

## **REPORT OF THE GREENING NIAGARA COMMITTEE**

Prophetic Social Justice-Making is an integral part of our diocesan vision. The Greening Niagara committee seeks, through its ministry, to enable all of us to live into God's invitation to prophetic social justice making by caring for creation; striving to be more sustainable in our ministry practices, advocating for systemic change, and animating our community. Below we've highlighted some of our work over the past year.

### ***Green Parish Accreditation Program***

Building on the success of last year's pilot accreditation program, Bishop Michael challenged all parishes in Niagara to become accredited green parishes. The goal of the accreditation program is to encourage parishes in their work towards undertaking their ministries in a more sustainable manner. The program was fully unveiled at Synod in November 2009. Since that time twenty-two parishes have become accredited green parishes. The majority of the accreditations have been at the bronze level, although three parishes have achieved silver and gold accreditations: St. John's, Niagara Falls (gold), St. James, Dundas (silver), St. Jude's, Oakville (silver). The accreditation program has proven a useful tool through which parishes can examine their impact on creation and look for ways to better care for creation.

### ***Advocating for Climate Justice***

Several parishes planned initiatives as part of the International Day of Climate Action (350.org) which happened on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009. In advance of the global summit in Copenhagen, Denmark our diocese prophetically witnessed to the world the need for strict goals around carbon emissions through letters and petitions to Members of Parliament, marches through the streets, and bell-ringing at our churches. The focus is on the number 350, which represents 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, which scientists have identified as the safe upper limit of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. We're currently at 385.92ppm.

In March, several parishes also held vigils as part of Earth Hour; using social justice resources produced by KAIROS. Many other parishes held an Earth Sunday service on the Sunday before Earth Day (April 18).

In consultation with the committee co-Chairs, Bishop Michael agreed to move Resolution A180-R1: Climate Change at General Synod in June. Among the various components of the resolution there are a few parts that speak directly to our ministry in Niagara: a call to "press the Government of Canada to adopt a comprehensive climate action plan"; a hope "to incorporate concerns about the care of creation more fully into regular liturgies"; and an encouragement "to join with other faith communities and secular groups in researching and providing information on the climate crisis to members of their own communities."

### ***Supporting Diocesan Ministries and Parishes in their Greening Work***

Members of the committee have been available to give support, advice, and wisdom to various groups and individuals throughout our diocese about sustainable practices for our ministry. In the year past we've made presentations to Synod Council, as well as a few regional clericuses and parishes.

We also remain committed to our partnership with the Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings. We're grateful to David Ricketts who continues to act as the BACCB's liaison to our committee. One of the ways this partnership has bore fruit was through the Solar Energy Taskforce. Formed as result of several parishes' interested in exploring the possibilities for solar energy and their buildings, a great deal of work went into developing a report for Synod Council in order to best support parishes as they work through the many considerations needing to be addressed prior to entering into a Solar Energy contract.

## **REPORT OF THE GREENING NIAGARA COMMITTEE (continued)**

This past year also saw several members of our committee assist in the planning coalition of the Community Justice Camp that our diocese hosted in May. As a result, many sustainable practices were undertaken including minimizing waste in packed lunches and encouraging the use of sustainable forms of transportation where possible, and purchasing carbon off-sets for flights to the camp.

As you can see, our goal is to be partners with the parishes and people of our diocese. At the same time, we hope that in the course of your work you'll also share wisdom with our committee too. We invite you to contact Michael Skafel ([michael.skafel@sympatico.ca](mailto:michael.skafel@sympatico.ca)) or Bill Mous ([billstjames@bellnet.ca](mailto:billstjames@bellnet.ca)) with information and resources that we might share with the diocese or if we can be of assistance to you in the work of your parish or ministry.

### ***Greening Facilitators***

Has your parish appointed a Green Facilitator? Someone who is the point person at the parish for matters pertaining to greening; gathering a group of volunteers together to form a green team and liaising with the parish leadership and Greening Niagara committee to reduce the parish's footprint on the earth and undertake practices which are more sustainable. Parishes are invited to designate a Green Facilitator as part of their vestry reporting forms and about fifty parishes have done so to date.

### ***Gathering & Producing Resources for the Webpage***

If you haven't already found it, you'll want to check out our webpage on the diocesan website at: <http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/green>. The Greening Niagara committee continues to produce and gather new resources for use in your ministry. Among the new resources, you'll find, suggested best practices for Special Events, a link to the Church of England's Green Wedding guide and a FAQ sheet for the green parish accreditation program. Check back often as resources are continually added as they are developed and compiled.

With a solid foundation for our diocese's vision of more fully living into what our faith teaches in regards to environmental sustainability issues, we hope to work with even more parishes and groups in our diocese to 'green' our ministries. We're excited to expand our network to include the Greening/Environmental committees of neighbouring dioceses, and look forward to working with them in the year ahead.

Lastly, our sincere gratitude is extended to Russ Kelk for his work as Co-Chair. His enthusiasm and passion for this work helped bring the Greening Niagara committee into existence and helped steer us in its first two years. Congratulations also to Sue Carson and Susan Curran on being appointed to the Order of Niagara by Bishop Michael for their tireless work in caring for God's creation. We are also grateful for the wisdom and energy that each of the members of the Greening Niagara committee brings to our ministry:

Sue Carson	George Henry
Susan Curran	Russell Kelk (past Co-Chair)
Patricia Davis	Laura Marie Piotrowicz
Michael Edwards	Michael Patterson, Ex-officio
Dean Sutton-Greenhalgh	Karen Nowicki, Staff Support

Respectfully submitted,  
Mr. Michael Skafel, Co-Chair  
The Reverend Bill Mous, Co-Chair