

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND CREATION CARE COMMUNITY



ABOVE: "Fight for Earth" Day Rogation Procession moves through the Cathedral grounds, May 3, 2025. Photo: Jennifer Uihlien, Girl in a Camera Productions

IN THIS ISSUE:

MESSAGE FROM THE MISSIONER – PG. 1
RESOURCES FOR PENTECOST/SUMMER – PG. 1
CRUNCHED BY NUMBERS – PG. 2
FOAM FREE FLOWERS – PG. 3
REWILDING OUR SPACES – PG. 4
LOOKING AHEAD – PG. 5
FIGHTING FOR EARTH – PG. 5

Resources for this Pentecost/Summer



BY THE REV. MARK GENSZLER
AND THE REV. MAXINE BARNETT



In many of our urban and suburban communities, summer is a season for relaxed reengagement with projects. The long green, growing season of 'ordinary time' after Pentecost is our liturgical work of relearning how to be the Church, the Body of Christ in the world, and all our work is '...begin, continued, and ended' in the One making all things new.

It can be a time for children's camps and activities, garden cultivation -- or planning for next year's gardens or tree-planting inspired by seeing things growing all around us this summer!

It can be a time for planning how and when a transformative observance of the September's 'Season of Creation' would take place. Put that July meeting on the calendar to make plans for September work!

Here are some resources!

If using the summer for program-year planning, here are some ways to give an [eco-theo framework to year-round work](#).

Looking for [children's summer activities](#), even [curricula for day camps](#)? Bring an awareness of our budding humanity being part of God's wide, wide ecosystem - and [build in 'care for the earth'](#) as a vulnerable creature, and our care as a primary act of mercy and seeking of right-relationship and restoration.

And, why not peer into God's future -- or, at least as far as September's 'Season of Creation'? Our bishop encourages us to craft liturgies that turn our awareness to our shared home, here on the earth, 'the most vulnerable of the creatures of God.'

The Episcopal Church's ['Creation Care' section](#) on the Church's main web site is an excellent place to begin -- whether to educate yourself, or to follow links to specific resources for liturgy, intergenerational activities, or advocacy (local and international).



Message from the Missioner for Environmental Justice

THE REV. MATTHEW MOORE

Dear Friends,

On Pentecost Sunday, the long festival of Easter comes to a fitting end with an abrupt shift from white to red and, in many congregations, the descent of the Holy Spirit proclaimed in a joyous multilingual cacophony.

The predictability of our liturgical calendar--the long celebration of Easter followed by the excitement of Pentecost--obscures what must have been the very different reality of the first fifty days that began with the discovery of the empty tomb.

For the first generation of Christians those fifty days were at first a time of disorientation and disbelief, giving way only gradually, as their spiritual sight adjusted to the light of resurrection, and they learned to recognize the crucified and risen one in their midst.

(continued on pg. 2)

To subscribe to this newsletter, email us at:
creationcare@dioceseli.org

(continued on pg. 2)

Message from the Missioner *(continued)*

The joy of having Jesus back with them must have been tempered by the difficulty of understanding all he had to teach them, and just when they thought he was about realize their stubborn messianic fantasies (Acts 1:6) off he went to take his seat at God's right hand, with a final command to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The widespread tendency to give the Feast of Ascension no more than a cursory liturgical nod has the unfortunate consequence of blinding us to the confusion that first Christians must have felt as they waited for the realization of a promise they can't have fully understood.

But wait they did, and not passively. They prayed together and took a decisive step toward healing the wound in their fellowship that had been opened up by betrayal and death of Judas. They may not have known exactly what was in store for them, but they knew that their Lord had not abandoned them, and they had work to do. They couldn't foresee even half of that work would involve, but that didn't stop them from attending to the tasks at hand, including the election of a new twelfth apostle.

When the Holy Spirit did come, a long and still unfinished history began. For us the bright red of Pentecost gives way to the green of the long season that mirrors the long history of redemption. Like the first Christians, we come to this Pentecost with a profound sense of disorientation, as our political and social order seems to be unraveling before our eyes. And when red has been traded in for green, there will be the long season of doing the work God has given us to do.

The magnitude of the challenges that face us, in particular the challenges that face those of us who care deeply for the good of Creation, may lead us to despair. How can we hope to make a difference when everything seems to be falling apart?

As I prepare to go on hiatus as your Missioner, I want to leave you with a story you may already know, about the beach littered with hundreds of stranded starfish, and the little girl who was saving one after another by throwing them back into the ocean. When a passerby asked her what difference her efforts her could make, when there were so many she couldn't possibly save, she threw another one in, and answered, "It made a difference to that one."

I look forward to rejoining the good work of our Creation Care Community when my sabbatical concludes eight months from now. In the meantime, I pray that you will reap all the blessings of our long green season, and rejoice in doing the good works of creation care that God has prepared for you to walk in.

