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# **Creation Care Covenant Statement and Plan Proposal**



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On behalf of the CMP Creation Care reflection group and CMP Youth

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## Introduction and Background

Over the past year, small groups of CMP members (including youth and adults) have met on numerous occasions to reflect on CMP's role and direction for environmental care. The meetings took place online and in person and included storytelling, guided reflection, scripture sharing, and prayer. This document is the culmination of those reflections and a proposed plan for integrating creation care more intentionally and holistically into the life of the church.

This document uses the terminology "Creation Care," as we are motivated by God's call to care for his Creation, including the environment and we, its inhabitants. Caring for the environment is a noble and critical cause; care for Creation encapsulates our relationship with God, with ourselves, with each other, and with the rest of Creation.

## Creation Care Covenant Statement

CMP is committed to Creation Care, as it is one of our modes of mission:

*In Genesis 1 humanity is described as the tzelem (image/agent) of God, meaning that God gives humanity the vocation of being God's representative on earth, including as stewards or caretakers of creation, with responsibility to care for the well-being of our planet—actually, God's planet. Of course, the stewards of someone's property are never permitted to harm the owner's property, which has been placed in their care. We are all aware of how deeply humanity (including ourselves) has failed in this responsibility of creation care, and thus how we have harmed ourselves and our neighbours, locally and globally, by our failure to exercise proper stewardship of creation. Acting to protect or enhance the well-being of our physical environment, locally and globally, is an important form of both loving God and loving others.*

As a congregation committed to caring for Creation, we **affirm** God's creation in all its glory and beauty.

- Our physical context has long been one of gathering; we honour this context and the indigenous peoples who have cared for Creation long before us.
- Creation is complex and diverse and needs both complexity and diversity to thrive, both in nature and in human interactions.

We **acknowledge** God as the source of all things. We acknowledge Christ as the redeemer of all things. We acknowledge the Spirit as the sustainer of all things.

- Biblical scriptures state that all was created by the Creator (Acts 17:21-28; Col. 1:16-17).
- There is much wisdom from the Creator to be found in creation and we need to take more notice of this (Job 12:7-10).
- God remains faithful amidst destruction (Lam. 3:22-24), whether natural or man-made.

As a result, we strive to respect all of life as sacred. We **accept** our **vocation** as environmental stewards who care for Creation. We accept our responsibility to live justly in relation to our fellow human beings in ways that all creatures may mutually thrive together.

- We acknowledge the painful aspects in creation: we will engage together in our anger at the human hand in the climate crisis, our fear that we can never do enough, and our despair and lament for degrading Creation.

- We believe there is purpose and meaning in acting in and contributing to Creation, and we commit to finding ways to become lights of hope in the darkness of climate change.
- Celebration and relationship in Creation is an act of community, hope, and an opportunity for conversations.

## Proposed Plan for CMP Creation Care

This plan includes existing practices and activities as well as enhanced and new practices for the CMP community. Because we desire to leave Earth a better place for our children, we will engage in intergenerational dialogue with our children and youth, teach and model for them responsible Earth practices, and engage them in meaningful participation to promote love and respect for Creation, and co-create projects that restore creation.



**Worship** is our principal form of gathering, and we will incorporate environment care in our worship in alignment with the Church and eco calendar. Throughout the year we will glorify God intentionally together; we will celebrate creation, confess our sins against creation, grieve the losses of creation, and commit ourselves to care for Earth.

We can integrate this through the Prayers of the People, selection of worship music, and sharing reflections and worship resources in services and communications. We also propose to focus one service per quarter on Creation Care, for example:

- Q1 (Jan-March): Lenten service on preparing for Easter and salvation for Creation
- Q2 (April-June): Earth Day service in line with Pentecost season, spring, and planting
- Q3 (July-Sept): Celebration of creation through outdoor/nature-based summer service
- Q4 (Oct-Dec): Harvest and thanksgiving service and UNFCC COP preparations



**Relationships and Discipleship** are at the center of our faith and community. We engage in relationship in and outside the church, during and outside worship, in our homes, and communities. In the context of climate action, it is important to value relationship outside of “getting things done,” and that healthy and peaceful relationships are the foundation of growth and transformation. In order to integrate reconciliation with each other and with Creation, we propose to:

- Encourage ourselves as individual members of this congregation in our personal lifestyle, in our homes, and at our work, knowing that our habits and practices can contribute significantly to care for Creation. We will do this through service announcements, social media, the Parish Pulse, and simple resources for households and home groups.
- Seek to foster a closer relationship with nature so that we can live simply and walk lightly upon Earth. We will do this through engaging in nature as a community, including Junior Youth Camp events, sports days, gardening events, nature walks, and outdoor worship.
- Foster intergenerational engagement in Creation care and intentionally listen to our children and youth on their fears and aspirations related to the environment and the climate crisis.



