




The cross is made from a horizontal and a vertical beam. Rooted in the ground, we reach upward in the presence of our Maker as we learn what it means to love and be loved by Him. Fuelled by this love we reach outwards into our world.

Why Eco-Theology? Why Way of Love?

For God so loved the world. John 3:16 reminds us of God's love for the cosmos—the earth and all the things that inhabit it. As followers of Jesus, we are called to love as God loves. The work of climate justice isn't just a secular endeavour, but the sacred work of God. Our baptismal covenant demands us to love our neighbour as yourself, in part by striving for justice and peace among all peoples and respecting the dignity of every human being. Bishop Michael Curry invites us to imagine what it could look like for God's earth and people to be restored. Climate justice is part of God's greater mission to end our human suffering. As Episcopalians living out our baptismal covenant, we must advocate for the environment and the people living within it. How can we as a body of faith lean into these human-Earth relations in an empathic, restorative, and resilient way?

Using the existing framework from the Way of Love curriculum, this resource offers new insights to land use, indigenous understandings of God, and the relationship these have to us as a body of Christ. This curriculum is area specific, meant for the people of the ECCT to create dialogue and establish new rhythms that foster reconciliation and renewal among local indigenous lands and theological reflections. There are five recognized indigenous groups on Connecticut lands, and two within the southwest region of CT. This resource is meant for all, for lay leadership as we continue to live into our baptismal covenant. Within this document you will find a deeper understanding into the genesis of this project, and things to consider.

Solastalgia is a term that describes the emotional feeling of distress associated with environmental change in your "home." It is a sense of homesickness experienced while at home, a sense of grief resulting from changes in biodiversity, loss of terrain, or the inability to carry on traditions connected to the natural world. Thinking theologically, solastalgia represents a misuse in creation, suffering within the world God creates. John Calvin explains it as such; "we err not in the use of the gifts of Providence when we refer them to the end for which their author made and destined them, since he created them for our good, and not for our destruction, has he not given many things a value without having any necessary use." God created and declared it as good.



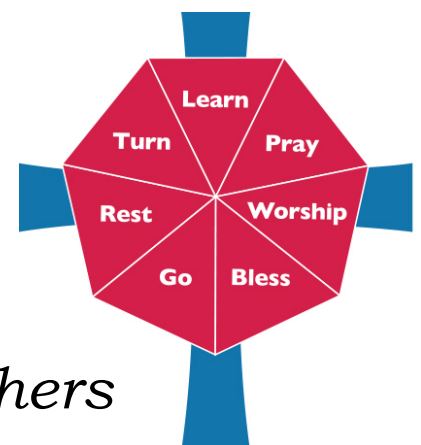
"The incarnation itself means God cares very much about the earth, not first in terms of possessing it but communing with it. I tell churches to get to know the land, the landscape where they are, and how it works. We live woefully ignorant of the geography we inhabit." Willis Jennings

Humanity tends to assign value to things in our world based solely off our understanding of how they help us sustain ourselves. But there is a symbiosis, a reliance upon the created order to thrive.

When this crack occurs, a splint is needed. The body of Christ is called to be care givers in the “in-between-ness,” of home and homesick. We are called to respond to the emotions, and needs of an in-between space, a place of tension between what was and what may be. The in-between of theology and a lived experience is most prevalent during times of climate crisis. As such there is an accountability we carry living in the world. We are faced with a shifting paradigm of what it means to prevent the tragedy of the commons. What affects someone across the world will eventually makes it way to where you are. Climate change knows no boundaries.

It seems daunting then as the body of Christ to bear witness and provide a splint in this crisis. Yet we remember our call to serve in the world as followers of Christ. When the miracle of feeding the 5,000 occurred, Jesus instructed the disciples to give the crowd something to eat (John 9:12-13). Jesus asked the disciples to use what they had—a few loaves of bread and some fish—rather than send the crowd elsewhere to look for more food. These small gifts, brought before God, created an abundance beyond what anyone could have imagined. Like the disciples, we are invited by God to bring our gifts, whatever they are or how small they seem, to the work of creation care and climate action.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry reminds us “a church for everyone is counter-cultural.” The church is not a building, it is the body of believers wherever they happen to be. We are called in Colossians 4 to be one body in Christ and are all needed parts of that body. And yet we have an institution where there are places that overlook the pain it caused. There is still an institution that has played a role in systemic oppression. To fix this, it starts with naming but does not end there. We must name the intersections of the church and an unjust world, bearing an obligation to reconcile. Then we must go and do. We can turn towards the cross to understanding how this happens. The cross is made up of a horizon and vertical beam. The horizontal represents the individual relationship to God, our walk with Jesus. Rooted in the ground, we reach upward spending time with God as we learn what it means to love and be loved by Him. Fuelled by this love we reach outwards into our world. Once we have understood our personal, intimate relationship with God, we can reflect that love in how we interact with others. Because love moves us, upward and outward. *Love God and Love others.* In this way, love transcends the idea that we have all fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. Because in love we have forgiveness and grace though the cross. Love transcends our expectations for a king and shows up in the messy, ordinary moment of an obedient traveling family in search of lodging. Love unites us to God and propels us to partake in Jesus's ministry in the world.



Love God, Love Others

