

61ST DIOCESAN CONVENTION

TITLE: Congregational Water Use Inventory

Names of submitter(s)

Name	E-mail	Phone
The Rev. Pam Hyde	pam@azdiocese.org	602-325-3306
The Rev. Steve Keplinger	rector@grace-stpauls.org	520-327-6857
The Rev. Alison Lee	rector@standrewsaz.com	520-281-1523

Church Name: Creation Care Council

Church City: Diocese of Arizona

RESOLVED: That the 61st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona affirms General Convention Resolution 2003-D046 (Urge Stewardship of Water Resources) and acts upon the stewardship model it encouraged; and be it further

RESOLVED: That each congregation of the Diocese perform an inventory of water use within their buildings and grounds and take actions to conserve water in same, such actions to include one or more of the following:

- Regularly checking the church's water meter and bill to track water usage and checking for leaks and/or adjusting the outdoor irrigation system if usage increases substantially;
- When and where possible, installing water-saving devices both indoors and outdoors, such as composting, low-flow or dual flush toilets, faucet aerators, hot water recirculation systems, drip irrigation systems for landscaping, and/or rain harvesting systems;
- Using water-saving practices in the church kitchen, if one exists on the church premises;
- Planting or replanting church grounds with native low-water use and drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and/or trees, or alternatively, considering areas of church grounds that would be suitable to xeriscaping;
- Watering outdoor plants only when necessary and shutting off automatic watering systems when it rains or installing a rain shut-off device;

- Installing gutters on church buildings and directing downspouts toward shrubs or trees or into collection systems for landscape irrigation;
- Using a broom instead of a hose to clean church driveways, sidewalks, and parking areas;
- Paving new or repaving existing parking areas with permeable materials that allow water flow down through the paving which will recharge groundwater and prevent toxins from running off into rivers, streams and washes.

and be it further

RESOLVED: that congregations use this inventory an opportunity to educate their members on ways that they can conserve water in their own homes and properties; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Canon for Creation Care will create a survey, provided via an online portal, regarding this inventory to be completed by each congregation before the 62nd Diocesan Convention on steps taken and progress made toward their self-discerned water conservation commitments. This data will then be included in a report to be submitted and presented at the 62nd Diocesan Convention by the Canon for Creation Care.

Explanation: Arizona has been in a state of drought for approximately 22 years, which makes the current mega-drought the worst drought in more than 110 years of record keeping. As a result, water supplies are low and the state faces its first-ever cutbacks from its share of Colorado River water beginning in January 2022. While water conservation efforts over the past decades have reduced water consumption rates in the state, increases in population and the continuation of some wasteful water use practices means that per capita water use in Arizona is still higher than the national average, at 120 gallons per person per day in Arizona versus 82 gallons per person per day nationally.

The Episcopal Church has already recognized that water is precious, not only to humans but to all creatures, and has urged dioceses, congregations, and communicants to conserve it. In 2003, the 74th General Convention passed Resolution 2003-D046 (Urge Stewardship of Water Resources), which stated:

“Resolved, That the 74th General Convention urge dioceses, congregations, and communicants to regard water resources as precious, and to recognize that the right use of water is an explicit means to show love for one's neighbor, since water connects people and all creatures throughout the global community; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to become active stewards of their water resources through conservation efforts including reduction of consumption; through examination of water discharge such that contaminated water does not improperly leave church grounds; and through the creation of environmental programs for stewardship of water and the whole of creation and for the education of congregants in regard to good and faithful stewardship of the earth's resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to undertake one or more of the following four stewardship steps:

- When and where possible, install water-saving devices, such as low-flow commodes and aspirators on sink faucets.
- Replant church grounds and home gardens with plants and trees that are drought-tolerant and have low needs for water, and that are native to the region and therefore able to survive local climatic conditions.
- Devise drainage systems that allow rainwater to flow from gutters and drain pipes to spread onto the lawn and landscaped areas of church grounds and home gardens, thereby reducing water lost to sewer systems.
- Pave new or repave existing parking lots with materials that are pervious, so that water penetrates into soil beneath parking areas, thereby reducing the flow of oil and other auto fluids into streams."¹

Recognizing that populations have increased in the eighteen years since this resolution was passed and the effects of climate change have made water conservation even more vital in places like Arizona, this resolution commits congregations in this diocese to respond to this call for water conservation. Actions derived from a list of water conservation tips published by the Arizona Department of Water Resources² give congregations a menu of specific actions they can take to reduce their use of water as good caretakers of creation, as good citizens of their communities, and as examples to others of how to live lightly on the earth.

Funding Implications: There are no anticipated funding implications for the Diocese outside of the continued need to support the Creation Care ministry and the Canon for Creation Care position.

¹ General Convention, Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003 (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 314f.

² https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/media/Conservation_Tips_2015_2.pdf