Blessings,
Matthew+

Resources for Pentecost/Summer *(continued)*

Whatever your summer holds, may you find something to tend - even a houseplant or a flower. May your care for this fellow creature renew your sense of care and hope for all creatures with which (and with whom!) we share our common home.

May the growing green season of the Church instruct our hearts to repair relationships and advocate for justice for all our sister creatures, human and other-than-human -- abundant life for all.



Photo by [Townsend Walton](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Crunched by numbers: tools for measuring climate risk

BY BENJAMIN SPIER



When most of us think about the effects of climate change, what instinctively springs to mind is images of apocalyptic destruction—like a glacier obliterating a Swiss hill town or skies turned burnt orange by Canadian wildfires. But what if we want to map out the less graphic, long-term consequences of global warming for our church buildings and property? Fortunately, researching climate risk and resilience has led me to a number of handy online tools to help quantify climate risks. I decided to put these tools to the test in assessing climate impacts on my parish, St. Ann & the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn Heights.

One such dataset is Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation, found at resilience.climate.gov. CMRA offers climate projections in an easy-to-navigate format. Using CMRA's map function you can pinpoint your census tract, county, or tribal area to pull up estimates for five climate hazards—extreme heat, drought, wildfire, flooding, and coastal inundation—for three time periods: early century, mid-century, and late century. (The historical baseline is 1976-2005.)

The projections allow for scenarios of lower or higher greenhouse gas emissions and can be viewed in chart or table form. I inputted my census tract in Brooklyn Heights and found the results eye-opening if not surprising. The one spot of good news is that the risk of coastal inundation in my neighborhood is 0% under both low- and high-emission scenarios, even if the nearby Brooklyn Bridge Park is transformed into a lagoon by the melting glaciers. The not-so-welcome news? By mid-century St. Ann's can look forward to a biblical 40 days and 40 nights of uncomfortable 90-degree-plus temperatures with two weeks of triple-digit swelter. That is, of course, under the high-emission scenario. Cutting emissions would make life more tolerable and reduce the need for budget-busting AC!

Another useful tool is the Climate Risk and Resilience Portal, or ClimRR (climrr.anl.gov), developed by the Argonne National Laboratory with AT&T and the U.S. Department of Energy. Like CMRA, ClimRR allows visitors to analyze their community's climate profile with the help of the map-based Local Projections Tool. By opening a menu of data filters and map layers, users can fine-tune projections for variables like temperature, wind speed, precipitation, wildfires, and heat indexes while adding in data on community resilience (population makeup, income inequality) and infrastructure (colleges and universities, nursing homes, etc.).

A similarly granular dataset for current-day vulnerabilities can be found at FEMA's RAPT (Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool). Zooming in on the RAPT map, I was able to pinpoint St. Ann's in relation to, for instance, flood hazards (thankfully none). RAPT also offers access to data from NOAA and the National Weather Service on weather hazards, along with census data on social vulnerability (for example, population over 65 or with a disability).

For a somewhat heartening perspective on my parish's vulnerability to natural disasters in general, I turned to FEMA's National Risk Index Map at hazards.fema.gov. I was greatly relieved to learn that my immediate neighborhood's risk level is "very low." Not so reassuring? Our vulnerability to heat waves is rated "relatively moderate."

Given the current turn in federal policy and DOGE-initiated cuts in spending and personnel at agencies like FEMA, one cannot help but wonder about the future viability of tools such as RAPT and CMRA. Nonetheless, it is helpful to have these and other datasets on hand as we strive to plan for our houses of worship in a future of climate uncertainty.



Creating gorgeous, safe and healthy floral arrangements for worship spaces

BY IRENE ROSS

On May 3 at “[Fight for Earth](#)” Day, Irene Conte Morgan of Country Arts in Flowers, florist to the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, showed a large audience how to create luxurious altar flower arrangements without the use of floral foam.

Why? Floral foam contains formaldehyde and sulfates. It is also made of microplastics, which do not break down and so pollute the earth. With awareness of the environment, people are discovering that [foam-free flower arrangements](#) can be as beautiful, if not more so, with alternatives such as twigs, pebbles, lemon leaf, floral frogs or tall vases.

“There’s no reason why we can’t honor God’s beautiful creation without using any of the stuff that harms the environment,” said the Very Reverend Laurence Byrne, Chaplain, Diocesan Altar Guild. Fr. Byrne is also rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Bayside, and Dean of the Flushing Deanery.

Speaking specifically about foam-free flower arrangements Fr. Byrne said: “Most of us didn’t even realize how toxic floral foam was, so we just used them, without a thought to toxicity.” He added: “I just bet if I walked into our sacristy, I’d see some floral frogs.”

