

ST. THOMAS A' BECKET CHURCH  
Care for Our Common Home Ministry  
April 2, 2019 – Minutes

10:00am – Welcome and introduction of our guest speaker, Bob More from the St. John Neuman CCH core team and Parish co-chair to the Diocesan Care for Creation Team.

OPENING PRAYER – from Laudato Si'

PRESENT: Kitty Conlan, Helen Dickey, Liz Eckl, Carol Even, Des Horton, Harriet Hanlon, Patti Kaiser, Mary Ricotta, Lauren Smith, Betty Sullivan, John and Bebee Stroik

EDUCATION: Bob More from St. John Neumann gave us a presentation, including a power-point slideshow about green power programs, specifically about Arcadia Power and how home owners can switch from Dominion Power to cleaner power at little or no cost to them. Bob will email his slideshow to this group. His presentation explained where our energy comes from, and how much of it is actually clean renewable energy. Nuclear accounts for 33%, natural gas for another 33%, and coal for 26.5%. The remaining 5.6% includes biomass, pumped storage, and hydropower. Biomass is nearly neutral, but creates CO<sup>2</sup>, and pumped storage uses power to pump. Only 1.6%, from hydropower, is clean and renewable power as distributed by Dominion. To use renewable energy, either we produce it ourselves, as by installing solar panels, or, we can purchase renewable energy certificates (RECs). Renewable energy is clean mixed-source power that produces no emissions. It is distinguished from green energy, such as nuclear, that is green but not renewable. One REC is the equivalent of one megawatt hour.

Each REC can be numbered and tracked. It is sold only once and can be retired in the tracking system. EPA recommends buying these RECS, as they are the currency of the renewable energy market. As people buy RECS, they help promote the green power market. See [www.epa.gov/greenpower](http://www.epa.gov/greenpower).

There are two programs in our area for greenpower: Dominion Energy's green power program, and Arcadia Power. Dominion purchases RECS equal to your monthly energy use at an addition cost of 1.3 cents per kilowatt hr. Thus for 1500 kilowatts per month, the cost is an additional \$19.50. This limits the sources of your energy use to wind (56%), biomass(34%), and solar (10%). Arcadia offers two packages. All their energy is from wind. The first package is free. Arcadia purchases RECS equal to 50% of your monthly use. They send you a bill and they pay Dominion. The second package covers 100% of your energy use at an additional cost of 1.2 cents per kilowatt hour or about \$18.00 additional for 1500 kilowatts use per month.

Arcadia can serve institutions, but only at 100%, and the cost is on a sliding scale based on monthly usage.

Discussion followed concerning the degree of corporate responsibility shown by Dominion, and about legislative blocks to improving Virginia's clean energy use.

St. Thomas a' Becket is signed up for renewable electricity from Constellation, a company that largely serves institutions.

LIBRARY REPORT: doors are open Monday through Friday after 9:00am Mass, until CCD is finished on Monday through Wednesday, and until 4:30 on Thursday and Friday. Ask Dottie if the door is locked when you need the Library during those times.

Articles and books related to the Care for our Common Home are most welcome. Liz described the Library procedure for donating new books. There is a basket for books and notes (such as any suggestions for new books). The books are processed weekly. Carol recommends a new book, Overstory by Richard Power – his life and the meaning of trees in his life.

Shopping note: Carol bought organic swiss chard at MOM's and found that the tag is meant to become a bookmark!

RECYCLING: We hope to involve the Parish more, perhaps by including a box in each Bulletin with a recycling thought for the day. Our present recycling bins are not always well placed – visible. Also, for the Bulletin, Carol gets monthly tree tips from [w3americanforests.org](http://w3americanforests.org), e.g. sprout tree seeds in ice cream cone. She will contribute one green item a month to the Bulletin.

Betty noted that the Workcamp Supper used plates, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Fri event is slowly changing over to plates. Dish-washing is still an issue, especially at the Pancake Breakfasts. How can we help the Knights to avoid single use plastics, and to regularly use the dishes provided in the kitchen? We do not want to interfere in the cleanup and closing of the Hall after Breakfasts. Betty says only three helpers are needed for the job, one to wash, one to dry, and the third to put away the clean items. Other events are different, with less constant pace, as for funeral Masses, and there seems to be less trouble, even though people bring in their own dishes sometimes. We cannot use the dishes and utensils without running the washer on Pancake Sunday, especially since the utensils will run short. Helen has agreed to approach the Knights with our suggestion of eventually turning the job over to them, while we assist by washing and eventually training kids to help with the washing.

LAUDATO SI' STUDY GROUP: Sunday night meetings have had small to medium attendance, but the discussion has been lively and inspiring.

FACS: We are a member of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. Today FACS is meeting with the Board of Supervisors and the School Board – note the Washington Post news article about how schools will use solar. FACS has so many varied recommendations for activities in faith congregations, we will be following their progress and looking to them for useful suggestions and resources to use in our parish.

Because Earth Day, April 22, is immediately after Easter this year, we thought a bulletin flier about CCH would be better inserted in the April 28<sup>th</sup> bulletin. Helen and Kitty will work together to produce a flier to inform parishioners of the CCH efforts at St. Thomas a' Becket, and the importance of taking positive action for the environment.

LOOKING FORWARD: Carol noted a new 3-part *must-see* "Nature" series on public TV and Facebook: "American Spring Live" (see [www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/american-spring-live/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/american-spring-live/) for previews). It runs April 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> on PBS and Facebook. These programs promote citizen science in addition to sheer awe for the beauty of creation.

Harriet will be doing research on the causes of some recent phenomena noted around Reston lakes. The mosquitoes, bees, and mallards all seem to be diminishing in number recently. She will be making scientific inquiries.

EVENTS: The Walker Nature Center will be hosting a FACS Donor Appreciation Event on April 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm. RSVP – <https://actionnetwork.org/events/facs-donor-appreciation-event?source=direct> Carol will attend.

350 Fairfax April General Meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm in Vienna. RSVP - <https://actionnetwork.org/events/350-fairfax-april-general-meeting-2?source=direct> Patti will attend.

FIRST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: A year ago, we started with the showing of the film, "Saving Place, Saving Grace". This was followed by the "Bag-It" film, plastic-free Advent, adding ecology-related shelves to the Parish Library, and contributing books. We have had speakers address our group on water quality, on renewable energy, and on other organizations that have taken the lead in these efforts. We have had a study series on Laudato Si', the Pope's spur to action. Also, we have made efforts in the Parish to promote recycling of paper and kitchen waste, reduce single-use plastics, and promote using the real plates and utensils for food activities (help with dishwashing during Pancake Breakfasts).

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE YEAR AHEAD: we will serve in the Parish with films, bulletin inserts, study groups – new readings, involvement with FACS, reaching out to young people, with parish and community activities.

CLOSING POEM: The Daffodils by William Wordsworth

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 10:00am