

Recommendations of the Climate Emergency Working Group

Theology

In our baptism, and each time we renew our baptismal covenant, we vow to “strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth (Anglican Church of Canada, Marks of Mission)

Executive Summary

Purpose:

The intent of the following recommendations is to present the elements of Synod 2019 Resolution 8, in actionable steps.

Summary:

Regarding investment and financial decisions:

Our primary recommendation is the adoption by the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada's *Investing with a Mission*.

Regarding support to parishes in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:

We focus on developing resources, human and capital, to reduce the church's GHG emissions.

Seeing opportunities and partners:

The churches of the Diocese of New Westminster have, through climate change and the declared Climate Emergency, some opportunities to offer our gifts to each other and our neighbours. We focused on:

- responding to the Climate Emergency in the public square
- responding to the Climate Emergency in our networks and partnerships
- responding to the Climate Emergency through pastoral care for our churches, our members and our neighbours

Installation of two (2) EV charging facilities at the Synod Office:

- This recommendation has already been put forward to the Mission and Ministry Development committee for consideration.

Ongoing work:

Given the nature of a climate emergency, this effort will not be a one-time quick fix but is anticipated to be the work of a generation. Therefore, we have made recommendations to ensure the ongoing work of faithfully responding to the Climate Emergency.

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Climate Emergency Working Group

Guiding Assumptions

1. Synod declared an emergency; we have been guided by the urgency of the *emergency*. Therefore, please find in the recommendations of this report **all** of the Emergency Working Group recommendations. We have not made compromises or withheld more challenging recommendations, hoping that by doing so our submission to Diocesan Council might more easily “pass.” Rather, as council determines its priorities – and as the Holy Spirit gives guidance – we trust that Diocesan Council and the Mission & Ministry Development Committee will give these recommendations full consideration.
2. God and God’s people make things happen. We focus on **people** throughout these recommendations, working to ensure we have the human resources to respond to the Climate Emergency now and in our future.
3. We have specifically made great effort to stay close to our Climate Emergency mandate. However, it is impossible to separate climate from environmental degradation. Some recommendations reflect this interconnection.
4. We are guided by a theology of creation. Therefore, *we enter into every set of recommendations by stating our theology.*

What this is not

At this time, we do not have an Indigenous member on this committee. Therefore, we have not attempted to speak for Indigenous people or on reconciliation issues. However, we name and notice that Indigenous justice issues are intertwined with these urgent recommendations. The impact of climate change in Canada is already unevenly and unjustly impacting Indigenous communities. For example, polar ice melt endangers traditional livelihoods and shifting ecosystems threaten lives and traditions.

While this document and our recommendations do not delve deeply into the social justice dimensions of climate change, we nonetheless affirm the truth in Pope Francis’ words:

“We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” [Laudato Si p. 139]

Background

History

In May of 2019 the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster declared a Climate Emergency. The Climate Emergency Working Group began meeting in January 2020 to develop an action plan in response to Resolution 8 as it was passed during that synod.

Resolution 8 has already passed. The emergency was declared. The climate crisis is expected to impact the Diocese of New Westminster in these ways:

- Rising sea level, impacting especially Richmond, Tsawwassen, Delta and White Rock
- Changes to global climate impacting food security, including fisheries
- Longer drier summers will impact fresh water supply
- Wildfires are expected to become a greater risk
- Climate change impacts vulnerable species and ecosystems of land, air and water
- Global human migration, as a result of Climate Change, will impact this region
- Climate change impacts people unequally. The poorest among us (especially globally, but here locally too) unjustly bearing the most destructive costs. This makes climate change in this Diocese also an Indigenous issue and reconciliation issue

Members of the Climate Emergency Working Group:

the Rev'd Alecia Greenfield, the Rev'd Ron Berezan, the Rev'd Liz Hamel, Mr. Jeddy James, the Rev'd Harold Munn, the Rev'd John Stephens, Ms. Shirin Theophilus

