

Project 4: Parish Education to Action

On September 14, 2019, Green Sanctuary supported the annual Sustainable Technology Fair produced by a sister organization, Sustainable South Shore. Green Sanctuary has also sponsored educational events after Sunday services, following coffee hour in the Parish House:

- *Working to Improve the Environment* (January 20, 2019): letter-writing; calling and visiting legislators, regulators, and other officials; participating in demonstrations, stand-ins, sit-ins, and civil disobedience; changing individual choices (refuse / re-use / re-cycle) such as reducing consumption of red meat and using recycled paper products; using public transportation, hybrid / electric vehicles, biking and walking; and insulating, sealing cracks, updating storm windows and doors, and having a home energy audit.
- *Electrify Your Life* (January 26, 2020): Laura Burns' update on Hingham Net Zero; David White's demonstration of electric induction cooking as a substitute for gas stoves (a technology applicable to hot water heaters); Ron Pollara and Brenda Black's account of using heat pumps to substitute for or complement gas / oil furnaces; Laura Burns' explanation of distance capabilities, home recharging methods, and public recharging facilities for electric cars.

Of the minister's five recent sermons on environmental issues, four led to specific actions:

- "How Forgiving Is the Earth?" (September 16, 2018) prepared for the three-week class, "Bible and Earth Care" described in this report as **Project 5: Adult Education Class on Biblical Roots for Climate Change Activism**, which follows, led by the minister. Discussion leaders were Turner Bledsoe, Laura Burns, and Connie Gorfinkle.
- "Not to Weary in Well Doing" (January 20, 2019) led to an after-coffee-hour discussion, *Working to Improve the Environment* (above); discussion leaders were Turner Bledsoe, Laura Burns, and Connie Gorfinkle.
- "The Truth that Can Save Us" (May 12, 2019)
- "Earth, Spirit, and Us" (September 15, 2019) encouraged members to participate in the Global Climate Strike (September 20, 2019); at least a dozen Old Ship people, including the minister, went to the rally and march in Boston.
- "Greta and the Power of One" (January 20, 2020), inspired by climate activist Greta Thunberg, led to an after-coffee-hour discussion, *Electrify Your Life* (above).

Since 2010, The Rev. Ken Read-Brown's column "Earth and Spirit" has appeared monthly in the Hingham *Journal*. Aimed at "lifting up the place of the natural world in our spiritual lives as well as environmental issues including climate justice, this column is also a form of outreach to the wider community" (Old Ship Church Annual Report 2019, p. 12). Since 2018, fourteen columns addressed environmental issues:

- March 2018 – Edmund O. Wilson's view "that creating and maintaining about half the earth as conservation land and wilderness should be enough...to conserve biodiversity, ameliorate climate change, enough, in short, for planetary health." Initiatives in Seychelles, Peru, Chile, and Hingham foster this goal.
- June 2018 – From gardening to climate change, we should heed Thoreau's advice in Walden to "build castles in the air.... Now put foundations under them."

- July 2018 – NASA announced in 1988 that the “greenhouse effect” was already resulting in “global warming”; we must immediately support alternative forms of energy, take political action, and participate in the September 8th march for climate action.
- September 2018 – In Genesis, human beings are told “to have dominion,” and this means stewardship through citizen responsibility in consumer choices, recycling, reusing, and political action.
- November 2018 – The conjunction of Jupiter and Venus in the pre-dawn sky reminds us of the 15 billion years for which we have shared the cosmos and calls us to “take care of ... the intricate interwoven living systems of our Earth home.”
- January 2019 – “Joy to the World” and “For the Beauty of the Earth” are “empty if as we sing we are complicit in turning the earth uninhabitable for one beautiful species after another....”
- March 2019 – The Green New Deal, sponsored by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA), may have flaws but should at least galvanize bipartisan recognition that climate change is real and that the bill addresses related issues of economic inequality, financial insecurity, and racial / ethnic discrimination.
- April 2019 – Our children know all about recycling, but we cannot wait for them to confront and solve the crisis of climate change; “love for one another even across usual boundaries of difference and conflict” can guide us in taking action.
- May 2019 – While we cannot know whether animals can appreciate the blessings and beauty of life, our mindfulness about daily life – e.g. our meals – can enable us to “go easier” on the animals and on all the elements of nature which produce our daily life.
- June 2019 – The Apollo mission was nearly fifty years ago, bringing home to us the finitude of our resources and the artificiality of national borders; we may hope that “blending our technological creativity with an ethics transformed by those images of Earth” can lead us to a deeper understanding of “who and where we are on this small planet....”
- July 2019 – Fifty years ago, the Apollo astronauts walked on the moon; far beyond competition with the Soviets, the view of “big blue dot,” in Carl Sagan’s words, “underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the...only home we’ve ever known.”
- September 2019 – Greta Thunberg’s example of climate change activism inspires us to join in the Global Climate Strike on September 20th
- November 2019 – At Thanksgiving, we should heed Native Americans’ example: they “do not separate the spiritual from the rest of life” and can teach the rest of us to live more harmoniously with the natural world
- January 2020 – With Australian wildfires, tensions in the Mideast, and our administration’s refusal to recognize climate change, we have ample reason to support our Town’s Energy Action Committee in calling for reduction of carbon emissions, to support Climate Net Zero, and to support the climate advocacy of 350MA (which meets monthly in the Parish House at Old Ship Church). (Please refer to our narrative of **Project 1** earlier in this report.)