

ST. THOMAS à BECKET CHURCH
Care for Our Common Home Ministry
October 1, 2019 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER: read by Carol Even

PRESENT: Lori Brady, Kitty Conlan, Helen Dickey, Liz Eckl, Carol Even, Barb Ewalt, Patti Kaiser, Mary Ricotta, Lauren Smith, John and Beebe Stroik, Betty Sullivan

EDUCATION: Kitty reported on her progress with bringing environmental awareness into the Religious Education classrooms. |

RECYCLING: The problem of recycling noxious/toxic waste materials was addressed, beginning with a reference to our church basement. Additionally, it was noted that there are occasional neighborhood and County programs to collect and dispose of old paint, cleaning chemicals, etc. Our neighbors at Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation have a green team that deals with such problems.

For future consideration we might like to sponsor a recycling event managed by Republic Recycling Company.

Because the County now has a purple recycling bin for glass within short driving distance of the Parish, we might individually encourage our families and neighbors to collect their clean glass bottles and to deliver them to the bin on a regular basis. Kitty has done this in her cluster. It could be an individual effort, or, it could become a neighborhood activity with shared responsibility. Many people have yet to be made aware of the benefits of glass recycling in Fairfax County. Helen suggested writing letters to our neighbors – these would be informative and suggest further action. Also, cluster newsletters can be a way to promote glass recycling. People may agree to a cooperative effort.

We watched a video from the Republic Services website, recyclingsimplified.com showing a tour of a modern landfill, just one of several resources for educators. There is a lot of material for the general public also on that website.

Betty and Barb mentioned the transformation of former landfills such as the beautiful park that used to be Mt. Trashmore near Virginia Beach.

“Renew, Reuse, Recycle, Repair” - See EVENTS below regarding the repair café movement

EDUCATION: Betty attended The Plastic Free Forum sponsored by FACS, at Great Falls Library on September 28th. Dan Simons, restaurateur, and co-owner of Founding Farmers spoke about his commitment to sustainability and his initiative, Our Last Straw, to ban all single use plastic starting with plastic straws. Through a growing coalition of restaurant businesses and chambers of commerce, and ultimately, local legislators, he is working to introduce legislation to ban plastic straws. He was successful in D.C. and the ban has gone into effect earlier this year. See his website at DanSimonssays.com where you can subscribe to his blog.

Send Betty anything we think should be in the church bulletin. We hope future announcements include our CCH logo.

RECYCLING - Harriet reported on her 20 hours of research inspired by the how2recycle.info website. She wrote them about single use plastics and what to do when there's no symbol. She learned that plu labels on produce have codes. If the number begins with an 8, the produce is genetically modified, - if a 9, the product is organic, and no number indicates that pesticides were used. How2Recycle invented the three arrows logo that we see on most plastics. At the company level, there is progress in recycling that has not reached the consumer level. An addendum to these minutes will be attached with specifics about recycling.

Betty reported that the Virginia Green baggers make bags for distribution at various ecology-related events.

Regarding store drop-offs for single use plastic – we ought to name the store drop off sites and have a How to Recycle Day. The website to find a store drop-off location is: <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-find-drop-off-location/>

ASSIGNMENTS: read one of the CCH books by next month and find a plastic that you do not know whether to recycle.

CCH EVENTS: The movie we presented (The Fifth Element) brought out nearly 50 people, including Norbert Pink from the Sierra Club. There were many positive comments. Our CCH Day of Conversation in the Library, however, was poorly attended.

Planning for Friday's concert "In the Beginning" – refreshments and cider will be donated. We can use paper cups that are not coated, and the glass punch mugs that Nancy Dickson donated. Our display board, as used in the Library, will be set up with brochures and information.

It is evident that we do need to work on publicity for our events. At present, we do have a spot on the website found under Parish Life, and Parish News & Events. Also, the cost of information from Our Sunday Visitor is high compared to the cost of information from the Catholic Climate Covenant. We need to explore these options.

OTHER MATTERS: At the Interfaith Dialogue meeting, Harriet proposed a dialogue/trialogue to Laura and she also met with someone in the Muslim community who might be interested.

Barb spoke with Maureen about solar panels in response to the Bishops. It turns out that the pitch of our roof is too steep, and skylights also prevent such an installation. However, this might be addressed again next year.

Carol has been looking at sources for informational pamphlets and comparing costs and availability.

OTHER EVENTS: Several parishioners attended the Virginia Climate Crisis Forum at the First Baptist Church in Vienna. The moderators were Karenn Gore and William Barber III. Three empty chairs were beside the presenters, representing those not present, yet most impacted by climate change, - children, poor people, and non-human creatures.

Lori attended a showcase at Saint John Neumann on 'Food for personal and planetary health'. It was very well planned with well-organized, informational displays, and a place for children to play. There were handouts describing their mission in detail. Janet Broderick has now become the chairperson of the Diocesan group.

Fix-It Clinics have been held around the County. On Oct. 19, 2019 at Martha Washington Library, and last April 19th and 20th, Fairfax County held Fix-It Clinics at seven different branch libraries, including Reston Regional. Even sewing repairs were offered!

