

# A Christian Call to Climate Justice

The Report of the 2023-24 Climate Change Task  
Force of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

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# Executive Summary

Members of the Diocese of Michigan recognize that climate change is both an immediate existential threat and a grave spiritual matter concerning care for God's creation, which He saw fit to enter as our savior Jesus Christ. To that end, a collection of congregations submitted a proposal to the 2023 Convention to create a Climate Change Task Force. This group was convened in January 2024, and charged with developing recommendations for the 2024 Convention.

The Task Force developed a theological statement outlining their rationale for emphasizing climate action within our faith community, and to articulate our understanding of how climate justice is essential to Christian life. We undertook a survey of our congregations to find out the current level of climate anxiety, action, and need. We determined that most congregations are experiencing at least some difficulty due to climate change, and are taking steps to combat it with varying levels of success. Most respondents felt that more needs to be done, and that additional resources of money, coordination, and expertise would help them to do more.

To this end, and acknowledging the urgency of the matter, the Task Force includes in this report a collection of resources intended to help congregations advance this work. The Task Force recommends that an ongoing Climate Justice Action Commission be formed at the diocesan level in order to provide these resources to our congregations. We call on all members of the Diocese to honor the creation that our Maker called good by working to sustain its life-giving abundance.

# Section I: Background

## I.1 Task Force Formation

The Climate Change Task Force was created by the following proposal at the 2023 Diocesan Convention:

### RATIONALE:

The Diocese of Michigan has invested its moral energy in ending gun violence, achieving many of its public policy objectives in the past year. Additionally, this diocese has begun exploring how to make reparations for the horrible sins and crimes connected with the institution of slavery in the United States.

Ending gun violence and atoning for the evils of slavery are indeed grave moral issues that the church absolutely must continue to address, and deserve the focus of our efforts. Building on this energy, we are further called to confront a third grave moral issue of our time: the global climate crisis. We hold that the success of the gun violence policy efforts reveals a wellspring of moral energy that can accommodate this additional goal.

The climate crisis, like the crises of violence and racism, is a crisis of justice, with marginalized and oppressed communities bearing the brunt of the pain. Further, these communities will continue to suffer first as our diocesan and community infrastructures cope with a climate for which they were not built. Addressing these three crises, individually and collectively, is a means of living out baptismal vows to "strive for justice and peace among all people" and to "respect the dignity of every human being."

### RESOLUTION TEXT

WHEREAS without abandoning the focus and urgency of working on issues of ending gun violence and making reparations for slavery, this diocese has a moral imperative to also develop a strategy to activate diocesan resources – resources of

prayer, resources of activism, resources of activity, and the material resources possessed by the church – to seriously address the moral issue of climate change,

Therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 189th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan establish a task force to report to the Bishop and to 190th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan how this diocese might best focus its efforts and resources to address the existential threat of climate change in ways that have the most potential to make a difference on this moral issue, and

RESOLVED that the President of Convention appoint members to this task force, with a particular focus on recruiting young people whose lives are even more likely to be cut short from their natural life spans because of the accelerating effects of this calamity, constituting this task force within 90 days of the close of this Convention so that the task force can carry out this important work.

## I.2 Task Force Activity Summary

The Task Force was convened by Bishop Perry in January 2024, with Dr. Ruth Boeder and Rev. Tom Ferguson as co-chairs. The commission completed three primary tasks over the course of the year: drafting a statement explaining the theological and spiritual significance of climate action; designing, distributing, and analyzing a survey of our worshiping communities to determine the current level of climate action; and developing the recommendations and gathering the resources in this report. The Task Force also prepared messaging encouraging the observance of Rogationtide, which was distributed in the Diocesan weekly e-news in Spring 2024, and provided logistical support for the Climate Retreat hosted by St. Aidan's Ann Arbor the first weekend in October.

The Task Force's activity was guided by the epiphany that climate justice is an essential element of our Christian calling. Climate justice means acknowledging that climate change will have the greatest impact on the least powerful among us<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Learn more about Climate Justice at Yale's Climate Connections news service: <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/07/what-is-climate-justice/>

Poorer communities endure the waste and pollution that enriches the wealthier; younger generations will face a more challenging world that their elders' choices have made; and privileged nations simply have more resources to mitigate the damage than marginalized nations. Climate issues have harmful social, economic and public health impacts—impacts which are already being felt in the communities of our Diocese. As Christians, we are directed by Jesus to use God's gifts to us to serve the poor, the marginalized, the forgotten, and the suffering. Climate justice is a social incarnation of our spiritual call to service.

## Section II: Theological Statement

### II.1 Climate Justice is Central to our Faith

*Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard,  
they have trampled down my portion,  
they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.  
— Jeremiah 4:10*

With these words, the prophet Jeremiah challenges us to pay heed to the suffering of the earth. The authors of Genesis tell us that we were meant to tend and care for the garden, to sustain and preserve the environment. As our Bishops wrote in 2011, "Christians cannot be indifferent to global warming, pollution, natural resource depletion, species extinctions, and habitat destruction, all of which threaten life on our planet."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls us to be shepherds ourselves, following his example. But when we choose to ignore the suffering of the Earth, we stray from Jesus' way of teaching, healing, and embracing human communities, Jesus' way of giving hope to those he served. This is indeed a perversion of the original blessing which God intended for all of creation and humanity.

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<sup>2</sup> [Episcopal Church House of Bishops Issues a Pastoral Teaching on the Environment](#), September 2011

Jesus gave us a new commandment to love one another. When we are indifferent to the forces that threaten the food, shelter, safety, and indeed the very survival of “the least of these,” we neglect Jesus’s commandment to us in the most flagrant terms. Love for one another as Jesus commanded dictates that environmental stewardship in the face of global warming is indeed a profound spiritual responsibility that we ignore to our spiritual peril.

## II.2 Complacency and Despair

As we hear and read about oceans swelling, temperatures rising, and winters becoming milder, it is difficult to know what to do to address these pressing challenges that have real-life implications for us, our global siblings, and our future generations. Sustainability maxims aimed at individual efforts to “reduce, reuse, recycle” feel utterly inadequate to the point of irrelevance when large corporations and the ultra-wealthy are contributing to the climate crisis with limited, if any, regulations on their behaviors. It is hard to believe we can make a difference of measurable impact.

Those of us living in higher-income countries should not, however, continue to ignore how our current pattern of actions is already having an impact. According to the United Nations, “The wealthiest bear the greatest responsibility: the richest 1 percent of the global population combined account for more greenhouse gas emissions than the poorest 50 percent.”<sup>3</sup> The New York Times reports that 23 wealthy, developed nations are responsible for half of all historic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while more than 150 countries are responsible for the other half.<sup>4</sup> Nadja Popovich and Brad Plumer write in their article, “Who Has the Most Historic Responsibility for Climate Change?” that: “Rich countries, including the United States, Canada, Japan and much of western Europe, account for just 12 percent of the global population today but are responsible for 50 percent of all the planet-warming greenhouse gasses released from fossil fuels and industry over the past 170 years.” Both our collective actions and our collective inaction are contributing to the problem of global climate change.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/actnow/facts-and-figures>

<sup>4</sup> [“Who Has The Most Historical Responsibility for Climate Change?”](#) Popovich and Plumer, 2021

This problem encompasses multiple factors, regions, and populations; it affects the whole system of our planet. In facing such a systemic problem – such an overwhelming systemic problem – it becomes easy to feel a sense of despair and powerlessness: in our congregations, and in our communal and individual lives. Why do anything, if what we do doesn't amount to much, if the problem is so much more than our individual behaviors? Why spend our energy and efforts making little headway? Why try?