Limitless creativity

Don’t think foam-free arrangements can’t look good. If you haven’t already, look at the floral arrangements in the Cathedral of the Incarnation. The ones at the front altar, near the pulpit, are foam-free.

Almost a decade ago, the Rev. Canon Michael Delaney, now vicar of St. James Episcopal Church, Long Beach, created a floral arrangement for a wedding at the cathedral. Fr. Michael, with Jody Treanor, a parishioner who he said has “amazing abilities with festive items,” used lemons and limes – not foam – to hold the flowers in place.

“I got that idea from St. Luke in the Fields Episcopal Church in Manhattan’s West Village,” Fr. Michael said, “and the green and yellow shades of the fruit glistened beautifully with the glass vases.”

Actively promoted by the Church of England

While floral foam is not yet banned outright, the Church of England [encourages](#) its dioceses and parishes to use more sustainable alternatives.

[Sustainable Church Flowers \(SCF\)](#), a movement within the Church of England, also advocates for using locally grown, seasonal flowers to reduce the carbon footprint associated with imported blooms.

The Creation Care Community of the Diocese of Long Island hopes that by offering classes, such as the one at “Fight for Earth” Day, we can spread the word and the practice within our own parishes.

Members of the Diocesan Altar Guild attended the demonstration.

“I learned a lot,” said Jane Ames, head of the Diocesan Altar Guild, “and have already put some of what I learned to good use.”



ABOVE: Irene Conte-Morgan of Country Arts in Flowers demonstrating foam-free flower arranging at “Fight for Earth” Day, May 3, 2025. Photo: Jennifer Uihlien, Girl in a Camera Productions © Diocese of Long Island



ABOVE: Wedding floral arrangement at the Cathedral of the Incarnation by the Rev. Canon. Michael Delaney, using lemons and limes rather than foam. Photo: Rita Ann Griffith © Diocese of Long Island



LEFT: View of the reredos of the Church of the Transfiguration of Freeport on Easter III, May 4, 2025, featuring foam free arrangements by Irene Conte-Morgan. Photo: © Kyle Taylor, Diocesan & Church of the Transfiguration Altar Guild



Foam-free floral arrangement demonstration
Photo: Jennifer Uihlien, Girl in a Camera Productions

A Word on Abundance

BY DARREN J. GLENN



"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin." — Matthew 6:28

As the cost of living continues to deepen—from rent and groceries to transportation and healthcare—many people are feeling the pressure of daily survival. Budgeting has become a constant balancing act, and even simple pleasures often carry a price tag. Amidst this economic squeeze, the idea of leisure or wellness can feel out of reach. Yet there remains one resource, both grounding and generous, that still asks nothing of us: nature.

The natural world, fashioned by divine hands, remains a testament to grace freely given. Even in the most difficult seasons, creation offers itself without demand—a reminder from our Creator that not everything nourishing must be bought or earned. A walk beneath the trees, the sight of birds wheeling across the sky, the sound of rain on leaves—these are small, sacred gifts that ask only our attention. The lilies do not toil, and yet they bloom; so too can we trust that God's provision is not limited to what we can afford. It lives in cycles, in renewal, in the quiet persistence of green things pushing up through the soil. By leaning into these rhythms of creation, we can begin to loosen our grip on the fear of not having enough, and instead hold tighter to faith.

This mindset is not about ignoring hardship, but about finding resilience in a different kind of wealth—one rooted in divine abundance. When we reconnect with God's handiwork—even through a patch of sky from a city window or the smell of grass after rain—we root ourselves in a truth larger than scarcity. Gratitude grows more easily here. We remember that we are part of a creation that continues to give, guided by a God who does not forget us. In this way, nature doesn't just soothe—it becomes a form of worship, reorienting us toward hope and reminding us that, with faith, life—like the lilies—often finds a way.

ReWilding our parish landscapes

BY SUSAN MACDONALD

We are all called to care for the Earth. Our Creation Care mission statement guides us "to care for creation and our commitment to finding ways, as Christians, to address environmental degradation and climate change." ReWild Long Island is an amazing partner to put that ethos into practice.

ReWild Long Island is a non-profit organization that will come into a parish and provide free design services (up to 1,000sf) and free plants for a Native Pollinator garden. If accepted into their Community Gardens program the parish will provide the space/prepared gardening bed(s), a water source and volunteers to maintain the garden for two years until the plants are established.

ReWild will also work with individual homeowners through the support of their members and volunteers. They offer free educational resources to learn about sustainable landscaping centered around native plants, including webinars hosted by local experts and public events such as guided walks and presentations at libraries and schools.

Their programming aligns beautifully with the mission of our Creation Care Community of the Diocese of Long Island.

The Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City just installed their ReWild garden on May 20th! All are welcome to come and visit. There is also a ReWild garden at Zion Episcopal Church in Douglaston. This is an amazing congregational and community building project. While installing the Cathedral ReWild garden on May 20th, several people from the community who were taking walks on the property that morning asked if they could join in planting and in the ongoing care of the garden.

ReWild Community Gardens Programs – How the Program Works

The ReWild Gardens program accepts grant applications from committed groups of volunteers with rights to a feasible garden location with water access. Successful applicants receive professional garden design/installation consulting, plants, irrigation, signage, on-site maintenance and weeding advice, as well as help in growing community involvement. In return, community groups commit to creating a public garden space and weekly maintenance for two years. The 2-year engagement provides time for perennial plants to establish themselves, and for the volunteer groups to become adept at maintaining their sustainable garden.

For more information, email Gardens-Leads@ReWildLongIsland.org

Creating sustainable garden communities

ReWild gardens promote biodiversity and climate resilience for a healthier Long Island. They provide vital habitat for native and migratory fauna as well as insects. They also clean our soil, water and air. These sustainable gardens incorporate native perennials as the major design component along with judicious use of responsible ornamentals that are non-invasive & pollinator-friendly. Other ecosystem-friendly practices include organic gardening, composting and soil-building while eschewing pesticides and harmful chemicals.

2026 Community Gardens Grant Applications open in the Fall

The grant application will come out in the Fall. If you'd like to have a conversation with Samantha Jo at ReWild beforehand feel free to email her (samantha@rewildlongisland.org)



ABOVE: Members of the Cathedral of the Incarnation install their ReWild garden on May 20, 2025
Photos courtesy of Susan MacDonald

Would you fight for your country? What about Planet Earth?

BY RITA ANN GRIFFITH

How hard would you be prepared to fight for the country you call home? Many have had to answer this question over the centuries. We Anglicans even sing hymns about it, such as in the popular "I vow to thee, my country", with lines that vow: "The love that asks no question [...] the love that pays the price, the love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice."

What if it is not your country, but your planet, your only home?

This is a question the members of the Creation Care Community Leadership Team asked when the new administration took sweeping actions to roll back environmental protections and renege on climate pledges. These included defunding the EPA, firing climate scientists, and withdrawing from the global climate accords. What could we do to try to defend our home, planet Earth?

The May 3rd "**Fight for Earth**" Day was born out of a determination to follow through on our commitment, as stated in our 2020 Diocesan Convention resolution, to acts of "justice-seeking, healing, activism, education, or witness." Bishop Provenzano fully supported this day aimed to spread the ideas of how to protect "this fragile earth, our island home."

So we had presentations on how to reduce our plastic consumption, both single-use plastics such as water bottles, and by something as simple as using foam-free floral arrangements for our altars. We learned how to pray for the earth, in a creation focused Morning Prayer at which Bishop Provenzano preached; with a creation Anglican rosary prayer shared with the young people; and with a Rogation procession through the Mercer and Cathedral grounds.

We learned about connecting with lobbying groups to advocate for legislation at the state and national levels. From a landscape ecologist from the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood, we learned about the best plants for greening our spaces. We heard from an entomologist from Cornell University about pollinators, and had a presentation on ReWild L.I., who can assist parishes in planting pollinator gardens. We also learned about how to transition to solar energy in our parishes and homes.

In addition, we had a health fair, from the NYC Nurses Honor Guard, a craft exhibition, and a book giveaway. Finally, we also visited the Cathedral's bees and learned more about beekeeping from the Rev. Canon Eddie Alleyne, Sub-Dean of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, and a member of the Leadership Team.

All the resources are available at [this link](#). You can also read a great article about the event from Episcopal News Service [here](#).

We may not necessarily take up literal swords and armor to fight for planet Earth, but what "Fight for Earth" Day taught us was that the battle can be fought with spreading love and care for our planet. With doing the things that are beneficial, and ceasing to do the things which are harmful. We would argue that our baptismal vows require us to do this work, to enter this fight.

We hope you will join us.



Learning about advocacy with Chelsea McMillan, Green Faith
Photo: Rita Griffith



Learning about bees from Canon Eddie Alleyne
Photo: Kyle Taylor



Rogation prayers at the diocesan offices, See House
Photo: Jennifer Uihlien, Girl in a Camera Productions



Bishop Provenzano with members of NYC Nurses Honor Guard
Photo courtesy of Dr. Michelle Chester

Looking ahead:

August 27 – Fall/Season of Creation
Newsletter

September 1 – World Day of Prayer for
Creation

September 1 – October 4 – [Season of
Creation](#)

October 4 – Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

October 4 – Visit to Sisters of St. Joseph,
Brentwood*

November 14 – 15 – Diocesan Convention

November 27 – Advent/Christmas/
Epiphany/ Winter Newsletter

*More info soon at

<https://www.dioceseli.org/creationcare>