

What Environmental Stewardship Means to Me



The Spirituality
of Creation Care

Christ Episcopal Church,
Rockville, Maryland

In Eucharistic Prayer C we acknowledge to God, “At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.” May we ever be mindful of the gifts we have been given, and the responsibility that engenders.

By your will they were created and have their being. ~ **The Rev. Lisa Zaina**

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Environmental stewardship is at the core of my spiritual call. I know we are directed to care for the earth and it is our moral obligation to do what is in our power to serve this duty. The thing is, as you care for the soil, the plants, the pollinators and all the other creatures, you are given the surprising wonder of discovery. The discovery of the beauty of creation and the interplay of all the parts. We are an integral part of the web of life. For as much damage as others have done, the rest of us are working to mend, to protect and conserve and restore a healthier whole. For most of my life, I haven't felt compelled to publicly state I'm an environmental steward. The label isn't what matters to me. What matters to me is that I'm doing what I perceive is my sacred duty, whether it's in my chosen profession or in my so-called free time. ~ **Ann English**

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Environmental health is directly related to the health of people in our communities and around the world. People deserve the right to live in healthy homes, breathe clean air, and drink clean water. Environmental stewardship is a central part of my world-view and informs the choices I make. These choices, in smaller or bigger ways, should incrementally improve environmental quality. ~ **Charles Bevington**

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I've felt from an early age that God has given us a gift that we need to take care of. As a child I saw awe and wonder everywhere I looked in nature...from the beautiful flowers I saw and smelled in my mother's backyard garden, to the wonderful birds I heard singing in my neighborhood, to the vast ocean and mountains where our family vacationed. I saw God's greatness at every turn, and I knew to believe in him meant respecting, cherishing, and honoring his perfect creation. ~ **Nancy Laurson**

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All human beings are inextricably connected to the earth.

We are made of her elements and minerals. We emerge from her at birth; we eat the food and drink the water that she provides, and at the end of life, we become part of her once again.

The Earth is a complex and intricate web. When we negatively impact our planet, we harm all beings who depend on her for life. Likewise, when we hurt people, plants or animals, we damage the Earth as well.

If we look within, we are sure to find a longing in our hearts to protect the Earth herself from suffering and sadness, to create a world in which we can each pursue our dreams and aspirations without harming the one planet that supports the type of life we love and treasure. ~ **Rob Follit**

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Our air, our water, our food — without their health, our health is in danger, our physical, mental and spiritual health. Without strong stewardship, our environment is in danger and so are we. Our spiritual connection to the environment is our life connection, and stewardship is required for our existence. ~ **Janet Wert Crampton**

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According to the book of Genesis, God creates the building blocks for life on Earth and humans' existence in seven days. All that God created during this rudimentary time is "good" in its purest form. Modern-day scientists have yet to find another planet like Earth in the universe. Can we really afford to pollute our home and the home of all of God's creatures? When we work in conjunction with God to sustain the health of God's creation, we are in fellowship with God. ~ **Leslie Porter**

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My input about why environmental stewardship is spiritually important goes back in the book of Moses 2:1 when the Lord was talking to Moses, saying: "And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End,

the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest.”

Also in the beginning, the book of Genesis 1:1. God created the heaven and the earth. I just think this wonderful earth and all things on it are the creations of God. Each one of us on this earth is befitting from this divine creation, and it is our duty to care for the earth, be wise stewards over it, and preserve it for the future generations. The earth and all things on it are parts of God’s plan for the redemption of His children and should be used responsibly to sustain the human family.

To truly respect the Creator, we must appreciate His creations. God intends His creation to be pleasing to look upon and to brighten up the mind and spirit of the people. I think I will end with a quote from Margaret Mead, who says: “We won’t have a society if we destroy the environment” — which simply means to me that there won’t be any next generations if the environment is destroyed. ~ **Honore Kaseya**

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I believe we have a moral obligation to use the talents and gifts God has given us, to make the world a better place. We do this throughout life in so many ways. Medicine has been my career path, but in retirement I will find new types of work to this end. Care of the environment, particularly as we struggle with climate changes and its effects, is in critical need of work to be done. I will pitch in. This is a very simple construct: I have a moral obligation, there is work to be done, I will do it. Woven into this is the example of compassion we see in Christ, and His direction to us to "do likewise." I try to manifest this compassion by caring for the Arctic environment — its lands, seas, flora and fauna, and its peoples. I don't believe God cares whether I am above 66 degrees north, or south of that, but having a geographic focus directs my efforts to use those talents more effectively. ~ **Katherine Schexneider**

