

ST. THOMAS à BECKET CHURCH
Care for Our Common Home Ministry
January 5, 2021 7:00pm virtual meeting Minutes

OPENING PRAYER: Carol opened the meeting with our Earth Prayer before a Committee Meeting.

Today's meeting has an open agenda to allow members to speak about their ecology and theology activity, learning, reading, watching, and New Year's climate resolutions.

PRESENT: Ali Althen, Lori Brady-Neumann, Carol Even, Barb Ewalt, Patti Kaiser, John and Bebee Stroik, Betty Sullivan

SOLAR ENERGY FOR THE PARISH:

Recently we learned that Janice Ryan sent a letter to the Pastoral Council suggesting the Parish install solar panels and electric vehicle chargers. In response, the Council agreed "to consider the installation of solar panels before inclusion of electrical charging stations".

The Diocesan Care team is aware of local solar installations in the Diocese such as Nativity Parish. Catholic Energies, a non-profit founded by the Catholic Climate Covenant, is currently helping SJN at present to transition to solar power.

Ali is vice-chair of the Pastoral Council. She reported that before they meet next week, she will attend the pre-meeting with Fr. Bill and the executive team of the Council. They last met in November and discussed solar, prompted by the communications from Janice Ryan and another parishioner. Solar power was discussed as a long-term goal for Parish, and it is on the radar of Fr. Bill and Council. There is interest in another long-term feasibility study, as it is some time since this was explored in earnest.

Carol added that Catholic Energies will come to do the study for free. They will manage all the work including finding financing. We all need to read up on how Catholic Energies works. Several CCH members stated that it is time to move forward on this, as there is no up-front cost to our parish, and there is great long-term value.

WE ANSWER - What are you doing?

Carol – reading, gardening, and finding inspiration in cookbooks and new recipes, trying to make life more simple, not buying clothes, giving to charities in lieu of Christmas gifts to adults. She has recipes for home-made cleaning products.

Lori – recycling, and is inspired by her granddaughter who takes after Greta Thornburg and won't allow plastic in her house, or shopping by Amazon, and refuses new clothing.

Ali – expecting in May, is avoiding plastic things for baby, doing organic cotton baby clothes, wood, silicone products, including glass baby bottles. At her County work, Ali is focusing on two rounds of public engagement to learn what the public is willing to do for the environment, and what the public needs from the County to do more, e.g. helping overcome expenses for HVAC, insulation, changing lightbulbs, etc. By the summer, the County will have a community-wide action plan for greenhouse gas reduction and will follow that plan with the implementation phase. The County is working to install charging

stations at their buildings that are public-facing, like libraries, and effort is ongoing to convert the County fleet to electric vehicles.

Barb – reading, recycling a lot more, including taking glass bottles to the purple bins, donating to help needy kids in Herndon and for Christ House meals, hoping that ecological practices will make her life easier not harder.

Bebbe and John Stroik – suggested that we have a gardening class outdoors when the weather improves.
Patti – reading, baking, and cooking new recipes, learning about composting and possibilities for future compost pick-up service in the County.

Betty – two yoga classes a week, 3 book clubs, zoom groups from school colleagues and family, chair of building garden committee – will ask lawn contractor about fertilizers, what and why chemicals are used, and about native plants. Her HOA is installing charging stations for electric vehicles in the garage – thanks to a grant from Dominion Energy.

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS mentioned during the meeting:

350 Fairfax

America Media

Arlington Diocesan website -Creation Care under 'Peace and Justice Commission'

Attenborough, David – movie "A Life on Our Planet". He is optimistic that we will save the day.

Berry Thomas (eco-theologian) - book *Dream of the Earth*

Catholic Energies – part of **Catholic Climate Covenant**

FACS –Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions - training for advocacy

Fairfax County's action plan

K.I.N.D. – Kids in Need of Defense (esp. at the border)

Mason and Greens, in Alexandria – will fill your bulk item containers, is planning another store

Mom's Grocery Store – will fill your container with their bulk products – soap, nuts, grains, etc.

National Catholic Reporter – articles and webinar(s), including some articles by/about Tim Kaine

New York Times – Climate and Environment section

New Yorker magazine – **Bill McKibbin** articles

Sierra Club

Terry Gross' Fresh Air interview of David Attenborough on his latest book "Life on the Planet"

Veteran's Composting tackling local compost recycling.

Washington Post – Climate and Environment articles and Ecology articles (Weekender p.3)

World Central Kitchen

XR- Extinction Rebellion – non-violent action group – per Lori's granddaughter

NEXT MEETING: Feb 2nd 7pm

CLOSING POEM: Burning the Old Year – Naomi Shihab Nye