Task Force on Environmental Issues

Members

Mr. David Culp, Chair
Ms. Christine DiFeliciantonio
The Rev. John Hamilton
Ms. Margaret Reinberger
The Rev. David Stooksbury
Mr. Jonathan Frederick Walz

Mandate

R24-1 Task Force on Environmental Issues

Resolved, That there be created a Task Committee, entitled "Task Force on Environmental Issues," consisting of five persons, appointed by the Bishop, to consider the several recognitions, recommendations and remedial actions first suggested by Resolutions R24-1 and R24-2; and

Resolved that the Task Force report its findings and recommendation to the 119th Annual Council in 2025, with the goal of helping Diocese of Atlanta entities develop plans by 2026 for reducing their carbon footprint.

R25-7 Reaffirm R24-1 Task Force on Environmental Issues

Resolved, that the 119th Council of the Diocese of Atlanta reaffirm the commitment made at the 118th Council of the Diocese of Atlanta to create a "Task Force on Environmental Issues," consisting of five persons, appointed by the Bishop, to consider several recognitions, recommendations and remedial actions to align the Diocese of Atlanta with some of the creation care goals affirmed by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

Resolved, that the Task Force report its findings and recommendations to the 120th Annual Council in 2026, with the goal of helping Diocese of Atlanta entities develop plans by 2027 for reducing their carbon footprint.

Resolved, that the Executive Board of the Diocese of Atlanta hear an interim report on the progress of this task force in the first half of 2026.

Summary of Work

Background

The 118th Annual Council created and the 119th Annual Council reaffirmed the five person Task Force on the Environment. The Task Force convened in July 2026 after the fifth member was appointed in June 2026. The Task Force's charge is to examine and report back to the 120th Annual Council its findings and recommendations for Creation Care in this Diocese.

Guiding Themes for the Work of Creation Care

Witness: Make environmental stewardship a visible expression of Christian leadership.

Justice and Community: Ground environmental work in partnerships and social justice.

Structure: Build the systems needed for continuity, authority, and funding.

Parish Engagement: Equip congregations to take practical, measurable environmental action.

Findings

1. That the Church and her members need to recognize and repent of our sin in these issues so that we may joyfully work to restore and reconcile.
2. The challenges of Creation Care appear to be overwhelming, but they are of human origin and within human means to meet with the grace of God.
3. The care for all of creation is an outward and visible sign of the Church's moral leadership long recognized by the Church and flows from our Baptismal Covenant.
4. The Diocese's structures do not promote coordinated or collective action by her members, parishes, and constituent organizations. Supporting the people doing the work with the tools and processes needed can assist in a plan for succession.
5. The work of Creation Care is necessary for the Church's survival and growth.
6. The Diocese's Commission on the Environment created by a previous Council still exists but is dormant .

7. Resources to support this work already exist within The Episcopal Church, other Churches, interfaith organizations, and secular groups. Connection to and integration of these resources is difficult and requires significant intention and effort.
8. Opportunities to collaborate between congregations and ministries based on local context should be promoted.

Recommendations

1. That each parish and organized ministry within the Diocese should complete one action not already performed to care for creation.
2. That the resumption of the Commission on the Environment be publicized, and the commission should recruit new members to be appointed by the Bishop using diocese-wide and parish communication tools.
3. That the Bishop appoint two Co-Chairs for the Commission with alternating terms.
4. That the Commission integrate and coordinate this work with other Diocesan Commissions, Committees, and operational organizations including the Bishop's staff and the Convocations.

Proposed Resolutions

Challenge to Further Creation Care

Resolved, that the 120th Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta challenge each Parish, Diocese of Atlanta Community Ministry, and Diocese of Atlanta Renewal and Formation Ministry to complete one action not previously undertaken to heal human-caused damage to creation, to invite others to further the work of creation care, and to report the outcomes of the action when commitments to the 2028 Diocese of Atlanta Budget are due.