

ST. THOMAS à BECKET CHURCH  
Care for Our Common Home Ministry  
October 27, 2020 7:00pm

**ATTENDANCE:** Ali Althen – our Zoom hostess, Lori Brady, Carol Even, Barbara Ewalt, Carla Gibson, Patricia Kaiser, Robert Ruedisueli, Mary Ricotta, Lauren Smith

**OPENING PRAYER:** A Prayer For Our Earth by Pope Francis

**EDUCATION:**

Our Zoom meetings during the pandemic will be hosted by Ali Althen, who is a member of our new Pastoral Council. Carol invited Ali to introduce herself. Previously, Ali worked in the U.S. Senate the U.S. Green Building Council. Now, she is Public Information Officer for Fairfax County in the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. The Office is responsible for County-wide climate action planning. Lori asked about the origin of the Office. It started twenty years ago with one staffer. Now, there are six people on staff.

The County is working on plans for resilience and adaptation, energy management, and sustainability with energy improvements in 220 county buildings. They also are partnering with Fairfax schools, housing, and parks to bring solar to 115 sites, including Reston Community Center as one of the first. They also developed the Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) Task Force to help public and private organizations with energy goals.

Barb asked when solar would come to the Government Center. Although it is not a priority, solar is likely to come in the form of canopies over cars in the parking lot.

In Dec, a Washington Post story explained the issues involved in the Fairfax solar plan.

More recently the County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services announced a transition from plastic to paper yard waste bags. Despite political opposition, the change is expected to be complete by next spring, with a possible formal code change to follow.

Barb noted that the Diocese of Richmond may be greenest diocese in Country. Richmond teamed with Catholic Energies and the Catholic Climate Covenant install solar panels and retrofit lighting in seven of its buildings.

**RECYCLING COMMITTEE:**

no report

**SEASON OF CREATION RECAP:**

Bulletins thru September have had CCH input and each had a video link to family-friendly information. The Diocese provides Creation Care News on the diocesan website under “Peace and Justice Commission.

St. Mark’s did an online retreat over three evenings looking at the importance of water as a resource that sustains life, “God’s Gift of Water”.

St. John Neumann’s CCH prepared a prayer walk outdoors with hand-decorated peace poles supporting a long cord that had fabric squares hung along its length – all attached by people praying along the walk. Here is the link to the video. Be sure to adjust the volume to hear the music and enjoy!:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PDoRC1t5nGDVNHXO\\_T9lAetlbFWCzI0q/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PDoRC1t5nGDVNHXO_T9lAetlbFWCzI0q/view)

The Diocesan Care for Creation group would like to know what kind of webinars they could help us with.

Some neighboring parishes are not involved with the Diocesan group, e.g. St. Joseph’s and Christ the Redeemer. If we know of people from those parishes, perhaps we could contact them and suggest their parish get connected. A few contact people were mentioned.

### **FALL AND WINTER PLANS AND IDEAS:**

Next summer or spring we might ask the Parish about doing a solar installation, with help either from the County, or from Catholic Energies.

We could do an outdoor prayer walk for the Season of Creation, where each person who wants can hang up a piece of fabric. Think about where we would like to do this.

We need working committees – Carla and Betty's Recycling committee is the only ongoing.

We need a Garden committee to work toward Audubon and St. Kateri habitat certifications. Lauren offered to help. Betty might help as she loves gardens and Liz, too!

Fr. Bill would love to have a bird house. Sheila and Carol have beautiful birdhouses –made in Berryville. This would make a good gift for Christmas -Carol will follow up and send a picture.

Since we missed Earth Day tree planting with Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, we ought to do it on Earth Day, 2022, April 22. We could join with Ken Gubin and the NVHC green team to plant redbud and/or red maples.

We would like to have speakers come to present on important issues. Charlie Forbes or another outreach person from the County would be excellent for an educational program.

America Recycles day is November 15<sup>th</sup> in 2021.

"Pope Francis – a Man of His Word" is a movie we would like to show the Parish.

Further Discussion focused on possibly having a socially responsible sales fair – to sell sustainably produced or cause-supporting merchandise for a percentage to go to the Church. This would follow the example of St. John Neumann and other churches that have done similar events. However, this would be a virtual sale, the Parish gets 10% and there is no shipping charge. The store Carol mentioned is at [www.fairtradewinds.com](http://www.fairtradewinds.com). A bulletin announcement would include a link to shop virtually. There are other organizations that have worthwhile items for sale. Barb mentioned SERVV as one example.

Harriet did Al Gore's Climate Reality Leadership Training, and she would like to present some of the invaluable materials that were shared in her study. She had to commit to doing 10 climate related activities in the year following the training. A presentation to our Parish CCH would count as one of these.

There was no question that we would like to continue with Zoom meetings until it is not necessary. Ali will let the Parish know that she has professional Zoom account that she is willing to use it to help us and other groups in the Parish.

### **NEXT MEETING – NEW MEETING SCHEDULE**

November 17<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm – future meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of every month.

### **CLOSING POEM**

Jane Hershfield – "Today, When I Could Do Nothing" - from May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Gratefulness.org website.