



A green movement of the Spirit

By The Rev'd Dr Steven Ogden

The Spirit of God hovered over the waters of creation (Genesis 1:1-2), empowered the ministry of Jesus (Luke 4: 1, 16), and inaugurated the church at Pentecost “where all of them were filled with the holy spirit” (Acts 2:4).



The Climate Action Task Group, from left Steven Ogden, Beth Walton, Marianne Gillard and Paul Devenport

The Spirit is now enlivening our parishes, schools, and Anglicare. For several years, we have witnessed this movement in the installation of solar panels, our op shops, recycling programs, water conservation, tree planting, community gardens, and the cultivation of properties for the benefit of birds, bees, butterflies, and frogs.

This green movement of the Spirit took root and flourished in the hearts of Adelaide Anglicans. As individuals and faith communities, we knew intuitively the earth was sacred. We are connected to the earth. We are earth-creatures. Our caring for creation resonates with the wider community and their concern about our degraded environment.

One of the unintended consequences has been we have made ourselves as a church relevant. Remember, young people are concerned about the climate crisis. So, our green credentials speak volumes to young people.

In my pastoral work, young people intuitively understand process theology. This was initiated by Alfred Whitehead (British-American philosopher and mathematician). For Whitehead, the Spirit works in and through the evolutionary process. Young people get this.

Ironically, this spirit-inspired revolution is also about the renewal of the church. It is inviting us to think differently about our identity and mission in Christ in the world. A world that needs our faith, courage, and vision.

Many parishes are seeing that mission today is a green mission. This is not unusual. Historically, in the face of a crisis, churches have been renewed by the Spirit in order to face the exigencies of the day. Globally Christian communities are moving in this direction.

Important groundwork for these initiatives was laid down by members of ACCN (Anglican Creation Care Network). They did a brilliant job. Shortly after Synod, CATG (Climate Action Task Group) will gather the Network for a meeting to explore new grass-roots initiatives.

CATG was initiated by Synod. It consists of Beth Walton, Paul Devenport, Marianne Gillard, and me as convenor. We are networking and gathering new information. We have met with politicians and church leaders. Recently, Marianne sent out an environmental survey which ACCN sourced from ARocha UK and adapted for our Diocese.

The survey is an invitation to lay people to engage with our work. We want to know what parishioners know, think, and care about. Undertaking this survey, with thoughtful input from a small parish team is one way of engaging in the divine green mission.

In Christ, with hope

The Rev'd Dr Steven Ogden, is convenor of the Climate Action Task Group and priest of St Mary Magdalene, Adelaide

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