In the face of these forces, it is easy to lose hope, to fall into despair. Howard Frumkin, in his piece "Hope, Health, and the Climate Crisis" writes that these narratives of things being beyond our control have an impact: "Media accounts increasingly describe people with anxiety, despair, and hopelessness, linked to concerns about climate change. Some young people are forgoing higher education, believing that impending catastrophe makes education pointless (one slogan is "Why should I study for a future I won't have?"). Some young people are opting not to have families – one of the most elemental expressions of human hope – not wanting to bring children into an apocalyptic world."

This despair is understandable as a human response to such overwhelming challenges. But as Christians, we are called to counter this despair with faith, hope, and love. If we are to truly repent of our sins of omission and commission related to creation care, we must also return to sustainable ways of living. It is therefore important to name the ways in which we, as individuals and as human communities, and particularly as communities of faith, actually can and do realize our agency even in these profoundly worrying times. It is important to maintain a sense of hope, because hope propels action: Frumkin continues, "People need to pressure governments and private firms to transition to a post-carbon economy. People with high-consuming lifestyles need to interrogate, and when appropriate revise, their behavioral choices. Well-informed people need to "spread the word" regarding climate science and associated threats and opportunities. These tasks all require constructive engagement – for which hope is prerequisite." How do we as Christians, and congregations, bear witness to this prerequisite of hope, and as a position of faith?



## II.3 Following Jesus' Example, We are Called to Action

As people of faith in congregations and across our Diocese, we are called to build hope for ourselves and our communities.

- A) We are called to tell the truth. In the Daily Office, we pray that God “guide us in the way of Justice and Truth.” The psalmist calls us to avoid illusory hope, to see the world clearly, and to name things as they are, without downplaying, minimizing, or exaggerating realities of individual or communal life. We need to understand, in frank terms, where we are in terms of climate health: the things we are certain of, the things we are yet uncertain of, and resist growing mis- and dis-information.
  
- B) We are called to honor our grief. In the Gospels, Jesus wept. Jesus went away to quiet places by himself. In human form, Jesus felt and named and honored the very real experiences of the human condition, and we are given permission to do that, as well. In naming our ecological grief – the loss of a stable planet, frustration at the systems that enable emissions growth, and worry for our future generations – we can then begin to adjust our sights and expectations and feel a sense of relief. And then, when the time is right for us, we can look to action.
  
- C) We are called to build communities of solidarity. Across the Diocese of Michigan, we have a wealth of resources, organizations, task forces, and groups who are committed to climate justice and relief. As the Church, we can practice what we hold true: the priesthood of all believers, and that all people bring gifts and talents to bear. How can we further identify individuals in our congregations and across the Diocese that have time, energy, and resources to engage in climate action? How can we network with governmental agencies and nonprofits in furthering our work? Jesus recognized he could not do the transformative work he was called to do by acting alone: he called disciples to follow. He brought people into inner circles of healing and belovedness. We can do the same.

D) We are called to practice joy as resistance. As we see the climate changing before our eyes, it can be easy to lose ourselves to despair. Throughout the Gospels, when Jesus faced hard challenges, he brought his friends alongside him. He turned water into wine for a wedding banquet, so that the party might continue. An integral part of maintaining hope is seeking and building joy: as individuals and as communities of faith. Across the Diocese, what would it look like for us to cultivate joy and celebrate our wins, climate-related and otherwise?

E) We are called to bear witness. By truth telling, honoring grief, building solidarity, and practicing joy, we become witnesses to the truths of the world around us: by naming harm, working to build equity, and resisting evil in all forms, we become co-creators of a better, more just world.

## II.4 Prioritizing Environmental Action

As people of faith, we are called in these times, for all that we face, to follow what Jesus models for us: when we come up against resistance and uncertainty, to gather with like-minded people. When we face exhaustion, to know what is ours to do and trust others to carry the baton until we can once again. Why? Because the climate change that we are facing is more than us: it is a global issue, affecting generation upon generation. So may we build what we need – rooted in love of ourselves and love of our neighbor – to make a movement that is enduring, promising, and hope-filled. May we be moved to action in everything we do: as individuals, as congregations, as deaneries, and as the Diocese of Michigan, responding as the Church to an urgent need.

# Section III: Summary of Survey Results

## III.1 Design and Distribution

To better understand the current level of creation care awareness and activities across the Diocese, the CCTF members designed a survey. With the support of Diocesan staff, this survey was digitally distributed to all the parishes via email, and kept open for responses for about two weeks. We received 19 responses, though not all responses included answers to every question. The full list of questions can be found in Appendix C. Appendix C also includes visualizations of the distribution of responses to most of the questions and provides lists of responses to open-ended questions. The responses have been anonymized for this report, but the full set is held at the Diocesan Offices. We wish to express our gratitude to everyone who responded to the survey for generously sharing their thoughts.

## III.2 Emerging Themes

Many congregations are already actively engaged in creation care and climate justice work. In reviewing the survey responses, we identified several activities that are already being undertaken by multiple parishes:

- Engaging in advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels
- Connecting with the broader community—neighbors as well as partner organizations
- Doing the three R's (recycling, reusing, reducing) in their buildings and operations
- Pursuing energy efficiency, especially by replacing light bulbs and appliances
- Updating infrastructure changes such as upgraded HVAC systems, improved water management and landscaping changes, or installing EV chargers
- Holding internal discussions to build awareness, including articulating values, committing or re-committing to ministry or program areas, and forming committees

The respondents also discussed their plans for the future. Repeated responses included:

- Becoming better informed about general issues
- Gathering necessary information and articulating plans for specific projects
- Pursuing big-ticket purchases or changes
- Committing to the amount of time required to achieve their goals

It cannot be denied, though, that for many questions the most common response was in the negative—"no" or "very little" or "we aren't aware of that". Many respondents already articulated a desire to grow into knowing and doing more; the CCTF both hopes and believes that many more will be drawn to this work as we continue together.

### III.3 Insights to Carry Forward

Alongside all the fruitful labor that is already happening, the participants also identified barriers preventing them from achieving all their goals. Some particular challenges they hope the Diocese might address include:

- Providing guidance in spiritual practices around climate issues
- Providing grants and connecting congregations with grant-writing experts
- Providing educational materials and other resources for tackling projects
- Creating networking opportunities for like-minded individuals and congregations to network

Each of these challenges can be seen as an opportunity, though. These requests provide concrete ideas for how the EDOMI, as a cooperative entity, might take action in response to the climate crisis. Thus, the CCTF took these ideas and used them as a foundation upon which we have built our recommendations.

## Section IV: Recommendations

### IV.1 Diocesan Level: Integrating Climate Justice Into Our Work

#### IV.1.a Formation of a Climate Justice Action Commission

The Task Force recommends that the diocese establish an ongoing Climate Justice Action Commission (CJAC) to coordinate climate action, develop policy, and support congregations in this work. Happily, the General Convention has also called for an increased commitment to creation care work; passing fourteen resolutions<sup>5</sup> related to this aspect of our shared life during their 2024 meeting. Our proposed Commission can provide leadership to the Diocese in seeking ways to appropriately respond to these pieces of legislation.

