

**Report by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care  
Diocesan Convention, November 2018**

I have served our diocese as Missioner for Creation Care for nearly five years. The position went ecumenical a couple of years ago, when I also began serving in this role for the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. This ministry takes me across and beyond Massachusetts as I write, speak, preach, lead retreats, and advocate about our urgent call to protect God's Creation. I seek to build networks and coalitions as I reach out to Episcopalians and other Christians, to people of different faiths, and to people with no religious affiliation.

Some of my work has been international. Last October I traveled to British Columbia to preach about climate change in Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, and to lead a clergy retreat for the Diocese of New Westminster about our Gospel call to address the climate crisis.

Last June I accepted an invitation to participate in an international ecological symposium, "A Green Attica for a Sustainable Environment: Preserving the Planet and Protecting Its People," jointly sponsored by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Region of Attica. I traveled to Athens, Greece to participate in this inter-religious, inter-disciplinary symposium hosted by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Last September I returned to the Pacific Northwest and made a mission trip down the West coast, preaching and leading a retreat in Vancouver, preaching in Seattle, and attending a Multi-Faith Service of Wondering and Commitment that was held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. While in San Francisco I also led and attended faith-based workshops affiliated with the 3-day Global Climate Action Summit. The workshops I attended focused on topics ranging from "Living the Change" (a new interfaith climate initiative by GreenFaith) to climate geo-engineering.

- Preached in the diocese and beyond

This year I preached about Creation care at First Congregational Church, Great Barrington, MA; Grace-St. Paul's, Tucson, AZ; St. Andrew's, Longmeadow, MA (for the Greater Springfield Ecumenical Easter Vigil service); Federated Church of Orleans, Orleans, MA; Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, B.C.; Trinity Episcopal Parish, Seattle, WA; and First Parish, Lincoln, MA.

- Wrote blog posts and published articles

I posted essays on my Website, [RevivingCreation.org](http://RevivingCreation.org), about risking arrest for climate justice; the 2018 Pioneer Valley Women's March; a new coalition, sponsored by Cardinal Sean O'Malley, bringing together scientists and faith leaders on climate; Jim Antal, climate hero; carbon pricing as a spiritual and ethical imperative; "The week that was: world religious leaders confront climate disruption"; "Exodus from Fossil Fuel: An Interfaith Witness for Climate Action"; and how to organize an interfaith environmental action.

You can subscribe to blog posts at [RevivingCreation.org](http://RevivingCreation.org).

The Boston Globe published my LTE, “Trump is spitting in God’s face by slashing national monuments.” MetroWest Daily News published an opinion piece on carbon pricing that I co-wrote with Rabbi Katy Allen; the piece was later circulated among MA State Representatives. The Daily Hampshire Gazette published my article: “Women’s March lesson is all of us or none of us.” Episcopal News Service published two articles: “In new coalition of religious leaders and scientists, Massachusetts bishops declare climate change an emergency,” and “Episcopalians, world religious leaders confront climate disruption.” I was quoted extensively in “Responding to Small Island States Imperiled by Human-Forced Climate Change: An Ethical Imperative for Christians,” by Jame Schaefer, *Anglican Theological Review* (Winter 2018). I contributed an essay to “The Episcopal Church – standing up to climate change denial?” by Margaret Daly Denton, *Search: A Church of Ireland Journal* (Spring 2018).

- Featured in videos

I am part of a short documentary about faith, climate justice, and civil disobedience, “The Tide is Rising” (<https://vimeo.com/245119326?ref=fb-share&1>). I am also part of a professionally-made, short documentary about the interfaith witness, Exodus from Fossil Fuels (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUEwG4f8xdQ&feature=youtu.be>). I recorded a couple of short videos for the Diocese of WMA.

- Continued to develop Creation care across the diocese

“Creation Care Network” e-News is sent out every month, listing opportunities to learn, pray, act and advocate for Earth (to subscribe, sign up on the Creation care page of our diocesan Website). (The monthly newsletter is read beyond the diocese – MACUCC put a link on its environmental justice page and invited its environmental justice folks to subscribe.)

The diocese is celebrating its fifth annual Season of Creation, with substantive materials on our [Creation Season Website](#). To align the diocese with the millions of Christians who celebrate Creation Season worldwide, we changed the date this year to September 1-October 4.

I am excited about the effort to create Bishop’s Connectors in three corridors of the diocese, and am helping to recruit climate champions.

I am delighted that last year our climate resolution, “We Are Still In,” was passed enthusiastically at our diocesan convention. I helped to edit and I am eager to support the resolution that will be debated at this year’s diocesan convention, “Creation Care in our Congregations: Living Lightly on God’s Good Earth.”

- Led retreats and workshops, spoke at events and on panels

At Rolling Ridge Retreat & Conference Center, North Andover, I led an evening retreat for leaders of the ABC (American Baptist Church) Creation Justice Network, and an all-day ecumenical retreat, “Making the Connection: Christianity and Environmental Justice.” I later returned to Rolling Ridge for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Conference, moderating a panel of interfaith speakers on Creation care, and leading two workshops on interfaith environmental action.

