



Opening Prayer

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and every. Amen (BCP p. 259)

Bible Study

What can we draw from the Bible for guidance about our roles in public advocacy for creation care?

On Ash Wednesday we hear from Isaiah 58: 6-8

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of in-justice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

How does this passage relate to Creation Care?

Why does God, speaking through Isaiah connect the “fast that I choose” to our healing?

“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31: 8-9

There are stories of advocacy throughout the Bible — think of Moses, Daniel, and Esther. To secure the Israelites’ freedom, Moses used his connection to Pharaoh to speak for the people. Here’s a passage from Exodus 4:10-12:

But Moses said to the LORD, O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Then the LORD said to him, “Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.

God also calls each of us to be good stewards of our gifts. As Americans, we have the gift of influence with our government. When we steward that gift well, leaders can make decisions that fight the systemic causes of poverty, conflict, and injustice.

[source: <https://www.worldvision.org/christian-faith-news-stories/what-does-bible-say-about-advocacy>]

Some Christians feel free to voice what they discern God calls them to advocate and others are reluctant.

- Whom have you seen or heard whom you felt advocated authentically from a place of Christian faith?
- When have you advocated for something from a deep place of spiritual calling? What was the experience like for you? What difference did it make? What have you learned from being an advocate on behalf of God?
- Do you trust that God will give you words and actions to advocate for climate health and creation care?

Video presentation – <https://youtu.be/XvtKU8WBWNs>

Key topics concerning public advocacy for Creation Care (32 minutes with The Rev., Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas presenting and introduction and concluding examples and resources from Don Maruska)

1. Is there a calling for us to advocate publicly for creation care?
2. If so, how do we navigate the political issues? Dos and Don'ts (resources and perspectives from the national church and organizations in which the Episcopal Church participates)
3. What are constructive examples of parishes publicly advocating for creation care? (case studies, resources, checklist of opportunities for advocacy, etc.)
4. How can parishes help parishioners find opportunities to express their own public advocacy? (including illustrations from the Episcopal Public Policy Network, Interfaith Power and Light, etc.)

Activity (in small groups, divide participants into groups of 5-7 persons for active discussion)

1. What advocacy efforts are we willing to take personally?
2. Are there local, regional, state, or national issues where we feel called to advocate on behalf of the whole parish?
3. How can we keep members of our parish informed and supported about the ongoing needs and opportunities for advocacy?

Group Conversation

- Who in our parish is interested in climate justice advocacy and how would our parish be interested?
- What are three things we'd like to do or support within our parish to advocate for creation care

Closing Prayer

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. Give us the courage, strength, and persistence to build a community dedicated to sustainable living. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, Amen.

Center for Action and Contemplation February 12, 2020

