

# **A Diocesan resolution addressing climate change**

By Matt Weiser

When church leaders meet in Redding on Oct. 21-22 for the Diocesan Convention, they will be asked to consider adopting a resolution dealing with nothing less than the fate of our planet: A climate change resolution.

The resolution calls on individual Episcopal churches and other diocesan organizations to strive for carbon-neutral status in their operations by 2030.

It sounds like a lot to ask, especially for small churches with limited resources. But the resolution has been carefully crafted to ensure success.

## **Why carbon neutral?**

Climate change is caused by carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels used by industry and transportation. This additional carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is boosting average global temperatures to historically unprecedented levels. This is already harming plants, animals and human communities, and causing numerous disasters caused by unusual weather events. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has called on churches to reduce carbon emissions in everything from the food they serve to the electricity they consume.

In addition, at the General Convention in July 2022, Episcopal leaders adopted Resolution A087, calling on the church to achieve net carbon neutrality in its operations by 2030, and urging individual churches and congregations to do the same.

Also, the church has laid out a detailed Covenant for the Care of Creation. It's a program to adopt loving and life-giving relationships with all aspects of God's Creation, from the air we breathe to the animals that the Bible calls upon us to protect.

## **What will the resolution do?**

The proposed resolution states that, by Dec. 31, 2024, each congregation and Diocesan organization shall present to its vestry or equivalent governing body a facility assessment to identify actions enabling its operations to become carbon neutral by 2030.

## **What is carbon neutral?**

Carbon neutral means that emissions associated with operating a church are offset by actions to absorb emissions. No church can be totally emission-free. So first we must assess how much carbon dioxide we are emitting. Then we identify ways to reduce them. For instance, through simple energy conservation measures or by adopting alternative energy sources like wind and solar. Finally, we must take action to absorb emissions from the atmosphere equal to the amount we require to operate. Planting trees is one simple way to do this.

## **How can churches do all this?**

The resolution requires the Diocesan Commission on the Environment to help churches meet the 2030 goal. It will do so by sharing resources and successful examples, and

pointing church leaders to experts who can help. It will also identify financial resources that may help churches adopt carbon-neutral practices.

Yes, it's a tall order. But as catastrophic fire, drought and flood rock our congregations, we are realizing that managing climate change is one of the most important challenges of our time. Each of us as individuals have a responsibility to do our part and working together we can accomplish even more. One way we can do that is by managing the operation of our churches.

If you have further questions about the climate change resolution, please contact: Miriam Casey, (650) 380-2747, [mlcasey7@yahoo.com](mailto:mlcasey7@yahoo.com); or Rev. Dr. Pamela Dolan, (314) 477-6591, [pamela@churchofstmartin.org](mailto:pamela@churchofstmartin.org).