



Caring for creation is at the heart of who we are as a people of faith. It flows from our reading of the scriptures, our tradition and our experience.

— Bishop Michael Bird

Turning to God on Earth Sunday!

Today is Earth Sunday: the day we celebrate the wonder, beauty, and fragility of God's creation. This day reminds us of our call to be good stewards of God's creation. In the beginning, God created the world, and it was good.

At the climax of creation, God creates humans. As rational beings made in the image and likeness of God, we are special. For this reason, God entrusts the planet to our care, intending that we use the earth's resources to nourish ourselves while preserving its ability to support life for future generations. Unfortunately, this balance is rapidly disappearing.

Until recently, ignorance was our excuse for our debilitating behaviour. For years we knew nothing of carbon emissions or climate change. We knew only that we could use our God-given resources to improve our standard of living. And improve it we did. In many ways, the average Canadian today lives better than the royalty of a few decades ago.

But ignorance is no longer our excuse. We now know that our affluence comes with a high environmental cost. From our use of water to our extraction of fossil fuels to our creation of vast amounts of waste, we know that our unsustainable behaviour defiles God's creation. Today, Peter's words from the Book of Acts speak to us: "I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers... Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out" (3:17, 19). Just as Peter called those complicit in the death of Jesus to repent and turn to God, so are we who are complicit in the destruction of our life-giving planet called to do the same.

Let us therefore repent and turn to God so that the balance of creation may be restored.

— Reflection by Leah Watkiss



Action Steps for Creation Care

*We will conserve only what we love.
We will love only what we understand.*
—Baba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist

The most important steps we can take to care for creation are to come to love it through understanding it. Here are steps you can take to know and love creation more.

Make physical contact with creation. Go for a walk with friends or members of your church through a local conservation area. Garden if you can or join a Community Supported Agriculture program (www.csafarms.ca) and help with the work as well. Support local organic farmers, or gather fruit at a pick-your-own farm, and include children and grandchildren. Teach them the pleasure of making a meal from food they have planted, cared for and harvested themselves.

Improve your knowledge of creation. Encourage children and grandchildren to grow in their understanding and love of creation. Young children will enjoy the three-part adventure narrated by the Universe itself, *Born with a Bang, From Lava to Life and Mammals who Morph* by Jennifer Morgan. Watch the BBC's *Planet Earth* series or CBC's *The Nature of Things*, with David Suzuki.

Connect with creation spiritually. Make use of worship materials available from the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (<http://acen.anglicancommunion.org>) and KAIROS (<http://ht.ly/9BPXC>). Consider inviting a guest speaker to bring a special message on creation care.

Change your practices. Visit the Greening Niagara website: www.niagara.anglican.ca/green. There you can take the Niagara Home Challenge, explore how your parish can implement the many best practices of creation care, and learn about how your parish can become and accredited 'Green Parish'.

Advocate for creation. Arrange for a parish group to meet with your federal MP or provincial MPP to discuss your concerns about sustaining creation. Choose a specific focus, such as support for public transit; protection of farmland and water sources; phasing out reliance on fossil fuel and moving to clean energy systems.