Resolution, A Climate Emergency

As per Resolution 8, passed at the 119th Synod of our Diocese in 2019, the Climate Emergency Working Group recommends these actions to the Mission & Ministry Development Committee and then to Diocesan Council and our Archbishop:

Resolution reads:

This Synod recognizes a climate emergency;

All investment and financial decisions in the diocese be made in keeping with our moral obligation to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and transition towards renewable energy;

The Diocese of New Westminster supports all parishes in efforts to reduce their emissions and that such efforts be documented in annual vestry reports made by parishes;

The diocese and parishes of New Westminster seek out opportunities within our communities and in partnership with others to respond to the growing crisis that lies before us;

A report on the progress of the diocese in reducing our collective carbon footprint and our efforts to support a just transition to renewable energies be provided at each Synod beginning in 2021, including the installation of two (2) EV charging facilities at the Synod Office.

The Recommendations of the Climate Emergency Working Group follow below.

Recommendations:

Recommendations regarding investments and financial decisions:

All investment and financial decisions in the diocese be made in keeping with our moral obligation to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and transition towards renewable energy;

Resolution 8

Theology

Our economic practices must be considered not in purely economic terms but through the lens of God's vision for our human life, which includes the flourishing of all, including the non-human creation. (from 'Investing with a Mission')

Recommendations

1. This Working Group on Climate Emergency recommends that the Diocese of New Westminster adopt the guidelines The Anglican Church of Canada developed in the resource, *Investing with a Mission* in 2017. These guidelines, as outlined in that document, will help us invest our financial resources in ways that support the environment, social justice and more *just* governance in companies and industry.

The entire document can be found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Investing-with-a-Mission.pdf>

In part it says:

“Responsible investment is an approach to investing that aims to incorporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors into investment decisions, to better manage risk and generate sustainable, long-term returns.” [from: “Investing with a Mission: A Guide to Responsible Investment and Church Funds”, The Anglican Church of Canada, November 2018]

2. We recommend the creation of a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures. Where a fund holds segregated assets, provide

instructions to the manager on areas of particular interest for the screening process. We would like those to be based on ESG criteria.

3. We recommend that we as a Diocese (and the Investment Sub-Committee in particular) be active owners as shareholders. “Active ownership describes the use of a fund’s position as a shareholder to influence the policies and practices of the companies they own. Various rights are attached to the ownership of shares, most notably the right to vote at annual meetings (“proxy voting”), the right to elect directors, and in many jurisdictions the right to file shareholder proposals. Shareholders may also engage directly with boards and management to express concerns and propose improvements.” [“Investing with a Mission”]

4. We recommend that we direct investments in ways that support justice and environmental concerns. “Funds may choose to direct a part of their investments towards organizations or assets that are selected primarily for their positive social or environmental impacts. One example might be investments in constructing social housing, which generates a financial return as well as meeting a social need. Funds may also want to target investments in green energy, or Indigenous economic opportunities, as two additional examples.” [“Investing With a Mission”]

While there are many needed responses to the Climate Emergency, how we invest our funds and our resources is clearly linked to this. **This Climate Emergency Working Group is recommending to the Diocese of New Westminster as a whole, that we need to integrate the ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) factors into our investment process.** We need to take an active role in ownership, see that we can have some impact by our specific investments and continue to screen our investments. Divestment, the selling off, of shares, is the last resort.

5. The Diocese Investment Committee will include a person to name and value environmental issues on an ongoing basis

6. The Diocesan Finance and Property Committee will include a person to name and value the issues and concerns of Climate Emergency on an ongoing basis

Rationale:

- Valuing and protecting the Climate will be an ongoing concern. To have an active voice on these committees will ensure ongoing and up to date information is shared

Note: By engaging in this discussion there have already been changes to the Diocese of New Westminster’s investment holdings to better reflect our Care for all Creation in this time of Climate Emergency.