#### IV.1.b Proposed Work of the New Commission

The Task force recommends that the CJAC liaise with the Bishop's Staff, the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, the Trustees, and the Deaneries to encourage each entity in their environmental justice work, connect efforts where it is logical to do so, and provide additional resources and guidance where possible.

The Task Force further recommends that the CJAC work with all of these groups to prepare a report for the 191st Convention, and further conventions thereafter. This report will detail how each element of the diocese is taking action for environmental justice, as well as offering recommendations for further action.

### IV.2 Congregational Level: What Can We Change In 10 Years?

#### IV.2.a Setting Actionable Goals

The Task Force recommends that all worshipping communities within our diocese commit to measurable, actionable climate goals to the best of their ability given

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<sup>5</sup> See the full list at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ecojustice/creation-care-climate-change-and-eco-justice-related-legislation/>

their location and resources. We suggest a 10-year timeline for these goals, so that we may celebrate our accomplishments together at the 200th Convention of the Diocese.

The EDOMI's worshipping communities each exist in a unique, local situation. Giving each congregation the chance to set their own goal allows them to do the work that is best suited to their members' gifts and to their neighbors' needs. Parishes may also wish to collaborate on goals, working together with others in the same city or deanery, or in some other alignment.

To provide inspiration while congregations are brainstorming, the Task Force has prepared two supplements to this report: first, a list of 100 suggested actions (Appendix A), and second, a list of resources including liturgical practices, suggested books and readings, and links to existing organizations (including potential funding sources) already engaged in this work (Appendix B). The proposed CJAC would also be available to support parishes in setting and achieving their goals, especially in helping them to network with other EDOMI congregations and to access Diocesan resources.

# Appendix A: Climate Action Idea List

As you consider what goal you will commit to work towards over the next ten years, consider these guiding questions:

- Are you better equipped to address issues on the ground or through policy change? Could you do both?
- Who is working to mitigate the effects of climate change near you? How might your organization join their work?

Being strategic in your choice will help make your work sustainable. Partnering with others will make the work easier and more effective, as well as building out the network of people committed to this cause.

Many of the suggested actions below are connected to the topics listed on the survey or in response to needs expressed by survey respondents. Some of these actions can be done by individual members/families; others are ones that would be tackled by the congregation as a whole. Discuss what feels like the best fit for you. And, if you find the first goal was achieved easily and you are encouraged to do more, follow that guiding impulse!

## Energy Usage Actions

- Installing on-site electrical generation
  - Install solar panels
  - Install a geothermal heat sink
- Choose a green energy provider
  - Get a free energy inspection from DTE or Consumers
  - Sign up for a renewables only, or non-peak times only option
- Reduce HVAC usage
  - In summer, close the window shades and put the thermostat higher
  - In winter, lower your heat at night and use blankets. Open your window shades and let the sun's heat and light into your home
- Replace light bulbs
  - Replace incandescent and CFL bulbs with LEDs. [DTE](#) and [Consumers](#) both offer rebates for commercial customers to help with the switch!
  - Turn off lights when they are not in use

- Replace appliances
  - Check the [energy star rating](#) of any appliance you buy and go for the highest rating you can afford
  - Consider renting or sharing tools and appliances, or buying used/thrifted ones instead of new
  - For your garden or workshop, replace worn-out gas powered tools with electric, battery, or hand operated tools
- Become a signatory on the [Michigan Interfaith Power & Light Covenant](#)

## Landscaping Actions in Response to Climate Change

- Improve stormwater management
  - Install a rain garden to make good use of water puddling in low-lying areas and limit harmful runoff into sewers and drainage ditches
  - When replacing nonporous pavement, consider transitioning to environmentally-friendly paving options
  - Use native plants to prevent erosion and support local wildlife
  - Dispose of waste properly
- Change fertilizer and pesticide use
  - Do not use fertilizers within 10 ft. of an existing body of water
  - Reduce or eliminate use of liquid chemical fertilizer and weed control products. See [advice on weed management from MSU](#) for some other options.
- Change your lawn care practices
  - If your local ordinances allow, embrace "[no mow May/low mow spring](#)" to help insect and native plants grow
  - Replace lawn area/s with butterfly gardens or other pollinator plants
- Integrate native plant species
  - Replace nonnative species, especially [invasive ones](#), with [native plants](#)
  - Native species need fewer pesticides and support wildlife and pollinators
  - Your County Conservation District is a great source of plants!



## Outreach Actions in Response to Climate Change

- Encourage members to do individual work toward climate change
  - Do errands in one outing
  - Use public transportation as available
  - Limit consumption of beef and eat more veggies, beans, and legumes
  - Practice a “Carbon Fast” for Lent (Info from [Anglican Focus](#) and from [Climate Stewards USA](#))
  - Explore the steps in this [Climate Action Toolkit](#)
  - Identify ways to implement other suggestions on this list at home
- Engage in public policy advocacy
  - Write or call your legislators to encourage them to support new environmental bills (such as Senate Bill 660, at the time of writing)
  - Find out if your city or township has a Climate Action Plan. Review it and see how you can participate. If they don’t have one, encourage your civic leaders to make one.
- Organize climate volunteering
  - Research local, grassroots environmental organizations and get a group together to volunteer with them. Encourage others to do so, too!
  - Watch for opportunities to remove invasive species from state parks or other public lands
- Reallocating outreach funds
  - Use diocesan grants for parish projects addressing environmental issues
  - Allocate funds for community education on environmental concerns
- Host climate programs
  - Offer meeting space to local environmental organizations
  - Create opportunities to discuss local concerns about the environment
  - Start a book club or reading group to learn more about environmental issues
- Include creation care topics and tips in your newsletter

## Waste Reduction Actions in Response to Climate Change

- Learn about gray water usage and consider how you might be able to follow this practice
- Use rain barrels to collect water for your lawn and landscaping
- Begin composting food scraps
- Buy foods in bulk to avoid excess packaging
- Reduce paper use
  - Use shorter or multi-week bulletins
  - Buy recycled paper products
  - Make copies double-sided
  - Reuse blank paper
- Reduce disposable dishes
  - Commit to using “real” dishes, glasses, mugs, and utensils, and washing them afterwards
  - Fill the dishwasher as much as you can before running it
  - If using disposable tableware, buy biodegradable items instead of plastic or styrofoam
  - Use less plastic wrap and foil
- Reduce fuel usage
  - Walk or ride a bicycle when possible
  - Buy an electric car, if within your budget
  - Join a carpool

# Appendix B: Resources for Climate Action

As congregations consider what actions they might take to respond to climate and environment issues in their local context, we hope this list of resources will prove useful.

## Including Creation Care In The Liturgy

- Rogation Sunday (May 5)/Rogationtide more generally
- [Season of Creation](#) (September-October)
- Harvest festivals/Thanksgiving
- ["Rogation Days"](#) from *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*
- ["The Rogation Days"](#) from liturgies.net
- [Sample bulletins](#) for Rogation/Creation Care & Celebration services, courtesy of Christ Church Detroit
- ["The Daily Bread"](#) by Werner Fuchs
- ["Turning the Tables: People First"](#) by Roberto Malvezzi
- ["Wild Lectionary"](#) from Salal & Cedar

## Potential Partners In This Work

### Local and State

- Your County Conservation Dept
  - ["Find Your Conservation District"](#) Michigan Association of Conservation Districts
  - Look especially for grants; for instance, the Washtenaw County Conservation District offers School & Community Habitat Grants
- [2030 Districts](#) in [Ann Arbor/Washtenaw](#), [Detroit](#), and (emerging in) [Lansing](#)
- University of Michigan's [School of Environment and Sustainability](#) and their [Detroit Sustainability Clinic](#)
- [MSU's Extension](#) offers a variety of educational resources, including ones focused on [climate change](#).
  - Another resource that may be particularly interesting to congregations with food pantries and/or community gardens is their [Cooking Matters](#) classes.

