

Environmental Policy for Churches in the Diocese of Algoma

“The earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.” (Ps 24:1 NRSV)

We affirm the essential goodness of all creation as the gift of God’s love, held in being moment to moment by the love of Christ (Gen 1-2:4; John 1:1-14; Col 1). We affirm that human beings are created in God’s image and called to “have dominion” over the environment in which God has placed them (Gen 1:26-27; Gen 2:5 ff.). Responsible co-creation and governing of our environment is part of our vocation not simply as Christians, but as human beings. As a result of the Fall, however, our relationships have been disrupted—our relationship to God is now defined by fear, to our fellow humans by rivalry, and to the land as one of enmity (Gen 3). With respect to our environmental responsibility, we recognize that we will always engage in attempts to use and control our environment, even as we sadly acknowledge that the results of such control will always be ambiguous, producing great benefits to our fellow humans and to our world, and also inflicting great harm. The Gospel of Jesus announces God’s care for the whole creation, and speaks of salvation not as the rescue from creation, but the restoration of creation to its original intent, namely, to be a fit dwelling for God and God’s people (Is 65:17-25; Rom 8:18-25). As a disciple of Jesus, in whom human destiny is fulfilled (Ps 8; Heb 2:5-18), we commit ourselves to responsible care for creation, seeking actions that minimize harm and maximize benefit to the land and water and to all life. Recognizing that the final renewal of creation is a gift of God yet to be fully realized, we will strive in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses to that final renewal in our daily lives.

Guided by our Baptismal Covenant and the Fifth Mark of Mission from the Anglican Communion, and in response to the goals of our 2009-2014 Strategic Plan (6.4), the Social Justice and Mission committee recommends the adoption of the following policy on Environmental Stewardship. The policy engages parishes in the areas of worship, education and programming.

Worship: On a regular basis, through liturgy, prayers and music, our congregations will celebrate the creation which the Creator has entrusted to our care.

Education: Through educational and advocacy programs, our congregations will become knowledgeable about the latest environmental and technological challenges and issues that impact creation positively and/or negatively.

Programming: Parishes will adopt and integrate environmental approaches and activities based on the philosophy and practices of reduce, reuse and recycle. Through responsible lifestyle choices and energy efficient actions, parishes will make decisions that will have a positive impact on their ecological footprint.

Some examples may include: composting, the use of earth-friendly cleaning products, low maintenance landscaping, encouraging sustainable transportation, and the banning of plastic water bottles. For ideas on programs and activities parishes can refer to web sites such as: PWRDF (<http://www.pwrdf.org>), Green Church (<http://www.greenchurch.ca>), Kairos (<http://www.kairoscanada.org>), Faith and the Common Good (<http://www.greeningsacredspaces.net>).