I led an evening retreat, “Earth Stewardship: Healing Earth, Healing Ourselves,” for Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership, and conducted a 3-day retreat,

“Contemplative Ecology: Landscapes of the Soul,” at Rivendell Retreat Centre, Bowen Island, B.C.

I was the guest speaker at an Interfaith Lunch at Mount Holyoke College, at an ION (Interfaith Opportunities Network) meeting in Amherst, and at a public gathering at Applewood, an independent living community in Amherst. I was the keynote speaker for an interfaith conference held on Cape Cod, “Caring for the Earth: Human Calling, Urgent Task,” and the keynote speaker at an Interfaith Breakfast at Westfield State University. I spoke on a panel at WSU about carbon pricing. I spoke on a panel with Karenna Gore and Dean Kelly Brown Douglas in a Facebook Live response from Episcopal Divinity School at Union to General Convention’s Joint Session on Creation Care. I spoke on a panel at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, on “The Role of Religion in Addressing Global Climate Change” with Richard Miller (Creighton University) and Meighen Speiser (Eco-America).

- Worked on a book, *Rooted and Rising*

With my colleague, the Rev. Leah Schade, I am editing an anthology of essays by faith-based climate activists, *Rooted and Rising: Voices of Hope in a Time of Climate Change*. This year we recruited 16 authors, began receiving and editing essays, wrote an Introduction, submitted a book proposal, developed a marketing plan, and negotiated with publishing houses. Rowman & Littlefield accepted our book proposal and plans to publish the anthology in January 2020, in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.

- Engaged in interfaith public witness

#StandUpCharlie: The Diocese of MA accepted my invitation to participate in this effort to persuade Governor Baker to release an executive order to ban new fossil fuel infrastructure in the Commonwealth. I joined some 300 people at the Boston Statehouse for a rally and sit-in last November. Twenty-six of us (including 5 Episcopalians and then-MACUCC-President, Rev. Dr. Jim Antal) refused to leave the Statehouse after the building closed. We were charged with trespassing and rioting/unlawful assembly; the charges were later dropped.

Exodus from Fossil Fuels: I was part of a team of six (2 Baptists, 2 Rabbi’s, 1 Quaker, 1 Episcopalian) who were lead organizers of a Holy Week/Eve of Passover interfaith action of prayerful witness in downtown Boston. I helped compose a letter to Governor Baker from 18 faith leaders (including Bishop Doug Fisher), requesting a meeting to discuss the governor’s energy policy. On Monday in Holy Week, I helped to lead a service for about 200 people who gathered on the steps of the MA Statehouse to sing, preach, and pray about climate change; we processed inside, spoke to aides of the Governor, wrote postcards to the Governor, and lobbied our representatives.

I sent the liturgy of repudiating and burning the Doctrine of Discovery, a service that I helped to write and lead at Agape Community in October 2017 in the presence of Native American leaders, to a Christian community in British Columbia that hopes to carry out a similar service.

I also participated in a gun safety rally in front of Smith & Wesson, Springfield, and in “March for Our Lives,” held in Northampton. I joined other clergy in assembling at Cooley Dickinson Hospital to help protect an undocumented immigrant during his trip from hospital back to First Church, Amherst.

- Advocated through Social Justice Commission

Our diocesan Social Justice Commission signed a letter urging environmental justice legislation in Massachusetts; signed a letter addressed to leadership of the State House in Massachusetts, urging passage of a strong clean energy bill; wrote a letter to Springfield's Mayor Sarno, urging him to hire a full-time Sustainability Coordinator; co-sponsored a forum to stop expansion of local pipelines; and signed a letter by Columbia Gas Resistance Campaign regarding the pipeline explosions in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence.

- Partnered and explored coalitions

Faith and science: Led by Cardinal Sean O'Malley, the Archdiocese of Boston convened an unusual meeting of faith leaders and scientists to discuss forming a coalition around climate. Dr. Philip Duffy, President of Woods Hole Research Center, was one of the speakers. I gave a presentation on the status of the interfaith climate movement in Massachusetts. A few months later the coalition released a "Faith & Science Joint Appeal for Climate Action," which I invited all our diocesan clergy to sign. I joined Bishop Doug Fisher, Bishop Alan Gates, and other faith leaders at the press conference announcing release of this emergency appeal.

Met with stakeholders to discuss how the diocese might develop its organizational base for carrying out our mission around Creation care by partnering with "Light Up the Map," Mothers Out Front, Ener-G-Save, and Resonant Energy. Met with the Executive Director of Sierra Club in MA and others to discuss Sierra Club Peer Outreach and the possibility of training faith leaders to organize around climate action. Met with Steve Abdow to discuss possibly hiring a Creation care "mentor" for the diocese.

Thank you, friends, for joining me in our shared mission to follow Jesus and seek reconciliation between humanity, God, and the whole of God's Creation.

-- Submitted by (the Rev. Dr.) Margaret Bullitt-Jonas ([mbj@revivingcreation.org](mailto:mbj@revivingcreation.org))