- State of Michigan [Utility Program Portal](#): Information about special programs from various energy providers
- [Michigan Saves](#): A non-profit, green bank making individual and commercial loans for building projects
- [Huron River Watershed Rain Catchers](#)
- [“Friends of the Rouge”](#) is a good resource for rain gardens
- Visit a local Demonstration Rain Garden for inspiration:
  - MSU Tollgate Gardens-Rain Garden 28115 Meadowbrook Novi, MI 48377
  - Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission 705 N. Zeeb Ann Arbor, MI 48103
  - Presented by “Friends of the Rouge.” Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex 650 Church St. Plymouth, MI
  - Fort Street Bridge Park 130 Oakwood Detroit, MI 48217 (Just north of I-75)
- [The Nature Conservancy–Michigan](#)
- [Michigan Interfaith Power and Light](#)
- There’s a bunch of additional Michigan organizations listed on [this page](#) from the A2 Climate Teach-In Website

#### Regional, National, and International

- [Province V Creation Care Group](#)
- [Solar Faithful](#)
- [Poor People's Campaign](#)
- [Deep Green Faith](#)
- [National Wildlife Foundation's Sacred Grounds Program](#)
- [Creation Care--the Episcopal Church](#)

#### Educational Materials

##### General/Book Club Suggestions

- Jim Antal, [Climate Church, Climate World](#) (resources included for group study)
- Karen Armstrong, [Sacred Nature](#)
- Katherine Hayhoe, [Saving Us](#)
- Kathleen Moore and Michael Nelson [Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril](#)

- Robin Wall Kimmerer [\*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants\*](#)
- NY Times [interview with Ayana Elizabeth Johnson](#)
  - Her books: [\*All We Can Save\*](#) and [\*What If We Get It Right?\*](#)
  - [The All We Can Save Project](#) website provides materials to support group discussions and actions based on the book
- Ben Rawlence [\*The Tree Line: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth\*](#)
- Benjamin Herold [\*Disillusioned: Five Families and the Unraveling of America's Suburbs\*](#)
- [Food System Sustainability Reading List](#) from the US Food Sovereignty Alliance
- Learn about [Triple Bottom Line Accounting Practices](#)

#### Theological Commentary/Interpretation

- ["Love God, Love God's World"](#) Creation Care Curriculum
- Winnie Varghese [Church Meets World](#)
- ["Taking Action on Climate Justice"](#) conversation guide from ChristianAid
- ["Our Prophetic Journey Towards Climate Justice"](#) from ChristianAid
- [On the origin of "this fragile Earth, our island home"](#)
- ["Climate Justice" posters](#) from ChristianAid
- Bishop Welby 's 2019 William Temple Lecture on ["Reimagining Britain: Faith and the Common Good"](#)
- Diana Butler Bass ["I Don't Understand"](#)
- Diocese of North Carolina climate goals: [Creation Care](#)
- [Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves shares thoughts from 2024 Anglican Primates' Meeting](#)

#### Reconciliation/Restorative Justice Approaches

- [Seven Steps Towards Reconciliation](#)
- Brankovic, Jasmina. "Transitional and Climate Justice: New Opportunities for Justice in Transition." *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, vol. 17, no. 2, July 2023, pp. 185–91, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijad019>.
- González-Hidalgo, Marien, et al. "Emotional Healing as Part of Environmental and Climate Justice Processes: Frameworks and Community-Based

Experiences in Times of Environmental Suffering." *Political Geography*, vol. 98, Oct. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102721>.

- Whyte, Kyle. *Indigenous Climate Change & Climate Justice: Teaching Materials & Advanced Bibliography*. <https://kylewhyte.seas.umich.edu/climate-justice/>.

## Rogation-Related: Food Systems Info

- ["US Food System Fact Sheet"](#) UM Center for Sustainable Systems ([PDF](#))
- ["Michigan: The Hands That Feed You"](#) Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- ["What Hunger Looks Like in Michigan"](#) Feeding America
- ["The Need to Support Native American Food Sovereignty"](#) Feeding America
- [Local Food Directories](#) from the USDA
- ["A How-To Guide for Eating for the Season"](#) MSU Extension
- Your local library can help you check out a variety of cookbooks
- ["Climate Kids Connects: Food Systems Hands-On Science"](#) Climate Kids
- ["Sprouting Chefs" Cookbook](#) from The Food Project
- ["Sustainability Resources for Teachers: Food"](#) from UM Center for Sustainable Systems (several of these videos are also good for teens & adults)
- Include kids as much as you can as you grow, shop for, and prepare food. If you want inspiration and practical tips on how to do this, search for "Montessori gardening/cooking".
- Some activities listed here for teens & adults will also be good for kids
  - Discussion activity: [A Chair for Everyone](#)
  - Discussion activity: [Your Favorite Meal](#)
  - Organize a group to volunteer at a local food bank or feeding program
  - Take the [SNAP Challenge](#)
  - Research recipes from your ancestral heritage or from a different culture you would like to learn about—and then try making them! (Potluck, anyone?)

# Appendix C: Climate Change Survey Materials

Responses have been anonymized. The full set of responses is held at the Diocesan Offices.

Dear Friends Across the Diocese,

As you may recall, the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan formed a Climate Change Task Force at its 189<sup>th</sup> Convention last October. The Task Force is charged with reporting back to the 190<sup>th</sup> Convention about how the diocese “might best focus its efforts and resources to address the existential threat of climate change in ways that have the most potential to make a difference on this moral issue”. We, Ruth and Tom, are the co-chairs of that Task Force, and we have a request to put before you.

As the Task Force has been working on that report, we’ve realized we’d like to have a better understanding of how climate change is already affecting our broader diocesan community. How has climate change already affected *\*your\** faith community? What actions or commitments might your community already be taking? Are there challenges that your community faces as you’re responding to these changes or enacting your commitments?

We’d like to hear more about these questions, from every congregation in the diocese. Even if your answers tend towards no—you feel you aren’t affected or currently engaging in climate work—we’d still appreciate having your input. Hearing from everyone will help us be much more nuanced in the recommendations we’ll include in our report to Convention.

You can *click here to open and respond to the survey*. We ask that each congregation designate one person to respond to the survey on the community’s behalf—that could be the rector/priest-in-charge, a Warden, or someone else. We’re attaching a copy of the questions for you to review in advance, if that’s helpful.\* In order to answer some questions, you may need to get information from your Vestry/Bishop’s Committee and/or those responsible for maintaining your buildings and grounds, so we’re keeping the survey open for a few weeks.

**Please complete the survey by Saturday, June 29, 2024.**

If you have questions, you can send them to either of us co-chairs, Dr. Ruth Boeder ([rlboeder@gmail.com](mailto:rlboeder@gmail.com)) or Rev. Tom Ferguson ([tomferg3a@gmail.com](mailto:tomferg3a@gmail.com)).

