

Pre-filed General Resolutions to the 53rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Resolution 1

Submitted by:

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and a member of the Commission on the Integrity of Creation

Additional members:

The Rev. Joy Blaylock

Sonja Crawford

The Rev. Bob Donnell

Frank Gilliam

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Carrie Stevenson

Gene Strickland

Mark Waddell

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 53rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, embrace the spirit of Resolution 2009-A045 of the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church by restricting the use of bottled water at Annual Convention and at other Church-sponsored activities where safe; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that every baptized Christian be encouraged to practice simple energy and water conservation techniques, so that, by working together, we may restore the beauty of God's creation and ensure that this resource may again be available to all God's children in abundance.

Rationale: The production of plastic bottles has an extreme negative impact on the environment. The recycling of those bottles, while rare¹, creates additional environmental problems².

Single-use plastics are a glaring example of the problems with throwaway culture. Instead of investing in quality goods that will last, we often prioritize convenience over durability and consideration of long-term impacts. Our reliance on these plastics means we are accumulating waste at a staggering rate. We produce 300 million tons of plastic each year³ worldwide, half of which is for single-use items. That's nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population. (Source: NRDC⁴)

The bottled water industry generated roughly 600 billion plastic bottles and containers in 2021. This resulted in around 25 million tons of plastic waste — most of which is not recycled and ends up in landfills⁵.

The waste pile is so gargantuan that it would be enough to fill a line of 40-ton trucks stretching from New York to Bangkok every year, according to the report.

Fossil fuels are the raw ingredient for the vast majority of plastics, which have a heavy carbon footprint from manufacturing through to disposal.

¹https://link.edgепilot.com/s/1ef628f9/dYoDBUGSlkGb8MUJZEbbiw?u=https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eda91260bbb7e7a4bf528d8/t/62b2238152acae761414d698/1655841666913/The-Real-Truth-about-the-US-Plastic-Recycling-Rate-2021-Facts-and-Figures_5-4-22.pdf

² "Recycled Plastic Bottles Leach More Chemicals into Drinks Review Finds," The Guardian, March 18, 2022.

³ <https://link.edgепilot.com/s/98517e86/E-VVKEUBSkCotM0SmM33qQ?u=https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/>

⁴ <https://link.edgепilot.com/s/c208eb53/HNYeYXei4kCvCEVaGVAJjg?u=https://www.nrdc.org/stories/single-use-plastics-101%23why>

⁵ <https://link.edgепilot.com/s/1f5ea85d/Anh89BF4bEqxhSjdqFpyYg?u=https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/16/us/plastic-recycling-climate-impact-lbg/index.html>

If the plastics industry were a country, it would be the fifth largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world.

Around 85% of plastic water bottles, which can take up to 1,000 years to degrade, end up as waste. They also end up in the ocean, adding to a vast swirl of plastic waste that poses a serious threat to marine life.

The world's oceans are polluted by a "plastic smog" made up of approximately 171 trillion plastic particles that, if gathered, would weigh around 2.3 million tons.

In the environment, plastic bottles can break down into miniscule particles, called microplastics, which make their way into our food and water, posing a potential risk to human health.

Plastic can also leach toxic chemicals, affecting animals that ingest it, contaminating the animal and human food chains.

According to Christiana Zenner, Associate Professor of Theology, Science and Ethics at Fordham University, "potential and actual costs of bottled water are assessed in ways that usually fail to encompass environmental concerns, issues of local rights of access, or the long-term interests of the community, ecosystem, and water sources from which the water is drawn."⁶

2009 - A045 A Resolution to Restrict the Use of Bottled Water and Practice Conservation

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention ask the Church to restrict the use of bottled water at General Convention and at other Church-sponsored activities where safe, because of the extreme negative environmental impact that attends its production, and be it further

Resolved, that every baptized Christian be encouraged to practice simple energy and water conservation techniques so that, by working together, we may restore the beauty of God's creation and ensure that this resource may again be available to all God's children in abundance.

⁶ Zenner, Christiana, *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and Fresh Water Crises*, © 2018, p. 55.

Resolution 2

Submitted by:
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Additional members:
The Rev. Joy Blaylock
Sonja Crawford
Frank Gilliam
Lella Lowe
Salem Saloom
Carrie Stevenson
Gene Strickland
The Rev. Ken White-Spunner
Mark Waddell

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 53rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, endorse and support the following four areas of practice relative to Earth Care:

1. Our **worship** and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore our home Earth. We will encourage liturgy and preaching that emphasizes the sanctity of all creation, and God's call for all of us to care for the created order.
2. In **education** and formation, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways to maintain and heal creation in response to God's call to care for our home Earth, for justice, and community.
3. Our **facilities** will be managed, maintained, and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our churches and other buildings, we will use energy efficiently including weatherizing to conserve energy, decrease or discontinue the use of plastic and Styrofoam utensils, and recycle. We will use native plants on our grounds. We will look for and find ways to use energy sustainably. We will share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for us now and for future generations.
4. Our **outreach** will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores our home Earth, as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can uphold or damage our neighborhood, region, nation, and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that all churches and agencies within the diocese are encouraged to adopt the same four areas of practice relative to Earth Care.

Rationale: The congregations, ministers, staff, and friends of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast of the Episcopal Church are aware of and alarmed by the dramatic changes being wrought on God's creation by the unsustainable practices of our 21st-century society. While all living things are affected, the greatest human impacts of climate change are borne by those who are least responsible and least able to address them.

Locally, we are already seeing the impacts from extreme heat on individual health. The increased frequency and severity of hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe thunderstorms affects people and infrastructure in our community directly, and affects our area indirectly through climate migration. Increased flooding and rising sea levels overwhelm already overtaxed storm sewers, while property insurance rates rise. Food is more costly, less available, and less nutritious. The coastal seafood industry continues to be affected by increased ocean acidification and warming waters.

In an outpouring of love, God created Earth and all that lives herein, and said that it is good. Peace and justice are God's plan for all creation, and we are called to deal justly with one another and the Earth. Our hope lies in individual and communal efforts to serve God and protect God's creation. In the face of these current realities, our diocese and the churches therein are called to action within the four domains listed above.