

Caring for Creation

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

As the days grow longer with each passing day, signs of new life spring forth all around us. This is the time of the year when we are perhaps most mindful of the wonder and beauty of God's creation. 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.

Throughout the ages, however, our concern for creation has drifted to the sidelines of our Christian witness. Yet many, like theologian Christopher Lind who spoke at our Synod in 2007, have not forgotten this important mark of how we live out God's mission and are calling us to reclaim and renew our role as custodians of creation.

In Niagara, caring for creation has become an important part of how we will pursue excellence in ministry through prophetic social justice-making. With this in mind, I want to bring to your attention to two opportunities that lend themselves well to renewing our commitment to care for God's creation.

*The first is **Earth Hour on Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 p.m.*** It's an hour in time where we, as a people of faith, symbolically turn off those things in our lives - televisions, computers and lights – which contribute to the production of green house gases by the electricity they use from non-renewable sources of energy.

This week KAIROS called on all Canadians to observe Earth Hour “as a symbolic pause to reflect on our use of fossil fuels, to think about the impact of our activity on people and ecosystems around the world, and most importantly, to pledge to make a difference – as individuals, communities, and as a nation.” I echo this call and urge all Anglicans in Niagara to observe Earth Hour. For more information, visit KAIROS' website (www.kairoscanada.org) and learn this relates to their Re-Energize campaign.

Last year, I wrote to you in response to a motion from Youth Synod asking me to declare one Sunday per year (near Earth Day) for Anglicans in Niagara to walk, cycle or carpool to church. *This year **Earth Sunday falls on April 19.*** I hope all parishes will go one step further this year and observe Earth Sunday in some way through their Sunday liturgies. As part of my Earth Sunday plans, I'll be reducing my carbon footprint by using my hybrid car as little as possible and by walking to my host parish that Sunday. I urge all of you throughout our great diocese to also reduce your carbon footprint on Earth Sunday as way of demonstrating your commitment to care for creation.

Every year the spring season ushers in a natural renewal of the earth. Perhaps we might follow creation's example and take this opportunity to recommit to our role in caring for creation and re-new our practices and ministries with an eye towards sustainability for all of creation, not just this human generation. At the diocesan resource centre we've made a commitment to being better custodians of creation. For example, no longer will plastic water bottles be used at diocesan meetings and events; instead pitchers of water will be served instead. The newly formed Greening Niagara Committee has already produced and gathered a wealth of resources – including best practices such as this - to help us to live more lightly on the earth. Please have a look at them: www.niagara.anglican.ca/green

We are called to care for one another and the earth, and I believe our efforts can impact ourselves, our communities and our world. This spring, we have an incredible opportunity. Join me, as our diocese renews its commitment to live out our call to care for creation.



Bishop of Niagara