

# A Personal Commitment to Creation Discipleship

Bishop Jane Alexander

*Holy week to Easter*

*Tuesday April 12*

## Scripture

### **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

## Reflection

Where can we start? The challenges of creation are so huge, we are created in Christ Jesus for good works but what can one person do? Today I offer you an answer from Canon Rachel Mash who leads the Anglican Communion's Environmental Network: "The place to start is here: follow your heartbreak. We cannot all be involved in all the environmental issues, so identify the one that breaks your heart.

"Perhaps it is climate change and the face of drought and famine. Educate yourself about the impact of climate change on a country or community where you have links. Commit yourself to doing an electricity and fuel audit of your home and your church. See how you can make small changes. Get others involved in bigger projects — solar panels for the church or school — and find out what your politician's stance is on renewable energy and challenge them in letters to the press. Get your Church denomination to divest from investments in fossil fuels. Look at where your pension money is invested, can it be taken out of fossil fuels? Remember the DOT principle: Do One thing. Keep on doing it faithfully, inspire others, link up with others, and a movement may be started.

"Perhaps it is plastic which breaks your heart, clogging our oceans and lands. Commit yourself to stop using plastic bags for shopping. Reduce one-use plastic for your family. Start a campaign at church! Get the local churches in your community to put pressure on supermarkets to stop using plastic bags. Sign a petition to get the Minister of the Environment to ban plastic bags – as has been done in Kenya and Rwanda. For example, churches have started the "Bring your own bag" campaign: 1. Commit to bring your own bag when shopping; 2. invite unemployed church members to make bags; 3. Put pressure on your local store to stop using plastic bags; 4. Put pressure on the government to ban plastic shopping bags.

"Or perhaps it is the loss of biodiversity that breaks your heart, as animals and birds die out due to our neglect and greed. Commit yourself at home to stop using chemicals and products that kill insects. Promote them at church and school. Start an organic garden. Find a part of Creation near you that you can care for and encourage others to get involved in (river clean -up, local park or nature reserve). Get involved in an international campaign to protect an animal you care for.

“The needs are huge — but the principle is this: start with what breaks your heart. Find an action you and your family can take. Inspire others, join networks. Research tells us that transformation change come when networked individuals change. And have fun!! God is with you.”

## *Prayer*

*By faith  
I listen for your voice,  
and know  
the whisper that I hear  
breathed a world into existence,  
yet listens to the prayer within my soul.  
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## *Foodgrains bank projects feed people in need*

It is mid November and Gary Weir is waiting for the right day to harvest his grain corn. It has been a particularly wet season and the crop needs to dry more before it can be harvested. He also has to wait for the combine that he hires to be available.

Squares of farmland spread across the Ottawa Valley like a quilt, including Fitzroy Harbour where Gary and his wife Pat live. The village sits on the Ottawa River about 41 km northwest of Parliament Hill as the crow flies. Here Gary farms 200 acres of corn, soybeans and hay.

Just 40 minutes east of Fitzroy Harbour is Bells Corners, a suburban community of the City of Ottawa. If you popped into Christ Church Bells Corners for a Sunday morning service, you'd see a bustling suburban church where annual offerings are tithed, yielding approximately \$30,000 for mission and outreach.

For the past three years, CCBC has allocated \$2,000 to the Weirs to farm 14 acres of their 200 acres. This money is used for fertilizer or other input costs. The Weirs in turn donate the earnings to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's account in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. It is a circle of giving that grows the gift.

Weir and his brother, Ron, had always been dairy farmers, but in 2009, they decided to also plant soybeans as a cash crop. “We wanted to give a bit to the Canadian FoodgrainsBank so we just sent in a donation from our earnings.” In 2012 the Weirs' own congregation, St. George's in West Carleton, got involved. The year after it became a parish outreach project when St. Thomas', Woodlawn began participating as well. Since then the Parish has helped with field cultivation, promotion and advocating for the Foodgrains Bank, fundraising and monetary donations.

By 2014, the project became the West Carleton Foodgrains Bank Growing Project and CCBC began sending their donation to help cover some of the field input costs. “This project is very empowering for the Parish,” says the Reverend Kathryn Otley, CCBC's incumbent. “It gives a way to get involved in addition to just giving money, as important as that is. CCBC's parishioners built a sign for the growing project and the project creates opportunities for the parish and also the Diocese of Ottawa's PWRDF committee to increase relationships and understanding between city and rural parishes.”

“We’re very pleased with the amount that CCBC gives us,” says Weir. “The project wouldn’t be possible without it.” Weir notes costs are further contained through the donation of seeds from Bit-A-Luk Farms and weed control by SynAgri.

Weir plants the seeds and tends the crops over the growing season. Sometimes he pays for “custom work” for harvesting and/or planting. Sometimes he “works up” the soil for corn crops himself, and also subscribes to a no-till method of seeding for soybeans, which prevents soil erosion.

By late fall the crops are ready for harvest, corn is often sold for ethanol and soybeans for industrial use. That \$2,000 investment from CCBC, plus donations of about \$1,000 from St. George’s and St. Thomas’, will turn into a \$9,000 donation to PWRDF’s Foodgrains Bank account.

**Read the whole story on our website at**

<https://pwrdf.org/growing-projects-connect-farmers-andchurches-to-feed-people-in-need/>