Thank you in advance for your time!

Ruth and Tom

1. Name of Congregation
2. Respondent Name
3. Respondent Role: Who is completing this survey?

- Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-charge
- Other clergy
- Warden(s)
- Vestry member(s)
- Other (please specify)

4. Is it ok if members of the Climate Change Task Force contact you if they have follow-up questions about your responses? If yes, please provide your email address and/or phone number.

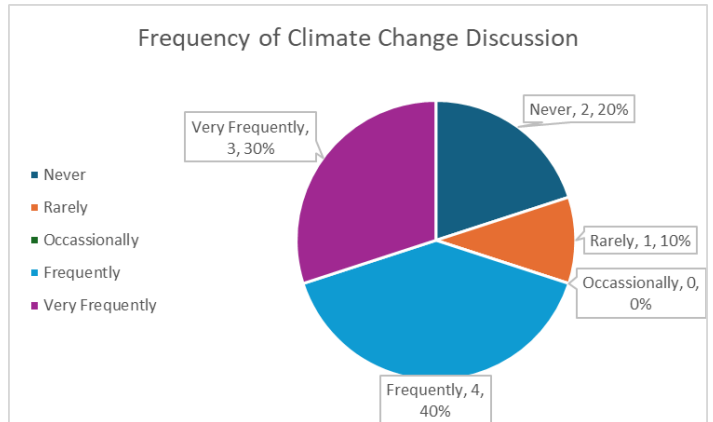
5. Networking

Who are the best contacts in your congregation for climate issues? The Climate Change Task Force would like to be in touch with them, if you have permission to share their names and email addresses.

6. Congregational Awareness

Over the last year at your congregation, how often have climate change concerns been raised in discussions? Include both casual conversations and formal meetings.

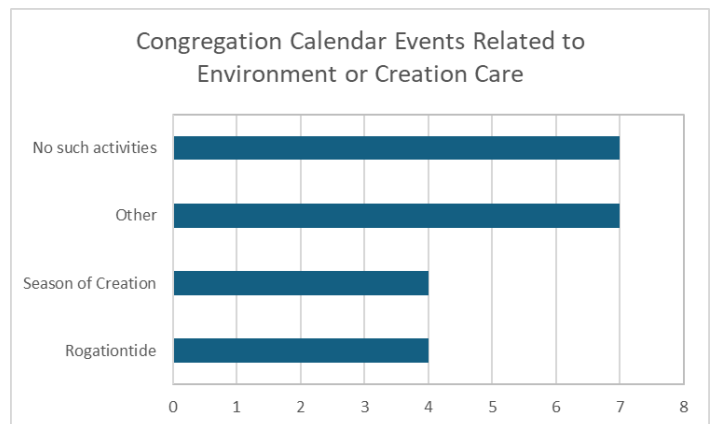
- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Very frequently



7. Liturgical Observation

Does your congregation hold any environment-related or creation care activities around specific points in the calendar? Check all that apply.

- No such activities
- Season of Creation
- Rogationtide
- Other (please describe)





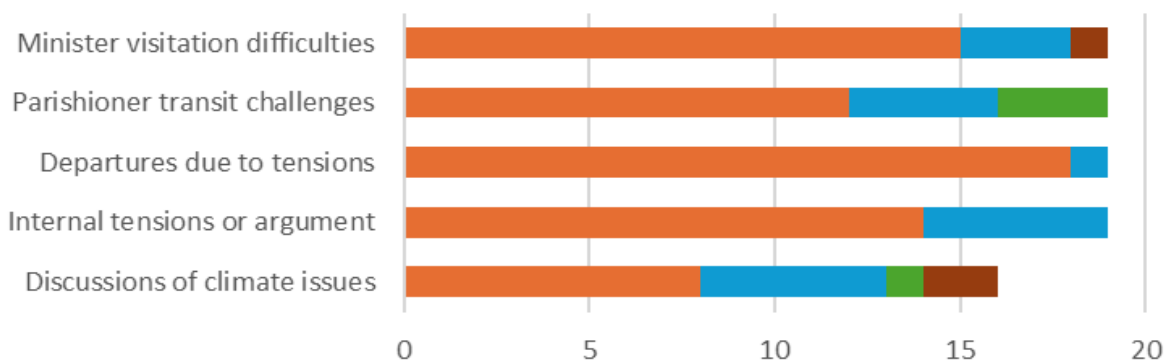
Responses to "Other":

- Earth Day
- Earth Day in April, a Pet/Creation Blessing in October.
- Recycling
- One of our parish goals is focused on Environmental Concerns. Each month we review what we have done to address them.
- We do several creation care activities in our gardens around the weather/seasons but not linked to a specific calendar point
- Native plants educational and service events
- Each year we have environmental education and programming, community garden, composting, Earth day and adult education

8. What impact has climate change had on the people in your congregation since 2010?

A. Internal Difficulties	n/a - No Impact	1 - Small Impact	2 - Moderate Impact	3 - Large Impact	4 - Major Impact
Discussions of climate issues					
Internal tensions or arguments					
Departures due to tensions					
Other					
B. Transportation	n/a - No Impact	1 - Small Impact	2 - Moderate Impact	3 - Large Impact	4 - Major Impact
Parishioner transit challenges					
Minister visitation difficulties					
Other					

## Internal Difficulties Due to Climate Change



	Discussions of climate issues	Internal tensions or argument	Departures due to tensions	Parishioner transit challenges	Minister visitation difficulties
■ n/a - No Impact	8	14	18	12	15
■ 1 - Small Impact	5	5	1	4	3
■ 2 - Moderate Impact	1	0	0	3	0
■ 3 - Large Impact	2	0	0	0	1
■ 4 - Major Impact	0	0	0	0	0

### Responses to "Other":

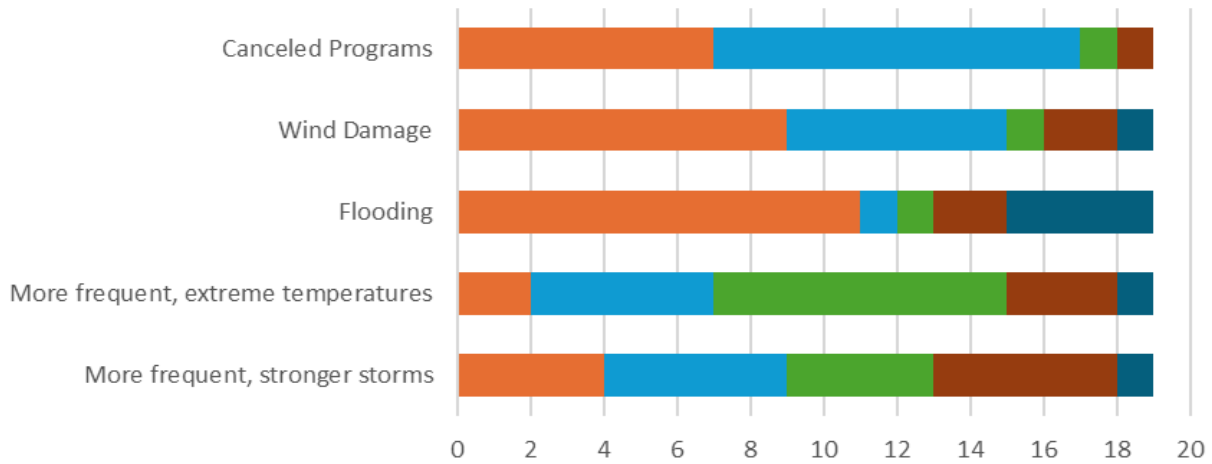
- Certainly our aging congregation is very sensitive to temperature extremes. We have air conditioning in the church itself and one unit in the office. We only run them for church related activities.
- Sticking to spiritual matters not political ones.
- We include prayers for those affected by climate change at every liturgy
- Our main concern is certainly not climate change.
- Some personal home issues with wind, heavy rain, power outages
- We were severely impacted by flooding in June 2021, which prompted a discussion and action to seal the envelop of our buildings in anticipation of more frequent and severe storms in the future.
- Changes in climate patterns affect our ability to hold outdoor events
- Not necessarily a challenge, but related to transportation: We have a number of folks in our congregation who have actively or are looking to change to hybrid or electric vehicles for their transportation.
- No buses on Sunday