We notice that many of our parishioners are also investors, therefore:

1. **We suggest individual investors are also invited** to consider the Church's guide, Investing with a Mission, in assessing their individual holdings.
2. **We name and witness** the complexity of our (collective and individual) involvement in capitalist and consumer activities. We invite parishioners who are also investors into pastoral conversation with the resources of the theology of creation and liturgies of grief, lament, and confession.
3. **We invite the church** to model just investing behavior.

Recommendations regarding Diocese Support for parishes

The Diocese of New Westminster supports all parishes in efforts to reduce their emissions and that such efforts be documented in annual vestry reports made by parishes;

Resolution 8

Theology

At the heart of God is a joyful generosity. Authentic stewardship recognizes wealth as a gift of God to be used for the flourishing of the wider community, which includes all of creation and all of life. Our parishes require generous support in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint, for the sake of God's creation

Recommendations

1. **The Diocese support through grants/stimuli/education** the upgrade to greenhouse gas emissions-reducing choices
 - For example, when the water heater needs replacing, there is financial support for getting an energy efficient heater upgrade
 - That the grants require a very simple application
 - For example, support for solar panels or geothermal heating
2. **The Diocese also maintain a list of external grants and resources** for emission-reducing activities, and support parishes in applying
3. **That these climate-impacting changes be reported** to Synod and to the public media
4. **We recommend \$250,000 be set aside** for these activities, this to be reassessed every two years.

Rationale: By investing in Climate emission reduction the church is a credible authority. By investing in GHG emissions innovations, we are making our theology visible as a public witness to our commitment to God's Creation. Synod has declared an emergency. These recommendations are

intended to support immediate and meaningful change to the church's GHG emissions.

5. **Every parish's annual vestry report identifies** any building improvements and their relation to GHG emissions (rough estimates of the carbon impact are acceptable, for example noticing natural gas usage year over year to track changes)

Rationale: By reporting we remind ourselves and encourage thinking about and naming improvements.

6. **The Diocese develops and supports a list of resource people** in the Diocese who are able and willing to help educate parishes on Climate Action as it relates to building upgrades
7. **We suggest every parish have an Creation Care Coordinator** (a volunteer role) on parish council.
 - The Annual Vestry report to the Diocese includes a report from the Creation Care Coordinator, including any changes to building GHG emissions parish investments, and any participation in Climate and Environmental Advocacy actions. (See **Ongoing Work**, page 15)
8. **We suggest the Diocese support the Creation Care Coordinator program with training to empower diverse local action.** This initiative will develop and deliver training for the program. This will support faith-based environmental conversations on an ongoing basis. There are already volunteers for this activity.

Recommendations Regarding Community

The Diocese and parishes of New Westminster seek out opportunities within our communities and in partnership with others to respond to the growing crisis that lies before us;

Resolution 8

Theology

People and communities, especially among the least influential, are being damaged by unjust work environments and governance structures as well as by environmental degradation and climate change. These conditions are often created or exacerbated by the economic and environmental practices of the developed world. God calls us to work closely with Anglicans and other partners both locally and around the world to transform creation care practices and thereby assist and support those who are most affected by the climate

Recommendations – for responding to the Climate Emergency in the public square

- 1. Encourage the Archbishop and/or Bishop to release clear statements** on key emerging climate related issues such as fossil fuel developments, clean energy alternatives, the moral imperative to act for climate justice.
- 2. The Diocese encourages identifiable participation** by Anglicans in key public environmental events such as Earth Day, climate rallies, etc.
- 3. The Diocese provides written or oral submissions** to different levels of government on climate policy when such opportunities occur.
- 4. Encourage Topic to feature** regular climate justice-focused articles connecting these issues to Anglican theology and tradition.

Rationale: The church can significantly contribute to discussion and action of climate emergency in these ways: theologically, with hope, and with courage in order to support nonjudgmental change.

