

ST. THOMAS à BECKET CHURCH  
Care for Our Common Home Ministry  
March 2, 2021 7:00pm virtual meeting Minutes

**OPENING PRAYER:**

Carol read the opening prayer from the Catholic Climate Covenant

**PRESENT:**

Ali Althen, Carol Even, Barbara Ewalt, Harriet Hanlon, Patti Kaiser, Betty Sullivan, Matthew Verghese

**REPORT ON the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) SURVEYS:**

Ali sent out surveys via links in email. There were three public surveys, 1. energy, 2. transportation, development, and waste, and 3. an open-ended survey for additional public input. Nearly 2000 survey responses have come in already. These were sent to about 80 different local groups to share with their members, in addition to being sent to social and print media. This was all done without a budget. Although the surveys are presented in four languages, demographics are limited, and non-English responses are few. The County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) is working to improve their multilingual outreach. Carol suggested approaching large ethnic faith communities like the local Korean church. Ali explained that FACS is represented in the working plan and is involved in reaching out to faith communities.

The OEEC, with ICF (originally the Inner City Fund, now ICF International), will produce five on-demand webinars in next few months – from Ali's office and ICF. They will provide half-hour presentations on-demand for businesses. For a wide public blast, they will use the Nextdoor app. Their survey efforts will be competing with the county-wide strategic plan and transportation surveys. In May there will be another round of surveys from the OEEC along with public engagement. Then the plan will go to the County Board of Supervisors for approval. Ali developed, narrated, and produced a series of three educational videos found on the County website page for Climate Action News.

The CECAP program is now moving into another stage called the Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Information can be found on the following webpage:

[Fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/public-engagement-cecap](https://fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/public-engagement-cecap).

**CHURCH BULLETIN and ONLINE PRESENCE:**

Betty reports that the bulletin is going miraculously. Sent as word document this time, the format may be better for insertion into the bulletin. Keep feeding the bulletin green tips by sending emails to Betty. Carol suggested that tips be seasonal, e.g., care about pesticides in spring.

Matthew shared that he puts up a summary of the bulletin on the Church Facebook page. Anything to post on the Facebook group should go to him for posting.

There was some discussion of how the CCH could have digital presence, on Facebook or the Parish webpage.

**ODDS AND ENDS:**

Barb said we need to remind people that glass does not go in the recycling bin. If we just keep reminding, we will continue making progress.

Green America has a catalog of companies that practice sustainable manufacture.

Old cars can go to Catholic Charities.

### **EARTH DAY 2021:**

The official date is April 22<sup>nd</sup>, but many events are planned for the weekend, particularly Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

The CCH ministry has two Earth Day activities planned. Last year our plans fell through because of COVID restrictions. This year we understand what we can and cannot do, and what precautions to take when meeting with others.

The theme for Earth Day this year is 'Restore Our Common Home'. Two ways we can respond to this theme are:

1. Wiehle Avenue clean-up – through the VDOT program Adopt-A-Highway. Patti will be in touch with members to arrange sign-up and training (watch a short video or read a few pages to be provided).
2. Establish a St. Kateri Habitat on the church grounds and plant more native pollinator plants. The criteria for such a habitat can be found at [Kateri.org/saint-kateri-habitat-2/](https://kateri.org/saint-kateri-habitat-2/). It is just like Audubon at Home, except it includes a religious element such as a meditation bench or statue. The Parish Gardening Group consists of Fr. Bill, Betsy Coffey, Kate Buschelman, and Sara Might. We plan to work on improving the Mary Garden and developing another area for the Habitat.

Audubon has sent Harriet a list of nine native plants they recommend for birds, and there is a PDF guide available showing Northern Virginia native plants. Using these, we may be able to make a habitat that combines Audubon and St. Kateri certifications.

The CCH Garden Committee includes Carol, Harriet, Mary, and Patti. They will meet in about two weeks to look over the garden areas at the church.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

### **CLOSING POEM:**

"I Wake Close to Morning" by Mary Oliver.