## 9. Impact on Facilities and Operations

What impact has climate change had on your facilities and operations since 2010?

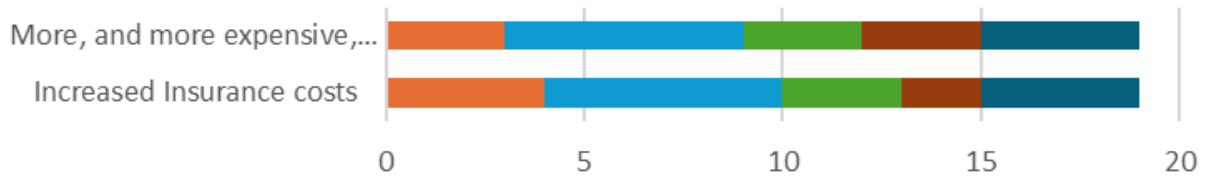
A. Changing Weather	n/a - No Impact	1 - Small Impact	2 - Moderate Impact	3 - Large Impact	4 - Major Impact
More frequent, stronger storms					
More frequent, extreme temperatures					
Flooding					
Wind damage					
Canceled Programs					
Other					
B. Rising Costs	n/a - No Impact	1 - Small Impact	2 - Moderate Impact	3 - Large Impact	4 - Major Impact
Increased insurance costs					
More, and more expensive, maintenance					
Other					
C. Utility Disruptions	n/a - No Impact	1 - Small Impact	2 - Moderate Impact	3 - Large Impact	4 - Major Impact
Electrical outages					
Water outages					
Other					

## Impacts of Weather on Facilities & Operations Since 2010



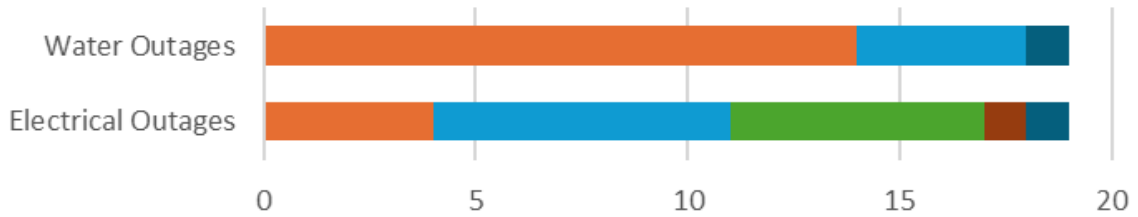
	More frequent, stronger storms	More frequent, extreme temperatures	Flooding	Wind Damage	Canceled Programs
■ n/a - No Impact	4	2	11	9	7
■ 1 - Small Impact	5	5	1	6	10
■ 2 - Moderate Impact	4	8	1	1	1
■ 3 - Large Impact	5	3	2	2	1
■ 4 - Major Impact	1	1	4	1	0

## Impact of Rising Costs on Facilities & Operations Since 2010



	Increased Insurance costs	More, and more expensive, maintenance
■ n/a - No Impact	4	3
■ 1 - Small Impact	6	6
■ 2 - Moderate Impact	3	3
■ 3 - Large Impact	2	3
■ 4 - Major Impact	4	4

## Impact of Utility Disruptions on Facilities & Operations Since 2010



	Electrical Outages	Water Outages
■ n/a - No Impact	4	14
■ 1 - Small Impact	7	4
■ 2 - Moderate Impact	6	0
■ 3 - Large Impact	1	0
■ 4 - Major Impact	1	1

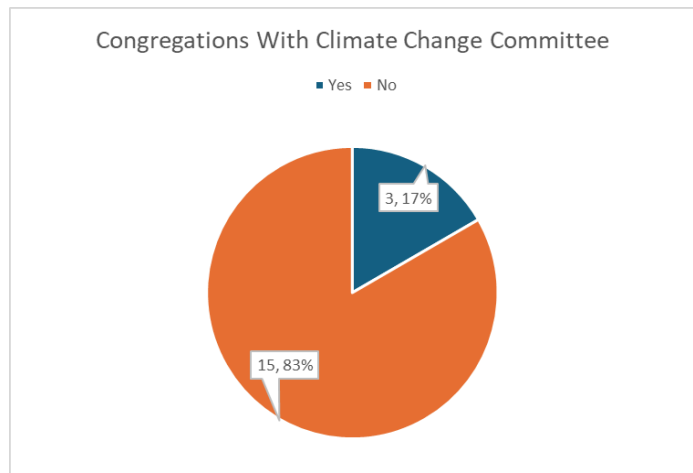
### Responses to "Other":

- No. The weather is Gods [sic] domain.
- We are blessed with an amazing zoom set up so if parishioners are impacted by weather issues they can zoom in
- [We have] been impacted by the fact that DTE is our electrical provider - we have lost power on several Sunday mornings before worship, and throughout the week I have come in at times to find our power out.
- Sewer backups due to torrential rainfalls. Backflow preventers (check valves) have been installed at a cost of \$12K to prevent future events

### 10. Organizational Infrastructure

Does your congregation have a commission, committee, or other group whose focus or charge is climate action?

- Yes  
 No



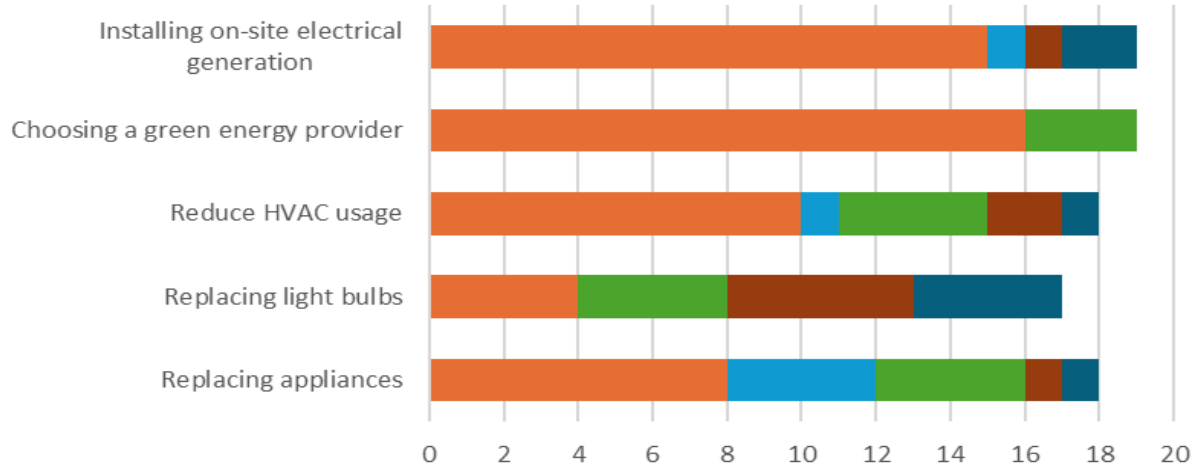
### 11. Congregational Climate Actions

Consider the changes that your congregation has made as a result of climate change. For each category, rate the changes from 1 to 4.

