

Convention 2020 Report of the Environmental Stewardship Committee
of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

Members: Rev Ingrid Andersen; Rev Malinda Clatterbuck; Ms. Kay Cramer; Prof. John Dernbach; Canon Kate Harrigan; Ms. Cricket Hunter; Ms. Madi Keaton; Canon Dan Morrow; Ms. Chloe Selles.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee was formed in August 2019. The role of the Committee is threefold: Networking, Education, and Advocacy. Our goals at the outset were to:

- Create an enabling environment in the Diocese for environmental and climate advocacy and action.
- To identify “community champions” at a convocational level who are already informed and involved, in order to create an effective network for communication, information and action, and to co-ordinate and mentor environmental activists. To identify leader/s for each of these seven convocational clusters.
- Identify the broad spectrum of climate and environmental initiatives and resources in the parishes of this Diocese in order to showcase best environmental practice, and to tell these stories.
- Partner with other Diocesan committees and bodies that work in the connected issues of racial, economic, and other aspects of human dignity and justice.
- Partner and work with other denominations, institutions, organizations and structures who can contribute to this work.
- Provide ongoing information and training for Environmental/Climate advocacy events and opportunities.
- Identify liturgical, educational, scientific and practical resources/information for parishes.

The Committee began with organizing local activism and advocacy, particularly around the Global Climate Strike, and began to identify stakeholders at the Convocational level, and to seek partnerships in the Diocese and nationally. We had established the need for additional support for effective communication and the building of awareness. Just before October’s Convention, the Environmental Committee was rejoicing in its budget allocation, had a broad action plan and was poised to begin to undertake awareness building within the Diocese and strategizing for effective regional communication. And then COVID-19 struck.

Since March, the world has changed dramatically, with a shift to online activism and knowledge transmission. The social and economic disruption of the pandemic has facilitated activism in the United States in a way that is reminiscent of the 1960s. The pandemic exposed fault lines in a society focused primarily on profit and productivity. Record Californian fires have destroyed more than two million acres of forest and property, raising new awareness of a global environmental and climate crisis. Oil companies are in financial crisis because of shutdown and are reportedly rethinking strategies for survival. The task of the Environmental Stewardship Committee going forward is to re-assess this new context of activism, communication, networking and education, in order to have the most impact within this Diocese. *A luta continua.*