

Report by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care Diocesan Convention, November 2022

This was an energetic year, full of opportunities to convey God's boundless love for our precious, ailing Earth community. I am grateful for the heightened awareness and activism regarding climate justice that I perceive not only in our own diocese but also in other dioceses across the Episcopal Church.

Good news: the two dioceses in MA agreed to fund a short-term project manager/webmaster to shepherd "**An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice**," beginning on October 1, 2022. Please join me in welcoming the **Rev. John Elliott Lein**, a priest in our Diocese, as the new Project Manager. "An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice" is a four-level program to help congregations amplify and accelerate their response to the climate emergency. We dream that eventually this project will be widely used not only by Episcopal parishes in MA but also across Province One and perhaps in the wider Church, as well. We can't wait to get it launched!

I continue to meet monthly with a small team of advisors (**Creation Care Leadership Circle**) to brainstorm and pray. Its members presently include Ms. Edith Allison, Rev. Heather Blais, Rev. Michael Hamilton, Rev. John Elliott Lein, Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley, Rev. Dave Woessner, and Rev. Anna Woofenden. This summer many of us spent a glorious day together in person in Ashfield, gathering to pray, walk the land, and share a meal.

We celebrated our diocese's ninth annual **Season of Creation** (September 1-October 4). Resources are posted on our [Creation Season Website](#) to help us learn, pray, act, and advocate. These materials are updated periodically and are available year-round, so please use them anytime!

Members of the Creation Care Leadership Circle – especially Rev. John Elliott Lein – were key to developing a [new ecumenical liturgical resource for Season of Creation](#) that was endorsed by the Episcopal bishops in MA and by bishops in several other dioceses. It is now available on multiple sites, from SeasonofCreation.org and [Anglican Communion Environmental Network](#) (as one of only three offerings from Episcopal/Anglican sources) to Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology and ecoAmerica/Blessed Tomorrow websites. The Rev. Vicki Ix also sent out an ENS press release, which reached people across TEC.

The Creation Care Leadership Circle also helped to assemble **Daily Lenten Meditations** (text and photos) that focused on the beauty and integrity of the natural world and our Christian calling to protect it. The material was beautifully assembled by Ali Gamache and proved to be surprisingly popular. We hope to create another Lenten series in 2023.

Some other highlights of the year (unless otherwise noted, all events were held online):

• Collaborating with Diocese of MA

My second year of encouraging Creation care in DioMA focused on working with a small group in Creation Care Justice Network (CCJN) to develop An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice. I helped to plan the annual CCJN retreat, assist with producing CCJN's newsletter (Green Justice News), and update CCJN website and resource materials.

• **Retreats**

Three-day, in person educational retreat on climate emergency for Society of St. John the Evangelist community

Quarterly contemplative retreats sponsored by the two Episcopal dioceses in MA and by Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ (SNEUCC): “Make your home in me as I make mine in you” (Advent) “Reconciliation: Putting a Burden Down” (Lent); “Take heart, it is I” (Creation Season)

Retreat (“Rooted and Rising in Love”), all day, in person, at Rolling Ridge Retreat & Conference Center, for both Episcopal dioceses in MA

Conference (2022 Conference for Creation Care, “Taking Heart in Troubled Times: From Prayer to Action”) for Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island – helped to plan and lead this in person event
Retreat (“Rooted and Rising in Love: Fall Clergy Day”), all day, in person, for Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Retreat for early career faith leaders involved in climate action (“Spiritual Ecology for Spiritual Leaders”), all day, in person, sponsored by The BTS Center, Portland, Maine – one of the elder speakers for this intergenerational, multifaith retreat

• **Preaching**

Record sermon for Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, Texas

Preach and lead an in person forum at Immanuel Congregational Church, UCC (Hartford, CT), and at Christ Church (Greenwich, CT); preach in person at St. Paul’s, Holyoke

Record Easter 2C/Earth Sunday sermon for two Episcopal dioceses in MA and SNEUCC

Provide Easter 4C sermon for Sustainable Preaching website (now succeeded by PreachingforGod’sWorld.org)

• **Speaking and teaching**

One of four online panelists (with John Becker, Stephanie Kaza and Xiumei Pu) at “Buddhist-Christian Responses to Ecological Catastrophe and Climate Change,” an event sponsored by The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, preceding Annual Meeting of American Academy of Religion

Co-lead with Rev. Jim Antal two recorded online conversations about climate crisis preaching (“Preaching Hope in a Climate Emergency” and “Preaching Climate Justice”) for both Episcopal dioceses in MA and SNEUCC

Record a “Let’s Talk Climate” webcast about Season of Creation for ecoAmerica’s Blessed Tomorrow

“Reframing the idea of dominion: What is Creation care?,” concluding speaker in a 6-week series hosted by Creation Care ministry of Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

Faith Forum (online) for Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, hosted by St. Paul’s Cathedral

Keynote address online (“The joy in climate justice: How we pray, learn, act, and advocate for God’s Creation”) for Province One ECW’s Annual Meeting

Record “A Body Prayer for Peace” for opening session of National Faith and Climate Forum, American Climate Leadership Summit 2022

Keynote speaker for Creation Justice Ministries’ webinar, “Preaching Resilience: Cultivating Climate Justice from the Pulpit”

