/creationcare



We look forward to sharing what we know to help you create the Creation Care Ministry that meets the needs of your church and community.



Appendix

Below are links to additional resources that may be pertinent for Creation Care work.

TOOLBOX

CCC DEFINITION OF TERMS

TEC COVENANT

2021 EDSO CC RESOLUTION 21-06

2021 EDSO BISHOP'S CARE OF CREATION STATEMENT



Left: Sharing the Eucharist at Camp Stevens.

Above: Piggy friends at Camp Stevens.