

Horizon's Gathering

The Rock: Environmental Stewardship

Background:

Our responsibility to God's creation and to all of its creatures is grounded in scripture. **We acknowledge God as creator:** "In the beginning, when God created the heaven and earth--" (GN 1:1), and "He (Jesus) was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him --What has come into being in him was life." (JN 1: 2-3). "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." (Ps 24:1) **We acknowledge the goodness of creation,** "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (GN 1: 31) **We acknowledge that we have damaged creation** and that the resulting environmental problems hurt people, particularly the poor and most vulnerable of our neighbors, breaking the covenant to love God and our neighbor.

Bishop Sutton has stated his desire to be known as the "Green Bishop" and in his initial address to Diocesan Convention noted, "--we have a commitment to addressing important societal issues, such as racial justice and the environmental crisis, in light of the gospel of reconciliation through Christ." With the establishment of the Environmental Steering Committee and the development of the Maryland Episcopal Environmental Network, he has focused the Diocese on the following **Vision:** Caring for creation is core to our spiritual vocation. As stewards of creation, we must live a life that sustains our environment and in turn allows all of us to live healthy and just lives through sharing and protecting the earth's resources for everyone.

Proposal:

The Environmental Steering Committee strongly encourages the Horizon Gathering to identify Environmental Stewardship as one of the Five Rocks and that the Diocese embrace the following **Goal: To reduce energy usage in the Diocese 20% from 2009 levels by 2015.**

Discussion:

It is estimated that over one-half of all energy is used to power our buildings. Reducing energy consumption helps reduce pollutants discharged into our air and water and is a major consideration in improving the overall environment. By focusing on the issue and adopting, energy saving methods, parishes will both reduce their environmental footprint and reduce expenses over the longer term. Further, by focusing on implementing environmental best practices, there will be an opportunity to educate youth and adults, create a network for parish and Diocesan environmental efforts, and provide an opportunity to reach out to the community beyond our doors.