A. Energy Usage	n/a - No Changes	1 - Very Few Changes	2 - A Few Changes	3 - Many Changes	4 - Very Many Changes
Replacing appliances					
Replacing light bulbs					
Reduce HVAC usage					
Choosing a green energy provider					
Installing on-site electrical generation					
Other					
B. Waste Reduction	n/a - No Changes	1 - Very Few Changes	2 - A Few Changes	3 - Many Changes	4 - Very Many Changes
Reducing disposable dishes					
Reducing office paper usage, including shorter bulletins					
Composting					
Gray water usage					
Other					
C. Landscaping	n/a - No Changes	1 - Very Few Changes	2 - A Few Changes	3 - Many Changes	4 - Very Many Changes
Adding rain gardens					
Use of native plants					
Changes to lawn care practices					
Changes to fertilizer and					

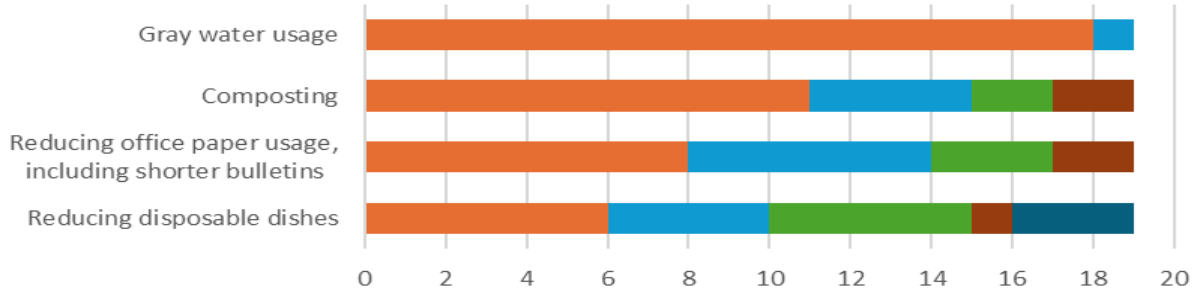
pesticide use					
Improved stormwater management					
Other					
D. Outreach	n/a - No Changes	1 - Very Few Changes	2 - A Few Changes	3 - Many Changes	4 - Very Many Changes
Hosting climate programs					
Reallocating outreach funds					
Organizing climate volunteering					
Public policy advocacy					
Encouraging parishioners to individual change & action					
Other					

## Energy Usage Actions in Response to Climate Change



	Replacing appliances	Replacing light bulbs	Reduce HVAC usage	Choosing a green energy provider	Installing on-site electrical generation
n/a - No Changes	8	4	10	16	15
1 - Very Few Changes	4	0	1	0	1
2 - A Few Changes	4	4	4	3	0
3 - Many Changes	1	5	2	0	1
4 - Very Many Changes	1	4	1	0	2

## Waste Reduction Actions in Response to Climate Change



	Reducing disposable dishes	Reducing office paper usage, including shorter bulletins	Composting	Gray water usage
n/a - No Changes	6	8	11	18
1 - Very Few Changes	4	6	4	1
2 - A Few Changes	5	3	2	0
3 - Many Changes	1	2	2	0
4 - Very Many Changes	3	0	0	0

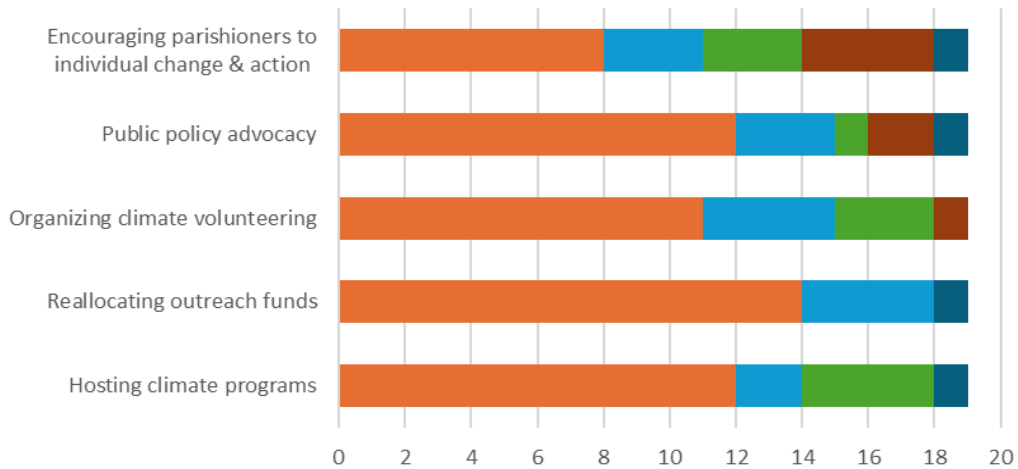


### Landscaping Actions in Response to Climate Change



	Adding rain gardens	Use of native plants	Changes to lawn care practices	Changes to fertilizer and pesticide use	Improved stormwater management
■ n/a - No Changes	13	8	11	14	12
■ 1 - Very Few Changes	1	2	4	1	1
■ 2 - A Few Changes	2	4	3	3	3
■ 3 - Many Changes	1	3	0	0	2
■ 4 - Very Many Changes	2	2	1	1	1

### Outreach Actions in Response to Climate Change



	Hosting climate programs	Reallocating outreach funds	Organizing climate volunteering	Public policy advocacy	Encouraging parishioners to individual change & action
■ n/a - No Changes	12	14	11	12	8
■ 1 - Very Few Changes	2	4	4	3	3
■ 2 - A Few Changes	4	0	3	1	3
■ 3 - Many Changes	0	0	1	2	4
■ 4 - Very Many Changes	1	1	0	1	1

## Responses to "Other":

- A generator is needed but not in our budget.
- We are making gradual 'as needed' changes such as swapping out to energy efficient light bulbs when they need to be changed
- So far parishioners have shared generators when needed
- We have installed solar panels on our roof, and are utilizing our HVAC in more responsible ways.
- Would like the money to install solar.
- We are actively exploring the installation of solar panels, after our roof is replaced this year, but have not done so yet.
- Added a recycling bin for paper and one for plastics/glass/metal that parishioners take turns taking home to recycle in their City/country provided facilities - the church building itself does not have access to these amenities
- We are awesome recyclers. We belong to a great network (B3 which stands for big, bold and bodacious) of ELCA congregations in our county who encourage each other, meet regularly and help congregations provide opportunities for recycling such as styrofoam collection semi regularly, and new initiatives and connect us to environmental education opportunities as they arise in our county. They provide us with bins we set up with collection containers for our Parish Hall and our local library for items not collected by our communities such as batteries and plastic grocery bags. Parishioners take turns signing up to empty the containers and to drive the recycling to a county recycling center. We also have containers set up to sort trash (food, recycling, etc in our kitchen and at our serving tables in the Parish Hall. We feel this also encourages in-home recycling.
- We have made the move to biodegradable plates and cutlery, or real dishes, as well as having a compost bucket in our church kitchen. We are working on reducing paper usage, particularly around our bulletins.
- We did petition the city to have a recycling bin. We were taking recycling to other sites before this. We try very hard to recycle all we can.
- We have pretty much stopped using styrofoam entirely, except for usage by an AA group that meets in our building.
- We have experimented with various weed barriers in our food garden (where we grow produce for the local food pantry) and are now using new raised beds, trellises and we have just created and begun using a composting system
- We are looking to build a rain garden in the northwest corner of our building, as well as re-wilding our lawn. We are also revitalizing the woods on our

property to be turned into nature pathways filled with native plants and trees.

