

## 62ND DIOCESAN CONVENTION

TITLE: 2022-01 Prayers for God's Creation

Names of submitter(s)

Name	E-mail	Phone
The Rev. Pam Hyde	<a href="mailto:pam@azdiocese.org">pam@azdiocese.org</a>	602-325-3306
The Rev. Steve Keplinger	<a href="mailto:rector@grace-stpauls.org">rector@grace-stpauls.org</a>	520-327-6857
The Rev. David Benedict Hedges, BSG	<a href="mailto:dhedges@stmichael.net">dhedges@stmichael.net</a>	520-886-7292

Church Name: Creation Care Council

Church City: Diocese of Arizona

BE IT RESOLVED: That the 62nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona recognizes the imminent threat of environmental disasters to God's Creation and the call of our religious tradition to protect and defend the defenseless; and be it further

RESOLVED: that each congregation of the Diocese be strongly encouraged to include prayers for the protection of God's Creation in every Sunday service of worship; and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Convention commend for use (1) the prayers in *The Book of Occasional Services 2018, Liturgical Materials for Honoring God in Creation*, (2) the prayers in *Season of Creation: An Ecumenical Celebration*, a liturgical resource authorized for use in the Episcopal Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts which is available for download at <https://www.diocesewma.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SeasonOfCreationLiturgicalGuide2022-MADioceses2.pdf>, and (3) any other liturgical materials as the Bishop of Arizona may authorize.

Explanation: The Prayers of the People as outlined in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, page 383, state that "Prayer is to be offered with intercession for"... "The welfare of the world"... and "Those who suffer and those in any trouble"...

As reported by multiple scientific and governmental organizations the world over, wildlife populations have nosedived by two-thirds since 1970. Three quarters of the entire Earth's land base has been significantly altered by humanity, as well as two-thirds of the marine environment, all in the last 50 years. The United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's definitive scientific group on the subject, as well as dozens of other international science organizations, tell us that the planet is under existential threat, that climate change is, in fact, the greatest threat to human health in history.

If we are called by the church to pray each week for the welfare of the world and for those who suffer, it is impossible to do so without praying for the land itself, for the oceans, the rivers, the canyons, the wildlife, the wilderness.

It is not just our recent history in the Episcopal tradition that compels us to pray for the protection of the wild. It is also not just the threat to our personal safety or the suffering that will result if we do not protect it. Our call to pray for the natural world is deeply imbedded in our religious tradition. John the Baptist initiates the church in the riparian wilderness surrounding the Jordan River. Our most important sacramental act occurs in the wild. Jesus becomes one with the river and the desert in his baptism. From there, he is propelled back into a desert wilderness to experience his call, a call that formed this church and changed the course of world religion.

It is also not just Christianity that was born and grew in the wilderness. Throughout Hebrew Biblical tradition, our prophets discover God in the wilderness, beginning with Moses, through the founding event of Judaism, the Exodus experience of 40 years in the wild. Spiritual discernment and revelation consistently happen in our tradition in the wilderness. Our religious history begins in the wild and evolves in the wild. Without wilderness, the entire Judeo-Christian tradition would not exist.

The dire facts are reason enough to pray for the protection of God's creation every Sunday in our worship. But we are also compelled to do so because wilderness is what connects us to God. Not only is the world in danger because of our destruction of the planet, so is our religion. We pray for the welfare of God's creation to protect our neighbor as well as our faith.