Recommendations - for responding to the Climate Emergency in our networks and partnerships

1. We join other existing networks and do not create new ones.

Rationale: There are many active networks and partnerships which are widely known (or easy to locate in a 'Google' search), and it would not be productive to duplicate their efforts. We don't need to "re-invent the wheel."

2. A Committee be tasked with an annual evaluation of potential partners, and create one or two recommendations for the next year or two. Additionally, work to ensure those parishes that participate in activities, like Season of Creation, have contact with each other for mutual support and encouragement.

Rationale: a barrier to participation in Climate and Creation centered initiatives is an overwhelming array of options.

Recommendations - for responding to the Climate Emergency through Liturgy and Pastoral Care for our churches, our members, and our neighbours

1. Enhance the observance of the Season of Creation within the diocese by encouraging parishes to participate, by providing resources, and through the issuing of an annual letter from the Bishop of the Diocese reflecting on our fifth mark of mission [To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth].

2. Gather, vet, approve and make available liturgical prayers with a strong Creation focus: Collects, prayers of the people, Eucharistic prayers (for example, recourses from Salal and Cedar and the Diocese of Islands and Inlets).

- Bring these together in one document to be posted on the web site.
- Resources will not be limited to only the Season of Creation
- Noting need of prayers of lament, consider developing a special liturgy as a "lament for lost species/ecological loss" that would be available to parishes, with support
- Have a liturgy prepared for a time of ecological disaster, before such a disaster occurs

3. Seek inclusion for of the 'Salal and Cedar Eucharistic Prayer' in the list of Authorized Liturgies for use in the Diocese of New Westminster.

4. Support the development of a “Bioregional Liturgical Calendar” which connects annual liturgical events with bioregional information (ie spawning of salmon) as a way of rooting our faith communities in the ecology of our place. It is anticipated this will be collaborative work with First Nation communities.

- Print copies and distribute a digital copy that can be amended to local seasons

5. Undertake 3 visioning sessions exploring the roles that our church communities might play in their neighbourhoods in coming times of ecological collapse and climate chaos.

6. Undertake 3 theology sessions/events to explore, articulate and share the Good News of Christ in the face of possible climate disaster. To collaboratively attend to our theology in a facilitated and educating discussion.

7. Consider having a fund available to assist with legal fees for those called to non-violent, respect-filled, civil disobedience in the course of drawing attention to issues of climate emergency

Recommendations Regarding Reporting and EV Charging Facilities

A report on the progress of the diocese in reducing our collective carbon footprint and our efforts to support a just transition to renewable energies be provided at each Synod beginning in 2021, including the installation of two (2) EV charging facilities at the Synod

Resolution 8

There are two parts to this fourth section of Resolution 8:

1. **The annual synod report** will arise from initiatives outlined in this Climate Emergency Working Group report, initiatives which will only begin when the report is read and responded to by Diocesan Council.
2. **The recommended installation** of two (2) EV charging facilities at the Synod office, passed to MMD (Mission & Ministry Development) committee and Diocesan Council for consideration.

The Ongoing Work of Climate Emergency

Theology

In our baptism, and each time we renew our baptismal covenant, we vow to “strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth (Anglican Church of Canada, Marks of Mission)”

1. **The Diocese hire a staff person to be named as an Creation Care Coordinator**

- a. responsible for ongoing education, synod reports and monitoring process and issues of climate and environment in the Diocese of New Westminster. The role of this person is to support transform us all into more able stewards of the environment.
- b. every meeting of Diocesan Council receives an oral and written report on the current state of the environment, as well as local parish level actions.

Rationale (for a staff person): Humanity is facing climate emergency. We need the staff hours to make a meaningful contribution to the work of engaging with the climate emergency.

- ### 2. **A committee of Mission and Ministry Development (MMD) be formed to implement the recommendations adopted and to work with the Creation Care Coordinator.** This group would continue to measure, advocate and inform on climate and environmental action in the Diocese of New Westminster. As a sub-committee of MMD, which will report to MMD and other diocesan committees, they will meet to inform on climate issues and celebrate parishes addressing GHG emission reductions.