- We put in a native-plants garden more than 10 years ago, but plans for stormwater drainage have progressed slowly. We have a plan, but have had trouble finding a company to install it.
- Installed rainwater collection system for community garden
- God as my advisor.
- In our church food garden we grow produce for our local food pantry. Our church is on a very busy road and the garden is in the front of the church with a banner often installed. When we deliver the produce weekly to the food pantry they know where it came from.
- Our short-lived Green Team included frequent idea swaps, e.g., where can I recycle X or Y

## 12. Next Steps

### A. What is your congregation planning to do next regarding climate change?

- No plans currently.
- Follow God's lead.
- Policy advocacy at state level
- Increase our participation with the 2030 District.
- Maybe changing fluorescent bulbs to LED
- Continue crochet for a cause ministry (plastic mats for unhoused locally and in world)
- Use washable tableware instead of single use plastic, recycling paper
- We are in the process of renovating our basement to make it more energy-efficient and resistant to flooding. We also recently had two EV chargers installed in our parking lot and are about to begin opening them to the wider community.
- No current plans
- Early this past spring we took advantage of two blessings - a new experienced & engaged Buildings & Grounds Ministry team leader, and a growing congregation including new members who are knowledgeable, generous and excited about the possibilities of our awesome grounds - and we had a Grounds Meeting that all the congregation was invited to. Leadership and accountability was determined and shared with the

congregation. We exploded with ideas and are beginning to consider them and implemented some already.

- To answer this survey, we assembled a climate change task force from the leadership of our various ministries that deal with climate and environmental related issues. We agreed to continue meeting to discuss things this survey brought up for us and encouraged us to pursue. We aim to create a proposal for our priest when she returns from sabbatical in mid September.
- Continue to be active in the Line 5 Pipeline work, turning the small residential house on our property into either a short-term housing space or parsonage using greener power options, and continue to be active in the Ann Arbor for Public Power initiative, and in other efforts both locally and statewide.
- Climate Change and Creation Care are one of the priorities identified by our Social Justice Ministries for the coming year.
- We have upgraded to LED light, newer more efficient furnace, new double paned windows with solar blinds, new stove, new dish machine, new low flow toilets, new programmable thermostats and setting temperature's up/down a couple degrees. All these items have helped to reduce our gas/electric bills.
- need to develop a committee, encourage discussion and hopefully engage in programs to decrease our carbon footprint
- 1. We hope to install solar panels, but aren't yet at the bidding stage. 2. As noted, we have a plan for stormwater remediation, but haven't been able to implement it yet. 3. A kitchen renovation over the next 12 months offers an opportunity to switch to Energy-Star appliances.
- As part of a larger creation care advocacy and outreach, we plan to continue raising awareness of practices we can take in our own homes to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure environmental sustainability through adult formation, children/youth programming, and liturgy.
- Environmentally safe; reduce lawn size in favor of native plants
- Replace natural gas heater, windows, and doors, possibly hot water heaters. Convert fluorescent lights to LEDs. Begin climate-focused column in newsletter

B. What would your congregation like to do next, but hasn't been able to?

- Install a generator.
- Nothing.
- Understand specific action steps
- Hold a climate change information summit.
- Set aside transition issues/rector search to focus on this.
- Nothing at this time
- Replace incandescent bulbs with lower energy bulbs.
- We would like to install an HVAC system in our basement that would allow for us to have air conditioning, but we were not able to include this in our renovations because it was too expensive.
- N/A
- More of the above—we are just getting started!
- The biggest challenge for us is humanpower: we have so many causes we are involved with and would like to engage with in the future, but the challenge has been not having enough volunteers to do so. We've had to choose where and when we will focus our energies.
- We're just beginning to explore this topic seriously.
- We would like to 1) replace single pane windows in Parish Hall and basement. 2) Solar panels on roof of Parish Hall to produce our own electricity and save on electric. Both these projects would need a lot more funding to do.
- Have not yet involved congregation in discussion.
- Stormwater remediation.
- As we continue working on building improvements, we are prioritizing ways to make our building more environmentally friendly such as considering permeable parking lot and improve parking lot runoff.
- Heat pumps and solar panels
- [We are] in an information-gathering stage in some of the projects listed above, i.e., those that are in process. Part of the issue is the extreme amount of sexton and volunteer labor that is needed to accomplish the work (such as installing the LED conversion kits). Even the work of meeting with contractors and putting together a plan of action is time-consuming

C. How might the diocese be helpful in your congregation's climate action efforts?

- Grants
- Stick to spiritual guidance not politics.
- Outlining action plan
- It would help if you could provide funding resources available.
- Leadership regarding resources, joint collaborations between all parishes, etc. Wasteful for each congregation to have to reinvent the wheel.
- N/A
- Offer model curriculum for climate change education series. Provide suggestions or diocese wide program focussed on climate change that our community could participate in
- If we were to do something major like using solar panels, grant funding might be needed.
- Continue connecting us to resources/programming on creation care and climate justice, specifically through an Indigenous lens. And offer financial support if possible for our ongoing building renovation efforts.
- Unknown
- Including us in your reporting process with this survey has been helpful! Thank you! Also we would appreciate hearing about: \*What other congregations are doing \*any potential grants from the diocese towards environmental action. We look forward to hearing the results of your report at convention!
- Grants - such as the one we received for renovations on our small house - have been incredibly helpful to our community. Continuing to provide such financial resources, alongside providing theological/spiritual practices and interpretations for thinking about creation and stewardship, would be helpful.
- Nothing immediately comes to mind.
- Not sure if they could fund any or all the dioceses need.
- Will not know until we try.
- If EDOMI could add information about nonprofits and churches installing and paying for solar to its website, that would be a useful and trusted reference site for parishioners and Vestry members, easing the burden on the Vestry, Buildings & Grounds Committee, and others to spread awareness ahead of congregational action.

- Providing educational programs and grants to make our buildings more environmentally friendly.
- Grants and expertise for heat pumps, solar panels. Storm water retention/ rain garden, to help churches install the right systems. Reduce paved surfaces
- Many of the projects described that are yet to be completed are well beyond the property commissions' budget. The ability to apply for grant money from the Diocese for climate change projects would be greatly appreciated to accelerate these efforts. If the Diocese had a person that is knowledgeable about or could research state or federal grant opportunities that our congregation could apply for, that would be helpful. Even more helpful would be to have someone who has grant writing experience to advise and consult with our congregation so that we have a better chance of being successful.