**Education** is integral to how we understand our Biblical mandate to care for Creation, learn about the state of degradation on the Earth and its relation with human exploitation, and how we move forward as Christians to heal and restore our community and creation for the future. We will learn by:

- Seeking opportunities to invite and dialogue with Indigenous people, highlighting the deep knowledge and methods of Indigenous people on understanding and honouring Creation.
  - Virtual engagements with our sister church in Bay James
  - Inviting Indigenous clergy and lay people to preach, share, and lead learning workshops
- Listening to experts in our own church and beyond in the realms of environment and climate change science, policy, and theology.
  - Science talks led by church members
  - Documentary or learning evenings led by CMP or other Diocese partners
  - Youth-led service-learning projects where we learn and then act together



Our **Building and Grounds** are a large stewardship responsibility. Our building was renovated in 2020-21 ensuring better energy use. We also share our space, and can invite those we share with to join us in caring for the building. We will strive to make choices that lessen our negative impact on Earth and that serve to renew and restore Earth community, including:

- Outdoor space: seeding replacement on the lawn with clover, planting raised and pollinator beds and fruit trees, and rock and moss beds in shady areas; building urban bird houses using upcycled materials; using environmentally friendly fertilizers and low impact products for snow and ice clearing.
- We propose to do a yearly environmental impact checklist to assess the impact that our activities and the use and maintenance of our property may have upon creation—in such matters as energy and water use, cleaning products, lawn care, paper use, food choices, recycling and waste, and transportation.



**Mission:** As an individual church, we acknowledge there is little we alone can do to reverse or mitigate climate change. However, we can join a growing movement of faith-based actors who are seeking to change the systems that foster the degradation of creation and to rectify the injustices that result from it. We will foster this mission in CMP by:

- Alerting our members of environmental legislation that protects Creation and to encourage their active participation in the development and evolution of public policy. We will encourage members to engage in civic activities that foster ecological health and policy, and will promote their activities to the congregation.
- Engaging with For the Love of Creation, a Canadian ecumenical organization seeking change in our systems and practices, as well as external Diocese of Montreal activities in climate action.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

We will pursue this mission in a grace-filled manner, seeking to find hope and joy in the commitments and sacrifices these proposals may entail and in the restorations they engender. We seek to let our care for environment be known to others.

In order to fulfill this plan, we will need the commitment of CMP members, with the support and guidance of the Parish Leadership Team. See the table below for some preliminary suggested roles and responsibilities; more leads and volunteers need to be recruited.

Environment Care Category	Lead	Contributors	Actions
<b>Worship</b>	Chris B.	Speakers Worship leaders Lay readers	Schedule quarterly sermons; coach speakers on “eco-sermons” Review prayers to incorporate environment care
<b>Relationships and Discipleship</b>	TBD	Home Group leaders Youth group leaders Children’s ministry leaders	Find or create simple resources for CMP ministries Develop [annual?] opportunity for intergenerational dialogue on environment care
<b>Education</b>	Julia S.-B.	PLT (external liaison for partners) Youth volunteers Internal and external subject matter experts CMP social media	Compile and track schedule of educational opportunities and resources Resource leaders in other areas Resource youth group
<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>	Paul B.	CMP members	Create and track impact checklist Plan and care for gardens Youth group nature care projects (e.g. bird houses, tree planting, etc.)
<b>Mission</b>	Julia S.-B.	Jasmine (social media) Website owner	Link with Diocese and For the Love of Creation for deeper engagement Create webpage for CMP website on resources and actions

## Resources and References

Some additional resources to draw from include:

- Lutherans Restoring Creation Congregational Self-Organizing Kit: <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/what-can-we-do-creation-care/>
- For the Love of Creation guides: <https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/resources/>
- Season of Creation 2024 guide: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>
- Christian Eco-Preacher 1-2-3 guides: <https://interfaithsustain.com/ecopreacher-123/>
- 52 Ways to Care for Creation: <https://www.creationjustice.org/blog/52-ways-to-care-for-creation>
- Creation Care and Why Environmental Stewardship in a Biblical Principal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tec5WWgA0mk>

Clip art for this document retrieved from Google images and:

- <https://www.moravian.org/bcm/2018/09/17/environmental-stewardship/>
- <https://stpaulcathedral.org/52-ways-to-care-for-creation/>

- <https://inspiredscripture.com/bible-studies/deuteronomy-22>
- <https://www.middletonumc.org/discipleship-stewardship-2021/>