



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA

Anglican Church of Canada

September 26, 2019

“And a little child shall lead them, . . .” ~ Isaiah 11:6

Dear friends,

Although the climate crisis is not news, nor our lack of a speedy and effective response, the rising voices of our young people demanding that we take action on the most pressing issue of our time is striking. I cannot help but respond to the urgency that is being expressed in the climate strikes, inspired by Greta Thunberg, happening around the world this week, including here in our own diocese.

With our creation narratives, which are foundational to our understanding of our sacred duty to steward the Earth’s resources responsibly, Christians have a particular way of viewing God’s creation – as something given as a gift and a unique act of creativity and delight. Given these understandings, and the promises we make in baptism, we also have an essential role to play in response to this present crisis.

It’s worth remembering that our Greening Niagara committee began as a result of a resolution brought to our diocesan synod in 2007 by a youth delegate, after having been considered at our Youth Synod.

Through this act of leadership, in the last decade the diocese has been led by our Greening Niagara efforts in educating ourselves about changing personal practices as well as improving the environmental footprint of our parish buildings. Since 2009, 49 parishes have achieved their bronze accreditation, 20 have progressed to their silver, and 6 have achieved gold. We have been leaders in this regard, with some parishes even installing solar panels and geo-thermal heating and cooling systems.

Earlier this year, our Youth Synod approved a motion to abandon the use of single-use plastics, including the use of bottled water and our national church has committed to doing this by 2021. With organization and intention, this is a constructive and achievable goal for every parish and would have a significant impact on our contribution to the needless accumulation of waste.

But it’s not enough. The Anglican Church of Canada recognizes that there is a climate emergency and we are called to do more to live up to our responsibility as the protectors and of God’s earth.

In recent weeks, Christians have been observing the Season of Creation, a time of prayer, education, and action. Inspired by this global witness and this week’s events, I am urging all parishes to:

- a) **Pray** for the life of creation during Sunday worship services;
- b) **Learn** about the climate crisis and current environmental best practices with an eye toward being informed about how we can better care for God’s creation; and
- c) **Act** by improving our ministry practices to reduce our environmental footprint on the Earth and by advocating for strong and resolute political action to address the climate crisis.

A good place to start is to visit our Greening Niagara webpage (<https://niagaraanglican.ca/green>) or to contact our diocesan program consultant for outreach and social justice.

Our youth are crying out to us; may we hear and stand with them so that together, with God’s help, we may safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth.

Sincerely,

Bishop of Niagara

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