

ST. THOMAS A' BECKET CHURCH  
Care for Our Common Home Ministry  
May 7, 2019 – Minutes

10:00am WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER – from Laudato Si'

PRESENT: Helen Dickey, Liz Eckl, Carol Even, Barb Ewalt, Carla Gibson, Harriet Hanlon, Patti Kaiser, Linn Mitchell, Mary Ricotta, John and Bebee Stroik, and Betty Sullivan

EDUCATION:

- Some re-usable products for kitchen use include plastic bowl covers with elastic (Giant), glass food savers from Corning Ware (Leesburg outlet) and waxed-cloth food wraps (available at Abeego.com).
- Members shared around an article about the carbon footprint of the food we eat.
- The Parish is getting energy from Constellation. Maureen Roan has told us that the Parish uses Constellation for energy. It is a company that offers renewable energy plans. She also assured us that all parish lightbulbs are being replaced with LED bulbs.
- Bebee and John Stroik's son has agreed to do a new lighting system for the church entrance area. He is a Professor of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, and founder of the Sacred Architecture Journal.
- Carol is signed up with Arcadia Energy and now obtains 50% of her electricity from wind power. She is pleased with it so far.
  - Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) sends out e-mails, but only some CCH members who signed up are receiving a monthly newsletter. Patti will follow-up to see that FACS contacts' information is accurate.
- Helen brought samples of a composting system that is working well in her garden to keep down weeds and compost food scraps. These are made with a corn-based weed stopper fabric. They are formed into pillows and filled with garden and appropriate kitchen scraps, then placed like pillows around plants.
- Barb announced that The League of Women Voters will be having an open meeting of the Climate Change Interest Group June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00pm, City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St. Fairfax, 22030.

LIBRARY REPORT:

- The Overstory by Richard Powers about trees that play the central characters, has been donated by Carol who stated it may be the best book she ever read.
- Lynn shared from an article in the Post about a UN study on biodiversity. A 4 year study found biodiversity is in distress and without action, we may lose a million species of plants and animals in the foreseeable future. See the report at <https://ipbes.net>, or see the related article in the Library files.
- The Library now has a place for articles collected by members – the file cabinet top right drawer will collect what we bring in, and Carol will review articles for possible permanent status on the shelves. Also, literature about changing over to renewable energy in our area will be available in the Library.
- Carol will give the Library monthly newsletters from Green America, and the National Green Pages directory.
- On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Conversations in the Library will begin, with the Book Club being the first featured parish group. The next Conversation will probably be in September, with focus on the CCH Ministry. Dates will be selected for Sundays when there are no large activities in the parish hall.

RECYCLING:

- Helen spoke with four of the Knights of Columbus about washing dishes and utensils. The Knights are 'with us', but they don't have enough Knights to do the work. The youth volunteers are done with their service projects, and there will probably not be any pancake breakfasts during the summer, so this problem may be delayed in solving. Starting with the Season of Creation in September, we might make a step forward with this issue.

- Saint John Neumann has a dishwashing committee. We could ask them to help us address our problem. Bebee, Helen, Lori, and Patti would be interested in pursuing this in the future.

- 350 Fairfax invited Charles Thorp, the head of County recycling to address their meeting and to clarify what can and cannot be recycled. Since recycling items represent a business opportunity, recyclers need to find markets for the products they make, such as plastic pellets. The markets are highly variable. However, plastics numbered 1 and 2 can readily be recycled. Paper and cardboard are also easily recycled. Glass is a problem, and most of it goes into landfill. Recently, there have been some improvements in glass recycling. Clean glass can be recycled at two stations in Fairfax County. The closest to us is the purple recycling bin at the I-66 Transfer Station at 4618 West Ox Road, Fairfax, VA 22030. When ground, glass can be used in an aggregate for paving of roads.

- Clothing - Mom's grocery store has a denim recycling drive going on until June 13<sup>th</sup>. Carla reminds us that keeping our wearable clothes nine months longer will reduce our carbon footprint. Also, there are several places that recycle women's business wear – Women Giving Back in Sterling, Suited for Change in D.C. Lori reported that some old materials are useful in making crafts as in Africa – using men's ties.

#### COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH:

- The Easter Bulletin contained a large announcement about the CCH. In the future, Carla and Betty will do Bulletin tips, weekly if possible.

- Harriet has attended three meetings of VOICE, a group that includes St. Marks and St. John Neumann, and includes Fairfax, Prince William, Alexandria and Arlington. Fr. Tom Ferguson is currently very active in an issue regarding his parish in Alexandria.

#### FUTURE EVENTS:

- David Cowdrill purchased the film, "The Human Element", by James Balog, photographer who visually recorded startling changes in the environment. We will show it to our group on June 4<sup>th</sup> instead of a regular meeting. Later, we might include it in a program for the entire Parish, as part of a video series on environmental awareness.

- The Season of Creation is for 2019 is September 1<sup>st</sup> through October 4<sup>th</sup>. See [www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org) for more information.

- For the Season of Creation, Carol suggested we might have a prayer evening for the Parish focusing on the days of creation – having seven readers with music.

We have been invited to hold a meeting at Lauren Smith's house to lunch in her garden instead of a regular meeting. This might be at 10:00am on the summer solstice, June 21<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned.

CLOSING POEM: "May" by Jonathan Galassi.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> – viewing of "The Human Element" video in the Teen Room at 10:00am