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God’s presence is often best realized for me when I’m able to get away from all the man-made, man-focused stuff and immerse myself in the awe and wonder of His creation. At a recent retreat, I was mesmerized by the intricacies of the plants and flowers, trees, insects, birds, and cloud formations against the blue sky, which were evident from the little patch of ground near the woods selected for a meditation spot. Truly, how can you look at a majestic mountain, gaze at the stars, be entertained by creatures going about their day, feel the breeze, listen to the ocean roar, or watch the

changing colors of a sunrise or sunset, and not see God? Thanks and praise can't help but follow. The immense power of nature helps us to realize that God has a plan for us and looks after us like he does all of his creatures.

But we are not holding up our end of caring for His creation, as He instructed. Rather than having “dominion”, and helping to care for all that He made and called good, we are greedily, and often cruelly, practicing “domination.” People, animals, and plants are suffering and dying because we human beings have abused what is God's. The good news is that we know God is merciful when we humbly repent. The Environmental Stewardship Committee serves as a means to prayerfully explore where we have gone astray, and how we can make amends and become better stewards moving forward. The annual trash clean-up days held in the spring are especially meaningful to me — a time to clean and recycle — and all while enjoying the great outdoors and the companionship of others.

We can all do our part to care for His creation — His people, animals, and plants. And God promises to take care of the rest.

Isaiah 11:6-9: The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ~ Debbie Thompson

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This planet and all the creation of which I am aware are such treasures, I find the joy and wonder of God bursting out of all the natural spaces and creations that I see. Spending time in these cathedrals saturates me with “the beauty of holiness.” To cherish and care for these gifts is a deep part of our faithfulness, in my mind, and I pray I might grow more committed to this crucial calling in the days ahead. I'm so very grateful to all those at Christ Church who devote time, passion, and gifts to creating and developing our Environmental Stewardship Committee. Janice Musselman and Mark Wright champion this terrific ministry and I say, “Thanks be to God and to them for their leadership.” ~ **The Rev. Cindy Simpson**

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I have always been attracted to our natural environment; relishing the beauty, amazed at how nature replenishes herself, and frightened by the forces that can prevail. As a young child I spent much of my time outdoors; lying on hilltops watching the clouds and chewing on fresh sweet grass with my dog wandering about, loving flowers, colors and fragrances that surrounded me, and delighting in sledding down a hill on mounds of fresh fallen snow. Much of my childhood was spent at our camp, on a river — swimming, listening to the waves, picking fresh berries, and avoiding the skunks and raccoons. Even at such a young age, I found peace in our natural world.

In mid-life, I spent many happy hours in my flower beds and herb gardens, planting, weeding, sometimes crying, and learning to pray. Somewhere on those knees, digging in the dirt I began a deeper relationship with Jesus. I found His peace in the midst of an unhappy, chaotic life.

In my elderly years, I have come to realize that this peace comes from the Holy Spirit — peace that keeps me grounded and seeking a closer relationship with Jesus. Even today, when I am stressed or fearful, I go outdoors to delight in beauty and peace that can only come from Him. ~ **Janice Musselman**

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John 21 tells us Jesus cooked fish for the disciples: “When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’” We can almost smell and taste that fresh breakfast.

Contrast that scene from scripture with a September 2019 article in the science website Phys.org, which reported that methylmercury and microplastics are bonding together in the ocean and being consumed by fish. One of the scientists quoted said this is “creating extremely concentrated ‘fish food’ bombs of dangerous chemicals.”

If Jesus returned today, what fish could we safely offer him to eat? What will he say about our stewardship of his creation? What must we do, now? ~ **Mark Wright**

<p>Christ Church’s Environmental Stewardship Committee meets bimonthly, usually in the Parish House at 12:30 p.m. (or 11:30 a.m. if that Sunday happens to have a 10 a.m. combined service). Please email Mark Wright at mark@pickupyourplastic.org for details on upcoming meetings/events, or to be placed on the committee’s email list.</p>

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