

Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta  
**Task Force on Environmental Stewardship**  
**Report to Diocesan Council**  
September 2009

In the last year, the Diocesan Task Force on Environmental Stewardship has made steady progress. The Task Force continues to focus on providing parishes and people with the resources to deepen their biblical and theological understandings of the care of the earth, practical tools to cut waste and reduce energy consumption, and conduct appropriate advocacy for the wise use of the riches of creation.

The membership of the Task Force has remained steady since last year's report. We have had exceptional support this year from both William Monk and Alexis Myers, for which we are very grateful. Since last year's Council the full Task Force has met seven times, and the three work groups on promoting understanding, providing tools, and advocacy have met more frequently.

Last year's Council approved a resolution asking each parish to designate at least one "Creation Keeper" as part of a network of contacts throughout the diocese who could promote congregational and diocesan environmental stewardship. As of September 27 we have 106 Creation Keepers at 36 parishes. An inaugural retreat for the Creation Keepers, on February 6-7, 2009 at Camp Mikell, was attended by 40 persons and featured Dr. Robin Gottfried of the University of the South as a keynote speaker. We also held a workshop on September 19, 2009, graciously hosted by St. George's Episcopal Church in Griffin. Thirty people braved torrential rain to share ideas for congregational action and learn about "The Story of Stuff".

Parishes across the Diocese are embarking on spiritual and physical journeys to improve their understanding of our relationship to the Creation, our imperative to sustain it, and specific steps we can take to tread more lightly upon it. The sharing of their stories is one of the chief purposes of the Creation Keepers. In order to do this more effectively, we are developing a web site, now under the test address [www.bishopsgreenguild.org](http://www.bishopsgreenguild.org)

The Tools work group, led by Jeff Ross-Bain, has developed a Keeping Creation Project scorecard, available on the website, which parishes can use to measure their progress in environmental stewardship. Working in partnership with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL), the Task Force is proposing a goal of having every parish in the diocese conduct an energy assessment by the end of 2010 and implement the audit's recommendations. Twenty-three parishes have already conducted such assessments. GIPL can help arrange low cost assessments and, in some cases, offer grant resources to help implement cost-effective findings which protect both the earth and your parish budget. A resolution to this effect will be offered at the 2009 Diocesan Council.

We are also learning just how many connections there are for this work in both the national Episcopal church as well as in other faith communities. The Episcopal Ecological Network is one such resource, and the national church has a designated Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer. We continue to look for opportunities to join with other communities of faith in promoting environmental stewardship.

Finally, care for the creation is a continuing calling. In the face of such issues as water scarcity, climate change, urban sprawl, and air pollution, the Task Force believes that "this fragile earth, our island home," should be an ongoing ministry of the Diocese of Atlanta. The Task Force supports a resolution, to be introduced at 2009 Council, to form a standing Commission on the Creation no later than the 104<sup>th</sup> Annual Council meeting as a successor to the Task Force. The Commission would consist of 12 to 15 individuals, appointed by the Bishop and representative of the whole diocese. At least one-third of the commission would be presbyters or deacons and at least one-third lay persons.

We give thanks to God for the energy and dedication of the Task Force members, and for the steadfast support of Bishop Alexander and the members of the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Stan Meiburg, chair