

Introduction from The Right Rev. Johny Itty, Ph. D, Bishop of Oregon

In the fall of 2005 the 117th Convention of the Diocese of Oregon adopted a resolution encouraging all congregations, parishioners, and Diocesan institutions to be good stewards of water and to undertake at least one water conservation measure.

The following spring the conference “**Water & Spirit: Heeding the Call to Stewardship**” was held, the first event in our **Healthy Waters Initiative** to raise awareness of the issues about water - from the local need to keep pollutants out of the waterways to the global need to conserve water and provide water access for the poor.

Through scripture and Christ’s own example, we are called to stand with and to take responsibility for God’s creation. Why focus on water? Water is the essence of life. The U.N. calls access to water a fundamental human right. Christians acknowledge water as a holy gift from God. Yet, experts warn that a global shortage of fresh water is looming. According to Episcopal Relief and Development, 1 billion people depend on unsafe sources of drinking water. Even in Oregon, fresh water is increasingly threatened by scarcity, pollution, and misuse. How are we to respond as creation’s stewards?

It is our hope that you who explore these materials will come away with a new sense of your Christian call to be stewards of God’s creation. And, we hope individuals and congregations will use these tools and resources to identify changes they can make at their homes and churches (be it in landscaping, conservation, or switching to non-toxic pest control methods) to best steward the sacred gift of fresh, clean water.