

ST. THOMAS A' BECKET CHURCH
Care for Our Common Home Ministry
August 6, 2019 Minutes

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER – Carol opened the meeting with a prayer from the Climate Summit in Poland

PRESENT: Mary Beth Collins, Kitty Conlan, Peggy Cowdrill, Helen Dickey, Carol Even, Barb Ewalt, Harriet Hanlon, Patti Kaiser, Linn Mitchell, Debbie Robinson, Betty Sullivan

EDUCATION: Kitty has looked for ways to involve the children in Religious Education classes in the Season of Creation. The existing textbooks contain material on stewardship and creation, but how can the teachers focus to do better in this area? Kitty tried to develop segments based on age groupings but found the specific learning objectives differed so much from grade to grade, e.g. the sixth grade focuses on the Old Testament, seventh grade on the New Testament, and eighth grade on Confirmation. Overall, the main objective is to teach that God created everything, and it is our job to take care of it. There are variations on the same concept, increasing in complexity. So, Kitty has focused on lessons followed by activities that involve the children in creation awareness in the 1st month of Religious Education. She has developed some song lyrics that speak of God's role in our world, written to familiar tunes, in ascending grade order, songs like, 'Farmer in the Dell', 'He's Got the Whole World...', 'Turn, Turn, Turn'. Members were asked to add craft projects to her list of Earth Day activities. Eighth graders must stay on task, preparing for Confirmation, but they might see how saints such as St. Francis related to creation. Also, they need church-based service hours, and Laudato Si tells us that any environmental work may be considered service to the church.

RECYCLING AND STEWARDSHIP: Carol offered special thanks to Kitty and to Betty and the recycling committee. Betty and Carla would like more Green tips for the Bulletin, and the more specific, the better – e.g. car washing causing water pollution that runs to the Chesapeake. Reston Association provides decals/tags and glue with instructions on how to attach tags to water drains. We could make a project of finding untagged drains and tagging them.

We still need to ensure that downstairs rooms have recycling bins for paper. Classrooms need bins, so the teachers can demonstrate and instruct the children in paper recycling. Children could make a project of decorating cardboard boxes to use as bins. Carol has made sure upstairs office staff have recycle receptacles.

Saint John Neumann has a company that picks up compost and recycling, see www.roadrunnerwm.org. It claims to be a less expensive and to recycle more than other companies.

Kitty has a neighborhood glass recycling program where a neighbor announces on facebook when they will drive to the nearest purple bin so that people could gather glass to be taken there. It is a project we could do in our neighborhoods, to organize days for hazardous waste and glass recycling.

Betty will write the County asking about resuming the hazardous waste days when it would be picked up at the curb.

There are informative handouts on recycling at www.FairfaxCounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-and-trash.

Betty brought to the meeting the list of acceptable recycling items from the County, and she gave farm market bags to Father Bill and Maureen.

Harriet suggested finding a speaker to address the problems of water levels and temperatures plus chemicals that cause pollution in the Reston lakes.

Betty reported that Maureen Roan has been working on projects around the Parish, including the contract for parking lot lights. Starting August 7th, all the lights will be changed to LEDs.

Recycle cartridge ink at Office Depot, batteries at Mom's, #5 plastics at Mom's and Whole Foods. Mom's may recycle glass in the future.

LIBRARY REPORT: All books submitted from our group are on the shelf. There is also a magazine file box and a 3-ring binder.

Carol has added the book An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore, to the Library.

NOTE: The Parish website is partially in place. Maureen is looking for someone to maintain it.

FUTURE DATES: August 17th and 18th – Carla Walsh, Diocesan Coordinator for the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) will come to speak at all Masses and we will provide volunteers to hand out sign-up cards after each Mass. The VCC does public policy work for the two dioceses of Virginia and their Bishops.

Conversation in the Library with our Ministry will take place on a Sunday in September, tentatively the 22nd. We might plan a movie night – maybe show “An Inconvenient Truth” - after this and try to increase young adult participation.

On October 4th we have the Season of Creation performance at 7:30 – helpers are needed!

In November, because the Church is a polling place, our meeting will be moved to the first Thursday, November 7th.

NEXT MEETING: the day after Labor Day, September 3rd at 10:00 am. We will plan handouts for the Library Conversation (date in September to be determined) and sign up volunteers for the Library and for October 4th.

CLOSING POEM: Carol read “Intimate Detail” by Heid E. Erdrich