Note: at this time some members of the Climate Emergency Working Group are able and willing to serve with this new committee.

- a. When the committee has been confirmed, the name “**Climate Emergency Working Group**” could be extended to this group
- b. Ideally, this new Climate Emergency Working Group will have a mix of clergy and lay; people from different geographic areas of the Diocese of New Westminster; people of diverse ethnic, gender, sexuality, age, abilities, etc. backgrounds. Indigenous members will be essential to connect to the reconciliation issues identified in the process of writing this report.

- c. Comprised of 6 to 8 regular members plus the Diocesan Environment Steward.
3. **The work of this committee be distributed** and posted on the web site, and include resources that range from very *concrete*, like tracking GHG emissions of a building, to *pastoral* with Creation centered, grief aware, and theological resources related to care for the environment.
 4. The committee be reassessed and recommissioned every three years to ensure the work remains engaging, filled with the Holy Spirit, connected to world needs and committee member gifts

Suggested Activities of the Climate Emergency Working Group:

- Connect and form alliances to other networks, for example KAIROS, Green Church and Anglican Church of Canada activities and communicate to the Diocese and Parishes opportunities for action and resources
- Recommend people (lay and clergy) to sit on diocesan committees who would also bring the perspective of Climate Change Emergency
- Maintain a list of Anglican and non-Anglican resource people for the Archbishop/Bishop to draw on to support statements on climate
- Maintain and support the production of articles for Topic, informing and celebrating local action on Climate Issues
- Gather Creation focused liturgical resources: collects, prayers of the people, Season of Creation, Eucharistic prayers (ie Salal and Cedar, Diocese of Islands and Inlets), etc.
- Gather and share resources relating to best practices for reducing energy footprints of church buildings, enhancing biodiversity on church grounds, and encouraging food production on church properties
- Assist with useful and engaging training for parish Creation Care Coordinators. The training (and invitations to relationships) should empower action by the greatest number of individuals. The training will encourage local and innovative action
- Assist in supporting parishes fill in Vestry reports

Goals:

- Twice a year physically embody the urgency of the Climate Emergency by attending a protest, gathering, presentation or climate centered liturgy
- Create Climate-Centered presentations (invitations to action) for gatherings of clergy attending, for example, clergy days, retreats, and conferences
- Work with Salal and Cedar and the Diocese of New Westminster Eco-Justice Unit to expand the work of environmental awareness and climate change in the Diocese

Resources (for the back of the questionnaire)

Theology: See Investing with a Mission, theological introduction

Liturgy:

- national Anglican church resources for season of creation <https://www.anglican.ca/publicwitness/season-of-creation/>
- Anglican Communion Environmental Network, including prayers <https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/liturgical-resources.aspx>
- from "Green Anglicans", liturgical resources for the season of creation <http://www.greenanglicans.org/resources/liturgical/>

Climate Emergency: resources to help understand the issues and explore responses

- Understanding Climate Change <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>
- Climate Change, local <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality/AirQualityPublications/GHGFactsheet.pdf>
- Bishop Desmond Tutu on Climate Crisis, https://youtu.be/rlh_ptOjkg

Reducing GHG Emissions: resources to reduce personal and church emissions

- City of Vancouver suggestions for reducing emissions <https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/tips-for-sustainable-living-at-home.aspx>
- List of actions for individuals to take to reduce emissions <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/four-places-cut-carbon/>
- List of actions for buildings to reduce emissions <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-homes/make-small-changes-add/21850>

Getting Started:

- In transforming parish buildings to be more energy efficient, consider also making changes to church grounds. Enhance biodiversity, food security, and community outreach by planting trees, growing gardens, harvesting rain water and welcoming Creation into your midst. Develop a short liturgy to celebrate this hopeful act and consider the outdoor space as an extension of the sanctuary.

Appendix B

<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Investing-with-a-Mission.pdf> (for the full document)