• **Publishing**

A piece for *The Creation Care Bible Challenge*, ed. Marek P. Zabriskie (Forward Movement) Sermon in the new anthology, *Thirsty, and You Gave Me Drink: Homilies and Reflections for Cycle C*, ed. Jim Knipper (Clear Faith Publishing)

To be published shortly:

“Spiritual Practice and Sacred Activism in a Climate Emergency” in the journal, *Society of Buddhist-Christian Studies*

• Blog posts

[“Fasting in solidarity with Sunrise hunger strikers”](#)

[“Preaching Resilience: Cultivating Climate Justice from the Pulpit”](#)

[“A Body Prayer for Peace”](#)

[“No new pipelines: climate justice is God’s justice”](#)

[“Celebrating God’s oceans”](#)

[“2022 Season of Creation worship resources”](#) (this became the lead story in a Province One newsletter)

[“Preaching Climate Justice: A Conversation with Jim Antal and Margaret Bullitt-Jonas”](#)

• Social Justice Commission

“Bending Toward Justice”: led two breakout groups on Creation care for our second annual diocesan social justice conference

Signed various eco-justice petitions, including letters urging rejection of Governor Baker’s biomass amendment to the climate bill; endorsing human rights to utilities; urging world leaders to accelerate the just, renewable energy future and close the fossil fuel era; urging phaseout of oil and gas production on public lands and waters to near zero by 2035; advocating for electrifying MA; urging House and Senate to increase funding for endangered species conservation, etc.

• Public advocacy

With Edie Allison, joined a banner drop at the Mount Tom overpass above I-91 to protest Line 3, the controversial pipeline crossing Native lands and waters in Minnesota

Spoke at a Northampton City Hall rally to support Sunrise Movement and the push to pass Build Back Better

Took a 4-week online course on community organizing around climate action, “Be the Spark,” through Mass. Interfaith Power & Light

Invited 28 congregations to co-sponsor **Rally to Stop the Springfield-Longmeadow Eversource Pipeline**; registered the event with Sacred Season for Climate Justice; planned to speak at the rally at Federal Courthouse, Springfield, but was interrupted by a thunderstorm! Co-sponsors included All Saints (Worcester), Christ Church Cathedral (Springfield), Grace Church (Southern Berkshires), Grace Church (Amherst), St. John’s (Northampton), St. Mark’s (East Longmeadow), plus the Social Justice Commission. The Rev. Sandi Albon, Rev. Tina Rathbone, and Rev. Tom Synan joined the rally. Thank you all!

Faiths4ClimateJustice, Greenfaith’s global multifaith campaign to organize faith-led events that pray and push for climate justice: In 2021, five congregations from DioWMA participated; in 2022, we hope for more. As I write this, I’m planning multifaith prayer vigils in in Springfield and Northampton, led by six Christian, Muslim, and Jewish women leaders in the Connecticut River Valley, to protest Bank of America’s funding of fossil fuel projects. Bishop

Doug plans to give a closing prayer at the one in Northampton. Thank you, +Doug, for your ongoing support of Creation justice.

• **Other affiliations and connections**

Bread for the World: accept invitation to join the Host Committee of *A Faithful Voice on Hunger and Climate*, an initiative to address climate change and hunger in Africa; help to draft an ecumenical faith statement

The BTS Center: accept invitation to be an Adaptive Mind Fellow in a yearlong project with BTS staff, led by Susanne Moser, to develop skills and perspectives to deal with chronic, traumatic social and ecological change

Creation Justice Ministries: with a group of faith leaders, meet with NOAA Administrator Dr. Rick Spinrad to advocate for protection of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

World Resources Institute project, Faith and Sustainability: DioWMA is one of 8 dioceses selected for this pending project

Blessed Tomorrow: meet quarterly with Leadership Circle Executive Committee; meet with small group to discuss how to provide spiritual support to climate activists of all faiths, especially those on the front lines

ThirdAct.org: join new activist network for people over 60, dedicated to stability of democracy and stability of physical world (= climate), attend meetings of faith working group and plenary sessions led by Bill McKibben

Respond to inquiries from several people starting ministries similar to mine (Missioner for Creation Care, Episcopal Diocese of Missouri; Missioner for Environmental Justice and Creation Care Community, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island; Pastor for Creation Care, New England Synod); support person in Diocese of South Dakota developing diocesan Creation care webpage; meet with Creation Care Committee of Diocese of Missouri as they draft an announcement of climate emergency for Bishop Deon Johnson, based on the one we created in MA, and edit their Clergy Petition, urging divestment from Citi, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase (the top 4 banks funding fossil fuels)

• Please join the conversation on our Facebook page, [Creation Care](#).

• To view more than 100 sermons about Creation care, plus articles, books, blog posts, media, schedule, etc., please visit my Website, [RevivingCreation.org](#).

• As always, I hope you'll stay in touch. Please subscribe to my newsletter, "**Creation Care Network**" e-News, which is released on the first of every month. You can sign up on the [Creation care page of our diocesan website](#). I also hope you will [sign up to join CCJN, Creation Care Justice Network](#), which originated in Diocese of MA and now welcomes folks in the Diocese of Western MA. Let's bring together the gifts and passions of our two dioceses and see what we can create!

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