Repair Café, sponsored by Transition Town Fairfax, will be held at Twins Ace Hardware in Fairfax on Saturday, Oct 26th at 10:00am, and again at the City of Fairfax Regional Library on Saturday, November 2nd at 1:00pm.

The November ballot is huge. Barb advises us to read ahead. The League of Women Voters has a four-page article on our local elections. There is a woman candidate who is very big on climate. Be sure to VOTE!

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 7th at 10:00am

CLOSING POEM: God's Grandeur by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Addenda (2):

- Recycling Guidance for St. John Neumann submitted by Lori Brady
- HOW2RECYCLE program page submitted by Harriet Hanlon

RECYCLING GUIDANCE FOR St. John Neumann

Acceptable

Plastic-all items with recycling symbol #1-7, except bags* and black plastic**

Metals-aluminum or steel cans, aluminum foil, aluminum foil trays/pans, empty aerosol cans, metal coat hangers (metal can be recycled into new cans over and over)

Glass-all glass bottles, jars, and drinking glasses (in Virginia they get crushed for landfill cover, not made into new glass items; opt for cans over bottles where possible)

Paper-office paper, mixed paper, newspapers and inserts, magazines, catalogs, junk mail (including envelopes with cellophane windows), phone books, paperback and hardback books, cardboard boxes, juice cartons and boxes, soup boxes, pizza boxes, rolls from toilet paper or paper towels

Unacceptable

Anything smaller than one's fist-e.g., metal bottle caps, cardboard tags from new clothes

Anything with food residue/grease-if bottom of pizza box has grease but lid doesn't, recycle lid only

Napkins, paper towels, tissues

Styrofoam (it's toxic)

Shredded paper-can compost (store in paper bag)

Plastic bags*, even if they have the recycling symbol-take *any and all clean plastic bags* to *grocery store bin* (see Page 2 for more details)

Pots and pans

Heat-resistant glass or ceramics (drinking glasses are OK, but better to take them to a thrift store)

Glass panes, light bulbs, any broken glass (since items are hand-sorted at recycling center)

Photographs

Batteries

Handling

Clean/rinse items; shake out to get rid of water. *This is an important step so other material will not be contaminated with liquids or food residue and be rendered unrecyclable.*

Keep all recycling loose in bins, not in plastic bags

If plastic bottle and cap are both recyclable, leave cap on; if only bottle is, discard cap

If milk or juice carton has recyclable plastic cap, leave it on

Remove metal lid from glass jar

For containers with cardboard sides and metal top/bottom, recycle as is

For containers with cardboard sides and plastic ring on top, cut off and discard plastic ring

Break down cardboard boxes-tape can be left on

Don't need to remove wire from spiral notebooks

Don't need to remove every piece of plastic film on top of plastic containers (e.g., for grated cheese)-remove what you can

**Black plastic and other #5 plastics can be taken to Whole Foods or MOMs

* Additional guidance for plastic bags and plastic film.

Plastic bags of any sort jam the recycling machines and are removed from the recycling stream and sent to the landfill. So, collect all bags (with and without the recycling logo) and bring them to the grocery store collection bins.

Recycle only clean, dry plastic bags and film. Remove receipts, crumbs, adhesive labels, and any other items from bags.

Acceptable examples include:

- Retail, carryout, produce, newspaper, bread, and dry-cleaning bags (clean, dry, and free of receipts and clothes hangers)
- Zip-top food storage bags (clean and dry)
- Plastic shipping envelopes (remove labels), bubble wrap, and air pillows (deflate)
- Product wrap on cases of water/soda bottles, paper towels, napkins, disposable cups, bathroom tissue, diapers, and female sanitary products
- Plastic furniture and electronic wrap
- Plastic cereal and cracker box liners (but not if it tears like paper)
- Any film packaging or bag that has the How2Recycle label

Unacceptable examples:

- Degradable/compostable bags or film packaging (like biodegradable produce bags, often recognizable by their greenish tint)
- Pre-washed salad mix bags
- Frozen food bags
- Candy bar wrappers
- Chip bags
- Cling wrap
- Cellophane (like from flowers or gift baskets)
- Bedding packaging with zippers

Remember - clean and dry materials for recycling!

How2recycle is a company that has produced a clear, well-understood label that conveys to the consumer how to recycle a bag, box, can or bottle (www.how2recycle.info).

Companies become members of HOW@RECYCLE to learn how to prepare their products so they can be correctly recycled by the consumer. How2recycle evaluates the company and helps the company improve their products for successful recycling.

Go on the How2recycle site if you want to find:

- Companies that have made a commitment to recycling. The 10,000+ companies who are members include: Aldi, Bic, Costco, Campbells, Coca Cola, Clorox, Dominos, DOW, DeI Monte, Gerbers, Kelloggs, Kohls, McDonalds, Marzetti's, Shaklee, Target, Walmart, Walgreens....
- Store Drop-Off locations that accept the recycled item (input item description and your zip code to the site search field and you will get a list of places to take the product).